Hanging Around for the Better Living Conditions – a Youth Project in the European North

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This research studies the different meanings of a sub-regional youth-project for young people and the local features in the implementation process of the project. In the focus of this case study is the Kasvu-project, which is a regional development project for young people. From the year 2001 to 2004, the Kasvu-project has functioned in the sub-region of six municipalities Polvijärvi, Kontiolahti, Eno, Kiihtelysvaara, Pyhäselkä, Liperi and a one town Outokumpu. The research material consists of thematic interviews of the project leaders and the young people from Outokumpu and Kiihtelysvaara.

Projects mean different things for the different people. The different meanings are a resource of the projects but also a source of variation in the implementation process. The Kasvu-project implements the LEADER+ community initiative program of the EU. The program coordinates and supports small-scale development projects, which are based on the local partnership. In this way, the program negotiates the meanings for the projects with the local people. The Kasvu-project has applied the idea of partnership to the young people and given them the possibility to influence in the local youth action groups. The possibility to influence and the adult support given by the project leaders were significant things for the many young people.

Individuals are also members of their localities. Based on the interview results, this study observed the local differences that emerged in the implementation process of the project in the case localities. Remarkable local differences were noticed between Outokumpu and Kiihtelysvaara. A lot of new youth activity has been developed and a lot of youth have been involved with the project and the activities. However, the project proceeded better in Outokumpu than in Kiihtelysvaara. The main reasons for the different proceedings were in the geographical locations of the localities, in the sizes of the youth populations and in the locality structures.

CONTENT

1. Introduction

1.1. The Background

In the year 2002 I worked in the office of the local LEADER-association in Joensuu during my practical training period. In my work I participated to the coordination and administration of the small-scale development projects of countryside. For example, I interviewed people of the projects and participated to the meeting of the board of the association. I met many enthusiastic people. The LEADER(Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement l´Economie Rural)-program had succeeded to bring new social activity, innovation and livelihoods to the rural areas. This is how I got interested of the development project work as a real opportunity to take action against the social, economical, environmental, etc. defects.

The LEADER-program has many achievements but there also came up some problems. The biggest problems I met were connected to the cooperation. The relationships between the top-level administration in the ministries and EU, and the actors in the local and regional level were difficult. That appeared as growing bureaucracy. Coordinating the wide range of local level actors seemed to be a difficult task too. The different people, organizations and institutions have different interests and also the ideas of the need for development are different.

As the EU has implemented numerous development programs in the member countries and also outside its borders, these programs have been of a great interest of research. Also the geography has been a fruitful subject for such research because of its long tradition of regional development studies. The LEADER-program represents a kind of new and innovative culture of regional developing. That is why a whole group of scientists has studied the dynamics of the implementation of the program. In this research I want to give some new light to the study of this field. Although, much research has already been done.

When I worked with the different projects, my observation was that a project could mean different things for different people. For my opinion and experience this topic is very important, more important than it might seem to be. Very often the multiple meanings given to a project by the target group have not been taken account. That can mean emerging conflicts or even the total failure of the project in a certain point of view. For example, in many projects the true needs of the target

group have not been recognized (Silfverberg, 20). On the other hand, the different functions and meanings are a resource for the project.

The focus of this study is on a youth project. Quite often I hear speeches about the importance of the young generation for the future of the society. Notwithstanding, the rural youth has been of a little importance both in the research and also in the planning and decision-making in the Finnish society (Muilu 2001, 27-28, 31). A Kasvu youth project, and this study too, are attempts to explore new possibilities in this marginalized field. The dynamics of the LEADER-developing is already quite well explored (see for example: Lehto 2002, 33-36). Instead of presenting any new theoretical models, I approach the rural youth and ask them how they see this kind of development project. I try to find out and present the view and the vision of the local youth about the development project in respect to their local community.

1.2. The Research Questions

The LEADER development projects are based on the interaction between the local communities, LEADER-organizations and officials on local, regional and national levels. Local people, local organizations and institutions participate in a remarkable way to the planning, coordination and implementation of the LEADER development projects (Karhio 2000, 88-89).

The crucial question about the development projects is that how do they correspond the true development needs of the target area. In this case, the question is how do the LEADER youth project corresponds the needs of the local youth. Answering to that question is not self-evident. Who knows best what is best for the youth? It is not a task of the researcher to give an answer. One might say that youth themselves know it best. Another could say that you should ask from parents, teachers, local youth organizations or parish. The researcher can only give new information about the present situation and try to express the reality as well as possible. A good research can be a valuable source for the people whose work is concerned about the subject.

The research questions of this study are:

What kind of meanings the local youth gives for a LEADER development project, which is directed to them and what kind of special features the project gets from the locality?

To answer the question, I have divided the research question to the following sub questions:

- ❖ What is the LEADER-program and how is it implied in a particular case of a youth project?

- ❖ What kinds of personal meanings and functions the development project has had in the minds, lives and cultures of the young people?

- ❖ How does the existence of a project in a particular locality make it different from the project in another locality?

The "great invention" of geography is that geography matters. That means; space is an important factor in the construction of different phenomena. The heterogeneous space is the material for geography. If the space would be always homogeneous, the geography would not be needed. In the field of human geography especially people are in the focus. While the other social sciences try to find some general regularities or principles in the behavior of people, human geography aims at finding some differences. On the other words, people and their environments are the "human space" that makes the difference.

In this study the main interest is on the meanings that the young people give to a development project. With this approach I ask: how is a development project constructed in the human space? As a starting point – there is no simple answer. Every part of the world, country, region or even locality has its special features. In that sense, there are no two similar development projects. On the other hand, all the development projects have at least some common features. My basic assumption is that people do give different meanings for different things because of their different backgrounds, cultures and societies. Therefore always beside the "official project"(planned and written in the paper) there are several "unofficial projects" (the personal meanings, which differ from the "official"). The task of this study is to study this phenomenon.

1.3. The Central Concepts

Meanings. The different ways of doing research of the world of meanings are fascinating and multiple. Usually the meanings are understood as symbolic ways how people conceptualize the world around them in their minds (see for example Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 46-47). My way of using the concept of meaning is broader. I define the meanings so that they concern the whole life of a person. In that sense, some things are more meaningful for a person than others. Furthermore, some things can be meaningless. Anyway, people can give different meanings for a same thing. This fact is as much dependent on practical aspects as symbolic ones. The strict division between the person's "outside world" and the "inside world" is noticed to be problematic by the social scientists too (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 49).

Youth. When defining who is a young person, the biological, psychological, cultural and the legal aspects must be taken account. When I speak of the youth, I just mean the target group of the Kasvu-project. The project is mostly targeted to the youth, who are in the stage of upper-level comprehensive school (classes 7, 8, and 9 in Finland) and secondary schools. This age group ranges from 13 to 18 years. Thus the youth concept of this study refers to the physical age. Nevertheless, the concerned age group is also culturally very homogeneous because of the common background in the uniform comprehensive school system.

Rural locality. With respect to the LEADER-projects, the local rural community is the community, which is supposed to benefit from a single development project. Basically, the LEADER-program is applied outside the urban areas. Nevertheless, it can include small towns like Outokumpu, which is one of the two cases of this study. Many geographers have used the Agnew's three-level framework to conceptualize place (see e.g. Castree 2003, 167-181). In short, the definition divides place firstly to the *location*, which means the position of a place in respect to the other places and wider spatial systems like states. Secondly, there is *locale,* which means the space that enables the social relationships and networks of the individuals. This is the physical element of place in a local scale. Thirdly, Agnew separates the *sense of place*, which reflects the individual observations, knowledge and feelings, each one of which are formed in a certain context of a locale and location.

All of the three above-mentioned dimensions together form the place. This is a broad framework, which can be applied to all the localities, irrespective if the place is rural or urban. There are clear

differences between the rural and urban localities. The biggest differences are the different appearance of natural environments and the different amount and concentration of population and the constructed environments. The two localities observed in this study, Outokumpu and Kiihtelysvaara are very different compared to each other. The descriptions of the features of these localities are in the chapter 5.1.

Regional development project. According to Keränen (2001, 13) the general features of the projects are uniqueness, target-orientation and systematic proceeding. A project has an *organization* and certain *resources*. It uses systematically certain *measures* to reach the *goal* and make the *results* within a *timetable.* (Keränen 2001, 13.) These features apply for all the projects but there are many different kinds of projects. A 'regional development project' is a part of program-based developing, which actualizes the regional policy of a state or the EU (Keränen 2001, 13). All of these definitions fit in the Kasvu-project.

Hang around. This concept of spoken language came out often in the research material. I wanted to define it because it is difficult to give an exhaustive explanation for it. It has many interesting dimensions and it is a link to the world of youth. "Hanging around" ("hengailla" in Finnish) is not doing anything special. It is a way of being. One precondition for hanging around is free time. Therefore hanging around is a phenomenon of the modern and postmodern world where big groups of people are hanging around without anything special to do. Hanging around is connected to the society, where machines have partly replaced the human work and particularly the young people are free from the responsibility of the productive work.

Hang around is also a spatial concept – a place is required for hanging around. For example, houses, streets and yards are places for hanging around. Naturally, people are looking for the most convenient place. Hanging around is not complete passivity. There is no simple line between doing something and hanging around. It is more likely 'active being' or 'passive doing' exclusively to the 'active doing' and it has also the social function – it is more convenient to hang around in a company. As a conclusion, hang around means active being in a convenient place in a convenient company.

2. Methodology

## 2.1. The Theoretical Approach

This study is a qualitative case study. The reason why I chose the qualitative approach is that I find qualitative methods better than for example formal questionnaires, when having the whole picture of thoughts and behavior of different people. In that sense, my philosophy comes close to Phenomenology, for instance (see Kitchin and Tate 2000, 10). The approach could also be described more likely descriptive and understanding than law seeking and explaining. Nonetheless, I consider these dichotomies more or less artificial. Logical thinking is required in the both kinds of studies. When a researcher is reading a writer's text with the understanding method, he is also seeking laws in order to understand the writer. In accordance, when a social scientist is formulating laws about the appearance of racism, for instance, he must also understand the thinking and the social-psychological preconditions that are connected to the phenomenon. In the social sciences, which are dealing with human beings, both understanding and explaining are always required.

My hypothesis is the assumption that people do give different meanings to the projects. With the qualitative interviews I am looking for some empirical examples of the meanings. The qualitative method also allows seeing multiple causal connections and setting the phenomenon in the broad framework. The study approach is deductive proceeding from the general principle to the individual cases (see for example Lindsay 1997, 7). That is because I have strong presumptions about the research material. Nevertheless, the approach is not strictly deductive but it gives freedom to make multiple assumptions from the basis of the collected material. The inductive conclusions are also possible in the qualitative research.

Human geography is a spatial application of the social sciences. The central question is, what is the influence of the spatial factor to the observed phenomena. I describe the geographical extent of this study with a triangle in the figure 1. Individual himself is a *spatial subject*, having certain physical and mental features, social connections, life history and the place of living. The life history of an individual is connected to a certain locality, where he is living or has lived. Therefore the individual is always somehow *a representative of his locality*. When there is a project, which becomes a part of the individual's locality and life history, the individual becomes a *subject of the project*. The research question of this study is two-sided: how the young people as individual spatial subjects

have experienced the project and how they represent their localities as the subjects of a project? From the influence of the individual local people the project gets certain local features. That is the setting of this study.

