

# Development of Wellbeing and Civil Safety in Municipalities

Submitted by the Regional State Administrative Agency for Lapland



## Regional State Administrative Agency for Lapland

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### Size of organisation

50-100, people involved: >15

### Type of sector

Public administration, modernisation, institutional affairs, reform; Public health and social welfare/affairs

### Key words of project

Network, safety, security, wellbeing, public administration, resource management

The project on Civil Safety in Municipalities has found novel, nationally recognised solutions to implement wellbeing and safety services in municipalities, by bringing in the resources and skills of NGOs and voluntary organisations to complement the services provided by the private sector and municipalities. The developed model is piloted in municipalities in Northern Finland. All five of the project's pilot municipalities have convincingly shown that the shift in focus to preventive work and the utilisation of existing resources increase citizen wellbeing and reduce public sector costs. Even in small municipalities the savings are estimated to be €2-3 million per year.

Because of the current budget cuts and decreasing resources, which threaten maintenance and quality of services, there was a focus on remedial work and the costs of social and healthcare have doubled in municipalities during the 2000s. There is a risk that the Finnish welfare state is becoming a society taking care of citizens' welfare only when it is lost. Each actor does what has to be done by law, but with limited resources. Remedial work is expensive and there is no future if we try to do things alone. The focus must shift to preventive work and the pooling of existing resources. The project presents solutions for municipalities having the principal responsibility to provide services for citizens.

The developed model is attached permanently to the municipality management structure and brings additional resources to proactive wellbeing and safety work by pooling existing resources. Enhancing public safety and the prevention of health problems are the most important tasks from the perspective of daily life in local communities.

The results of the project are encouraging. Municipalities have established inter-sectoral working groups on wellbeing and safety, and the national level is involved in piloting a single approach, in which dozens of administrative WGs and programmes participate to bring about more effective resource management.

The project overcomes traditional administration thinking that has led to a myriad of wellbeing and safety policy programmes, papers and initiatives in municipalities, which have resulted in overlapping tasks wasting scarce resources. According to the Mayors of the pilot municipalities, the new working model helps them to find new resources and to save a remarkable amount of money. This working model is practicable – not only in Finland, but also in the rest of Europe.