

T5.2 Case study report (Code FI8B)

Vital agriculture and forestry in Uusimaa region (The ELINA Uusimaa project)

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Table of Contents

Acronyms & Abbreviations.....	748
Introduction.....	749
Context	751
Regional and local features.....	751
Education	757
Labor.....	759
Agriculture, multifunctional farming.....	761
Rural tourism and leisure time visitors.....	764
The project's practice context	765
Origin of the practice	770
Actors involved.....	773
Style of activities promoted	775
Environmental aspects.....	777
Innovativeness and replicability	779
Synergies and networking.....	783
Policies and institutional supports	786
Impact and perspectives	790
References.....	793
Annex 1- The list of interviews	795

List of Figures

Figure1. The relief map of Finland.	752
Figure 2. The Corine Land Cover (2018) area of the province of Uusimaa Finland.....	753
Figure 3. The population of the province of Uusimaa by age groups, years 2000-2019.....	756

Figure 4. The migration and natural change of population in the province of Uusimaa, years 2000-2019.	756
Figure 5. Changes in population between 2019 and 2010 by the municipalities of the province of Uusimaa.	757
Figure 6. The share of people with education of tertiary level qualification, by the Municipalities of Uusimaa, year 2019.....	758
Figure 7. Economic and Population Dependency Ratios 2010-2018.....	759
Figure 8. Unemployment rate in Uusima and Finland 2010-2018.....	760
Figure 9. Number of farms and average cultivated area (ha, UAA/farm) in Uusimaa.	762
Figure 10. Number of farmers on private owned farms by age category in 2014–2019.	763

List of Tables

Table 1. Key figures of the population of the province of Uusimaa in 2019	755
Table 2. Population aged 15 or over by level of education in 2019	758
Table 3. Labor force by industry in 2018.....	760
Table 4 Interviews	795

Acronyms & Abbreviations

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
EDR	Economic Dependency Ratio
ELY	ELY centres are regional bodies of the Finnish state administration for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment issues
EU	European Union
NGO	Non-government organization
PDR	Population Dependency Ratio
UAA	Utilized Agricultural Area
WP	Work Package

Introduction

This case study report presents the development actions for farms in southern Finland during the projects Elinvoimainen maatilatalous Uudellamaalla - ELINA (Vital Agriculture and forestry in the province of Uusimaa, ELINA I) and Elinvoimainen maatalo ELINA II HUMKS (Vital Farm, ELINA II). This case study is one of 30 RURALIZATION WP5.2 case studies. The detailed guidelines for these studies and reports were presented in WP5 Task 5.2 input paper in July 2020 (Sivini, Vitale, & Kovach, 2020).

The farmers' advisory organization Proagria Etelä-Suomi (Proagria southern Finland) has been responsible for administrating both projects. The ELINA I project was implemented in the province of Uusimaa between 1st November 2015 and 31st December 2018. At the same time, Proagria Etelä-Suomi had a similar project covering two other provinces. The ELINA II project started in 1st November 2018 and it will be finished till the end of 2021. ELINA II HUMKS was implemented in a larger area of five provinces in southern Finland.

In these projects the operating circumstances and profitability of farms are developed by organizing information events and training to farmers. The training is a type of professional updating education for farmers. Also people who are just planning to be a successor are allowed and welcomed to participate in events and training. The trainings of the projects are focusing on farm investments and generational renewal issues and improving the profitability and competitiveness of farms taking into account also environmental management aspects.

Although the later project, ELINA II HUMKS has operated the province of Uusimaa too, the main focus in this case is in that province and in the ELINA I project. To get a better understanding about the context of farming development actions, this report features an outlook to the regional features of the practice. The outlook is based mostly on statistical data about the geographic, demographics, social, economic and the labour and livelihood features of the Uusimaa region.

The analysis of this practice in this case study was deepened by the qualitative data collected by interviews in 12 semi-structured in-depth interviews. The interviews were done between 29th September 2020 and 18th December 2020. The Interviewees were farmers, agricultural



D5.2 30 CASE STUDIES ON RURAL NEW COMERS, NEW ENTRANTS TO FARMING AND SUCCESSORS

advisors and experts, consultants, local and regional administrative officers and specialists of farmers' union. The additional information was gathered from the project documents. The focus group discussion about this case study was held online on the 22nd of April with the board of the Proagria Etelä-Suomi. The preliminary results were discussed in a webinar on the 14th of June 2021.

Context

Regional and local features

The Finnish administrative structure has three main levels: the national (state), the regional (provinces) and the local (municipalities). The state takes care of the national administrative tasks. At the local level municipalities are in charge of the actual provision of basic services for their inhabitants. The municipalities have created many common organisations for specific tasks that ask for pooled resources (e.g. special healthcare, rescue operations, vocational education). The municipalities have a right to collect income and real estate taxes and the state provides a special subsidy to finance part of the tasks. Business development, rural/urban development, business consultancy services etc. are not obligatory for the municipalities, but they are actively engaged with these activities (Kuhmonen & Ruuska, 2020).

The province of Uusimaa differs from other regions in Finland by many aspects. It is a somewhat special case for the rural development activities too. It is the most populated province of Finland with 1.7 million people and with the biggest and the capital city of Helsinki. About 31 % of Finnish inhabitants live in the province of Uusimaa (Statistics Finland, 2021).

The total land area of Uusimaa is 9,098 km². That is about three percent of total land area of Finland. Inland waters cover 470 km² and seawater 6,491 km² of the total area of Uusimaa (LUKE, 2020a). The topography of Uusimaa is quite continuous, shelving downwards from inland towards the Gulf of Finland (**Errore. L'origine riferimento non è stata trovata.**).

There are roughly five main types of landscape: the Salpausselkä ridges from south west to north-west, the rocky highlands in the middle part of the province, the region of lakes in the west, the river valleys in the east and the coastal archipelago in the south. The archipelago zone of the Gulf of Finland borders the province in the south. The province of Uusimaa has over 6,300 km of sea coast including almost 11,000 islands and islets (Rinkinen & Kuusisto, 2012).

The greater part of the area of Uusimaa belongs to the northern coniferous forest belt. Even if Uusimaa is the most populated province of Finland, forests and bogs cover about 60 % of the area. The forests are mainly the conifer and mixed forests. The coastal area is more wooded than the inland cropping zone that is a mosaic of lakes, wooded moraine ridges and

fields on the west side of the province (Rinkinen & Kuusisto, 2012). The utilized agricultural area (UAA) of Uusimaa is about 20 % of total land area (Figure).

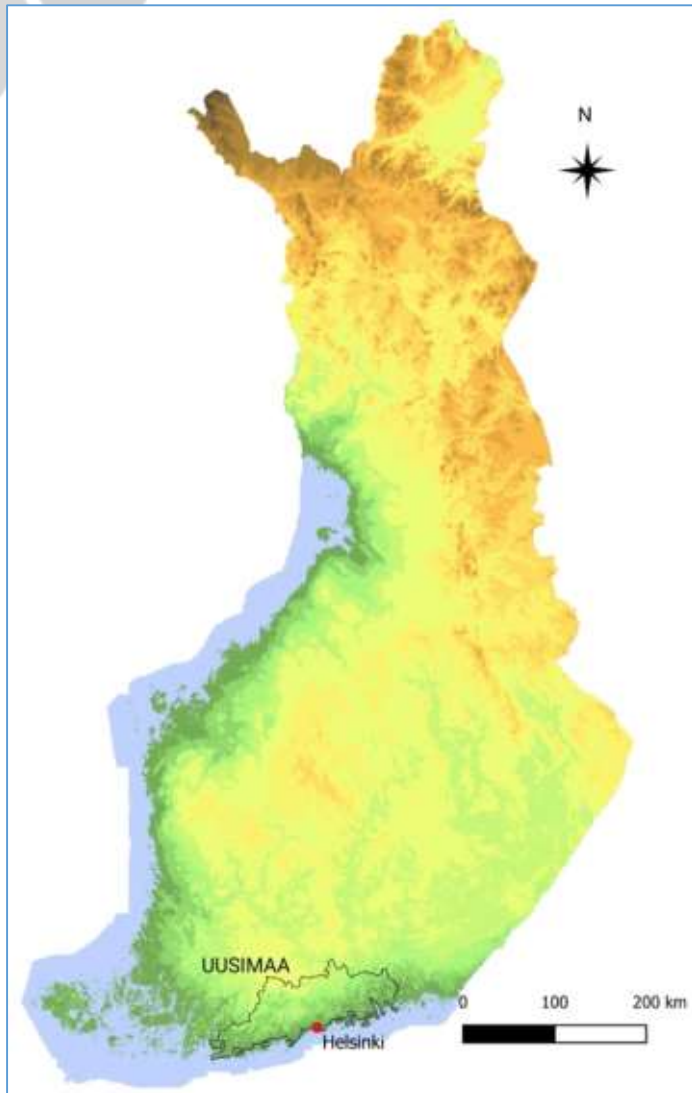


Figure1. The relief map of Finland.

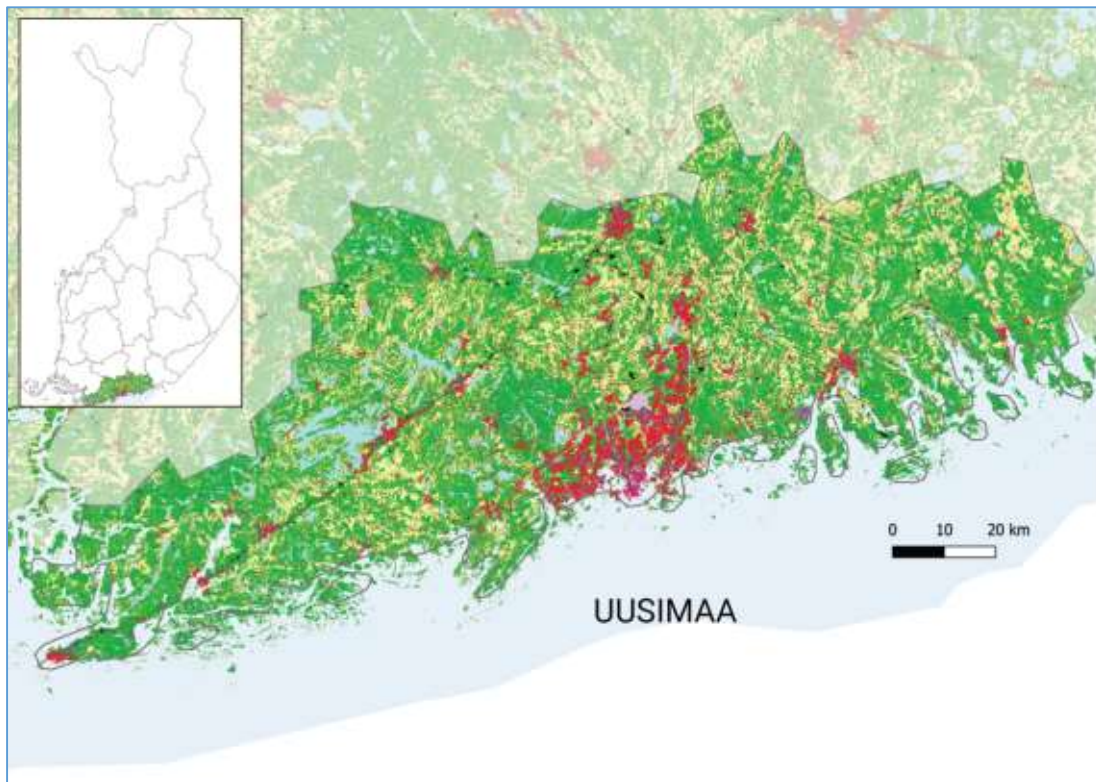


Figure 6. The Corine Land Cover (2018) area of the province of Uusimaa Finland.

