

SMART RURAL
RAUDANMAA



SMART VILLAGE STRATEGY OF RAUDANMAA (FINLAND)



JUNE 2020

This strategy has been developed based on the template prepared by E40 (Project Coordinator) in the context of the 'Preparatory Action for Smart Rural Areas in the 21st Century' project funded by the European Commission. The opinions and views expressed in the strategy are those of the participant villages only and do not represent the European Commission's official position.

Table of Contents

Foreword: Smart Rural Raudanmaa	2
I. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 Local governance in Finland	3
1.2 What is a ‘village’ in Finland?	3
1.3 What smart is for Raudanmaa	3
II. CONTEXT	5
2.1 Context of the strategy development.....	5
2.2 Existing strategies & initiatives	5
2.1.1 Links to existing local strategies	5
2.1.2 Links to existing higher level strategies	5
2.1.3 Review of past and ongoing (flagship) projects and initiatives	6
2.3 Cooperation with other villages	7
III. KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF RAUDANMAA.....	8
3.1. Key characteristics of the village.....	8
3.2. Key challenges.....	10
3.3. Main assets & opportunities	11
3.4. Key characteristics of the local community	12
3.5. SWOT Analysis.....	14
IV. INTERVENTION LOGIC	15
4.1 Overall objective	15
4.2 Specific & operational objectives in response to SWOT.....	15
4.3 Smart solutions: actions, outputs and results	19
V. MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING	25
VI. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT.....	25
6.1 Stakeholder engagement in strategy development.....	25
6.2 Key channels of communication and awareness raising among citizens.....	26
6.3 Planned actions to mobilise stakeholders	26



Foreword: Smart Rural Raudanmaa

Raudanmaa is a rural area with some 600 inhabitants that consists of several small villages. People live very close to nature in our area, and this is a great asset that our villages can offer both to new residents and visitors. Our main aspiration is to be a service-oriented, innovative village where daily life runs smoothly. We want to bring new innovative enablers to boost the village economy and living conditions.

We are proud of our local community that is very active and supportive of new initiatives. We have several active associations and organise regular gatherings of villagers on matters that concern everyone. We have built our own water supply, sewage system and optical fibre network. One of our main concerns now is to create a well-functioning multi-service smart village hall that provide activities and services to local residents and visitors in the area. We gathered the opinion and ideas from all villagers to develop a plan for the village hall and are currently developing detailed plans on the construction, functioning and sustainability of our hall.



I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Local governance in Finland

In Finland, municipalities represent the local level of administration and act as the fundamental, self-governing administrative units in the country. Municipalities control many community services, such as schools, health care and water supply. The municipal councils (kunnanvaltuusto) are composed of members elected via a proportional representation system for a period of four years.

Raudanmaa area (Keso/Kautiala being the main villages) is part of City of Kangasala which takes care of the city administration and services for residents. The town council includes a few elected representatives from Raudanmaa area, who participate actively in city decision making and actively bring the voice of the rural areas to other city policy-makers.

1.2 What is a 'village' in Finland?

Rural municipalities are often composed of dispersed rural villages. While villages do not have their own elected representatives, they often form village associations to solve common problems. For instance, Raudanmaa Village Association represents the villagers in many common forums, the association gives out statements and is consulted at times in matters concerning the village area.

In Finland, villages have relatively few inhabitants and are located in sparsely populated areas. Many of them are to be considered as remote areas that have declining population, services and economy. The value of the housing is also shrinking.

The relationship between municipalities (and their elected councils) and villages vary widely. In smaller municipalities, the connection with the villages is often better, but services are still disappearing. When municipalities were merged, a shorter or longer process has led to centralised services.

Villages do not have any budget for development. Development is a result of dynamic environments where villagers take action together with municipalities and other stakeholders, often through project financing. This has resulted in a variety of solutions from individual, to partnerships and contractual.

In Finland, especially in Northern Finland, some specific tasks have been delegated to grassroot actors through budgeting. All over Finland active NGOs and villages have negotiated different contractual relations for service-provision with the municipalities, from outdoor activities to various rural development related activities of the municipality.

1.3 What smart is for Raudanmaa

As specified above, 'smartness' for Raudanmaa means to be a service-oriented, innovative village where daily life runs smoothly. Our goal is to keep the rural village area alive and to preserve the



distinctive physical and cultural environment and heritage created by the communal and traditional way of life in the villages. We also want to bring new innovative enablers to boost the village economy and living conditions.

Fast network connections and telecommuting possibilities open up possibilities that are partly used already, but could be utilized and marketed in new ways. Digital services could offer new effective ways of co-operation and openly sharing information both within the community and also with visitors and external bodies.

We want to support viable sources of living, social and physical well-being and provide innovative services for all villagers in this rural area. Main development aspirations for our smart village development activities are related to three main areas: environment, culture and vitality.

Raudanmaa has always embraced the culture of trying out new ideas and ways of working, gaining strength from strong sense of community. Culture of experimentation is not a novel idea in this village area. Smart means for Raudanmaa naturally that we utilize new technology, and but social smartness is an equally important aspect for us as we strive to enhance the traditional village culture and take it to a new level in the digital world. What used to be a traditional way of working and co-operation in village context, we aim to turn into good practices facilitated by new technology, such as sharing resources, equipment, helping each other when special needs arise.

