



Experience exchange meeting
Project INTERACTIVE GARDENS meeting
Protocol

INTERACTIVE GARDENS

Inspirational garden tour and meeting at Elonkierto exhibition Park
Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme

Agenda, the 26th to the 27th June

Date: 26. June 2024.

Time: 11:30 – (EET)

Excursion to Elonkierto

Meeting place: Jokioisten Tietotalo, Jokioinen <https://www.jokioistentietotalo.fi/>

Please, take warm clothing with you, we are much of the time outside in nature and fields!

8.40 – 10.30	Bus transportation from Helsinki-Vantaa airport to Jokioinen (those coming 8.20). Rajala bus leaves as everybody of the 8.20 flight coming passengers are in.
10.30-11.00	Registration to hotel Fabrik
11.00-11.30	Transportation from Forssa to Jokioinen, bus
10.30-12.00	Transportation of later commers (10.15) from airport directly to Jokioinen, private car
11.30 – 12.00	Welcome, registration and free discussion with refreshments
12.00-13.00	Lunch – Jokioisten Tietotalo, restaurant Wendla https://www.wendla.fi
13:00 – 14:00	General introduction to Elonkierto (Sirpa Kurppa, chair of the board), to Luke (Research professor Marketta Rinne) and welcoming words from Jokioinen municipality (Mayor Jukka Matilainen)
14:00 – 14.30	Visit to Wendla's park (Research professor Elina Kiviharju)

14.30 – 16.00	Visit to the Elonkierto exhibition park – a tour in the park – forest path and edible forest garden + animals (Pirjo Mutkala, Miia Kuhanen, Saania Suhonen) Exhibition Park Elonkierto – Elonkierto
16.00- 17.00	Coffee break and discussion around campfire or on Makasiini, depending on the weather
17.00 – 18.15	Continuation of the tour in Elonkierto – the Finnish food table, nutting and cafeteria activities (Sirpa Kurppa, Grigori Torkel, Leena Puura)
18.15-18.35	Transport to Hotel (Fabrik, Forssa)
19.30	Dinner Fabrik Villa restaurant

Date: 27. June 2024.

Time: 9:00 – (EET)

Meeting at Elonkierto exhibition park

Meeting place: Jokioisten Tietotalo, Jokioinen <https://www.jokioistentietotalo.fi/>

-9.00	Breakfast in your hotel
9.00-9.30	Transportation from Forssa Fabrik to Jokioinen Tietotalo
9.30 – 10.00	Taiji exercise (Vesa Kauppinen)
10.00 – 12.00	Program at the Tietotalo –Teams connection to Loue Lappia - Northern Vitality - lappia.fi . Teams connection to this part of the excursion Liity kokoukseen napsauttamalla tästä Presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loue healing garden (Marja Uusitalo) • Roles of autonomic nervous system in wellbeing (Anja Yli-Viikari) • Insights of landscape sector on green spaces (Marja Uusitalo) • Insights of users on green spaces (Anja Yli-Viikari)
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch at the Elonkierto park
13:00 – 14.30	Environmental art workshop (Marja Uusitalo Anja Yli-Viikari)
14.30 – 15.30	Group work on pilots (Marja Uusitalo Anja Yli-Viikari)
15.30 – 16.15	Final discussion, summary and advice from the project leader (Daina Feldmane)
16.15 – 16.30	Farewell coffee, tea and sandwiches (can be taken to bus also)
16.30 – 18.30	Bus transportation to Helsinki-Vantaa airport

Meeting participants:

LUKE – Marja Uusitalo, Anne Nissinen, Anja Yli-Viikari, Anne-Mari Paukku
Elonkierto – Miia Kuhanen, Sirpa Kurppa, Sanseeb Karki, Grigorii Torkel.
Lappia – Pauliina Myllylä
Rakvere municipality - Kärt-Mari Paju
EMU – Leila Mainla
Dobele county – Liene Laurinoviča, Taiga Gribuste
Institute of Horticulture - Linda Deičmane, Daina Feldmane, Laura Sarkanābola, Agnija Berge
Vidzeme University - **Linda Lancere**
Klaipėda PPS - Jurgita Vainauskienė, Ulijana Petraitienė, Vidas Karvelis
Aukštaitija Regional Park - Danutė Kondrotienė
Biržai district municipality: Jurgita Bruniuvienė, Renata Gražiniene
Aarhus University - Thayna Mendanha
Zemgale Planning Region - Sigita Šilvjane
Aizkraukle municipality – Valērija Noreika
Jēkabpils municipality – Sandra Gogule
Tukums municipality – Ingrīda Smuškova, Maija Fogeļe
Jelgava municipality - Inga Romašjonoka
Directorate of Aukštaitija Protected Areas - Danutė Kondrotienė, Adrija Gasiliauskienė
Bauska municipality government- Ilze Tijone

