

# Making the Impossible **POSSIBLE**

We Welcome You to join us at  
the Finnish Rural Parliament 2017  
in Leppävirta on the 1st - 3rd of September.

## Dear Recipient!

The RURAL PARLIAMENT 2017 will be held for the first time at the national level in Finland on the 1st - 3rd September in Leppävirta, North Savo.

The event will serve as a meeting place for anyone interested in rural development in Finland, from residents to decision-makers, enterprises to associations, researchers to developers, project co-ordinators to financiers, from villages to cities.

The weekend event will be attended by over one thousand participants from all over the country and the main theme of the event is "Making the Impossible Possible".

Participants will have the opportunity to, for example:

- learn about the comprehensive activities of rural development on various Excursions
- share their experiences and newly acquired knowledge in Workshops
- network and gather information at the Partner Square
- listen to High-level speakers and participate in interesting discussions throughout the event

The Programme of the RURAL PARLIAMENT 2017 promises surprises, solutions and identification of emerging trends for rural areas through different topics. During the event, a National Rural Policy Declaration will also be adopted. The Declaration will then be brought to the European Rural Parliament, in the Netherlands in October 2017.

The Programme includes an International part: a field trip on Migrant Integration on the Day 1 and four workshop options for the Day 2 (see attached). During the other events the most important parts will be simultaneously translated to you from Finnish to English – plus your friendly Finnish colleagues will help you with "whispering translations".

WE WELCOME YOU to join us at the FINNISH RURAL PARLIAMENT 2017 in Leppävirta on the 1st - 3rd of September.

The main organiser of the event is the Finnish Rural Policy Council, along with the North-Savo Villages Association and the Village Action Association of Finland, the Rural Network Support Unit and the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (MTK). The Finnish Society for Rural Research and Development is also a key partner.

At this stage, please book the dates, the full program and registration will be coming out soon!

Best regards!

*Christell Åström,*  
Secretary General of the Rural Policy Council,  
christell.astrom@mmm.fi, +358 29 516 2030

*Petri Rinne,*  
President of the Village Action Association of Finland,  
petri.rinne@kylatoiminta.fi, +358 40 555 3232

Attachment.

## **LOCATION**

How to get to the Lake Land of Leppävirta, North Savo: <http://www.leppavirta.fi/index-englanti>

Book your accommodation in the event venue: <http://www.vesileppis.fi/en/1/Home>

General tourism info on Leppävirta:

[http://www.leppavirta.fi/365\\_upload/filestorage/More-information-on-tourist-services-in-Leppavirta-2017-pdf.pdf](http://www.leppavirta.fi/365_upload/filestorage/More-information-on-tourist-services-in-Leppavirta-2017-pdf.pdf)

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAM**

### **English language Field trip on Migrant Integration on the Day 1:**

Friday, 1st of September, schedule:

8.30	Departure from the event venue, VesiLeppis Spa Centre
9.15-10.15	Suonenjoki Arts Gallery, welcoming words by the Mayor Juha Piironen. Tasting local strawberry delicacies with music.
10.15-11.15	Black theatre performance "Alice in Wonderland" in Finland100yrs festivities style
11.20-13.00	Lunch in Vanhamäki and introduction to the Vanhamäki Reception Centre for the refugee children (under 18yrs), with link to local LEADER projects.
13.00-13.30	Transport to Rautalammi, the National Park of Etelä-Konnevesi. Welcoming words by the Mayor Risto Niemelä. Introduction of cultural integration project VIEKKU and a nature-based tourism development project.
13.30-16.00	Short walk to the Kalajanvuori pond, where the project talks continue with coffee, pancakes and music (if there are more sporty people in the group they can have a hike of some 5km to the top of the hill).
16.00-17.00	Visit to Korhola Mansion House, learning to know more local products and delicacies with a surprise program
17.00	Departure back to Leppävirta, arriving there at 18.00

(Joint Evening Dinner at 19.00)

### **English language workshops on the Day 2 afternoon (14.00-16.00)**

Saturday, 2nd of September

#### **Place-based policy in regional and rural development – theory and practices**

Place-based policy has been lately the subject of discussion in the context of regional and rural development. Place as a concept is challenging since it is multilevel and simultaneous; combining actions, everyday life and governance. Place can be seen as a knot combining actions on several levels, and at best, it can weave together different networks and initiatives.

Place-based regional and rural development is strategic policy in which local resources and problems are recognized and area is developed in wide cross-sectoral partnership with local actors. Place-based approach can promote inclusion and bring deliberative democracy as a part of regional and rural development work.

Working group discuss about the theory and practices of place-based policy and identifies policies and methods that can be used in place-based development. Further reading: Place-based regional development as a strategic guideline

#### **Migrant integration to rural territories**

Europe has witnessed a huge influx of migrants over the past few years. What do these newcomers mean to rural territories? Are they a threat or an opportunity? Welcome to discuss the hot topic in the workshop organized by the Finnish Village Action Association, Hela Sverige Ska Leva and Nordregio.

European Rural Parliament outlined in November, 2015:

“The arrival of desperate people from areas of conflict and disaster, seeking refuge and new lives in Europe, is provoking thought and action within our networks. While urging governments and other agencies to work urgently to solve the underlying causes of this crisis, We call for a warm-hearted response, based on solidarity between peoples. We believe that for many rural areas, and particularly those with declining populations, this offers an opportunity to integrate refugees and other newcomers. The process of integration must include the necessary job creation, investment in housing, services and infrastructure. Successful integration efforts should be celebrated.”

The workshop updates our rural policy views on migration and integration from Scandinavian and Finnish perspectives, and presents some good local practices.

## **International Project Match-Making**

Do you have a brilliant idea on how to develop your area, and would need a companion to do it? Then participate in a café of European project innovators who can do this together!

One month before the event, the workshop leaders will send you a form in which you describe your project idea in short, the three main objectives you wish to attain with the project, and a draft timetable. These forms will then be put together under the main themes they arise and you will be divided into theme groups in advance.

The idea of the match making is that you will start a project plan with 3-4 international partners, agree on the project coordinator and the schedule for the continuation of the project plan writing. We will not define any themes in advance, we rather hope to get a variety of themes according to the interests of the participants.

Each group will start writing the project plan in Google Docs in the workshop, so you will get a concrete boost for project writing. Bring your laptop with you so that you will be able to participate in the writing also.

## **Storytelling**

The purpose of this workshop is to move more people to do great things. It's our philosophical heartbeat: to inspire people to act and behave in a way which will enrich their lives and those of people around them both personally and at work. Everything we do is in service of this purpose, and storytelling provides us with a powerful tool to make change happen.

Stories spark emotions. We have an intuitive, emotional side as well as a deliberate, rational side to our character. Too often in development work we only try and connect with people on a rational level but this isn't enough to actually change how people behave. People may understand what you want them to do but if they aren't emotionally engaged they just won't do it! Storytelling gives leaders a way of inspiring colleagues in a way that appeals to both sides of our character.