This is already done for example via village common facebook flea market, where people can search and offer second-hand articles. Our village has also a whatsapp group, where daily burning issues, problems, or news can be shared. All our associations also have their own facebook groups, where discussions can be held on the matters of interest. In the next phase we could aim at smart village as a platform, meaning that village enables the residents and visitors to co-operate in a new, faster and more open way, maintaining and increasing the sense of belonging and safety in the community. In the village development smart for us also means flexible and fruitful co-operation between associations, public sector and private sector.



II. CONTEXT

2.1 Context of the strategy development

The local Leader group Kantri ry. created the connection with the Smart Rural project by suggesting Raudanmaa village as a possible participant. Our village has also been actively involved in the Rural.fi “Finland’s smartest village” competition, developing village initiatives together with the panel in quarterly meetings and workshops.

The village’s main challenge at this moment (2020) is that the local school was closed in May 2019 and the village lacks a common venue for all activities in the long term. Due to this, it was seen necessary already in spring 2019 that the villagers need to organize and gather the needs of the villagers to enable more structured planning on village strategy and actions.

2.2 Existing strategies & initiatives

2.2.1 Links to existing local strategies

We have started creating our village strategy in 2019, this is something we really want to focus on this coming year 2020. Our city strategy mentions rural areas as "areas of possibilities". We want to make our village not just area of possibility but area of continuous development and innovation where people aspire to live in and feel loved and cared. As we work on this at the same time with the smart village initiative, we want to make sure that the strategy is developed as a “smart village strategy” from the start.

2.2.2 Links to existing higher level strategies

Our strategy is well integrated with municipal, LEADER and national strategies:

Kangasala city:

Mahdollisuuksien maaseutu/Rural areas of possibilities

Leader group Kantri ry strategies

The themes of the Kantri ry’s programme 2014-2020 "Responsibility for Community and Environment" are:

1. Environmentally responsible living
2. Communality, inclusion and local youth
3. Local business

Leader ry. has been our funding partner in our optical fibre network construction project where 55% of the cost was covered by public funds under Leader project umbrella. Also the village hall planning



project (ongoing) is carried out with the help of an approved Leader project to cover a major part of the cost.

Leader funding is organized under:

The Rural Development Programme for Mainland Finland coordinated by the rural development unit of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (Manner-Suomen maaseudun kehittämisohjelma):

Focus areas that we link to in the Rural Development Programme and what have been our main grounds for support are these:

2. Diversify rural industries and create employment by improving the competitiveness of businesses, supporting new entrepreneurship and promoting the networking of companies.
3. Improve vitality and quality of life in rural areas by strengthening independent local activities

EU Rural Development policy priorities 2014-2020

FOCUS AREA 1A: Innovation, cooperation, and development of the knowledge base in rural areas

FOCUS AREA 6B: Fostering local development

Smart village strategies

Smart Villages are communities in rural areas that use innovative solutions to improve their resilience, building on local strengths and opportunities. They rely on a participatory approach to develop and implement their strategy to improve their economic, social and/or environmental conditions, in particular by mobilising solutions offered by digital technologies.

2.1.3 Review of past and ongoing (flagship) projects and initiatives

Kautiala water co-operative (2010-)

Water co-operative was founded by the villagers to meet the water legislation requirements around lakeside areas and to get fresh water to area where there typically is a lot of metals in the bored well water. The water and sewage pipelines were built during 2011-2012 and the co-operative has now 143 active members.

Raudanmaa optical fibre network project (2017-2019)

The optical fibre network was built by a common village co-operative during 2017-2018 with now almost 100 joint owners. The project was funded by local LAG and the owners. The costs were brought down by joining forces with local electricity company, which was replacing the overhead cables with underground cables at the same time.

Electricity company Elenia was our partner in optical fibre network project to minimize the cost. Co-operation has every time opened up new possibilities, ideas and viable plans; also concrete help in financing and implementing the plans. For example the 1,5 m€ optical fibre project would not have



been possible without sharing the cost & planning effort with electricity company as they transferred the old overhead cables to underground in this area.

Smart Village Hall planning project (Monipalvelukeskus suunnitteluprojekti, July 2019 – Dec 2020)

One key project that we are now working on is a smart village hall - a multi-service centre for various operators and user groups that would serve as the main hub for activities and services to the residents and visitors in the area. The planning work has started with idea gathering from all villagers and continues 2019-5/2020 with more detailed planning to create a concrete ground plan, action plan and budget and funding plan for the project. For this planning project we already have public funding: The feasibility and design study and planning project is funded now by LAG Kantri/ELY centre 70% and 30% by voluntary work.

Earlier co-operative projects in the village include:

- Village pier – built and maintained by village associations
- “Ekokeko” – a common waste collection point for special waste (glass, metal, plastic, batteries, papers, cardboards + a recycling point
- Ice rink on the schoolyard bought and maintained by village associations
- Carpet washing station

2.3 Cooperation with other villages

The key stakeholders that Raudanmaa is cooperating with include:

Kantri r.y., LAG developing the rural areas around Tampere

- specific projects and initiatives
- In November 2019 one person from our village association participated in Leader-organized trip to Scotland to visit Forth Valley & Lomond leader group with other European villages in the smart village network.

Pirkan kylät ry. (Villages of Pirkanmaa area)

We are members of the association and participating in the events and consult the experts of the association as needed

Suomen kylät r.y.(Finnish Villages association)

In August 2019 Raudanmaa villagers made a study tour to Lokaali-event (yearly event for local rural developers) and active villages with multi-service village halls and other services.



