Henrik Dombovari

Roselyn Kiblasen

Andrei Mogilnyi

Mikhail Khudyakov

BUILDING A STARTUP ECOSYSTEM IN IMATRA TO ADDRESS MIGRATION LOSS

Report
Customer Project

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University of Applied Sciences

CONTENTS

OVERVIEW

Urbanization and internal migration have been affecting the cities of Europe and worldwide for years now. This type of migration could be affected by students moving to their place of study or young professionals moving to a place of employment. Smaller cities in Finland have been affected by the migration of young adult population to bigger cities like Helsinki metropolitan, Turku, and Tampere, leaving them with a lower population, usually with 55 and above year olds. According to Statistics Finland, the combined net migration (internal migration and immigration) of the metropolitan area of Helsinki alone was 13,867 persons in 2019. It has also been noticeable that foreign-language speakers have the highest percentage of this migrants. In the 2019 population data of Statistics Finland, 22.35% of Uusimaa residents are foreign-language speakers. These data show that a significant number of people moving to Helsinki Metropolitan are foreign-language speakers.

Imatra is one of the cities that has been affected by migration loss for the past years. In 2019 alone, 1218 people have moved from Imatra; in this number, 66.75% are 20-to-54-year olds. The city government is well aware of this migration loss, and they want to innovate the city to attract people, businesses and talents in the area focusing on the tech companies.

The purpose of this study is to answer the following:
1. How can Imatra address the problem of migration loss?
2. How does the city attract more people, entrepreneurs and tech start-ups to establish businesses in the city?

Through interviews, executives and entrepreneurs in the booming tech companies of Finland will answer these questions and give insights into the practical aspects as well. Our respondents are chosen based on their knowledge and experiences in the field of tech industries and start-ups. They have either founded successful start-ups, working with start-up and tech companies, or handling tech talents. Our interviewees also included CEO's and department chiefs from some of the biggest enterprises in Finland. Summing up the numbers, the companies interviewed turned over a bit more than 2637.5 million euros last year and employ over 6389 people every year.

APPROACHES

The study commenced after the researchers, Antti Oravuo CEO of KEHY, and Saku Tihveräinen research consultant met and discuss the migration challenges in the city hall of Imatra. Sets of respondents have been selected by the group and first stage communications done through LinkedIn. There were 17 respondents interviewed through online platforms and phone. They are executives of tech companies with yearly revenue of 20 million euros and above and founders or co-founders of booming start-up companies in Finland. The interviews took place in November and the analysis after that. There were regular weekly update meetings with Antti and Saku during the duration of the study. Part of understanding the declining population at Imatra is to understand the reasons behind the challenge. We see that it is linked with declining job market.
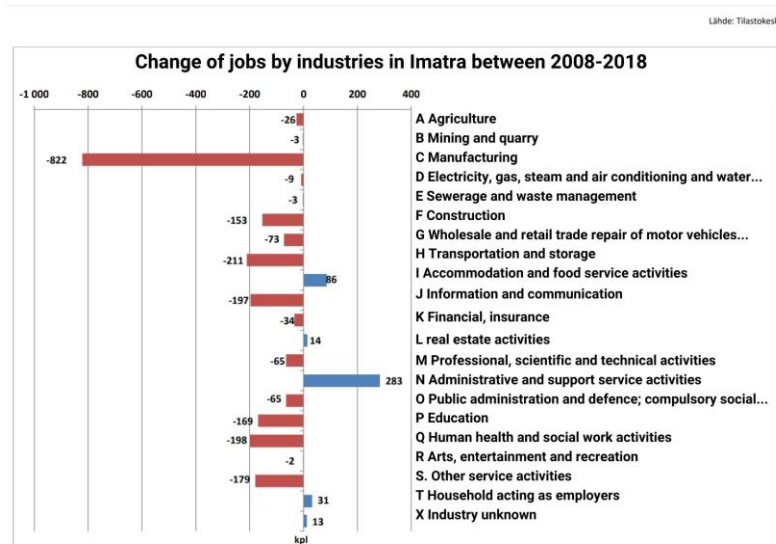
The graph above illustrates the changes in number of jobs between 2008 and 2018 at Imatra. Over this 10 year period we can see that nearly every industry has faced downsizing except accommodation and food service industry and the administrative industry. The decrease in available jobs does not help the city's population issues.

INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

We interviewed 17 executives mostly via online platforms (Microsoft Teams and Google Meet) and few by phone. The interviews lasted typically for 20-30 minutes. We had prepared a set of questions (see appendix) that we asked all

the interviewees. We recorded the interviews and assured anonymity to the executives.

After the interviews we listened to the records and listed themes with regards to the company executive perspectives on Imatra. We have found similarities within what the respondents said and thought of Imatra. In the following chapter we are highlighting some of the answer we received for the questions.

What comes to your mind when you think of Imatra?

RESPONDENT A	RESPONDENT B	RESPONDENT C	RESPONDENT D
Vacation, It is a nice place for a get away.	A place to come and relax, not to do business	Imatrankoski, Hotel and Spa. A small city pretty much similar to all small cities in Finland.	Good for retreat cause it is quiet and close to nature.

As shown in the Table 1 above, many of our respondents highlighted that they remembered the town from a touristic perspective. They mentioned the Spa, the waterfall (Imatrankoski), and the calmness and quietness of the city resulting in it being a good place for getaway. The interviews in general demonstrate that Imatra has a positive echo in company executives' perspective. With the 2.5h train connection to Helsinki and plenty of natural sights and touristy activity offering Imatra has a good foundation in place.

RESPONDENT F	RESPONDENT E	RESPONDENT C	RESPONDENT H
Access to customers, access to people. With Technology, now-a-days easy to have a good internet connection you can literally work from anywhere. For a technology start-up to be establish honestly you don't need anything. All you need is an idea, a team to dealt up the idea. So people, and access to customers.	As an entrepreneur when you are establishing something, the capital is always limited and covid has proven that people can work remotely, they don't need to meet everyday. Office spaces offer premises almost free of charge. For example offering businesses an office space for free to use for two years. Close to railway station or bus station, free parking. As an entrepreneur or a worker travelling to work, I want to get something to be quick, very easy, and cost effective. Most specially for the start-ups.	I use a lot of services of Maria01. Most coworking spaces provide the possibility of entrepreneurs having their office there, having meetings, and also they allow the guests to use the tools and services there. These coworking spaces are also good for networking and individuals can meet a lot of new likeminded people.	Incubators (like *ship) work quite well. These events and accelerators attract a lot of people and They give people the opportunity to cowork together to inn ovate together. Improve on the already existing solutions.

What are some of the services that increase startup developments in a certain area? What services are of key importance to your business?

As shown in Table 2 we were trying to find out what generic themes companies need in an area. Also, we were interested to learn what type of services increase the startup development in a certain area, and what are some of the services without which the respondents could not fulfill their duties. The interviewees highlighted that startups often struggle with renting an office and obtaining a place to work at. The community aspect and working together has also been a very common theme in the interviews conducted and it seems to be that startups and entrepreneurs do not mind working in the same office as other people. What's more, in more generic terms access to customers is of importance to the firms. But given the era we live in where new business opportunities often align with technology, this means the access to customers take place via applications and platforms. Somewhat contradictory to this, the interviewees saw the importance of proximity of ideas and people.

