Preconditions for Sustainable Rural Coworking Spaces in Southwest Finland

Field Study England – Case Study Mietoinen

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Juha Heikkilä

ABSTRACT

This thesis was commissioned by Valonia, which is a service centre for sustainable development and energy issues in Southwest Finland. Valonia is constantly searching for ways to improve ecological wellbeing in the region, and was therefore interested to find out the preconditions for sustainable rural coworking. Coworking is a global phenomenon which was invented to help self-employed people in particular to get a work related community around them. In addition, coworking activates local economies and can support environmentally friendly behaviour.

Three research questions were formed in order to be able to give preconditions for sustainable rural coworking in the area; 1) what experience is there of coworking in England?, 2) are there sustainable impacts associated with coworking in England?, 3) what are the needs of potential rural coworkers in Southwest Finland? The answers for the first two questions were received by making a field study in England. A case study was conducted in a rural community in Southwest Finland, Mietoinen, and it produced an answer to the last research question. The field study consisted of structured theme interviews, observing, and photographing, whereas the case study merely included semi-structured theme interviews.

The literature review of the thesis showed that there are only a few publications regarding coworking, and that the information concerning rural coworking is practically non-existent. However, two recently published global coworking surveys along with many blogs and web sites related to coworking managed to give sufficient understanding of the phenomenon, how coworking is linked to sustainable development, and why there seems to be a need for rural coworking in Southwest Finland.

The study is able to determine ten preconditions for rural coworking in Southwest Finland, one of which states that any venture to start a rural coworking space in Southwest Finland should begin by building up a community of people. The other preconditions are equally tangible, which gives for example Valonia an opportunity to promote coworking in the area.

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Opinnäytetyön tilasi Varsinais-Suomen kestävän kehityksen ja energia-asioiden palvelukeskus Valonia. Valonia edistää toiminta-alueellaan erityisesti ekologista hyvinvointia, minkä vuoksi se halusi selvittää kestävän kehityksen mukaisen yhteisöllisen työskentelyn reunaehdot. Yhteisöllinen työskentely on maailmanlaajuinen ilmiö, joka kehitettiin auttamaan erityisesti itsensä työllistäjiä saamaan ympärilleen työyhteisö. Sen lisäksi yhteisöllinen työskentely aktivoi paikallistalouksia ja tukee ympäristöystävällistä käyttäytymistä.

Reunaehtojen selvittämiseksi muodostettiin kolme tutkimuskysymystä; 1) mikä on kokemus yhteisöllisistä työtiloista Englannissa?, 2) onko kestävä kehitys huomioitu yhteisöllisessä työskentelyssä Englannissa?, 3) mitkä ovat potentiaalisten maaseudun yhteisöllisten työtilojen käyttäjien tarpeet Varsinais-Suomessa? Ensimmäiseen kahteen kysymykseen saatiin vastaukset tekemällä kenttätutkimus Englannissa. Tapaustutkimus, joka tehtiin maaseutuyhteisössä Varsinais-Suomessa, Mietoisissa, tuotti vastauksen viimeiseen tutkimuskysymykseen. Kenttätutkimus koostui jäsennellyistä teemahaastatteluista, havainnoinnista ja valokuvauksesta, kun taas tapaustutkimus sisälsi pelkästään puolijäsenneltyjä teemahaastatteluja.

Kirjallisuuskatsaus osoitti, että yhteisöllisestä työskentelystä on olemassa vain muutama julkaisu, ja että maaseudulla tapahtuvaa yhteisöllistä työskentelyä koskeva tieto on lähes olematonta. Kuitenkin kaksi hiljattain julkaistua maailmanlaajuista selvitystä yhdessä usean blogin ja nettisivun kanssa tuottivat tarpeeksi tietoa antaakseen ilmiöstä riittävän kuvan, kertoakseen kuinka yhteisöllinen työskentely liittyy kestävään kehitykseen ja osoittaakseen miksi Varsinais-Suomen maaseudulla näyttäisi olevan tarvetta yhteisölliselle työskentelylle.

Tutkimus pystyy määrittelemään kymmenen reunaehtoa Varsinais-Suomen maaseudulla tapahtuvalle yhteisölliselle työskentelylle. Erään reunaehdon mukaan kaikkien maaseudun yhteisöllistä työskentelyä edistävien pyrkimysten tulisi alkaa yhteisön kokoamisesta. Reunaehdot antavat esimerkiksi Valonialle mahdollisuuden edistää yhteisöllistä työskentelyä.

Avainsanat	Työympäristö, kestävä kehitys, sosiaaliset suhteet, yhteisöllinen työskentely
Sivut	88 s. + liitteet 7 s.

CONTENTS

1   INTRODUCTION

Coworking is a new way to organize work. It was first tested in San Francisco USA in 2005 by a programmer called Brad Neuberg, who wanted to try to combine the benefits of working individually to having a community around him. Few years later coworking had developed into a movement and coworking spaces were popping up around the continent. (Gaylord & Arnoldy 2008.) By the beginning of February 2012 there were a total of 1320 coworking spaces around the world (1320 coworking spaces worldwide 2012). The phenomenon was first seen in Finland in 2009 when HUB Helsinki opened its doors to the public (Janhonen 2011, 9).

Coworking got popular in a big city, spread out to other big cities but has thereafter gathered an increasing amount of interest and success also in less urban areas (Ulvund, email message 19.12.2011; Kidd 2011; How To Start a Coworking Space in Your Small Town 2011). There are indications which suggest that coworking spaces could also be needed in the rural areas of Finland. For example Eeva Hellström from Sitra, the Finnish Innovation Fund, has come up with an idea that by establishing coworking spaces around rural Finland it would be possible to make the innovation potential of the countryside benefit the whole of Finland (Sitra 2011).

