

REPORT STUDY VISIT JYVÄSKYLÄ (FINLAND)

# Sharing Experiences with Jyväskylä (FIN)

9-10 July 2009



## Sharing experiences with Jyväskylä [Finland]

A report on the study visit to Jyväskylä. 7-9 July, 2009

*Jyväskylä is located in the Lake district of Central Finland, about 250 km from Helsinki. With 130.000 inhabitants it is one of the Finnish growth centers alongside the urban regions of Turku, Oulu, Tampere and Helsinki.*

The URBACT Creative Clusters partners and some members of their Local Support Groups arrived at the city of the famous architect Alvar Aalto during the Jyväskylä Arts Festival. Pirkko Korhonen, the project coordinator of URBACT in Jyväskylä and R&D Manager of Innovation Services of the City, organised the study visit with high professionalism and hospitality.

### The Human Technology City: Wellbeing and Quality of Life

Jyväskylä promotes itself as the “Human Technology City” ([www.humantechnology.fi/](http://www.humantechnology.fi/); [www.jkl.fi/lang/](http://www.jkl.fi/lang/)), mixing the technological and human dimensions of innovation. Quoting the Mayor Markku Andersson “technology traditionally has a hard basis, steel or bytes (...) we want to combine technology with more human or psychological aspects, and harness it in enhancing people’s life”. The main objective of the city’s innovation policy is the wellbeing of people and the environment, and its final competitive asset is the quality of life.



In fact, Jyväskylä is a youthful, lively and international city. It offers its inhabitants inspiring possibilities for living, studying and entrepreneurship. Due to the number of students being

one of the highest in Finland, its age structure is young. Moreover, the presence of students from around 100 countries in the world creates a diverse and multicultural environment. Theatres, orchestras and clubs make Jyväskylä also a throbbing cultural city.

The city is surrounded by forests and lakes and it is a sporting paradise for all interested in physical well-being. Greenness, freshness, security and sense of community are some of the distinctive characteristics of Jyväskylä.

### **The Network City: Cluster Model and Triple Helix**

Jyväskylä is a city of networks between companies, universities, institutes of higher education, research institutes, technology centres, cities, municipalities, regional councils, etc. The active engagement of governments in creating optimal environments for business activities and the strong interaction between university and industry are the basis for the success of the well-known triple helix model. Moreover, through the effective use of the open and user-centred innovation approach, we can talk about a quadruple helix, integrating also the civil society.

A region-based cluster model is in operation under the edge of the Finnish Centre of Expertise Programme, a specific government initiative oriented to utilise top level knowledge and expertise as a resource for business development, job creation and competitiveness, integrating 13 national clusters and 21 regional centres of expertise.



Jyväskylä Region Centre of Expertise focuses on the areas of new generation machines and equipment, bio energy, and housing and construction. Wellness technology and knowledge intensive business services (KIBS) are also growing in importance and will play a major role in developing the human technology city. The Centre participates in five national cluster

programmes: energy technology, ubiquitous computing, forest industry future, nanotechnology and tourism and experience production.

Jyväskylä Innovation Oy ([www.jklinnovation.fi/en](http://www.jklinnovation.fi/en)) is the institution in charge of the Jyväskylä Region Centre of Expertise Programme and it is the national coordinator of the nanotechnology cluster programme 2007-2013. Its mission is to develop the right innovation environment and technology clusters and to support the development and competitiveness of technological enterprises in Jyväskylä region. The URBACT delegation visited the organisation located in the recent Innova building, in Luttako area (a living lab centred on tourism and events), and became impressed with its modern premises and huge package of business services.

### **The “City of Schools”: Education and Research**

Jyväskylä is known as the “City of Schools”. The city has been recognized as the centre of Finnish education hosting several universities and higher education institutes, such as: the University of Jyväskylä ([www.jyu.fi/en/](http://www.jyu.fi/en/)), the JAMK University of Applied Sciences ([www.jamk.fi/](http://www.jamk.fi/)), the Air Force Academy and Jyväskylä Polytechnic, but also several innovative cross-field research institutes.



The URBACT network had the opportunity to visit one important Centre of Excellence in Research (under the Finnish Programme for Centres of Excellence in Research 2008-2013 of the Academy of Finland), the Interdisciplinary Music Research Centre. The institute is mainly interested to study how people listen to music, experience music and how they play and perform music. Applications of the new knowledge produced in this research, such as music

therapy, the promotion of language learning and the reduction of state fright, have social, pedagogic, artistic and commercial significance. It was amazing to see how music therapy rehabilitation works and how music can be used to set and create mood.