Protocolist: Sirpa Kurppa**Date: 26th June 2024.**

At the beginning of the meeting in Jokioinen, *Sirpa Kurppa* (Chair of the board of the Elonkierto association) presented a general introduction to Elonkierto by opening the history and the present of the park development. Research professor *Marketta Rinne* presented a brief outline of the Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke) and Mayor *Jukka Matilainen* (represented by Municipal officer *Mikko Mäkelä*) presented welcoming words from Jokioinen municipality and described the importance of the Elonkierto exhibition park to the municipality and the area. (Links to the presentations:)

The first garden visit was directed to the **Wendla's Park** guided by Research professor *Elina Kiviharju*. Wendla's garden is located in the area of Jokioinen manor, behind the old barn. The area is named after Wendla Gustava von Willebrand. Luke maintains and displays the old plant strains of the Jokioinen manor in Wendla's garden. In addition, the garden has national plant genetic resources, such as Japanese rosehips, air bulbs and sour cherries. The garden also presents researched and sustainable fruit, berry and ornamental plants that have received the FinE trademark. In the presentations of the garden's plants, special attention is paid to the genetic significance of plants, i.e. the cultural history of plants and the diversity within the species. Finland is committed to preserving Finnish plant genetic resources in horticulture. They are the old varieties that have been cultivated here for a long time and have adapted to Finnish conditions, country-style varieties and varieties bred in Finland. In Wendla's garden, you can get to know this conservation work.

In the garden, you can also study what the diversity to be preserved means in practice. For example, each of my Japanese rose flowers is genetically unique. The shape, size and colour of the fruit are



different. Wendla's garden also shows the visitor that plants have a genetically rich cultural history. Old plant stocks from previous generations in old gardens are valuable. Their stories should be collected, and the plants should be nurtured. Wendla's garden is of particular benefit to those who maintain old valuable cultural environments, historic gardens. It is important that old plant stocks in gardens are cared for with the same appreciation as buildings. They are part of local history.



Kuva: Suomen ilmakuva Oy.

The visit was continued towards The Elonkierto exhibition Garden through **the garden of the Jokioinen manor house**. The manor's main building from the 1790s is one of the earliest and most significant representatives of neoclassicism, in Finland. Its construction began in 1794. When completed, the main building was one of the largest buildings in Finland: it had 30 rooms. The building was designed by Carl Christoffer

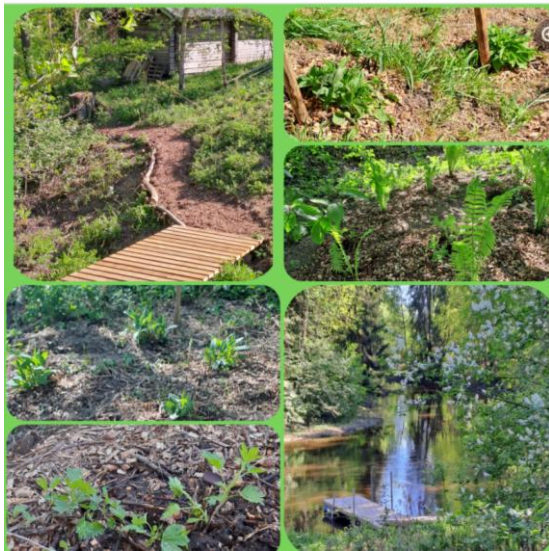
Gjörwell and Erik Palmstedt. The main building was plastered in lime white. The original interior of the manor building has been well preserved, especially on the second floor. The manor park dates back to the 17th century, and around the time the main building was built, a large English-style park was planned around the manor, which continues along the Loimijoki river as a park forest. In the park forest is the grave of Lord von Willebrand and his wife with monuments. The manor park has since been renovated, and today there are about 400 trees growing in the park's 3.4 hectares, the oldest of which, the oaks, are over 200 years old.

