



JUMP

to Suupohja

Isojoki • Kurikan Jurva • Karijoki • Kauhajoki • Teuva

INTRODUCTION

A woman with long blonde hair is splashing water in a lake. She is wearing a black and white swimsuit. In the background, there is a dense forest and a small boat with three people on the water.

Jump to Suupohja – safe landing to quality of life

How about making a life change and jumping to the way of life of Suupohja region? The Finnish countryside is much more, it surprises with its versatility. Here know-how is combined with tranquillity of nature and entrepreneurship has a good spirit.

THE SUUPOHJA REGION is situated in Southern Ostrobothnia, in Western Finland. The history of this area goes back an extremely long time as the Wolf Cave is the oldest human dwelling in Northern Europe. The Neanderthals lived there 120,000 years ago using stone tools whereas the present inhabitants have knowledge and skills of the 21st century.

People don't act alone in Suupohja. Although private entrepreneurship is more than characteristic for them, cooperation and communities are also vital. The local people in the Suupohja region are active in organizations; they enjoy being and doing together. Through associations and other networks they can improve their neighbourhood, remedy grievances and find new sources of livelihood.

In the Suupohja region there are distinct strengths and specialized entrepreneurship to be found. Important sources of livelihood are metal industry, branch of logistic systems, food industry, furniture industry and agriculture.



Suupohja region

Suupohja region has approximately 28 000 inhabitants in four municipalities and one former municipality:

TOWN/MUNICIPALITY	INHABITANTS
Kauhajoki	14 223
Isojoki	2364
Karijoki	1527
Teuva	5851
Jurva (consolidated to Kurikka)	4289



AMPIENCE



Ostrobothnian environment

There's a lot of space for living in Suupohja. A family can find a home for example in a traditional Ostrobothnian house built of logs, a modern stone house or a brick row house.

People in Southern Ostrobothnia respect their traditions but they can also modernize and make use of them. There are several traditional Ostrobothnian houses and courtyards which are used vividly in occasions and in rural tourism, for example the country house Hämes-Havunen in Kauhajoki.

Active villages hold the reins of improving living comfort and sources of livelihood. For example the village of Myrkky in Karijoki aims at becoming a horse village with its riding rings.

*Altarpiece of Teuva church is painted by Tove Jansson, the creator of the Moomins. ►
The Wolf Cave is the oldest human dwelling in Northern Europe. ►►*



NATURE

Ancient rocky coastline and expanses

Nature in Suupohja varies from rugged dry pine forests and ancient rocky coastlines to expanses of Osrobothnia. You can sense the atmosphere of wild forests especially in Lauhanvuori National Park in Isojoki. In Parra in the municipality of Teuva you can admire stone fields shaped by the ice age, while the river valley of Hyypänjoki presents wide riverside landscape. Nature offers several activities; you can for example watch birds or hike on duckboards.

National parks

- There are two national parks in the Suupohja region: Lauhanvuori National Park in Isojoki and Kauhaneva-Pohjankangas National Park in Kauhajoki.
- Lauhanvuori: nature shaped by the ice age, rapidly changing vegetation zones, coast formations and stone fields. Rugged moor forests and luxuriant groves.
- Kauhaneva-Pohjankangas: mire nature, beautiful moor forests and kettle holes from the ice age.





Four seasons

Shimmering snowdrifts make a winter day feel like wonderland. When the summer comes, frosts give way to mid-night sun and warm summer days.



LINE OF BUSINESS

Production in the Suupohja region

The most prominent branch of industry is the cluster of logistic systems. The Logistia cluster is concentrated in particular on industry automation systems and on control of data and material flow. This globally active cluster consists of 70 enterprises and employs about 1,000 workers. In the heart of the cluster and the development of the branch is the Technology Centre Logistia.

A traditional strength of the region is the bio-food sector which employs more than 2,200 local people in primary production and processing. The food businesses are small but dynamic. The focus of the production is on vegetables, root crops and potatoes.

THE FURNITURE CLUSTER with its 200-year history is another traditional strength of the Suupohja region and Southern Ostrobothnia. There are more than 200 furniture companies which employ about 1,300

people. Two important operators in the furniture sector are the Interior Design Centre Sella in Jurva, in municipality of Kurikka, and the Adult Education Centre TEAK Oy in Teuva which is the biggest adult education centre concentrated on wood and furniture industry in Finland.

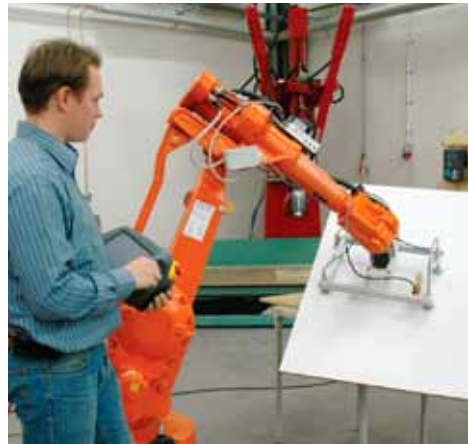
One of the most modern and fastest regional optical fibre networks in Europe has been built in Suupohja, covering about 95 % of the region. As the digitalisation increases, the network will provide plenty of opportunities in the future for example for learning, international networking and business concepts.

