

VILLAGES AND VILLAGERS' PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING PROCESSES OF LAPLAND TOURISM

Tuulentie Seija¹ & Hakkarainen Maria²

¹ Senior researcher, Dr., Finnish Forest Research Institute, Rovaniemi Research Unit, Rovaniemi, Finland, seija.tuulentie@metla.fi

² Researcher, doctoral student, Finnish Forest Research Institute, Rovaniemi Research Unit, Rovaniemi, Finland, maria.hakkarainen@metla.fi

Abstract

This presentation examines remote village's stakeholders as a party in Lapland's tourism development and planning processes. Different forms and practices of participation have become important tools for planning and development processes nearly every branch and sector of society. When examining participation processes in tourism of a remote region, the processes have to be seen from wide perspective both in horizontal and vertical level. For example, in remote regions in Finnish Lapland tourism planning processes are related as well to land-use issues and regional economy and development policy as to everyday life in the villages.

In regional development, tourism is often seen as an automatic mechanism for economic survival in the peripheries. Almost every development and participation activities of administration or land-use management, which are aimed to villages, are somehow related to tourism. From the community's lifeworld point of view, tourism in a village is not only a business issue but also part of a community. The community consists of inhabitants and their identities, landscape and activities, and these are part of a tourism product and vice versa. Tourism activities demand wide negotiations between local parties in relation to land use or the public recreational facilities. Tourism may serve as a ground for improvements for the village infrastructure but this requires that the villagers accept the touristic use of facilities.

The aim of this presentation is to evaluate participation activities – their forms and practices – in the village context. Who are involved in which practices and how does the change of rural livelihoods change the lifeworld of the inhabitants? What kind of activity spaces these practices can constitute? Some of these participation features are described through the empirical case study of the village Lokka situated in Finnish Lapland.

In the case of Lokka, our results show that 71 % of the village population are in principle interested to participate in arranging common activities but only 9 % of the villagers are active in arranging these activities. The fact is that new livelihoods are entering also the most remote villages and the lifeworlds are changing. These changes are understood as possibilities especially if they are regarded as truly benefiting the local society. Participatory processes regarding different livelihoods are strongly intertwined: e.g. development plans and processes in fishery and mining are linked in many ways and level to tourism and reindeer herding.

Key Words

Local participation, village tourism, lifeworld