Älykkäät kylät/Smart villages network in Finland (rural.fi/EAFRD)

In November 2019 and February 2020 our village has participated in “Runway days” as part of the Finland’s smartest village competition. During the days we have experts and peers advancing and elaborating the specific issues and plans that each village presents. We have been working on our smart village hall project and got really good co-operation and a grant to work on business planning.

Kangasala city and other neighbouring cities

Kangasala city has identified rural areas as areas of possibilities. We intend to keep up a fruitful co-operation with the municipality and the neighbouring cities so that also the public sector would be taken into account as one of the possible users of our village hall and the services. Business Kangasala has already shown interest in our smart village concept and the activities related to our village strategy. We could utilize also “Visit Kangasala” resources to market the rural area as part of the nearby recreational area to the city.

We are also developing common projects and exchanging ideas with other villages having smart village activities in Pirkanmaa area, especially within the same LAG. We have kicked off a common digital village portal initiative with Luopioinen and Talviainen villages, around the concept of “Sydän-Hämeen kylät”/Villages of Central Häme. The target of this initiative is to investigate how we could get common visibility to all village services to locals and visitors in one place, easily accessible to everyone.

III. KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF RAUDANMAA

3.1. Key characteristics of the village

Raudanmaa village area consists of several small villages (Kautiala, Tohkala, Keso, Köyrä, Mutikko, Ponsa, Mäyrä) and the rural area situated between two large lakes in Kangasala: Vesijärvi and Längelmävesi. Raudanmaa is located 5-20 kilometres from Kangasala city centre and 30 km from the second largest city in Finland, Tampere. There are approximately 600 residents in the Raudanmaa area.

Important source of livelihood in the area is agriculture, but there are also many small entrepreneurs and also people who are employed in the nearest cities. Raudanmaa is an active village, where many of the activities and big development projects have been planned by the villagers themselves, such as water co-operative, optical fibre, ice-rink, selective waste disposal point, etc.

Table 1: Closest towns to Raudanmaa

Name of closest town or city	Population of town or city	Distance between village and town/ city
Kangasala	30,563	20 km
Tampere	226,696	30 km
Orivesi	9168	20 km
Pälkäne	6499	20 km

Table 2: Key statistical data (Raudanmaa, 2017/2018)

Indicator	Value	Value (nat. average)	Comments
Population Out of which migrants Out of which people with disabilities	622 [Not available] [Not available]		Ponsa area
Elderly dependency ratio %	39%	35%	% base on Tohkala area post number statistical data The ratio between the elderly population (aged 65 and over) and the working age population (aged 15-64)
Unemployment rate %	10% (Kangasala city 12 %)	7,3%	% base on Tohkala area post number statistical data Percentage of unemployed aged 15 and over, divided by the labour force (those aged 15 and over)
Employment rate %	71%	71,3 %	% base on Tohkala area post number statistical data Percentage of those employed who are aged 15 and over divided by the working age population (aged 15-64)
Participation rate %	52%	50%	% base on Tohkala area post number statistical data Percentage of the labour force aged 15 and over divided by the population of those aged 15 and over
Age structure**:			
Share of population aged 0-15	19%	17%	
Share of population aged 16-59	50%	55%	
Share of population aged 60-65	7%	7%	
Share of population aged 65+	23%	21%	
Educational attainment*:			
Share of population with tertiary education	20%	22%	
Share of population with secondary education	58%	53%	
Share of population with primary education	22%	25%	

Source: <http://stat.fi/index.html>, *2017, **2018

3.2. Key challenges

3.2.1 Sustaining services in a sparsely populated area

Our village group Raudanmaa area is a large sparsely populated rural area. The heart of the village activities has been our school (founded 1893), which Kangasala city closed after 125 years of operation. Now even the smallest schoolchildren need to spend long times in transportation to the school and day-care.

Kangasala municipality is not interested in keeping the village services up and running, they are mostly seen as expenses, rather than enablers of full and meaningful life in rural area.

The school used to serve as the main hub for all associations, activities, clubs and courses in the village. Furthermore, the school had also a nurse visiting monthly in context with village cafeterias, where elderly people could get their health checks made and meet with other villagers. This venue enabled all villagers to get to know each other, newcomers to meet people, and children to familiarize with the elders of the village. The lack of a common venue deteriorates the communal feeling as local groups of people do not meet each other naturally in these common activities, village cafes, clubs or other meetings and hobbies. Functioning school with all the additional activities around the property have maintained a strong sense of belonging in our community and a kind of a status of an established local centre.

This is one key factor hindering the communal activities and diminishing the attractiveness of the village among families considering the area to live. If it is the case that venues dedicated to one service (like school) are not the feasible solution in modern rural area, we need to think about flexible solutions bringing together public and private sector together with third sector.

3.2.2 No sufficient promotion of nature & other destinations

We have many even spectacular nature destinations that are not very well known even by all local people. There are no marked routes or a list of possible destinations available anywhere. The mapping of suitable routes for hiking, biking, and other recreation purposes would increase the appeal of our area among possible new residents and visitors, offering travel industry new ways of marketing the area. Public availability of these destinations and routes would also increase the welfare of current population.

3.2.3 Deteriorating water quality of lakes

Our big lakes are surrounded by agriculture and forestry - dependent farms. During the past 30 years the water quality has deteriorated, eutrophication and blue-green algae has increased.



3.2.4 No strong village brand or communication plan

The responsibilities of communication on village issues is not well planned – things are done more on ad hoc basis. Our community lack clearly organized communication with planned publishing cycle. To keep everyone interested in our common issues, we need to make a yearly publishing plan and set clear responsibilities and also educate people on using our digital channels. This is vital to keep everyone interested and involved in the development activities of the village area. We also would benefit from a branded communication kit, including templates for communication and planning of how our main messages are conveyed in digital forums in textual and visual format. Developing our brand and communication would increase the appeal of our digital footprint among residents, visitor and possible business partners.