Figure 1. The geographical extent of the study.
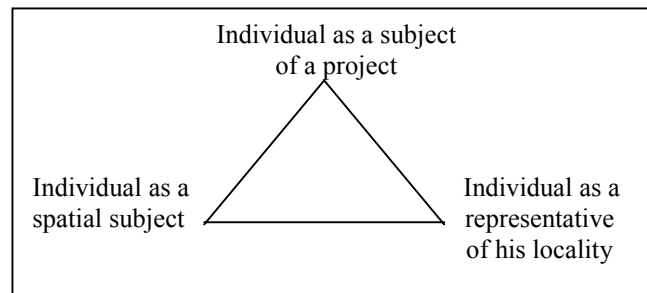
In respect to the Agnew's tree-level model, which has been used by Castree (2003, 167-181) for example, the approach of this study takes account all the three levels of place. Firstly, the Kasvu youth project, which is in the focus of this study, represents the levels of *locale* and *location*, as the project is a sub-regional project in the EU-wide development program, which is applied in the local level. Secondly, the personal meanings of the project for the young people are included to their *sense of place,* as the project is a part of the *locale* and the *location.* Using the Agnew's conceptualization, I use the *sense of place* of the young people as a mirror to the position of a youth project in a *locale* and a *location.* These theoretical conceptualizations are tool for categorizing the "human space" but I want to emphasize that the individuals as spatial subjects cannot be completely categorized. That is why they are called individuals. This is a general problem in the social sciences, which are based on different categorizations. The limitedness of the scientific tools should be taken account to reduce the possibility of too broad conclusions.

The two case localities of the youth activity within the Kasvu-project are the municipality of Kiihtelysvaara and the Outokumpu town. The reason for choosing these two cases was not that I was particularly interested of these two places. Rather, I was interested of the impact of place *per se* to the emergence of the project, on the other words: which of the meanings and features of a project are the same irrespective of the place and which of them are bounded to a particular place? Place with physical and social environments affects to the projects remarkably. However, the municipalities of Outokumpu and Kiihtelysvaara do give an interesting rural-urban comparison

because Outokumpu is a small town and Kiihtelysvaara is clearly a rural locality. The aim of the interviews was not to map out the whole world meanings of the youth in the municipalities but just give examples of the young people for whom the project has some kind of meaning. Although the samples are small, they still give enough material for investigating the different meanings given to the project and comparing the results between the two places.

As I mentioned, a lot of study has been done of the LEADER-program and LEADER-projects. The most representing collection of this research in Finland is done by Hyyryläinen and Rannikko (2000) in a book: "Eurooppalistuva Maaseutupolitiikka, Paikalliset Toimintaryhmät Maaseudun Kehittäjinä". My study represents the "grassroots studies" where the researcher tries to get into the world and head of the local people, in order to understand some wider phenomena. One example of this kind of studies is Rannikko's (2000, 143-165) research of the affect of a development project to the local identity. Rannikko was a member of his target group by himself, so he had a good chance to observe the local life by the participant observation (Rannikko 2000, 146-147). Even though I share the perspective with Rannikko, his study represents more the traditional social sciences, where the researcher tries to understand the general logic of the local development. I am also interested of the fact that there are different stories and different logics – even inside a same locality.

Another interesting approach to the research of the development projects is the social capital theory. This study is not particularly concerned about the social capital but the social capital theory gives interesting views to the final results of this study. Also, the development of the social capital is a great source of motivation behind the LEADER-projects and the Kasvu-project. I give a deeper look to this field of research in the chapter 3.2.

2.2. The Research Material

I used two kinds of interviews for collecting the material. First, I conducted a thematic group interview with the project leaders of the Kasvu-project. All the three leaders participated the group-interview (appendix 1.). One of them was male. The atmosphere of the interview was very relaxed. Everybody was joking and the chat with the Karelian dialect made the discussion very convenient. I did not feel right to keep on using very official language. I do not think that is even necessary because the interviews are about using the spoken language as a tool for mediating people's

thoughts. The more convenient the language is the better is the result. The interviewees were expressing themselves openly and the result was good from my opinion. In the second stage, I made short thematic interviews with the young people who represented the target group of the project in their localities. The numbers of the interviewees were 17 in Outokumpu and 9 in Kiihtelysvaara.

I made the interviews with the youngsters of Outokumpu in a summer camp organized in the frames of the Kasvu project on 21-25th of July in 2003. The camp at Outokumpu was the sixth cultural camp of eastern Finland called Ramppis. The program of the camp consisted of music, theater, circus, etc. training and other activities. There were about thirty participants from all over the Finland but mostly from North-Karelia. I interviewed seventeen youngsters who were from Outokumpu. Six of the interviewees were male and eleven female. The age range was 13-17. Again, the nature of the interviews was conversational. Especially, with the young people I did not found it convenient to be very formal or official. Basically I followed the same formula (appendix 2.) in all of the interviews but sometimes I presented additional questions when some interesting issues came out. The interviews were short, about 3-10 minutes, which I also found as a benefit in the field situation. Anyway, the youngsters usually answered willingly to all the questions.

Another set of interviews was made on 24th of October 2003 in a youth disco at the Church village of Kiihtelysvaara. This time I had nine interviewees, five boys and four girls. The age range was 13-18. It was a good place for the interviews because there were estimated 70 young people present, which is a very good representation of the whole youth population of the municipality, who represented all the age groups. The situation was very different compared to the one in Outokumpu. At the Outokumpu, the interviews were strictly organized along the other program of the camp. In Kiihtelysvaara I had to ask the people by myself, whether they would have liked to participate an interview. One boy refused to participate.

Already in Outokumpu, I noticed that some young people had very little knowledge about the Kasvu-project. That is why I changed the strategy so that there were optional questions for those who did not know much about the project (appendix 3.). Again, the list of questions was just a framework for the conversation and I asked a lot of other questions that I felt important in the interview situation and left out irrelevant ones. I recorded all the interviews with a tape recorder and later I wrote down everything with a computer. I transcribed the interviews only with the normal text and I marked down the breaks and the unclear parts in the speaking. I did not write down any other features of the expression of the interviewees. I only wanted to record the core-meanings from

the answers, not any detailed analysis. Anyhow, the deeper analysis would have been better for the purpose of this study but it would have required a wider research than the master's thesis level.

All the studies are based on language. This study also uses the language as a tool for collecting material through the interviews. The multiple ways of using and understanding language are worth of discussing. There are good reasons why to use language as a tool but this approach has many deficits too. Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 139-146) rise up important aspects of language. Firstly, language is a cultural product. Secondly, people use different discourses when using language and finally, language is a way of describing the reality and also a way of making it. The cultural character of language means that language is produced in a social interaction. In that way a language is a part of a certain culture, in which the language is produced and reproduced. Discourses are different ways of producing and using the language. People use different discourses to achieve their purposes. Discourses are aimed at affecting other people. Therefore the discursive language is social language.

Another way of seeing language is taking it as a truthful way of describing the reality. As Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 139) write, this is the Modern view of language. The Realistic approach sees language more as a tool of making the reality. Furthermore, they argue that the researcher must choose between the different approaches when conducting a qualitative research (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 146). The benefit of the argument given by Eskola and Suoranta is the remark that there are different aspects in language. As I understand, these features exist simultaneously in language. The truthful description of reality is an important task of language. Without this task and the mutual trust between the users of the language, the whole language would not have any function. At the same time language is culturally bounded and socially constructed. Although the language systems are continuously chancing, the change does not seem to be very fast. For example we can still understand the meaning of the proverb *veni, vidi, vici* even though it is thousands of years old. Therefore this phenomenon does not have so much importance in an individual's life. It is more an issue of different cultural eras and domains.

The concept of "discourse" is a bit confusing. All the language, spoken and written is discursive. All of our saying, doing and ignoring is targeted to certain goals. We could also speak of "discursive behavior", "discursive actions" or "discursive ways of life". At the same time there can be many discourses, which can form hierarchies. An interview is a discourse itself. Why the interviewees answer the questions? The answers could be: "because they like the interviewer" or

"because they are interested". In many cases the interviewer is dependent on the sympathy or the natural curiosity of people. That is a problem of interviews. There are always people who have no reason to participate an interview. Certain groups of people leave out from the research. Accordingly, certain discourses leave out. If I carry on the idea of discourse, I could say that the missing people represent some kind of a "silent discourses".

Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 145) mention the non-verbal messaging as a part of language. My experience is that the body language has a crucial role in the interview situation. The interviewer must use the body language to make the situation socially acceptable. This means ensuring that the interviewer is considered as a friend – shaking hands, smiling, looking to the eyes and so on. The body language affects remarkably to the quality and the quantity of the material received by interviews – as well as the person and the sex of the interviewer affect too. People speak more openly to a friendly person than an unfriendly or irritating one. Thus every interview is somehow a unique situation. This raises a question: how it is possible to make reliable conclusions from material that has so much variation? My answer is: intuition. Conversation is a natural way of transmitting information between human beings. Our bodies, senses and minds have all the tools for using the language and picking up the fundamental parts from a conversation. That is something we do by intuition.

Interview is a form of conversation. In the every day life people ask questions and answer them, storage the information in different ways and analyze it their minds. That is natural for all the people. Using the technical tools for the processing of information is characteristic for the interviews, although the technical tools have became common in the every day life too. The only big difference between an interview and a common conversation is that an interviewer makes a detailed written report of the interview. The report helps reminding the interview later. As a conclusion, interview is the most natural way of collecting material for a research and the interviewer himself is the fundamental tool for conducting the interview. On the other hand, an interview is always a unique situation with the personal features of an interviewer and the interviewee. Therefore the interviewer must use his natural intuition and the common sense for the conducting of the interview, analyzing it and choosing the parts of the interview, which can be used as a basis for generalizations and which parts cannot be used. What is "common sense" understood to be depends on the researcher.

2.3. Analysis

The material for the analysis consisted of two kinds of transcribed interviews: a thematic group-interview of the three project leaders and the 26 short semi-structured interviews of the young people. Because the main goal of the group-interview was to get background information about the Kasvu-project, I did not use any special analysis methods with it. I simply coded the different aspects of the project that the interviewees brought out in the interview and then I wrote the description of the project as a logical entity (chapter 4.). I also listed up the meanings that the project leaders had given to the project. Comparing the meanings given by the youth and the project workers is one of the tasks of this study.

The analysis of the youth interviews is conducted in the different stages. First, I formulated questions, to which I needed enlightenment from the interviews. I formulated the questions from the basis of the research questions with taking account the nature of the interview text. The study question considers the meanings that the youth gives for the youth project. Practically, I am asking how the project and the youth meet each other. These are the questions that I set on the material:

1. What kinds of activities, connected to the Kasvu-project, an interviewee had participated?
2. What did the interviewee really get from the project?
3. Based on the questions one and two, what was the meaning of the project personally for the interviewee and how important it was for him/her.
4. What kind of a local meaning the interviewee considered the project having?
5. What else did the interviewee have to say about the project?

