

BUILDING A COMMON CONCEPT FOR HEALTH-PROMOTING SPORTS IN PÄIJÄT- HÄME REGION, FINLAND

Satu Parjanen

Lappeenranta University of Technology

Lahti School of Innovation

Finland

Päijät-Häme Region

- 12 municipalities belong to the region of Päijät-Häme: the cities of Lahti, Heinola and Orimattila, and the municipalities of Hollola, Sysmä, Asikkala, Hämeenkoski, Hartola, Nastola, Kärkölä, Padasjoki and Artjärvi.
- About 200,000 people (half of them in the regional centre of Lahti).
- The Päijät-Häme Region is well-known for its competitive sports and possibilities for exercising.

Challenges for Health-Promoting Sports

- It is important that regions reverse the trend towards inactivity and create conditions in which people can promote their health by making physical activity part of their everyday lives.
- Because the ageing of the population and municipal financial difficulties public sector organisations face much pressure to innovate and renew their services.
- Routines and different kind of lock-ins hinder new ways of doing things. For example in Päijät-Häme Region health-promoting activities have seldom crossed administrative sectors or municipal borders.

Innovation Session Method

- The philosophy of open innovation (Chesbrough 2003)
- There is huge innovation potential in combining different fields of knowledge and expertise (Johansson 2005).
- The purpose of innovation session is to seek for new ideas or ways of doing things with creative working methods.
- The purpose of the innovation session is not only to generate ideas but also create relationships and networks between the participants.
- Innovation sessions enhance fresh thinking and promote integration across traditional borders.

Innovation Sessions of Health-Promoting Sports

- Two sessions: start-up session (idea-generation) and definition of measures session
- In the building of a common concept it is essential that all potential actors are included. Invitation was sent to all potential actors.
- Participants were from the municipalities, universities, different projects, regional organisations, sport clubs
- The sessions included short presentations, group work and general discussions.
- The idea-generation was helped with creative methods.

Results of the Innovation Sessions

Common concept of the health-promoting sports in Päijät-Häme Region

- Vision 2015
- Definition of the elements of the vision
- Proposals of action
- **Publication:** Päijät-Häme liikunnan megamaakunta. Terveysliikuntakonsepti - institutionaalinen innovaatio?

The ideas of the health-promoting sports and the prevention of diseases are found in many regional strategies and proposal programs.

Pros and Cons

- Building a common concept can be successful if this is based on a common vision and ideas. The innovation session makes it possible to build the vision together.
- Diversity forces participants to think in broader terms and combine differing approaches in a unique way.
- Possibilities for networking and leveraging best practises.

- Unconnected people are more difficult to mobilise or coordinate around new ideas. Who will take the responsibility to implement or to motivate the participants to implement the ideas?
- Some innovative ideas may take time to develop before they are ready to be implemented. Who will develop further the ideas generated in the session?

Future Studies

- How the vision has become concrete?
- How the common concept for health-promoting sports has affected the inhabitants of Päijät-Häme?
- How the building of common concept has facilitated the health-promoting activities in the region?
- Has there been new innovative ways to activate people to physical activities?
- Has the health-promoting activities crossed administrative sectors or municipal borders? Has new networks around health-promoting activities developed?

Thank you for your attention!

Satu Parjanen

satu.parjanen@lut.fi

Lappeenranta University of Technology

Lahti School of Innovation

Finland