3.2.5 No funding base for large investment

Funding any large development project would need a lot of external support and it should rely also on voluntary work. Our village associations do not have any extra funds or large events from where we could get income.

3.3. Main assets & opportunities

3.3.1 Functioning infrastructure

In Raudanmaa, we have built water and sewer networks and optical fibre network. Our village area has this well functioning infrastructure that businesses or remote workers can utilize. Many summer residents are telling that their connection in the summer house is currently better than in the city. We also have good traffic connections, 10-30 minutes to 3 nearest city centres and functioning bus service.

In whole Finland, under 20% of population are using optical fibre connections, and in rural areas the number is in some places under 10%. In Kangasala city, high-speed broadband connections are available to c. 50% of total population, majority within the city centre areas where housing is concentrated.¹ The joint project - where electricity overhead lines have been replaced by buried landlines together with optical fibre - has brought us excellent, weather-proof connections that farms, businesses and people can utilize. We no longer have those power cuts for several days that used to halt daily activities and cause a lot of trouble.

3.3.2 Strong entrepreneurship and volunteer activity

Our village has a vital asset in the many entrepreneurs who provide services in the area or run their businesses in nearby cities. The entrepreneurial spirit affects also our common projects and active

¹ <https://www.traficom.fi/sites/default/files/media/file/Kuluttajatutkimus-2019-vastaustaulukko.ods>,
<https://www.traficom.fi/sites/default/files/media/file/Kiintean-verkon-laajakaistasaatavuus-Tillgang-till-fasta-natet.ods>

group of villagers, who are not afraid to tackle new challenges. We have wide array of entrepreneurs within agri-travel, equestrian activities, veterinary service, video & film production, project management, and more traditional areas such as plumbing, building services, etc.

Furthermore, we have several farms producing high-quality products, such as beef, lamb and milk products.

People are willing to participate in volunteer activities, we have very active associations and residents who have a strong sense of belonging to the community and participate actively in joint projects.

3.3.3 Natural resources and attractiveness

In our area, people enjoy living near the nature and maintaining the village cultural landscapes. We have clean and beautiful nature alongside with a cultural rural area inhabited for thousands of years. We have a lot of unused potential in our natural resources, six “mountains” with spectacular views and footpaths that have not been brought into public knowledge. We have very clean forest nature, with wild berries and mushroom. There are sand forest roads for horse-riding and hiking. Our lakes are suitable for free-time fishing, swimming, boating other activities. The lakesides are popular areas for summer cottages.

The mapping of suitable routes agreed with local landowners for hiking, biking, and other recreation purposes would increase the appeal of our area among possible new residents and visitors. Public availability of the destinations and routes would also increase the welfare of current population and bring opportunities to other service providers, e.g. farm accommodation, local food producers, etc.

3.4 Key characteristics of the local community

The village consists of families of all age groups, as well as summer residents. There is a slight trend in increasing number of elderly population, as the village school has been under dispute for many years. This has resulted in hesitation of younger families moving in the area in the past few years.

The community is very active and supportive of new initiatives, as can be seen from the number of the active associations, and the activities they organize. We also organize gatherings for villagers on matters that concern everyone. The latest village gathering was in June 2019 to all villagers about the new multiservice center, our smart village hall, to share the results of the questionnaire sent earlier. (results PPTX document attached, only in Finnish). We also celebrate together, the villagers gather to winter events, independence day celebrations, spring celebration, etc. We have web pages and Facebook pages for all village associations where information is shared and discussed. We also use Whatsapp for daily messaging of more urgent nature.



Key stakeholders of the village are:

Stakeholder	Main role
Raudanmaan kyläyhdistys ry./ Raudanmaa Village Association	Represents the village and drive development
Raudanmaan Maatiaisnaiset r.y. / Raudanmaa Rural Women's Association	Offers physical and cultural activities and contributes to preserving the cultural traditions of rural life
Raudanmaan nuorisoseura ry./ Raudanmaa Youth Association	Organizes hobby clubs and activities to children from 1-17 years. Employs and support young people of the village.
Längelmävesi lake fishing management participant's Association	Takes care of fishing policies, fisheries management and fishing permits
Raudanmaan metsästysseura r.y. /Raudanmaa hunting association	Takes care of wildlife management in the Raudanmaa area
Village road maintenance Associations	Takes care of the roads in the area
Raudanmaan kyläkuitu osuuskunta /Raudanmaa optical network cooperative (100 properties)	Offers fast and weather-proof network connections
Kautiala Keso and Ponsa water co-operatives (100 + 150 properties)	Water and sewage network to ensure clean water supply and sustainable sewage system for wastewater in Raudanmaa area

3.5 SWOT Analysis

The main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) set out above in details are summarised in the SWOT table below.

