



## Bisnes Lande project on youth entrepreneurship

A CAP funded project that successfully promote youth entrepreneurship in the sparsely populated areas of rural Finland.

### EAFRD-funded projects

**Location:** Saarijärvi-Viitasaari region, Finland

**Programming period:** 2014-2020

**Priority:** P6 - Social inclusion & local development

**Focus Area:** Local development

**Measures:** M07 - Basic services & village renewal

**Funding:** Total budget 241 612.50 (EUR)

EAFRD 101 477.25 (EUR)

National/Regional 140 135.25 (EUR)

**Timeframe:** 2021 to 2023

**Project promoter:** LAG Viisari

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### Lessons & Recommendations

Entrepreneurship support develops many skills that are desirable in all kinds of professional contexts.

Involving youth workers in this type of entrepreneurship project can help boost its possibilities and its impact legacies.

### Context

Finland is the most sparsely populated country in the EU. It has 16 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> on average, while in the Viisari Local Action Group's (LAG) area, the population density is just 5 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. Primarily a rural area, with long distances between urban centres, 95% of the Viisari LAG's population face significant challenges relating to public service provision, especially in the more remote rural areas. In a context of population decline and ageing, this project was developed to promote youth entrepreneurship by encouraging local young people to identify opportunities to earn a living or start a business.

### Summary

The Bisnes Lande project developed the entrepreneurial skills of young people and reinforced the idea that their home region can be a place of opportunity and creativity. Targeting the rural communities of the Saarijärvi-Viitasaari region and the Äänekoski municipalities, the project developed an operating model for creating an entrepreneurial youth network for people under the age of 29 where they can develop their ideas and commercialise their skills. At the same time, the project promoted entrepreneurship education across the wider region and raised awareness about new opportunities for young freelancers and small business owners. The implementation of all this has been a cooperative effort between youth actors, educational institutions, companies, municipalities, and associations.

### Project results

- 77 workshops, events, and other activities for young people.
- 12 young entrepreneurs and five others have found freelance work outside of the network.

### Objectives

The project aimed to promote the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the region and strengthen the area's image as a place of opportunity and innovation for young people. The project's network allows young entrepreneurs to learn new skills and do concrete things together thanks to the ideas, support, and encouragement of their peers.



## Activities

Specific activities implemented by the Bisnes Lande project included:

- Establishing partnerships with development companies, schools, universities, and municipalities.
- Establishing networks of enterprising young people to enable them to combine and complement their skills.
- Running competitions within the young entrepreneurs' network, such as the so-called "shark tank", where business ideas are presented and evaluated.
- Facilitating training opportunities on business development, product packaging ideas, marketing, communications, sales, etc. Helping young entrepreneurs to consider and plan for the all the elements of introducing commercial product/services.
- Providing one-to-one mentoring according to the needs of individual entrepreneurs, on topics such as goal setting, pricing, customer acquisition, or well-being and resilience.
- Organising networking events including celebrations - such as a VIP entrepreneur gala - to increase project participants' self-confidence and motivation while championing the values of inclusion and teamwork.
- Organising a programme of training and networking activities that increase dialogue between entrepreneurs and students, to inspire them to become entrepreneurs themselves.

One of Bisnes Lande's collaborations was with a local vocational school which contributes technology tools and teaching expertise. On their technology courses, young people could study drone filming, modelling, VR modelling and 3d printing, skills that can then become the basis of a young person's start-up initiative.

## Main results

The project has so far delivered 77 workshops, events, and other activities for young people.

Since the project was launched in January 2021, Bisnes Lande has provided freelance work opportunities to 12 young entrepreneurs and five others have found freelance work outside of the network.

## Key lessons

Entrepreneurship support develops many skills that are desirable in all kinds of professional contexts.

This type of project should not be limited to education providers and the involvement of youth workers in such entrepreneurship projects can help boost possibilities and successful impact legacies.

### Additional information:

▶ [youtube.com/channel/UCCepQf5cC2rCWlaKpgprzA](https://youtube.com/channel/UCCepQf5cC2rCWlaKpgprzA)

📷 [instagram.com/tuletekijaks/?hl=fi](https://instagram.com/tuletekijaks/?hl=fi)

▶ [youtube.com/watch?v=JN0OWSSzpyo](https://youtube.com/watch?v=JN0OWSSzpyo)



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