I read through the interviews and coded the parts of the text, which corresponded the different questions. In the second stage, I made cards for the different respondents. The cards included all the questions with short answers derived from the interviews. In this stage, I could see the differences and the similarities between the different answers. Finally, I started writing the analysis based on the similarities and the differences. I presented the analysis of the different meanings around the similarities in the material. This approach brought up certain themes that were common in the material text (chapter 5.4.).

The final thesis is based on the results of the youth interviews. The sub-regional project is somehow meaningful for the individuals of the target group. The project has a meaning and significance for the individuals. The local young people do participate (or do not participate) the activities of the project. In this way the project becomes a local project. Different people participate to the project in different ways and have different experiences of it. Therefore, there is variation in the features of the project between different localities and different individuals. Also the local environments (*locale*) are factors of the local variation in the project. This analytical setting of this study uses the understanding of the young people (*sense of place*) as a mirror to the local aspects of the youth project.

3. The LEADER+-Program and Development Projects

3.1. The LEADER+-program

The LEADER+ is one of the four of so-called community initiative-programs of the EU on the period of 2000-2006. It carries on the earlier LEADER programs, the first one of which was started in 1991 to support the unfavorable rural areas of the EU. The LEADER+ funds local development projects, which are supposed to be innovative. On the local level, the responsibility of the planning and implementing the actions is given to the local action groups (LAG). The LAGs consist of rural people, local associations, enterprises and municipalities. The idea of the program is that the rural people can make decisions of the developing of their home area. (The Ministry of Forestry and Agriculture, 2002.) The LAGs must be organized as legal units such as associations.

On the period of 2000-2006 there were 25 LEADER+ LAGs in Finland and in addition, 7 POMO+ LAGs. POMO+ is a similar program than the LEADER+ but it is a national one and it uses only national money. The total budged of the LEADER+ in Finland was 1013 million marks (about 170 375 229 Euro). About one third of it comes from the EU, another third from the state and the municipalities and the final third comes from private sources. (The Ministry of Forestry and Agriculture, 2002.) On the regional level, the implementation of the program is organized in the sub-regions, each of which has a LAG. In the region of North-Karelia (N-K) there are three LAGs

that work in the three sub-regions. Those are Vaara-Karjalan-, Keski-Karjalan- and Joensuun Seudun LEADER+ regions. The sub-regions consist of small groups of municipalities. The Joensuun Seudun LEADER+ -region consists of seven municipalities, Eno, Polvijärvi, Liperi, Kontiolahti, Kiihtelysvaara and Pyhäselkä and a one small town Outokumpu. This study concentrates on Outokumpu and Kiihtelysvaara. (Figure 2.)

Figure 2. The LEADER+ -area of the Joensuu Sub-region

The LEADER association of the Joensuu Region was established in 1996 to implement the LEADER II- program. In March 1999 the association had 179 members, who were mostly individuals but also few associations. The members are usually active local people who contribute also in other associations and organizations, especially in village councils. The decision-making body of the association is the board. The board has followed the principle of tripartite cooperation. It means that the members of the board come from the three different fields of society, which are

municipal institutions, different associations and the individual local citizens. (Moniarvoinen ja Aktiivinen Kansalaisyhteiskunta, 6.) During the LEADER II period the association coordinated more than 130 development projects on the area (Moniarvoinen ja Aktiivinen Kansalaisyhteiskunta, 1). Therefore, the model of the LEADER developing has rooted itself in the region to the networks of active people and organizations.

One of the North-Karelian LEADER-researchers is Kirsi Karhio. Karhio (2000) has reflected the complicated LEADER networks with the concept of "partnership". The idea of partnership derives from the principles of the EU programs (Karhio 2000, 78). According to Karhio, the partnership means cooperation between different actors and different levels. Partnership is doing together, making new fields of activity that cross the old boundaries. In the development project work the principle of partnership tries to combine the efforts and the development views of different parties. The cooperation should work in all the stages of the actions beginning from the planning and preparing. The partnership widens the developing network outside the line of the traditional administration and also links the local actors to the official institutions. (Karhio 2000, 80-85.)

Partnership requires from different parties the ability of combining the interests. That is more than just taking account the different interests of parties. That means discussing about the objectives and strategies and developing an equal status between the partners. (Karhio 2000, 86.) LAGs with the principle of the partnership are new channels of local democracy. The positive feature of the LEADER-program is that it is constructed so that it invites people to negotiate the common meanings for it. That is why this study subject is far more complicated than one might assume: the program gives people a possibility to exchange and negotiate different meanings. That does not mean that people always use this possibility. Furthermore, it does not take away the problem of contradictive meanings.

I agree with Vesa Puuronen who has written in his article: *"There is no society without a functioning individual, also a village council and the LEADER-program need individuals. Respectively, the constrains and resources given by the society, village and the LEADER-program form the frames for the functioning of an individual."*(Puuronen 1998, 36; translated by T.S.) Taking account the viewpoint of an individual is as important as taking account the different collective actors.

3.2. LEADER-projects and Social Capital in the Field of Regional Development

Development projects are the actual products of the LEADER program. Keränen (2001) has described the program-based developing as a cyclic process. The program has certain goals and the projects are tools for reaching the goals. The effects of the projects are evaluated and the experience from the projects is used to develop the program and the new projects. The task of a regional development project is to carry out the program, from where the project gets funding. (Keränen 2001, 15.) One of the most important goals of the LEADER-program is to create social capital to the target areas. That is also what the Kasvu-project is about, despite that the concept of "social capital" it is not usually used.

Based on their research, Falk and Kilparick (2000, 101-102) define the social capital as a human resource that can be gained and depleted. They have distinguished two main categories of social capital: *knowledge* and *identity resources*. The *knowledge resources* consist of knowledge about different kind of things: skills and knowledge itself; kinds of social and physical information in the local level like the awareness of the physical places and resources; formal and informal networks; values, rules and historical aspects. The *identity resources* are outcomes of social interaction, which produces belonging and commitment to something. These are identities of self, -others and -place; trust, norms, values and attitudes. (Falk and Kilpatric 2000, 99-101.) This kind of social capital have the potential to contribute to the social, civic or economic well being of different kinds of communities (Falk and Kilpatric 2000, 103). They also argue that the social capital can only be built in a local social interaction. Further, they note that the quality and the quantity of the interactions determine the development of the social capital. Anyhow, it is not only the human contact that can produce the social capital. Also the Internet or other sources of informative material can develop the knowledge or identity resources. (Falk and Kilpatric 2000, 97, 101.)

Social capital has seen as an important underlying force in the regional development in the philosophy of the LEADER developing. The emphasis of the LEADER of Joensuu Region to the development of social capital comes out from the program handout. One starting point of the program is *"...the emphasis on the process nature of the program: more important than the program paper itself is that what will stay between the ears of those who have participated the doing. That is why it is important to get as many as possible of the inhabitants of the target area*

and potential makers of the project along to the planning of the project." (Moniarvoinen ja Aktiivinen Kansalaisyhteiskunta, 1; translation by T.S.)

These examples show that in the conceptual level the discussion of different meanings, values and functions of the LEADER-projects is well adopted. In that sense, a LEADER-project is a favorable target for the research of meanings. How good are the mechanisms that try to give room for the different meanings and how do these work in practice?

As mentioned above, there are no two exactly similar projects. Different temporal, spatial, material, cultural and personal factors always give different features to the projects (see Keränen 2001, 14). But in all the projects there are also common features. One theoretical model, which presents some features of the projects, is the life-span model of an ideal project by Esko Lehto (2002). He has modified the model from the presentation of Westlund (2001). The life-span- model is very useful here because it uses the concepts of social capital, partnership and empowerment, which are closely related to the LEADER projects. The model presents five stages of a development project. The main task of the project is seen to be the transfer and development of social capital. (Lehto 2002, 35.)

Lehto defines the local social capital simply as the capability of people to work together for the common purposes in the groups and organizations (Lehto 2002, 33). Common norms and other social structures increase the efficiency of the work of groups of people. The life-span model of an ideal project draws on a theory, according to which the individual actors use and invest their social capital to the cooperation networks. The individuals who invest their social capital to the starting and making development projects are called *social entrepreneurs. Partnership* is understood as a common agreement of the purposeful short-term project activity of the people participating the project. *Empowerment* means reinforcing the skills, capabilities and power opportunities and building the new structures of cooperation. (Lehto 2002, 33-34.)

The first stage in the life-span model is the **composing** of the project. The social entrepreneurs use their personal capitals to develop the idea of the project. The next stage is the **preparing**. Now the social entrepreneurs invest their capital to the construction of the local partnership. In the **top-down** stage the different partners use their social- and human capital to develop the social and personal skills of the target group of the project. That is called 'empowering'. The forth one is the **down-top** stage, in which the project activates the target group, which begins to use their links and skills,

created by the project, to develop the new skills and forms of cooperation. The social entrepreneurs become advisors. The fifth and the final stage is the **return** when the participants transfer their new human- and social capital back to the area for example by being active in different organizations. After the project, the level of human- and social capital in the area is higher than before. (Lehto 2002, 35.)

Social capital is only one of the development fields in the LEADER-program. Examples of the other fields are entrepreneurship, rural-urban cooperation and network society. An interesting idea is also the "chain of values" (Moniarvoinen ja Aktiivinen Kansalaisyhteiskunta, 25). The term is a relative to the concepts of partnership and networking but it is a little bit wider concept. The chain of values is a practical term for the program technique where not only a one group of people but also actors of a wider range make a project. It neither means only the participation of the actors in the same sector or cluster nor some kind of administrational cooperation. Rather, the chain of values is cooperation that seeks to cross the boundaries of different sectors. Furthermore, the idea is to put the whole project in the wider perspective of regional development besides the administrational partnership and there should be cooperation in all the stages of the project. (Moniarvoinen ja Aktiivinen Kansalaisyhteiskunta, 25, 27).

3.3. The Youth Democracy in the European North

Although, the youth policy has been in the minor role, it is not right to say that the youth is forgotten in our society. There is, both on the national and international levels, legislation, which aims at better living conditions and life opportunities of youth and at the better participation to the decision-making in the society. One example is the European Council resolution 2139/1998, which encourages the EU member states to invite young people to the local, regional, national and international decision-making. This way the youth would be better associated to their communities and to the process of European integration. The role of the youth-organizations as organizers of the participatory projects is also recognized in the resolution. (European Council 1998.) This kind of policy seems to have room in Finland. That can be best seen in the establishment of youth councils or youth influence groups, which have become common in towns and municipalities all over the Finland. Paunikallio (2000) has made a study of those groups. I introduce that further in this chapter.

The youth councils are directed to realize the idea of the political-institutional democracy. Kasvu-project plays more on the field of youth work. They still have a big common ground: youth participation. Kasvu-project too, has promoted the youth participation to the decision-making on the local, regional, national and international levels. The most important form, by which the Kasvu-project promoted the youth participation were the youth action groups (YAG). Those were local planning and decision-making youth groups, which were linked to the administration of the Kasvu project. The project participated to the large-scale networking with different organizations and other projects on the different levels. In that way, it brought a possibility for the some young people to participate different kinds of meetings and conferences, where the issues of the youth were discussed. Also the project carried on the ideas, opinions and information about the living-conditions of the youth especially to the municipal parliaments and the regional council of North-Karelia. (See chapter 4.1.) Kasvu-project, in a big part, fits in the framework of the considered European Council resolution.