The purpose of this study and the main research problem is to find out, what are the preconditions for sustainable rural coworking spaces in Southwest Finland. Three research questions are formed to get an answer to the main research problem and they are 1) what experience is there of coworking in England, 2) are there sustainable impacts associated with coworking in England, and 3) what are the needs of potential rural coworkers in Southwest Finland?

Sustainability is one of the five values of coworking and is therefore emphasized in this study (Coworking wiki 2012). This study is interested in all three aspects of sustainable development which include, according to International Institute for Sustainable Development (2012), environmental, economic and social well-being for today and tomorrow.

Another reason for being interested in sustainability issues is that this study has been commissioned by Valonia, which is a service centre for sustainable development and energy issues in Southwest Finland (appendix 1). Valonia is supporting an idea of establishing a network of coworking spaces around rural areas of Southwest Finland in order to improve opportunities to telecommute, and also to enable economically, socially and ecologically sustainable growth in local communities. Valonia is also considering a project in which a network of coworking spaces would be built up in rural areas of Southwest Finland. The contribution of this study has a big influence on the project plan.

The study is carried out by visiting English coworking spaces during the author's student exchange period in University of Leeds and by using the case study method in Mietoinen, which is a little rural community in Southwest Finland. Although the field study in England will be carried out

later than the case study in Mietoinen, results of the field study are reported ahead in order to maintain the logical framework of the study.

According to the literature review, very little Finnish literature about coworking or coworking spaces has been published. In addition, English literature concerning rural coworking is practically non-existent but there are a few publications about coworking as a phenomenon. Hence, this thesis and its contribution have a value in terms of Finnish literature concerning coworking but also international literature concerning rural coworking.

A reason for the limited amount of literature seems to be that coworking is a relatively new idea and that people who are so called coworking enthusiasts, use untraditional channels to share their ideas and findings, such as web sites and blogs which are devoted to coworking. These kinds of fast and alternative ways to share your ideas with the public seem to suit a dynamic and young phenomenon such as coworking.

The literature review of the thesis begins in chapter two by describing the origins of coworking. The following two subchapters will tell more deeply about characteristics of coworking and the global success that the phenomenon has achieved. Thereafter a rather new idea of rural coworking is presented and later a public discussion about potential for rural coworking in Finland is covered. Chapter two as well as the whole literature review ends to the subchapter that explains the link between coworking and sustainable development.

The main research problem alongside the three research questions are set up in chapter three. In addition, chapter three includes two subchapters which will present the methods of the study. Chapter four gives detailed information about the preparations for the field study in England as well as presents all the visited coworking spaces in England. In chapter five the process of the case study in Mietoinen is described and for example the selection of the interviewees is covered in detail.

Chapter six is divided into three subchapters, which present the gathered information during the field study in England and the case study in Mietoinen. The three subchapters are named according to the three themes used both in the field and case study to make them convergent. Synthesis of the results and the conclusions of the study are shown in chapter seven, which is divided into subchapters according to the three research questions of the study. An answer to the main research problem is given at the beginning of chapter eight. In addition, the final chapter of the thesis includes an assessment of the contribution of the thesis to the field and to the commissioner of the thesis, Valonia.

2   COWORKING – A NEW WAY TO WORK

Many different factors of the changing society affect the way we work. The most obvious of these changes during the last decade has been the development of the communication technology, but also some less tangible changes have been under way. Nevertheless, they all reflect in how we work, why we work, when we work and for whom we work. As a result of this development, an increasing amount of people in developed countries have found themselves working as freelancers, entrepreneurs or telecommuters, who all usually work alone.

As a response to this development, an idea of a shared collaborative workspace was tested by Brad Neuberg in San Francisco USA in 2005. The term "coworking" had already been coined by Bernie DeKoven already in 1995, but Neuberg was the first one who attached the term to a shared collaborative workspace. (Dullroy 2012; Rouse 2011.)

Brad Neuberg was a computer programmer who was unhappy working at a rental office space and was trying to find a way which would allow him to work independently and to have a sense of community at the same time. He had meetings with his life coach about his frustrations, and through their sessions Neuberg came up with an idea of establishing a space which would offer a work related community to self-employed people. He put that idea into action in 2005 when he rented a suitable space which was out of use during the daytime and started to call it a coworking space. (Dullroy 2012.)

The beginning was not easy as, according to Neuberg, for the first two months, no one showed up. He had thought that getting people there would be easy and he had used a limited amount of money and time on advertisement. Soon he changed the tactics and started spreading flyers and talking to people and finally the first coworkers arrived. However, after a year Neuberg felt like the coworking space had died as well as the whole idea of coworking. It turned out that people had done as Neuberg had advised them to do, which meant that they took the idea of a coworking space, remixed it and started to make new coworking spaces. The evolution of coworking spaces resulted in openings of new coworking spaces around the USA during the following years. (Dullroy 2012; Gaylord & Arnoldy 2008; Butler 2008.)

Eventually, Neuberg's initiative started a movement since by the beginning of February 2012, there were total amount of 1 320 coworking spaces around the world (1 320 coworking spaces worldwide 2012). A projection has been made for the end of the year 2012 suggesting that the number of coworking spaces would be by then over 2 100 (2nd global coworking survey 2011).

The future for coworking seems bright as the number of knowledge workers seems to increase constantly in developed countries. There is also a

reason to believe that the number of alienated knowledge workers is already at the critical level as, according to a survey, one in every five knowledge workers are in danger of being alienated (Nair & Vohra 2010). Workers who feel themselves lonely and isolated can be seen more likely to start working at a coworking space than workers, who are already part of a work related community.

2.1 Characteristics of coworking

Coworking has proved to be an answer to many entrepreneurs, telecommuters and freelancers, who have been missing a work related community. Unlike in the typical office environment, coworkers usually work individually and just share the facilities of a coworking space. According to Cohen (2011), coworking enables collaboration, shared knowledge and skills and gives a good opportunity to make subcontracts. Spontaneous encounters of people working in various different professions and fields are usually very fruitful and can create new innovations (Partanen 2011).

