



# Raudanmaa

**Country:** Finland

**Inhabitants:** 600

**Type of area:** Rural forest and lake area

**Governance:** Self organised local governance body

**Administrative level:** lower than LAU2



## About Raudanmaa

Raudanmaa is a rural area in Western Finland with some 600 inhabitants which consists of several small hamlets and houses surrounded by beautiful lakeside nature, woods, and fields. The village belongs to the Kangasala municipality and is situated 30 km from Tampere city of 100 000 inhabitants.

People in Raudanmaa live very close to nature, and this is a great asset that the villages can offer both to new residents and visitors.



In Raudanmaa there is a strong entrepreneurial and innovative thinking among the residents and many active farms with local food produce. The villagers have founded co-operatives and built water and sewage networks and optical fibre network offering good infrastructure as a basis for future development. The villagers also transformed old village school building into a multiservice center providing a meeting point for local people and tourists and space for remote work and services. There is a strong sense of belonging to the community, the local community is very active, several associations organise activities for children and adults and there are regular gatherings of villagers on matters that concern everyone.

The lack of funding base for large development investments, weak 'village brand' and the deteriorating water quality of the surrounding lakes are among the main challenges that Raudanmaa has to face.

## Smartness of Raudanmaa



The 'smartness' for Raudanmaa means to be a service-oriented, innovative village where daily life runs smoothly. Their goal is to keep the rural village area alive and to preserve the distinctive physical and cultural environment and heritage created by the communal and traditional way of life in the village as well as as to bring new innovative enablers to boost the village economy and living conditions.

Through different village co-operatives water and sewer networks and optical fibre network were built in the village in order to have its well functioning infrastructure that businesses or remote workers can utilise. After the village school was closed down in 2019 by the municipality, Raudanmaa village co-operative decided to buy the building for 24.000 euros and transform it into a village hall as a multiservice center providing space for visitors and tourists to meet and to make it as a beacon of the villagers' activities, cooperation and innovative thinking.

Raudanmaa utilise new technology, but social smartness is an equally important aspect for the village as they strive to enhance the traditional village culture and take it to a new level in the digital world.



# The Smart Journey of Raudanmaa



## Developing the infrastructure

The **water co-operative** was founded by the villagers to meet the water legislation requirements around the lakeside areas and to get fresh water to the area where there is typically a lot of metals in the bored well water. The **water and sewage pipelines** were built during 2011-2012 and the co-operative has now 143 active members.



2008

**Title: Building of water and sewage pipelines**  
**OVERALL BUDGET: 2.300.000 €**  
**Public fund (national) : 600.000 €**  
**Private fund: 1.700.000 €**  
**Duration: 2008-2012**

The **optical fibre network** was built by a common village co-operative during 2017-2018 with now almost 100 joint owners. The project was funded by the LEADER LAG and the owners.

The costs of setting up the fibre optic network were reduced by joining forces with a local electricity company (Elenia), which was replacing the overhead cables with underground cables.

2018

**Title of initiative: Optical fibre network**  
**OVERALL BUDGET: 290.000 €**  
**EU fund (LEADER): 75.560 €**  
**Public fund: 68.400 € (other) and 36.000€ (national)**  
**Private fund: 77.000 €**  
**Duration: 2016-2019**

## Multiservice village hall

In May 2019 the village school was closed down by the municipality. The school used to serve as the main hub for all associations, activities, clubs and courses; so with the closure the village suddenly there was no common venue for all activities.

As a first step of the conceptual planning, a feasibility study for starting the multi-service center and acquiring the premises was prepared.

**Title of initiative: Feasibility study for starting the multi-service center**  
**OVERALL BUDGET: 18 000€**  
**Public fund: 14.000 € (national/regional)**  
**Private fund: 4.000€ (voluntary work)**  
**Duration: 2019-2020**



2020



Raudanmaa village co-operative was set up in 2020 to maintain and operate the Raudanmaa village hall/ community centre. The building was bought for 24.000 euros by the cooperative in 2021. The cooperative owns the premises and surrounding land and manages the smart village hall premises and offers a platform for services provided by associations and companies.

**Title of initiative: Purchase of the old school building**  
**OVERALL BUDGET: 24.000 €**  
**Private fund: 24000€ (300 € /membership fee)**  
**Duration: 2021**



Developing tourism and local businesses



The renovation of the old building and children's farm started in 2021. Architectural and cost estimate plan was developed with the support of the Smart Rural 21 project.



Title of initiative: Architectural renovation plan, business plan, Children's farm benchmark study  
OVERALL BUDGET: €11,740  
EU fund: € 11,740 (SR21 project)  
Duration: 2020-2021

Title of initiative: Renovation of the village hall and building of Children's farm facilities  
OVERALL BUDGET: € 60.000  
Private fund: € 60.000 (voluntary work + profit of the co-operative)  
Duration: 2021-ongoing

From 2021 many entrepreneurs started to rent out the pop-up working facilities. The multi-service hall now offers several services (e.g virtual doctor, local food store, package drop off site) facilitating life and revitalising the village community. Also by-passers can easily drop by for a coffee or a snack. **Services are offered by companies or associations.**



The Children's Farm Pikkupiha was set up in 2021, with almost 2000 visitors in the first year of opening. Within the Smart Rural 21 project, experts provided benchmarking support for Belgian children's farm concept and developed the **educational farm**. At the children's farm, an animal-assisted therapy facility was also set up with the objective of widening services offered by the smart village hall and to attract more tourist in the area.



2021

Raudanmaa - 'Iron land' - had implemented a new communication plan, including a new village logo and enhanced web and social media presence on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.