Source: Finnish Environment Institute

In the province area of Uusimaa there are 98 Natura 2000 areas. Their total area of is 169,306 hectares. Over half of that total area is waters. In addition, six other Natura 2000 areas are situated by minor parts in the province of Uusimaa. Of the Province of Uusimaa Natura sites, there are 74 sites that are listed under the Habitats Directive (SAC), 20 sites listed under both the Habitats and Birds Directives and 4 sites only under the Birds Directive (Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council, 2020b).

The population of the Province of Uusimaa was 1,689,725 in 2019. The population has grown 21 % since the year 2000 while in the whole Finland the growth has been only 7 %. The population is ageing also in this area of the highest population density in Finland. The average age of the population of Uusimaa is 41 years, about two years less than among all Finnish citizens. The number of retiring age population, 65 or more years old people, has grown 84 % in last twenty years. The working age population is now about 14 percent higher than in 2000. At the same period, the birth rate has not been that high, the growth of population of 0-14 years has been only 8 percent and the share of that age category is lower than retiring age population (Figure). The transitions between age categories are not that dramatic that

are among the whole Finnish population where only the category of 65 or more years has grown in last twenty years.

The population density of Uusimaa was 185.7 inhabitants/km² in 2019 while the province with the second biggest density, Varsinais-Suomi had 44.9 and the whole Finland 18.2 inhabitants/km². The whole province of Uusimaa is not that highly populated though. In the urban-rural typology nine of 26 municipalities are categorized as urban, nine as rural areas close to urban areas and six as rural heartland areas. The typology used by Statistics Finland is available in small grid format (GIS) with seven categories and in municipality level format with four categories (Helminen et al., 2014; Kuhmonen & Ruuska, 2020).

There are 26 municipalities but 70 % of the inhabitants live in the three biggest cities Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa. In Helsinki, the population was 653,835 and population density 3,051.7 inhabitants/km² in 2019 while the smallest population was in the municipality of Pukkila, 1,860 inhabitants and the most sparsely populated municipality Lapinjärvi had only 7.9 inhabitants/km². In rural areas¹ live 7.5 % of the whole Uusimaa population but on the other hand there are ten municipalities where over 90 % of the people live in rural areas. Nine out of 26 municipalities had the population predominance of males while females had predominance at the provincial level (51.2 % vs. 48.8. % for females). The biggest difference in balance is in Helsinki, 52.5 % of the population are females (Statistics Finland, 2021).

¹ The classification system is implemented using a nationwide 250 x 250 m grid of cells. Each cell is categorized into one of seven classes according to the certain criterias. The details: http://stat.fi/meta/kas/kaupunki_maaseu_en.html.

D5.2 30 CASE STUDIES ON RURAL NEW COMERS, NEW ENTRANTS TO FARMING AND SUCCESSORS

Municipality ¹	Population 2019	Population density people/km ²	Average age, years	Inhabitants	
				in rural areas, %	Foreign background, %
Askola (M)	4 943	23.3	41.8	98.9	2.8
Espoo	289 731	927.7	38.6	0.1	18.1
Hanko (M)	8 199	69.8	49.5	98.5	4.6
Helsinki	653 835	3 051.7	40.8	0.0	16.5
Hyvinkää	46 470	144.0	43.6	1.4	6.2
Inkoo	5 386	15.4	46.0	97.1	4.4
Järvenpää	43 711	1 164.4	41.0	0.0	5.9
Karkkila	8 714	36.0	46.0	98.8	6.2
Kauniainen	9 797	1 663.3	42.9	0.0	8.4
Kerava	36 756	1 200.0	41.6	0.0	11.8
Kirkkonummi	39 586	108.1	40.2	7.5	8.8
Lapinjärvi (M)	2 606	7.9	47.8	98.1	5.7
Lohja	45 965	48.9	44.7	20.4	4.6
Loviisa (M)	14 772	18.0	47.9	99.0	4.4
Myrskylä	1 882	9.4	47.2	98.6	3.7
Mäntsälä	20 721	35.7	41.3	81.6	3.5
Nurmijärvi (M)	42 993	118.8	40.1	0.4	5.4
Pornainen (M)	5 035	34.4	40.3	91.1	3.0
Porvoo	50 380	77.0	42.9	11.2	7.3
Pukkila (M)	1 860	12.8	45.2	98.5	3.0
Raasepori	27 536	24.0	46.5	96.5	5.3
Sipoo (M)	21 170	62.3	41.5	3.9	5.4
Siuntio (M)	6 145	25.5	42.4	73.7	5.8
Tuusula	38 599	175.8	41.5	0.0	5.8
Vantaa	233 775	980.7	39.3	0.0	20.6
Vihti	29 158	55.9	41.8	21.7	5.7
Uusimaa, total	1 689 725	185.7	40.8	7.5	14.2
Finland, total	5 525 292	18.2	43.2	27.0	7.7

Table 5. Key figures of the population of the province of Uusimaa in 2019

¹ (M) = Predominance of males in population

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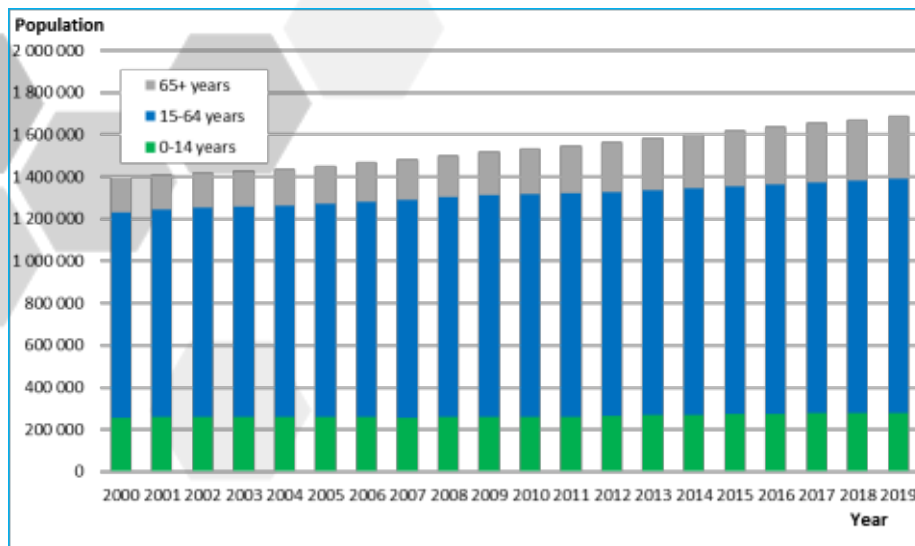


Figure 7. The population of the province of Uusimaa by age groups, years 2000-2019.

Source: derived from Statistics Finland (Population structure).

The population growth of the province of Uusimaa has been based on increased intermunicipal migration from other parts of Finland to Uusimaa which has been getting even stronger recent years. Also the positive international migration has grown the population of the Uusimaa region. The capital region and the three biggest cities of it have the most international population in Finland. The natural increase in population is still positive, but it has decreased recent years (Figure).

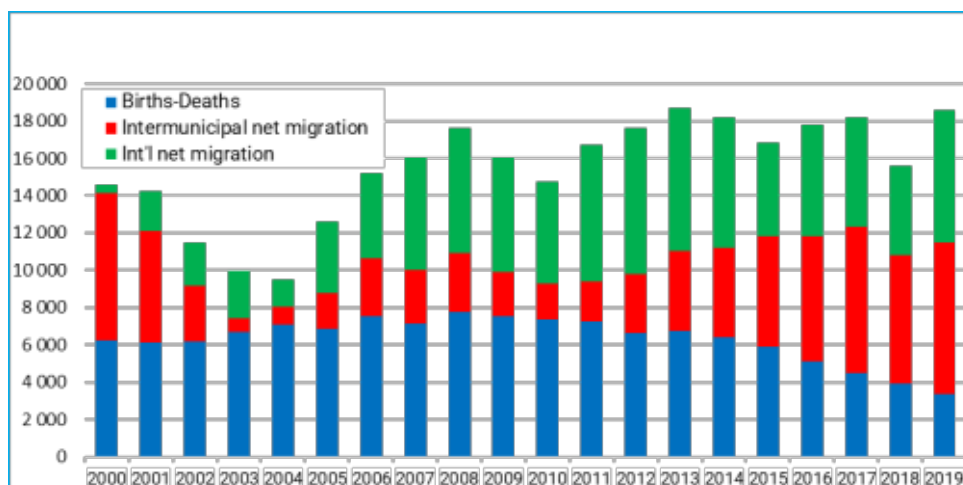


Figure 8. The migration and natural change of population in the province of Uusimaa, years 2000-2019.

Source: derived from Statistics Finland

There are still both winners and losers among the municipalities of Uusimaa too. From the year 2010 there are ten municipalities that have suffered from depopulation, most heavily the town of Hanko in the south-western corner of Uusimaa (Figure). On the contrary, there are six municipalities that have grown their population over ten percent in recent ten years. By absolute numbers the cities of Espoo, Helsinki and Vantaa have together increased their population by 140,767 people, 89 % of the total increase in Uusimaa between 2010 and 2019.