Elonkierto exhibition park. <https://www.elonkierto.fi/en/>. While entering the park visitors met the first animals of the park, Shetland and Russie ponies, grazing on a traditional partially forested pasture (later some more information about the ponies).



Park presentation in Youtube (Finnish).

<https://www.facebook.com/elonkierto/videos/844373693489536>



The first site presented to the visitors was the *edible forest garden*, which was just initiated. That was guided by the project officer Pirjo Mutkala. An edible forest garden, or utility forest garden, is a forest-like area, where trees, bushes and undergrowth produce edible herbs, berries or fruit. It is an alternative to just fruit trees, berry bushes or a vegetable garden. There, perennial plant species grow in each other's recesses and in layers. Some of the plants are crop plants, but some of the plants have support tasks: providing shade, support and preventing the soil from compacting and pulling water and nutrients from the ground with their roots. Plants are chosen to attract pollinators, to prevent pest invasions and to take up space so that there is no need to weed. The fertility

of the soil is taken care of based on the circular economy: by composting and recycling plant waste through decomposers into soil again. A forest garden is related to reducing the climate effects of plant production, as it binds carbon in trunks and soil all year round. It is also a form of cultivation that strengthens biodiversity, providing a versatile habitat for animals, from soil invertebrates through pollinators to birds and mammals.

The edible forest garden was established in a wooded area behind the chicken coop, partially extending to River Loimijoki. The edible forest is built for a Green Care activity, i.e. its purpose is to produce well-being for the visitor through nature experiences. The idea of a utility forest garden came to Europe 50 years ago, but in Finland it has gained momentum only in recent years. There are now courses and literature available for establishing an edible forest, and our partner Martat has developed his expertise in the subject area, which we can now use. Landscape designer Jim Steed is also a member of the association, who made a plan for the garden as a consultant. The subject area is so new that the best practices are only being tested in the Finnish area, and we believe that the edible forest that will grow in Elonkierto will attract visitors and home gardeners from further afield.

The Elonkierto animal visit was guided by Saania Suhonen and Miia Kuhanen. The **six chickens** in Elonkierto represent Jussila's stock, which is named after Jussila house in Valkeakoski. The roots of this highly endangered breed of chicken date back to the 1930s. Landrace chicken tolerates cool conditions reasonably well and knows how to look for food directly from nature during the summer. In addition to foraging, landraces also keep other instinctive traits, such as hatching instincts and

caring for offspring. Landrace hens are also considered adept at flying and when they are free, they sometimes spend their nights in trees. The Finnish landrace chicken is known as a long-lived and healthy breed. On average, it lives to be 5-7 years old, but even a chicken over 10 years old is not a rarity. Chicken has good disease resistance, diversity of MHC-region has been found behind this. The Finnish landrace chicken has a unique genome. There are references to both white and brown egg-laying lines, in the Finnish landrace, as well as heavier breeds of chickens, which are the ancestors of broilers. On the other hand, crossbreeding with imported breeds has been sporadic and has not left a significant impact on the genome of landraces. Based on studies, it can also be assumed that the Finnish landrace hen is closer to the eastern origin than, for example, commercial egg-laying lineages.

The Elonkierto cows - In the summer of 2024, 1,5-year-old western Finnish cattle heifers *Usva* and *Utu* will graze in Elonkierto. They have arrived from Tampere, AhlmanEdu cattle farm, where genetically valuable Finnish cattle are maintained. The uniformly reddish-brown Western Finn cattle are the largest of our landraces. Western Finn cattle is one of the world's highest-yielding domestic cattle breeds. There are about 1500 cows and the population is declining worryingly. In the past, landrace breeds were mainly used in milk production. In recent decades, they have been in danger of disappearing altogether. Finn cattle consists of three different breeds, Western, Eastern (called "kyyttö"), and Northern race. Finn cattle is a natural, human-friendly breed that diligently observes its environment. Finn cattle is well adapted to Finnish conditions and scarcity. They do well in forest pasture. Domestic cattle are usually hornless, i.e. nubs. The maintenance of Finnish livestock and the promotion of vitality is also both culturally and historically valuable and relevant in terms of biodiversity. Grazing in a natural environment is one of the few ways of food production that improves natural biodiversity. Grazing animals help save traditional habitats that are disappearing, such as meadows and heathlands, and the endangered animal and plant species that live in them.

