

Kehätyö Youth Employment Project

Opening the labour market to Finland's rural youth – providing support for employers as well as young people to find each other.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Mynämäki, Finland

Programming period: 2014-2020

Priority: P6 – Social inclusion and local development

Focus Area: Local development

Measures: M07 – Basic services & village renewal

Funding:	Total budget	113 965 (EUR)
	EAFRD	38 292 (EUR)
	National/regional	52 880 (EUR)
	Private/own	22 793 (EUR)

Timeframe: 06.11.2015 to 30.06.2019

Project promoter: Meri-Vakan 4H-association

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- 33 youth established their own business, through which a total of 58 young people were employed.
- The good results have encouraged the project cooperation network to continue their work after the project was completed.

Key lessons and recommendations

- Young people were most successfully reached through information events at local schools.
- Employers were able to contact the project directly when problems arose with any of the young people. This direct access to support resolved issues quickly.
- Due to poor public transport, it was important to get new employment opportunities near the homes of young people.

Context

Agriculture is intensive in the region of Varsinais-Suomi region, south-west of Finland and local farms have difficulties finding labour especially for seasonal jobs. It seemed that farms as well as other employers did not have access to sufficient information and only had a limited understanding about the specifics of youth employment. While, on the other hand, young people were insufficiently aware of work opportunities and did not seem to have sufficient confidence in their own skills and how to promote themselves. There was a clear need to connect both sides and to find each other.

To address this need, the 4H-association, together with four local municipalities, local farms and other employers wanted to create a new cooperation model, which would support 14-22yr old youngsters to enter the labour market; and for employers to find their labour force. Meri-Vakan 4H-association in Varsinais-Suomi region, is one of the many local 4H-associations in the Finnish countryside, teaching entrepreneurial skills to young people, helping them find their first jobs. '4H' is an international network of organisations whose mission is to engage youth to reach their fullest potential while advancing the field of youth development; 4H stands for Head, Heart, Hands, Health.

In 2015, the association contacted the Leader Action Group (LAG) Ravakka and Varsin Hyvä that helped them develop the idea into an inter-territorial LEADER project.

Summary

The Meri-Vakan 4H-association in the Varsinais-Suomi region, south-west of Finland, is one of many local 4H-associations in the Finnish countryside teaching entrepreneurial skills to young people to help them find their first jobs. Agriculture is intensive in Varsinais-Suomi and local farms have difficulties finding labour, especially for seasonal jobs. It seemed that employers did not have access to sufficient information and only had a limited understanding about the specifics of youth employment. While, on the other hand, young people were insufficiently aware of job opportunities and did not seem to have sufficient confidence in their own skills and how to promote themselves.

The 4H-association created, together with four local municipalities, local farms and other employers, a new cooperation model that supported the efforts of 14-22-year-old young people to enter the labour market. The successful project exceeded its targets and the partnership has continued to operate with its focus on fostering youth employment.

Project results

- 149 young people found employment (initial project target was 120).
- 91 youngsters worked for farms and other employers.

Objectives

The main aim of the project was to establish a new cooperation model, where information about job opportunities and the understanding about youth employment was more accessible and present among the various networks of farms, businesses, employers, and associations. The ultimate objective was to reduce youth unemployment.

Additional operational objectives included:

- To reach all young people (14- to 22-year-olds), companies, farms and communities in the project area and introducing them to employment / recruitment opportunities in the area in a variety of manners.
- To motivate farms and companies to employ young people.
- To increase young people's confidence in their skills and how to promote themselves better.
- To create a new kind of collective spirit in the municipalities to promote the employment of young people and at the same time promote cooperation between different actors.



Meri-Vakan 4H-association

Activities

The project involved the following activities:

- Creating employer groups including farms and other businesses, that all had similar type of employment needs (usually for a few hours a day rather than a full-time position).
- Organising employment and entrepreneurship information events and training sessions for 14-22-year-old young people (e.g. through local schools).
- Teaching the required skills to young people in line with the needs of the employers.
- Organising youth employment information events for employers to improve their capacity for hiring young people.
- Organising face-to-face meetings and discussions about job opportunities with young people in the target area. Special attention was thereby given to vulnerable groups and school dropouts.
- Organising company visits to farms for the participating young people.
- Finding employers for the participating young people.
- Using both social and local print media to raise public awareness about the new youth employment model.
- Bringing together different youth actors such as municipal social workers and youth associations to better reach young people and improve their awareness of the new model.

Main results

- The project proved very successful. Young people found jobs quicker and easier than expected and the quantitative targets of the project were exceeded.
- 11 employer groups were established (initial project target was 10).
- Employers became more interested in employing young people when they were given information about the special features of employing young people along with them receiving some hand-holding support at the same time.
- 149 young people found employment (initial project target was 120).
- 91 youngsters worked for farms and other employers.
- 33 youth established their own business, through which a total of 58 young people were employed. The start-up companies have survived. Because of this positive experience, the setting up of new businesses has become easier due to the raised awareness and learning achieved through the project.



- The good results have encouraged the project cooperation network to continue the work for youth employment after the project was completed.

Key lessons and recommendations

- Young people were most successfully reached through information events at local schools.
- Employers were able to find the project easily, and a lot of information about the special features of youth employment was shared with them.
- Employers were able to contact the project directly when problems arose with any of the young people.
- This direct access to support resolved issues quickly.
- New employers were encouraged to provide employment opportunities to young people supported by the project. This resulted in an increased number of local jobs being accessible for young people.
- As public transport was poor in the project area, it was important to get new employment opportunities near the homes of the young people to give them an equally good opportunity to find employment as young people have in cities.