Still, it is not merely the community that attracts people. Coworking spaces usually offer equipment, amenities and premises that all the businesses could not otherwise afford. Typical features of a coworking space include:
- Shared work space.
- 24/7 access.
- Reservable or rentable meeting rooms.
- Wi-Fi.
- Communal printer, copier and fax.
- Shared kitchen, bathroom and lounge. (Rouse 2011.)

It seems like there are other factors besides the community, which make coworking a tempting idea especially for self-employed people. Shared workspace and other resources give them an opportunity to reduce their costs and to use high quality equipment. There is a magazine which focuses on coworking and they have conducted two global surveys about coworking. According to the 2nd global coworking survey (2011), interaction with other people is however the most important benefit for the coworkers, as can be seen in figure 1.
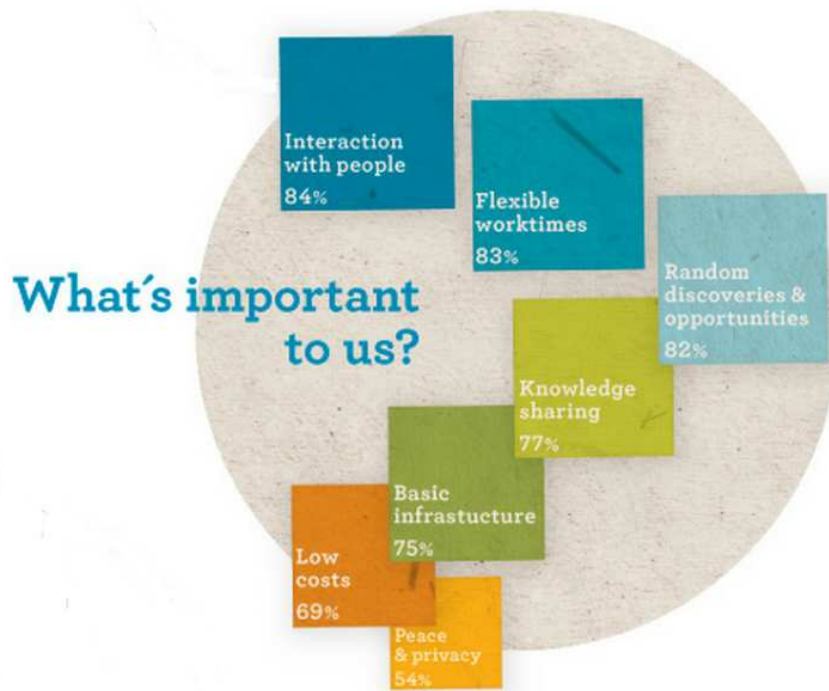
Figure 1   The most important issues for coworkers (2nd global coworking survey 2011).

DeGuzman (2011) sees coworking space as a space, which offers flexibility similar to working at home and inspiring atmosphere of a cafeteria. She has created a list of the benefits, which coworking offers for a coworker.

- Higher motivation when working with similar minded people.
- More social interaction.
- Healthier relation between work and family life.
- Increased possibility for accelerated serendipity.
- Shared resources (for example office equipment).
- Higher income due to new working opportunities and wider professional network.

According to Stephanie Ng (2011), Vandenbroek (2011) has written an article in French in which he has applied Maslow's hierarchy of needs to coworking. Following the Maslow's original idea, the basic needs have to be met first before coworking spaces and coworkers can progress up the pyramid. Below are the short explanations of each step in the pyramid, which is shown in figure 2.
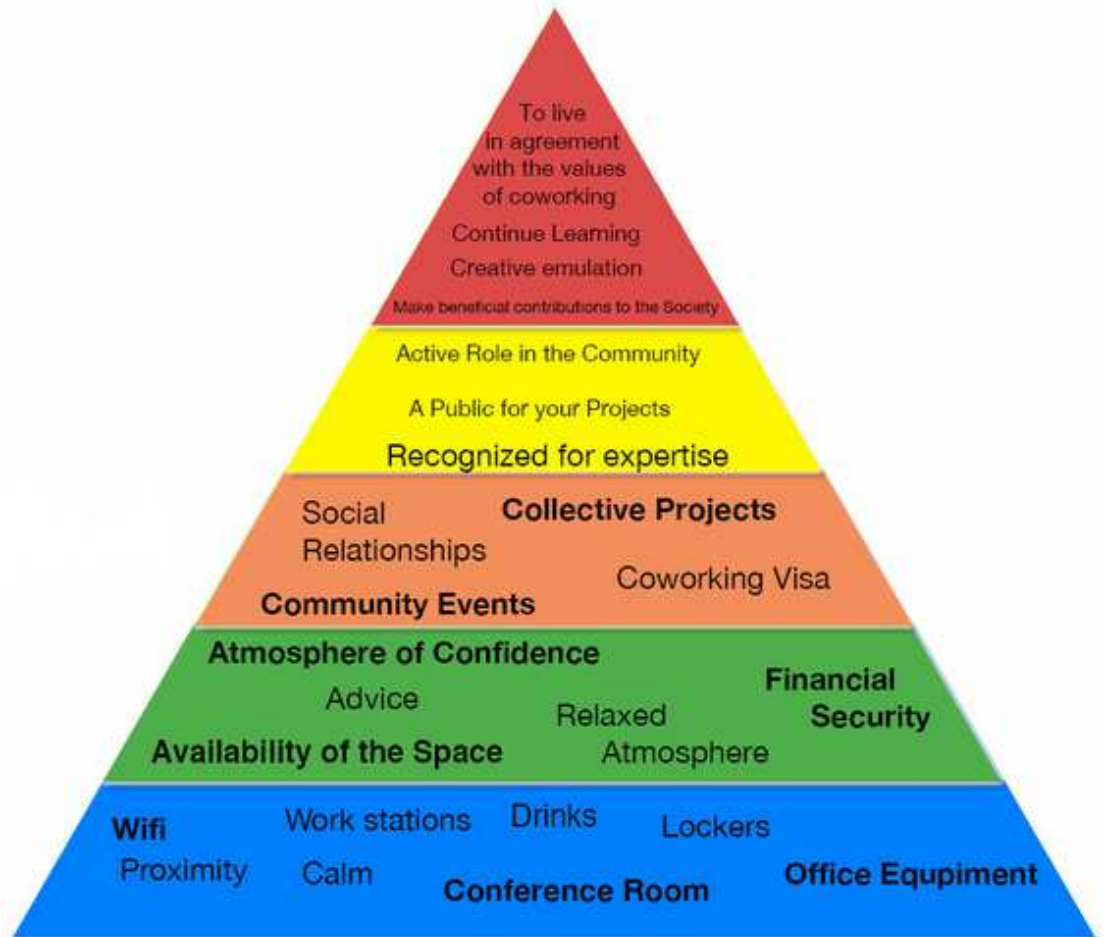
Figure 2   The coworking pyramid of needs (Ng 2011).