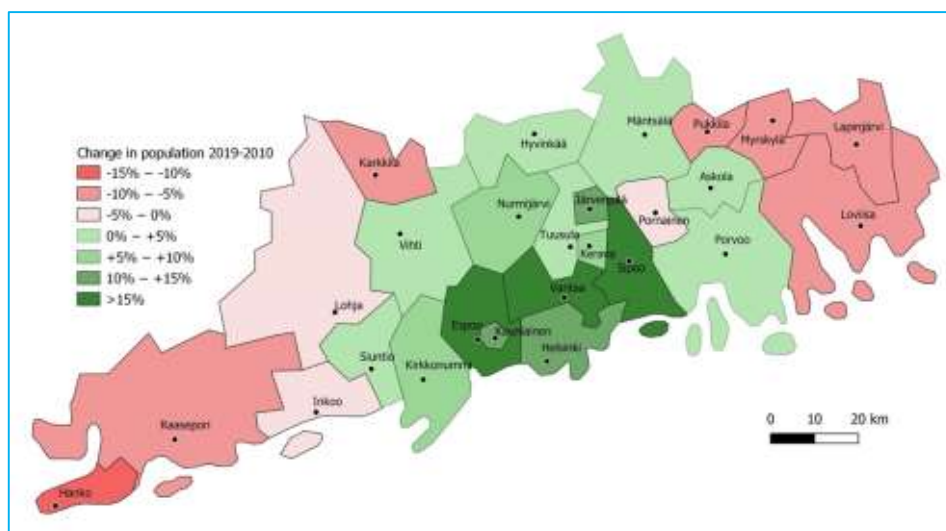


Figure 9. Changes in population between 2019 and 2010 by the municipalities of the province of Uusimaa.

Source: derived from Statistics Finland

Education

The education level of the Province of Uusimaa is higher than on average in Finland. The share of people with tertiary level education is about seven percentage points bigger than among the average citizens of Finland. The education with tertiary level qualification is more common among females than males, like it is at national level too (Table). The education level is not equal between the Uusimaa municipalities. In the smaller municipalities that have suffered from the depopulation the share of people with tertiary level education is notably smaller than in big cities and in the municipalities close to them.

D5.2 30 CASE STUDIES ON RURAL NEW COMERS, NEW ENTRANTS TO FARMING AND SUCCESSORS

Persons aged 15 or over		Helsinki	Uusimaa province	Finland
Without upper secondary qualification	Total	23 %	26 %	26 %
	Males	25 %	27 %	28 %
	Females	22 %	24 %	25 %
With at least upper secondary qualification	Total	77 %	76 %	74 %
	Males	75 %	74 %	73 %
	Females	79 %	73 %	75 %
With tertiary level qualification	Total	44 %	39 %	32 %
	Males	40 %	35 %	28 %
	Females	48 %	43 %	36 %

Table 6. Population aged 15 or over by level of education in 2019

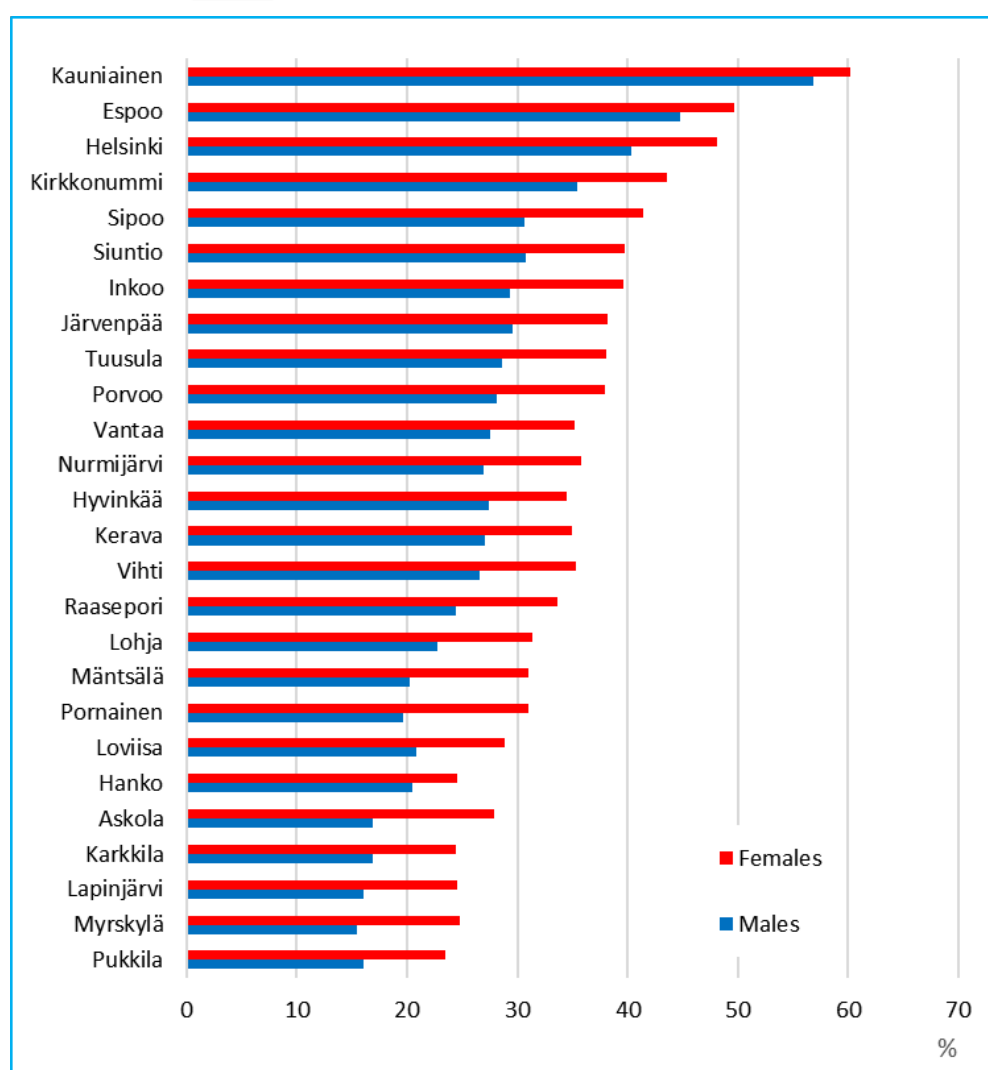


Figure 10. The share of people with education of tertiary level qualification, by the Municipalities of Uusimaa, year 2019.

Source: derived from Statistics Finland

Labor

The labor force of the province of Uusimaa was 870,203 people, 33 % of the total labor force of Finland and 52 % of the population of Uusimaa in 2018. The number of employed was 797,737 people, 48 % of total population and 72 % of working age (15-64 years) population. Due to increasing population, the labour force of Uusimaa has increased 7 % in last ten-year period. Still, the population is aging and so the PDR has gone upwards in Uusimaa and the EDR has not much improved. It is better than in the total population of Finland though (Figure 65). Also, the unemployment rate is lower than in national level. In recent years, the difference in the unemployment rate between Uusimaa and the whole Finland has slightly decreased. (Figure).

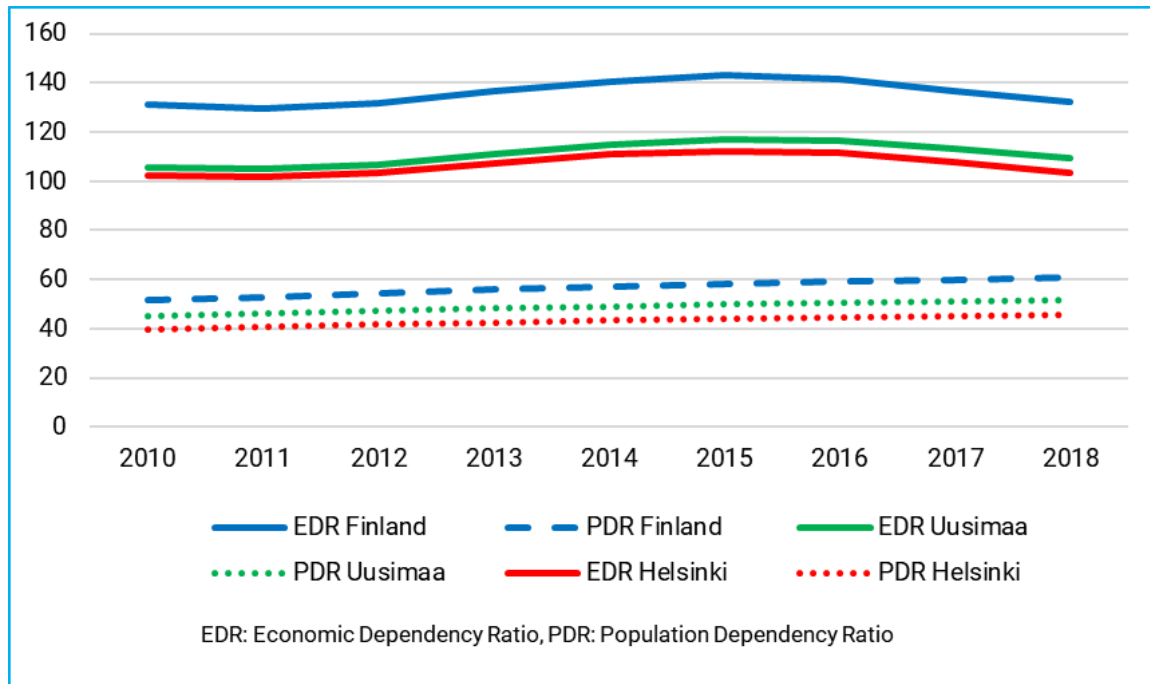


Figure 11. Economic and Population Dependency Ratios 2010-2018.

Source: derived from Statistics Finland.

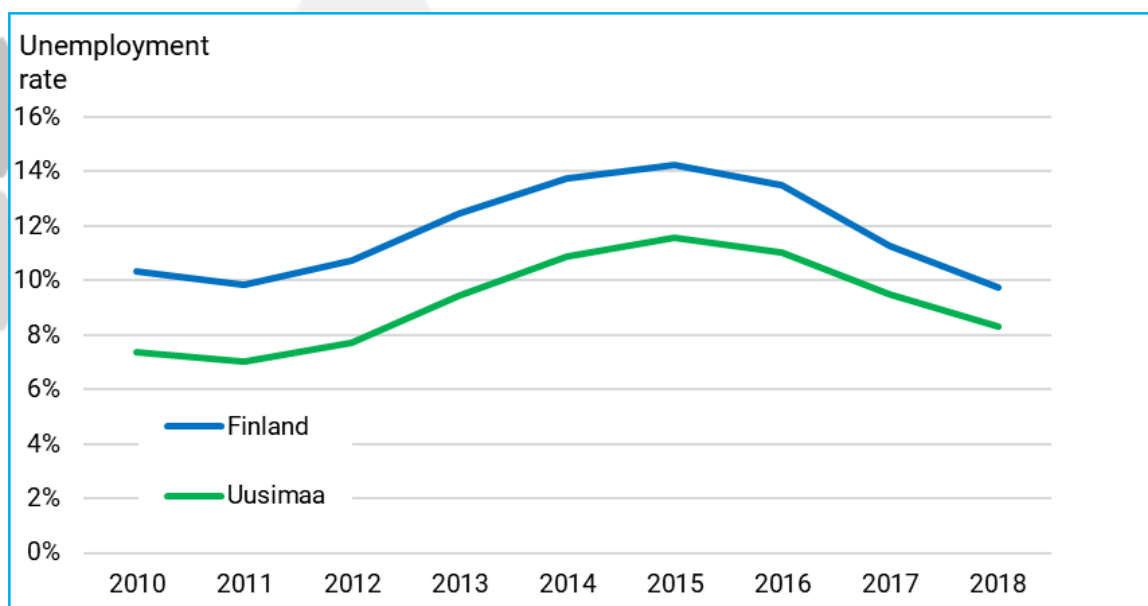


Figure 12. Unemployment rate in Uusimaa and Finland 2010-2018.