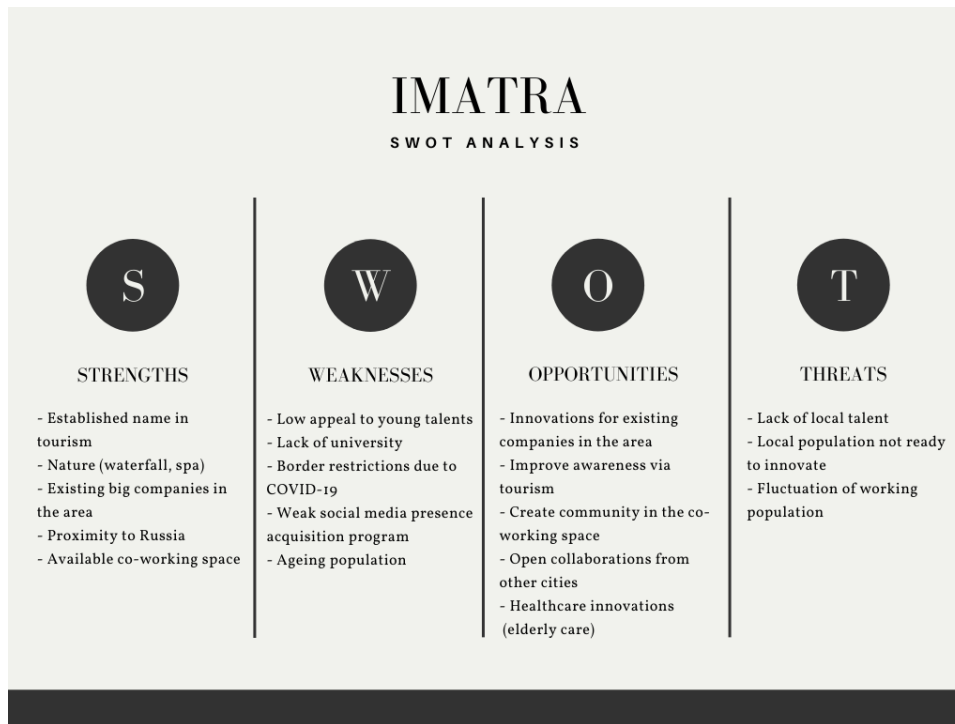| What is your personnel recommendation when setting up something new and innovative?				
RESPONDENT B	**RESPONDENT F**	**RESPONDENT I**	**RESPONDENT J**	**RESPONDENT K**
Talents comes from the university and startup hall. Create a startup incubation hub. The hub would be Imatra's talent bank. Companies could go there to recruit. The incubation hub will create a talent pipeline. The current service they have make it as a hub and have an experienced personnel to man the hub. In order for this to thrive, there should be ongoing events to seek talents and to help them as well.	Create another avenue to introduce more startups and more innovative companies. Innovative focus make the community more vibrant. Include create new innovative approaches for startups.	Co-working spaces like hubs: Frictionless. Access codes are readily availble, services is known, security aspect, ergonomy of the place (screens, chairs), can you invite guests. Combine the place you stay to the place you work.	Attracting people. What would be next? Something that Imatra offers; this could be shown in the website. Incubators, supporting organizations, How are they supporting SMEs currently in Imatra. Goal and vision for government organization.	If you set up something new it will take time before something will become successful, and the companies there have the money already so if someone will solve their problems that would be a good innovation. Go to manufacturing companies in Imatra and deal with their problems. Start incubator for the companies. Interview these big companies: challenges in automation, in supply chain, etc. and it that way they will most likely to establish office in there beca use of access to these companies

In table 3 we were looking for recommendations and tips on how one could implement innovation in a small town. Our respondents highlighted the importance of engaging with the existing universities in the region to attract talent, bringing in talent and the importance of collaboration between the newly brought in talent and the existing companies that are ready to innovate and utilize the talent available. What Imatra offers is a major theme that needs to be solved. The university talents and graduates are a resource that Imatra could invest in to make the region more attractive to new businesses. To make that happen, it does require work and conscious effort.

Altogether from the interviews and the analyses we have a case of Imatra having a positive image among the company executives, need for local community and ecosystem to be in place for the companies to become interested and talent to tap on. This creates a setting whereby Imatra needs to provide some clear rationale how to address these themes. We next look at the analysis from the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) perspective.

SWOT ANALYSIS

To get a clear picture of the current situation, we applied SWOT analysis on Imatra. What we did was identify elements from the interviews and use in either strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or threats.

IMATRA

SWOT ANALYSIS

S	W	O	T
STRENGTHS	**WEAKNESSES**	**OPPORTUNITIES**	**THREATS**
- Established name in tourism - Nature (waterfall, spa) - Existing big companies in the area - Proximity to Russia - Available co-working space	- Low appeal to young talents - Lack of university - Border restrictions due to COVID-19 - Weak social media presence acquisition program - Ageing population	- Innovations for existing companies in the area - Improve awareness via tourism - Create community in the co-working space - Open collaborations from other cities - Healthcare innovations (elderly care)	- Lack of local talent - Local population not ready to innovate - Fluctuation of working population

Looking at the strengths of Imatra as identified by the business executives, Imatra is firstly an established name in the tourism industry. That translates in people decide to spend time in the region and town. In addition, big industrial companies exist already in town. The Russian border is also close to Imatra creating many opportunities.