- Basic needs (blue), for example proximity to the home of the coworkers and comfortable workstations. All the basic needs must be provided to enable positive coworking experience.
- Security needs (green), for example relaxed atmosphere and an opportunity to only pay per use instead of fixed rent.
- Need of belonging (orange), for example friendship between coworkers and coworking visa providing a membership to international community of coworkers.
- Need of esteem (yellow), for example to have an audience for your projects and to be recognized for your expertise.
- Need of realization (red), for example coworkers increase each other's creativity and live according to their personal and coworking values. This is the highest level of the coworking pyramid. (Ng 2011.)

The first global coworking survey found out issues which make a coworking space attractive to coworkers. Below is a list of the key issues.

- Most coworkers prefer a workspace which has less than twenty coworkers.
- Coworkers would like to have a mixture of open floor plan office and more private workstations.
- Coworkers want to have influence on the layout and design of a coworking space.

- A little less than half of the coworkers rent a permanent desk.
- Most wanted amenities include internet access (99 % of the respondents), printers and copiers (80 %), a meeting room (76 %), and a kitchen (50 %).
- Nearby services which are needed are a restaurant (81 %), a supermarket (nearly two-thirds), office services (34 %), and a kindergarten (8 %).
- Only 25 % of coworkers think that recreational activities, like table tennis, are important.
- 54 % of all users have 24/7 access, the rest work during the typical office hours.
- The most important factors which coworkers like at their coworking space are other coworkers and a friendly atmosphere. (Foertsch 2011a.)

Coworking spaces are usually understood to be ideal for people working with their laptop, but it seems like also artisans and artists could use them as well. For example the community at a coworking space in Tampere would be glad to see some artisans working among them (Hub-heimo jakaa työtilan ja menestyksen 2011). It could be the way to diversify a coworking space, bring in new ideas and even deliver new projects and businesses.

Common for all the coworking spaces are five values, which are collaboration, openness, community, accessibility and sustainability (Coworking wiki 2012). According to Kwiatkowski and Buczynski (2011) those values should be kept in mind when establishing and running a coworking space. They state that the values of coworking are open to individual interpretation and that each coworking community should therefore decide on what the values mean to them.

2.2 Coworking worldwide and in Finland

One of the first coworking spaces in Europe was HUB Islington in London, England (figure 3). The HUB is a global coworking community of people, who are trying to create solutions for social, environmental and cultural challenges. At the moment there are 26 HUBs all over the world and many more in the making. (The HUB 2012.) According to the host of the HUB Islington, Anna Levy (interview 19.4.2012), coworking space was originally just one part of the whole idea of coworking among the people who created the HUB. However, since then the HUB has become best known for their coworking spaces, which can now be found all over the world.

Figure 3   A shared office space at HUB Islington, London (Justinien Tribillion 2012).

The HUB seems to be the largest of so called coworking chains, which usually use a franchise-like model to expand and grow (Coworking Labs 2011). Brad Neuberg, the man behind the first ever coworking space, thinks it is positive to see coworking spaces become more professionalized and even franchised. Nevertheless, he does not want independent spaces to die out as they have some advantages too. (Dullroy 2012.)

Founder of the coworking space Coherent, Angel Kwiatkowski, has also started to see the polarization of coworking spaces on opposite ends. According to the scenario analysis workshop she made with Thomas Chermack from Colorado State University, franchised coworking spaces may prove to be cheaper to join and offer more lavish amenities. However, there is a risk that they will be missing the same sense of community that there is in the smaller and less-profit-oriented spaces, due to being more accountable to their investors than their members. (Cohen 2011.)

Due to so many coworking spaces worldwide, there have been attempts to build a coworking directory that would help potential coworkers all over the world to find a suitable coworking space for their needs. One of the directories can be found at Coworking wiki, which is a collaborative project with many thousands of coworking enthusiasts around the world (Coworking wiki 2012). Another coworking directory has been made by a company called Deskwanted UG (Deskwanted 2012). It seems like these online coworking directories have difficulties in keeping up with the rapid growth in number of coworking spaces. For example Deskwanted web site lists only about 800 workspaces worldwide and the number already includes for example private studios (Deskwanted 2012).

According to the first global coworking survey (Foertsch 2011b.), about 80 per cent of the spaces were set up by private companies. The rest 20 per cent were established by non-profit organisations and public sector. This study is especially interested in the relatively small coworking spaces which are nearly always administrated by a non-profit organisation or public sector.

