

NEED project

WP4 Inspiring environments for education
Action 19

Report of designing and producing the pilot learning environments

in NEED – Finland



Summary of design and production of inspiring pilot learning environments in Finland

Short description of NEED-Finland target area

NEED-Finland target area lies in the Eastern Finland called the Finnish Lakeland. The NEED activities concern four (4) different education environments (see map figure 1);

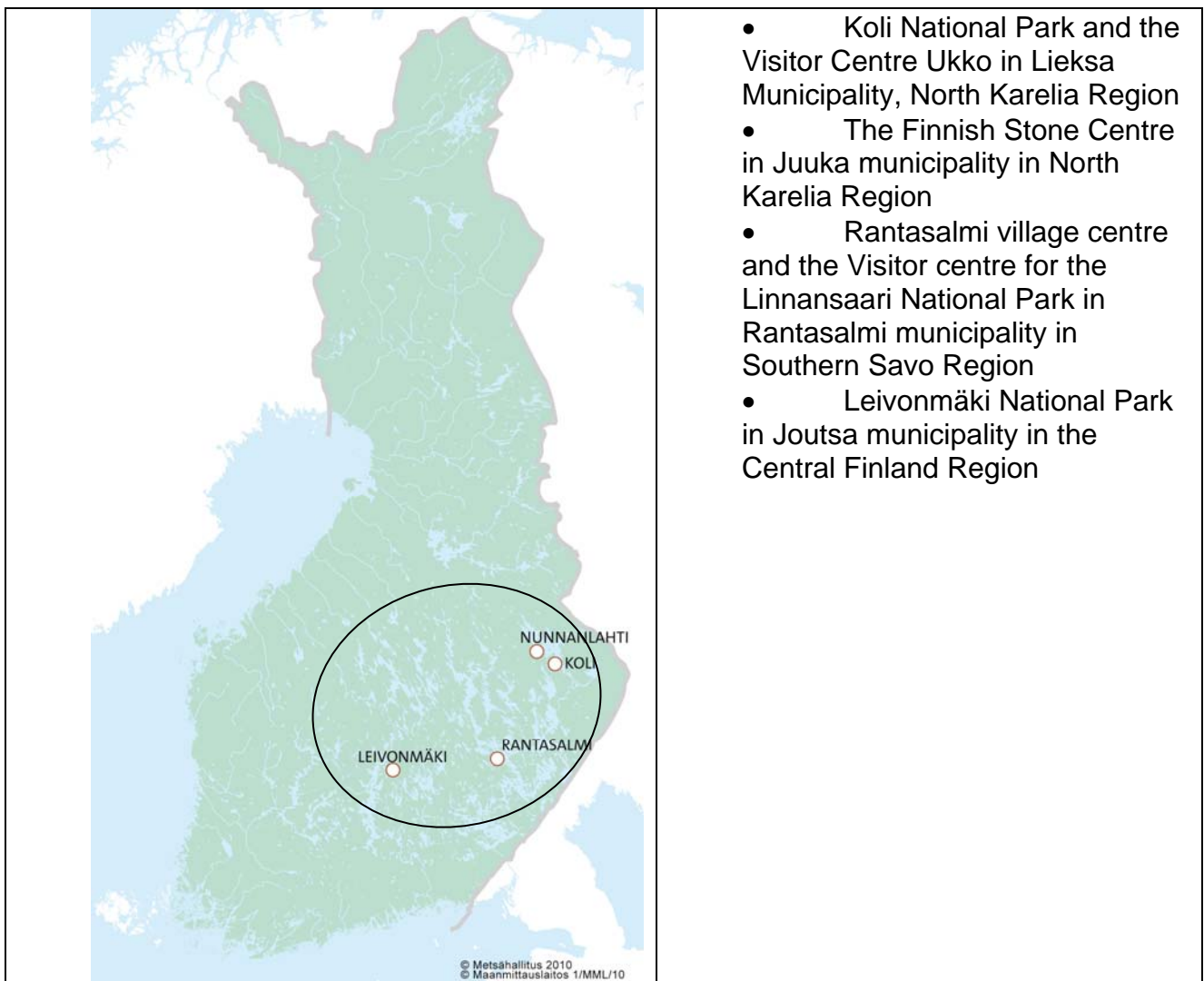


Figure 1. NEED target areas in the Finnish Lakeland.