The key weaknesses of Imatra come in the form of lacking a university; thus, the local education offering finishes at secondary education. Once one leaves town, it is always a bigger job to lure him/her back. On the other hand, LUT and LAB are not far from Imatra. But at the moment, due to the stagnatic job market, Imatra does not have much to offer to young adults. New jobs are limited beyond the tourism and sales industries, both that have suffered due to COVID. The established industries do hire at times, but they are apparently not growing per se. Also, the ageing population is one of the weakness raised up.

Imatra does have multiple opportunities. Two biggest companies that are already in Imatra carry on employing over 1400 employees. Tourism has created a positive vibe amongst the wider audience with Imatra. Perhaps this vibe could be further expanded to attract people to come and stay in Imatra. The existing co-working space in a community-building manner could provide a fairly easy

solution to work at Imatra remotely, a current trend partially boosted by the pandemic. What's more, the local region is keen on collaborating providing different opportunities for the future. In addition, having an ageing population is also an opportunity for healthcare innovations for this market. As a simple rule of business creation, businesses are created to address market needs. Some of the respondents mentioned that healthcare innovation in one city could attract many businesses. Healthcare business is not as simple as forming a start-up but when policies in Imatra are easier for these types of companies to start comparing to other cities in Finland, then it would be attracting businesses.

The key threats for Imatra come in two-fold form: the decreasing population have created a challenging trend that is hard to overcome. Also, the industries and job markets that are expected to grow in the 2020s do not have a strong presence in town.

PERCEPTION

When respondents were asked on how they view the city of Imatra, nearly all of them associate it with the local waterfall, spa, state hotel, beautiful nature and its proximity to Russia. Based on this, it is evident that one of the city's great strengths is the tourism industry. We also have to mention that some respondents were not at all familiar with the location, and none of the respondents said anything other than the city being a good place for vacation. Respondents were also familiar that there is a vast amount of traffic going through Imatra from Russia. All the respondents are positive and encouraging to the efforts the city is doing to innovate. Some of them are even willing to help in these efforts. About seeing themselves living in Imatra throughout the year, they had mixed feelings at the time of the interviews. Mixed feeling in a way that living there in summer and winter is a certain yes, but for example autumn, when everything is dark, seems not attractive. Respondents also highlighted, that it is important to take this into account when creating any sort of innovation. Is the main goal to permanently attract people to Imatra? If yes, the facilities must be able to provide a welcoming experience.

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

When asked about needed facilities and services, the respondents mentioned that start-ups do not usually require much for a facility because a person with an idea, talent, and the entrepreneurs could start the company with an internet connection and a computer which are always accessible in Finland. Some respondents also mentioned that with the emergence of 5G network in Finland there are certainly going to room for innovation and an opportunity that can be taken on. However, it is critical as well that the city would offer ease of building a business, availability of mentorship, access to networks and customers. Also, they have stressed the importance of outside work facilities such as gyms, saunas, restaurants, food deliveries, shopping centers, and bars as well as facilities for their families like daycare centers. Those facilities that would support their lifestyle, social life, leisure activities and achieve work-life balance. Moreover, the ease of a commute from point A to point B is critical to them, and parking spaces if they would be travelling by car.

HUB/COMMUNITY

The issue that the city is facing is local talent moving to bigger cities in order to find better career opportunities. Therefore, any long-term solution must at bare minimum involve the local companies that are operating in the area and have the capability to hire new talent. Since Imatra is close to Lappeenranta where Universities LUT and LAB can be found, we recommend setting up a collaboration between the University and the City. Collaboration between the existing companies, and the talents of LUT and LAB should be beneficial for both the company and the talent working on their projects/cases.

This raises the question how one would organize this collaboration. Lappeenranta attracts many international students as well as local talent in the area. We recommend that the companies in Imatra could provide a short term (Summer for instance) internship, where they allow the students to complete their practical training while benefiting the company and supporting the operation with the project.