Despite the rapid growth in number of coworking spaces, all the spaces have not been successful. For example in Tampere, Finland, a coworking community called *tilantekijät* failed to open a coworking space of their own due to small amount of people engaging to it (Tilantekijät 2010). In addition, every fifth coworking space has been forced to quit due to financial problems according to the global survey. As can be seen in figure 4, the spaces are mainly funded by renting desks for coworkers, but sometimes the costs of maintenance exceed the income, resulting in financial problems. (Foertsch 2011c.)
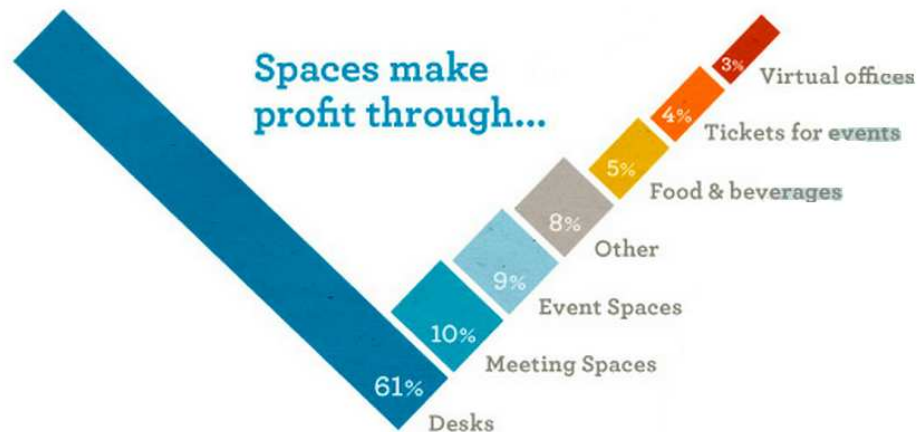
Figure 4   The ways in which coworking spaces make a profit (2nd global coworking survey 2012).

Coworking was first seen in Finland in 2009 when Hub Helsinki was opened. Since then also the cities of Jyväskylä and Tampere have received their own HUBs. According to Minna Janhonen (interview 15.12.2011), HUB Turku will be opened during the year 2012.

Besides the HUBs, there are places in Finland, which can be called coworking spaces with slightly different emphasises.
- A company called Grazy town is operating in Jyväskylä and Pori and is basically a business incubator for the information and communication technology companies (Grazy town n.d.).
- Boost Turku is an entrepreneurship community aimed for active and innovative students in the local universities. The community is concentrating in information and communication technology (Boost Turku n.d.).
- Protomo is a national network of coworking spaces, which offers support to the people who are trying to create a business of their own (Protomo n.d.).
- UrbanOffice is maintained by the library of Helsinki and it offers working space free of charge (Vassinen 2011).

A definition for the coworking space seems to be somewhat blurred, since there is a lot of variation amongst the places, which call themselves coworking spaces. However, coworking in one way or another seems to also fit well for Finland. Not until the end of the year 2011 have some ide-

as been brought up about establishing coworking spaces also in rural Finland. In the next chapter, a need for the rural coworking will be discussed.

2.3   Rural coworking

Coworking became popular in large metropolitan areas all over the world, but it seems like the next step could be spreading in more rural areas. An example of rural coworking can be found in Pella, a small town in the USA with the population of 10 000. In October 2010 a coworking space called Veel Hoeden was launched there (figure 5). (How to start a coworking space in your small town 2011.)

Figure 5   A shared office space at Veel Hoeden (Veel Hoeden 2012).

There are ten other rural coworking spaces in the USA, according to Coworking wiki (2012). In addition to these rural coworking spaces in the USA, there is only one other rural coworking space worldwide, which is in Netherlands (Coworking wiki 2012). However, Coworking wiki (2012) has not been updated for four months which may suggest that either 1) rural coworking is still taking its first steps and they take place mostly in the USA, 2) rural coworkers have established another forum similar to Coworking wiki, which was not found by the author of this thesis, or 3) there is no established international forum for people who are interested in rural coworking.

The number of recently shared articles found on the internet and blogs that are dealing with the field of rural coworking strongly suggest that rural coworking is a phenomenon which is bubbling under the surface, however scattered the information about it seems to be. This view is supported by the fact that large coworking chain the HUB has got many requests about spreading their concept to more rural areas. (Ulvund, email message 19.12.2011).

According to Kidd (2011; Malone 2011), coworking scales well also to smaller towns and communities because it is usually low in overhead. He states that rural coworking spaces can benefit the local community by building sustainable rural economies, which happens by supporting diverse small businesses and enabling their collaborative operations. Kidd

also states that there are a number of ways to arrange the ownership of a rural coworking space, which makes it suitable to the local funding realities. In addition, the flexibility of coworking gives the so called space catalyst an opportunity to come up with creative solutions in order to find ways to build up a thriving coworking community. Kidd says that a coworking space in a rural area can be made in cooperation with local library, school, or parish, which would save costs and build a stronger network around it.

Kidd is not merely talking about rural coworking for he is building up a coworking community to Whitesburg, which is a rural town with about 2000 residents. His aim is to support the diversity of occupations and activities in the area, which is why he has shared his ideas of coworking with small business owners, economic development agencies, community agriculture activists, musicians and non-profit organisations. (Buczynski 2011a.) Kidd states that even the smallest communities have vivid economic life which should be made more visible.

> The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in rural communities, and coworking gives these fearless business owners the opportunity to come out of their basements and garages, and into the public eye.
>
> Mark W. Kidd (Buczynski 2011a)

Linda Goin owns another rural coworking space called La Venture Station. According to Goin, it can be easier to set up a coworking community in a rural town than in a big city, especially if people understand the benefits of collaboration. The coworking space La Venture Station was opened when there were only two full time members, but since then many part-time members have started to use the space including people who use the meeting room for work sessions, like massaging therapy. (Buczynski 2011a.)

It seems like rural coworking spaces need to build the coworking community as large as possible in order to succeed. According to the global coworking survey (Foertsch 2011d) and operators of coworking spaces in smaller towns (Foertsch 2011e), there are also many other differences between coworking in small towns and big cities. The most significant differences and special characters for rural coworking are listed below.