Source: derived from Statistics Finland.

Only about 0.5 % of the employed labour force of Uusimaa worked in the agriculture, forestry and fishing professions in 2018. There are still eight municipalities, Askola, Inkoo, Lapinjärvi, Loviisa, Myrskylä, Pornainen, Pukkila and Raasepori where the primary sector employs relatively more than on average in the other parts of Finland. In the province of Uusimaa, the service sector is a bigger employer and industry professions smaller than among the whole labour force of Finland (Table 32)¹. In all three big cities, Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa the service sector employs over 90 % of the employed labor force.

	Uusimaa province	Finland
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0.5 %	2.7 %
Industry	8.6 %	13.6 %
Private and public services, administration	90.9 %	83.7 %

Table 7. Labor force by industry in 2018.

Source: derived from Statistics Finland (Population, Employment).

¹ Division by industries derived from Employment Statistics of Finland (TOL 2008). Industry includes B. Mining and quarrying, C. Manufacturing, D. Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply.

The province of Uusimaa had 117,376 establishments of enterprises, about 29 % of Finnish total in 2019. Those enterprises employed 4.9 staff-years on average, while in Finland it was 3.8 staff years per enterprise. The biggest employers by staff-years are in the three biggest cities Vantaa (7.7 staff years/enterprise), Helsinki (5.5) and Espoo (5.2) while in the small municipalities of Pukkila and Pornainen the enterprises employed only 1.4 staff-years per enterprise on average. About 69 % of the establishments and 81 % of the employees of the enterprises are in the three biggest cities of Uusimaa. The population and the economic and administrative activities are highly centralized to those cities and very nearby municipalities. (Statistics Finland, 2020b).

Agriculture, multifunctional farming

The utilized agricultural area (UAA) of Uusimaa was 181,201 hectares in 2020. It is about 20 % of total land area which is much more than on average in Finland where the share of UAA is only about 7.5 % of the land area. There were 3015 farms in Uusimaa in 2020, over half of them locate in the six municipalities of the outer zone from the metropolitan area; Lohja, Raasepori, Mäntsälä, Loviisa, Porvoo and Vihti.

The animal husbandry has decreased in Uusimaa, only 11 % of the farms had farmed animals in 2020. Over half of the farms are for cereals production, but the share of other type of more undefined plant production farms have increased (LUKE, 2020b). In fact it is the only type farms that have increased recent years (Figure). Some of them have moved perhaps towards more passive and not that productive use probably because of the agricultural profitability and market reasons and by the agricultural policy incentives.

In 2019, there were 402 organic farms, 13.1 % of all farms and 15.1 % of UAA of the province of Uusimaa. In Finland, of all farms, the share of organic farms is 10.7 % of total farm number and 13.5 % of UAA. The number of organic farms of Uusimaa has increased 29 % in recent six years (LUKE, 2020; Ruokavirasto, 2020b). The greenhouse production and the production of outdoor vegetables had about 4 % of the farms of Uusimaa.

The number of active farms has been going down in the province of Uusimaa but the average size of farms (UUA/farm) has been growing. In recent decade, the average UUA/farm has grown over ten hectares to 60 hectares/farm (Figure). It is about ten hectares above the average Finnish farm size.

D5.2 30 CASE STUDIES ON RURAL NEW COMERS, NEW ENTRANTS TO FARMING AND SUCCESSORS

The average size of organic farms is even bigger, 68.1 hectares with total area of 22,362 hectares of organic farming. The biggest organic farm in Finland is in Vihti, Uusimaa with over 1,500 hectares of UUA (Laurea ammattikorkeakoulu, 2020; Ruokavirasto, 2020b).

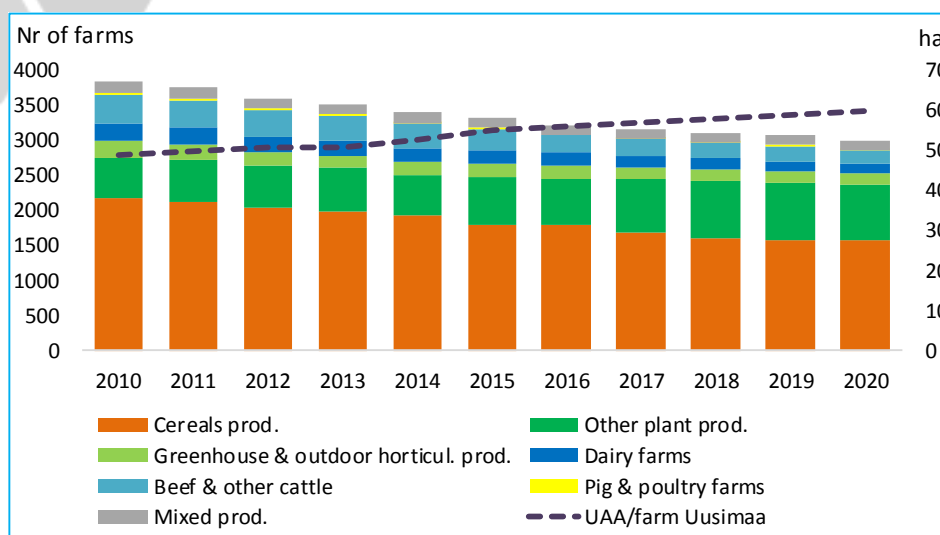


Figure 13. Number of farms and average cultivated area (ha, UAA/farm) in Uusimaa.

Source: LUKE (2020)

Over one third of the farms in Uusimaa have diversified their enterprises to other line of businesses. In most cases, the other business means producing some services like contracts for machinery works. Different kind on industrial works, e.g. subcontracting is a typical additional business for the diversified farms too. The other businesses alongside the farming are more common in Uusimaa than on average in Finnish farms. At national level, 29 % of the farms were these so-called diversified agricultural and horticultural enterprises in 2016.

Private persons own 85.8 % of the farms in Uusimaa in 2019. Less common were farming syndicates (8.4 %), heirs (2.4 %) and limited companies (2.2 %). The ownership structure by the legal form has been quite stable for a long time. The share of farming syndicates and limited companies has slightly risen but not significantly.

Males dominate farming in Uusimaa. Females were the main farmers only in 17 % of the farms. The average age of farmers is 53 years, about the same as an average farmer's age in Finland. About 19 % of the farmers are 65 or more years and only 15 % of the farmers are under 40 years old (Ruokavirasto, 2020a). From the statistics of active farms in EU-terms, i.e. farms that are eligible for EU's income support, we find that the share of farmers at retire-

ment age, persons of 65 or more years old has risen quite sharply in last five-year-period since 2014. A big cohort of farmers has slid to retirement age during the period and perhaps many of them not having a successor (Figure).

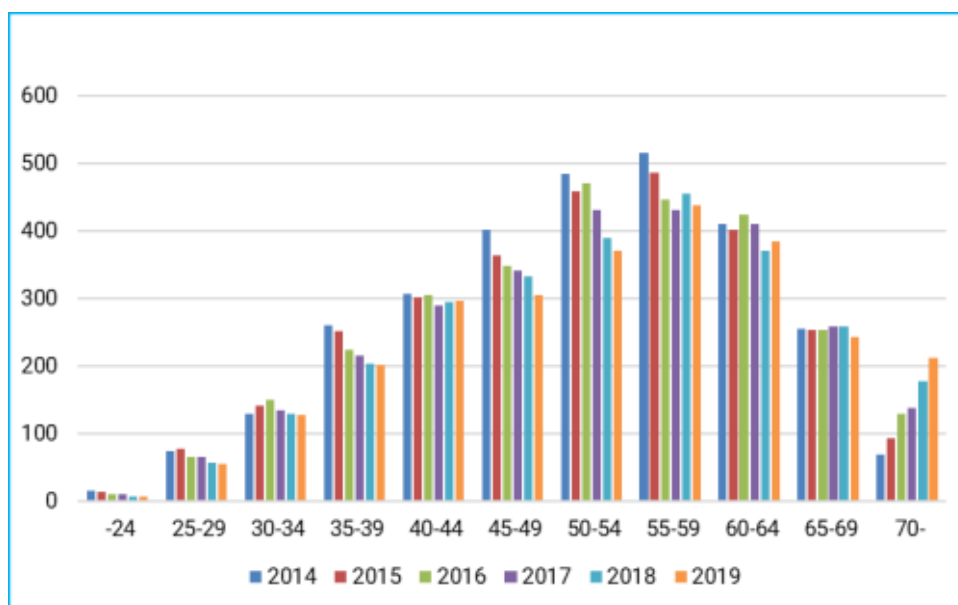


Figure 14. Number of farmers on private owned farms by age category in 2014–2019. Source: (LUKE, 2020).

The last CAP-reform gave new incentives to continue farming or even start farming as a new entrant in an older age when age constraints were removed also from Pillar II subsidies. These subsidies, like LFA-subsidy are of great economic significance in Finnish agriculture. The age of 40 is one limit for a starting aid of young farmers and for extra income subsidy of young farmers. In Uusimaa, their number has decreased 18 % since 2014, meanwhile the number of farmers 65+ years has increased 40 %. It is evident that these changes affected partly by the agricultural policy too.

Many farms do not have a successor in this region of many alternative jobs but it does not mean that the farmland of those farms with retired farmers would be abandoned. Other farmers usually rent or buy that land and continue to cultivate. In 2019, 57 % of the farms cultivated rented farmland alongside their own land covering 35 % of the total UAA of Uusimaa (Ruokavirasto, 2020a). Due to that structural change the ownership or occupancy of arable land has become more concentrated.

Cultivated area (UAA) of the province of Uusimaa was 181,294 ha. About 55 % of the UAA was covered by grain crops, mostly wheat and feed barley and oats. Malting barley covered about 15 % of the areas for grain crops. Fodder grassland covered 20 % and various nature management fields and fallows covered 15 % of the UAA. For the rest of the UAA, the main areas were covered by rape, broad bean and caraway. In last five years the cultivating area of grains, especially wheat, rye and malting barley has diminished while the area of grasslands has grown.

For the agricultural production there are some natural advantages (e.g. climate, field structure) compared with many other parts of Finland. However, the province of Uusimaa is growing fast in other business areas and there are many alternative and competitive jobs for the potential successors of farms. Full-time farming has not been that attractive any more. Some manifestations of that kind of development may be e.g. the reduction of farms with animal husbandry and the changes of use of farmland.

