THE ROLE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN IMPROVING SOCIAL COHESION IN AGEING OUTLYING VILLAGES

IFA, Melbourne, May 2010
Arja Kilpeläinen
lecturer, Master‘s Degree Programme of Social Work and Information Technology
Lapland:
- 6 regional areas
- Total area 98,947 km²
- Population:
  - 183,900 (2008)
- density 2.0 inhabitants/km²
- Rovaniemi city 8016 km²
  - over 60,000 inhabitants
  - over 50 villages
Social cohesion in this research

• village is a basic community inside the municipality
  – a compact area either geographically or mentally
  – a unit of cohesion, which can be functional or symbolic including norms and culture
Social cohesion in this research

- could be defined to the individual or group-level (see Friedkin, Noah E. 2004)
  - individuals → groups
- individuals in remote villages act alone or together with others
  → more social cohesion
- As a group they have possibilities to effect on their living conditions
  → increase the community in village
Information technology in this research

- computers, phones, networks
- give possibilities to live in remote areas in general
- services easily escape to the centres
- way to make every-day-life easier
About the questionnaire

• the respondents are from two service-village areas of Rovaniemi
  – Meltaus-area
    • Perttaus, Tolonen, Meltaus, Marrasjärvi, and Patokoski
  – Jaatila-area
    • Leipee, Petäjäskoski, Jaatila, and its surrounding areas

• during spring 2008 or in the end of 2008

• the total amount of answers 255
  – Meltaus 143 (54 % from this area)
  – Jaatila (56 % from this area)
About the respondents

• all together 255 answers, of which 46 percent females and 54 males
The importance of devices offered by information technology to communicate with other

- Landline
- Cellphone
- Email
- Phones via net
- Webcam
- Instant messages (messenger etc.)
- Discussion forums in internet

%: not at all important - at least little significant
Use of computers and internet

- searching information
- bank affairs
- office-programs
- photos
- reading journals
- communication
- e-business
- e-services with authorities
- videos and music
- playing games
- looking TV-programs
to study
e-business with library
communication with peer group
distance work

Percentage of users who use

- no
- yes
What kind of users there are in these villages?

- Stabilized use age < 39
- 40-64-years
- 65-79-years
- 80-years and older

- E-tainment use age < 39
- 40-64-years
- 65-79-years
- 80-years and older

- Utility use age < 39
- 40-64-years
- 65-79-years
- 80 and older

Legend:
- seldom
- sometimes
- often
Technology and every-day-life

[Boxplot chart showing the distribution of how technology helps to cope in every-day-life across different age groups.

- 39 and younger
- 40-64 years
- 65-79 years
- 80 and older

The boxplot indicates that younger age groups tend to have a higher perceived help from technology in daily life compared to older age groups.]
Thank you!

• “If there is a will, there is a way”

• Thank you for your attention!

• arja.kilpelainen@ulapland.fi
• www.ulapland.fi