- The average age of coworkers in small towns up to 20 000 inhabitants is higher (43 years) than in big cities up to a million citizens (32 years).
- Encounters of different age groups give young rural coworkers an opportunity to share their skills with new technology and more mature coworkers an opportunity to share their career experience and networking.
- Coworkers in small towns use their coworking space less often than those in larger cities because they have more space at home, many have families who occupy their time, there is a lack of public transport and a smaller need for networking due to a dense social network.
- Many new rural coworkers are concerned about the privacy at a coworking space and are asking for private office rooms.

It is obvious that these differences and also other special characteristics in rural coworking must be kept in mind when considering establishing a rural coworking space. In addition, the founders of Veel Hoeden name five important things to remember if planning to establish a rural coworking space.

- Do not limit the coworkers just to a few groups of people, but inform all the potential coworkers of the area.
- Find out, what people require from a rural coworking space. Do not purchase anything before you know it.
- Try to create a strong and committed community by speaking, networking and even by having fun together.
- Find out what it will cost to run a coworking space for example by benchmarking the running coworking spaces. Do not establish a coworking space until the amount of engaged coworkers is large enough to cover the costs.
- Talk to the engaged coworkers about what furniture and equipment they are able to share with the other coworkers. (How to start a coworking space in your small town 2011.)

Buczynski (2011b) has conducted a small survey among the people who own rural coworking spaces, and asked them to share their insight of starting a rural coworking community. According to the survey, a space catalyst should learn from the existing coworking spaces both in rural and urban areas and exploit the international coworking community through internet. They should also use social media and online surveys to increase the interest towards the coworking space in the area.

It seems like coworking can take place also in rural areas, because when the size of a coworking space is smaller, the costs are smaller. A rural coworking space can even be operated in cooperation with other local organisations, which helps to create a network around it and make it more able to cope during the bad economic times. In next chapter a need for rural coworking in Finland is being discussed.

2.4   Discussion about rural coworking in Finland

Coworking is a very new concept in Finland, since it was not until 2009 that the first coworking space was established (Janhonen 2011, 9). Nevertheless, it has already proved to fit well for the Finnish circumstances, as addressed in chapter 2.2. So far coworking in Finland has merely been an urban phenomenon, but in 2011 there were some indications that also rural areas of Finland could become part of the global movement.

- Eeva Hellström from Sitra, the Finnish Innovation Fund, has come up with an idea that by establishing coworking spaces around the rural Finland it would be possible to make the innovation potential of the countryside benefit the whole Finland (Sitra 2011).
- According to a programme called Landmarks by Sitra, the Finnish Innovation Fund, there are nine such groups of people, who are ready to work, live or spend their spare time in the countryside. One of these groups is called in the report as WLAN-wanderers and ac-

> cording to the Sitra, they need coworking spaces for working. (Sihvonen 2011, 5-9).
> – Laura Jänis from Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has stated that so called country hubs could create social innovations (Jänis 2011).
> – Research director Torsti Hyyryläinen (2008, 109-110) from Ruralia Institute has written that the key factor in the success of small communities is an opportunity for creative people to cooperate.

In addition, fast and reliable internet connections can be seen as a crucial factor in developing vitality as well as social and economic sustainability of rural areas. According to Heikkilä (2005), especially companies working in the field of information and communication technology and the authorities, find fibre optic networks very important factor in the development of an information society. However, teleoperators are known to have only a little interest to develop internet connections in the countryside due to the high costs. Väisänen from Finnish teleoperator DNA has told that it costs thousands of Euros for a household to be connected to a fibre optics cable in a remote area (Operaattorit: valokuitu liian kallis haja-asutuksen koteihin 2011). A coworking space in a remote area would enable a shared high speed internet connection for example by public funding.

Even though the idea of a coworking space in the rural Finland is brand new, something similar has been done already in the late 1980's. During the time a large network of so called data cottages were tried to spread in the Finnish countryside (Cronberg, Kolehmainen & Lehikoinen 1990). The aim of the data cottages was to improve the possibilities to make a living and to acquaint the people in the countryside to the world of information society. Another aim was to make the data cottages become service centres of a sort, where people could meet each other and deal with their literal tasks by computers. (Leinamo 2009, 35.) During the recession in 1990's, many of the data cottages were closed. The reasons for closing were, according to Leinamo (2009, 87-88), that the need for computers was limited at the time and that those people who had a need, would rather buy a computer of their own. There were also financial problems when the public sector was not willing to maintain the facilities, which were originally financed by local projects.

There seem to be signs which suggest, that coworking is something that would be needed also in the Finnish countryside. Data cottages can be seen as forefathers for coworking spaces and therefore one should keep in mind, how and why they became to an end. Nevertheless, world has changed significantly from those days and the concept in coworking differs a great deal from data cottages.

2.5   Sustainability and coworking

This study is also interested in sustainability of coworking, as sustainability is one of the five coworking values (Coworking wiki 2012). Furthermore, this study has been commissioned by Valonia, which is a service

centre for sustainable development and energy issues in Southwest Finland.

The most frequently quoted definition of sustainable development was published by the World Commission on Environment and Development in *Our common future* (1987), which is also known as the Brundtland report.

> Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
>
> International Institute for Sustainable Development 2012

International Institute for Sustainable Development (2012) defines sustainable development shortly as environmental, economic and social well-being for today and tomorrow. This study is interested in all those three dimensions of sustainable development.

Even though the full meaning of sustainability has to be determined by each coworking space individually (Kwiatkowski and Buczynski 2011), sustainability being one of the main values of coworking is a remarkable thing, as it supports all the ambitions of making coworking a sustainable business in any way. It seems that there truly are factors in coworking which can have positive impacts on environmental, social and economic sustainability, as can be seen below.

