LAB University of Applied Sciences

Kati Peltonen (ed.)

LAB Health Annual Review 2023

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Kati Peltonen

Promotion of Health and Well-being through Impactful Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI) Projects

The objective of various development projects is to initiate interventions and experiment with new approaches or methods that lead to positive changes in relation to challenges or issues arising from the business sector or more broadly from society. These needs often pertain to the promotion of well-being and health at the individual, organizational, community, or societal levels. The positive change sought and achieved by projects may manifest, for example, in the enhanced resilience and well-being of businesses, improved employment opportunities for partially disabled individuals, or increased physical activity among children and youth. Positive change, or impact, thus refers to a positive long-term development and local, regional, or societal benefit that the project has contributed to through its interventions. According to the definition provided by the Higher Education Funding Counsil for England (2016) impact is

> *“*
> ***an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia.***

Demonstrating the impact of development projects is challenging, as long-term changes are typically assessable only after the conclusion of the project. Therefore, the extent to which the intended change is realized often remains unexplored. Additionally, it may be difficult to pinpoint the specific change brought about or produced by a given project,

as multiple factors often influence change simultaneously. A third challenge is related to how impact is understood and how attention is given to its evaluation and demonstration during the planning and implementation of the project. In everyday project activities, results, effects, and impact are often viewed as synonymous, and articulating their mutual differences can be challenging. Consequently, project dissemination and reporting often emphasize the actions, results, and measurable outputs achieved during the project.

The impact chain, developed by Bertelsmann Stiftung (2010) and introduced by Sitra (Heliskoski et al. 2018), known as the Input-Output-Outcome-Impact model (IOOI model), is a widely used framework that illustrates the relationship between resources, actions, effects, and impact. This model aids in conceptualizing the distinction between these terms (Image 1).

The fundamental idea of the IOOI model is to begin with the end goal in mind. In essence, the initial step involves envisioning the desired long-term societal, environmental, and target group changes intended to be realized. Impact is understood as positive and negative, primary or secondary long-term effects produced as a result of developmental interventions or other purposeful activities, either directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally (OECD 2002). Hence, an impact constitutes a medium- to long-term change that extends beyond the direct beneficiaries of an intervention. Impacts differ from "outputs," which are the directly measurable effects occurring among the intervention's target groups, and from "outcomes," representing broader and more medium-term effects among the beneficiaries (Bührer et al. 2022). Notably, impact may not manifest during the project's duration, as societal

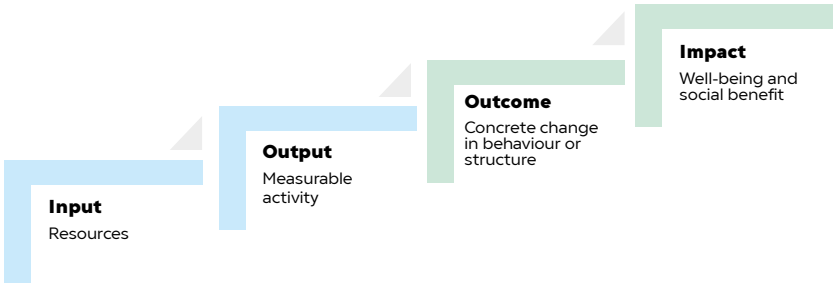

Image 1. IOOI -model (Sitra 2019)

impact often becomes apparent in the medium-term (3-6 years) or long-term (6+ years).

The goal of impact-oriented activities is always to bring about tangible changes. Subsequently, the next step involves identifying the specific change to be achieved in target groups, such as new skills, behaviors, attitudes, changes in position, practices, efficiency improvements, savings, or new resources. Impact is often demonstrated through interviews, workshops, surveys, or data analysis.

The third step entails identifying the activities required to achieve the outcome. In impact-oriented activities, actions are developed agilely through experimentation in collaboration with target groups. Experiments serve as central tools in impact-oriented activities. Measurable activities may include various experiments, pilots, trainings, and other interventions. Output can thus be seen as a transformative solution that facilitates targeted change. However, the planning of concrete actions is always preceded by the identification and segmentation of target groups (Heliskoski et al. 2018.) The fourth step in the IOOI model involves determining the resources needed to implement the intervention activities.

However, societal challenges and "bottlenecks" often arise from highly complex phenomena or sets of phenomena. Examples of such complex societal phenomena are inequality and social exclusion. These phenomena comprise multiple components and intricate interdependencies (Virtanen et al. 2018, 3). Phenomenon-based approach is strongly linked to systems thinking, which involves examining challenges and issues in relation to the whole while recognizing relationships between parts. Phenomenon-based approach can thus be seen as a way to systematically address complex societal challenges with an effort to identify underlying structures and conventions to avoid making only superficial changes (Colcherster 2019).

Therefore, impact-oriented development activities start by addressing holistic real-world phenomena, signifying the exploration of intricate, real-life issues as comprehensive entities, situated in their actual context, and approached from diverse perspectives. In phenomenon-based development, the phenomenon itself serves as the initial focal point, necessitating comprehensive and interdisciplinary thinking (Lonka 2018). The integration of phenomenon-based developmental orientation into impact-oriented

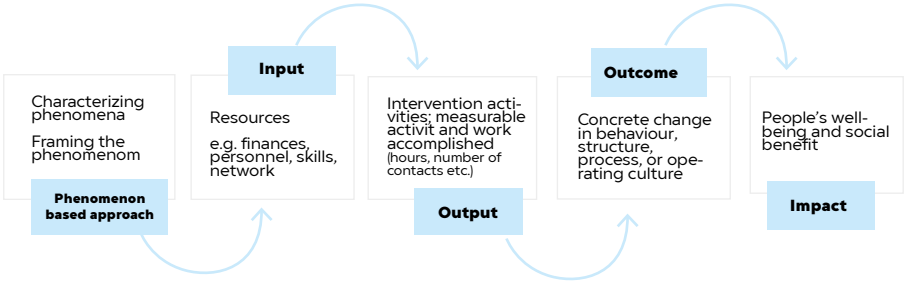

Image 2. Extended IOOI-model. (Betelsmann Stiftung 2010, modified by Heliskoski et al. 2018)

activities can be regarded as an extended manifestation of the IOOI model (see Image 2). Within this model, developmental endeavors initiate by identifying existing needs and considering which societal events or changes demand a response. Subsequently, in alignment with the IOOI model, the focus shifts to determining the intended change.

At the core of impact-oriented activities is the idea that impact emerges as a result of co-development. Co-development differs from traditional collaboration in that it is grounded in jointly agreed-upon impact and outcome objectives (Sitra 2019).

Recognizing its responsibility to make a positive societal impact, LAB University of Applied Sciences has adopted a systemic and life cycle approach to promoting health and well-being. LAB

Health stands as one of the strategic focus areas, guiding both research, development, and innovation (RDI) activities and education. The mission here is to proactively enhance overall well-being by developing sustainable innovations and solutions in well-being services.

The key RDI areas in this focus domain include;

1. well-being the living environment, physical activity and tourism;
2. social inclusion, working life, and safety in everyday life; and
3. data and technology for well-being.

Each of these areas addresses health and well-being challenges from distinct perspectives.

Fundamentally, the research, development, and innovation (RDI) activities are not confined to isolated university settings but are deeply embedded in practical, grassroots-level collaborations. LAB actively engages in university–business and university–community partnerships with various stakeholders, involving students in development work and ensuring a holistic approach to addressing health and well-being challenges.

Our contribution to the workforce and society is realized through a variety of Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI) projects. This publication comprises nine articles that illustrate how practical RDI collaborations with companies and communities are conducted and the positive societal impact these projects have yielded. The articles delve into how LAB has advanced the achievement of impact goals. They explore the pathways, mechanisms, operational models, and partnerships through which this impact has been generated. Additionally, the publication sheds light on LAB's role in promoting systemic changes and innovations.

The authors of these articles are professionals specializing in health and well-being affiliated with LAB University of Applied Sciences or collaborating partner organizations. I express my heartfelt gratitude to each author for their significant contributions to this publication. May readers find these articles enlightening and enjoyable to read!

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PART I

Well-being from living environment physical activity, and tourism

Kirsi Kiiskinen & Anni Pietarinen

Effective Coaching

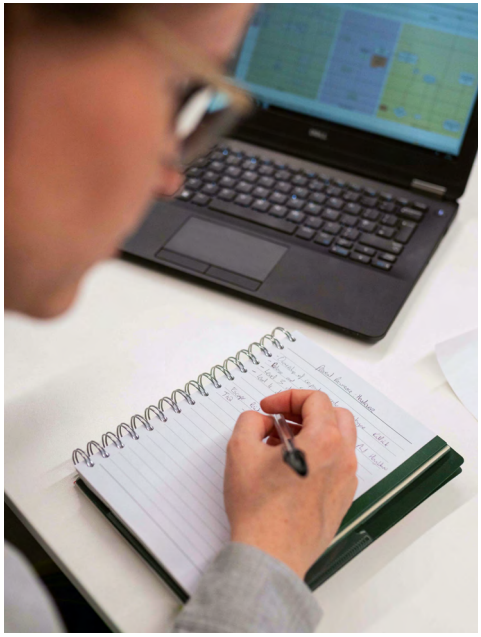
The **PARASTA ITÄÄ!** project focuses on developing cooperation between education, work life and social welfare and health care actors as well as creating a strong, shared operating culture. The community developer education Get Excited by Phenomena! is at the core of the operations. It develops phenomenon-based operations and dynamics of multidisciplinary actor networks. The coaching is based on combining multidisciplinary competence and services into impactful and client-oriented services to support the regions' existing ecosystems. Trainees support the joint understanding of professionals involved in a phenomenon in order to create effective and client-oriented services. Creative methods and the expertise of professionals support this work. (PARASTA ITÄÄ! 2023.) This article discusses the evaluation of the Get Excited by Phenomena coaching and its impacts in the field.

The Get Excited by Phenomena coaching consisted of five coaching days over six months. There were 25 participants from four different regions (South Savo, South Karelia, Kymenlaakso and Päijät-Häme). The common phenomenon was youth and young adults in a changing world of work and society. Dropping out of school, intergenerational disadvantage and young people's life management were among the phenomena arising from the regions.

The coaching involved experts from different fields of social and health care, education, humanities and arts and culture. The participants included family centre employees, school social workers, youth counsellors, teachers, study counsellors, speech therapists and project experts. The themes of the coaching sessions were "Innostutaan ilmiöistä ja monialaisuudesta" (Get Inspired by Phenomena and Multidisciplinarity), "Minä ja muut" (Me

and Others), “Luovuus ja luottamus” (Creativity and Trust), “Verkostoista voimaa” (Strength from Networks) and “Muutoksella eteenpäin” (Driving Change). Between the coaching days, the traineers had intermediate tasks that helped them integrate the lessons learned during the meetings into practical work. Each of the coaching days was kicked off with a series of speeches “Innostutaan hyvinvoivasta Suomesta!” (Get Inspired by a Healthy Finland!), in which the experts involved in the project discussed some topical themes related to the coaching.

The goal of the first day of coaching was to understand the mechanisms/areas related to the operation of the multidisciplinary and multiprofessional ecosystem. We used a birthday circle and picture cards to get to know each other. An introduction to ecosystem thinking was next on the agenda. Ecosystems have two meanings. In nature, an ecosystem refers to a functional and slowly developing entity formed by organisms and lifeless environmental factors in a fairly uniform area. When used metaphorically, an ecosystem refers to a multi-network environment or a network. The word ‘ecosystem’ often refers to cooperation between organisations, which involves interdependencies, decentralised



organisations, common value proposals and shared operating methods. (Hartikainen 2022.) The final task of the day was to create one’s own sociogram. Everyone drew, painted or crafted their own network, with themselves in the middle, surrounded by people and parties that they encounter in their work. In the end, everyone had a visual image of their own work network. After the first day of coaching, the participants made a Reiss Motivation Profile® for themselves, and their intermediate task was to write a text on multiprofessionalism using the method of empathy-based stories.

The aim of the second coaching day was to identify one's motivations and competences and to learn how to utilise one's strengths in networks. At first, we reviewed the created motivation profiles – what were everyone's top three motives that affect working in networks? The participants revisited the phenomena identified on the first day and considered how the phenomenon could be turned into a project draft. Toward the end of the day, we used the Forum theatre method to identify the problem with the phenomenon:

- Who 'suffers' from the problem?
- Who's causing it?
- Who can influence it?

The goal of the third coaching day was to identify and utilise the potential of creativity at work, and to see things in a new light and through different means of interaction. The traineers prepared their body and mind through listening to and playing music. We revisited the phenomena in small groups and created a concrete plan on the project idea, the vision of the future and the practices to which the phenomenon is related. Later, we played with reality using the Forum theatre method again and continued working on the identified phenomenon. Finally, we carried out a musical improvisation exercise. The goal was to promote creativity, improvisation and mutual trust as well as the recognition and expression of emotions in groups through music.

The goal of the fourth day of coaching was: How to use my competence comprehensively in my work and networks? We verbalised our will in small groups (phenomenon groups): "We want to..." In the afternoon, we organised a band workshop. The purpose was to illustrate that boldly improvising and doing things together could help the participants create something unexpected. The participants were given intermediate tasks that included exercises in visual expression in the video format, for example. The exercises helped us relax and find our creativity through drawing, and we worked on our phenomena by creating collages.

The topic of the last day was the importance of trust, creativity and encounters in work communities and networks. A short film called "Kohtaamisia" (Encounters) served as an introduction to the theme of the day. After the film, we created works of art about our phenomena using Lego blocks and various materials in phenomenon groups. Finally, we displayed the artworks in an art exhibition.

Image 1. The Get Excited by Phenomena coaching used the Forum theatre method. (Image: Kirsi Kiiskinen)

Impact assessment

The PARASTA ITÄÄ! project has a societal mission, goal and vision for the future that includes making a change. The change must be impactful. When public funds are used to implement goal-oriented activities, we must assess their effectiveness, impacts and success. However, the problem with impact assessments is often the difficulty to provide undisputed evidence. The indisputability of the methods of natural science does not transfer to humanities and social sciences. People and human behaviour can be monitored, and changes can be observed, but proving the cause of the change may be challenging. This is increasingly problematic when the changes affect organisations,

networks and ecosystems in addition to human behaviour. The fact that effects and impacts are often considered synonymous can also be considered a problem in impact assessment. Effects can be measured using logical and quantitative or qualitative methods, while impact is a broader concept consisting of diverse impact chains and relationships. People live in a multidimensional and complex world. The objectives of the PARASTA ITÄÄ! project are also multidimensional and complex, and this poses certain challenges for evaluation. (Koskinen-Ollonqvist, et al. 2005.)

The assessment of both effects and impacts can be based on different approaches: descriptive (describing the process), normative (do the project measures work as they should) and causal (did the project produce the desired results and impacts). (Koskinen-Ollonqvist et al. 2005.) This article aims to answer questions concerning the nature of the coaching provided in the project, the objectives of the activities, the implementation of the activities and the observed changes. Demonstrating the impacts of the project would probably require a monitoring period longer than the entire PARASTA ITÄÄ! project. Societal impact (changes in a certain area of life, such as well-being) or changes in structures do not arise quickly and may be difficult to detect in the short term. Still, we try to describe the PARASTA ITÄÄ! project's central process, the Get Excited about the Phenomena coaching and to assess the realisation of the desired effects and impacts in the course of the project. This description is based on the survey material we collected during the PARASTA ITÄÄ! project's Get Excited about the Phenomena coaching.

We used qualitative impact analysis as our method. The qualitative impact analysis method includes the ontology of the relativistic paradigm, meaning that reality is not an objectively measurable reality. Instead, individuals and groups construct their own realities.

