

Provincial University of Lapland: Enhancing human capital and supporting innovation in a sparsely populated remote region

Eero Pekkarinen, Development Director, Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences

Ari Konu, Director, Provincial University of Lapland

Globally Competitive, Locally Engaged – Higher Education and Regions
19 – 21 September 2007 Valencia

LAPLAND FINLAND



Geography and People

Area 98,937 km²

Land frontiers

590 km (Sweden), 730 km (Norway) and 310 km (Russia)

Population 187,000

Population density 2 persons / km²

Languages

Finnish, Swedish and Sami

LAPLAND FINLAND



Characteristics of Nature:

Part of the Barents Region

Temperature variation -30°C - +25°C

4 Seasons: Cold winters, bright springtimes, warm summers and colourful autumns



Nightless night in June
Winter twilight in December

Aurora Borealis

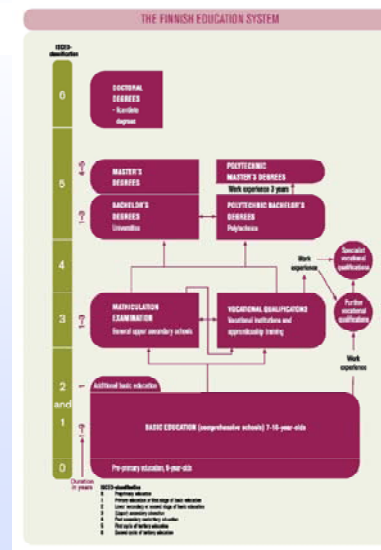
Fish, Reindeer

Wildlife, Fells, Forests, Lakes

Gold and Minerals



Higher Education in Finland



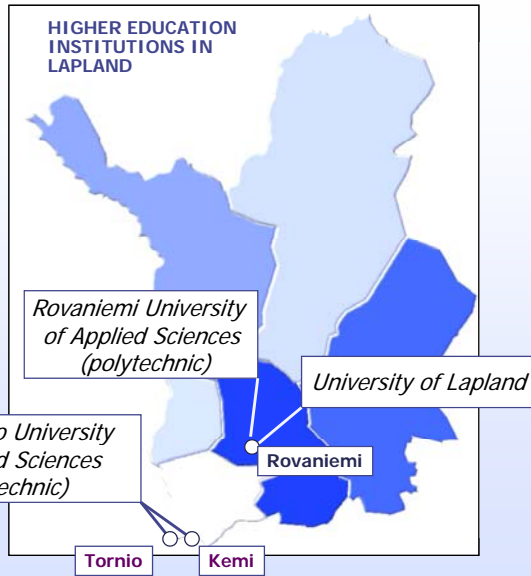
Higher Education System

- Universities
- Polytechnics

About 23% of the population have a higher level degree (university degree).

Adult Education

Provided widely by post-comprehensive schools: polytechnics (universities of applied sciences) and universities.



Challenges for Higher Education in Lapland

- Long distances
- Depopulation
- Decreasing number of students
- Low-skilled population
- Limited absorptive capacity of SMEs

Provincial University of Lapland

- A network of the University of Lapland, the Rovaniemi and Kemi-Tornio Universities of Applied Sciences, the Summer University of Lapland and the sub-regions (SR) of Lapland
- Consortium founded in 2003
- The Provincial University of Lapland is based on a collaboration and network of sub-regions and institutions of higher education
→ **sub-regional co-operation networks/boards**
- Operation is based on the needs of the sub-regions
→ **local competence strategies**

Objectives

- to support development of the sub-regions
- to improve access to and availability of higher education
- to enhance co-operation between higher education institutions in Lapland



**WELL-BALANCED DEVELOPMENT
OF LAPLAND**

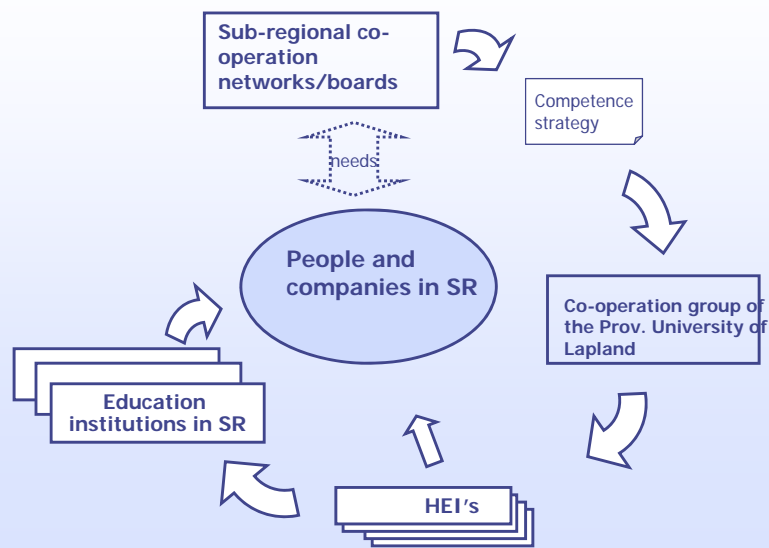
The First Step

- Commitment
 - Establishing sub-regional collaboration networks in every 'remote' sub-region
 - Goals:
 - Involve sub-regions in collaboration and planning
 - Define the needs of the region
 - Plan the implementation
- Local Competence Strategy