On the other hand, the province of Uusimaa is more densely populated than other provinces of Finland and thus there are perhaps better prospects for local food markets. It has been realized already in the demand for organic products and in the density of organic food processing enterprises (Laurea ammattikorkeakoulu, 2020). According to Aitojamakuja.fi database, there are 166 enterprises that sell local farm products on the farm or by some other alternative more local market than the centralized food processing and delivery system. That voluntary based database does not necessarily cover all the farms with such businesses. Still, according to the statistics of structural development of agriculture, the mainstream of the food system that e.g. Kallio (Kallio, 2018) describes in her study, have not much changed. The number of small farms has decreased and the number of medium-sized and large farms has increased constantly and the interaction between farmers and consumers is quite thin.

Rural tourism and leisure time visitors

There are not available any detailed data of tourism or rural tourism at the local municipality level of Uusimaa. Some information is available from the tourism report published by the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council with twelve of the municipalities of Uusimaa (Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council, 2020a). The Statistics Finland has published some experimental

statistics of the capacity¹ of rental cottages by the region that can give some more information about the rural tourism and leisure time visitors. From the various online booking services can be found only a few rural tourism enterprises but that probably indicates more the decentralized marketing challenges than the actual number of such enterprises in Uusimaa.

In general, tourism is an important business in the province of Uusimaa. About the half of the demand for tourism in Finland is focusing on Uusimaa. The direct tourism income to Uusimaa was five billion euro in 2018. One third of the tourism income came to the capital of Finland, Helsinki.

At the end of 2019, there were 271 leisure time rental cottages in Uusimaa¹. It is only 2 % of all rental cottages of that kind in Finland. The main areas for tourism activities of that kind are in Lapland, north-eastern Finland and in the lake district of Central and eastern Finland. However, spending the leisure time in one's own rural apartments is likely popular also in Uusimaa since there are over 40,000 free-time residences, about 8 % of all free-time residences of Finland and most of them probably only for their owners' use, not for rental or business purposes (Statistics Finland, 2020a).

In general in Finland, nine out of ten free-time residences are in rural areas. Urbanization and ageing of the population probably increase the free-time accommodation in rural areas since urban people spend more time in their free-time residences than rural people. 69 % of the owners of the free-time residences have the permanent residence in some other municipality and 38 % further in some other province (Pitkänen & Strandell, 2018).

The project's practice context

The analysis of this practice in this case study was deepened by the project documents and by the qualitative data collected by interviewing 12 people (5 females, 7 males) in semi-structured in-depth interviews. The interviews, of which 3 face-to-face, 1 by phone and 8 by Microsoft Teams were done between 29th September 2020 and 18th December 2020. The interviewees were farmers, agricultural advisors and experts, consultants, local and regional administrative officers and specialists of farmers' union. The focus group discussion about

¹ The statistics on rental cottages include only cottages that are announced on the largest Finnish online market places. Link to the homepage: <http://www.stat.fi/tup/kokeelliset-tilastot/vuokramokkitilasto/index.html>.

this case study was held online April 22nd with the board of the Proagria Etelä-Suomi. The preliminary results were discussed in a webinar on the 14th of June 2021.

In the case of the ELINA, the realizer of the development projects is an association called Proagria Etelä-Suomi (Proagria southern Finland). It is one of the regional associations in a nationwide organization that provides expert services and know-how to develop competitiveness in agriculture and rural businesses. That organization is an experienced actor in these kind of rural development actions and consulting farmers. That organization is big enough to carry the financial and operational risks of bigger development projects of this kind and to ensure the expertise needed for the special professional issues of the trainings and other project actions.

The ELINA I project was implemented in the province of Uusimaa between 1st November 2015 and 31st December 2018. At the same time, Proagria Etelä-Suomi had a similar project covering the provinces of Kanta-Häme and Päijät-Häme. In this first period of projects, they had two partner organizations that shared some of the total project funding by the voluntary agreement. Still, the Proagria Etelä-Suomi was mainly responsible for implementing and administering the projects.

The ELINA II project started in 1st November 2018 and it will be finished till the end of 2021. ELINA II HUMKS was implemented in a larger area of five provinces. Besides Uusimaa (NUTS3: FI181), it covers the provinces of Etelä-Karjala (FI187), Kanta-Häme (FI184), Kymenlaakso (FI186), Päijät-Häme (FI185). In the project area, there are 63 municipalities and three regional ELY¹ Centres who are responsible for the public administrative control of the projects.

In these projects the operating circumstances and profitability of farms are developed by organizing information events and training to farmers. The training is a certain type of professional updating education for farmers.

The regional context and the structural development of the province of Uusimaa give rational reasons for the projects like ELINA. Also, the project plan of the ELINA I project has some text for reasoning this project, written in October 2015 (ProAgria Etelä-Suomi ry, 2015). The project was seen necessary for the reasons mentioned below.

¹ ELY centres are regional bodies of the state administration for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment issues.



The number of farms was likely to decrease over one fifth in next five years, weak liquidity and profitability accelerates the decline



decreasing subsidies for the new period of CAP, the delayed payments of subsidies, decreasing market prices of grain, the decreasing market price of milk, at the same time increasing costs



The need for a new information and know-how is essential especially in the big turning points of farm enterprises.



The farmers who decide to continue farming need to grow the farm size and to improve the productivity



Have to get more competence for managing the turning points, for handling the economy, for improving the profitability, for improving the abilities of entrepreneurship.



Have to get more competence and know-how for bigger investments, in some cases for diversifying or rationalizing the business, for creating better operating circumstances for the farming in the future.



When the size of farm increases, the investments and farm successions become more challenging. A need for better abilities for the management of the farming business.



Changes of operational environment by economics, politics and administrative issues make the decisions of continue farming or not more difficult. Therefore the successors need early guidance with investment plans and at the time of planning the change of generation.



A need to increase the collaboration between farmers



To share the machinery investment costs



To improve the availability of farm labor



To improve the nutrient circle of manure by cooperation between plant production farms and animal husbandry farms.



A need to activate the transfer towards organic farming



A need to soil enrichment actions and to improve the nutrient utilization to reach more economic and eco-efficiency

The ELINA projects may not be that unique as such because partly similar type of training projects for farmers and potential successors has been implemented also in other parts of Finland. One thing that make the ELINA projects special though is that they are focusing on farming issues also on the province of Uusimaa which is the only urban area by the urban-rural typology of Finland. Another special thing is the richness of themes concerning farming issues that they have under the same “ELINA's umbrella”. Also the large geographical area with several provinces for project actions makes ELINA somewhat different from other projects.

“Many of the farmers in Uusimaa are part-time farmers. Therefore we thought that they might need some training. Also, the stakeholders and partners in cooperation, e.g. in food industry have communicated that farmers need training in some issues, like how to cultivate some new plant species or in some cultivating methods.” (F18B/Int.2).

“One thing that stands out in Uusimaa compared with other parts of Finland is the location near to metropolitan area. Perhaps the social and economic structure has developed faster there than elsewhere. On the other hand, when we look at the deep rural areas of Uusimaa, it is not that different from other rural areas of Finland. They have similar basic needs concerning their entrepreneurship and operating circumstances” (F18B/Int.4).

“The metropolitan area, urbanization and many alternative jobs affect agriculture in Uusimaa. Especially in the central parts of Uusimaa the agriculture must be adapted to to other activities in the society. The value of land is high because of the alternative options for the land use. Because there are the alternative jobs and high value of land, there are not that many full-time farmers. When you are not a full-time farmer, you do not necessarily have the education for farming and you know the cultivation technique only by the know-how of your home. I mean, the investments in farming are not that high when you are not a full-time farmer” (F18B/Int.7).

“There are one and a half million residents in that relatively small area... in addition to farming, the farm entrepreneurs have possibilities to many other side businesses or to paid work. On the other hand, the natural circumstances make it possible to have efficient agricultural production both in plant production and in animal husbandry... On the other hand, the population pressure is likely bigger than in other parts of Finland... the spatial planning and the land use for other purposes may be limiting things [for the farming operations]” (F18B/ Int.8.)

Origin of the practice

The original idea of ELINA project was made together by the regional development network. In the centre of that network belong the Proagria organization, regional farmers' union, ELY centres, regional food industry (dairy industry, cereal processing industry), finance sector and active local farmers. The key actors for starting to throw ideas around this project were still the regional farmers' union and the regional Proagria organization.

That network has a strong experience of previous development projects. They recognize the current challenges in agriculture. They are used to utilize the public funded rural development projects as one tool for finding solutions to these challenges. The former model of separate small development projects for various lines of productions in farming was rejected in ELINA project. The focus was now more in farm management and economic issues and for instance the environmental issues were wanted to study more from the environmental management or from the eco-efficiency point of view.

"It [the idea] was born in the previous EU-funding period...since 2014, our agricultural development projects were designed fully separately for three different production sectors. One type for dairy farms, one for beef production, one for grain and other plant production farms...When these projects were coming to the end, we decided to change the concept and started to focus more on the managerial aspects of farmers. Of course, those managerial issues included the environmental management and other things too. We thought that those issues are cross-sectional for every production sector... So, in the starting phase we shared the experience from the previous projects, coordinated our knowledge about the future needs of development. Based on that information, we built this project...We had a strong background in these development actions...we have a strong food industry here...plus the farmers that participated the previous projects who told us the needs of future development actions...and ELY centre of course... and the regional farmers' union too and perhaps some banks too. We have done it together with stakeholders and with the actual target group [farmers]" (FI8B/ Int.5.)

"And there is always some people who say that hey, we have already seen that production side of our work. Please, not that any more, give us now something about the management. And the economy is something we should have in a better shape [in farming]" (FI8B/ Int.1).


The idea was tested and improved on the grounds of the feedback from stakeholders and farmers that have participated in previous development projects. The low number of young farmers to ensure the continuity of farming was one of the concerns. It was just one of the many focus points of that project. Actually, all the actions made in that project were meant to create new abilities for farmers to meet future challenges and to ensure the continuity of farming in Uusimaa.


“In the previous project, we got the feedback and demand from the customers [farmers] that they need more information about environmental aspects of farming and better managerial abilities to handling the farming business.... The successions of the farms of Uusimaa have delayed and we get the feedback of that and we try to increase and activate them more actively...We have tested the ideas by giving a draft version of the project plan and asking the feedback from the steering group in the previous project where the members are farmers and stakeholder representatives” (FI8B/Int.1).

“The profitability of farming and the faith in the future are the first things that come to my mind. Also, the knowledge about facts that encourage farmers to invest. Of course these projects like ELINA which is a training project, are based on the idea that there is a huge need for the development because the world is changing and new information comes from everywhere. Somehow the new information should be handled in the practical field of enterprises and get abilities to implement it”(FI8B/Int.9).

The planning process is participatory which is possible by the well working network with permanent actors and organizations with longer cooperation history. The members of that network know and trust each other.