For location, the existing hub or co-working space would be a very ideal from both sides. The projects that are location independent from the companies could easily move into the co-working space and students would have the opportunity to work there. This way, the community would develop on its own at least during the duration of such internship. While this does not give space for independent individual community growth, in order to create awareness at the town, it is crucial that the students/people working there leave the place with a good memory. Furthermore, students either need to be given the chance to earn a salary while working on these projects or be given the opportunity to live in the city for free for the duration of this internship.

DISCUSSION

In the tech industry nationally, a great number of accelerators and hubs have emerged over the last 15 years. These hubs have many potential benefits, but they need to have a community and working space feeling. The only way start-ups and entrepreneurs find these hubs appealing tends to be if they can get access to knowledge that otherwise they would not have access to. This translates in a key threshold to reach at first, without adequate number of people and companies investing time and money in the hub, it will not become true. Once sufficient numbers take part, then for example access to new tools allowing them to better organize their activities can be useful, as is access to mentoring from experts in relevant domain. However, we emphasize that in many cases the place itself will not provide a sustainable solution without enough people and companies working in that space, so that the newcomers feel like becoming part of something bigger and, when necessary, getting help from them.

One way to increase the likelihood of working in such space is to organize events at the hub, so that people can familiarize themselves with the space, and to provide low-cost office solutions to these newly born companies. As for many startups requiring an office comes into the picture a bit later in their journey, it is crucial that when they need it, they have access to something low cost. Taking into consideration also that there has to be a commitment element to these spaces. Renting a full office is costly in any city and requires at least 1 year of agreement. For start-ups a commitment that sized may seem scary, therefore a cheap coworking office with shorter and flexible leasing agreement

may be the best way to go about this. Having access to tools and devices at the hub is also very important in the development of start-ups

If the city of Imatra plans to take the hub into concrete action aspiring high, the city must take into consideration the direction that they will take when supporting the community that eventually forms the hub. The value proposition of the hub must be clear and available for everyone interested. It is worth taking into consideration having a very specific themed HUB for example Tech HUB, Entrepreneurship HUB, Cyber HUB. This will increase the likelihood of a certain group of people to join in. However, the specialization will also decrease the likelihood of people who are not operating in that industry to join in, therefore it may be beneficial to not segment in the awareness stage, but attract masses, and then measure which customer segment is the most prominent in the long run. Again, this going after the masses is not an easy option to go for – more rarely do generic answers provide relevance for all.

Whatever the hub design is, when taking it to the next level, conscious effort is needed. That will require creating campaigns and events, and it is important to make the distinction between online and offline. If a marketing campaign is aiming to raise awareness about an online event, the city/hub will be competing against all the online event players. If it is aimed at an offline event, the targeting has to be interactive and engaging to the local target group.

Upon interviewing experts that have had the experience in working in hubs, developing them, or just in general managed to build a great work community some of the ideas that we found out are the following:
- The business model must be developed in a way that support individuality and freedom to set one's own boundaries, aims and goals.
- The organization should be supportive and focus on providing guidance to everyone.
- Everyone has a different leadership type; therefore, everyone needs to understand their own personal type.

On the top of every subcategory in an organizational structure as such there is very often a people specialist/community manager who is responsible for making sure that the community is developing in a way that is beneficial for the

individuals as well as the companies. The community manager does not necessarily have to be that involved with administrative tasks, this person needs to be able to coach, provide emotional support and understand business practices in order to be successful in a position.

The hub/community creation will address one of the key weaknesses specified in the SWOT analysis which is having no university in the city. A successful hub can become to a degree Imatra's talent bank. It could become a proactive recruiter of individuals to the city, with establishing connections with individuals that would be interested in relocating to the city if a job would emerge. Also, all the students of LUT and LAB would be a natural talent pool for the hub. Thus, at it's more successful scenario, through the hub businesses could acquire talent. Of course, many start-ups are also founded by collaborations of talented people in similar hubs. For the positive side, Imatra has already the facility for this since they have the co-working space, they would only need a qualified hub manager and talented people with growing connections.