There is not much research done of the young people in the rural Northern Europe, particularly in the new context of the EU. Especially, I could not find any research of the rural youth projects based on the EU regional policy. Is this also a sign of the lack of political interest to the youth work? Anyhow, there are studies about the living conditions and the life opportunities of rural youth in the Europe and Finland. The most closely related study to my research is Paunikallio's (2000) survey- and interview-study about the youth participation to the local democracy in the nine municipalities in the Central and Western Finland. Paunikallio found out what kind of solutions the municipalities had for taking account the opinions of young people in the decision-making. With the survey and the thematic interviews, she asked the opinion of the youth and the local authorities and representatives about the youth influence groups, which were supposed to represent the voice of the youth in the localities. (Paunikallio 2000, 18-19.)

The solutions in the different municipalities varied a lot. The youth groups, which were called "youth councils" for example, had different positions in the democratic organizations. Some of the groups were in the minor role and only the municipal youth worker mediated the ideas of the group to the local council. Some groups had direct connections to the municipal bodies with the permission to participate and speak in the meetings, for instance. Also the young people had very different views and experiences about participating the groups. (Paunikallio 2000, 44-45.) Even though the activity was sometimes found frustrating or cliquish, the outcomes of the participation were mostly very positive. The young people in the groups had had a lot of new experience and

knowledge. Also their self-esteems were strengthened. The activity itself brought many good things like good mood and new friends. The most important thing was the feeling that it is possible to make the change. The group activity gave knowledge and tools about how to contribute. One outcome was the grown sense of empathy – on the one hand they could better take into account the opinions of other people in the group, on the other hand the position of the municipal decision-makers, when the youth became aware what the decision-makers really do. (Paunikallio 2000, 58, 78.)

In the group of respondents (n=91) the experiences were generally good. The best experiences were the situations when their initiative went through and their wishes became realized. Also it was great when the decision-makers asked the opinion of the group about a certain issue. In accordance, the biggest disappointments were the cases when the decision-makers were not interested about the opinion of the youth. (Paunikallio 2000, 77.) It is important to notice that only about half of the young people, to whom the questionnaire was sent, responded (Paunikallio 2000, 20). Those discourses, which did not get into the study, remain silent. Perhaps the view of those who refused would have been more pessimistic. It is impossible to know. Paunikallio (2000, 51) assumes that those who responded belonged to the most active group.

The local youth influence groups and, in the context of the Kasvu-project, the youth action groups are based on voluntary activity. A generally well-known fact supported with my experience is that usually in the voluntary organizations or voluntary activity there is a certain core-group. It consists of the most active members who are strongly committed to the activity and who are usually doing most of the work. In addition, there is a bigger group of passive members, whose commitment is more or less loose. That is the case especially in the small organizations. This is one of my presumptions in this study. Because of the different backgrounds, life situations and worldviews people have different kinds of motivation and different possibilities to participate the voluntary activity.

Why are some young people more active than others? Suutari (2002) has approached this question from the viewpoint of the so-called "marginalized youth". There is a word "syrjäytynyt" in the Finnish language that means a person, who is living on the edge of the society. Those are people, who are unemployed or who have other social problems and who are not properly integrated to the official society. Scientists and official institutions have developed different indicators how to measure how far a person has fallen from the society. Then the certain measures are launched to

integrate those people back to the society. Suutari (2002) criticizes this kind of thinking. She suggests that the characterizing word "syrjätynyt" should be replaced with the term "marginalized", "marginaalinen" in Finnish. Her key point is that although a young person is living on the margin of the society, he/she is not necessarily falling to the social vacuum or passivity. (Suutari 2002, 65.)

Suutari claims that social networks are remarkable elements in the construction of lives of young people. She contacted with the questionnaires and interviews North-Karelian young people in the age group of 18-25, who were classified as marginalized by the official indicators. Most of the respondents had middle-sized social networks of 11-20 persons. Some had bigger or smaller ones. The networks consisted mostly of the family, friends and relatives and, in the minor extent, of the welfare state institutions like social or employment offices. Females had bigger networks than males. (Suutari 2002, 51, 65-67.) These networks were sources of material and emotional support in the daily life and survival of the young people (Suutari 2002, 70-71). This case study shows that beside the official institutions, the unofficial networks are in a very important role in the lives of young people.

In the light of these results, it is not easy to say why some young people are more passive than others. The reasons for the passivity of youth are both in the success in the official society (e.g. school) and in the success within the social networks. Furthermore, those two are dependent on the life history and the personal features of a person. The Kasvu-project and the youth influence groups are more favorable for those young people who already have big social networks. On the other hand, they are possibilities for a person to create and develop those networks.

4. Kasvu – a Project for Young People

I made the thematic group interview with the leaders of the Kasvu-project in May 2003. The main purpose of the interview was to find out what kind of a project the Kasvu is. I wanted to get a picture of the different stages of the project, the width of it and the different actions and activities that have taken place. In addition, I observed what kind of meanings the leaders gave for the project. The project workers represent the official side of the project. On the other hand, they have

the best view to the field of the project. The most official definition of the project is in the official program paper of it. As a source in this chapter, I use both the program paper and the interview.

The ages of the interviewees were 23, 28 and 37. They were all living in the center of Outokumpu. Tomi Kervinen had a degree of the theatre expression and he had worked as an entrepreneur in the cultural sector. Kaisa Mustonen had a degree of communication with the direction to the producing. She had the working experience as a producer. Jaana Kokkonen had graduated from the commercial institute and she had also the dancer's degree. She had worked in the offices and as a dance trainer. All of them had a close contact to Outokumpu, so they were developing also their own neighborhood. The project was their job but Tomi also mentioned the ideological reasons to their interest to the Kasvu-project. He mentioned the idea of *"making the world better"* (transl. By T.S.) and the *"humane goings-on"* (transl. By T.S.), which he had experienced in the Teatteri Traktori-association. The idea was to *"shake the youngsters"* (transl. By T.S.), make them to think what is wrong and what they could do.

4.1. Kasvu I and Kasvu II

The Kasvu-project has, in fact, included two successive projects: Kasvu I and II. The name "Kasvu" means "growth", so it includes the message that it is a development project for young people. The people of the two organizations, Pohjois-Karjalan Nuorisoseurojen Liitto (the association of the youth clubs of N-K) and Teatteri Traktori limited, developed the idea of the project. Kasvu I began in August 2001 and it lasted to the end of the year. The project started with the living condition settlement of the youth of all the seven municipalities (Outokumpu, Polvijärvi, Eno, Liperi, Kontiolahti, Kiihtelysvaara and Pyhäselkä). It was a massive survey conducted with 1368 people in the age range of 15-24. Youth leader students of the Niittylahti polytechnic conducted the survey (see chapter 5.1.). The survey study was sent to the councils of all the seven municipalities.

The second step was the community-theatre tour in the upper-level comprehensive schools and secondary schools, including evening occasions for the adults. More than thirty plays were presented. The community-theatre is an interactive form of theatre, where the themes come close to the local problems of the audience, who can take part to the play or discuss and determine the intrigue. One of the project workers defined it as follows: *"...a session that included theatre, discussion and ideation mixed, a package of three to six hours and from that ground they became*

inspired." (transl. By T.S.) The community theatre performances were a way to rise up problems of the youth of the localities; to think up together solutions to those problems and to inform the people about the new possibilities emerged by the project.

The most concrete goal of the Kasvu I was to establish youth action groups (YAG) to the target area. The YAGs are groups of young people who organize meetings in unofficial form with the minimum bureaucracy in their localities. The YAGs give young people the chance to affect and make decisions about the local youth activity and living environment. In that way, the YAGs carry on the idea of the Kasvu-project and also reproduce the principles of the LEADER-program among the young people. Already in 2001, there were twelve YAGs established. At the time when I interviewed the project leaders in June 2003, from one to four YAGs existed in every municipality. The Kasvu project gave funding for the different things that the YAGs decided to organize. Those were actions or investments such as paintball wars or skateboard ramps. Beside that, the project tried to find other supporters and supporting networks for the YAGs. Those were mostly parents, municipal youth workers, the other projects and the youth organizations.

The approved cost estimate of the Kasvu II was slightly more than 100 000 Euro. Therefore, it was one of the biggest LEADER-projects in the Joensuu Region. The Kasvu II began officially in March 2002 but it really got started in August 2002. The project was supposed to last until the end of the year 2003 but it got some more time because all the money was not yet used. Anyhow, the project will end on 2004. Between the two projects, there was a period of planning and marketing the project to people and different quarters. The figure 2 shows the time-scale of the two projects. The Kasvu II carries on the work started by the Kasvu I. The project supports the YAGs in many ways. It gives funding for the small-scale projects and helps the groups to solve problems that are difficult for young people – how to deal with bureaucracy, for example. The important way of support has been the encouraging of the young people to take action and use the possibilities to make the change in their living conditions. At the same time, the project leaders have organized common meetings for the YAGs, project training and different kinds of youth camps and happenings.

Figure 3. The time-scale of the Kasvu I and Kasvu II.
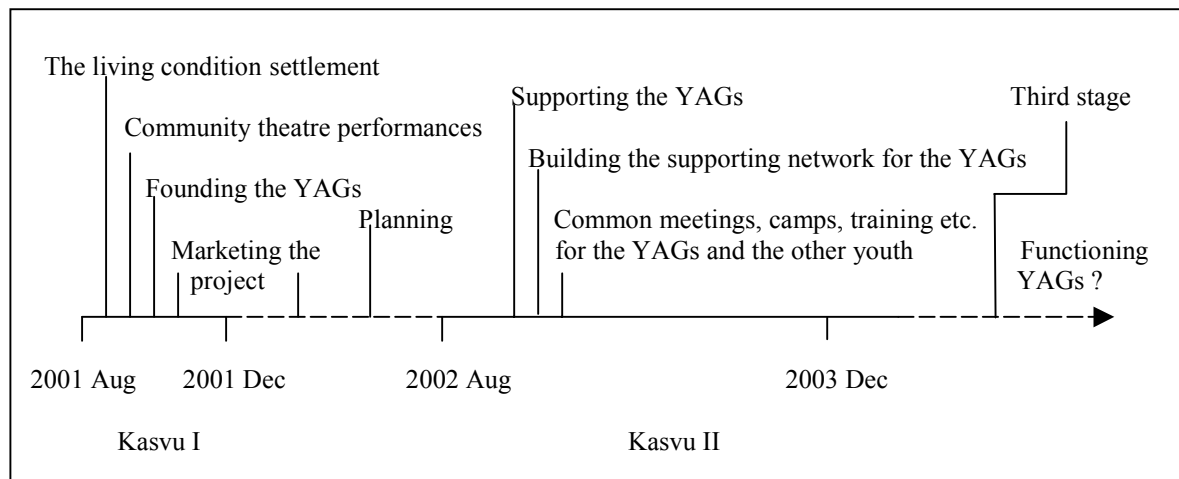
The cooperation networks of the Kasvu-project have been wide. The cooperation has been done in the local, regional and national level. The most remarkable partners in the local level are the municipalities, schools, associations and enterprises. The schools have been a way of reaching the young people and giving them information about the project. The municipalities have been one of the target groups of the project. The project visited together with a group of young people all the municipal parliaments and delivered information to the decision-makers about young people's living conditions.