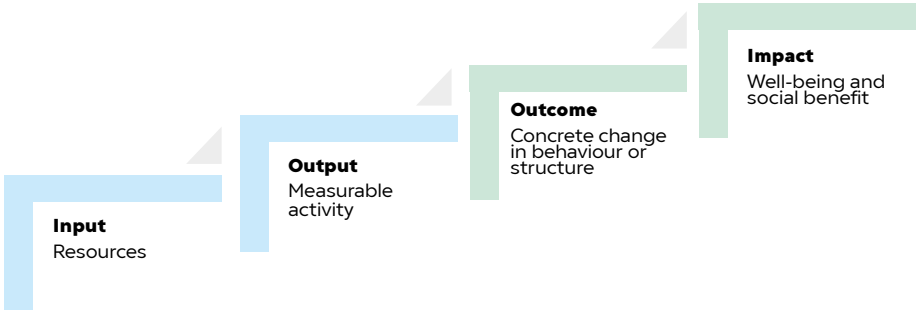


Image 2. The iooi method by Bertelsmann Stiftung (Sitra 2019)

In this method, reality is seen as a multiform and multi-layered reality existing in between relations. Demonstrating impacts is also related to the question about the essence of reality. In this qualitative and descriptive impact analysis, we adopted a constructivist and interpretative approach, in which both the interpretation and conclusions are context-bound. Maija Riitta Ollila has stated that "the effects of life phenomena cannot be based on evidence, because everything is only exploration and experimentation." (Ollila 2005, translated from Finnish.) Although the PARASTA ITÄÄ! project also involved exploration and experimentation, we still strived to collect evidence-based material during the project, which we analysed in this qualitative assessment. We trust the participants' views on and experiences of the success of the coaching.

Highlighting the psychological and social factors of work with the QPSNordic survey

We used the QPSNordic survey in the coaching. The survey is based on a project initiated by the Nordic Council of Ministers to improve the scientific quality and comparability of research data collected on the psychological, social and organisational characteristics of workplaces in connection with various interventions. The PARASTA ITÄÄ! project's coaching sessions involved experts from several different organisations, and the survey material has been applied to this group.

QPSNordic is a method that measures psychological and social factors at work, including the characteristics of the work and the organisation as well as individuals' attitudes toward work. It can be used both as a research method and as a survey feedback method when developing work communities. It is designed to assess employees' observations of psychological, social and organisational working conditions. QPSNordic is particularly suitable for creating a foundation for organisational development projects and interventions, and it can be used to verify changes in work and to assess the impacts of development interventions. It is also suitable for studying the links between work, health and productivity. The QPSNordic questionnaire consists of multiple-choice questions on the following psychological and social areas of work: job demands, opportunities to influence work, predictability at work and management of work, social support, leadership, work climate, interaction between work and private life, meaning of work and commitment to the organisation, and work motivation. (Elo et al. 2001.)

The QPSNordic survey is a scientifically validated method. The reliability and validity of its scales have been studied at two stages during the survey's development process. The data was collected from four Nordic countries. (Elo et al. 2001.) In this assessment, we compare the group of those participating in the PARASTA ITÄÄ! project with the QPSNordic's reference material, which consists of 2,015 respondents from different sectors in four different Nordic countries. Employees who responded to the prototype of the survey worked in organisations representing different sectors of the world of work, such as industrial production, private services, public administration, and healthcare. The answers of those participating in the PARASTA ITÄÄ! project's coaching were compared with this reference material.

QPSNordic has many advantages compared to many other extensive survey methods that examine the psychological and social factors of work. The survey measures work-related factors simultaneously at the level of the task, the organisation, and the individual, and it takes the entire organisational and group level into account at the organisational level. It covers many topical themes related to work and takes into consideration the continuous development and transformation of organisations, including an innovative climate, which is an important part of a learning organisation. (Elo et al. 2001.)

The coaching sessions carried out in the PARASTA ITÄÄ! project were based on co-creation, and the purpose of the surveys was to assess the impacts of this co-creation and to reveal the change processes. We decided to use the short version of QPSNordic in the assessment of the PARASTA ITÄÄ! project. We used it to conduct a baseline survey for the participants. In addition to the short version of QPSNordic, we added some questions related to the coaching's identified goals to the questionnaire. We also used the baseline survey to map out the expectations of the participants regarding the impacts of the coaching sessions. In the final survey, we requested the participants' views and experiences about the impacts of the coaching sessions.

The QPSNordic survey is originally intended for use in large research populations, but the PARASTA ITÄÄ! project's coaching sessions involved a relatively small group of participants. This means that our assessment follows QPSNordic's recommendations, according to which the average and median or reduced scale percentages are suitable statistical indicators for assessing the results in groups of more than 10 but fewer than 30 people. QPSNordic's response scales usually consist of five options, but here the number of options was reduced to three by combining the two categories at both extremes, i.e., 1 and 2 and 4 and 5. The same was done to our own questions at the analysis stage. The following tables detail the results of comparing the participants' responses to the baseline survey with the QPSNordic reference material.

The QPSNordic survey's content areas are grouped into three conceptual levels: task level, social and organisational level, and individual level. In the table above, we can see that according to the views of those participating in the Get Excited about the by Phenomena coaching, the strengths of their workplace are mainly related to the social and organisational level (support from superior, authorising management and social climate). The material also revealed strengths at the task level: control of decision-making at work and the work pace. Support from friends and family is an individual-level strength. This means that the participants' assessment of these content areas is clearly better than the Nordic average.

The following table shows the negative deviations from the reference material, i.e., the content areas that the participants assessed as worse than the Nordic average or more challenging before the coaching begun.

Table 1. Positive and negative deviations from QPSNordic's reference material

The trainees did not deviate from the reference material in the following contents:	Positive deviations from the reference data:	Negative deviations from the reference data:
Quantitative requirements of the work	Opportunities to influence working patterns	The difficulty of the work
Predictability over the next month	Opportunities to influence decision-making	Job learning requirements
Role conflicts	Support from manager	Consideration of staff through rewards (money, incentives)
Experiencing control	Support from friends and family	Social climate (rigid and rule-based, disturbing conflicts)
Assessment of group work	Empowering leadership	Innovative climate (below average information flow)
Lack of equality	Social climate (supportive and encouraging)	Clarity of work role
Support from colleagues		
Social atmosphere (relaxed and comfortable)		
Innovative atmosphere (personnel encourages thinking about how work could be done better)		

The following table lists the positive deviations by content area.

Table 2. Positive deviations classified according to QPSNordic's content areas.

Work Task Level	Organizatinal level	Individual Level
Opportunities to influence the pace of work	Support of the foreperson	Support from friends and family
Opportunities to influence decision-making	Empowering leadership	
	Social atmosphere (encouraging and supportive)	

Negative deviations from the reference material can be interpreted as development targets. In other words, the participants considered their work more challenging than average, and the learning demands of work were considered higher than average. Role clarity was also considered worse than the Nordic average. These content areas were related to the task level. At the organisational level, the data revealed that the participants felt that rewards (money or encouragement) were given less often than average in work communities, that the social climate was considered more rigid than average and rules-based, and that the information flow was worse than average.

With regard to QPSNordic, we asked the participants the same questions at the end of the coaching to see if their views on the psychological, social and organisational aspects of work had changed during the coaching. 17 people responded to the baseline survey and 15 to the final survey. When comparing the results of the final survey with QPSNordic's reference material, there were hardly any changes in the content that emerged. With regard to positive and negative deviations, the same content areas stood out as at the beginning of the coaching. The only minor change observed in the final survey was that the lack of equality seemed to be less prevalent than average in work communities at the end of the coaching, while it was initially assessed to be close to the Nordic average. We did not notice any major changes using these indicators during the coaching programme. This is a concrete example of the challenges of assessing impacts in the short term.

Expectations and feedback on coaching

In addition to the QPSNordic survey, we formulated some key questions related to the goals of the coaching, which make it possible to highlight effects and impacts even in the short

Table 3. Negative deviations classified according to QPSNordic's content areas.

Work Task Level	Organizatinal level	Individual Level
The dificulty of the Work	Consideration of personnel through rewards (money, encouragement)	
Work learning opportunities	Social atmosphere- (stiff and rule-based, disturbing contradictions)	
Work role clarity	Innovative atmosphere (information flow is weaker than average)	

Table 4. The statements in the baseline and final surveys and the percentages of those who agreed with them.

Proposition	Get excited about phenomena beginning (N17)	Get excited about phenomena ending (N15)
recognize their own inherent strengths	94%	93%
able to utilize inherent strengths at work	82%	87%
able to utilize the knowledge gained through education and work experience	88%	87%
able to utilize skills acquired through hobbies and other interests	59%	53%
believes or feels that coaching affects enthusiasm for phenomenon-oriented work	94%	67%
believes or feels that he/she is able to tune her work more and more to be phenomenon-oriented and multidisciplinary	88%	64%
believes or feels that he/she can utilize the knowledge and skills learned during the training in the work community / in the activities of professionals	100%	47%
believes or feels that the know-how brought by the coaching affects the organization's services	76%	33%
believes or feels that coaching increases work well-being or well-being	76%	73%
believes or feels that coaching helps in identifying and utilizing one's own skills and potential	76%	53%
believes or feels that he/she will get new methods for her own work	88%	67%
believes or feels that coaching increases opportunities to influence one's own work	59%	20%
believes or feels that coaching has a positive effect on work motivation	76%	60%
believes or feels that the contents of the coaching can increase the development of one's work and the organization	65%	33%
believes or feels that coaching strengthens and deepens the understanding of the importance of creative competence as part of one's own work or interaction	94%	93%
believes or feels that he/she will be able to use creative methods as part of her own work in the future	82%	87%
believes or feels that the coaching inspires to do more phenomenon-oriented multidisciplinary and multiprofessional cooperation	94%	73%
believes or feels that coaching gives you courage to connect your own work more to R&D activities or co-development	82%	53%

term based on how the participants themselves assessed the effects of the coaching. Before the coaching, we asked about the participants' beliefs about the potential impacts of the coaching, and at the end of the coaching, we asked the participants to provide their experiences and opinions on the achievement of the objectives. The following table shows the statements given in the baseline and final surveys and the percentages of those who agreed with them.

The table above shows that the participants' expectations for many statements were higher than the final outcome. Despite this, we believe that the coaching package was very successful, as the assessment of many statements was over 50%. More than 60% of the participants felt that they had learned new methods to use in their own work. One of the key areas of the coaching was the identification and utilisation of one's natural strengths in one's work, and the survey suggests that the participants are better at utilising these strengths after the coaching. Based on the percentages, the greatest achievement of the coaching was that it strengthened and deepened the participants' understanding of the significance of creative competence as part of their work. The ability to continue using creative methods as part of one's work was also improved during the coaching.

Based on the response rates, the Get Excited by Phenomena coaching really inspired people to engage in more phenomenon-based, multidisciplinary and multiprofessional cooperation. We also find it significant and impactful that well over half of the respondents felt that the coaching had many positive impacts on well-being at work/well-being and work motivation for them personally.

The participants felt that the coaching had the least impact on improving possibilities to influence work and the second least impact on the organisation's services and the development of one's work and organisation. In other words, these responses show how difficult it is to incorporate new operating models and ways of thinking into structures and organisations.

Conclusions

The PARASTA ITÄÄ! project and the Get Excited by Phenomena coaching are based on systems thinking, in which systemic change is not always a development based on clear events. We often focus on the visible side of change and pay less attention to underlying events and events that are more difficult to perceive. These less noticeable events often relate to complex structures in society and organisations and their interdependencies. (Uusikylä & Jalonen 2023.)

The PARASTA ITÄÄ! project's theoretical objective was to influence the system through office holders and professionals operating within. The Get Excited by Phenomena coaching helped the PARASTA ITÄÄ! project to take a concrete step away from silos toward developing cooperation between education, worklife and social welfare and health care actors, and strengthening a common operating culture between different organisations across regional boundaries. The phenomenon-based co-creation model developed in the project will be a key opportunity to utilise existing resources more efficiently, across regional and organisational boundaries. Creative and cultural methods as part of coaching, on the other hand, open a door into a new way of thinking, managing and working. The ideas, operating models and methods of the traineers that participated in the coaching will be transferred to the participating organisations and their operations. At the same time, a multidisciplinary network will be built around a common phenomenon to support existing ecosystems. This will show the project's impacts in the longer term.

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Sara Suikkanen, Thayse Gomes, Alan Donnely & Ilkka Väänänen

“Well planned is half done” Lessons from the GO GREEN ROUTES pilot study

Introduction

In today’s society, the green transition, sustainability, and healthy lifestyle as well as diversity, inclusion, and citizen engagement are important topics. The GO GREEN: Resilient Optimal Urban natural, Technological and Environmental Solutions (GO GREEN ROUTES) project is a European project with 40 partners from 19 different countries. It is funded by the EU Horizon 2020 programme under grant agreement No. 869764 and it aims to increase nature-connectedness with participatory action and co-creation in six European cities: Burgas (Bulgaria), Lahti (Finland), Limerick (Ireland), Tallinn (Estonia), Umeå (Sweden) and Versailles (France) (EU 2022).

The framework for the project is the 360 Health approach which includes multiple domains that affect the health and well-being of people. The domains are mental health and well-being, sleep, nutrition, physical activity, social health, sustainability, nature interactions, and cognition and performance. The GO GREEN ROUTES approaches 360 Health and its domains through the citizens relations to urban nature in the participating cities. In the Lahti region, the project is closely linked to the Lahti Regional Health and Environment Programme 2022–2032 (Päijät-Häme Joint Authority for Health and Well-being 2023).

As a part of the GO GREEN ROUTES project, an interventional study was planned to study the effects of environmental quality on physical activity participation and health. In the autumn of 2022, LAB University of Applied Sciences conducted a pilot study “The effects of environmental quality on physical

activity participation and health" with the University of Limerick, Ireland. The pilot study aimed to test the recruitment, intervention, and study methods in a smaller population before the larger trial to ensure that the research protocol was feasible and that all the selected surveys and measurements were suitable for the study population. The pilot study is an important step in planning an effective larger-scale intervention study. In this article, we reflect on the experiences of the pilot study to ensure the high-quality implementation of the main study. These lessons are presented especially from the Lahti perspective, but they will be taken into consideration in the main study in other participating partner cities, too. The impacts, benefits, and development targets were determined by the research teams from Lahti (Finland) and Limerick (Ireland). In addition, the feedback of the participating Finnish subjects was taken into account.

The pilot study

The ethical evaluation of the study design in Finland was performed by the Satakunta Higher Education Institutions Board on Research Integrity in Human Sciences before participants were recruited in the study. The target number of participants for the 8-week intervention pilot study was twenty, ten females and ten males, all from the city of Lahti. The inclusion criteria were 20 to 65 years of age, having a smartphone, taking less than two 30-minute walks a week, and being able to attend the pre and post-intervention measurements at the LAB campus in Lahti. The recruitment began in September 2022, and participants were recruited via social media using Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn posts, which contained links to participation screening surveys in Webropol. In addition, the internal webpage and the Yammer groups of LAB University of Applied Sciences were used in the recruitment of participants.

Before the pre- and post-intervention assessment visit, the participants completed a survey including the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ), Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) (Buysse et al. 1989), and Rand/SF 36 health quality survey (Hays et al. 2001). The participants were asked to provide open feedback on the routes they used and the study design at the end of the intervention.

All participants participated in the assessments performed in the LAB by the members of the research team. These tests were done before and after the intervention and included anthropometric and cardiovascular measurements such as blood pressure, height, weight, hip and waist circumference, body composition

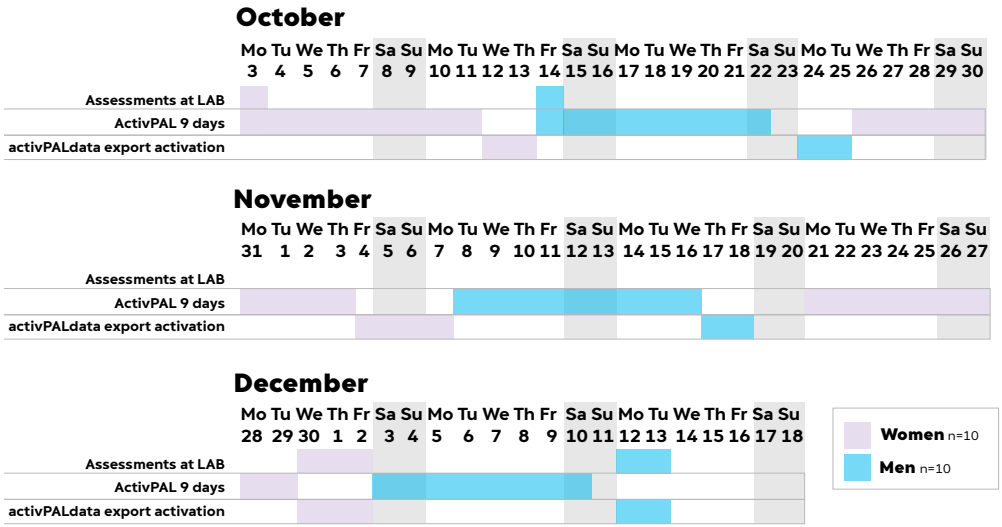

Image 1. Planned schedule and timing of the assessments and activPAL measures in the GO GREEN ROUTES pilot study 2022.