The commissioner of the study, Valonia, has a focus on environmental sustainability and that is the main reason why they are interested in coworking (Väisänen, interview 29.9.2011). Three different aspects of environmental sustainability can be identified in coworking, which are environmental impacts of 1) coworkers and their actions, 2) a coworking space, and 3) businesses that take place at a coworking space.

There is a web site called Green coworking, which seems to have listed the most obvious measures that coworkers need to do in order to minimize their environmental impacts of coworking.

- Optimize the energy settings for your computer and other devices and shut them down at the end of the day.
- Turn off lights in spaces that are unoccupied.
- Keep things digital and dematerialized whenever possible.
- Print on both sides of the paper and use misprints as notepaper.
- Use reusable containers for your lunch as well as plate, utensils and napkins. (Green coworking 2010.)

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has a programme called Green Office, which is a practical tool for the workplaces to become environmentally-friendly and save costs at the same time. Workplaces which fulfil the requirements are allowed to use the Green Office logo. In order to get the logo a workplace has to, among other criteria, plan a practical environmental programme, improve energy-efficiency, reduce waste, and report to WWF annually. (WWF 2009.)

WWF has also created a list of guidelines which give an easy start for an office to improve its eco-efficiency. Below is a list of the guidelines, which are not overlapping with the list by Green coworking (2010).

- Do everything you can to save energy and offset emissions generated by your consumption of energy by using Gold Standard-certified projects.
- Use virtual meetings instead of arranging business trips. Offset emissions generated by possible business trips by using Gold Standard-certified projects.
- Walk or cycle to work or use public transportation. Telework whenever possible.
- Eat vegetarian food.
- Use local services as incentives – not goods.
- Do your best to use less, re-use and recycle.
- Purchase environmentally-friendly products and services. Rent and lease instead of buying. (WWF 2009.)

One of the things that can be associated to coworking and one that was hardly dealt with by Green coworking (2010) or WWF (2009), is telecommuting. Telecommuting can be defined as any work which is carried out at a distance. If telework is done by working from home the commuting reduces to zero as well as pollution caused by it. Two-car households may even be able to sell their other car. (Telework association n.d.) Coworking spaces support telecommuting by giving an alternative to telecommuting at home, which can be sometimes tricky if the family is home as well or if there is no spare room where to do one's work. Coworking spaces may also encourage potential telecommuters to try telecommuting or to telecommute more often. However, commuting to coworking space causes some impacts for the environment depending on the means of transportation a person decides to use.

Some parts of the previous two lists made by Green coworking (2010) and WWF (2009) seem to be more suitable for an owner or a host of a coworking space. Such guidelines are the ones which advice one to purchase furniture from a second hand shop, to ensure good use of natural daylight and good air quality. In addition, both lists advice to make recycling easy and overall sort out the office waste. (Green coworking 2010; WWF 2009.)

The third issue that causes environmental impacts at a coworking space are businesses that take place there. As pointed out earlier, coworking is potentially a sustainable business as sustainability is one of the coworking values (Coworking wiki 2012). Probably the largest coworking chain, the HUB (see chapter 2.2), seems to have an ambition to help solve the large scale problems of our time, which include environmental challenges.

> Our members' projects cover all industries and professions, from fair-trade eco-fashion to micro-finance for the poor, from inclusive education to zero-waste supply chains, from corporate entrepreneurship to peer-to-peer crowdsourcing models, and much, much more.
>
> Sustainable impact n.d.

There is a smaller coworking chain called Green Spaces, which have also named environment as one of the issues that they hope their coworkers would focus on. "We unite and cultivate the social innovation, environmental, socially responsible and nonprofit communities" (Green Spaces n.d.). A quick look at some of the other coworking spaces' web sites shows that environment is not visibly emphasized in them. This may mean that coworking spaces do not want to limit the field of the people that are welcomed to join them as it would be potentially harmful for the business.

Coworking has also value in terms of economic sustainability and, in fact, most of the environmental issues above have positive economic impacts as well. According to Kwiatkowski (2012), coworking spaces help people to stay in town instead of moving to bigger cities, which preserves their skills, money, and enthusiasm for use in the local economy. She also states that smaller businesses are highly important for a local economy because they live, work and shop locally. Buczynski (2011c) believes that coworking spaces give entrepreneurs and freelancers a safe environment to try new things as well, which benefits the whole community.

Figure 1 in chapter 2.1 shows that low costs are one of the most important benefits of coworking. It is fair to say that working at home is usually the cheapest way to work as there are no costs from commuting or renting the desk. However, if one takes into account all the business opportunities that are missed if working at home, it is not that simple anymore. In addition, if one considers things like being able to use high quality office equipment, gain wider network of people, meet one's clients in professional office space rather than at home, and common reception by which you are nearly always reachable – it becomes apparent that the total cost of working at home might actually be bigger compared to coworking.

Coworking supports telecommuting, which has also some economic benefits. A company which encourages telecommuting reduces the amount of office space that is required, which is one way to save costs. In addition, telecommuting reduces commuting to work, which helps people to save the money that would otherwise have been spent on petrol, and reduces the pressure on the transport system. (Telework association n.d.) The most significant benefit to economy could be the increase in productivity as, according to Telework association (n.d.), many organisations that have embraced coworking have increased their efficiency.

Social sustainability is one of the three dimensions of sustainable development that this study is interested in. It seems obvious that coworking has a strong positive impact on social sustainability, for it is the feeling of loneliness that is the main driver behind the whole coworking phenomenon (Dullroy 2012). In addition, all the five coworking values, which are collaboration, openness, community, accessibility and sustainability, have a strong sense of sociality in them (Coworking wiki 2012).

It seems like instead of fancy premises and high quality amenities, social interaction is the most important benefit of working at a coworking space, as could already be seen in figure 1 in chapter 2.1.