On the regional level, the project had links with the Regional Council of N-K, the Business and Employment Center of N-K and the other youth projects and organizations. The two first mentioned are administrational partners who have helped with bringing into use new codes of conduct in the regional structures. An important project partner has been the Nuorten Foorumi (the Youth Forum) NUFO, which is another regional youth project. Two regional seminars concerning the developing of the living conditions of youth were organized together with the Regional Council of North-Karelia and the NUFO. A new regional organization was planned from the basis of the seminars. It is meant to be a follower of the Kasvu-project. For instance, it distributes money to the YAGs.

The most important partner in the national level was the Allianssi-project. It was an, so-called 'umbrella project', which was building a network between the different youth projects around the country. The living condition settlement in the Kasvu I was also part of the Allianssi project. Other similar settlements were done by the different projects around the country and these were compared with each other. (Asikainen et al. 2002, 4.)

4.2. The Goals of the Project

The program papers of the Kasvu I and Kasvu II give several goals for the projects:
- Activating and encouraging young people to planning and doing on their own initiative together with adults.
- Preventing the social problems of the youth.
- Developing the living conditions of young people.
- Helping young people to control their lives.
- Promoting the possibilities of the youth to participate and contribute in the society on their own initiative.
- Socio-cultural inspiring.
- Developing the youth work methods.

In general, the same things came out in the interview. Many of the goals can be condensed to the term "socio-cultural inspiring", which the interviewees used. It means inspiring people to contribute to their living conditions in interaction and cooperation with other people. Tomi Kervinen demonstrated the content of the term: "*Wake up, do something for your living conditions! Wake up, stop complaining!*" (transl. By T.S.) More concrete goals were also mentioned, such as making better hobby-possibilities for the youth and developing the youth services and living conditions. The project-leaders saw that their role was to "be beside the young people" rather than being in front of them or behind them. That means being equal partners with them. They claimed that especially the municipal youth coordinators are usually passive supporters of the youth work, which means being "behind the youth". Being "in the front" means that the adults plan and do everything for the youth, without taking into account their opinion. In many cases that leads to bad results. "Being beside," means active participation to the planning and doing but also sharing the responsibility with the young people. In concrete, it was helping them with the practical problems they met.

The YAGs were the main instruments that mediated the wishes of the youth to the project leaders. However, the project was open for all the young people who came there with good ideas. When a youth group started making their own project, the leaders of the Kasvu-project tried to find good connections and supporters for it from the local community. That is, for example, ensuring the commitment of the municipality to the skateboard park-project. Because the YAG-activity is a new

code of conduct, the interviewees themselves had to formulate all the rules and preconditions for the groups. The project leaders had made instruction books and organized training to make the work of the YAGs easier. Anyhow, the groups still need personal guidance and encouragement. The main principle in the project work is what the interviewees call "communal responsibility". It is a form of direct democracy, where the people just do not wait that something happens but they realize that they have the responsibility. The responsibility of making better living conditions is on the youth themselves, not only on the individuals but also on the groups. That kind of thinking has connections with the principles of the LEADER-program. That is why the project is called "the LEADER of the youth".

4.3. Clown-jumps and Net-cafés

The Project leaders listed some activities that have been organized during the project: discos, clubs, motocross clubs, international activity, keeping a net café and youth café, arranging afternoon activities, keeping a net-radio, clown-jump club, skate-boarding and live role-playing. Different kinds of camps and happenings are an integral part of the project. The leaders of the Kasvu-project organize meetings, where the young people come together everywhere from the LEADER area of the Joensuu Region. The program of the meetings consists of project training, experience- or adventure activity and socializing with the other people. There are also other happenings like the culture camp in the summer and many band-happenings. The young participants organize smaller happenings in their localities and participate to the organizing of the bigger happenings. In the happenings the young people cross the municipal boundaries and make friendships on a bigger area. The interviewees have also noticed some kind of regional networking among the youth. The ideas spread on the area like the fashion-phenomena. For example, if a skateboard ramp is built in a one place, the youth in another place wants it too.

The YAGs have made some progress in their work. Sometimes they have done projects without any help. According the project leaders, the money is not a self-value for the youth groups but the activity itself. The actively working groups may not need money at all, unless they make some bigger purchases. For the beginner groups, the encouragement and support is more important. There are differences, as well, between the groups in their way of doing. The group-work method itself is not completely unproblematic for the youth. It may be hard for a young person to be a leader of a group or work in a group of a self-organized form.

In the interview we also discussed about the failures of the project. Overall, the interviewees thought that the project had succeeded well. The result is an active generation of a couple of hundreds young people. Only the resources were a problem; there would have been much more work to do than they could. The project had done quite a lot compared to their resources. Much of it was done by their personal effort. Furthermore, they complained that the municipal youth work has been driven down. The resources in that sector are far too scarce, owing to which the work is focused to the youth with special problems. The so-called "active part" of the youth is left with rare attention. Consequently, the interviewees had sometimes felt that someone else should have done the work they have been doing. One goal, which the project workers counted partly as a failure was the finding of the "youth promoters". The original idea was to find an adult person from every municipality who would have been a supporter and promoter for the YAGs. Some of that kind of persons already existed. The "promoters" were, for example, municipal workers who to turn to when the YAGs have practical problems. There was still a lack of supporters in a bigger scale.

The project leaders were concerned about the future in their field of work. They were afraid that the work they have started would end along with the project, if there were not enough people and resources behind the youth movement, which had born. A lot of hope was set on the "third stage" of the project, which will cover the whole North-Karelia. The third stage is actually no more part of the Kasvu-project, but it will be a more permanent actor, which the interviewees called *"the Youth Know-how Center"* (transl. By T.S.). The Kasvu-project has participated to the planning of it. The regional institution of education organizes it and it aims at combining the resources of the different youth organizations. The temporal limitation is a problem in the project work. The interviewees hope that the new actor would give longer-lasting solutions to the problems of the youth work.

4.4. Summary

The Kasvu-project, which original endurance was two years and four months, has concentrated on making better living conditions for the youth in the LEADER area of the Joensuu-region. The main principle of the project was the "communal responsibility", which means that the final responsibility of the developing lies on the target group itself – in this case on the youth. It also means doing together with other people and different quarters. According to the three paid workers of the project, a lot of work has been done compared to the resources. Many different actions have

taken place, but the most important form of work has been the youth action group work. Although the YAGs cannot reach all the youth on the area, some degree of direct decision-making power has been given to the youth.

The main meanings of the project given by the interviewees and the program paper were:
- "Shake the young people", make them to take action for their living conditions.
- Actualize the "LEADER of the youth".
- "Be beside" the young people, which means doing with them as an equal partner.

The concrete goals of the project were:
- Develop the living conditions of the youth.
- Develop the networking between the youth and different quarters of the society.
- The possibility of the young people to make friendships and networks with each other inside and over the municipal borders.
- Promote the youth work on the local, regional and national levels.

5. The Project in the Consciousness of the Youth

5.1. The Case Localities

The places where I conducted the interviews were the Outokumpu town and the municipality of Kiihtelysvaara. This chapter gives short presentations of the localities, as living environments of youth. The living condition settlement, which was made as a part of the Kasvu I is also utilized here. Table 1 presents statistical information about the two places. The table shows that the surface area of the two localities is almost the same but the size of the population of Outokumpu is about three times bigger than the population in Kiihtelysvaara. Owing to this fact the youth population in Kiihtelysvaara is much smaller than in Outokumpu.

Table 1. Statistics about Outokumpu and Kiihtelysvaara.

	Outokumpu	Kiihtelysvaara
Land-area with waters:	584 km²	530 km²
Population (2003):	7955	2659
Population change 1993-2002:	-1102	-103
Age group of 10-19 (2002):	1153	405
Biggest sectors of employment(2001):	Industry & services	Industry & services
Unemployment (2002):	19,5 %	14,9 %

Source: Regional Council of North-Karelia 2004. (www.pohjois-karjala.fi).

Outokumpu town. Outokumpu is a former mining town, which has gone through a vast structural change during the last twenty years. A big copper mine, which gave work for thousands of people, was closed on the 1980s after the copper became rare in the mine. After that, the town faced the high unemployment rate and the massive out-migration (see table 1). The complementary industries have been developed in the town. Industry and services are the biggest employees there today (see table 1). As a living environment, Outokumpu has both urban and rural elements. The small town is surrounded with countryside - forests, lakes and fields. The old mine is still the greatest landmark of the town. New functions have been given for the huge mining buildings by the cultural activities.

From the basis of the living condition settlement, which was made during the Kasvu I in 2002, the youth of Outokumpu seems to be quite satisfied with their neighbourhood. 61 percent of the respondents answered "quite good" and 17 percent "very good" when they were asked how good they felt to live in the locality. The results were based on the answers of 240 young people of Outokumpu. (Asikainen et al. 2002, 14.) 64 percent of the respondents had the plan to move away from the town in the future. The main reasons for the moving out were the study- and work possibilities (Asikainen et al. 2002, 37-38).

Municipality of Kiihtelysvaara. Kiihtelysvaara is clearly a rural municipality with relatively sparse population in respect to the surface area. The two bigger villages of the municipality are Heinävaara and the Church Village of Kiihtelysvaara. Kiihtelysvaara too has gone through a structural change during the last decades when the forestry and agriculture have lost their position

as the main livelihoods on the area. As the most of the rural Finland, Kiihtelysvaara has lost much population when people have moved to the bigger towns. The biggest sectors of employment at the municipality are also industry and services.

According to the living condition settlement, 52 percent of the 62 young people who filled the questionnaire at Kiihtelysvaara chose the answer "quite good" and 25 percent the answer "very good" to the question how good they felt to live in their locality. It seems on the basis of this result that the most of the young people of Kiihtelysvaara like their locality. (Asikainen et al. 2002, 14.) 75 percent of the respondents were intended to move out from Kiihtelysvaara in the future. The study- and work possibilities were the main reasons for the moving plans there too (Asikainen et al. 2002, 40).

The common feature of the two target areas of this study is that both of them have rural elements, with the remark that Outokumpu has also urban features, which are missing from Kiihtelysvaara. The majority of the youth in both of the places are quite satisfied with their living environments. However, the majority of the young people are going to move away from the localities because the study- and work opportunities are rare in these places. This applies only to the present situation and the near future. The situation in the future may be different.

5.2. The Youth Interviews

The results of the interviews between Outokumpu and Kiihtelysvaara were so much different that it is reasonable to present them separately. The fundamental difference between these two places was the amount of activity appeared by the Kasvu-project. In Outokumpu, there was a big group of young people who were either organizing or participating the youth activities and the amount of activity was high. The situation in Kiihtelysvaara was completely different. At the time when I made the interviews, the functioning of the local YAG had already been ended. The activities organized by the former YAG had been small happenings, which reached only a small part of the youth in Kiihtelysvaara and the project itself was mostly distant or unknown for the young people.

The answers between Outokumpu and Kiihtelysvaara are not entirely comparable. The interviews in Outokumpu were made at a camp that was organized by the Kasvu-project. Many young people who were active organizers within the project also came to the camp. In Kiihtelysvaara I reached

the youth at a disco, which had no connection to the Kasvu-project. Therefore, the group of interviewees consisted of all kinds of youth, not particularly those interested of the project. The table 2 shows the basic information about the interviewees. The biggest difference between the two groups within the table is the share of those who had participated to the YAGs. As a result, the interview-group of Outokumpu gives a "more active" picture of the youth than the real situation in Outokumpu would have been. Because the interview-groups were not randomly selected, it is not possible to make any straight comparisons between the groups. Instead, the single answers give a lot of material for comparisons.