(InBody 720), and a 6-minute walking test (Mänttäri et al. 2018).

At the pre-intervention assessment visit, the participants received an activPAL device (PALtechnologies, Glasgow, Scotland), which measures the person's physical activity and sedentary time for nine consecutive days. After nine days, participants returned the device to LAB for data analysis. During the pilot study, the physical activity and sedentary time were measured with activPAL three times: at week 1, week 4, and week 8. The activPAL is a small device that is taped to the person's right thigh with Tegaderm. It measures the acceleration of the thigh and its position with a triaxial sensor. The

device can use its position to determine whether a person is walking, standing, sitting, or lying down. Participants wore the accelerometer for nine consecutive days 24/7. They were instructed to take the device off only during swimming, bathing, or sauna, or if they performed martial arts or other contact sports. Otherwise, they wore it all the time. If they took the device off, they were instructed to record the activities during that time in a simple physical activity diary.

All the participants took part in the same 8-week intervention. They were instructed to walk 3 times a week for at least 30 minutes at a time following their preferred route wherever was convenient to them (e.g., close to home or workplace). They were instructed to use the same route for the whole eight weeks. During the walk/run they used the smartphone app SportsTracker to record their training activity (time, distance, and route).

Reflections and possible solutions

Five major challenges were identified in the pilot study:

- recruitment,
- gender distribution,
- equipment/surveys,
- the lack of variation in routes/ environment,
- the dropout rate.

The recruitment method through social media was effective in attracting female participants. The ten volunteer female participants were easily recruited. The recruitment process for the male participants was trickier, and we were not able to recruit the desired number of ten male participants suitable and willing to participate in the pilot study. The recruitment strategy for the main intervention study will be altered based on the lessons learned during the pilot study. The recruitment of the potential participants in the main study will be done through advertisements in newspapers, social media posts, face-to-face encounters in the local marketplace, and other events. In addition, a press release should be published to improve the visibility of the recruitment process. The local media (e.g., radio, newspapers such as Etelä-Suomen Sanomat, etc.), the reporters, and journalists should be contacted, too.

During the recruitment, the participants filled in a Webropol survey where we asked for some background information to evaluate their eligibility for the pilot study. We asked if they took a ~30-minute walk less often than 2 times a week, and if their answer was affirmative, they were eligible for the study. However, the wording of the question in the pilot study did not include any other physical activity, and the goal was to recruit inactive persons. Some of the recruited persons did other moderate and vigorous physical activities during the week and were not physically inactive. For the actual study, we will include the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) short form in the background information survey. It will give us more extensive information of the person's physical activity levels and allow us to create clearer inclusion and exclusion criteria concerning their current physical activity. We will use the World Health Organization's (World Health Organization 2018) physical activity guidelines as an inclusion criterion, meaning that those who do not meet the objectives of the WHO physical activity guidelines are eligible for the study.

Measuring activity with the activPAL three times during the short 8-week period was not very feasible. The schedule was very tight, and we had only 12 devices that the participants used in turns. There were few opportunities for individual alterations. For example, if someone did not return the accelerometer on time, it caused delays for someone else. Due to the limited number of devices, their malfunctions and low charging capacity caused major problems. The tight schedule and the small number of devices caused many challenges for the research team. Based on the lessons learned during the pilot we

altered the main study's study protocol so that the activPAL measurements will be done at the baseline and during the last week of the intervention. We also need to obtain more activPAL devices before the main study. They will enable a slightly more flexible timetable and allow us to enroll more participants. The larger number of devices will make the protocol less vulnerable to delays caused by participants and possible device malfunctions.

In addition, students must be recruited to assist in the measurements. That way, we can test more subjects on the same day. The pilot study was conducted during the autumn, which can be rainy in Finland, and the evenings were already dark. For the main study, the summer season could be a better option to encourage participants to partake in the outdoor activity intervention. However, summer is a national holiday season in Finland, meaning that the participants might be tempted to stray from their predetermined routes in Lahti.

Conducting multisite research in different countries necessitates a robust protocol so that the measurements and instructions, etc., are done similarly in all the participating sites. In intervention research, it is important to consider the differences in languages, customs, and cultures. There might be some variations in the instructions. For example, we needed to instruct the participants to remove the activPALs from their thighs when going to sauna, which was not included in the Irish instructions. Also, the translations of the questionnaires may need a license, or there might be no official translation available. For example, the use of the English version of the PSQI is free but you must pay a licensing fee for all the other language versions, and it is only allowed to use their official Finnish version in research. Our license covered only the use of the paper version of the questionnaire, and we were not able to use it in digital format. Even though the paper surveys were easy to fill, some participants said that they would have preferred the digital format. However, because of the licensing restrictions, we were not able to use the digital format and we will not be able to do so in the main study either. In the main study, we will use all the same questionnaires as in the pilot study. In addition, for the questionnaires used in the pilot, the main study will include a questionnaire on beliefs concerning green exercise and the WHO Five Well-Being Index (WHO-5) (World Health Organization 1998). The BAGE Beliefs against green exercise (Flowers et al. 2017) will be included, and

we hope that said questionnaire will help us gain a deeper understanding of the person's beliefs about nature and green exercise.

In the intervention conducted in the pilot study, we let the participants choose their outdoor route in the city of Lahti without giving them detailed instructions. The idea was to test whether we get enough variability in surroundings, e.g., green spaces and urban areas. The selected routes were not diverse, so for the main study, the participants will be randomly assigned into two groups: green (natural surroundings, forest trails, etc.) and grey (urban surroundings, paved streets, etc.) to ensure more variability between the selected routes. With these two groups, the effect of a green environment could be studied better.

The mentioned positive aspects of the selected routes included the peacefulness, silence, and freshness of the environment. In addition, the variety of the terrain and geography were condifered positive aspects of the route. Darkness and the rainy autumn weather were demotivating aspects.

Interpretation

Study limitations included the absence of a control group and the small sample size. The pilot study's design proved to be feasible, and a larger multicentre study could be carried out based on these experiences and lessons to understand the relationship of the variables between groups performing outdoor physical activity in "green" and "grey" spaces.

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Päivi Tommola

Attractive bicycle tourism in Päijät-Häme through event-based development

Bicycle tourism is a trending type of tourism that combines ecological aspects, physical activity and nature experiences. In 2010–2020, the popularity of mountain biking as a hobby in Finland increased clearly in terms of both the number of hobbyists and the number of biking sessions (Neuvonen et al. 2020, 37-38). During this period, interest in road-based bicycle touring has also increased, especially in the Finnish lake district and on the Finnish coast. The scenic water bodies of these regions also attract bicycle tourists from international markets. Despite the collapse of international tourism and the clear decline in tourism as a whole, bicycle tourism managed to maintain its attractiveness and even improve it during the COVID-19 pandemic. From the perspective of business operations, the sector's growth potential has also been strengthened by the emergence of electric bicycles, which have made cycling a more accessible mode of transport (Yritysmaailma 2021).

In Päijät-Häme, the attractiveness of bicycle tourism is guaranteed by the region's clean nature and water bodies, easy access from the Helsinki metropolitan area and strong regional expertise in sports tourism. In the future, especially different events and thematic development are expected to promote the tourism industry in the region (Visit Lahti 2022). The Lahti region with its international arenas and major events is an extra attractive and also internationally acknowledged destination from the perspective of sports tourism. The

Image 1. The Päijät-Häme for Cycling Tourists project focussed on increasing the visibility of Päijät-Häme's bicycle-friendly services, for example by producing photo material and thematic content for tourism marketing in the region. (Image: The Päijät-Häme for Cycling Tourists project)

Salpausselkä Geopark, which received the UNESCO Global Geopark status in April 2022, and its geological history also offer new opportunities for realising the full potential of nature and sports tourism (Lahti Region 2022).

Showcasing bicycle friendliness

The joint Päijät-Häme for Cycling Tourists project of LAB University of Applied Sciences and Päijät-Hämeen Liikunta ja Urheilu ry, launched in autumn 2021, has worked to develop client understanding related to bicycle tourism and bicycle-friendly products, and to improve the visibility of routes and services central for bicycle tourism (Tommola 2022a). The Welcome Cyclist badge (Bikeland 2023) administered by Pyörämatkailukeskus has been used as a tool and indicator in the development of bicycle friendliness. The number of actors carrying this badge has multiplied during the project in Päijät-Häme. The project has also highlighted the new cycling friendly

attitude of Päijät-Häme in cooperation with regional companies and other actors interested in bicycle tourism.

The project has promoted the visibility of bicycle tourism in Päijät-Häme by producing regional communication materials, such as the Bike Travel Guide for Päijät-Häme and Päijät-Häme for Cycling Tourists: Routes. Sights & Services video (LAB 2023a). In order to improve the visibility of the routes and services in the area, the project has also developed the concept of a regional bicycle tourism day. The key idea of the concept design was to create a low threshold cycling event combining the tourism potential of the area with nature values, local action and communities. The project produced a web-based benchmarking study as background material for this work. It examined European cycling events from the perspectives of concept and brand, venue and routes, target audiences, consideration given to the perspective of tourism, and organisation. This produced observation materials and ideas for planning an event that suits the needs of Päijät-Häme (Tommola 2022b).

Thematic content on local nature and accessibility

The design of the concept strived to find a solution that complements the region's other event offering and highlights the best regional cycling routes and services, while distinguishing itself enough from other regional events. The previous offer of cycling events in Päijät-Häme includes two international road bicycle events (UCI Tour Lakeland and Ironman Lahti) and a few Finnish mountain and road bicycle events, the majority of which are competitively oriented. Both of our international events are also aimed at competitive athletes. They still invest heavily in the attractiveness of the region's scenic water bodies in their marketing. The same theme, Salpausselkä Geopark's Landscape created by water, is also visible in the event concept created in the Päijät-Häme for Cycling Tourists project, but the event contents, target audiences and objectives of organisation clearly distinguish this concept from other events in the region.

We ended up naming the event concept 'Salpausselkä Bike Fest' after the new UNESCO Global Geopark of the area. In addition to the Geopark theme, easy accessibility and the kick-off of the cycling summer are also visible themes in the idea and the framework of the programme. In addition to logistics, easy accessibility is showcased by the fact that the event's bicycle tours are guided, aimed at new cyclists, and most of them also include the opportunity to rent a bicycle. The Geopark theme is visible in the contents of the tours

and side programme, which highlight the geological heritage of Salpausselkä Geopark. The event will celebrate the kick-off of the cycling summer, for example, with the opportunity to tune your bike for the summer season. The market trends identified in Päijät-Häme's tourism strategy 2025 (Visit Lahti 2022) are visible in the overall organisation of the event. These trends include sustainable tourism, nature & cleanliness, culture & traditions and doing things together.

New perspectives on multi-locality

Salpausselkä Geopark consists of six municipalities in Päijät-Häme, Southern Finland. The longest north-south axis of the Päijät-Häme is approx. 100 km, and the longest east-west axis approx. 70 km. The most significant geological attractions in the area are the I Salpausselkä and II Salpausselkä ridges formed by ancient glacier rivers. They are at their tallest and most impressive in the Lahti region (Lahti Region 2023). The idea is to organise the event in I Salpausselkä and II Salpausselkä in turns, which would make it easier to cover the entire area.

Multi-locality is also realised at each individual event, as the concept includes cycling tours in different parts of the region and a joint programme organised at the central location. This combination

aims to create unique touring products that also inspire cyclists already familiar with shorter local routes to participate in the event. Regional geological sites favoured by tourists and nationally valuable landscape areas (LAB 2023b) are attractive factors when planning the routes.

Although the main product of the event concept is programmed bicycle tours, there will also be other cycling-related programme located at the centre of the event. The programme will include the Welcome Cyclist fair, children's bicycle riding school, spring service point for bicycles and relaxed bicycle races. There, participants can also watch the tour on a big screen.

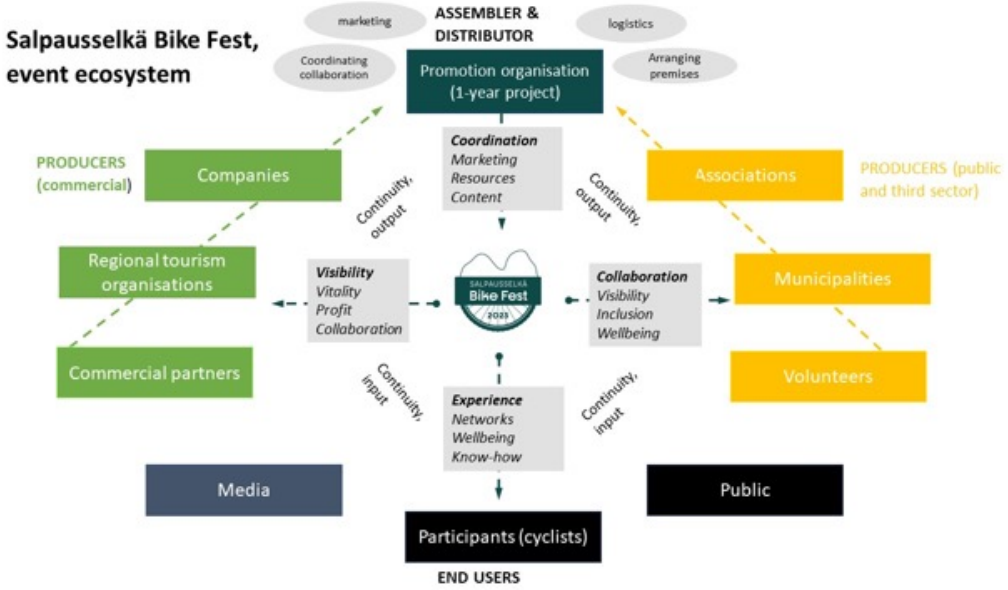

Image 2. The Salpausselkä Bike Fest event ecosystem with the roles of actors and the interfaces creating value for these actors and enabling the organisation of the event in the future. (Image: Päivi Tommola)

Collaboration model and the roles of different actors

A pilot event for the Salpausselkä Bike Fest concept was organised in Hollola in May 2023. More than 20 companies and other actors interested in cycling tourism were involved in producing the event. The collaboration was multidisciplinary, as tourism companies, cycling clubs, outdoors associations, municipalities and regional tourism organisations participated in the event. Each actor had their own role in organising the event. The roles of the different parties involved in the event and the interfaces creating value for these actors are outlined in Image 2. The key producers of the pilot event included regional companies and associations, and the Päijät-Häme for Cycling Tourists project was responsible for the overarching coordination and marketing. From the participants' perspective, the most important outcomes of the event were experiences, and from the producers' perspective, visibility and collaboration. These interfaces affect how much interest different parties will have in organising the event at a later date, how the concept is expected to continue and evolve, and

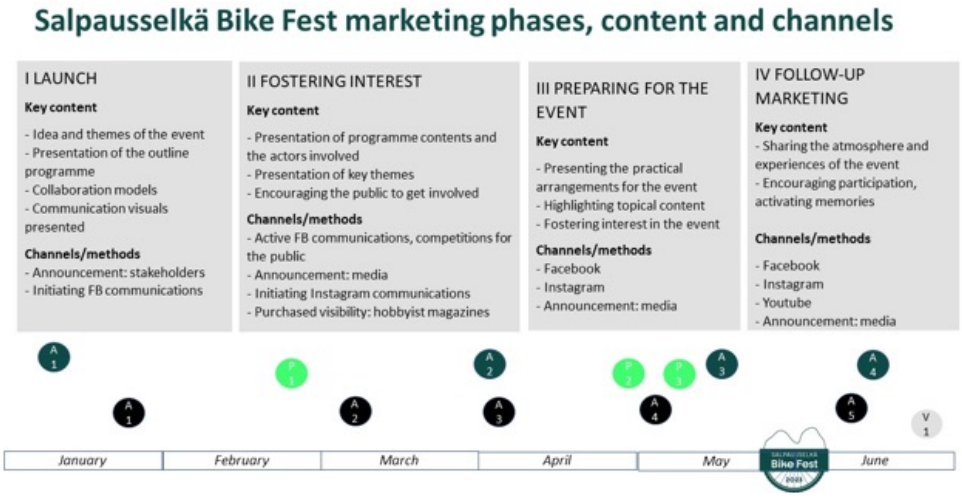

Image 3. The marketing stages of Salpausselkä Bike Fest and their focus areas. The diagram also shows individual bulletins (T), articles (A), videos (V) and purchased visibility (O). (Image: Päivi Tommola)

whether a new coordinator will be found after the project has ended.