The targets of the project ELINA I was mentioned briefly in the project plan:

 to develop the know-how of the farm entrepreneurs to improve the profitability of farms and to contribute the overall success of farming

 to utilize the newest research findings to improve the know-how of farm entrepreneurs

These targets are focusing on promoting the farm investments, regeneration and collaboration. The focus is also supporting the operational actions of dairy farms, plant production farms and organic farms by sharing the information.



D5.2 30 CASE STUDIES ON RURAL NEW COMERS, NEW ENTRANTS TO FARMING AND SUCCESSORS

The ELINA I project in Uusimaa was meant to collect 352 farmers to various theme days, 170 farmers to 34 workshop sessions and to meet 30 farmers in their farms in more private training sessions. Also 18 domestic and 2 study trips abroad were in the project plan (ProAgria Etelä-Suomi ry, 2015).

Actors involved

The main operations of the ELINA project were the training sessions for the farmers. The training sessions were either theme days for the bigger number of participants, group meetings and discussions, personal training on farms in some limited cases or study trips. The main actors of the training sessions were the participating farmers. The original goal was to reach 774 participants during the ELINA I Uusimaa project. After all, they could not reach quite that many persons. In all, 566 individuals participated in the live training sessions. On the other hand, many farmer participated in more than one session. Many farmers participated e.g. the theme days online and they are not included the number of participants (Proagria Etelä-Suomi, 2019). Thus the project actions reached quite many farmers.

The main personnel resource for the project came from the Proagria Etelä-Suomi. In all, 52 people from that organization. Only two of them worked full-time for that project, others only some days or hours as an expert or trainer in various training sessions. The core personnel, who involved more closely to the planning and implementing of project actions, was under ten experts.

"I would say that under ten people belong to that core group who work more actively [in this project]. Those who have many tutorial groups to lead and those who participate more to planning and organizing the events. In addition, there are more occasional people who just come to give a lecture or training in some event. After all, it is quite a small team, two or three people who have the main responsibility of planning the actions" (FI8B/Int.2).

Besides the Proagria Etelä-Suomi, two other organizations were closely involved in the project. They worked in a project by the partnership agreement with the Proagria Etelä-Suomi by doing some of the tasks of the experts in theme days and group training sessions. One of those organizations was the Central union of Proagria centres of Finland, a national actor of the Proagria consortium. Six experts from that organization worked part-time for the project (Proagria Etelä-Suomi, 2019). The other partnership organization was Työtehoseura TTS with three experts' part-time work for the project. TTS is a non-profit corporation that offer the training and development services to its customers. It is one of the biggest and oldest private organizers of vocational education in Finland.

D5.2 30 CASE STUDIES ON RURAL NEW COMERS, NEW ENTRANTS TO FARMING AND SUCCESSORS

The project had a wide network of stakeholders consisting of some agricultural companies in dairy and meat processing and grain processing industries, local and regional agricultural public administration, Farmers' Union, Farmers' Social Insurance Institution and Financial institutions. The ELINA project staff followed the other ongoing agricultural development projects in their region and made cooperation with many of them. Most of those other projects were working with water or climate issues in agriculture, some with the special issues of young farmers.

With the cooperatives of farmers, the project staff could allocate the project events better both spatially and by the actual challenges of some group of farmers. By that cooperation it was easier to find the farmers how might need the training to win the economic or other challenges that they have already or that are probable in the near future. The commercial actors in the training sessions have an important role too. They have the expertise on their own business to share. The younger farmers get to know them in group training sessions finding ways to benefit from the cooperation too.

The cooperation with all stakeholders when organizing farm succession trainings updates the know-how of all members of that network in that complicated matter. So, ideally after that the communication and sharing knowledge with farmers is easier to everyone in that network (Proagria Etelä-Suomi, 2019).

Style of activities promoted

In the ELINA I Uusimaa project the main focus was to develop the operating circumstances and profitability of farms in the province of Uusimaa. That was made by organizing the educational training events and other promoting events in various themes to support the original goals of the project. The training was a professional updating education for farmers. Also part-time farmers or people who are just planning to be a successor were allowed and welcomed to participate in events and training.

The training of the projects was focused on farm investments and generational renewal issues and improving the profitability and competitiveness of farms taking into account also environmental management aspects. The main target groups were dairy farmers and plant production farmers in the province of Uusimaa. The training sessions were seminars or some other kind of public event with experts giving presentations about special themes, discussions and trainings with smaller group meeting and study trips. From the good experiences of previous projects and from the demand of farmers, the individual training was included in the project plan bearing in mind the limitations of the funding rules for the projects like that. After all those individual trainings did not come true in that project. That was possible by the farm advisory services of the CAP (Proagria Etelä-Suomi, 2019).

The actions of the project were divided into four work packages: WP1) the investments and transfers of the farm to the next generation, WP2) the collaboration between farms, WP3) Improving the abilities for the entrepreneurship, WP4) the environment. The actions of WPs 1-3 were allocated to all farms no matter the farm production sector. The actions of the WP4 were allocated only to dairy farms and to plant production farms. In the WP1, the target was



To increase the reasonable investments in the region



To increase the collaboration between farmers in investment actions



To speed the farm transfer to next generation



To ensure the continuity of the farming and living after the transfer to next generation has been done

By the training events, seminars and study trips the participators got the up-to-date information about the facts that must be considered in the farm succession process. In the public

training events, the participants were encouraged to join smaller training groups to develop their individual future plans and to continue the succession process with the peer support in more intimate and confidential environment. In a public event it is not possible. The idea of the study path from the public wake-up events to more private study groups is functional. It is important to get people to think about the succession process proactively in a good time. In the urban region like Uusimaa, the big share of part-time farmers makes it challenging to reach all the people who are in need of that information.

“About this farm succession theme, we have these public events that are more like general information sessions with this theme. People are nowadays quite difficult to reach at the day time. Therefore these sessions are in the evenings. The participants get some basic information about the farm succession, just to have a clue what one should take into consideration in that process. It is not appropriate to go deeper to anyone’s personal things in those events. People don’t like to discuss it in a public event. It is more like a short moment of interaction where people get some basic information. Hopefully they start to think about it proactively because sometimes the process may take years” (FI8B/Int.4).

“It is typical for projects of this kind that only the active farmers participate in project actions, the farmers who participate in other actions too. There is plenty of supply for these nowadays and therefore they cannot be in every action. That is the case especially if you are a part-time farmer and the actions are in the daytime” (FI8B/Int.12).

In the WP2, the target was



To make the production more effective and more cost competitiveness by increasing the collaboration



To improve the logistics of manure (organic fertilizer to use in plant production farms)

The WP2 proved to be not that attracting to reach enough participants for the study groups. That plan didn't come to anything.

In the WP3, the target was to improve the management, economy and operating circumstances of the farms. In that study module, they had seminars and general training events. For instance, a seminar that focused on the components for the more efficient use of grass-

land in animal husbandry concerning soil water resources, soil fertility and selection of the appropriate plant species to various conditions (Proagria Etelä-Suomi, 2019).

In addition, the study trips and group meetings were vital part of this module. For instance, the young dairy farmers had study group meetings to improve their farm management abilities. In one study group, the farmers familiarized themselves with the Holistic Management approach including the environmental management issues. Two study trips were made abroad to Ireland (them: plant production) and England (theme: organic farming)

Environmental aspects

The environmental aspects of agriculture were taken into consideration mostly in WP4 which was focused on dairy farms and plant production farms. The project actions promoted the economic and farming techniques of organic farming. The farmers were encouraged to transfer for organic farming.

The project actions for the dairy farms were taken in a tight collaboration with dairy industry. Their main target was to ensure the supply of milk of good quality for the industry in that region where the number of dairy farms has decreased quite rapidly.

For the plant production farms the project actions were targeted to improve the soil fertility, the efficient nutrient cycle and the environmental efficiency of plant production. One of the main things was to emphasize the interconnection of eco-efficiency and cost-efficiency of farming. The grain and plant processing industry of the region has incentives to ensure the supply of plant raw materials for the industry. Thus one target of this work package was to promote the cultivating of some special plants. The farmers of that area have incentives to find alternative plants for cultivation because the normal grain production has been very unprofitable.

"We have taken the environmental aspects of plant production into consideration. We have the study groups of soil fertility where we focus on the soil structure and the catch crops. Also, we focus on carbon capture in farming and on the actions that improve the farmers' ability to adapt to climate change" (F18B/Int.2).

The farmers could get to know these facts in seminars, in smaller study groups, in field days and in study trips. Some study groups organized visits to each other's' farms to see how the

production is organized in practice and to have peer support to their daily work. One popular seminar focused on the matters of climate change and the carbon balance of the farming; how to adjust the farming operations to changes that the climate change may take to farming and how to increase the carbon capture and storage in agricultural soil (Proagria Etelä-Suomi, 2019).

While the soil fertility and the eco-efficiency with economic aspects got the main attention, the aspects of caring the landscape or the biodiversity came to training sessions more like the by-themes.

“The aspect of biodiversity is somehow easier to adapt with the animal husbandry farms because they always have the grasslands and pasturing in their crop rotation” (FI8B/Int.1).

“we talk about catch crops, not only some rye-grass but many others too, some even very exotic ones. The farmers have made experiments with them and that encourages them to increase the biodiversity on the field” (FI8B/Int.2).

The theme of water pollution control in farming was brought to the training sessions mainly by the collaboration with other development projects that focused on those issues (Proagria Etelä-Suomi, 2019).

The development and training projects were seen as a good tool for promoting the organic farming and for supporting the organic farmers by sharing the information on new research results. The opinions about the organic farming were contradictory. None of the interviewees resist the promotion of the organic farming as such but some of them were worried about the future of the organic farming from the farmers’ point of view.

The increase of organic farming has not yet much market incentives. When the incentive comes mostly from the subsidies, it will not encourage the farmers to develop the organic farming practices as much they would with incentives that come from market demand. Some of the interviewees feared that the reputation of organic farming may collapse if the producer price difference between the organic farm products and other farm products remains that marginal as it is or if the premium is even lower after the increase organic farming area.

“The area of organic farming has grown strongly in the Uusimaa region and perhaps the growth will continue if the difference of the profitability remains. On the other hand, the

markets for the organic products are still limited and the market price variation can be quite strong. So, the attitude towards the organic farming is contradictory” (FI8B/Int.7).

”Well, there are very good organic farms and very bad organic farms. Many farmers have chosen it due to subsidies and some of them have grown to very big size... My personal opinion is that it is better to have smaller farms that can keep the fields in a good condition for the plants than to have too big farms that cultivate only because of the subsidies. When other farmers see that kind of farming with no real production, they never even consider the transfer to organic farming on their own farm. They don’t want to grow any weeds on their fields” (FI8B/Int.10).

”We have not had too much information about the organic farming but bit by bit or actually quite soon there arose some communal groups to promote the organic farming and to share information about the cultivating methods that some farmer had experimented. For the beginner in the farming, it is a vital thing. These kinds of projects are good tools for it” (FI8B/Int.10).

