Innovillage enables and enhances co-development of service innovations

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An open, national innovation environment, called Innovillage (http://www.innokyla.fi), was completed at the end of 2013 in the welfare and health field in Finland. Innovillage was developed and is maintained by the National Institute for Welfare and Health, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities and the Finnish Society for Social and Health. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health coordinates Innovillage.

The Innovillage project began in 2007 at a time when similar observations were being made by different stakeholders in the social and health field in Finland; The ageing population, the threatened availability of skillful professionals, and a recession within the public sector were challenging the existing modes of service production. New models and solutions were needed to meet these challenges. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the other authorities in the field have funded numerous development projects over the recent decades, but the models and solutions developed have only seen limited scaling-up within the sector, with very little development activities working across the sectors. Separate development projects have developed similar solutions over and over, without knowing of each other. New tools and practices are needed for co-development and for crossing boundaries that would strengthen the scaling-up and implementation of new models and solutions. A unified and more interactive platform enabling and supporting real time co-development processes was recognized as necessary in the sector.

Partly as a consequence of these observations, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health prepared a service innovation program to promote the innovation activities in the social and health sector. The building of Innovillage started in the autumn of 2009. The project was funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation, and Finland's Slot Machine Association. The near five-year process for setting up Innovillage was organized through several work packages, with actors from each of the founding organizations involved in each package. A private company, Ambientia Oy, carried out the technical development of the web service. The collaborative work was carried out in workshops and in an open web-based work space, Innowiki. The future clients and users of Innovillage, such as practitioners and developers in the field, were also involved in the development processes as much as possible.

The tools for co-development within Innovillage consist of both web-based tools and face-to-face tools, where actors meet in person. The tools are as follows: **Networks Tool** for the different networks to collaborate; a **Project Database** to design and report on development projects; a **Development Environment** to carry out development activities in real time; **Innoworkshops** to co-develop face-to-face; **Events**, to offer a meeting point for the developers (peers), a place where ideas, practices and models can be discussed, marketed and scaled-up; and finally the **Innotutor training** for developers to practice the innovation culture and learn how to use the Innovillage tools.

Since the beginning of 2014, Innovillage has been an integral part of the basic activity of the founder organizations, and the Innovillage tools have been in active use in the field. In December of 2014, there were almost 800 development projects in the Project Database, about 1600 models and their local applications altogether in the Development Environment, and over 130 different networks in the Networks tool. Some hundreds different Innoworkshops and events had been organized already during the project. In the future some parts of the Innovillage web-service will be also in English and Swedish.

Source

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