Pigs *Pipsa* (engl. "Peppa") (country pig) and *Ressu* (yorkshire) spend the summer in Elonkierto. In order to prevent African swine fever, a double enclosure has been built in Elonkierto, inside one part of which people can see the pigs quite closely during the day. If you can't see the pigs, they might be buried in the straw. They playfully play with a ball, bite sticks and take mud baths. The employees of Elonkierto also apply mud by hand on their backs, which protects them from the sun.

Horses - Light-bristle gelding named *Kankalon Angeliina* (b. 2017) and light chestnut mare *Totemimmi* (b. 2007) and Totemimmi's foal, the dark gelding *Ylijoudon Ymmi* (b. 2021), graze in Elonkierto. The Finnish horse is the national horse of Finland and the only original horse breed developed in Finland. There are about 20,000 Finn horses, which is one-third of the total number of horses in Finland. Warm-blooded horses are mainly used as riding and trotting horses, but the Finn horse is also suitable for work use. By nature, the Finnish horse is cooperative, enterprising, functional and humble. The Finnish horse has the best traction technology in the world – they pull twice as much load as their weight.

Ponies - Three ponies are spending all their summer in Elonkierto: 1-year-old Gotland mare Indica Wee (*Indi*) and 2-year-old Shetland pony mares Harmony Wee (*Puntti*) and Hope Wee (*Puhvi*). Additional three are others that spent in the park shorter periods. The Gotlanninruss, or russpony, is a Swedish country breed of origin. It has lived since time immemorial on the island of Gotland, where even today a herd of Russians roams almost freely throughout the year. The Russpony is an easy-to-care-for family pony, with a brisk, learning and lively nature. As a trotting pony, Russ is the fastest in the world. The Shetland pony comes from the Shetland Islands in Great Britain. It is one of the oldest and purest pony breeds in the world. The Shetland pony is the most common pony breed in Finland (approx. 8,500).

Goats - of the Elonkierto are Finnish goats, of which there are approximately four and a half thousand in Finland. The goat is an active, curious, stubborn and intelligent ungulate that is very skilled and agile in climbing. The Finn goat has a light build and their coloring varies from whitish white to mottled gray, there are also brown and black individuals. It can be horned or hornless. A long-lived goat can live to be almost twenty years old.

Sheep - The rams *Einari* (Gotlan fur and Leicester cross) and *Otto* (Suffolk cross) and 12 lambs graze in Elonkierto. There are about 155,000 sheep in Finland. In the spring, in March–April, an ewe gives birth to one to three lambs. A sheep is a true herd animal – the leader sets the pace and the flock follows him wherever he goes. Sheep produce wool, fur and meat and work in landscaping.

Concerning arable **field cultivation and horticulture**, the Finnish food table was presented to visitors by Sirpa Kurppa and Grigori Torkel. The average grain yield in Finland is 3500 kg/hectare, hay yield is 3700 kg/hectare and silage yield are 18000 kg/hectare. Feed grain is produced clearly above domestic needs. The bread grain harvest varies greatly due to weather conditions, which makes it necessary to resort to imports from time to time. Canola oil is produced in line with domestic consumption, but twice as much canola protein feed and canola groat is imported to Finland compared to domestic production. In terms of potatoes, Finland is self-sufficient and about a quarter of the sugar comes from domestic sugar beet. Today, an increasing share of Finnish food consists of livestock products, which increases the need for arable land. As much as 80% of arable land is used to produce feed for livestock, and only 20% for the cultivation of directly edible plant products. Cattle feed production alone requires almost half of Finland's arable land. Elonkierto presents, what is grown on Finnish fields and how much arable land is needed to produce different food raw materials for one average Finnish consumer. In addition, it is explained what else the field will be used for. Of the crops, cereals, legumes, oilseeds, and fibre crops as well as buckwheat are presented in Elonkierto. In cereal and leguminous crops, in addition to the varieties currently in cultivation, old landraces can also be seen. Elonkierto has built a local version of the planetary diet vegetable garden, a garden that fulfils the Finnish nutritional requirements (500 grams vegetables per day) for annual consumption per one consumer. By this garden we also present how to compensate animal-based protein by plant-based protein. This is done, by growing excessive amount leguminous vegetable. Different types of peas and beans. Food plays a key role in consumers' environmental impacts, as our food causes more than a third of all environmental impacts of consumption. Climate change and biodiversity loss are most important. Elonkierto more and more, also, works for the biodiversity in rural environments.