Table 2. Basic information about the youth interviews.

	Outokumpu	Kiihtelysvaara
Interviewees:	17	9
Male:	6	5
Female:	11	4
Age distribution		
13-14:	3	2
15-16:	10	5
17-18:	4	2
Participated		
to YAG:	10	1

5.3. The Activity of the Youth in the Localities

One of my interests with the interviews was what kind of activities, attached to the project, the youth had participated. All of the interviewees in Outokumpu were participating the Ramppis-camp, which offered cultural training and activity for the youth on the summertime. All the interviewees had found the camp entertaining and many of them had also been there before. For some of them, the camp had become an every summer tradition that they looked forward. 14 of the interviewees in Outokumpu somehow mentioned the Net-Café but I concluded that all of the respondents had visited the place quite often. The YAG with the support of the Kasvu-project had established the Net-Café in Outokumpu. Many different meanings were connected to that place and it had an important role for the young people.

The Kasvu-project and the YAG had organized many different happenings that the most of the interviewees in Outokumpu had widely participated. For example, discos, band-happenings, paintball-wars, youth camps, trips to the other municipalities and skateboard competitions were mentioned. Because of the Kasvu-project, the Kumpurock happening had grown to be a festival, which gathered bands and people from all over the Finland. 15 of the 17 respondents said that there had been more activity and happenings for the youth in Outokumpu after the Kasvu-project had begun there. 10 of the 17 had participated to the YAG. In practice, the participation meant meetings with the group, planning and organizing activity for youth in cooperation with the project workers and making small-scale projects. For these 'active organizers' the YAG and the Kasvu-project was like a hobby, with which they had spent a lot of time and effort. This kind of hobby was full of meanings for the young people, even so that it had been very important for some of them. One girl said that she had participated the organizing of activity without participating the YAG. It came out in the answers that there was a small group of young people who were planning and organizing the activity but a bigger group was participating as a workforce.

In Kiihtelysvaara, the most of the interviewed young people knew what the Kasvu-project is but they had not had many contacts with it. Only one of the interviewees at Kiihtelysvaara had participated to the YAG. There had been a group of active young people in the YAG but then the group started to diminish and finally the activity had ended. The YAG had organized discos and small happenings mostly in the central village of the Kiihtelysvaara. One interviewed boy had participated to the skateboard-park project. The YAG and a group of boys had started the project, which first proceeded well but somehow the project was left uncompleted. The most permanent effect of the Kasvu-project in Kiihtelysvaara was a punk-rock band established by few boys. Two of these boys were in the interview-group. The boys had applied money from the Kasvu-project and they got 800 euros for the purchases for the band. In that way, the Kasvu-project had had a great meaning for them. Two of the interviewees in Kiihtelysvaara had visited the Kasvu-happening at Outokumpu and three of the nine said that they had participated to the happenings organized by the YAG in Kiihtelysvaara. Two of the nine could not mention any activity connected to the project that they would have participated. After all, the Kasvu-project had not had much influence in the locality.

Another question I wanted to study from the material was how well the young people thought the project had succeeded in their locality. Generally, the estimation about the project in Outokumpu was very positive. The interviewees were happy about the new activity and possibilities that the

project had succeeded to create for the youth. Also the functioning of the YAG was estimated to be good, although there were a lot of seasonal variation in the level of activity. Summertime was the quietest season considering the project activity. In addition, there were two kinds of estimations about the project, both of which the interviewees brought clearly out. Firstly, a great part of the youth population had participated to the activities in some form, although only a small group had taken the responsibility of organizing them. That was clear because there were always a lot of people participating to the happenings. Secondly, the project could not reach all the youth in the town. That was because there was a division in Outokumpu between different groups of youth. Some part of the youth did not participate to the project activities because they belonged to the different group than those who were participating. It was also said that some young people did not understand the project activity and wanted to stay out of it.

It was more difficult to find estimates about the project from the interviews at Kiihtelysvaara because many of the interviewees did not know enough about the project to say how it had succeeded. However, it came out from the many answers that the activity had mostly concentrated on the Church village of Kiihtelysvaara. That was problematic for some of the interviewees because the area of Kiihtelysvaara is sparsely populated and it was difficult for the youth living outside the center to get there on the evening, when the activity mostly happened. Probably this was also a one reason why the YAG was finished. The situation was realized in the YAG and some happenings were organized in the smaller villages away from the center. After the ending of the YAG and the failed skate-park project, the general view was that the project did not make any remarkable change in Kiihtelysvaara. The only noticeable thing was the emergence of the new band. Some of the interviewees said that they did not need new activities because they were satisfied with the emerging youth activity in Kiihtelysvaara.

5.4. The Personal Meanings of the Kasvu-Project

The central question I posed to the interview-material was what the project really meant for those young people. The "meaning" of the project means: how was the project connected and how it affected to their lives and how important they felt that the project was for them. Also, the "meaning" can be something deeper – symbolic and abstract values or emotions. One of the starting points of this study is the idea that the meanings are personal and individual. A project with all the

activities and possibilities is like a common surface, on which the individuals of the target group draw their personal prints.

The different meanings, which came up in the interviews can be classified around certain themes. The themes are different aspects connected to the Kasvu-project, which were somehow significant for the interviewed young people. Therefore the themes are based on the similarities of the interviews. The analysis of the meanings is introduced theme by theme and again the division is done between the interviews of Outokumpu and Kiihtelysvaara because there were so many differences in the material.

5.4.1 The Interviews of Outokumpu

Activity. 16 of the 17 interviewees in Outokumpu mentioned the significance of activity that the project had given for them or for the youth generally in Outokumpu. For the 15 respondents, the project meant participating widely to different kinds of happenings and activities. 11 of the 15 had also been organizing the activities. The most of the 'active organizers' saw the YAG and the planning and organizing of youth activity as a nice hobby, not as a work. One girl was exceptional. She did not participate to the YAG because she would have needed activity but because she found it as a valuable youth work. Therefore she felt she was doing something important. Another girl said that she had participated to only few activities concerning the project because she was doing mostly sports. One boy had not much participated to the activities because he was still quite young, 13 years old. Nevertheless, he was an active user of the Net-Café.

For the most of the interviewees, the project was a source of activity. The activities were a fun way of spending the free time. One girl had found the activity as an alternative for sitting at home. Because of the activities, she was going more to the different places and seeing more things. It came out in the many interviews that it was important for the young people that there is youth activity and happenings in the small town. In that sense, the project had a great significance for them. Two interviewees mentioned that it was good that the project had brought especially more cultural activity for the youth in Outokumpu. One girl explained the importance of the project. She said that the leadership of the town consists of older adults who do not understand the needs of the youth activity. Therefore the project is good because it organizes activity particularly for the youth.

Possibility to influence. 10 of the 17 interviewees said that the project do give a possibility for the youth to make a contribution with the youth issues. Generally, the possibility to influence were seen a very good thing. Some of the respondents said that it had been personally important to participate the influencing and working for the issues and living conditions of youth. One girl said that it was good to have this possibility, even though she had not used it. It came out that the YAG had an important role as a group, where one can say aloud ideas and discuss about them in order to make decisions together. One boy even said that the project is a possibility to make the dreams come true with the condition that the dreams are realistic.

It was obvious that the possibility to influence was something special for the interviewed young people. Firstly, the youth had a feeling that nobody listened to them and their opinion was not taken account in the normal decision-making in Outokumpu. On the other hand, the possibility to influence gave them the feeling of power and dignity. It was also important for the interviewees that the decision-making power had some kind of real and visible dimension. The Net-Café was a concrete achievement of the YAG. Some interviewees presented it as an example and a symbol of the influential power of youth in Outokumpu. Money is a one form of power. Some interviewees brought out the importance of money given by the project. One boy assumed that the project was the only possible source of money for the projects wished by the youth in Outokumpu.

Adult support. Although, it was important for the youth to have own decision-making power, the need of the adult support was strongly brought up in the interviews. Six of the 17 interviewees mentioned the importance of the adult support for the youth activity. Some of them emphasized that the support was essential – without the project and the active adults, no change would have had happened in the youth activity in Outokumpu. One girl explained that the youth had always had ideas but they did not have the capability to carry them out. That is why the adults were needed to promote the ideas.

Two answers were especially interesting. One girl said: *"It is great when adults start promoting the youth and their issues in a way that the youth also can influence"*(translation by T.S.). This sentence includes a hidden claim: the adults are not usually promoting the youth and their issues in a way that the youth can influence. A boy said almost the same idea: *"It is great that adults and projects support the youth, their hobbies and doings"*(translation by T.S.). Do the adults support the young people and their issues in our society? The self-evident answer should be: "yes". Obviously, it was not self-evident for all the young people. Not at least in Outokumpu.

Another question is, if it is the task of the projects to support the youth activity? Should not it be the fundamental task of the individual adults, organizations, state and the municipalities by using their time, money and effort for the activity? Perhaps the lack of support is not the problem but the way of support. Despite the different youth support systems, some of the young people do not feel like being supported. The possibility to influence is a democratic salvation to this problem. An option to participate to the planning and organizing the activities gave the young people the feeling that they are on the same side with the adults. This was an opposite of the situation where the adults are making all the decisions and determining the activities.

Net Café. All the young people of the interview group had some kind of experience of the Net Café of Outokumpu. The Net Cafe had become a familiar place for the big part of the youth of Outokumpu. The Net Café gave the free access to the Internet but only one boy mentioned that as a reason to go there. Many other functions were given for it: a place to hang around, meet friends or spent time with youth. Some interviewees complained the lack of the youth places – the Net Café was a convenient place to go instead of hanging around on the streets of the town. This function was important especially on the wintertime when there was cold outside on the streets. Somehow, the Net Café was also a visible symbol of the Kasvu-project in Outokumpu in the minds of the youth. Especially, the café was significant for those young people who had participated to the planning and organizing of it with the YAG.

Friends. Friends were one important reason to participate different activities and happenings. Many young people had made new friends with the activities from all over the North-Karelia. It was possible because the project organized happenings and meetings where the youth gathered together from a wider area. Another social meaning of the project was "doing together". At least as important as the activity in itself was doing it together with a group. It could be sensed from the answers that participation to something and being a member of a group filled some kind of a basic desire of young people. This possibility to meet friends seemed to be particularly important for some of the interviewees.

All the described themes are categories of meanings of the project for the young people of Outokumpu. These themes are just examples of the meanings. Not all the meanings could come out in the short interviews. This kind of presentation does not give a very good picture of the individual differences of the meanings between the interviewees. Anyway, clear differences and also

similarities between the individual meanings of the project emerged. One fundamental difference between the respondents was the significance of the project for them. Some interviewees had participated the most the activities organized by the project and they had also participated the planning and organizing of activity in many ways. For them, the project had meanings in many levels and the meanings covered all the themes. On the other end, there were respondents who liked to do some activities but not participate the project any other way. For them, the meaning of the project appeared only by the single activities. Roughly, there were two types of respondents: "active organizers" and "consumers" of the project.