STRENGTH	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active living village, where many of the activities and big development projects have been planned by the villagers themselves • Distinctive physical and cultural environment and heritage • Local food, farms, horse stables • Functioning infrastructure: water & sewage, optical fibre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No common venue for activities • No funding base for large investments • Our village has no strong “brand” • Information of services/usable routes and village history not accessible • Nature destinations are not promoted for recreation or travel use • Lack of organized info sharing
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracting new residents and visitors through the opportunity to live and work still very close to the nature & nearby cities • Fast network connections and telecommuting possibilities: new effective ways of co-operation and openly sharing information both within the community and also with visitors and external bodies • Increasing trend of domestic and local tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local city authorities are not supporting rural development • Diminishing public transport • Possible migration towards the cities as no school in the village • If the sense of community is not supported, it will die • Lake water quality deterioration



IV. INTERVENTION LOGIC

4.1 Overall objective

Our main aspiration - our vision as we call it - is to be a service-oriented, innovative village where daily life runs smoothly. Our goal is to keep the rural village area of Raudanmaa (Iron Land) alive and to preserve the distinctive physical and cultural environment and heritage created by the communal and traditional way of life in the villages.

Our current version of village strategy, our vision and objectives & activities is presented below:

4.2 Specific & operational objectives in response to SWOT

In the current version of village strategy, our vision and objectives & activities is presented as below:



Three specific and operational objectives have been defined for the Smart Village Strategy (merging two of the core objectives above into a single specific objective) as described below.

Specific Objective 1: Improving vitality of the village

Objective 1.1: Maintaining the communal spirit and appealing feel of the Raudanmaa area

Developing a smart village hall is needed for gatherings, sports, hobby clubs, courses, meetings, all those activities that our closed school building offered until 2019. The common venue would be seen as the heart of the village where interesting activities are arranged to residents and visitors of all ages.

Objective 1.2: Ensuring smooth services for residents, visitors and tourists

The smart village hall could also serve as a basis for service providers – such as day-care, cafeteria/restaurant/local food store, various wellness workers (hairdresser, physiotherapist, nurse/doctor appointment), post package delivery point, rental service for equipment, etc. The spaces would enable distant workers to socialize and use the amenities.

Our digital village hub could be a digital portal/app enabling local sharing economy and also commercial use of assets, expertise and services in the village. We also aim at digitizing the village's cultural heritage, saving for future generations books on the village history and lake management, villagers' photographs and objects.

Specific Objective 2: Living environment – clean countryside

Our main targets in fostering living and clean countryside are:

Operational objective 2.1: Developing nature/rural tourism

One of our key ideas is to widen the smart village hall to encompass the concept of "Nearby farm" – similar to Netherlands Kinderboerderij concept. This "nearby farm" concept could include day-care and therapy farm facilities specialized in agricultural life and nature. The concept could be reproducible and marketed as a pedagogic and therapeutic service enabler where 3rd parties could utilize the spaces and assets to deliver and offer the services.

We want to have our village footpaths and skiing/snowmobile/riding routes available in some established digital service or app, with additional rich content such as viewpoints, main historical buildings, services, etc.

As we do not have well known routes or scenic large-scale attractions, we need to get our paths and waterways mapped, in digital and traditional format to ensure they are accessible to all. Making the routes visible also helps branding the village and increases vitality. We have already selected the platform(s) and method for the mapping and started to upload the data.

Operational objective 2.2: Securing rural business viability and housing

We want to make sure that rural businesses can flourish within the area and people have enough housing for different phases in their life. We would need to think about not only owned houses, but also long-term and short-term rentals as one way of enriching the population base.

Operational objective 2.3: Protecting the lake ecosystems

We need to increasingly take care of our important lake eco-systems, as the quality of water has decreased in past 20 years. Through getting the water quality better, we ensure that we maintain the lake nature and continue to be attractive location for residents, summer cottage owners and renters.

The aim is to maintain the diverse traditional biotopes and the cultural environment, which is typical for Finnish sparsely populated villages for example by supporting local farmers keeping herds on the grasslands and taking care of the forests and fields.

Specific Objective 3: Innovative village culture

Raudanmaa has a tradition of being a driver for innovations in the area. Telephone lines were built early on in 20th century in the village by the help of active villagers and we got to see them replaced now with optical fibres in our 21st century project. Increasing co-operation and involvement of all villagers and associations within the area is needed to discuss issues that affect all villagers, such as taking care of the cultural heritage environment, woods and lakes and making action plans for the future.

We have identified specific targets to focus on next to keep our innovative culture alive and all villagers involved.

Operational Objective 3.1: Develop communication and branding

During Phase 1 we aimed at: Developing a branding plan as a study project in Tampere University service design course. This phase has been completed by 4/2020.

During Phase 2 we aim at creating the visuals and brand elements that can be used in all communications, starting with requests for offers sent to local schools with marketing/visual/graphic design curriculae.

The way in which the above objectives respond to specific strengths & opportunities and challenges & threats are summarised in the table below.

Table 3: Objectives in response to SWOT

Specific Objective	Operational objectives	Challenges & threats	Strengths & Opportunities
1. Improving vitality of the village	<p>1.1 Maintaining the communal spirit and appealing feel of the Raudanmaa area</p> <p>1.2 Ensuring smooth services for residents, visitors and tourists</p>	<p>No common venue for activities In lack of support, diminishing sense of community</p> <p>No strong brand of the village area</p> <p>Information of village services not accessible</p> <p>No school and venue for common activities.</p>	<p>Active villagers participating in associations and common projects</p> <p>Functioning infrastructure: optical network, water & sewage</p> <p>Many entrepreneurs and accommodation services within the area</p>
2. Living environment and clean countryside	<p>2.1 Developing nature and rural tourism</p> <p>2.2 Securing rural business viability and housing</p> <p>2.3 Protecting the lake ecosystem</p>	<p>Information of destinations and routes not accessible</p> <p>Deteriorated lake water quality</p>	<p>Local food producers, farms, horse stables</p> <p>Distinctive physical and cultural environment (clean and partly spectacular nature)</p> <p>Increasing trend of domestic and local tourism</p>
3. Innovative village culture	<p>3.1 Developing communication and branding</p>	<p>Lack of organized info sharing of long term plans</p> <p>Possible outmigration due to lacking services</p>	<p>Long history of innovative projects, active villagers.</p> <p>Existing books and documents of the village history.</p>

4.3 Smart solutions: actions, outputs and results

Below, the main activities that contribute to each priority are highlighted. It has to be noted, that activities often contribute to more than one specific objective, which is presented in the table below.