At the end of the day, Leena Puura was presenting the visitors the barn Cafe and role of that in the park. During the IG project we will develop the barn cafe to a centre of information and partnership by adding interactive support material and creating participatory activities that are placed in the cafe. The planned activities have to be cost-efficient as the cafe is actually the only cost-based service site in the park. At present the sales of the cafe is valued about 25 000 euros per summer.

Concludingly, Elonkierto Park provides a garden model for an eco park that is focusing on environmental education.

The first day was finalized by the dinner Fabrik Villa restaurant in the nearby town Forssa.

Date: 27th June 2024.

Taiji exercise (Vesa Kauppinen)

Presentations at the Tietotalo:

Loue healing garden was presented by *Pauliina Myllylä*.

Insights of landscape sector on green spaces, presented by *Marja Uusitalo*.

Role of autonomic nervous system in wellbeing presented by *Anja Yli-Viikari*.

Insights of users on green spaces presented by *Anja Yli-Viikari*.

Environmental Art workshop (*Marja Uusitalo Anja Yli-Viikari*). The participants were randomly divided into four groups. First the group members discussed together about their idea, selected a location and natural materials to built their artwork. After 20 min of working, two groups changed their locations and continued the artwork of the other group. After another 20 min all groups gathered around and discussed about their key ideas. It was inspiring to see, how parallel the ideas were, and how we could communicate with each other by creating art. In addition, we could personally experience, how integrated body-mind working is creating social spaces with great joy and enthusiasm. There kind of spaces can be created by gardens and green areas.



The picture (below) is presenting the World Tree, where balanced is searched for in between human cultures and nature.

Group work on pilots (*Marja Uusitalo Anja Yli-Viikari*). With group work we discussed about the IG-pilots concerning education, therapy and recreation and planned the measures to evaluate these pilots.

- *Education*. Learning by doing. Topics such as biodiversity, lifecycles, nutrient recycling, changing seasons and their weather, food origin, multidisciplinary. Keeping in mind different social and age groups. Involving all the senses (various natural materials. Educational games. Adjustments according to the feedback and the piloting experiences. Evaluation by counting the number of species, group interaction, number of people attending, collecting feedback (feedback wall). Games.
- *Recreation*. City people. Interactive gardens. Integrated education. Environmental consciousness. Meaningfulness. Volunteering. Healing gardens with feelings, senses, communication, work therapy and sounds. Evaluation by quantitative methods: is there less of littering, less of damage, the number of questions, number of volunteers.
- *Therapy and wellbeing services*. Various models for the therapy (mental and physical therapies, nature- and animal assisted, Fito with medical herbs. Various target groups: children with special needs, staff, people with disabilities, seniors, adults. Concepts: *therapies* for healing and health improvements and *wellbeing services* for recreation and for maintaining the health. Measured by stress/anxiety (heart rate, blood pressure, skin reaction), emotions, interaction, socialization. What contribute to change (personality, background, type)? Pre- and post- comparing. Various kind of data collection (web link, watches, creative methods). Holistic frameworks needed including the therapist, client and the nature elements.

Evaluation of the park visiting was made by a creative and functional evaluation methods, where we were using peas to evaluate the outcomes of the project meeting. Accordingly, the most important

benefits for the participants were the useful information and the experiences with nature. Also, the hot summer weather was appreciated by the people. However, the evaluation shows also the multidimensional character of nature experiences, where the participants may gain with multiple of benefits.

The weather of the day was good and suitable for the activities	21
I got useful information and ideas for my own life and hobbies.	20
It was great to experience nature and contact with nature and animals.	20
I got some nice daily exercise. My body thanks me!	19
It was nice to contact with other people.	19
Good food (picnic, cafeteria) was an important part of the trip.	19
There were enough of services in the park (e.g. toilet, cafe, parking space, guidance).	18
I got general information on nature, environment and food producing.	15
My mind is calmed down. This was a nice break to my everyday life.	14
Actually, there was nothing special for me.	0

Final discussion, summary and advice were given by the project leader, *Daina Feldmane*. At the end of the discussion S. Šilvjane explained some details of the 1st period report in BAMOS+ system and preliminary mentioned about the desk office response.