”In Finland the difference between the organic farming and ordinary farming is quite small and after the ordinary farming has implemented the principles of carbon and regenerative farming, the difference may be even smaller...The EU has big targets to grow the areas of organic farming but can those products find their right position in the food market and how can they stand out from the other products? Are those subsidies seen legitimated still in the future and are the market prices higher? We’ve already seen that the market prices of organic products have come closer to ordinary products. Not only in Finland but elsewhere too” (FI8B/Int.12).

Innovativeness and replicability

This kind of training project for farmers as such is quite a typical tool in rural development in Finland. Many farmers and stakeholders are used to participate or organize or have been involved such events in other ways. Still, many interviewees have noticed that in the ELINA project the focus of organizing the training sessions was more on smaller group training sessions and sessions outside typical lecture halls than before. The inspiration of the power of

peer support and peer learning were seen positive or even innovative way of developing something new.

"We have seen new ways of collaboration...they develop new solutions for the more effective use of one's own working time, many kinds of unique equipment to save their time for some stage of their work. When they participate in the study group and notice some farmer having invented such an equipment, the other one wants to develop such a thing further for himself. ... They copy the new methods from each other" (F18B/Int.1).

"Farmers have for instance started to develop many kinds of new sowing methods for the catch crops but it is difficult to say if the idea came just from one training session or from somewhere else" (F18B/Int.2).

"Anyway, it encourages you if you see others and hear their stories and you notice that others have the challenges of same kind than yourself and you are not alone with your challenges" (F18B/Int.6).

The agricultural researchers have come closer to farmers to share their knowledge and to test their methods more often in practice with farmers by the training projects.

"I believe that this practice has come to stay that in development projects don't try only to collect huge amounts of people to some general training session to hear some outsider experts. It is just a fact that the farmers can learn new things from each other, partners share their know-how and experience. Perhaps that is something new, not only in the ELINA project but a change in general thinking. Since we have had the LUKE [Natural Resources Institute Finland] working with us in these development actions together with Mustiala [an educational institute of agriculture and forestry] we can see the actions where the researches, advisors and farmers together explore new things on the edge of the field" (F18B/Int.5).

The peer support helps farmers to see the future perhaps more positive and thus it may have an activating impact on farm successions. On the other hand, the ELINA project was not seen much new and innovative things for activating the farm successions.

"The actions for activating farm successions and investments have been quite slim. The focus has been more on group sessions, on development actions of actual production and on environmental issues" (F18B/Int.7).

"Perhaps they should have focused it [the project] more precisely to certain type farms. It was more in a general level at all farms... I think that the farm succession matters were not

emphasized so much, those issues did not jump out to my eyes. Of course, the farm business development actions included the continuity and the farm successions but those issues could still have got more attention” (FI8B/Int.8).

The promotion of farm successions is a complicated task. The succession process includes many technical, economic and juridical aspects but also many social and mental aspects. The ownership of the farm creates strong emotional ties between the family and the neighborhood. It also justifies survival strategies of a family which further strengthens the ties between family and the spatial location of land they own (Silvasti, 2010). Also, the agricultural policy and the general prospects of farming and the structural development of the society affect the attraction of farm ownership and entrepreneurship.

Many organization provide some pieces of information or services needed in the farm succession. One strength of the project like ELINA is that by the project these pieces of information with various aspects are collected together and they are made easily available for the farmers. Usually the technical, economic or juridical issues are still the routine part of the farm succession. The mental part is complicated and perhaps more difficult to handle and can take time. That part is perhaps more difficult handle in training sessions too.

“If there is something that is difficult, it is the mental issues. It is after all perhaps the most difficult part. After we can talk about the economy, it is much easier when we have the numbers to talk about and to find a solution by them. The mental part is the most difficult stage. Somebody needs more time and some people just don’t fit together to settle the things. Those issues are the human side of the process and if we think about the role of the project of this kind in it, we have only the position of a persuader... There is no solution for every succession case and in those cases we just have to admit it, no succession for this farm and then some other path will open. It is human life. On the other hand, why it is not necessary for this structural development too” (FI8B/Int.4).

Some discussions arose from the spatial and content variation scope of the project. The idea of the ELINA projects was to collect many themes and many kinds of farms to under the same umbrella and administration of ELINA and offer more or less the activities of the same kind in many provinces. That structure has some advantages but also some disadvantages.

“If some project operates in the area of many provinces, how much can it focus on the special challenges of Uusimaa... If we notice some certain elements inside the big project area that

might need some special development actions, the funding authority can say that you have that ELINA project for all needs and then no other operations cannot have funding because we have the ELINA” (F18B/Int.3).

“One of the problems was that we tried to build a too big project because the financial limits always exist. We have no unlimited resources of funding and we have to be realistic to see what we can do with the resources we have or what we have to do and what we have to do even without the public funding” (F18B/Int.5).

The implementations of the training events have not differed much from other similar type projects that have been in other parts of Finland too. This operating model of the ELINA project is quite easy to replicate elsewhere. It just needs an organization that has big enough human and financial resources to organize the events and other actions and to carry the administrative, financial and human risks of the operations like this. Naturally, this kind of project would be difficult to implement without existing and well-functioning stakeholder network and without the trust and previous cooperation between the organizer and the farmers of that area.

Synergies and networking

The ProAgria organization is a national network of experts in farm advisory and rural development tasks in Finland. The roots of that organization go as far as 1797, over hundred years before Finland became independent. The organization is owned by the Finnish farmers by the membership of voluntary based associations (ProAgria, 2020). The organization is well-known and widely spread in Finnish rural areas by their 9 regional associations and their employees who nowadays make more like consulting work among Finnish farmers. To that organization belongs also the Rural Women's Advisory Organization which is a nationwide expert organization and an extensive women's network in the rural areas.

The organization has a wide network with various operators like farmers union, food industry, farm machinery industry, financial institutions, rural administration, agricultural research and educational organizations of agriculture. The original idea and the content of the ELINA project were designed together by the regional development network and the network was utilized in implementing the actual project tasks. The organizational network was used for informing farmers about the project events. Thus the information about the trainings was spread by many channels.

Some specialists of that network, from the food industry for instance, were used as a lecturer or trainer in the project training sessions. On the other hand, some interviewees stated that the diversity of the trainers could have been still more diverse.

"It seems that that the trainers have come mostly inside Proagria. Perhaps they have the expertise needed because this operating area is so wide. One strength is though, when this project has operated in the Uusimaa region, the experts of the central union have been available than it could be further from the metropolitan area...Concerning the stakeholders, perhaps their expertise could have been used more that is available in this region" (FI8B/Int.7).

"They have the expertise of agriculture inside their own organization, no doubt. Still, I think that some other kind of expertise could have been used more because the challenges in agriculture seem to become so complicated that they need so many kinds of expertise and know how there" (FI8B/Int.9).

The project promoted the mutual networking of farmers but also the networking of farmers and agricultural researchers for instance. It was possible due to seminars and especially due

to smaller study group meetings. The study groups were commended as a well-functioning and positive practice in every interview. It was seen as a flexible way to build interesting content for the training sessions and the discussions could be focused on those issues that are important and meaningful just to those certain members of that certain group.

“Definitely the small group actions have been the best practice. That was tested already in the previous projects. The peer learning and the possibilities to discuss even about the private things of each other’s farms in those groups is the best practice. The training sessions on the edge of the field function well too and one thing I want to highlight is the practice of study trips” (F18B/Int.5).

“Small groups yes... but also the study trips are good. When you have the people together in that bus or plane or elsewhere in that group, there always comes good ideas. Somehow those occasions raise the team spirit and the pride of being an entrepreneur. That exchange of thoughts may be very meaningful” (F18B/Int.8).

“I’d like to highlight the small group actions. It is meaningful to the networking of farmers. I’m not sure but I think that the ELINA project has been one of the leading operators to promote it” (F18B/Int.12).

Regarding the promotion of farm successions, the project actions were seen to serve it by the networking of farmers and by the networking of the possible successor and the advisor. The project work promotes the networking inside the organization with the big number of employees. Advisors with various expertise get to know each other better which helps to serve the succession farms anticipating and more comprehensively.

“When you can meet those young possible future farmers earlier in the project events they already get to know the expert before (s)he later comes to make the calculations for the succession process. After that it is somehow easier to catch the successor so that s(he) is not left alone” (F18B/Int.1).

“This project work increases the consciousness of each other’s expertise” (F18B/Int.4).

“For the sector of the dairy farms there has been a need and a desire to promote the practice that the young future successors of dairy farms are in a focus to support and spar them already before they make the actual transfer of farm ownership to the next generation. I feel that it has been strongly involved in the Elina project” (F18B/Int.5).

“As far as I know, they had a group of Future... something. Anyway they had young people in that group who were just planning the farm succession. They discussed the questions of succession and visited others farms to have background information for their own investment plans. I have the impression that it was a good group and I think they continued cooperation later, so that it is still working” (FI8B/Int.6).

Some comments arose about the poor networking with possible new entrants of farming and with more general rural development projects, rural people who are not farmers and the society outside the farming business.

“I think that in the projects they could bring out more apparent the alternative that the farm can be transferred to the next generation so that the successor is someone who is not inside the family or relative” (FI8B/Int.10).

“ I wonder if it could be possible to combine these various operating models so that we could get some hype to some village. To get the farmers and everybody else there working together for livelihood and entrepreneurship. When the general livelihood can be developed there, the new generation of farmers would enjoy staying without longing for services somewhere else. The community spirit has disappeared in many places” (FI8B/Int.10).

“By this kind of project we could participate more in the media in these issues...We should improve the communication inside this business, with farmers who are just starting their business, with other farmers, with the society and with stakeholders” (FI8B/Int.11).

Policies and institutional supports

The common rural and agricultural development activities in Finland are typically implemented in development projects that are based on the CAP's pillar II funding. The financial support for these non-profit rural development projects is applicable to the public or private corporations, such as educational institutions, associations and cooperatives.

The main public financial sources for the rural development projects are the European Union and the state of Finland. In some local projects, also the municipal administrations may be one of the sponsors. The development organizations, associations, enterprises, municipalities and people can apply public funding to actions that improve e.g. the profitability of farming by training the farmers or that support the development of various other sources of livelihood, skills and services in rural areas. The rural development funding gives wide opportunities to various actions.

The development activities are typically training and development projects that are implemented and administered by the provincial level organizations. The public funds for them are funneled through regional ELY Centres or regional councils. Many of the more local projects are funded by local Leader groups too. In those cases, the implementing organization is usually a local actor. Depending on the project type, the private participants of the project or private organizations, e.g. farm or other enterprises, finance some share of the costs too.