Economic Development Agency of Suupohja Region, EDA, is a service organization which aims at developing the sub-region by supporting business start-ups and development of competitiveness. The member municipalities are Isojoki, Karijoki, Kauhajoki, Teuva and Kurikka.



Production

- 50 % of the furniture made in Finland
- 50 % of the material processing systems
- 50 % of potatoes for human consumption
- the biggest flax-growing area, about 500 ha
- the biggest concentration of sea buckthorn in Finland, about 100 ha
- the biggest spelt-growing area in Finland





Do you want to surf with symmetrical 1Gbits/s internet connection?

Suupohjan Seutuverkko Oy builds and operates Open Access fibre optic network in Western Finland offering its customers FTTx -network capable of facing the future challenges. Suupohjan Seutuverkko's network is totally open for all the service providers whether they are local, national or international. Therefore the FTTx-customers are free to choose their services from the service providers they prefer. The role of municipality owned Suupohjan Seutuverkko is to build, own and operate the network, not to provide services.

Economic Development Agency of Suupohja Region

Economic Development Agency of Suupohja Region, EDA, is a municipal business development organization. The member municipalities are Isojoki, Karijoki, Kurikka, Kauhajoki and Teuva. In addition EDA provides some services for surrounding municipalities, for example for Kristinestad and Honkajoki.

The strategic tasks of EDA are

- Business services
- Regional development services
- Looking after regional interests, cooperation and marketing
- Farm relief services

Business services

EDA maintains a regional business service desk in the Technology Centre Logistia in Kauhajoki and coordinates a regional business service network, so-called SEUTU YPP activity. EDA serves enterprises and becoming entrepreneurs. The regional business service desk provides business information, prepares business

start-up measures and helps with drawing up project applications for different investors. The desk guides customers also to other services. For enterprises EDA also offers consultant cheques for development operations and purchase of external services. EDA has annually about 600 customer contacts with enterprises. It helps on average 35–50 enterprises to start up every year.

The action of EDA enables business services also for example for metal, logistic and food sectors through agreement partners. EDA also maintains a regional immigration service desk INKA which serves enterprises in the Technology Centre Logistia. The activities in INKA are run by an immigration coordinator.

The regional development services of EDA aim at developing the region with the help of larger strategic development projects. The profit area is responsible for project activities, regional development programmes, acquisition of external development financing, regional anticipation and other strategic planning in EDA.

The central development themes in regional development



- Operational environment and know-how of the leading branches of industry in the region
 - Logistia / metal industry, furniture and housing, bio-food industry
- New equipment of the digital economy
 - social media, opportunities created by optical fibre network
- Search for new opportunities:
 - Growth enterprise training (all branches of industry)
 - Renewable energy solutions
 - Utilization of creative sector opportunities in business

EDA participates annually in dozens of diverse development projects.

"We are especially interested in projects including youngsters, villages and village activities, cultural activities and ideas around welfare services and the role of the 3rd sector."



LAG Suupohja

In Finland, Leader Local Action Groups (LAGs) are registered associations that develop rural areas by funding local rural development projects and supporting local enterprises by delivering Leader funds. Altogether there are 56 LAG's in Finland. The LAGs cover all of Finland's rural areas, which have a total population of 2.5 million people.

LAG Suupohja is situated in the middle and in the southern part of the province South Ostrobothnia, in West Finland. The area includes the municipalities of Kauhajoki, Isojoki, Karijoki, and the Jurva area of Kurikka.

LAG Cooperation activity

The area can be described as a combination of suburban and real countryside. The area is best known for its entrepreneurial spirit. Entrepreneurship is the key resource for the development of the region. Strong clusters relate to the

metal, technology industries, wood product industry as well as to the locally produced food.

High quality leisure –time services, hobbies, sports services and habitability are part and parcel of the attraction of the region. People live in the countryside and in urban areas in a clean and comfortable living environment.

We are especially interested in projects including youngsters, villages and village activities, cultural activities and ideas around welfare services and the role of the 3rd sector. SME's are a focal point of our activities as well.

We are looking for international partner regarding all aspects of rural development: to exchange ideas, solve problems and spread best practices!

www.suupohjankehittamisyhdistys.fi



LAG Suupohja

- The number of inhabitants is approximately 28 000
- the area is 3 128 km
- the population density is 10 inhabitants per km

From Estonia to Suupohja

Aimar Üidik, residing in Teuva, was born in Estonia but the peace of the Finnish countryside has kept a hold on him already for years. In 2001 Üidik made his first business trip to Finland and from that trip he got work experience as well as found a wife. Nowadays this father of three works as an entrepreneur.

– I moved to Kauhajoki in 2002. At first I commuted to the neighbouring region, to the municipality of Honkajoki, until I found employment closer to home, I worked in Teuva as a welder, Üidik explains.

The next seven and half years he worked for a concrete company in Teuva. However, the thought of starting a business of his own smouldered in his mind all the time. After a long consideration Üidik made the decisive moves

in 2010. He bought a house in Teuva and built a machine hall in his yard. The same year he resigned his job and started his own business.

