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

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

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

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.
Higher Education Institutions in Lapland

- Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences (polytechnic)
- Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences (polytechnic)
- University of Lapland

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

Sub-regional co-operation networks/boards

People and companies in SR

Co-operation group of the Prov. University of Lapland

Education institutions in SR

HEI’s

Degree studies in off-campus areas

- On-going degree study groups at Rovaniemi UAS
- single student
- On-going degree study groups at Kemi-Tornio UAS
- single student
- On-going degree study groups at the University of Lapland
Virtual Learning Model

Learners / students

Virtual Learning Environments

Virtual Classroom

Face-to-face learning

Teachers, tutors

Information and technical support

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