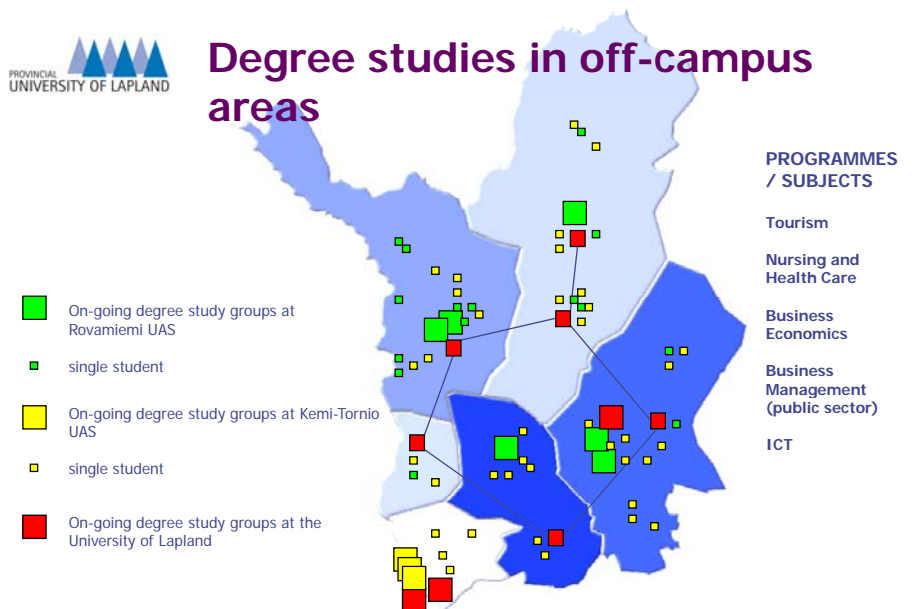
Local Competence Strategy

- Based on local commercial and industrial strategies
- Includes
 - Analysis of the present situation
 - Definition of focal areas concerning economical development in SR /municipalities
 - Definition of higher education objectives and their implementation
 - Degree programmes, open education substances, targets of research and development
- = "A Mutual Agreement on What and How to Do Together"

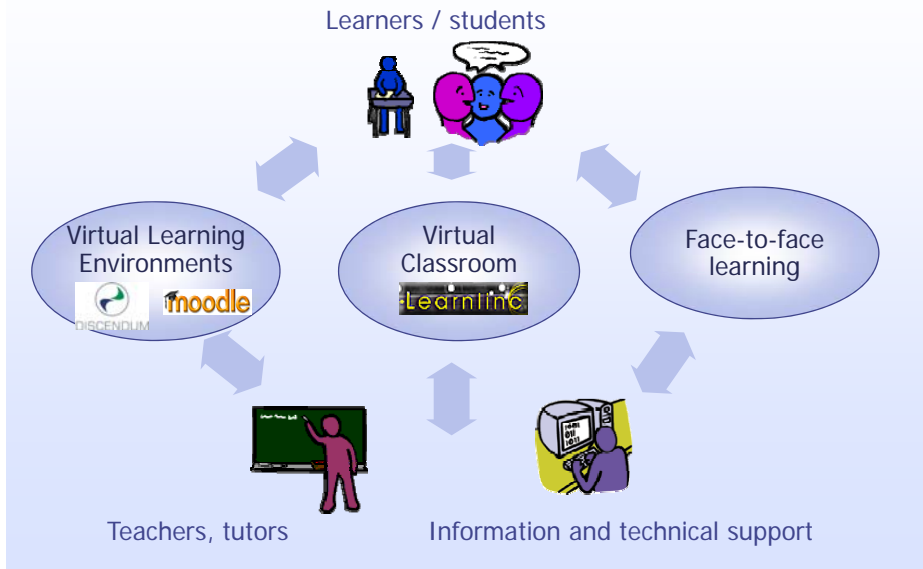
Cycle



Degree studies in off-campus areas



Virtual Learning Model



Benefits of Provincial University Operations

Regional education and development are based on the needs of the sub-regions

This enhances:

- Sub-regional activities
 - The region and its public sector receive universities' support for their development
- Enterprises
 - Qualified workforce and continuous improvement of the level of know-how
 - Support for R&D activities
- Individuals
 - Opportunity for higher education in their own region - Lifelong Learning Model (working population, unemployed, etc.)

Benefits of Provincial University Operations

Long-term planning of education and R&D

- Foresight
 - Preparation/planning of resource allocation and operations

Combining of resources and contributions

- Vocational and academic know-how
- Different activities
 - e.g. regional degree programmes offered also as open education

Ensuring the regional activity of HEI's

- The Provincial University of Lapland was permanently established in the beginning of 2006

Challenges

The needs of sub-regions

- not always focused ← several different opinions in development organisations
- many opinions → takes time to reach mutual understanding

Slowness

- resource seeking
- decision-making in academic institutions
 - almost too many ships to turn

R&D needs and supply

- small/minor companies are not used to utilising R&D
- some disciplines / branches have no interest in operating in off-campus areas