– Starting up the business wasn't difficult at all because I got a lot of help with the paperwork. When I applied for an investment grant, the officer filled in the application. I didn't have to say more than a couple of words and he formed the right kind of sentences, Üidik laughs.

WITH THE INVESTMENT grant Üidik bought sandblasting equipment which is used to remove old paint from foundation of houses.

– The thought of buying the equipment came up when I wanted the paint removed from my own house. There was a two-month waiting list for it.

There was clearly a demand for this service in the area.

In addition to sandblasting, Üidik's company Steel-Bull provides metalworking, repairing of agricultural machinery, as well as construction and renovation services.

Üidik, who is diligently renovating his own house at the moment, is fond of living in the countryside because there's so much space.

– I lived for a while in a town in Estonia so I know what it's like. The best thing in the countryside is that there's enough space to build an industrial building in the yard, for example. In a town, it's good if you can build even a garage.

Üidik thinks warmly also of his previous workplace because he could use the premises for his own work.





The Craycrofts are fascinated by the sports

THE SUUPOHJA REGION has attracted inhabitants both from Finland and from abroad. American **Thomas Craycroft** has lived in Kauhajoki now for nine years. His wife **Riitta** is a native of Kauhajoki and three of their four children live still with the family.

The American father is particularly impressed by the Finnish health care system.

- The difference to the American system is enormous. There you have to pay 700 dollars a month for the health care and a lot more when you use it. Here the system is practically free and I'm very satisfied with it, Thomas says.

When he moved to Finland, he was also surprised by how well a foreigner was received by the local people.

- I was paid to go to school to learn the Finnish language. Everything else went smoothly as well. In the United States even the smallest thing is affected by red tape but here you are really taken care of.

SPORTS PLAY a big role in the everyday life of the family as all the children go in for sports. The girls **Immi**, 14, and **Kreetta**, 13, play volleyball and go in for track and field. The son **Jussi**, 15, additionally plays basketball and the national sport of Finland, Finnish baseball. The children praise the versatile sports facilities in Kauhajoki. The trio uses all the ball game halls in the town and also the public swimming pool. In addition, the family is a familiar sight in the games of the most popular team in Kauhajoki, the basketball team Kauhajoen Karhu, which plays in the Finnish championship league.

The whole family considers Kauhajoki, with population of about 14,000, a suitable place to live. They find everything they need for the children's sports activities from local stores and they didn't have to fetch anything outside the town even when they were building their one-family house.

- There could be more clothing stores here but I think the shopping mall opening this spring will fix this situation, Immi adds.

The family is also fascinated by the fact that the cost of living is more inexpensive in the countryside than in big cities.

- You would get at most a three-room apartment in a city at the price of a one-family house, Riitta estimates. ♦

EDUCATION



Educational institutions

- Suupohja Vocational Institute: versatile vocational education
- SeAMK, University of Applied Sciences: Business School in Kauhajoki (hospitality management programme) and School of Culture and Design in Jurva
- Open University of Kauhajoki and Evangelical College of Kauhajoki
- TEAK, Adult Education Centre of Teuva
- Comprehensive schools and upper secondary schools



SOMETHING TO DO



Parra ski center

Foodfare

Nummirock





Snowboarding

Activities

There's plenty to do in Suupohja. You can get sweaty in Mobile Sauna Festival in Teuva or in Nummirock Metal Festival in Kauhajoki. In Kauhajoki Food Fair you can tickle your gustatory senses with delicacies from local producers.

Culture is strongly present in Suupohja. Several amateur theatres provide experiences together with skilful musicians.

Diverse sport clubs in Suupohja provide excitement and entertainment. A team that unites the whole region is the basketball team Kauhajoen Karhu which plays in the Finnish championship league.

Music



Amateur Theatre



Basketball

Mobile sauna festival



What about networking?

www.suupohja.fi

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Email. kunnanhallitus@isojoki.fi

www.isojoki.fi

Karjoki Municipality

Tel. +358 62680674

Email. kunta@karjoki.fi

www.karjoki.fi

Former Jurva Municipality

(consolidated to Kurikka)

Tel. +358 6451 3757

Email. kurikan-kaupunki@kurikka.fi

www.kurikka.fi

Kauhajoki Town

Tel. +358 62413 2009

Email. kirjaamo@kauhajoki.fi

www.kauhajoki.fi

Teuva Municipality

Tel. +358 6413 4000

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How to get to Suupohja?



Straight to the capital Helsinki or to Vaasa, from where it takes only a good hour to drive to the Suupohja region.

www.finavia.fi/airports



In the daytime train runs from Helsinki to Seinäjoki approximately every hour. From Seinäjoki it takes less than an hour to drive to Suupohja.

www.vr.fi



In the daytime there are several bus departures from Seinäjoki to Suupohja. You can also take a bus from Helsinki or Vaasa.

www.matkahuolto.fi



Distances:

- Helsinki 4 h (330 km)
- Tampere 2 h (170 km)
- Turku 3 h (240 km)
- Vaasa 1 h (90 km)
- Seinäjoki 1 h (65 km)



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