

**NORDIC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' PROGRAMME  
DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION**



**ACTIVITY REPORT**

**Project title:** DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION  
AND DEMOCRACY IN VOKI VILLAGE

**Project implementation time:** Aug. 01 2002 - July 31, 2003

**Institution:** SIKSALI DEVELOPMENT CENTRE /  
MTÜ SIKSALI ARENDUSSELTS

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**Project leader:** KAIDI-MARI KASE

**Project description:**

The aim of the project was to promote local development in Voki village by:

- building the competence of Siksali Development Centre staff through participation at local development seminar and study tour to Finland and Sweden
- training local people in local development issues through a training course that was carried out
- sharing experience both at international level (contacts at the study tour) as well as local level (by carrying out seminars)
- elaboration of a village development plan, that will be the basis for future co-ordinated, democratic development and administration of the village

The project fulfilled its aim to strengthen democracy by including people at grass-root level in the local development process, involving them in elaboration of development plan for the village.

At the same time it helped to contribute to the process of preparing local rural inhabitants for EU membership by introducing them know-how from EU countries through experience exchange, seminars and training.

The project included elements of competence building, training and sharing of experience in the field of local and regional administration.

### **Detailed description of activities carried out during the project:**

#### **1. Kick-off meeting**

Project idea and planned activities were introduced to local people of Voki village; participants got acquainted with each other.

A survey/questionnaire was carried out among the local inhabitants to find out their background and interests. Please see registration form, presentation and the copy of the questionnaire attached.

#### **2. Participation in seminar "The enlargement of Europe and project-cooperation with Baltic countries" combined with study tour to Finland and Sweden**

During the first week meetings were carried out with important and active project actors from various sectors in Ostrobothnia Finland, in order to study different project ideas, get in contact with special key-persons and get more knowledge about the region. This project activity was co-ordinated by Carrefour Svenskfinland.

Kaidi-Mari Kase gave a presentation about project-activities in Estonia.

During the second week a study visit to Pajala Municipality in Sweden was arranged in cooperation with a partner – Pajala Municipality – and the study visit included tourism actors and project coordinators also from Finland. There were meetings and seminars to learn to know other project coordinators and responsible key persons for rural development in Pajala area in Sweden. The trip included also a visit to the “Ice-hotel” area in Jukkasjärvi, Sweden in order to study the new innovative ideas for employment they have found for the area, including products for tourism packages of different kinds. Kaidi-Mari Kase gave a presentation about project-activities in Estonia.

Please see the study tour & seminar programme and presentation attached.

#### **3. Training course "Local development and democracy" in Estonia**

A training course was carried out in Estonia for local project participants - inhabitants of Voki village and interested people from other neighboring villages.

The leading trainer, lecturer and facilitator was the Danish partner - Mr Jorgen Grubbe from *KKA - interesser for livet*. The goal of the training was to share Danish experiences on local development issues with the Estonian target group. The training included lectures as well as discussions and group-works. Practical examples of Danish experience were provided to illustrate the training.

Siksali Development Centre representative Kaidi-Mari Kase shared the experiences of the seminar and study tour to Finland and Sweden to the training participants.

Miss Kaidi Nõmmerga from Estonian Rural Tourism Organisation shared the experiences gained from Euracademy Summer School on the Island of Gotland on August 10th-21st 2002. The summer school was organized by Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. Due to budget cut-down, the budget of this project did not enable to send a representative to the Summer School.

The training also included a 1-day study tour to Estonian "best example" of village-level co-operation - Hurmiorg Family Park in Põlva county. Different farmhouses that provide various touristic activities were visited. The co-ordinator of the co-operation network, Mrs Eela Jää, shared her experiences on village-level co-operation and gave useful hints.