Multi-channel approach and networks are key in marketing

The Päijät-Häme for Cycling Tourists project was responsible for the marketing of the Salpausselkä Bike Fest pilot event in cooperation with the parties involved in organising the event. In outlining the guidelines for social media marketing, the project was supported by a separate marketing plan, which was based on not only the marketing theory but also a survey on client needs. The marketing plan guided the practical planning of marketing using the stages of content definition, target group formation, roles definition and marketing (Veräväinen 2023). Social media marketing was launched in January 2023 on a Facebook page created for the event.

The role of social media in the marketing of the event was related to attracting interest in the new event and directing visitors to the event website salpausselkabikefest.com, where they could learn more about the event content and sign up. In addition to these channels, the event was also advertised in printed media. Some of the advertising was targeted at active cycling enthusiasts in Southern Finland, while some were targeted at local residents interested in cycling.

Salpausselkä Bike Fest's communication stages have highlighted various content packages. Communications were carried out through multiple channels, and the number of used channels increased as the event approached. In the launch phase, the key idea and themes of the event and the collaboration model were at the heart of communications. Then, the event moved onto fostering interest by presenting the programme and the actors involved in the production in more detail. In the final phases, when interest in the event was hopefully already at a good level, the communications focussed on presenting the event's practical arrangements.

In addition to verbal information, the marketing of Salpausselkä Bike Fest relied on the effectiveness of visual materials. The photo and video material produced during a photography road tour (Tommola 2022c) organised in Päijät-Häme in spring 2022 has played a major role in communications. Visual material was also utilised in the follow-up marketing of the event, which included the production of an event video.

Image 4. The participants visited Hankalan Pellavaloukku during the Salpausselkä Bike Fest pilot in May 2023. (Image: Kimmo Hirvonen)

Impacts on the Päijät-Häme region

The pilot event of Salpausselkä Bike Fest on 27 May 2023 was well received in the region, and approximately 300 people participated in the event. According to feedback collected in May 2023, the audience was particularly interested in longer bicycle tours and the cycling-related programme at the fair. They especially appreciated the fact that the productisation of the tours highlighted the region's nature and culture way more than in ordinary cycling events. We identified challenges in organising transport for a large number of cyclists and in defining the level of requirements for tours and making them match the interests of the public.

Overall, the impact of the event on the region is much more extensive than the financial yield it generates. The key benefits of the pilot event for cycling tourism in Päijät-Häme were highlighting the routes and services in its region, and the impact of new cooperation chains created by multidisciplinary collaboration. The marketing of the event was way more project-based than is the case with normal sports cycling events, and the event's visibility was also significantly improved by co-marketing through an extensive cooperation chain. In terms of collaboration, the significance of the event could be concretely observed as reinvigorated cooperation between sports clubs and tourism actors as well as between tourism companies operating in different sectors. From the perspective of regional tourism actors, such as municipalities and Salpausselkä Geopark, the event gave additional positive visibility to one of the trending themes of tourism. Overall, one benefit of the event must be the fact that it promoted local recreation that produces well-being and improves the perceived comfort of the living environment. Both of these factors have been found to promote people's health and well-being (Stakes 2023).

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Päivi Tommola & Kati Peltonen

The role of project activities in the establishment and development of Salpausselkä Geopark

The development of nature tourism is one of the spearheads of tourism development in Finland. For this reason, the development of nature tourism and nature-based well-being services is also one of the key RDI themes of the Well-being Service Innovations research area in LAB University of Applied Sciences. Nature tourism is a broad entity that refers to tourism whose attractiveness and activities are based on the natural environment and the activities carried out there (Hemmi 2005). The appeal of nature tourism in Finland is based on the fact that we have many natural and untamed areas where it is easy to walk and engage in hobbies (Tyrväinen et al. 2018). However, the natural environment alone is not enough, as the development of nature tourism and recreational services is intrinsically linked to the development of the service offering of nature tourism and programme service companies.

Geotourism is a rising trend in nature tourism. Geoparks are popular tourist destinations among both domestic and international tourists. Geoparks are homogeneous geographical areas containing internationally valuable geological heritage. Their key objectives include preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the area, strengthening local identity and engaging in sustainable economic activities. Upon separate application, a Geopark area may be granted an official UNESCO Global Geopark status by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), provided that the area meets strict

criteria related to geological heritage, visibility, administrative organisation and networking. The global network of official UGG sites currently comprises a total of 177 sites in 46 countries (UNESCO 2023a).

Salpausselkä Geopark, consisting of six municipalities in Päijät-Häme (Asikkala, Heinola, Hollola, Lahti, Padasjoki, Sysmä), received official UNESCO Glogal Geopark status as the fourth Finnish region in April 2022 (Lahti Region 2022). The application process was finalised by the new administration unit of Salpausselkä Geopark within Lahti Region, but it originated from project activities, and the pursuit of status was based on extensive regional cooperation, in which the municipalities, companies, associations and other cooperation actors in the area each played an important role. Although the responsibility for the development of the area has now been transferred to its official administrative unit, the geopark theme is also strongly visible in the activities of many other developers in the area. This article examines, especially from the perspective of project-driven development, the current state of development in the area and the steps that led to the official UGG status of the Salpausselkä Geopark area in 2016-2022.

The continuum of project activities led to the launch of the application process

In the phase preceding the UGG application process, the Salpausselkä Geopark cooperation was implemented in three separate development projects carried out in cooperation between LAB University of Applied Sciences (before 2020: Lahti University of Applied Sciences), Geological Survey of Finland and Metsähallitus. In addition to these organisations, several municipalities in the region and more than 100 other cooperation actors participated in the implementation. In the early stages of the operation, when the boundaries of the future geopark area were still being mapped, the cooperation also involved actors from the Uusimaa and Kymenlaakso regions (Räsänen 2018, Komulainen 2019, Tommola 2020). As a whole, the group of actors grew all the time, but as the process progressed, the roles of the different parties became clearer.

Due to the demanding and laborious nature of UNESCO's application process, the project activities were launched by familiarising themselves with the theme in general. The key results of the first Salpausselkä Geopark-themed project were familiarisation with the requirements and opportunities of

Image 1. The main theme of Salpausselkä UNESCO Global Geopark, consisting of six municipalities in Päijät-Häme, is the landscape created by water. The kettle ponds of Päijänne illustrate this theme in an excellent way. (Image: Johannes Sipponen)

UNESCO Geopark activities, clarification of the intent of the actors in the area and mapping the geology of Salpausselkä Geopark as desk work (Räsänen 2018, Kananoja 2018). Once a common vision and vision had been created, the company proceeded by gathering detailed scientific information on the geological sites and natural values of the area, strengthening cooperation networks, and building a model for the administration of the area in accordance with UNESCO's requirements and a management unit implementing it. At this point, the story of the area began to take shape, around which the marketing of Salpausselkä Geopark would later be built (Komulainen 2019).

In the final phase of the project activities, before the official application process was launched, the focus was on developing the visibility of the area, and the development project of LAB University of Applied Sciences and the Geological Survey of Finland focused on developing communication materials in the area and popularising and visualising scientific information. This phase was carried out in cooperation with the official administrative unit of the region, while also providing background support for the UGG application process (Tommola 2020).

Nationwide cooperation and sustainable tourism

The decision to grant Salpausselkä Geopark official status in April 2022 marked the end of a long preparation process, but the development work in

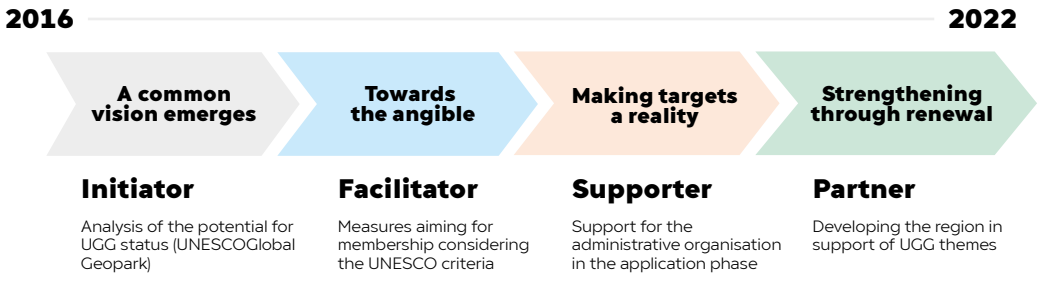

Image 2. The changing roles and themes of project activities during the early stages of the establishment and development of Salpausselkä Geopark. (Image: Päivi Tommola)

Image 3. Cycling tourism is one of the development themes in which Salpausselkä Geopark has been utilised as a development platform. (Image: Päijät-Häme for cyclist tourists project)

the area was still only just beginning. This is ensured not only by the desire for innovation arising from within the region, but also by the fact that UNESCO requires continuous development of its sites and the reassessment of Global Geopark status is carried out every four years (UNESCO 2023b). From this point of view, project-based development work in the area has continued and taken on new forms after UNESCO's decision. UGG status has increased the visibility of the region and strengthened cooperation. In corporate cooperation, Salpausselkä Geopark has adopted the official co-operation entrepreneur status (Visit Lahti 2023a).

After the status was granted, project-based development in the area has focused on, for example, the development of sustainable tourism,

national cooperation between geoparks and theme-based development, which will be the key contents of geopark activities. A roadmap for sustainable tourism is currently underway in cooperation between LAB University of Applied Sciences and the Lahti Region, which supports the implementation of the national Sustainable Travel Finland programme in the region (LAB 2023a).

In addition to Salpausselkä Geopark, there are also three other official UGG areas in Finland; Rokua (UGG since 2010), Lauhanvuori-Hämeenkangas (2020) and Saimaa (2021) as well as Kraatterijärvi Geopark, which has not yet been granted status. As a whole, the theme of geoparks and geopark activities are still relatively poorly known in Finland, but cooperation between the regions seeks synergy in the development of geotourism at the national level. In this theme, LAB University of Applied Sciences plays a prominent role as the administrator of a national development project (Tommola 2022a).

Theme-based development supporting geopark content

The official UGG status application process requires multidisciplinary familiarisation and content production, combining know-how on the geology and natural values of the area with the perspectives of sustainable development and education. For Salpausselkä Geopark, the application process succeeded in creating a good knowledge base on geotourism for operators in Päijät-Häme (Tommola 2021). During this process, a few development needs supporting the Geopark theme were identified, which excellently support the development of geopark activities in the new UGG area. On this basis, the Salpausselkä Geopark area has recently launched the development of tourism content that utilises the attractiveness of nature and cultural heritage and the development of cycling tourism (LAB 2023b, Tommola 2022b). In these projects, Salpausselkä Geopark is present as a development platform that brings both content and visibility to development. For example, the Päijät-Häme for Cycling Tourists project, which aims to develop cycling tourism, has developed a regional theme day, the contents of which are built around the Salpausselkä Geopark theme and attraction sites.

Impressiveness and long-term results

As a whole, Salpausselkä Geopark's project-based development work, which has lasted from 2017 to the present day, has been a continuum that adapts according to current needs, utilising previous results and constantly growing its networks. The project continuum

related to the construction and further development of Salpausselkä Geopark is an example of how systematic project-based development work produces impressive results. Above all, impact is created as a result of cooperation between different actors. The municipalities, development organisations, companies and other communities involved in the development work have each contributed to the it. The keys to success have been faith in a common vision, commitment to long-term development, openness and the ability to engage in constructive cooperation. The fact that the development work has been coordinated and systematic has also played a role. The role of the financier as an enabler of development work and as one of the guides of operations has also been significant.

Changes in the operating environment have not significantly prevented or slowed down co-creation. During this continuum, the tourism sector in the Salpausselkä Geopark area has undergone major changes in demand related to, for example, the Covid-19 pandemic and the effects of the war in Ukraine, but even taking these changes into account, the development process of Salpausselkä Geopark has come at an opportune time, when nature tourism and sustainable local tourism have been associated with many development needs. The long development work of Salpausselkä Geopark has contributed to the implementation of strategies made in the area, such as the Päijät-Häme roadmap for sports, experiences and well-being (LAB 2022), the Päijät-Häme event and tourism strategy (Visit Lahti 2025) and the national Sustainable Travel Finland programme (Visit Finland 2023b).

The short-term effects can already be seen, for example, in the growth of the Salpausselkä Geopark business network and the increasing importance of the Geopark as an attraction factor for tourism in the area. For the time being, Salpausselkä Geopark's beginnings as an official UNESCO Global Geopark area are bright. Although at the beginning of the process it was envisioned that the status would have a major positive impact on international tourism, it has not yet been seen in the region, which is partly explained by the current global political situation and the pandemic. Developing international visibility and serving tourists from different cultural and linguistic areas are among Salpausselkä Geopark's future challenges, and the region's strong international geopark cooperation networks provide good prerequisites for responding to them. The long-term effects can only be assessed after several years.

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PART II

Data and Technology for well-being

Annamaija Id-Korhonen & Hannele Tiittanen

Digital competence for social welfare and health care environments through service design

Finland has been ambitious in the development of digital solutions, and the strategic goal is to become a pioneer in the utilisation of digitalisation and technological solutions. Finland's strategic goals for the digital future by 2030 have been divided into four key areas:

- digital competence,
- digital infrastructure, the data economy of companies,
- advanced digital technology
- digital public administration.

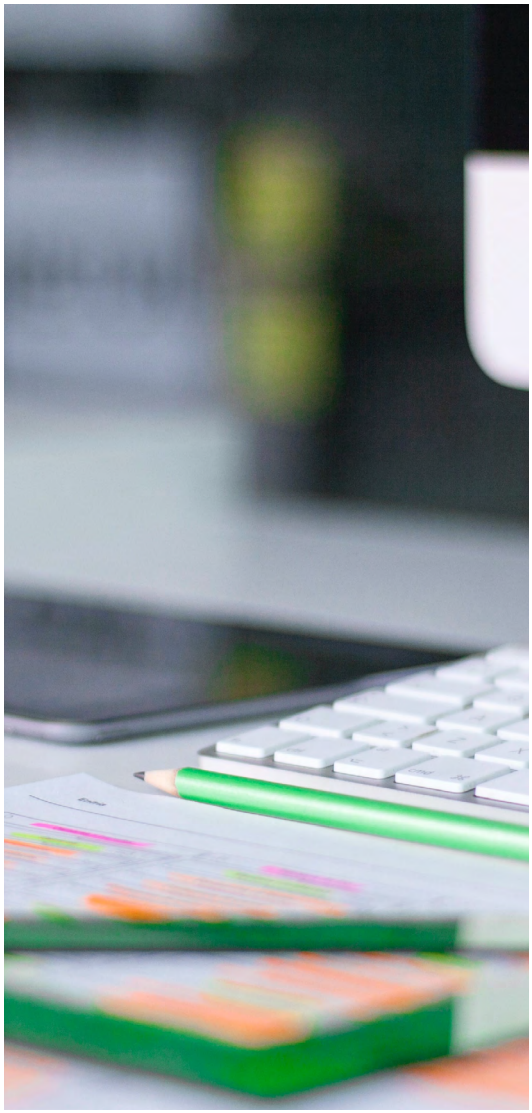
For example, efforts have been made to promote the primacy of digital services and communications in public administration services through various spearhead projects. (Saarijärvi et al. 2023; Finnish Government 2022; Finnish Government 2019.)

