

PHYSICAL STUDY CIRCLE

– to build competence together

The general aim of the project is to increase the understanding of forest owner decision-making and to develop new services with companies. In the autumn of 2019, a forest study circle was organized to strengthen forest owner's decision-making. The location was Seinäjoki Citizens' College. Eleven students attended the course and it lasted for two months. Based on the feedback, participants felt that their decision-making had strengthened, and their knowledge of forest issues had increased.

Future forest owners are a challenging group because they do not have an official status as a forest owner yet. Communication through courses and forest education does not currently reach forest owners to-be well enough. When it comes to forest ownership, women often end up in the role of sub-respondent, as they have not traditionally been in charge of forest matters in families. Therefore, they are less frequently perceived as forest owners, although that the number of women owning forest are increasing – as well as the interested in forestry among this group. This is something that should be considered better in communication and education.

Planning

When planning courses, teachers and course materials should include people of all genders and ages to provide an extensive and diverse outlook on forestry. The forest vocabulary constitutes a barrier on educational setting and is something that should be minimized/avoided. Forests and climate change are at the center of research and public debate, but education services are not yet able

to meet this demand well enough. In addition, the effects of forest biodiversity should be better integrated in the course and within each course topic.

Study circle, which is based on physical face-to-face meetings, allows easy interaction between course participants and lowers the threshold to ask questions. The creation of an inclusive and permissive discussion atmosphere plays an important role in successful learning environment. Face-to-face teaching is especially suitable for learners who are more used to traditional/personal teaching methods. In particular, a study trip in the woods enables a multi-sensory learning experience, which is not possible in a digital learning environment.

Conclusion

Commercializing a forest-based course is an excellent business idea, as many people are interested in forestry. The course should be designed to be compact, informative and visual enough. There are not many digital learning services available for forest owners, so there is room in the market for actors who offer impartial and high-quality forest educations that considers different groups of forest owners and different ownership goals and values. Forest education services should be planned in a targeted way for different groups of learners and different segments of forest owners. Forestry competes with other leisure activities, so forest learning packages could include experientialism, sense of quality, detachment from everyday life and memorable learning experiences.

PILOT SUMMARY



EUROPEAN UNION

Interreg
Botnia-Atlantica

European Regional Development Fund



Prosperous forest

Diversification through Inclusion and Specialisation