This interdisciplinary nature of the research work and the links established with industry and other relevant players was also experienced in the AGORA Human Technology Centre, a meeting place for people and technology as well as a multidisciplinary research environment where research, education, and business work together. The combination of technology and social innovations can be seen, for example in the Mind Tech Laboratory that develops and applies technology for the study of human mind.

### **The Cultural City: Creative Spaces and Events**

Jyväskylä is home for a large variety of cultural activities and events, the most popular of which are the Neste Oil Rally, the Jyväskylä Arts Festival and the Graphica Creativa Triennial, but also LUMO - Contemporary Photography Triennial and Jyväskylä Summer Jazz. Moreover, several national and international congresses are held in the city at the congress and trade fair centre, Jyväskylä Paviljonki ([www.jklpaviljonki.fi/eng/](http://www.jklpaviljonki.fi/eng/)), which was visited by the URBACT team. It is recognized as the most versatile pavilion in Finland with 400,000 visitors per year, an exhibition space of 20,000 sq m, a 1,200-seat flexible auditorium, several lecture and meeting rooms and a main restaurant.



Besides several museums, theatres and other cultural infrastructures (such as the Alvar Aalto Museum), it is worth of notice the existence of small creative and cultural spaces that supports the activity of artists and other creative people. One example is the Jyväskylä Centre for Printmaking ([www3.jkl.fi/taidemuseo/grafiikkakeskus/english.htm](http://www3.jkl.fi/taidemuseo/grafiikkakeskus/english.htm)) which aims at increasing its

knowledge of and insight to the art of printmaking. The centre includes a well-equipped print workshop, an art gallery and a guest room for visiting artists and organises exhibitions with both Finnish and foreign printmakers' works.

Other example is the Lutakko Dancing Hall ([www.jelmu.net/](http://www.jelmu.net/)), the soul of the rock music in Jyväskylä. It is located in a charismatic old building originally built as a bakery in the 1950's, at Lutakko, and contains almost twenty rehearsal spaces for bands and workspaces for visual artists, in addition to hosting rock gigs throughout the year. After visiting the space, the URBACT Creative Clusters network partners organised a workshop with some artists, creative companies and event's organisers of Jyväskylä in order to discuss their difficulties and opportunities: FirstBeat Technologies, Astor & Amadeus, JELMU, Kirsi Neuvonen (printmaker), etc.

Linking tradition with creativity, the Handicraft Centre Aivia ([taitokeskus.aivia.fi/](http://taitokeskus.aivia.fi/)) is a local crafts association representing handicrafts as medium of culture, skill and a business. The centre provides the opportunity of making articles oneself and learning through courses and crafts schools. Together with other local associations, the Finnish Crafts Association Taito forms the Taito Group with more than 140 crafts centres all over Finland, 280 permanent employees and 8,500 members. It was a good opportunity to the URBACT delegation to learn how to launch a national and local strategy to make a traditional sector creative and sustainable.



### **The Creative Strategy: Culture and Wellness**

“Culture and Wellness” is the title of the Local Action Plan that Jyväskylä is developing within

the URBACT Creative Clusters network. In order to reinforce the concept of the “Human Technology City”, the aim is to develop new products, services and solutions in the interaction between wellness (wellbeing in all of its dimensions: physical, social, professional, etc.) and culture and creativity in order to improve people’s quality of life.

“Clinic of Wellness” is one of the pilot projects that started in September 2009. The first clinic was meant for seniors and it was arranged by Aivia, with the aim of proving the wellbeing effects of the arts – in this case handicraft work – for the people. The evaluation of the effects will be done by using different kind of wellbeing technology invented in Jyväskylä and used in music therapy. The second clinic will start in the beginning of the year 2010 and is meant for the employees of the city hospital and it is going to use music as a tool. Moreover, the city is creating and animating a network of people working in creative and wellness sectors - Creative Wellnet as a regional organ and as a part of economic development. A larger research plan is also being defined which will be led by the University in cooperation with many other interest groups, like the city of Jyväskylä.

This strategy is linked with other projects on creative industries in development by the Regional Council of Central Finland ([www.keskisuomi.fi/](http://www.keskisuomi.fi/)), the Arts Council of Central Finland ([www.kstaide.net/english.htm](http://www.kstaide.net/english.htm)) and other players, such as: Creative Forum, Development of Entrepreneurial Expertise (LINKO project), CREA.RE - Creative Regions, Luovapaja portal.

URBACT Creative Clusters delegation left Jyväskylä with the “Sauna Concept” in mind. The initiative was presented by Jyväskylä Regional Development Company Jykes, Ltd and the aim is to use new concepts and innovations in bringing the deeply traditional sauna culture of Finland to the wider public. Next time, probably the team will have the opportunity to experience this “Sauna from Finland” concept in the beautiful summer cottages near the lakes.