In the area of public services, digital health care in particular has developed rapidly. Digital health covers a wide range of technologies from wearable sensors and data devices measuring personal health and well-being to different remote healthcare services. The number of new innovations will also rapidly increase as artificial intelligence develops. (Vähäkainu & Neittaanmäki 2018.) One important goal related to the rapidly developing digital services is to ensure the availability and accessibility of services for different population groups. For the social and health centres of the future, the key objective of the programme is to improve the equal availability, timeliness and continuity of services as well as the quality and effectiveness of services. Another aim

is to ensure the multidisciplinary nature and interoperability of services. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2020.)

Finland was ranked first in a European comparison of public administrations' digital services. Finns actively use official services via the Internet. More than 90 per cent of the network's users actively utilise digital administration services when using services. Finland is also on the first place in the use of digital health services in the comparison – nearly 50 percent of Finns have used digital health and care services. This is more than twice the EU average. (European Commission 2019.)

Although Finns are active users of digital services, digital services can also promote inequality. Many may not have access to the Internet or know how to use digital services, especially older people, immigrants and those with visual impairments. The need for support among the population remains high, even though digital skills are generally at a good level in Finland. (Kyytsönen et al. 2021.) The competence of social welfare and health care staff should also be improved by providing sufficient training to meet the challenges posed by the digitalisation of work. Future competence needs at workplaces are related to, for example, competence in utilising digital



solutions, competence in applying digital tools, digital communications competence, and the ability to develop digital content (EDUFI 2019).

Multidisciplinary Competencies in Developing Digital Health and Social Care Services (Monialainen osaaminen sosiaali- ja terveysalan digitalisaation kehittämisessä) specialisation education implemented under the national UUDO project aims to respond to the rapidly developing challenges posed by digital services in the social and health care sector and make them as client-oriented, accessible and high-quality as possible. At the same time, the project supports the Finnish Government's objectives related to the digitalisation of public administration and the objectives of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health's Future Health and Social Services Centres Programme (Finnish Government 2022; Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2020).

Specialisation education meets the needs of employers

The aim is to respond to employers' current needs through specialisation education offered alongside higher education institutions' degree programmes. This education is intended for currently employed professionals for whom the training provides a flexible opportunity to develop their expertise. The education provides tools for developing professional practices in one's field by applying research data and acting as an expert in one's field in different networks. Specialisation education is typically implemented in cooperation between universities of applied sciences. (Kallunki & Seppälä 2016.)

Multidisciplinary Competencies in Developing Digital Health and Social Care Services (30 cr) is a jointly implemented package provided by 14 universities of applied sciences. The education has been organised twice in a row in all these universities of applied sciences around Finland, offering nearly 250 social and health care professionals the opportunity to improve their digital competence.

Professionals who have participated in specialisation training have cultivated expertise in developing the digital ecosystem of social and health care services and the related knowledge base. In addition, they have developed expertise in the management of service design competence in multidisciplinary activities. After completing the

specialisation education, the student should be able to act as an expert in demanding planning and development tasks related to the development and production of multidisciplinary digital health and social care services.

The specialisation education consisted of four modules. In the **Expert of Electronic Services and Information Management in Social Health and Social Care Services module** (10 cr), the students familiarised themselves with client-oriented social welfare and health care service competences in an electronic environment, online interactions, and ethical competence. The module also focussed on issues related to information management and knowledge management in the social and health care sector. The service design process and various service design tools were reviewed in the **Service Design module** (5 cr). The students then used service design and the relevant tools in the **Workplace-oriented Development Task exercise** (10 cr). Additionally, the development tasks required practical problem-solving skills and the ability to act in multidisciplinary networks and development groups. In addition to these, the students were required to complete 5 cr worth of elective studies. Elective studies helped them deepen their personal digital services competence.

The specialisation education was implemented entirely online, which enabled professionals to participate in a flexible manner while working. When it comes to sharing knowledge and competence, the education also included common online meeting days, during which the participants were able to ask questions and discuss the current topic. Additionally, the participants exchanged ideas online in the forums and gained understanding and insights into the topics. The online implementation allowed for teamwork between students living in different parts of the country. This also enabled nationwide seminar work. This allowed students to familiarise themselves with the development of digital social welfare and health care in different parts of Finland.

Client orientation at the core of service design

The goal of the specialisation education's development task was to respond to genuine development needs arising from the world of work, related to the development of digital solutions in organisations. The development task

required the use of the service design process and working methods. Service design refers to the planning of services in a client-oriented manner, drawing on the client's service experiences and wishes. The starting point for service design is either improving an existing service or developing an entirely new service, with the aim of improving the usability and ease of use of services. Service design makes versatile use of inclusive tools, and development proceeds according to the service design process. Service design helps to develop the quality of the organisation's operations and produce added value for the client. (Alhonen & Iloranta 2021; Design Council)

The project's actors asked social welfare and health care organisations to provide development challenges related to the digitalisation of social welfare and health care organisations in a centralised manner. Representatives of each university of applied sciences also requested them from their regional social welfare and health care organisations. The topics of the development tasks were formulated based on these challenges. We received many topics, and each student group was able to solve a real workplace challenge and thus become an asset to social welfare and health care organisations in the development of digitalisation. The teachers assessed the suitability of the development challenges for the service design process, and the topics were assigned to student groups. These student groups were multidisciplinary, which lead to very broad-based development work. The instructions for the development task were given jointly and simultaneously to all students. In addition to this, each student group had a development task supervisor from their home institution. The supervisor guided the students' actual work. Seminars on the development tasks were organised in cooperation between

Image 1. Stages of the service design process. (Alhonen & Iloranta 2021, modified by Anna-Maija Id-Korhonen & Hannele Tiittanen)

two universities of applied sciences. This means that the students received comments on their development task from at least two guidance teachers and peers from another part of Finland.

The development task followed all the stages of the service design process: creating client understanding, creating concepts, prototyping/ piloting and assessing (Image 1). During the development task, multi-actor cooperation was carried out with citizens and the public, the private and/or the third sector.

At the understanding stage of the service design process, the aim is to understand the operating environment, its operating methods and the organisational culture. This includes the organisation's values, vision and strategy sector, the situation and future outlook, as well as services and information about the target audience of the services. (Tuulaniemi 2011.) Information is collected in different forms through client surveys, and a thorough interpretation of this information forms the basis for client understanding. The students worked in multidisciplinary groups of 3–4 people during the development process. They first started mapping out the experiences of service users and seeking an understanding of the service and its context, taking the needs and views of different parties into account. For example, the students interviewed and/or observed service clients, employees or patient organisations' experts or experts by experience. Utilisation of service design tools such as an empathy map and a description of the client's service path guided the achievement of client understanding and user-oriented thinking.

Students continued to develop the service until the concept creation and prototyping stages, creating client- and user-friendly digital services through this creative and experimental process. The processes build client understanding using different methods and strongly involve clients throughout the development

process. Concept drafts are created during the concept creation stage on the basis of the information collected at the understanding stage. Prototypes are used to concretise, describe, test and develop a concept created together with actors or users. A prototype is a preliminary trial version of the developed service. Different trials were already assessed during the development task's development process. It was also important to consider and utilise existing evidence-based information on the selected development target in the development task process.

Benefits and impact on social and health care services' operating environments

The development tasks were carried out during the implementation of two specialisation education programmes in 2022 and 2023. We realised a total of 70 tasks fulfilling employers' needs. The development tasks created benefits and impact on different operating environments of the social and health care sector across Finland.

As a result of the development tasks carried out in social and health care organisations, we created a wide range of solutions that responded directly to the needs arising from workplaces. The development tasks made it possible to produce entirely new client-oriented service concepts and to make existing services more client-oriented. The tasks also introduced new ways of producing services or their parts for different operating environments in the social and health care sector. The development tasks also resulted in business ideas that could be tested during the service design process. All development tasks were presented as posters at the seminar. We developed digital communications, interaction and services, electronic meeting places, client paths and client surveys for social welfare and health care service clients during these development tasks. We also developed electronic treatment paths, processes for implementing digital methods, remote appointments and electronic platforms for staff to support daily teamwork or management.

The development task posters were presented to students from all 14 universities of applied sciences at the final seminar. This allowed us to inform all professionals participating in the specialisation education. This way, they could disseminate information in different parts of Finland. In addition to the posters, an article was also written on some of the development projects. This increases the visibility and impact of the implemented development tasks. The specialisation education and the related

development task produced extensive expertise in digital services for social welfare and health care organisations. Such expertise is urgently needed in well-being services counties. Professionals can utilise the models and methods of multi-actor development cooperation after completing the specialisation education. When seeking solutions to workplace challenges, professionals can apply the client-oriented service design process and its working methods to creating client understanding, concept creation, prototyping, piloting, and assessment. The development process improved the participants' capabilities for guiding and updating the operations of their work community and the organisation of work, and for applying researched information in the development of operations. The attained development competence combined with digital service competence is competence capital for organisations. It also helps us meet the national objectives for digitalisation. According to student feedback, group work was rewarding and supported the application of the service design process in the development task. Using the service design process described on the digital platform also supported the implementation of the development task process. In the future, we should pay attention to the students' instructions and the uniform quality of guidance and study units when organising this specialisation education.

Social and health centres to be created in well-being services counties should offer smoother client-oriented digital services and better data transfer as well as be able to utilise a smooth cooperation of multiprofessional teams. Mobile self-care services and various digital services will be a significant part of the social and health centre of the future. Digitalisation will improve people's self-care capabilities and the opportunity to carry out preventive work. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2020.) Developing social and health care staff's competence is an essential part of achieving these objectives and justifies the provision of the Multidisciplinary Competencies in Developing Digital Health and Social Care Services specialisation education in the future as well.

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PART III

Social inclusion, working life and safety in everyday life

Jaana Ahl & Mari Lehtonen

Developing the competence of professionals as the organisation's success factor

Learning is a key human process. It takes place not only when you study at school, for example, but throughout your life. What people learn depends largely on their interests and how they interpret their observations. According to this definition, the learning process is both an individual event and an entity combining different social dimensions. (Soini et al. 2003, 285.)

The existence of universities of applied sciences is based on the creation, dissemination and application of new information. The ability to integrate these skills into the operations of work organisations guarantees a successful change (Ahokallio-Leppälä 2016, 104–105). The whole of competence development can be examined from different perspectives. This article focusses on the competence development of employed professionals as part of the LAB SoteCampus operating model. LAB SoteCampus (LAB University of Applied Sciences 2023a) is a co-creative operating model by the South Karelia Well-being Services County and LAB University of Applied Sciences, the work of which is guided by three pre-defined focus areas. They include strengthening and utilising the adoption of technology and digitalisation, strengthening management skills and work development skills, and improving knowledge management and the utilisation of knowledge. Competence development encompasses all our focus areas.

Universities of applied sciences (UAS) offer workplace-oriented education and training that is very practical compared to university studies. UAS studies include a great deal of practical training and project studies with employers. LAB's versatile employer connections ensure good employment opportunities for its graduates (LAB University of Applied Sciences 2023b). Today's vocational education and training is competence-

based. It means that during their studies, students develop their vocational competence in close cooperation with employers and society, and the vocational institution provides them with support and guidance (Paaso & Maunu 2022, 42). In other words, teaching at different levels of education is based on close development with employers and, consequently, continuous improvement of competence according to employers' needs. Today's teaching is a springboard to employment because the student understands that work involves continuous learning and commitment to learning new things in our ever-changing society.

Competence management as a key to success

Competence management is a diverse and multidimensional concept. In her doctoral dissertation, Ahokallio-Leppälä (2016, 42-44, 52) examines competence management from the perspective of the organisation's strategic thinking, where staff is seen as a resource along with machines and equipment. On the other hand, she also examines competence management from the perspective of the individual, in which case it often focuses on the development of staff's competence, i.e., nurturing, developing and updating competence. However, competence management is a broad concept, and one way of thinking should not exclude another. Competence management can also be considered a strategic choice when management is competence oriented. In this case, the importance of human factors and the people working in the organisation is emphasised as a key to success, and human resources are seen as a dynamic entity that can be updated and developed.

Successful competence management requires an organisational culture based on the individual's freedom and self-direction, all while ensuring the reconciliation of different expectations and uniform interpretations. One of the supervisor's tasks is to define and develop the areas and contents of competence that the organisation needs to succeed. From the point of view of promoting learning, the atmosphere in the work community is important, as are the structures and models created by the supervisor through their own actions to ensure that the work community engages in discussion that promotes learning and promotes awareness that supports learning. (Ahokallio-Leppälä 2016, 44, 52.)

LAB SoteCampus Methods to Support Competence Development

Improving work community's competence

- Exploring workcommunity workshop model,
- Goal oriented job rotation model

Improving professional's competence

- Successful interaction in client encounters online course
- Knowledge management is for everybody

Improving competence to support supervisory work

- Management training series for supervisors
- Mentoring model for supervisors
- Knowledge management network meetings and webinars

Image 1. LAB SoteCampus' methods to support competence development. (Image: Mari Lehtonen & Jaana Ahl)

Peter Senge has coined the concept of a learning organisation that consists of four basic concepts: personal mastery, mental models, shared vision and team learning. In other words, a learning organisation combines the individual's ability to commit to lifelong learning, deeply rooted generalisations of our worldview, the link between individuals through a shared vision, and the team's ability to learn more together than as individuals. To combine all of these, we need systems thinking (Senge 1990). LAB SoteCampus's methods support our learning organisation by developing the competence of the work community, supervisors and employees.

Improving a work community's competence

Exploring the work community

The concept of a learning organisation recognises the need for individual-level learning so that community-level learning can take place through high-quality interaction within the work community. On one hand, there is a need for visions and goals defined by management, and on the other, the organisation needs to support individuals' learning processes. A group of learners alone is not a learning organisation. Instead, a broader communal culture with different learning methods and opportunities is needed. (Soini et al. 2003, 283-284.)

The Tutkimusmatka työyhteisössä (Exploring the work community) method developed by LAB SoteCampus contains elements of a learning organisation. It is based on an idea similar to Senge's idea, that a common goal and vision bring individuals together and that the team's ability is more than the sum of individual talents. The method is used to advance systems thinking and the management of the work community.

Exploring the work community begins at the baseline defined by the work community's need. In practice, it can support development and learning in many types of situations. The baseline may be, for example, a work community facing a crisis for one reason or another, creating a new team or supporting the implementation of the strategy. Regardless of the starting points, the method guides both supervisors and staff towards solutions according to the stages of the client process. Supervisors and staff work on the same themes in parallel workshops. The leaders pass the identified challenges and solutions anonymously between the workshops. Solutions are developed using the methods of creative problem-solving, and this often yields many solutions.

The task of the experts leading the workshops is to help the members of the work community find and identify the solutions that will achieve the key results in terms of the needs and objectives of the work community.

In one example case, three key solutions were identified for developing the work community's operations. The work community decided to reorganise in a way that the competence of professionals was better aligned with the tasks that correspond to their competence. The work community also created an organised model for sharing and developing competence, which gave all employees the same opportunity to learn both as individuals and through social interaction. Developing cross-cutting competence in the work community allowed them to improve the entire community's competence and capabilities. The third key solution was the identification of enhanced meeting practices, which were defined and recreated in a more systematic format with the help of experts.

Goal-oriented work rotation model

Work rotation is a method used to secure competence and sufficient professional skills in an organisation. In work rotation, the employee can either temporarily work in another position, or two persons can change positions for a predetermined period (Hankonen 2015). The goal-oriented work rotation model developed by LAB SoteCampus is based on the latter of the alternatives described by Hankonen. Work rotation is possible whenever there is a person suitable for changing positions in the target unit: a counterpart. In other words, professionals exchange workstations for a predetermined period. Six months can be considered a typical work rotation period.