INTERNATIONAL TALENT INCLUSION

Talents in tech is a scarcity not only in Finland but the whole of Europe. Talented tech people come from international countries and have English as their universal language. For these people to thrive and feel included in a community, obtaining services in a language they understand will be a great start. Also, these talents immigrate with their families. Acquiring them comes in a package, the talent, and his family. To keep these talents, we should also take good care of their families. Finland has a reputation for being a family-friendly country which is one of the reasons talented people immigrate here. Services that could be offered to these would be an English kindergarten aside from leisure activities and facilities that they could use even they cannot speak the local language. Having people speak in English in these facilities would be great. The feeling that you will not be lost even if you don't speak Finnish, that you can get services in the language that you can understand like English give the feeling of belongingness in a community. According to Statistics Finland, nearly half of the number of people who migrated to the Uusimaa region from other municipalities in 2019 were foreign-language speakers. Attracting talents and businesses to a

specific location is easy; keeping them there is the challenge. However, according to different studies, people have difficulty leaving a place they have called home, a community where they belong.

FUNDING SCHEMES AND ATTRACTIVE TAX RATES

An effective way to attract entrepreneurs to a city to establish their business in it is to run a project to financially support individuals and companies. There are a lot of passionate professionals out there searching for finances to set their businesses up and one of the most common challenges is to gather substantial sum of money for the purpose.

Recent project initiated by Italian government to attract young entrepreneurs to Santo Stefano di Sessanio to launch and hold a business in the village with the population of 115 residents (41 of them are over 65 years old) has proved the efficiency of the idea. Over 8 days, an approximate amount of 1,500 people have applied, which is 13 times more than the current population. The government offers grants totaling as much as 44,000 euro over 3 years.

A similar idea was offered by one of the interviewees. By designing similar to the Italian village's offer for entrepreneurs and adjusting it to economic conditions of Finland and Imatra in particular (living costs in the region, average salaries, etc.) as well as implementing other ideas offered by the other interviewees, it is highly possible that many talented individuals with outstanding business plans will get interested in moving to the town. Those who have already established a business might get interested too.

Besides offering funding programs to passionate entrepreneurs in the field of IT, Imatra could offer lower tax rates for a certain period. The timeframe here would-be approximate quantity of years that would take Imatra to establish IT start-ups eco-system.

CONCLUSION

Migration loss is a challenge of many small cities in Finland, not only Imatra. Based on the result of the interviews, attracting, and keeping talents are done

in different ways. One thing that would help keep tech talents are providing them services not only for their business' needs but more importantly, for their holistic health which includes mental health. What they do in their leisure time are things that they prioritize more than what they do at work. Work is work, but leisure activities are different. Community inclusion and obtaining leisure facilities/services give more value to them. Without the community no hub/co-working space can be successful. The image of the community will be shaped by the people working within the community therefore it will be important to define it at the start of operations.

Moreover, the respondents mentioned that building a startup ecosystem in Imatra is not a big challenge if there are relevant numbers of startups in the city. Attracting people will be addressed by the startup Hub. Talents will be developed, and businesses will be born in the hub. Collaboration has been mentioned repeatedly, as well. A collaboration of Imatra with the paper mills, Lappeenranta, LUT, LAB, and others like neighboring St. Petersburg will help going forward to these innovations.

Guide questions:

- What comes to your mind when you think of Imatra?
- What features/benefits would you (as potential company) would like to see offered by the city?
- Imagine that you open a side office in Imatra, what services would you need in general to run your business?
- Commitment to develop an ecosystem. If that happens with all its features, would you then be interested?
- Would it benefit a startup if the city had a good coworking space? Would it change a whole lot if it was empty most times?
- What would be your first step, if you wanted to create a tech/startup ecosystem?
- What services or facilities are essential for your business and your daily life?
- What services, facilities or talent base would you like to see in place that would be essential for your business?
- Do you see it as an issue that there are no University?
- Do you think a collaboration with Lappeenranta Uni and the bigger companies in Imatra would help the area? If yes, think back to when you were a student, would you have taken a job/position in Imatra?
- Would you consider as a good place to start the business?
- Would you relocate to the city?
- Are you familiar with the services that Imatra provides?
- O: Have you had to do business with the city of Imatra, if yes, how did they handle your issue/question, was it fast and satisfactory or was it slow/troublesome?
- (What do you dislike about the products and services offered by the city?)
- O: What are you happy about staying and having business in Imatra (for those who are already in Imatra)?