Short introduction to Finnish pilot learning environments

Visitor centre Ukko serves approximately 50 000 customers of the total of 130 000 visitors in the Koli National Park annually. The segment of schools and pupils in the visitor centre cover some 2000 visitors annually. The exhibitions, multimedia programmes, classroom and library of the visitor centre serve the education oriented

visitors and schools. The service provider is the Friends of Ukko-koli Association, a NGO partner organisation of the public authority Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services who is in management charge of the park and the visitor centre.

The Finnish Stone Centre is integrated to the soap stone mine and industry. It's key activity is the general promotion of the stone as a raw material for development. The number of visitors in the exhibition of the centre amounts 10000-28 000 annually. The touristic visitors of the Finnish Stone Centre complex is about 50 000. The schools and pupils are a small segment of the customers in the centre.

Rantasalmi is a municipality in the South-Savo Region. The visitor centre of the Linnansaari National Park, including exhibition and classrooms for schools, lies in the village centre on the lakeside. The number of annual visitors is about 11 000. The schools and pupils cover about 10 % of that amount. The Rantasalmi village represents an interesting geo-cultural environment. The Geo-cultural edu-trail of the NEED project represents a new learning environment for schools and touristic visitors.

Leivonmäki National Park has several trails for schools and touristic visitors. The number of visitors in the park is low, about 12 000 visitors per year. Some local schools have visited there annually without any educational materials for their learning needs. One of the trails, called Luupää circle trail, was developed for geo-edu purposes in NEED project.

Actions made and development work done in NEED

The following renovations or new constructions were produced as NEED activities:

Koli NP, Visitor Centre Ukko

- design for the classroom renovation in the Visitor Centre Ukko
- education module equipments to be used in the classroom and in the terrain

The Finnish Stone Centre

- education module equipments to be used in the classroom and in the terrain

Geo-cultural trail in Rantasalmi Village

- educational trail with info-table and signposts by trail with nine stops and 12 fascinating educational stories of which five deal with geological and the rest with culture historical topics.

Geo-educational trail in the Leivonmäki National park

- 7 strategic points of geological interest upon the trail were chosen and
- marked with 4 x 4 inch wooden posts with information table standing on a metal anchor and carrying a blue nature trail sign. The trail was additionally marked with wooden signposts.

- education module equipments to be used in the terrain

Additional value achieved by NEED in the Finnish (/Irish/Icelandic/Norwegian) target area

Koli NP, Visitor Centre Ukko

- Before the NEED project (Northern Environmental Education Development) Visitor Centre Ukko was lacking a space for school groups, where pupils could solve tasks indoor, and would be a natural place for gathering before and after outdoor guided tours.
- As a result, Media studio became a versatile, easily convertible, well illuminated working space with:
 - teaching equipment and material storage produced by the NEED - project
 - collapsible worktables and opportunity to make Power point shows on laptop and data projector produced by Metsähallitus

The Fininsh Stone Centre

- During the NEED project geo-knowledge's social meaning has raised and the difficulties in teaching and learning geo-information has been made easier in many ways.
- Besides teaching, the produced NEED-learning materials and piloted environments can be also used in tourism.
- Experience oriented, participative and exploratory approach has been improved in the study module.
- Inside the company has been newly examined strategies in encountering children and young people, also the guides knowledge and interpretation capacity has been improved.
- Project has made possible receiving an excellent expertise support to develop the learning modules and learning environment.
- Cooperative network between national project partners has been improved.
- Meeting international partners, seeing different procedure and benchmarking in partner countries has increased everyone's own knowledge capital and views to develop working concepts also in the future.
- With the help of this project has bee developed a new, tested learning package for Centre services, which can be varied for different target groups.

Geo-cultural trail in Rantasalmi Village

- NEED Project created the positive kick-off for the solution how to realize in practice a long pondered development project idea and how to integrate the geological information and the cultural information to a comprehensive

educational trail package. The enterprises, who are working on the interpretation and tourism services in the Rantasalmi municipality have noticed the Aika Matka-trail useful and interesting for their customers. This creates positive impact to the regional economy and employment of the locals. This is extremely important now when the budget of Metsähallitus and the Visitor Centre of the Linnansaari National Park is apparently shrinking in 2011 and the supply of the public visitor services are under critical evaluation.

Geo-educational trail in the Leivonmäki National park

- NEED Project created the important education tools for Leivonmäki NP, which has long time being without such resources. New educational trail and the learning modul creates a new attraction for the schools and nature tourists. Also the SMEs (5 small businesses) can include this new attraction in their service mix. This produces more customers and creates incomes on the region.