The idea of developing professional competence within an organisation enables work rotation. The goals of the work rotation period are defined together with the supervisor to meet both the individual's and the work community's competence needs. The counterpart model ensures that work rotation does not increase the shortage of personnel typical of the social welfare and health care sector in units where the situation is already challenging. On the other hand, the opportunity to partake in work rotation may improve retention, as employees may take on varying tasks within their organisation.

Improving competence to support supervisory work

Management training series for supervisors

Management helps and encourages individuals to utilise their competence to achieve the organisation's objectives (Ahokallio-Leppälä 2016, 104–105). In other words, successful competence management as well as other areas of management require not only personal characteristics but also competence that can be acquired by various means. LAB SoteCampus has had the opportunity to support supervisory work and competence using both traditional methods, such as coaching, and new, innovative methods.

One LAB SoteCampus's traditional methods for improving competence was a management training series consisting of different themes. The coaching programmes addressed management from the perspectives of empathy, trust, innovation and development, focussing on knowledge management and economic and efficiency thinking. Instead of focusing on the client, all coaching programmes adopted a person-centred approach, even if they were based on demanding performance targets. The structure of the coaching programmes was influenced by a coaching approach to management identified as important to both organisations. The coaching programmes have helped supervisors to gain a deeper understanding of their team's activities and to understand individual experiences and needs related to the change process, for example.

Although the coaching programmes were aimed at a large target audience, they have included many concrete tools that can be applied to different operating environments. However, all tools require input from the supervisors in order to work. To ensure that the contents of the coaching programmes would evolve into effective actions for managing everyday life instead of just rhetoric, the coaching included sections in which supervisors shared their experiences and views on the practical implementation of tools. Including different participatory methods in the coaching programmes aims to promote interactive and communal learning. In the LAB SoteCampus operating model, this can also be done across organisational boundaries.

Mentoring model for supervisors

In addition to management coaching, LAB SoteCampus supports supervisory work with a new mentoring model. The model is a goal-oriented method that supports competence and well-being at work, carried out between two equal

supervisors. In other words, this new type of mentoring does not involve the traditional mentor-mentee model; instead, two experts already working as supervisors share their experiences and views with each other as equal partners.

Modern mentoring involves supporting growth, dialogue and creating something new (Kupias & Salo 2021), and its purpose is to support lifelong learning, or the person's ability to learn and develop throughout their life as part of the workforce and different communities (Virtanen et al. 2015). The mentoring model created by LAB SoteCampus begins with week-long intensive periods. Objectives derived from the organisation's strategy have been set for these periods, and the supervisors will also prepare personal goals that support their own competence. The partners will monitor the achievement of the goals on a daily basis and simultaneously assess the situation. They have access to expert support throughout the process. The aim is for the partners to continue their bilateral mentoring at suitable intervals also after the intensive period, achieving collegiality and continuous support at work.

The mentoring pilot yielded positive results. The partners felt that mentoring improved their well-being at work, increased their competence and helped them distribute the ethical burden caused by their work. These factors have an impact on the staff's permanence and commitment; from the perspective of supervisor retention, the mentoring model creates long-term impact when it works.

Knowledge management network and webinars

The idea for a shared knowledge management network for professionals in the LAB University of Applied Sciences and the South Karelia Well-being Services County arose in connection with management coaching on knowledge management. The aim was to create a light and informative knowledge management network that would meet the participants' knowledge needs. The aim of the network is to improve competence in knowledge management both at the level of supervisors and employees and to implement areas of both organisations' knowledge management strategies or action plans in a cross-cutting manner throughout the organisations. Another aim is to find more development targets related to knowledge management in both organisations and to respond to their competence needs. The basic idea is to provide new information without adding more stress to supervisors' and experts' hectic everyday work. The members of the network can influence the topics, and

there has always been plenty of time for joint discussion in the meetings. Thus, the network based on sharing information is also interactive and participatory, even though its function is mainly informative.

The Finnish Government's Network Management Manual (2019) mentions phenomena as one of the drivers of change in networks. Instead of traditional hierarchies, phenomena require dynamic organisation and a more comprehensive approach. (Prime Minister's Office 2019, 11.) In addition to the knowledge management network, LAB SoteCampus has organised webinars for knowledge management and structural social work for professionals in Southeast Finland in cooperation with the Center of Expertise on Social Welfare in South-East Finland, Socom. The latest event was organised with a multiprofessional approach from a phenomenon-based perspective, including megatrends and a business perspective.

Improving professionals' competence

The Onnistunut vuorovaikutus asiakaskohtaamisessa online course

Client orientation and interaction are key starting points in the development of social welfare and health care services. According to Talentia's Ethical guidelines for social welfare professionals, client orientation refers to listening to clients, respecting their right to self-determination and taking their individual situation into consideration. The client-oriented client process starts with the needs expressed by the client (Talentia 2022, 15.) Adopting a client-oriented approach does not mean that the client themselves would define their service needs. Instead, it involves cooperation and dialogue with a health care and social services professional. According to Kivistö et al. (2020, 268), client orientation at the organisational level may involve commitment to transparent processes that are as quick as possible and providing employees with resources and tools to create and maintain client relationships.

Client orientation also served as a framework for LAB SoteCampus's Onnistunut vuorovaikutus asiakaskohtaamisessa (Successful interaction in client encounters) online course intended for all staff in the South Karelia Well-being Services County. During the course, a social and patient ombudsman and an expert by experience explained some interactive situations you may encounter when working with clients and the related challenges. The wellbeing services county had wished that the course would take the special features of South Karelia into consideration. A local amateur theatre group acted out three different client encounters that

were not bound to a certain service but included some generic elements related to working with clients. The experts responsible for the content of the course were a lecturer in social services and an expert in service design. This helped us include pedagogical perspectives on both the substance of the social welfare and health care sector and the design of learning experiences in the course structure. The course was piloted in two units of the wellbeing services county at the end of 2022. The pilots received good feedback on its diverse approach to interactive situations, course assignments and videos.

The goal of the Onnistunut vuorovaikutus asiakaskohtaamisessa online course is to improve all employees' interaction skills regardless of the service. In social and health care services, the client experience can be influenced by successful, daily interaction, and the benefits of improving interaction skills can be measured, for example, by means of client feedback, the number of complaints related to the treatment of clients, and subjective assessment of how the professionals' competence has improved. Successful interaction can influence not only the client's but also the employee's experience and, consequently, their well-being at work.

Knowledge management is for everyone

The modern Finnish society is highly knowledge-intensive, and this has created the need to understand knowledge and its special features, especially from the perspective of management (Jalonen et al. 2012, 139). However, knowledge management is a broad concept, and it is understood differently in different organisations and even within organisations. Knowledge management has only become a management strategy in recent years, especially in public social and health care services. Improving knowledge management is important because the trends in the social and health care sector focus on client orientation, smooth service packages and responsibility for customer packages (Leskelä et al. 2019, 12). To enable these trends, understanding of knowledge management must be increased at all levels of the organisation, and we need to create a culture where knowledge management is for everyone.

LAB SoteCampus has produced an online course on knowledge management for the staff of the South Karelia Wellbeing Services County and LAB to explain the concept of knowledge management and to help them gain a comprehensive understanding of knowledge management. The aim of

the online course is to make knowledge management accessible to everyone, i.e., to help the learner understand the role of the individual in knowledge management. The course increases their understanding of knowledge, knowledge management and the utilisation of knowledge. Since the course helps them understand the significance of produced data, such as daily recording as part of a larger entity, it also motivates the learners to produce high-quality data to enable the above-mentioned trends. This also enables knowledge-based everyday work and development of work.

Knowledge management is based on the idea that the organisation has clear goals and identifies what decisions need to be made and who makes them. This way, it is possible to create a knowledge management strategy and relevant practices to support management and decision-making (Leskelä et al. 2019, 16). Based on this view, the next step in developing knowledge management skills in the wellbeing services county and LAB should be to clarify the goals of the individual and the community at all levels of the organisation, depending on the organisation's structure. This would help staff form a more concrete idea of their role in the organisation and create a tangible link with practice. Goal-oriented action requires sufficient understanding and knowledge of the prerequisites and opportunities for achieving the objectives. Jalonen et al. (2012, 140) state that, in addition to future-oriented thinking, knowledge management is particularly focussed on knowledge that helps individuals and organisations complete their current task.

Competence development supports the implementation of the strategy

The above-mentioned LAB SoteCampus measures can be used to improve and develop the competence of the staff, supervisors and the entire work community. Competence development benefits and affects not only the target professional or group, but also the entire organisation and its clients. The special benefits of improving competence can also be seen in the implementation of the organisation's strategy. However, this requires work and, as mentioned earlier in this article, management must also be competence-oriented and involve strategic action.

The wellbeing services county's strategy must take human resources policy into account. Different programmes and plans to be implemented by the wellbeing service county are also derived from the strategy, one of which is the

personnel programme. According to section 11 of the act on organising health and social services (612/2021), wellbeing services counties must draw up a service strategy as part of their wellbeing services county strategy to plan and manage its finances and operations (Laki sosiaali- ja terveydenhuollon järjestämisestä (612/2021) Section 11). The South Karelia Wellbeing Services County has made investing in staff one of its three strategic spearheads (Etelä-Karjalan hyvinvointialue 2023b, 4). The challenges with attracting and retaining staff in the wellbeing services sector have also been identified in the South Karelia Wellbeing Services County's service strategy (Etelä-Karjalan hyvinvointialue 2023b, 3–4). LAB's work community development plan is also based on the strategy. The expansion of professional competence is considered one of the attractions of LAB.

As a common operating model for these two organisations, LAB SoteCampus can support the implementation of both strategies and any plans derived from them. Employers investing in their staff's competence and professional development safeguard their competitive advantage and positive employer image. It is a great way of making the organisation more attractive and improving employee retention. Investing in the staff's competence will benefit the employer both in the present and in the long term. It is also a strategic choice.

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Mariia Baliasina, Marja Kiijärvi-Pihkala, Virve Pirttikoski & Iuliia Polyanovska

Solutions for the employment of highly educated people with an immigrant background in the Päijät-Häme region

Solutions to the skills gap require education and labour immigration, as the population is ageing, and the birth rate is falling (OKM 2019). Yet, university graduates with immigrant backgrounds experience more employment difficulties compared to Finnish graduates in the Päijät-Häme region (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment 2021). Reasons include language barriers and exclusion experiences (Suomalainen et al. 2019, 32-39). Päijät-Häme still requires improvement in the international experts' inclusion in the work communities. The retention of graduated international degree students remains crucial, and with the targeted support, up to 90% of the students would stay in our country to work (Saari et al. 2020, 91-93).

We investigated the experiences of highly educated people with immigrant backgrounds in finding employment in Finland. The data consisted of seven individual interviews. The data identified a need for development in strengthening practices for skills recognition, developing Finnish language and professional skills, and increasing networking opportunities. The interviewees also suggested the services' development; for example, they hoped for more information about Finnish working practices and opportunities to use the language in different situations. (Baliasina et al. 2022.)

The Lahden OSKE LAB project (2021-2023), funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture, strengthens the viability and competence recurrence of the region by supporting highly educated immigrants. Alongside university graduates, those interested in higher education and immigrants currently studying in higher education benefit from the project's services (LAB 2023). The project's measures have involved 529 people with an immigrant background. The Lahden OSKE LAB project has provided personal and group counselling, training in job search and study skills, a digital test for skills assessment, and job mentoring to support the education and employment pathways to serve the needs of the target group in the best possible way.

Identification of competencies is the starting point

Identification of competencies is the process where individuals first notice their competence, then learn to verbalise it, and finally get to make their competence visible (OKM 2022). Identification is essential for higher education graduates with an immigrant background to qualify for their profession, find employment or continue their studies in Finland (Autero et al. 2020, 123). The Ministry of Education and Culture proposes that skills recognition should be a civic skill for everyone (OKM 2022). All skills are acknowledged to be valuable and acquired in many different ways. The individual initiative plays a leading role; thus, it should be encouraged by providing equal and accessible support and guidance. Transparent and accessible tools should be available to make competencies visible, forming a coherent and accessible package. The overall processes should enhance the individual's experience of well-being, inclusion and development opportunities.

The Lahden OSKE LAB project has improved the possibilities for applicants with an immigrant background to identify their competencies through a self-assessment test. The test consists of five different themes - agency, knowledge, skills, experiences and networks. The test was developed in cooperation with the Salpaus Further Education and implemented by the OSKE LAB project. The pilot target group included students from the Salpaus Further Education's integration programme, students from the LAB University of Applied Sciences preparatory group and students from the Develop Your Skills for Study and Working Life course. The feedback collected from the target group, i.e. immigrants applying for higher education in Finland, was crucial for improving the clarity

of wording and sentence structure. The target group's feedback was positive, mainly because participants experienced that the test contributed a lot to expressing their competencies. On completion of the test, the participants receive written feedback on their skills and possible areas for improvement. The written feedback was perceived as support in job interviews, in writing a resumé, at the employment office and in hobbies, for example. A test to identify competencies is available to all interested parties on the osaamisenpaikka.fi website (Osaamisenpaikka 2023).

Finding personal path through guidance

The Lahden OSKE LAB project offered personal guidance and information on higher education matters in Finnish, English, Ukrainian and Russian to university graduates and applicants with an immigrant background. The personal guidance has proven to be effective in helping people find solutions to various situations related to education and employment based on their starting conditions and values (Puukari & Korhonen 2013, 15-16). According to the research (Crépon & Gurgand 2005; Sanders et al. 2021), high-quality guidance improves the speed and quality of employment.

During two years, 108 people participated in in-person and distance meetings under the OSKE LAB project. The in-person guidance sessions always started with an initial assessment of the client's service needs. About 30% of the participants searched for their educational and employment paths. They all shared a common interest in finding out more about the opportunities available in Finland that suited them. They did not have a clear idea of the available options, nor did they know which pathways would suit them best. The feedback clearly showed that the information received, for example, from integration training, might not suffice to clarify personal education and employment pathway. Other participants were already aware of the possible paths and required more detailed information on how to apply for higher education or get employed.

The OSKE LAB project has organised a series of information sessions on higher education opportunities for people from immigrant backgrounds at the Lahti Palvelutori Service Centre. The information sessions planned in cooperation with the Salpaus Further Education were held three times in a series: in autumn 2021, spring and autumn 2022. Despite the versatile and comprehensive marketing, the number of participants remained low. As a result, the project started targeting integration training groups instead. The subsequent

events were organised in cooperation with integrational training providers from the Lahti region. It is important to provide sufficient and updated information on employment and higher education opportunities in the region as early as possible. The information sessions held in simple Finnish covered the Finnish education system and current topics related to higher education. The participants' language skills were sufficient and, if necessary, supported by the OSKE LAB's multilingual experts.

There were 25 visits to various integrational training groups over two years. Three hundred twenty-five people with immigrant backgrounds participated in the sessions. The project has received positive feedback from the visits. Adequate knowledge of the educational opportunities in the region helps to clarify personal educational or employment path. In addition, the visits strengthened cooperation between educational institutions in the Lahti region. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (Larja & Peltonen 2023, 40) mentions increasing guidance as one of the effective ways to increase participation and skill levels in particular. The short course piloted in the project also addresses this challenge.

The course strengthens confidence

As the next solution, the OSKE LAB project has launched the Develop Your Study and Working Life Skills course (Kehitä opiskelun ja työelämän taitojasi), which supports people with an immigrant background in their transition to higher education or work. The course aims to develop participants' skills, particularly for university studies and working in a digital environment. It responds to the competence development needs central to raising educational levels and employment rates (for more on the course aims, its target group and the pilots see Baliasina et al. 2022, 65–69).

The course has received positive feedback. The feedback supports the project team's idea that people with an immigrant background require information on how to work in Finland. Understanding new environments with the participants' knowledge and experience useful in their future studies or work. The feedback highlighted the opportunity to identify and express one's skills as the most useful aspect of the course. Talking about oneself is culturally bound and thus difficult for many immigrants. It was important for the participants to receive tips for real-life situations. Reflecting on own competencies and objectives supports

skills development and specifies possible future paths. However, the job search phase requires extra support provided in a targeted and timely manner. The OSKE LAB project offers mentoring to work as the measure to raise matching efficiency during job search.