5.4.2. The Interviews of Kiihtelysvaara

Source of money. Five of the nine interviewees at Kiihtelysvaara considered the Kasvu-project as a possibility to get money for the youth activity. The two boys who were playing in a band had a good experience of getting money from the project for the band. This experience was also a positive example for the other youth so that they were convinced that there is a possibility to get money. Two of the interviewees explained more the importance of money: the project was good because there were no other possibilities to get money for the youth in a small locality.

Activity. The function of the Kasvu-project as a creator of youth activity in Kiihtelysvaara was small. The interviewees mentioned only single happenings they had participated, organized by the project or the YAG. Nevertheless there was one girl for whom the project had given a lot of activity on the time when she had participated to the YAG of Kiihtelysvaara. On the time when the YAG was still functioning at Kiihtelysvaara, the girl had participated planning and organizing of youth activity and promoting some youth projects. The project had had much significance for her.

The personal differences of the meanings of the Kasvu-project for the young people in Kiihtelysvaara came also clearly out. The project was almost meaningless for some of the interviewees. There were others, for whom the project had had a great significance. Why was the project meaningless for some of the young people in Kiihtelysvaara? Several reasons were given. One boy said that he was living in a farm and there were so much work in the farm that he simply did not have much free time. One girl explained that she was involved with the youth activity of the local sports club and that is why she did not participate to the other activities. Another girl lived so far away from the Church village that it would have been too difficult to always come there to participate the activities.

After all, the project had a positive image in the minds of the interviewees. Although, the project did not make a big change in a local scale, the project gave the young people some new possibilities, of which they were aware. As the Kasvu-project was a sub-regional project, some of the young people were moving inside the sub-region – when participating to the Kasvu-happening at Outokumpu, for instance. One conclusion of this is that the project had more likely a sub-regional meaning for the young people of Kiihtelysvaara than a local meaning.

6. The Construction of the Project in the Human Space

In this final part, I present the results by connecting the material from the analyzed interviews to the theoretical setting of this study. I also take a look at the results from the perspectives of the other studies, which I have presented in this study. From the basis of the different materials, I built up a picture of the sub-regional youth-project, which has had personal meanings in the worlds of young people and has become locally differentiated in the human space.

6.1. The Different Meanings of the Project

Considering the first part of the research question and the setting of the study, the results of the interviews do give some new information. The project meant different things to the different young people. Furthermore, it was more significant for some of the young people than for the others. This result is not surprising by itself. One of the main interests in this study is: are the meanings different from those mentioned by the project leaders or in the official program paper of the Kasvu-project. This is how the "official" and "unofficial" meanings of the project are compared.

One of the "official" purposes of the project was making the young people to take action for their living conditions and raise them to the communal responsibility. In the interview-group of Outokumpu, there was a group of young people for whom this philosophy had really worked. They had taken the action for their living conditions. Moreover, some of them also wanted to promote the conditions of the youth and youth work generally. They were working with a sub-regional project,

which had also regional links. Some of the young people were so committed to the project that they had in some degree assumed the role of a regional developer. It can be concluded from the interviews that only few young people were so much committed to the project. The vast majority of the youth had not so close relationship to the project.

I make a generalization based on the results: Not very many of the young people in the research areas had grown to the communal responsibility by the project. More likely, they saw the project as a possibility to different things like youth happenings or getting money for instance. On the other hand, those young people who had participated to the YAGs had experienced something that changed their views permanently. They had gained new social capital – they knew that there is the possibility of influence and they knew better how to influence. The communal responsibility had realized in their cases. Also, the YAGs symbolized the possibility of influence for the big part of the youth. Even though many young people did not participate to the YAG for the different reasons, they saw the YAG as a voice of the local youth. These results are very well in the line with the results of Paunikallio (2000). Also the local-political youth influence groups in the western Finland raised the social capital of the young people and strengthened their self esteems (Paunikallio 2000, 58, 78).

A remarkable thing, especially concerning the young people, was that the YAGs strengthened the self-esteems of the participants of those groups. The possibility to influence had a deep significance for the young people, not least on the emotional level. Many of the young people saw the world of adults as ruling, controlling and discarding in respect to the youth. By the possibility to influence, the youth world and the adult world could meet each other. It came out in the many interviews that this was what the youth really wanted: being recognized and regarded by the adults. The possibility to influence was significant for many young people although, only a small group actually used this possibility.

Another "official" meaning of the project, given by the project leaders, was "being beside" the young people. This principle meant doing the youth work and planning and organizing the activities as an equal partner with the young people. This code of conduct worked very well with the youth. Those interviewees who had widely participated to the project activities had the feeling that the project workers were supporting and helping them as adults but also sharing the responsibility with them. The importance of the adult support was strongly brought out by many of the interviewees. The possibility to influence and take action for the living conditions was not enough. The active

adults were needed to promote the young people and help them to carry on their ideas. The idea of "being beside" was realized for the youth in the project.

Again there is a question, what was the meaning of "being beside" for the majority of the youth who did not belong to the group of the "active organizers"? The answer is: the positive image of the project. Even though the influence of the Kasvu-project was very little in the locality of Kiihtelysvaara, the interviewees in there had a positive image of the project. Outokumpu was a central place for the project because it was the only town on the project-area and the office of the project was also located there. Big part of the activities happened at Outokumpu. Kiihtelysvaara is located on the opposite edge of the sub-region far away from Outokumpu (figure 2). Nevertheless, many young people in Kiihtelysvaara had the feeling that the project was accessible for them and there was a possibility to get money, for instance. As a positive example of this, the boys of the local punk-rock band had some money from the project for their instruments. Because the project workers wanted to come close to the youth and because of the easy accessibility to the different activities and possibilities of the project, the most of the youth in the research-areas felt that the project was on their side.

The third fundamental "official" goal of the project was to actualize the "LEADER of the youth". If the LEADER-program and the Kasvu-project are compared, many similarities and the common principles can be found. The project can be compared to the sub-regional LEADER-association, which coordinates the projects and shares the money to them. The YAGs identify to the local organizations like village councils that take the responsibility of the planning, organizing and implementation of the projects. Local partnership and the development of the social capital are two main principles of the LEADER-program. The same ideas can be found from the principles of the Kavu-project. The partnership-idea emerged for the youth as the possibilities of influence and participate the YAGs. The voice of the young people was also taken account in the administration of the project. Making the voice of the youth present in the local, regional and national institutions was one of the goals of the project. This is how the project implied the idea of partnership with the young people, although it was kind of "soft partnership", in which the adults were supporting the youth "from beside".

As I presented in the chapter 3.1, the LEADER-program is a form of regional developing that invites the local people, -organizations and -institutions to negotiate the meanings for it. This way the developing is a process where the setting of the goals follows some kind of a form of

democracy. In this sense, the Kasvu-project succeeded to create the "LEADER of youth" in the sub-region. There was a small group of young people who were actively involved with the project. Many of them were committed to the developing of the living conditions of the youth. These 'active organizers' were also representatives of the youth in their localities. Anyhow, this goal was much better reached in Outokumpu than in Kiihtelysvaara.

Considering the different meanings of the project, the social meaning was very important for the young people. The different happenings, camps and activities promoted the social networking of the youth. Having friends, being a part of a group and belonging to something were important things mentioned by the respondents in Outokumpu. Also, the interviewees brought out the new friends that they had got from the different municipalities than their own. The social function of the project was not so evident in Kiihtelysvaara than in Outokumpu. Anyhow, many young people in Kiihtelysvaara were participating the project in the sub-region although not very actively. As a conclusion, the project promoted the social connections of the young people in the local and sub-regional levels in both of the localities. Especially, the project strengthened the sub-regional sense of place of the youth. This conclusion concerns all the youth who somehow participated the activities.

The Kasvu-project has given new possibilities and new activity for hundreds of young people in the research areas. However, some part of the youth stayed outside the activities either intentionally or because of some particular reasons. Beside the Kasvu-project, there were many other youth activities in the research localities. The local organizations, sports clubs, parish and the local training centers organized many activities. Those young people who were involved with these activities were not so much interested in the project. In Outokumpu, there was also a large group of young people who had not so much to do before the project. As they said, they were "hanging around" the streets of the town. For them, the project gave possibilities to do something constructive and positively contribute to the youth activity of the town. Also the project gave company and the places for hanging around.

On the other hand, the youth in Outokumpu was divided in some kinds of sub-groups, which were not hanging around together. According to the interviewees, this division was so deep that it prevented some young people participating the project activities. It would have been interesting to interview this 'rejecting' group but I could not reach them with the interviews. Again, their discourses remain "silent". Nevertheless, this observation confirms the claim that there are different

meanings for the project – the EU youth-project appears in a very different light for those young people who intentionally wanted to stay out of it.

This analysis of the different meanings of the project is not exhaustive. These are just examples of the meanings that can be given for a project. Activity, possibility to influence, "being beside", possibility to get money, social function and the sub-regional meaning are the main categories of meanings that could be recognized from the interviews. Giving the exhaustive list of the meanings would be also an impossible task because of the limitations of research. After all, the meanings are somehow different for every people because of the different backgrounds, social networks and living environments.

Finally, the dichotomy of the "official" and "unofficial" meanings of the project turned out to be irrelevant in the case of the Kasvu-project. Kasvu-project has been reformative in its openness for the different meanings of its target group. The project leaders were very well aware of the needs of the youth. When the youth also had the possibility to influence to the project, the "official" and "unofficial" were actually mixed. This project has actualized a process of local youth democracy, although it still was a centrally coordinated regional development project.

6.2. The Local Features of the Project

The second part of the research question considers the local differentiation of the case-project. In the beginning, I use the life-span model of an ideal project by Esko Lehto (2002). The model outlines the development of the social capital in an implementation process of a regional development project. From the basis of the interview results, I present the stages that the both of the research localities have reached during the project using the concepts of the life-span model. (See chapter 3.3.)

The leaders of the Kasvu-project were *social entrepreneurs,* who invested their social capital to the building of the partnerships in the local and regional youth organizations, to start the project. As a result of the first two stages, **composing** and **preparing** of the project, the leaders of the Kasvu-project succeeded in building a sufficient partnership network for the project. The third stage is the **top-down** -stage where the *social entrepreneurs* use their social- and human capital in cooperation with the partners to develop the social and personal skills of the target group of the project. (Lehto

2002, 34-36.) Considering the Kasvu-project, the **top-down** -stage can be identified to the Kasvu I, in which the young people were informed about the project with the community theatre presentations in the schools and the local YAGs were established in the sub-region. The youth was encouraged to take action for their living conditions and use the possibilities of the project. The YAGs were established both in Kiihtelysvaara and Outokumpu. Therefore, there were not big differences between the research localities in the proceeding of the project in the **top-down** -stage.

The **down-top** -stage is the fourth step in the Lehto's model. In this stage, the target group becomes *social entrepreneurs* and they start using their new skills, social networks and capabilities to the developing of the new skills and forms of cooperation in their locality. (Lehto 2002, 35-36.) It would be misleading to call young people *social entrepreneurs*. The project created a group of active young people who are called 'active organizers' in this study. However, they are not *social entrepreneurs* in a sense of the Lehto's model. Rather, they are active young people for whom the project has given the capability to become *social entrepreneurs* in the future. One significant result of the interviews was that the young people need the adult support in their activity as long as they are still young.