RAW DATA:

WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU HEAR IMATRA/ NOTION OF IMATRA

- Vacation, nice for get away.
- Relaxing town
- Good for retreat because it is quiet
- Russian border, paper mills, state hotel
- not very familiar with the place
- Imatra is a part of Finland. Many Russian tourists travelling through the city. I feel like it is a small city.
- Closed. Nothing.
- Energy business
- State hotel
- The hotelli and the Imatra Koski.
- Imatrankoski, Hotel and Spa. A small city pretty much similar to all small cities in Finland
- A place to come and relax, not to do business

FACILITIES, SERVICES, TALENTS

- Incubators (*ship) and accelerators are great. They give people the chance to co-work together to innovate together. Incubator and improve on that. Improve the solution but don't need to innovate on it.
- If you can solve the issue in crossing the border, then St Petersburg is a bigger area so bigger market potential and more spots for innovation can be open.
- Restaurants, bars, clubs, shopping.
- I use a lot of services of Maria01. Coworking spaces are very good for networking.
- Some facilities that would include sauna, gym, lunch place, and work-place. This will make the city attractive to start up people.
- Would Imatra offer any attractive tax rates and funding possibilities? For funding for example offering companies funding for example 100,000 start up fund with a condition that you will establish your office in Imatra and won't move for several years for instance 10 years like that. Or offering land, buildings or offices.
- As an entrepreneur when you are establishing something, the capital is always limited and with covid has proven that people can work re-motely, they don't need to meet every day. Offer office premises almost free of charge. For example, offering businesses an office space for free to use for two years. Close to railway station or bus station, free parking. As an entrepreneur or a worker travelling to work, I want to get something to be quick, very easy, and cost effective. Most specially for the start-ups.
- How to get people to come to the office? Lappeenranta and Imatra can have a partnership. People can live in Lappeenranta and commute to work in Imatra. That would be a good possibility. Tech people does not want/need to live in big cities. Lappeenranta has more services and

thinking about the age of the people what would they need. For example, night life, dining services, gym, and some social life other than work so they could have a balance in life.

- Access to customers, access to people. Technology is now-a-days easy to have a good internet connection you can literally work from anywhere. For a technology start-up to be establish honestly you don't need anything. All you need is an idea, a team to dealt up the idea. So people, and access to customers.
- Talent could be a problem, but Lappeenranta could supplement depending on the type of the company.
- Will I have those services that I have in Helsinki in Imatra. Example Wolt, transportation services for commutes, schedule of buses, accommodation condition. Values of the change or compromise. Would a person able to compromise something they have to have something that they value.
- So many benefits for talents to settle. TAXES. Support the lifestyle of young people, entertainment, events, giving them opportunity to grow as a citizen. Highlight the certain things that Imatra is great at and people will cherish.
- Programs and support from government. Advise…mentorship for startup.
- Support from the government in general. Grants.
- Ecosystem and events are important. It cannot be only about 1 Hub, but there must be other facilities and services as well.
- Hackathons, business working events
- Talents come from University grads, but if Imatra have talent hubs, having no Uni in Imatra won't be a big problem.
- Consultancy company need clients around them and settle have offices where major clients are.
- Talents could be attracted from universities: junior positions, summer jobs.
- Super difficult to find tech talents in Europe. So, talents come from outside Finland and their language is English so their needs should be taken cared of as well.

PERSONAL RECOMMENDATION, SETTING UP SOMETHING NEW, INNO-

VATION

- Building the ecosystem is not a problem if you have the density of the start-ups there.
- Co working space is really good for startup. Supplemental office space.
- Adress everyone as individuals everyone gets equal opportunities and possibilities to be themselves. Everyone as different motivation, community, meaningful work, salary. address these motivations.
- If commute to Imatra from Lappenranta is good, then Collaboration with Universities would help. They are good for incubators.
- Startups need to have access to networks and be able to meet other people and learn.
- Attract talents and have them something to do. Make sure they can attract and keep talented people and make it easy to make business in those cities. Facilities for businesses who need it.