#### **4. Local development seminars**

Two local development seminars were carried out, involving all the interested local people as well as guests from neighboring communes and guest lecturers. Each development seminar was devoted on a specific topic, relevant to development of local administration and democracy:

**Seminar I - County development plan and commune development plan.** Võru county development plan and draft of Vastseliina commune development plan were presented to the local inhabitants. The guest lecturer from Võru County Government was Mr Raul Tohv and the guest lecturer from Vastseliina Municipality was Mrs Heidi Normann. Their presentations provided background information for elaboration of Voki village development plan. Villagers made their comments to the draft commune development plan and Kaidi-Mari Kase introduced the comments to the head of the Municipality, Ms Kadi Kaur. Villagers discussed, what are the problems and concerns as well as positive elements of Voki village. The results of the seminar served as an input for the elaboration of the village development plan.

**Seminar II - Support to local development projects.** A seminar to introduce existing Estonian as well as EU and other funding possibilities for local development projects was carried out. The aim of the seminar was to encourage people to initiate local development projects and to provide information about EU, which contributed to preparing rural inhabitants for EU membership. Guest lecturers from Village Movement Kodukant (Mrs Marika Parv), Võru Entrepreneurship Centre (Mrs Tiiu Toots) and Võru PRIA /SAPARD/ agency (Mr Tõnu Tolm) introduced different grant and support schemes. These included SAPARD Measure 6 for village investment development, other SAPARD measures as well as support measures provided by Enterprise Estonia.

Group work and discussion were be carried out in the course of the seminar days, to include the participating local inhabitants to the greatest extent possible.

## **5. Elaboration of a village development plan**

A 5-member working group was formed to work on the development plan, involving most active local representatives. Due to budget restrictions, one formal meeting was carried out. In the course of the working group meeting, results of the seminars as well as international experience gained from the study tour and training course, were used.

In order to assess the situation in Voki village, an analysis of the present situation was carried out; also a vision of the future was developed. Thereafter a draft development plan for further development of Voki village was elaborated, including short-term development as well as longer term development ideas. The document, which was introduced to villagers during the final project seminar, will be a basis for future planned administration and development of the village.

Villagers are continuously welcome to comment the draft development plan and introduce their additional ideas for future development. It is of utmost importance that the local people themselves would continue to actively take part in the further elaboration process of the development plan, as this is the only way to guarantee sustainability.

### **Project results:**

Thanks to exchange of knowledge, know-how and experiences the competence of the Siksali Development Centre staff are bigger and this will allow to lead and guide local development issues better.

Involving local inhabitants in the issues concerning their own life and development of their home village contributes to greater democracy as people know and feel that they themselves are given a chance to affect their future and contribute to it.

The draft village development plan, composed as a result of the project, will be a basis for future planned administration and development of the village. It is of utmost importance that the local people themselves would continue to actively take part in the further elaboration process of the development plan. Therefore Siksali Development Centre will continuously look for possibilities to apply for similar funding in the future, in order to be able to continue the work that has already been started. We submitted a project proposal "Development of Local Administration and Democracy in Voki Village, Part II" to NCM, but unfortunately it was decided not to support the project. We will continue to look for additional financing.

Starting from July 2003, Siksali Development Centre will co-ordinate environment awareness projects in Võru county. Estonian Environment Investment Centre organized a competition to find partners in every county in Estonia to co-ordinate it's environment awareness programme and our organization won the competition in Võru county.

**Future ideas:**

To continue with “Development of local administration and democracy” project started in August 2002 and supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers, and to further promote local development in Voki village by:

- building the competence of Siksali Development Centre staff through participation at local development study tour to Denmark and Norway
- training local people in local development issues through training courses
- sharing experience both at international level (contacts at the study tours) as well as local level (by carrying out different round-tables and training courses)
- involving children and youth in local development issues through a practical, hands-on trainings
- on basis of the previously elaborated draft village development plan, select priority ideas and draft “project proposal ideas” from them, to be used during further work
- develop a project website to disseminate project results (information on both the I and the II part of the project) to the wider public and serve as an example of “best practice” of local development organizations’ work.

**Financial report:**

Please see the financial report attached.

**Annexes:**

- Project participants’ registration form
- Newspaper articles about the project (published in local newspaper)
- Study tour and seminar programme in Finland and Sweden
- Presentations by Kaidi-Mari Kase
- Copy of the questionnaires
- Copies of some photographs made during the project
- Financial report

Kaidi-Mari Kase  
Manager, Siksali Development Centre

August 05, 2003