



*Delivering Services in Rural & Remote Areas:
A Transnational Exchange of Ideas and Practices*

*Palvelujen saatavuus syrjäisellä maaseudulla:
mallien ja kokemusten siirtäminen maasta toiseen*



Socially Innovative Networks: Deserve Case¹

Abstract

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What is the role of social networks in implementation of the innovative solutions? What networks need to become innovative? Do technological innovation and social innovation hinder or stimulate each other? Our paper proposes some potential replies to these questions. Social innovation, social networks, social capital, and technical innovation, as well as knowledge transfer and management are briefly considered in the theoretical part of the paper. Improving citizen empowerment, the use of participatory politics stimulates as well the potential occurrence of new innovations. Open society with the full civil rights also encourages the appearance of the new innovations. Citizens and particularly the interactions between citizens are generators for new innovation. We see innovations as social constructions (social constructive paradigm of innovations). From this perspective, every innovation, even most technical one, is a social innovation. The proposed concepts are further applied in the particular case of Deserve project, mainly funded by Northern Periphery Programme. Deserve stands for Delivering Services in Rural and Remote Area, provision which could be done by learning from each other experience. Implementing IT can, as well, be a technically innovative solution taken into consideration while designing service provision. The activity of the international networks involved in the Deserve preparation and implementation, as well as the one of the national networks involved in the implementation of the local projects, especially in Finland, is analysed. Distinct sections of the paper address the situation of the international partnership and perceived transfers, on the one hand and the local projects operational reality, on the other hand. Some factors facilitating the occurrence of socially innovative solutions as well as their sustainability are identified. The data used to conduct the analyses are the data provided by the internal monitoring of the Deserve project.

Keywords: innovation, social networks, service delivery

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