Networks and guidance on the career path through career mentoring

Highly educated people with an immigrant background require expert support in the job search phase (Kastari & Parkkonen 2019). Provided support needs to be well-timed to prevent the loss of talents to other regions, for example. Previous studies confirm that mentoring is an effective measure from both a labour market and integration perspective (see, e.g., Kinos et al. 2023). OSKE LAB has offered job mentoring to highly educated immigrants in 2022 - 2023.

The mentoring to work aims to strengthen the employability skills of people with an immigrant background, identify their competencies, clarify their goals and find new opportunities to advance on their career path. Mentoring is a two-way collaborative process between the mentee and the mentor with benefits for both parties. The mentee is a job applicant with an immigrant background, and the mentor is an expert with a profound knowledge of Finnish working life. Mentees find their way into the programme via the TE Office and the personal coaches of the local government pilot on employment for the Lahti region. Each mentoring programme lasted about six months. There were over twenty participants from a wide range of fields, including technology, business, arts and culture.

Respondents to the mentoring programme feedback survey gave positive and grateful feedback and rated the experience as four stars on a scale of one to five. According to the open answers, the best things for the mentees were gaining new knowledge about Finnish working life, strengthening their professional vocabulary, new networks and more precise career opportunities. They also updated their job applications and resumes during the process. The mentors stressed the opportunity to assist with employment and integration as the best aspect of the process. All the mentors and mentees involved in the programme would recommend the mentoring programme to people they know.

The development of best practices will continue in collaboration

People with an immigrant background need personal guidance in planning their educational paths and careers. Personal guidance targeted at the earliest possible stage must contain versatile information on employment and education options – both vocational studies and higher education. Identification of competencies is also essential at an early stage, as new competencies will build on the existing ones. On completing integrational language training, people can flexibly choose to continue toward employment or strengthen their competence in higher education or vocational studies. The most efficient way of providing personal guidance to support the applicants may include guidance in their language. Such service requires language skills and cultural sensitivity from the staff. Various stages of individual support demand cooperation between regional actors.

There exist many methods to identify competencies. However, the practices are diverse, and there are no nationally standardised structures. (Jäntti 2021.) Therefore, the practices of competencies identification should develop into a coherent process available for people with an immigrant background as well. The process should become an empowering experience and provide self-confidence in pursuing new goals. In Finland, several universities of applied sciences act as higher education institutions responsible for the SIMHE (Supporting Immigrants in Higher Education in Finland) services. SIMHE proved that competency identification at higher education institutions facilitates the education path and obtaining professional qualifications in Finland. For individuals, this means finding their career path, and for society, an increasing number of employees that promote internationalisation and cultural diversity. (Autero et al. 2020, 123.) Identification of competence does not offer a quick solution to finding employment, but it proposes clarity and peace of mind on the path towards employment (Niskanen et al. 2020, 4). The national principles for competence recognition include the acknowledgement that all knowledge is valuable and acquired in a variety of contexts. Individual initiative and equal and accessible guidance play a crucial role. There should be transparent tools for making competences visible. Processes should enhance the personal experiences and development potential of the participants. The parties involved in the competency identification should get support, and the actors' good practices should be shared and disseminated. (Finnish Government 2022, 34–35.) The

digital Osaamisen tunnistaminen test developed in the OSKE LAB project meets some of these needs and is accessible to everyone.

The mentoring process description and comprehensive materials (the Mesh project, ESF 2019–2021) supported the career mentoring offered by the OSKE LAB project. Successful mentoring programmes solidified the need to continue them. One of the organic organisers of the mentoring programme is the University of Applied Sciences. The activities should be permanent and fit as part of academic alumni activities. Students with an immigrant background need targeted support in finding employment, especially when they graduate (Kastari & Parkkonen 2019). The Päijät-Häme region has identified the need to support highly educated job seekers with an immigrant background, as it is more difficult to find work in the region compared to the rest of the country, and sufficient support measures are not available for highly educated persons (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment 2021). This work will continue in the form of close and functional regional cooperation between different actors. Higher education institutions play an essential role in this guidance cooperation and development. The previous studies of highly educated people with an immigrant background must be recognised as quickly as possible so that they can find the suitable education and career paths. In addition, those interested in higher education must receive timely and sufficient information on the region's versatile educational offerings. Concrete solutions include different tools and practices related to the identification and recognition of competence, personal guidance and group guidance, career mentoring, networking, and coaching and courses. Broad-based cooperation between different actors, functional structures and continuous dialogue will be needed to define the employment paths of those with an immigrant background and to support integration.

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Heidi Myyryläinen

Considering impact in the development of the Distance LAB project's tool for enterprises

This article describes how impact is planned and ensured in the development phase of one area of the Distance LAB project (funded by the Baltic Sea Region programme): the Design for Sustainable Business Models tool. Distance LAB is a three-year project launched this year (LAB 2023).

Impact planning was already started during the project planning, and the project areas are linked to the project's objectives. The project also helps achieve certain objectives of the programme. The development of the tool involves making choices that enable impact already at the design stage. The theory of change shows the importance of identifying step-by-step mechanisms and their prerequisites in the environment in order to understand impact. This article also applies this idea in developing the tool's impact.

Introduction

The Distance Lab project is funded under the "Innovative Society and Sustainable Economies and Societies" section of the Baltic Sea Region programme, which is linked to the Smarter Europe policy objective. It aims to increase the capacity for innovation and digitalisation as well as inter-regional connectivity. The aim is to make the benefits of digitalisation available to businesses and the public sector, among others. One of the sub-objectives is to improve the competitiveness of businesses in the region. The project also seeks skills that help develop the smart specialisation of regions. Distance LAB strives to meet these objectives of the Baltic Sea Region programme for its part.

The Distance LAB project supports companies by developing tools and competence for physically distributed

interaction between SMEs and the public sector. Overall, the project will develop nine different tools during the first year. The project was launched this year and will continue until the end of 2025. The project is organised by nine organisations from six countries: Finland, Sweden, Norway, Poland, Latvia and Lithuania. This article focuses on planning the impact of one tool, the Design for Sustainable Business Models tool.

The purpose of the Design for Sustainable Business Models tool is to provide a tool for assessing, developing, managing and communicating more sustainable business models in the context of remote work. This is expected to have a positive impact on the competitiveness of MSMEs. Responsible business also improves competitiveness (Elkington & Rowlands 1999). In this context, sustainability refers to sustainable business and efforts towards a more socially, environmentally and economically responsible business.

The tool has already been defined in the project application: it contains an overview of the sustainability aspects of businesses from the perspectives of the business model, sustainable products and services, and operations management. Businesses can utilise this information in planning, analysing and developing prototypes. The tool to be developed will be digitally available and quick to use, and the results will be available in 24 hours. The tool can be used regardless of sector, and it focuses on the context of remote work.

A perspective on impact

The theory of change provides one perspective on planning impact (Reinholz & Andrews 2020). According to this approach, the occurrence of the intended change must be described in the context, making visible the assumptions related to the change, the conditions that enable the change and the risks (Reinholz & Andrews 2020). The theory of change is part of the programme theory family. The theory of change aims to describe the mechanisms through which change is created. (Funnel & Rogers 2011.)

The theory of change model guides us to create a path when developing tools, starting from understanding the need. On the other hand, it is not enough to understand the need, but to find the conditions under which the solution would be useful. It is therefore also necessary to know the solutions already available on the market or otherwise, as it would be ineffective to produce something unnecessary or unusable

for the target group. When the need is understood well enough, it is possible to develop a solution that enables the desired impact.

The idea of an impact chain also works according to the step-by-step logic of the theory of change. The Hyvän mitta (Measuring Good) project coordinated by the Finnish Association of Social Enterprises (ARVO) has produced non-technical examples of different ways of assessing impact. The impact chain illustrates the steps that can be taken to assess the impacts (Hyvän mitta 2018).

Image 1. The impact chain provides a perspective on impact assessment (Hyvän mitta 2018).

The assessment of a solution's impact begins with understanding the need for the solution (Tykkyläinen 2018) and responding to it. The assessment of the impact chain also takes into account the sources and types of the resources available in the development task. The next step is to define the measures that realise the vision, taking into account the distribution of resources. This leads to defining and scheduling the expected results. In the impact chain, 'impact' refers to long-term results in relation to the original need to be addressed. (Pyykkönen et al. 2018.) Image 1 illustrates the stages of the impact chain.

Interactive development in impact planning

Although the theory of change is generally considered a theory-based assessment method, it does not conflict with experimental development and co-creation (Guarneros-Meza et al. 2018) that are also applied in the development of the tool. Experimental and iterative development helps us understand what kind of needs and objectives the tool should be developed for and how the solution should be oriented. In the development of this tool, 'experimental and iterative development' means flexible development based on experiments and feedback.

The tool's development process progresses interactively with the target groups. It is based on a definition of needs that includes different data collection methods, such as interviews, informal discussions and surveys to businesses in the programme region. We have asked companies what sustainable and responsible business means to them, what kind of relevant assessment or reporting practices they have in place, and what kind of tool they find necessary or ideal for them. The context of remote work limits the target group to especially information-intensive and expertise-based businesses. On the other hand, the perspectives of hybrid work are also taken into account. Different needs and objectives are continuously collected through discussions. Previous knowledge and assumptions are tested in new discussions in different contexts. This also provides information about the boundary conditions in the scope of which the assumptions work.

The definition of needs also includes an understanding of the solutions available on the market and otherwise. They are also examined from the perspective of the target group (MSMEs) who are new to and less familiar with responsibility reporting than large companies. The relevant regulations and standards are part of the daily work in large companies. The project has mapped out the solutions available on the market or otherwise and the way they work.

The project's data collection has provided developers with a shared view of the situation. Responsible and sustainable business is a broad, multi-levelled and ambiguous phenomenon; many developers seek a common and concrete manner of expression that speaks to their business. Few MSMEs have strategic tools for developing responsibility. In some cases, responsibility reporting is seen merely as a growing outside requirement. On the other hand, there are many specialised companies pioneering in responsible business. There is a need for information applicable to MSMEs, meaning that these enterprises need quick information that is easy to use, as applicable to them as possible, and as filtered as possible.

Scientific knowledge and international frameworks are also utilised in the development process. They are important because they support the structuring of knowledge and meanings and the formation of a shared understanding. Although scientific knowledge does not provide ready-made answers or frameworks that can be utilised as such, they are important from the viewpoint of impact. The tool needs a solid knowledge base that focuses on researched

information about sustainable and responsible business models. Many practical classifications and frameworks are also important for MSMEs. For example, the EU has been building a framework on how investors can value the sustainability of start-ups and business projects (European Commission 2023). For businesses, understanding this information and preparing for this is important – this is one area to be considered.

As a result of the needs definition process, we are creating a tool that can be used to assess the sustainability aspects and principles of different areas of the business model. The tool can be utilised by participating in a package, the path of which is described to the user. It is also possible to only utilise some components of the tool. For example, knowledge-based expert companies have their own questions and recommendations. The tool can be used independently or as a workshop for management or developers. Some of its components can be used with important stakeholders.

The tool will be recreated in a digital format. Digitalisation enables many aspects that support impact development. Firstly, it is possible to reach a more geographically comprehensive group that can use its mobile, tablet or desktop version. Designing visuals, gamified elements, simulations, and multimedia content helps the user use and select the components they need. Ensuring visual, cognitive and content-based user-friendliness and accessibility supports the impact development. Digital planning is part of enabling impact development.

The tool also has a regional dimension. The data also contain information on regional and macro regional strategies that are linked to the sustainability measures taken by businesses.

Testing the solution in three countries

The Design for Sustainable Business Models tool also creates links with a digital and environmental audit tool developed by our Lithuanian project partner. The same target group, i.e., MSMEs, can benefit from both tools that complement each other.

Piloting is an important part of ensuring the functionality of concepts. The aim is for at least 100 new businesses to test the Design for Sustainable Business Models tool in at least three different countries: Finland, Latvia and Lithuania. The pilots are also interactive events and learning processes. The pilots will enable impact creation and the collection of data on

the functionality of the solution and its preconditions. The pilots will also allow organisations in the region to learn from each other. Data will be collected based on experiences. From the perspective of understanding impact, it is also important to document this phase and the related experiences as systematically and consistently as possible. The tool and the related materials will be further developed based on the feedback.

At the same time, collecting experiences from different countries will enable the development of a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and its different environments, sectors and geographical areas. It is also important to collect this information, analyse it from different perspectives and publish it.

What will happen after the project?

The tools developed in the Distance LAB project and the related materials will be published in a hub developed by the coordinator, on a digital platform where they will be available to entrepreneurs and developers free of charge. The hub will be a digital meeting place where entrepreneurs and developers can find tools, services produced by different regional actors, and peer networks.

The Design for Sustainable Business Models tool contains instructions and a survey about the areas of the business model and management. Users can reply to the survey to receive a feedback report. If they so wish, users can also familiarise themselves with background materials with new perspectives and research data.

The materials used for assessing and developing sustainable business models will be published under the CC-BY-SA licence, which enables further utilisation or modification of the tool or its components, including commercially. This also encourages impact creation.

The project will also collect information from the target group participants on the extent to which they feel that project cooperation affects institutional change. This information is a qualitative and experience-based assessment by target group representatives. It could be too much to expect many businesses and organisations to radically reform their institutions as a result of participating in project activities. Causal relationships are more complex. Extensive collection of experiences is important in order to understand the impacts experienced by the target group during the project.

The project activities may support change and have an impact. We assume that some companies can use the tool systematically as a management and development tool. The positive impact on the development of digital and innovation capacity may be created in many ways. The sustainability tool and the related materials aim to filter information about businesses' external reality and opportunities that may be relevant to the business in developing competitiveness and responsible business. During the project and through the tools, the project also offers learning experiences, and the tools can also serve

Image 2. The intended impact chain for supporting sustainable business models. (Hyvän mitta 2018 modified by Heidi Myyryläinen).

as a path to new ideas, discussions and development. The materials also provide more information sources. Project networks and peer-to-peer networks may be one of the most important enablers of impact. Information and sharing create preconditions for creating something new.

Monitoring impact

The examination of impact in relation to the tool and the rest of the project is limited. As collecting and analysing data always demands resources, the Distance LAB project only focusses on the most essential issues related to monitoring impact. The main target group of the Design for Sustainable Business Models tool are MSMEs in the programme region. More specifically, the tool will be introduced in at least 100 businesses in at least three countries. However, the goal is for the tool to have a broader impact, as it will be available to all businesses in the countries in the programme region. When designing the digital solution, we will also consider the possibility of functions aimed at collecting and utilising data for the digital solution, the ownership and access right model to be associated with the data, and the kind of benefits the data could introduce to the business communities, research or education in the regions.

Impact monitoring focuses on predetermined, quantitative and qualitative indicators, such as the number of businesses involved, and how and to what extent they feel that their organisation and business activities benefit from the tool or the cooperation related to its development process. Image 2 illustrates the intended impact chain of the Design for Sustainable Business Models tool.

The theory of change encourages a way of thinking that seeks understanding of the mechanisms used to gradually create an impact. Understanding needs and developing solution models that function in different environments is also at the core of the Distance LAB project. Therefore, the development process is an important part of the project in addition to the results. Describing a communal learning and development process is a way of sharing learned lessons and the development path. Due to interactive development and the changing environment, the process will also bring surprises and require adaptation to changing circumstances. According to Rogers (2008), the theory of change can be used even in complex projects and if the environment introduces a high degree of uncertainty. Cross-sectoral and transregional competence related

to research, development and innovation will also be developed alongside the tool development. The learning process will also continuously produce information from different perspectives, and the picture of risks, preconditions, alternatives and functional practices will be clarified. This information may also be useful for others in the future. Thinking about the future is integral to the impact-oriented approach. According to Rogers (2007), assessment based on the theory of change can be used to compare learning experiences of how desired impacts are created, also in relation to costs.