The budget of the project ELINA Uusimaa was 388,888.89 €. The availability of public funding made it possible that project, no doubt. That is the main institutional support for the actions like this. Of the total funding 10 % came from the participants and other private sources and 90 % from the EU and the state of Finland. The ELINA project could operate quite flexible by the project plan and with many themes under the same project. The practice of the small group meeting gave some flexibility to adjust the contents of training sessions.

Some of the interviewees had ideas for developing the project practices. The short operating time of the projects was seen to be problematic. There are so many short-term projects that the practice in general may suffer from the problem of credibility. It always takes time to build a new project, to market and to make the operations and the operations known to the target group. Sometimes the challenges that the project has been made for, are quite complicated. In rural development operations, the target group is not so easily reachable either,

for example for spatial reasons. Also the possibilities to deviate the project plan were seen inflexible and bureaucratic.

“A negative thing is some kind of exhaustion of projects among the farmers. I mean that when we have these projects of two to three years with only the new name but only somewhat different than the earlier project. It is more and more difficult to keep the farmers in motion with it. If the project could continue at least the time of the funding period, the practice would be more perseverance... You must fix the operative frames very strictly before the project and if you notice that it doesn't work it is quite bureaucratic to change it” (FI8B/Int.8).

The very limited possibility for an individual farm by farm training was meant as the weakness of the development project practice. It was seen confusing that there is a simultaneous practice of the farm advisory services of the CAP.

“a farmer can have individual training and advice through the NEUVO subsidy system...I don't know if it has been thought thoroughly that why do we have to have two separate subsidy mechanisms to develop the abilities of farmers?” (FI8B/Int.9).

The interviewees found something to fix in the CAP and the food system regarding the farm successions. Even though e.g. the start-up aid and the additional direct payment for young farmers were seen positive for the farm successions. Many of the plant production farms cannot reach the start-up aid though due the bad economic figures of their farm. Some interviewees mentioned as a negative political decision for the farm successions that Finland had to give up the early retirement scheme for agricultural entrepreneurs after 2018.

The poor profitability of farming and a weak competitiveness against other business branches and jobs were seen quite commonly as the main reason for the low attraction of farm successions. None of the interviewees saw any dramatic change to the structural change in agriculture; the number of farms continues to decrease and the average size of the farms continues to grow.

Even if the province of Uusimaa has potential for an increasing demand for local food, there still is no bigger move to change the use of farmland for the plants that could give a better profit. The prospects were seen more positive in the central and western part of the province though. The agricultural subsidies alone cannot ensure the vitality of farming and to

give enough incentives for farm successions and investments. The subsidy system was seen even to have some features that can cause the stagnation for the farming.

“The potential for increasing consumer demand is significance here. The question is that how many farms can grow those special plants. It is not a business of every man. We have the direct selling farms and areas under small fruits, seasonal vegetables and such products. If we think about the more traditional farming, there we can see more living after the agricultural policy and the subsidies” (F18B/Int.3).

“One challenge is the decrease of animal husbandry that can partly happen due to policy. It is considered as a worrying phenomenon. It is not a good thing that the farms give up the animals continuing the plant production very passively” (F18B/Int.5).

“The structure of animal husbandry keeps developing but the younger people don’t see that so attractive than before... The development opportunities for the plant production are more limited after the succession and since the subsidies have capitalized in the price of land you have to have very good other premises if you want to have opportunities to develop your living there” (F18B/Int.7).

“I believe that the farmer really would like to earn the money from the products, not by the subsidies. I mean, the appreciation for that work could be bigger if the money comes from products. Nowadays we have the quasi-farming too, if I can call it like that, because the pre-conditions of the subsidies drives using the fields for grass that is not used to anything” (F18B/Int.10).

“This [central part of the province] is along the good and lively routes, so is the western part of the province...When we go to the eastern part of the province, there are less jobs and inhabitants. They don’t have such possibilities to develop the farm, only by the traditional farming and they don’t find the business partners that easily” (F18B/Int.11).

One problem that complicates the cooperation of the farm stakeholder network comes from the data protection legislation.

“I don’t if it is possible nowadays due to data protection regulations but at one time the Farmers' Social Insurance Institution could list the addresses of the farmers who were approaching the retirement age and we could contact them” (F18B/Int.4)

Various stakeholder representatives and administrative officers know farms that are in the succession phase of the farm life cycle but they cannot share the information. With the more

open discussion possibilities, the farm succession process could start faster and the successor could have early support for her/his succession plans. The political guidance is seen to be oriented too sectoral too. It does not take into account the diversification of farms.

“The political guidance is too sectoral. The Ministry of environment does its jobs but only for the environment, the Ministry of agriculture does, or its job is to improve the conditions for the livelihood. The Ministry of economic affairs comes into farming through energy issues and the Ministry of environment too. The ministry of transport and communications comes when we discuss the digital network. These ministries don’t have any coordination regarding the agriculture” (F18B/Int.11).

Impact and perspectives

The development and training projects like ELINA have many positive impacts on social capital in rural communities. By the project training sessions it is possible to provide farmers with new findings from research concerning farming practices. Due this know how farmers can improve the profitability of their farming business and improve the eco-efficiency of their actions too. Vice versa, some of the experts interviewed in this case study mentioned that they learn too when meeting the researchers and the practical experts, farmers in project events. By the project actions in lecture halls or on the edge of the fields, the researchers, too, have a good way to meet farmers and to increase interaction with practical operators.

Farmers get to know what kind of expectations the consumers and society outside the farmers' communities have for agriculture and food production regarding for instance the environmental issues. By these trainings, the farmers can have new practical tools to meet these expectations and improve their operating possibilities from the economic point of view too. On the other hand, some interviewees of this case study mentioned that these projects could be used more to inform the surrounding society, and the farmers themselves, about all the good things that farmers already do for the nature and landscape and for the sustainable use of natural resources and for the safety food production. The closer interaction with media and the other members of the society would perhaps increase the comprehension and appreciation for rural professions and professionals and the desire to develop and keep rural areas lively. The communication and interaction are important especially in regions like the province of Uusimaa where the vast majority of people work in other professions than farming and forestry and where the urban life style is dominant.

After all the farmer's work is very independent and lonely and getting even lonelier when the number of farms is decreasing and the size of farms are getting bigger. The mental workload and the personal and economic risks are getting bigger too. One important aspect for the training sessions is that farmers fresh their thinking not only with some experts or researchers but also together with other farmers. The peer learning and peer support and the promotion for collaboration and reasonable investments by the small group actions and study trips seemed to be perhaps the most successful parts of this project. The bigger semi-

nars and webinars served the idea of networking and sharing information and helped the project operators to guide and to encourage farmers to participate in small group actions. All interviewees of this case study emphasized the small group training practice of the project. By these group meeting sessions the contents of the training could be focused on issues that were interesting and relevant just to those farmers who decided to join the group. Flexibility in building the contents of the meetings by the participants' needs, inside the bigger themes of management and environment worked well. All the challenges of each farm cannot be taken into discussion in group sessions though. Some issues may be even so sensitive, regarding the farm succession or a decision for some agricultural investment, for instance, that they must be discussed more private. There is a need for personal training, too, but the opportunities for that are limited in public funding projects.

The interviewees were mostly surprised about the question concerning the equality of genders in rural entrepreneurship. It seems that the equality matters are not any problem. It is natural that women participate actively in farm management and development actions. The participation in farming works and decision making of farms is obviously shared in a way that fits the best of the daily actions of each farm, no matter the gender. Women participate in the project actions as well as men, too. One of the agricultural experts (a female) interviewed in this case study, stated that she has had to check her attitudes of women's role in modern agriculture when meeting those modern farmers in training sessions and on farm visits. Still, the project like ELINA can activate the women participation even further.

The fresh ideas and encouragement that farmers could have by the meetings served the goal of rural regeneration. One good idea for emphasizing that goal has been the efforts to build the groups of successors e.g. in dairy farming. The number of animal husbandry has decreased rapidly in southern Finland. Therefore, the efforts to increase the opportunities to peer support and encouragement is important in that group of young farmers.

In the project sessions, the farmers were encouraged to take the environmental aspects into account proactively. The incentives for this thinking come by the economic facts, by the benefits of eco-efficiency. The actions for improving the carbon balance, the biodiversity or for protecting the waters were introduced to farmers by the practical methods for the better soil structure, better utilization of inputs, better cost-efficiency and better market income by the more diverse plant selection and by the regulations of the subsidies.



D5.2 30 CASE STUDIES ON RURAL NEW COMERS, NEW ENTRANTS TO FARMING AND SUCCESSORS

All those actions can be seen to improve the operating opportunities, the continuity of agriculture and the generation renewal in the province of Uusimaa. The juridical, economic, financial and other concrete advice to the farm succession process serve the rural generation, no doubt. The results are hard to measure. The option of not having these kind projects is not comparable and some of the results may be observed later by the materialized investments, new farmers or changes in the use of farmland.

Still, the challenge of the low number of farm successions and the better attraction of other professions, somewhere alternative use of land is a fact. For many potential successors or especially for new entrants it seems to be hard to find enough economic incentives or even economic possibilities to choose the career of a farmer. Through the interviews and other information sources and the analysis of this case study, it seems evident that the income and investments subsidies, tax reliefs or other public operations alone cannot solve the problem. The food system does not give enough economic incentives. More incentives from the market income and better profitability of farming are needed. Also, the goal setting for the rural professions and their relation to natural resources must be clarified by the political decision makers and by the population in general to value the rural areas, rural operators and inhabitants better than we do nowadays.

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Annex 1- The list of interviews

Code	Interviewee (Pseudonym)	Gender	Role	Place and date of the interview
FI8B/Int.1	Ju	F	b, c	Hämeenlinna 29.9.20
FI8B/Int.2	Ma	F	a,b,c,d	Teams 29.9.2020
FI8B/Int.3	Pe	M	g	Teams 5.10.2020
FI8B/Int.4	Pi	M	d,e	Hämeenlinna 29.9.2020
FI8B/Int.5	Ro	F	c	Teams 5.10.2020
FI8B/Int.6	Ka	M	a,d	Phone 3.11.2020
FI8B/Int.7	La	M	a,d,g	Teams 12.11.2020
FI8B/Int.8	Vu	M	a,d	Keuruu 20.11.2020
FI8B/Int.9	Ku	M	f	Teams 2.12.2020
FI8B/Int.10	La2	F	e	Teams 10.12.2020
FI8B/Int.11	Ee	M	a,d,g	Teams 11.12.2020
FI8B/Int.12	Pe2	F	b	Teams 18.12.2020

Role of the respondents:

- a rural newcomers, new entrants or successors;
- b promoters and actors involved in promising practices
- c key informants on promising practices;
- d Local entrepreneurs (especially in the main important sectors operating in the context analysed)
- e Key persons in local communities, social networks or social movements;
- f Local/regional politicians involved in the definition/implementation of policy measure related to rural newcomers, new entrants or successors;
- g Responsible persons of local employers' association, farmers organisation and trade unions

Table 4 Interviews