4.3.1 Maintaining the communal spirit and appealing feel of the Raudanmaa area (Objective 1.1)

Activity 1.1.1: Smart village hall – multiservice center

Phase 1 activities: This is the activity where our major effort lies in 2020. Phase 1 in our planning is the smart village hall. The optical fibre network that we have built in the village is utilised strongly in the smart village hall services. We have started a feasibility & design study for building or renovating a multiservice centre for various operators and user groups that would serve as the main hub for activities and services to the residents and visitors in the area. The planning work started with idea gathering with a questionnaire from all villagers and continues 2019-5/2020 with more detailed planning project to create a concrete ground plan and budget and funding plan for the smart village hall project. The main activities in the project are:

- describing the customer paths for the multi-functional centre
Ongoing
- creating an initial space design and visualisation for the centre
Ongoing
- creating a suggestion of land use planning for city of Kangasala on the village area
- developing a scalable concept for a multiservice centre that could be significant within the whole province
- creating the budget and business plan for the multi-service centre main project

For this we have funding and a partner consultant. Plans for common workshops are ready – will be executed after Covid-19 restrictions are loosened. Potential partners mapping for building project /eco-building has also be carried out.

Activity 1.1.2: Digital Village Hub

We want to increase co-operation and involvement of all villagers and associations within the area to discuss issues that affect all villagers, such as taking care of the cultural heritage environment, woods and lakes and making action plans for the future. To enhance our village visibility and separate us from many similar rural areas, we need to strengthen our brand and bring out our unique strengths. We need to involve and educate elderly people in digital channels so that they can utilize all the services available for them in the future.

This would be developed in co-operation with partnering villages (Luopioinen/Talviainen etc.). First planning meeting to kick off the project was held in March 2020. Target to seek partnership from the

municipalities as well, such as Business Kangasala & Visit Kangasala who already co-operate with neighbouring towns

4.3.2 Ensuring smooth services for residents, visitors and tourists (Objective 1.2)

Activities 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 described in relation to the 'Smart village hall' above, also contribute to this objective.

Our smart village hall could work as a services enabler for different service providers. The digital village hub could be an app/portal enabling local sharing economy and also commercial use of assets, expertise and services in the village. One possibility is in the first phase to utilize existing platforms for collecting the data and share the information and links to the services on village web site for everyone to find.

This initiative has kicked off as a common planning project with partner villages.

4.3.3 Developing nature and rural tourism (Objective 2.1)

Activity 2.1.1: Make a study of the Nearby farm concept

One of our key ideas is to widen the smart village hall in its final phase to encompass the concept of "Nearby farm" by adapting the Dutch Kinderboerderij concept to Finnish farming & rural life with a new twist. We could provide a setting for children's farm that could offer educational and therapeutical services utilizing the animals and gardens around our village hall. This "nearby farm" concept could include day-care and therapy farm facilities specialized in agricultural life and nature. The concept could be reproducible and marketed as a pedagogic and therapeutic service enabler where 3rd parties could utilize the spaces and assets to deliver and offer the services.

The preparation of a study of the Nearby farm concept, benchmarks of children's farms and green care therapeutic services started in 2020. The list of related associations and potential benchmark companies identified include:

<https://www.gcfinland.fi/kehittaminen/maaseudun-hyvinvointiyrittajyyden-koordinatiohanke/>

<https://www.vskbn.nl/>

<https://agrarischekinderopvang.nl/>

<https://www.landbouwzorg.nl/index.php>

Further targets include:

We find it important to **maintain diverse traditional biotopes and the cultural environment** which is typical for Finnish sparsely populated villages. To do that, we can support local farmers keeping herds on the grasslands and produce local food, get funding for restoring footpaths after large forest cuts, create arboretum of a variety of species of trees, create a village & nature trail, etc. Ideas rising from the local community must be gathered and tested. These help to maintain the originality of the village environment and increase the recreational possibilities of the villagers' near nature as well as boost the travel industry.

Activity 2.1.2: Mapping available pathways and routes

As we do not have well known routes or scenic large-scale attractions, we aim to get **our routes (hiking/bike/riding/skiing/snowmobile/canoeing) mapped**, in digital format to ensure they are accessible to all. Making the routes visible also helps branding the village and increases vitality. First step is to find possible route locations and agree any development activities with the landowners. Publishing the routes can be done by in an established platform or mobile app, possibly with additional rich content such as viewpoints, main historical buildings, history of the village, events, services, etc.

More specificall, planned actions include :

- Gathering the villagers' favourite routes
- Mapping suitable hiking/riding/biking routes (Co-operation with landowners: volunteer/school project to study suggested and available route locations)
- Cooperation with local orienteering club possible
- Possible to set up volunteer/school project to insert public and commonly available routes in Lipas service (Finnish public routes database) once usage policies with relevant parties have been agreed

4.3.4 Securing rural business viability and housing (Objective 2.2)

All the actions planned support the local community viability and attractiveness of the village as a place of living and working (see activities 1.1.1 and 1.1.2). We could also think about new ways of marketing short-or longer term rental opportunities for people who are interested in moving into a village, but want a “trial period” without having to buy a property immediately.

