

SUSTAINABLE FUTURE WITH THE YOUTH KIMITOÖN, FINLAND



The Sustainable Future in Kimitoön (Kemiönsaari) transition arena focused on creating a good and sustainable life for and with the local youth. For this, a four-workshop transition arena process was organised which has resulted in several transition experiments. Kimitoön is a rural municipality of about 6 000 inhabitants located in the archipelago in Southwest Finland. It has a good communal spirit and a vivid civil society for a small municipality.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

Altogether 30 representatives of different associations, small enterprises, youth council, individual residents, and the municipality took part in the arena workshops.

IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES

The transition arena was based on the following identified challenges:

1. How to build sustainable and appealing future in Kimitoön for the youth and make youth moving back after studies to be a viable option?
2. How to strengthen possibilities to live a good and sustainable life in a small municipality?
3. How to support youth participation in creating this future?

The focus group discussions brought up that all youth should have spaces to discuss and express themselves on their thoughts on sustainability, future, and the ecocrisis; youth participation should be made appealing and easy, and community building should be promoted. In a geographically large rural municipality, more bike routes and increase in public transport are needed.

ABOUT THE PROCESS

The process was implemented through four transition arena workshops, the first for formulating the vision, the second for distinguishing specific pathways, the third for identifying steps and transition actions and in the fourth, a transition agenda was compiled. Additional meetings were held to elaborate the subsequent actions.

Five transition paths were co-created:

1. sustainable transport
2. building sustainability with communal spirit, locality, and culture
3. nature protection and climate change adaptation
4. increasing the production and consumption of local seasonal food
5. strengthening skills for sustainable life

Each path describes cumulative steps and roles of different actors to reach a vision of good sustainable life in Kimitoön.



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RESULTS

The process brought together local actors and the youth, offering them a space to discuss the future. The Transition Agenda was accepted by all as a basis for cooperation in the future. There will also be opportunities for informal cooperation as the participants established a WhatsApp group.

There are several actions that will start right away:

- 'Generations meet' focuses on young and older people meeting and learning about sustainable lifestyle from each other. This also increases communal spirit and social wellbeing.
- 'Public transport initiative' is a youth parliament led initiative to push for more public transport by conducting a survey on residents' wishes and seeking good examples from other rural municipalities.
- 'More plant-based proteins to plates' aims to familiarize people of all ages to plant-based dishes.
- A culture project bringing together the municipality's culture project, a regenerative culture house Kulturhus Björkboda that runs as a societal enterprise, and local youth to explore artistic ways of expressing themselves to ease loneliness of young people.
- A student-led rubbish picking competition in schools.

The Transition Agenda including the vision and actions is published on the municipality's website. The workshop participants will meet and reflect on the Transition Agenda regularly. Additional interested people may join the group. Discussion with the municipality on ways to support the further activities of the group is going on.



"The best part was to have space to think about future visions as equal persons. It is different than communicating through one's work persona. It was great to see so many municipal employees and volunteers give their time for this work."

CONTACT

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