A **pervasive booking software solution** (ASIO) for spaces and other bookable resources was set up in Raudanmaa's smart village hall. It was starting as a pilot to develop flexible solution. This digital solution combines booking spaces and assets, paying and door remote and access control that makes possible to run places relying less on voluntary work.

Next steps for Raudanmaa is to stabilise and widen the businesses of the village hall and to arrange annual events to fund the operative costs of the center and be less reliant on voluntary work of the local community.





## In Focus: Rural businesses



**Goal:** The target of the Raudanmaa community development has been to regain services and bring new businesses to Raudanmaa village area. The idea is to offer a communal space for different services, hobbies and meetings and create an attractive educational and tourist attraction to bring visitors to the village.

**Experience to share:** Planning of the village hall and **feasibility study** for starting the multi-service center and acquiring the premises was carried out in 2019 with support from LEADER.

Within the framework of the Smart Rural 21 project architectural and cost estimate plans and benchmark study of Belgian children's farm concepts were prepared for the renovation and planning of the use of the old school building in Raudanmaa.

Raudanmaa set up the '**Raudanmaa Village Co-operative**' at the end of 2020 to purchase and renovate the old school building and carry on with the planning of the smart village hall activities. The village hall with multi-functional facilities have proved to be flexible and suitable for many different uses, such as hosting small and big events, several operators, including both private and public sector actors, the gym and hobby/meeting room facilities, organising several courses and clubs and regular meetings in the premises (gym classes, yoga, dance classes, relaxation classes, arts and craft courses, etc.). Rented pop-up spaces have been used regularly by private service providers (massage, hairdresser, other well-being services).

Raudanmaa village co-operative has been operating the village hall lunch cafeteria/pizzeria, with the help of an external cook and the Children's Farm with one part-time employee. The challenge of such a model - where the village hall is owned and operated by a private co-operative and premises are used also by public sector associations and operators - is to get access to public funding possibilities. For instance, the co-operative could not get any public aid for the old school acquisition cost.

Due to the lack of funding, voluntary work is needed to carry out the activities of the village hall. The planning and operations currently rely heavily on the work of volunteers, so the workload can get sometimes too extensive for the voluntary group members.

### Main results & outcomes

- **2000 visitors** during the first year (**2021**) on the Children's Farm
- **6000 visitors in 2022.**
- Approximately **500 children** visited the educational school days during May 2022.
- **Educational videos** of the Children's Farm Egg hatching project (Spring 2022)
- **Many events** (in 2022) including Easter, Children's Culture Week, Galloping to Kangasala equestrian event, Halloween.
- The **Finnish National Local Food Day** was organised in co-operation between the national Agrihub and the local municipality. **Over 2000 people visited** this event.

### Next steps:

- The target for the 2024 is to stabilise and widen the business of the Children's Farm, expand to therapy farm activities and reduce the amount of voluntary work
- To find an external entrepreneur to operate the lunch cafeteria
- Concrete plans are now being prepared to arrange 1 or 2 big annual events (with approx. 2000 visitors/event) to fund the operative costs and future renovations of the village hall and Children's Farm.



## Local governance (public sector):

Raudanmaa area belongs to Kangasala municipality that represents the local level of administration and act as a key, self-governing administrative unit. The municipality council includes a few elected representatives from Raudanmaa area, who participate actively in decision making and actively bring the voice of the rural areas to policy-makers. Raudanmaa also closely cooperates with the local LEADER LAG (Kantri).

## Local community (civil society):

There are many active associations and cooperatives in the village (water, women, hunting, youth etc). Raudanmaa village cooperative was founded in 2020 to maintain and operate the Raudanmaa village hall/community centre.

## Businesses (private sector):

In the smart village hall, the rented pop-up work spaces and sports facilities have been actively used by local private businesses (mainly wellbeing and sports entrepreneurs).

## Research (scientific sector):

Currently there is no on-going cooperation between research companies/ universities and Raudanmaa.



## Community engagement process

The village consists of families of all age groups, as well as summer residents. The **community is very active and supportive** of new initiatives, as can be seen from the number of the active associations, and the activities they organise. Raudanmaa also organises gatherings for villagers on matters that concern everyone. There are web pages and Facebook pages for all village associations, where information is shared and discussed and feedback can be given and Whatsapp is used for daily messaging of more urgent nature.

During the smart village strategy development process under Smart Rural 21, **common workshops and meetings** with local associations and local villagers were held to identifying the vision, targets and actions that are seen as most important for the village within the next few years.

The community members (aged from 5 to 75 years) of Raudanmaa have been actively engaged in **voluntary work** to carry out the activities in the village such as renovation and facility set-up in the village hall, and fully built the Nearby Farm, a parking lot, yard green area, moved the ice-rink, cleaning the village hall etc. also strengthening the sense of belonging to the community.

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## Further information:

Raudanmaa's webpage: <https://www.raudanmaa.com/>  
Raudanmaa's Smart Rural 21 page: [https://www.smartrural21.eu/villages/raudanmaa\\_fi/](https://www.smartrural21.eu/villages/raudanmaa_fi/)  
Raudanmaa's Smart Village Strategy: [https://www.smartrural21.eu/wp-content/uploads/Raudanmaa\\_Smart-Village-Strategy.pdf](https://www.smartrural21.eu/wp-content/uploads/Raudanmaa_Smart-Village-Strategy.pdf)  
Smart Village Strategy Highlight: [https://www.smartrural21.eu/wp-content/uploads/Raudanmaa\\_Strategy-Highlight-1.pdf](https://www.smartrural21.eu/wp-content/uploads/Raudanmaa_Strategy-Highlight-1.pdf)