If the **down-top** -stage is identified to the activity that emerged among the young people in the research areas, a great difference can be seen between Outokumpu and Kiihtelysvaara. In Outokumpu the project activated a group of young people, the size of which is estimated 20-30 persons. This group started actively to organize youth activity and promote the youth issues. In addition, there was a bigger group who were hanging around the different activities and helping with the actual work. As a result, a great improvement was done to the youth activity in Outokumpu. The development in Kiihtelysvaara was different. The functioning of the YAG was finished because of the lack of active young people. Obviously, there were also some youth hanging around the activities but the size of this group was much smaller than in Outokumpu. Consequently, the amount of the organized activities was much smaller.

The final stage in the model of an ideal project is **return**. Finally, the target group gives benefit to the target area by transferring the new social capital to the different kinds of organizations and activities. (Lehto 2002, 35-36.) It has to be noticed that the **return** –stage of the Lehto's model is not very useful with young people because the most of them will move to different place in the future because of study and work opportunities (see chapter 5.1.). The instant **returns** in Outokumpu were the different happenings, activities and projects organized by the youth. Also the

development of the social capital of the young people gives a reason to expect the long-lasting **return** in the future. Also in Kiihtelysvaara the project raised the social capital of the young people but this development concentrated only on few people. No remarkable long-lasting **return** of the project can be expected in Kiihtelysvaara.

Summarizing the stages of the case localities in the terms of the life-span model of an ideal project gives a broad view to the local differences in the development process of the Kasvu-project. At the time when the youth interviews were conducted in 2003, the project was still at the **top-down** -stage in Kiihtelysvaara while in Outokumpu the project had proceeded to the **down-top** -stage.

There are many reasons for the remarkable local differences in the proceeding of the project. One reason is the location of the research localities. The office of the Kasvu-project was situated in Outokumpu and the project leaders were also living there. That is why Outokumpu was a central place for the project and the leaders were involved with many activities in there. The project was easier to access for the young people in Outokumpu. Another reason was the geographical distribution of the population. Although Outokumpu is a "rural" town, it has a clear town center where the youth gathers together to hang around in bigger groups. In Kiihtelysvaara the youth population was much smaller and the population pattern was more decentralized. It was more difficult for the young people to gather together to the one center from the distant villages. Hanging around in big groups was not so reasonable for the youth in Kiihtelysvaara. Also, it was easier to fulfill the needs of the rare youth with the existing youth activity in the municipality.

The reality of projects is that they need human resources. Not only individual efforts but the efforts of many people together. The hang around -groups of Outokumpu were a favorable resource for the Kasvu-project. On the other hand, there was an urgent need for the youth-project. The similar need did not occur in Kiihtelysvaara. Although there is a need for the youth activity in Kiihtelysvaara too, it is in a smaller extent. Also the decentralized structure of the population should be taken account in the planning of the activity. This result gives also a perspective to the regional development projects. Even though the idea and the model of a development project would be good, they do not automatically fit in every locality. The model should be intentionally fixed for each locality to correspond the local needs and special features.

6.3. Conclusion

Projects mean different things for different people. That was the case of the Kasvu-project too. In the research areas, Outokumpu and Kiihtelysvaara, there were young people who were actively involved with the project. On the other extreme there were those who were actively avoiding the project. Anyhow, those young people who were involved with the project appreciated the principles of it. It was important for the young people that the project gave them the real possibility of influence to their living conditions. The project gave them freedom of planning, organizing and carrying out youth activity and small-scale projects.

It was no less important that the project gave the adult support for the youth and the youth activity. The youth needed the adult guidance and encouragement and also money to carry out their own ideas. The respective principle of the Kasvu-project was what the project leaders called: "being beside" the young people. This combination of giving freedom and support is recommended for the youth workers because the basic desire of young people is to have their own freedom but also to be recognized, respected and supported by the adults.

The subjects of a project are also members of their localities. Agnew has separated the features of place to the three categories: *locale*, *location* and *sense of place* (Castree 2003, 167-181). The reasons why the Kasvu-project succeeded to reach its goals better in Outokumpu than in Kiihtelysvaara are in the structures of *location* and *locale*. The office of the project was situated in Outokumpu and the project workers were also living there. Kiihtelysvaara is located far away from Outokumpu. Therefore Outokumpu was in a more favourable *location* from the perspective of the young people. The population of Outokumpu is mostly concentrated in a town centre. In Kiihtelysvaara the population is much smaller and more dispersed over the municipality. Owing to this difference in the structures of the *locales*, the project was more favourable for Outokumpu because projects need human resources that are concentrated in a particular place. As a result, the amount of activity and the young people involved with the project was higher in Outokumpu than in Kiihtelysvaara.

A common development in both of the case-localities was the strengthening the young people's sub-regional *sense of place*. The young people were gathering together from all over the sub-region to the happenings, which were organized by the project. The same project shared money for the

youth activity to all the seven municipalities. Although the project did not succeed very well in the local scale in Kiihtelysvaara, the youth of Kiihtelysvaara still participated to the project in the sub-regional scale. In this light, the Kasvu-project has reached its goals of promoting the youth activity and the social networking of the young people in the sub-regional level.

If I compare the goals of this study and the results of it, I have to admit that the goals were a little bit too ambitious. Mapping out the different meanings of a project appeared to be a difficult task that would have needed more background information, more accurate research material and a deeper analysis of it than this master's thesis. However, the study approach was fruitful for bringing out the different aspects of a regional development project. The fundamental goal of this study – finding out what the young people think about a youth project – was reached.

The analysis of the local features of the project could also have been more detailed. Anyhow, the big lines of the local differentiation in the implementation of the Kasvu-project came out in the study. Geography matters – with the youth projects too. The local differences should be taken account in the planning of the youth activity.

I hope that this study encourages the individual adults, youth organizations and decision-makers to the recognizing of the needs of the youth and being active in the youth sector. I also hope that this study could give new ideas for the planning and implementation of the youth activity. The reality is that young people need adults to be "beside" them.

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Appendix 1.

The thematic group interview questions to the project leaders:
(The questions in Finnish with translations)

Eeettiset kysymykset: Saako hanketta tutkia? Henkilöt voidaan ehkä tunnistaa tutkimuksesta. Saako nimiä julkistaa? Saako hankkeesta puhua omalla nimellä?

(Ethical questions: Am I allowed to make a research of the project? Can I use the real names of the interviewees in the text? Can I use the real name of the project?)

1. Nimet ja kotipaikat.
   (Names and the home places.)

2. Aikaisemmat työ ja opiskelutaustat.
   (The professional background of the interviewees.)

3. Mistä hankeidea tuli ja miten hanke lähti liikkeelle?
   (Where did the idea of the project come and how did the project begin?)

4. Mitkä ovat hankkeen tavoitteet?
   (Which are the goals of the project?)

   a) Konkreettiset.
      (The concrete goals.)

   b) Varsinaiset kehittämistavoitteet.
      (The development goals.)

   c) Ovatko tavoitteet muuttuneet hankkeen edetessä?
      (Have the goals changed while the project?)

5. Missä vaiheessa hanke nyt on?
   (In which stage the project is now?)

   a) Mitä vaiheita on käyty läpi?
      (Which stages have been gone through?)

   b) Miten ja milloin nykyinen vaihe alkoi?
      (How and when did the recent stage begin?)

c) Miten hankkeen on tarkoitus tästä edetä?
(How is the project supposed to proceed from now?)

6. Mitkä ovat hankkeen tärkeimmät yhteistyökumppanit?
(Which are the most important partners of the project?)

   a) Minkälaista yhteistyötä on ollut?
   (What kinds of cooperation there have been?)

   b) Miten yhteistyö on sujunut?
   (How well has the cooperation succeeded?)

7. Minkälaista toimintaa hanke on synnyttänyt?
(What kinds of activity have the project created?)

   a) Nuorten neuvostot, montako ja mihin?
   (The youth action groups, where are they and how many?)

   b) Miten neuvostot ovat aktivoituneet ja toimineet?
   (How have these groups been activated and how have they functioned?)

   c) Mitä tapahtumia on järjestetty?
   (What kinds of happenings have been organized?)

   d) Nuorten asianajajat?
   (Who are the promoters of the youth?)

8. Hankkeen budjetti.
(The project budjet.)

   a) Miten se jakautuu?
   (The distribution?)

   b) Onko käytetty talkoita?
   (Have you used the voluntary work?)

Appendix 2.

The thematic interview questions to the youth of Outokumpu:
(The questions in Finnish with translations)

1. Etunimi, ikä ja asuinpaikka.
   (The first name, age and the living place.)

2. Mitä mieltä olet tästä leiristä?
   (What do you think about this camp?)

3. Mitä Kasvu-hanke merkitsee sinulle?
   (What does the Kasvu-project mean to you?)

4. Miten se on vaikuttanut sinun elämääsi?
   (How has the project affected to your life?)

5. Minkälaista tekemistä hanke on sinulle antanut?
   (What kind of activity the project has given to you?)

6. Oletko osallistunut nuorten toimintaryhmään?
   (Have you participated the youth action group?)

7. Miten kuvailisit sen toimintaa?
   (How would you describe the functioning of the youth action group?)

8. Mitä uutta hanke on tuonut tälle paikkakunnalle?
   (What new has the project brought to this locality?)

9. Onko hanke mielestäsi tarpeellinen?
   (Do you think this project is needed?)

10. Ovatko kaikki paikkakunnan nuoret osallistuneet jollain tavalla toimintaan?
    (Have the all youth in this locality participated the activities in some way?)

Appendix 3.

The thematic interview questions to the youth of Kiihtelysvaara:
(The questions in Finnish with translations)

1. Etunimi, ikä ja asuinpaikka.
   (The first name, age and the living place.)

2. Mitä mieltä olet tästä disco?
   (What do you think about this disco?)

3. Tiedätkö mikä on Kasvu-hanke? (jos ei, niin kohtaan 12)
   (Do you know what is the Kasvu-project? (If not, to the question 12))

4. Mitä Kasvu-hanke merkitsee sinulle?
   (What does the Kasvu-project mean to you?)

5. Miten se on vaikuttanut sinun elämääsi?
   (How has the project affected to your life?)

6. Minkälaista tekemistä hanke on sinulle antanut?
   (What kind of activity the project has given to you?)

7. Oletko osallistunut nuorten toimintaryhmään?
   (Have you participated the youth action group?)

8. Miten kuvailisit sen toimintaa?
   (How would you describe the functioning of the youth action group?)

9. Mitä uutta hanke on tuonut tälle paikkakunnalle?
   (What new has the project brought to this locality?)

10. Onko hanke mielestäsi tarpeellinen?
    (Do you think this project is needed?)

11. Ovatko kaikki paikkakunnan nuoret osallistuneet jollain tavalla toimintaan?
    (Have the all youth in this locality participated the activities in some way?)

12. Mitä tämän paikkakunnan nuorisolle kuuluu?
    (How are the youth in this locality doing?)

13. Minkälaista toimintaa nuorille tällä paikkakunnalla on?
    (What kinds of activity for the youth there is in this locality?)

14. Minkälaiseen toimintaan sinä olet osallistunut?
    (What kind of activity you have participated?)