4.3.5 Protecting the lake ecosystem (Objective 2.3)

Activity 2.3.1: Creating artificial wetlands (experimental project)

We need to increasingly take care of our important **lake ecosystems, as the quality of water** has decreased in past 20 years.

One idea is to co-operate with agricultural entrepreneurs, research organisations and authorities to **create artificial small wetlands to decrease the amount of nutrients that end up in the lakes** - with automated sensor-based measuring & reporting of the results. Getting the water quality better we ensure that we maintain the lake nature and continue to be attractive location for residents, summer cottage owners and renters. No activity planned yet, but will be discussed with local farmers.

4.3.6 Developing communication and branding (Objective 3.1)

Activity 3.1.1: Developing communications plan

Communication should be enhanced by yearly communication plan & clearly agreed responsibilities. This would enhance the sense of community and make the communication more effective. To keep everyone informed of common issues, we need to organize responsibilities clearly and coordinate actions

effectively, giving out well-formed information of plans and activities

Local elderly people will be gathered in digital workshops to learn about village digital communication channels after Covid -19 restrictions pass

Activity 3.1.2: Develop the Raudanmaa brand

Raudanmaa branding plan has been completed in April 2020 as a study project in Tampere University service design course. Our next aims are:

- to develop more concrete visuals and brand elements that can be used in all communication (abranded comms kit). This could be done in co-operation with design schools with marketing/visual/graphic design curriculae;
- create a one pager for the village that can be shared in pare/digital format;
- digital billboard “Welcome sign” at the entrance to our village area would also be a novel idea, where changing information about village happenings and services could be seen.

Activity 3.1.3: New web pages (ongoing)

New web site combining all our village associations under one umbrella site is under development to include clear and timely information to develop our communication.

In the next image you can see our main targets for the the following year on a simple timeline:

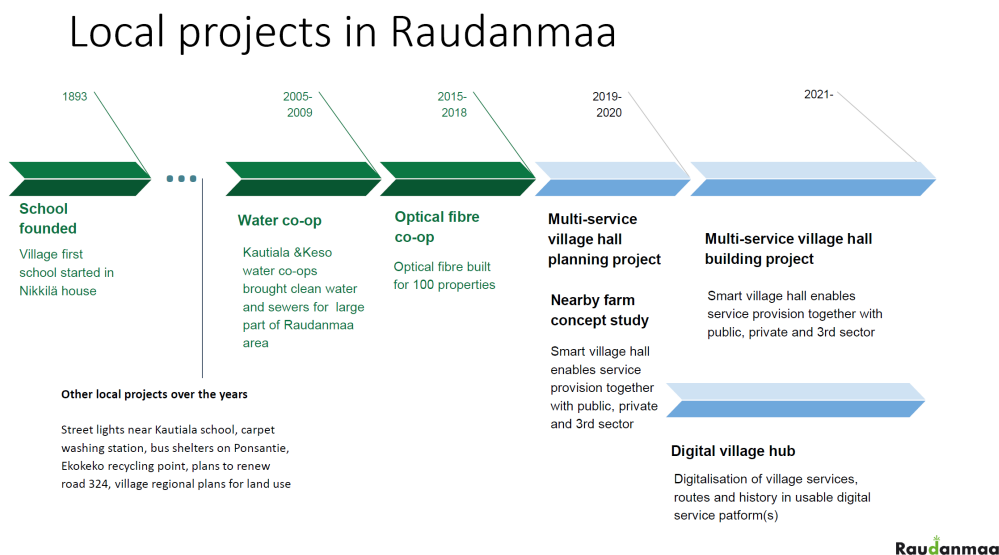


Table 4: Activities to achieve objectives

<p>1.1 Maintaining the communal spirit and appealing feel of the Raudanmaa area</p>	<p>Activity 1.1.1: Build smart village hall Creating a common venue for villagers’ gatherings, recreation, and service providers. Enabling the flexible use of assets & facilities of the hall and its yard for public and 3rd sector as well as businesses.</p> <p>Activity 1.1.2: Utilising/creating digital portal of services Common project with partner villages. Gathering village services & history in digital format, accessible to all. The digital hub would be a point of information sharing and interactive communication to residents, newcomers & visitors of life near nature and the opportunities and services within Raudanmaa area.</p>	<p>During 2020 we have a concept, visualization and business plan for our smart village hall</p> <p>During 2020-21 we have a digitizing plan with responsibilities and planned tools/platforms</p>	<p>Villagers are committed to our common smart village hall project and we are ready to kick off building/restoration project to create a communal heart for our village</p> <p>With the digitizing plan we can go forward to store the heritage information and local services in digital format</p>
<p>1.2 Ensuring smooth services for residents, visitors and tourists</p>	<p>Activity 1.2.1: Build smart village hall The smart village hall could also serve as a basis for service providers who could rent spaces to offer services</p> <p>Activity 1.2.1: Creating a digital Village hub Developing an app/portal enabling local sharing economy and also commercial use of assets, expertise and services in the village.</p>	<p>During 2020-21 we have a concept plan and first draft of the services listing usable for all</p>	<p>Residents and visitors alike can find local services: reinforcing business opportunities and increasing local appeal of the area</p>
<p>2.1 Developing nature and rural tourism</p>	<p>Activity 2.1.1: Make a study of the Nearby farm concept, benchmarks of children’s farms and green care therapeutic services</p> <p>Activity 2.1.2: Mapping available pathways and routes (walk/bike/riding/skiing/snowmobile/canoe routes) and selecting how to make them publicly visible</p> <p>Suggested (no active planning on these at the moment):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoring footpaths after large forest cuts Creating arboretum of a variety of species of trees 	<p>Business plan (summer 2020)</p> <p>Study of the “Nearby farm” concept and feasibility is done.</p> <p>Start a study with local landowners and residents on possible routes that could be utilized publicly.</p>	<p>Better understanding of opportunities / feasibility of the Nearby farm concept</p>