The most important aspect in the development of the solution is to support the competence related to responsible business and the competitiveness of businesses, and to ensure that the target groups find the measures and results useful and valuable. As suggested by the theory of change, we must also take the preconditions into consideration and manage the risks. We can meet the diverse needs of the target groups by tailoring the components. At the same time, we ensure that the developed results are available and based on ethical practices and that they can be utilised in many ways.

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Maina Seppälä

Hybrid Work enables Capacity for Change

In recent years, the change in working life has been accelerating and rapid in many ways. In particular, the ways and places in which expert work is carried out have undergone major revolutions as changes in society and various crises have changed the usual ways of doing things. The Covid pandemic accelerated the transition of different organisations to the digital age and made jobs genuinely multi-local and hybridised.

Looking at the broader framework, this is a major historic transformation in the structures and work of society. Earlier, the agrarian economy and industry have moved to a more knowledge-intensive world. (Nieminen et al. 2017) Since then, work has increasingly become information work and the provision of different services. This also changes the significance of individual employees, as it may be more difficult to replace a person performing demanding knowledge work than a professional performing mechanical work. Information is not automatically transferred from one person to another, and the work is based on competence that may have accumulated for an individual person over several years from many different places. Furthermore, many information work tasks and areas of expertise are so multidimensional that they are not done alone, but in order to succeed, an expert needs to be surrounded by networks, organisations and structures that support fragmented work.

When the industrial world was associated with the idea of work as carrying out assigned tasks in a predetermined manner, there is now a need for the ability to both act independently and cooperate in changing configurations and changing global operating environments (Nieminen et al. 2017). Intensifying competition in the market and changing customer needs require organisations to be able to change and ensure sustainable

competitiveness. Investments in learning and agile operating methods may thus enable the organisation to cope with the problems. (Björk 2022)

Experts play a key role in the changing working life

One important area in responding to changes is to ensure that the most important capital of the expert organisation, i.e. the experts, remain involved in the change, and not just involved but contributing to enabling it. This challenges different companies, organisations and networks to pay attention to the capabilities and skills required of experts and work communities in order to keep up with development. When talking about these capabilities, the terms capacity for change and resilience are often used.

The capacity for change means preparedness to react and adapt to changes in the operating environment. According to the Dictionary of Contemporary Finnish, resilience is the ability to remain functional when difficult changes occur and to recover from them. (University of Helsinki 2022). At the organisational level, the capacity for change refers to the capability to foresee and adapt to changes.

A resilient organisation with a capacity for change is able to maintain the organisation's functional capacity and react to varying situations without becoming paralysed and wasting resources (TTL 2022). The organisation's management and supervisors play a significant role in managing the organisational capacity for change, which includes not only supporting coping and well-being at work, but also managing personnel's competence, future orientation and ensuring the organisation's psychological safety.

Support for the management of expert work

Organisational capacity for change and resilience require both well-being of the employees as well as structures that can be relied on by the persons carrying out expert work. Structures must be created for employees and better performance of work and not vice versa, where complex processes and strategies can undermine work ability and drain energy from meaningful tasks.

The Hybrid Work enables Capacity for Change project responded to the needs for change in working life through coaching and a tool developed based on them. Coaching was offered

to organisations engaged in expert work in different fields. The project was based on the need for support in expert organisations and companies. The capacity for change and resilience can be increased, and preparations for changes in working life can be made, and the Hybrid Work enables Capacity for Change project sought to respond to this improvement of the competence of experts in managing and structuring their own work.

Coaching was offered using a double workshop model, in which the managers and supervisors of organisations participate in coaching related to management, and experts participate in coaching related to expert work at the same time. The double workshop model has been developed at the LAB University of Applied Sciences and the Hybrid Work enables Capacity for Change project applied it in its own coaching (Ahl, Lehtonen 2022). In the double workshop model, two different coaching sessions run side by side and can converse with each other, they can partly address the same themes but also specific topics that are only relevant to participants of one coaching. The simultaneous nature of the coaching enables joint development in important matters identified by the organisation, as issues raised during the coaching can also be worked on together.

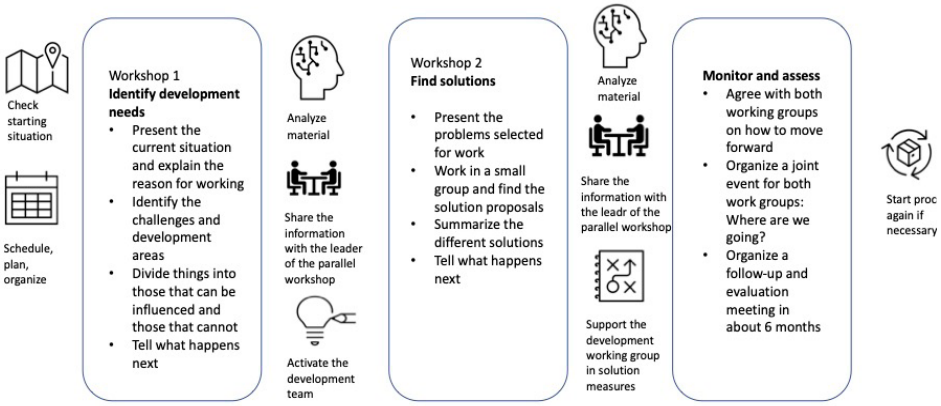

Image 1. Double workshop model process. (Image: Maina Seppälä)

Coaching as part of adaptation to remote culture

The key themes of the coaching aimed at experts in the Hybrid Work enables Capacity for Change project were self-management, everyday management, well-being at remote work and interaction and participation in a multi-location work community. The coaching sessions were attended by experts from companies operating in different fields. At the beginning of the coaching sessions, a general observation was that companies still lack a jointly agreed and written remote working culture in many places.

Several organisations have recently invested in concrete practices that facilitate remote work and, for example, acquired tools suitable for remote work for their employees, such as electric tables, larger displays for workstations at home, headphones and chairs. Whereas intangible practices require further work. Such topics and themes include experiencing inclusion, building a sense of community in teams where people rarely meet face-to-face or where some are at the office, some at home, and shared operating methods. The supervisors found it difficult to manage

the sense of community remotely, and trust, interaction and their management and building were discussed in the coaching of supervisors.

Remotely, in the office or both?

Multi-location work, hybrid working methods and flexibility of work are at the core when discussing the future of work. Hybrid work is a working model that combines remote work and working physically at the workplace and means alternating work between the workplace and remote work. (Kiiskinen 2022) As its name suggests, remote work means work carried out remotely, not in the workplace, such as the office. Whereas work in multiple locations means that many different places have been defined for working: home, office, some other place, such as events or customer service points.

The challenges in these diverse places are structuring and perceiving work. The nature of the work or one's own orientation may change as places change. Challenges may include questions related to management, challenges related to community cohesion, the skills of experts in self-management or finding a suitable rhythm for remote work and in-office work. Increased digital work may also be more stressful than before and should be taken into account when looking at well-being at work. The positive aspects are the improved productivity and the freeing up of time. For many, the home is a distraction-free working environment where concentration is perceived to be better. Reconciling work and leisure time has been found easier, and the time spent commuting can be used for other things. Many have also be enable to improve the physical working environment and the remote working equipment in use (Ranki 2023).

Many of the issues related to the organisation of work are contradictory, and both good and bad impacts can be observed in the same situation. The personalities of those doing expert work also have a strong impact.

In remote work, responsibility for well-being at work easily falls on the employee Although the transition to remote work has enabled many people to more independently decide about their own work, it may also imperceptibly shift the responsibilities that belonged to the employer to the individuals. The development of work independence has already begun before the pandemic, as

more and more people have started to talk about self-management related to work. The requirement of self-management has been used to justify increasing the autonomy of the employee or team and dismantling hierarchies.

More independent work requires self-management from the employees, this was strongly highlighted in the coaching sessions of the Hybrid Work enables Capacity for Change project. At the same time, the employees may be under pressure to manage themselves, but still be flexible and ready for schedules or deadlines specified elsewhere. Remote work emphasises the ability to direct one's own activities, independently plan the flow of work, define goals for one's work and also the ability to self-evaluate one's success. The nature of remote work is often such that it allows you to modify the content of your work and ways of doing things to suit you and support the use of your strengths. Then the work is motivating and you can feel work engagement while doing it, which further strengthens your well-being. (Ranki 2023)

Understanding yourself helps you manage yourself and your work

Self-management is a theme that highlights the needs of the changing working life. The requirement of self-management permeates many different fields and especially expert tasks. Self-management skills are sought after in job advertisements and are thought to be related to good work performance in the majority of different expert tasks. The appreciation of self-determination in society is also reflected in the fact that executive functions have already been highlighted in the curriculum guiding the teaching of comprehensive school-aged pupils. The Finnish National Agency for Education commented on the critical discussion on the topic by justifying that more autonomous working has been brought up because these skills are needed both in postgraduate studies and in everyday life (OPH 2018).

However, not everyone currently in working life has grown up based on autonomous methods, but this is a relatively new value in working life and way of working (Savaspuro 2019). Self-management can be understood as a method or tool for approaching

and structuring one's own work, not as a predefined setting that everyone masters.

One way to approach self-management is to develop self-understanding and the impact of one's own personality on the ways of working. Traditional leadership can be expanded to include what motivates you, what restores, what kind of circadian rhythm works best for you, or whether you need quiet working time or concentrate best when surrounded by people. The coaching of the Hybrid Work enables Capacity for Change project focused on considering one's own executive functions through Reiss's theory of motivation. Professor of Psychology Steven Reiss classified the 16 basic desires, or motives. According to Reiss, these motives guide everything we do. When we identify our motives, we know how to act in ways that support well-being at work and make the right choices related to our work and private life. Knowledge of motives also helps us identify the different needs of others in the team and thus better understand our colleagues and guide our own team to succeed (Talsi 2019).

According to a study commissioned by Taloustutkimus, Future Hybrid Work, self-determination and self-management are emphasised in hybrid work. Fewer than one in ten respondents did not feel that they needed support in managing their own work. Those in need of support said that they needed it most for time management and prioritisation. Support was also needed for motivation, well-being and remote communication. (Sweco 2022). More than 2,000 people participated in the Future hybrid work study and a few dozen in the coaching of the Hybrid Work enables Capacity for Change project, but the results are very similar.

Although people tend to feel that they are struggling alone with problems in remote work, the challenges and development areas are fairly commonly identified and universal. Trust, discussion, interest and clear goals also come up (Sweco 2022). Many people are also concerned about the number and too tight schedule of meetings. In remote work, the working day does not really begin or end, but leisure time and working hours are intertwined into an unrecognisable whole.

Leadership is emphasised in hybrid work
The need for leadership is emphasised in hybrid work. However, management needs do not only come from hybrid work, but also depend on employees, i.e. individuals. Some need more support, guidance and supervision than others. (Luoma 2023). Managing hybrid work requires different strategies compared

to in-office work, as work is organised differently. A supervisor should pay attention to the experiences of inclusion and community cohesion, as well as employees' work-private life balance. In particular, the supervisor's leadership skills and ability to react to changes support employee well-being. In hybrid work, relationship-oriented leadership can foster a sense of belonging among employees and prevent isolation, loss of motivation and reduced performance (Luoma 2023).

A tool to help you structure your work

The Hybrid Work enables Capacity for Change project produced a tool for examining different aspects of the work. The tool can be used by an individual employee to review their own work, by a supervisor or manager to structure the organisation, customs or culture, or even by a team that wants stimuli and more information to agree on common practices.

The tool is divided into three different sections: expert, management and organisation. Some themes, such as well-being at work, are cross-cutting and appear in every section. However, there is always a changing perspective on these, depending on whether well-being at work is examined through the individual, management and supervisory work or the entire organisation and its culture. The tool was created on the basis of the coaching sessions held during the project. The coaching sessions were attended by experts from companies operating in Päijät-Häme who wanted to develop their own practices for remote and hybrid work and had noticed some needs related to these.

The purpose of the tool is to help you take issues related to your own work into consideration and thus increase your sense of control and awareness of your work. Improved work structure increases coping and the ability to adapt to changes at the level of individual employees and entire organisations.

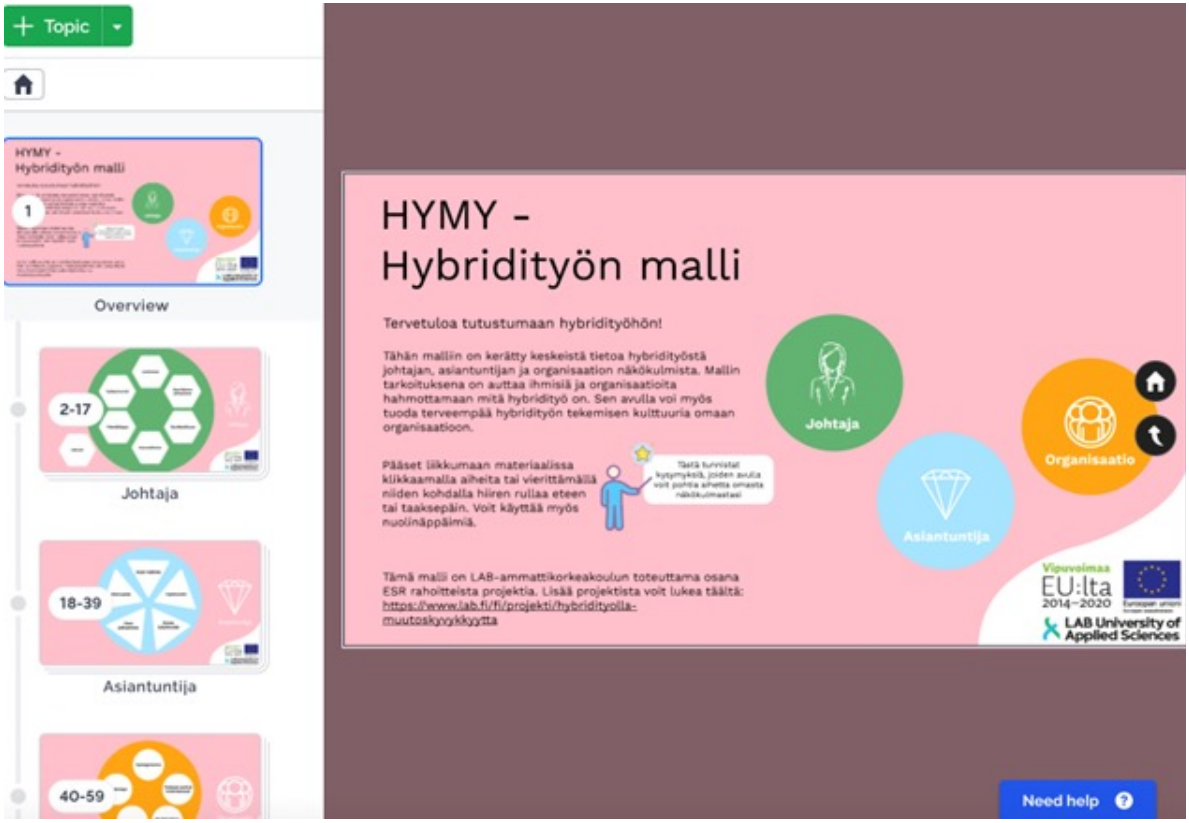

Image 2. Image of the tool. (Image: Maina Seppälä)

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LAB University of Applied Sciences

Health and Well-being Service Innovations is one of the four strategic focus areas of LAB University of Applied Sciences. The research, development and innovation (RDI) activities of this focus area aims at enhancing sustainable health and well-being of individuals and communities in holistic and effective ways highlighting life cycle and preventive approach as well as systemic thinking.

This publication provides insightful perspectives on the promotion of health and well-being in different contexts by presenting examples of ongoing or recently ended Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI) projects which are implemented and carried out in this focus area in collaboration with other partners and stakeholders.

The RDI projects are tools which enable the co-designing, piloting and development of the novel and enhanced operating models, processes and services and service chains which sustain health and wel-lbeing in cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary collaboration providing lasting impact on regions' well-being and vitality.

This publication disseminates results and impact of the presented RDI projects highlighting the significance of collaboration with the working life. This publication seeks to increase dialogue related to the complex challenges of health and well-being and encourage us all to join forces in exploring possibilities and novel solutions to tackle the challenges.

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