- Some facilities that would include sauna, gym, lunch place, and workplace. This will make the city attractive to start up people. Good facilities, good lunch possibilities, people come in comfort, gym, sauna, same building. No need to travel separately for gym and sauna. Nice lunch cafes in the building.
- Collaboration with the city of Lappeenranta to produce talents and others.
- If you set up something new it will take time before something will become successful, and these companies have the money already so if someone will solve their problems that would be a good innovation. Go to manufacturing companies in Imatra and deal with their problems. Start incubator for the companies. Interview these big companies: challenges in automation, in supply chain, etc. and it that way they will be most likely to establish office in there because of access to these companies.
- Lot more cooperation than competition with Lappeenranta/LUT.
- English language being offered in services.
- Recognition or Visibility of things; ways to advertise things or how good you are. No influencer campaigning for Imatra what the city does and so on. Which Channels that image could be exposed? Various ways. Website to show what you do, tools to be present. Social media channels. As channel for communication for people. B2B social channels. Conversations. moderation.
- Attracting people. what would be next? Something that Imatra offers; this could be shown on the website. Incubators, supporting organizations, how are they supporting SMEs currently in Imatra. Goal and vision for government organization…
- Co-working spaces like hubs: Frictionless service providing is the best. Access codes are readily available, services are known, security aspect, ergonomy of the place (screens, chairs), can you invite guests. Combine the place you stay to the place you work.
- Hackathon will help? depends on who will run that. Incubation. not only for them to join the hackathon but how would they proceed. For their idea to come true. Would there be support for these entrepreneurs to proceed? Hackathon is basically networking.
- Talents comes from the university and startup hall. Create a startup incubation hub. The hub would be Imatra's talent bank. Companies could go there to recruit. The incubation hub will create a talent pipeline. The current service they have, make it as a hub and have an experience personnel to man the hub. In order for this to thrive, there should be ongoing events to seek talents and to help them as well.
- Create another avenue to introduce more startups and more innovative companies. Innovative focus makes the community more vibrant. Include create new innovative approaches for startups.
- Opportunities for English speakers and their families to feel included in the community. English kindergarten for their kids and some leisure activities/facilities for them. Feeling that you can get services in English so you can feel included.
- Innovation in healthcare. Make it easy for companies to innovate on this sector.
- Figure out what is missing from the businesses side and create collaborations that support development.

- Big companies need to give opportunities to the smaller startups companies in order to allow the company to change and develop
- The key element is How and why the hub is built. Understand what the key elements and problems are. Without the key facilitator it would never work.
- Create the ecosystem based on values. Figure out how to attract masses, create an accelerator and a community. A hub needs an idea and people working towards a similar direction in order to achieve amazing results.
- Diverse community
- Community manager and the place itself needs to be cohesive. Create the pilot with a lot of buzz!
- People with different perspectives will join, first create the pilot, then figure out the next step.
- Long term success will come from Humans first, Business second mentality.
- Create the opportunity and matchmake with the mentors who are ready to support these people.
- Develop the organization structure in a way that it will support individual and community development as well. Break the organization down into smaller work groups.
- Create good borders for people to work within. Allow them to take on responsibility and personal development at same time.

OTHER INPUTS

What would be your first step, if you wanted to create a tech/startup ecosystem?

- Determine what are the needs of the company or enterprise. (startup grind: There might be something available in another place but not in Helsinki)
- Attend events to understand the needs,
- Create a database in order to create the ecosystem: key players
- Online promotion for the events
- Collaborate with key partners and start up ecosystems in other cities.
- Identify who are the key stakeholders who are the start ups
- Make an event to make these stakeholders meet and network consistently have engaging events
    - Creating demand by attracting customers to the town. If there is demand, there will be businesses and individuals to meet it
- Good research on the following:
    1. Who are the key stakeholders that could be part of this ecosystem?
    2. Who are the start-ups of entrepreneurs that would come onboard?
    3. Create an event to bring these people together. Make it consistent to make the people involved.
- Make the culture very open and support everyone to be themselves. Diversity and inclusion.

Commitment to develop an ecosystem. If that happens with all its features, would you then be interested?

- Yes, it is possible. If they have a vibrant ecosystem and it is thriving, I will not just be willing to build my business in Imatra but I be willing to join the business advisors there.
- Relocating in Imatra would be possible for people who have families in Imatra or near the area.
- Maybe. It's hard to say if we would come to Imatra. There are so many options and Imatra will have to standout. Imatra comparing to Stockholm, New-York, Amsterdam. That would be the competition.