<p>2.2 Securing rural business viability and housing</p>	<p>[Further activities are to be confirmed] Joint Activities supporting this are: 1.1.1 Build smart village hall and 1.2.1: Creating a digital Village hub with service listing</p>		<p>New innovative and feasible businesses in our smart village hall, combining it to day-care/school/therapeutic services – utilizing the full potential of the property and area</p>
<p>2.3 Protecting the lake ecosystem</p>	<p>Activity 2.3.1: Creating artificial wetlands Co-operate with agricultural entrepreneurs, research organisations and authorities to create artificial small wetlands, with automated sensor-based measuring & reporting of the results. [Further activities are to be confirmed]</p>		<p>Decrease the amount of nutrients that end up in the lakes</p>
<p>3.1 Developing communication and branding</p>	<p>Activity 3.1.1: Developing communications plan Activity 3.1.2: Develop the Raudanmaa brand Activity 3.1.3: New web pages (ongoing)</p>	<p>Village communication plan, responsibilities defined. Elderly villagers workshops for digital info channels on village issues Branding plan exists NEXT: Brand elements, templates for documents and digital use One-pager for the village Digital billboard when entering the village. Web pages with new coherent look & feel and brand message of the village</p>	<p>Coherent and regular communication enabled, strong brand of Raudanmaa enhanced Raudanmaa brand made visible and appealing, information of the village accessible Communication channels promoted, also elderly people get to follow the activities in the village and take part in digital forums discussions – increase the sense of belonging to the community</p>

V. MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

Our village strategy is managed by the village association, in close co-operation with other associations in Raudanmaa. The evaluation and monitoring of the plan will be done by the villagers themselves and updates of the plan will be done yearly/where needed. Updates could consist on needed actions to achieve the objectives set in the plan.

The financial and business plan for our multiservice center flagship project will be finalized in 2020 summer in agreed workshops with a consulting company (slight delay towards summer 2020 due to Corona-virus situation).

During the financial planning we intend to interview and talk to other villages that have had similar projects to get good benchmarking data on the feasibility of this type of project.

Our estimation is that as in most of our earlier projects, we will fund the large projects, such as the smart village hall building partly by voluntary work by the villagers, partly by LEADER investment funds. As the budget of our village hall will be substantial, we are also considering other possibilities for funding, such as crowdsourcing (training session on this coming up in May/2020) and private & public foundations.

Until now, we have gathered an Excel sheet of possible local, national funding possibilities, including LEADER funding, different public and private foundations and ministries as well as crowdfunding options. As soon as we have an action plan ready, we will evaluate and plan for the funding needed also for the smaller activities outside the smart village hall project.

Tools:

- Project plans and activities are maintained in Trello online tool
- Documentation kept in Village association Google Drive

VI. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Stakeholder engagement in strategy development

We have had survey on the needs of the villagers (106 respondents) and a workshop on the services they would want in the village (30 participants) in 2019. We have also had workshops with most of the village associations on the strategy development, including SWOT analysis of the village and idea gathering of the ideal village.

We have kept common workshops and meetings with local associations and local villagers to work on the strategy development, and identifying the vision, targets, and actions that are seen as most important for us within the next few years. Our activist group will be working on the village strategy still within the smart village hall concepting & business planning workshops in spring 2020. And we are planning to do an online survey to gather input and comments on the latest strategy version as soon as it is finalized.

6.2 Key channels of communication and awareness raising among citizens

We used Google Forms to arrange the online survey for village services in 2019. We have had several village cafes (latest one being a virtual café using Zoom) where information of the ongoing activities has been shared. There is always room for comments and discussion and information on where people can send feedback later. We also use our Facebook channels, word of mouth information sharing and occasional visibility in local newspapers to raise awareness of development projects.

In current situation when face-to-face gatherings are not recommended, we may need to share information also via distributing leaflets – as not all the elderly people are using the digital channels.

Zoom and Facebook live have been used in arranging virtual children’s hobby clubs. For arts and crafts classes all materials have been delivered to kids in their mailboxes and everyone can take part in guided sessions via online tool (partly by help of parents).

6.3 Planned actions to mobilise stakeholders

In the current situation, when all gatherings are banned, we are using online tools (Village association Facebook pages and web pages) to keep everyone well informed and motivated to step in when help is needed as more intense planning/building/restoring work starts. We will continue to arrange virtual “village cafes” using online meeting tools. Also some kind of survey on the strategy work is still needed after we finalize our workshops in 2020 on the smart village hall business plans.

We have special channels (Whatsapp group and Facebook group and Trello) for the close activist group involved in smart village hall planning. Usually when concrete help and more hands are needed, there are additional volunteers ready to step in. When projects start, we have a kick-off info meeting open for all, and regular info sessions in context with village cafes, for example. Workshops of smaller focused groups to manage and follow-up the activities are also needed in the phase when work really gets started.