> My lightbulb moment was realizing that a building is just a shell without a cohesive community to fill it. My priorities quickly shifted from finding the perfect space to finding the right tribe of people.
>
> Jen Lea, Space catalyst (Kwiatkowski & Buczynski 2011)

There are also other social benefits in coworking. According to DeGuzman (2011), coworkers usually get higher motivation when working with similar minded people, but also healthier relation between work and family life. In addition, many positive social impacts occur if a coworking space reaches some of the highest levels of the coworking pyramid of needs, shown in figure 2 in chapter 2.1.

It seems like coworking can be quite effortlessly linked to all three dimensions of sustainable development. There is also a good reason to believe that coworking may result in positive impacts on environmental, social and economic sustainability, if the space is operated in a responsible way and coworkers are acting by the five values of coworking.

3   RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODS

Theoretical framework has shown that coworking has grown very rapidly in number since it was coined in the USA in 2005, and that it has become a global phenomenon. There seems to be a global community of people who are interested in coworking and they have conducted some amount of studies and surveys concerning coworking in general. However, rural coworking, which gathers increasing amount of interest around the world, seems to be the subject that is barely looked into.

3.1   Research questions

This study is interested to know, if there will be or if there already are such conditions in the rural areas of Southwest Finland, which would enable an operation of coworking spaces. Therefore, the main research problem of the study is as follows.

Which are the preconditions for sustainable rural coworking spaces in Southwest Finland?

Southwest Finland was defined to be suitable area for this study since it is the area where Valonia, the commissioner of this study, is operating. A limitation to merely rural areas was made with the common decision of the author and Valonia. According to Valonia's coordinator of sustainable development, Väisänen (interview 29.9.2011), Valonia thinks that coworking in rural areas is something which could decrease the amount of commuting - and therefore polluting - to work by car through enhanced opportunities to telecommute. Valonia also believes that coworking could benefit the whole society by creating new business opportunities and by strengthening social networks at the local level.

The preconditions for rural coworking spaces in Southwest Finland can be identified by exploring the current situation in England, in which there already are many thriving coworking spaces, and rural Southwest Finland, in which there are no coworking spaces at the moment.

The following research questions are used to give an answer to the main research problem.

1. **What experience is there of coworking in England?**
2. **Are there sustainable impacts associated with coworking in England?**
3. **What are the needs of potential rural coworkers in Southwest Finland?**

There is only little knowledge and literature available about rural coworking and therefore this study could have focused on many other research

questions as well. For example following research questions remain to be solved in the future.

- How much a rural coworking space can potentially decrease the amount of commuting?
- Is there a need for rural coworking spaces in Southwest Finland?
- Is it possible to make sustainable business by running a rural coworking space?

3.2   Field study

The purpose of the thesis is to find out the preconditions for sustainable coworking spaces in the rural areas of Southwest Finland. The goal of the thesis is reached by describing coworking as a phenomenon and by mapping the preconditions for it in the chosen area.

For the descriptive part of the study, a qualitative field study method is being used. The aim of the descriptive study is to document the most essential and interesting features of the phenomenon (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2001, 128). In this study, the descriptive part will be executed by getting to know to the English coworking spaces during the author's student exchange period in University of Leeds. Another aim in the field study is to increase the author's understanding for coworking.

3.3   Case study

For the mapping study the most suitable research strategy is usually qualitative and as a method a case study is often used. Case study is a good method in order to get the detailed data of a single case. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2001, 123–128.) It is also a good method when researching a phenomenon which is only a little known and when trying to understand people's behaviour and actions (Räsänen, lecture 1.10.2011).

A case study method is suitable for this study since coworking in the rural Finland is a brand new idea and suitable geographical area for the case study is available (figure 6). Mietoinen is a small rural community in Southwest Finland with a few potential properties to be used for coworking purposes, the area has enough population to represent a typical rural community in Southwest Finland, and finally, Mietoinen is well-known area to the author of this thesis.

Figure 6   A map showing the area of Southwest Finland (Google maps 2012).

According to the preliminary studies made by the author of the thesis, there is a group of people in Mietoinen, who are interested in working at a rural coworking space. Mietoinen is a remote rural area and many young adults have moved there to raise their children, to run their small business, to grow part of their own food, or to escape the busy life of a city. Many of the newcomers seem to have an academic degree and therefore usually do knowledge-based work.

However, internet connections which can be seen as a crucial factor for the knowledge-based work, are not fast or reliable in Mietoinen or in many other rural areas of Southwest Finland. Therefore many people have to commute to the nearest city to work or then try to cope with the internet connection available. In this study a group of potential coworkers who live in Mietoinen were interviewed in order to find out their needs and requirements concerning a rural coworking space, which could enhance the possibility to make their living.

4 FIELD STUDY ENGLAND

This chapter will describe the field study in England, which was made during the spring 2012. In addition to the preparations for the field study, the chapter will give detailed information about the visited coworking spaces.

4.1 Preparation for the field study

The field study became possible with the grant from HAMK University of Applied Sciences and the financial support from the commissioner of this study, Valonia. The funding for the field study was assured when the author of the thesis received an invitation to visit University of Leeds from April to June in 2012.

Most of the preparations for the field study were made already in Finland, including the guide for visiting the coworking spaces, which is presented in the next chapter. What was left for the time in England was contacting the coworking spaces and making appointments with their hosts.

4.2 A guide for the visits

A guide for the field study (appendix 2) is based on the other guide made for the case study Mietoinen (appendix 3). According to Levonen (personal communication 10.2.2012), it was important to predict the possible results for both studies in order to be able to make them convergent. This was done by putting both guides side by side and then choosing the suitable methods for the field study. The idea is shown in table 1. The three themes in the first column of the table were formed to be able to focus the interviews on the issues that would produce adequate data for the research. The three themes were also used to divide the collected data into appropriate subchapters in chapter 6.

Table 1   Matching the case study in Mietoinen and field study in England.

Themes/ Phase of the study	Methods for the case study Mietoinen	Methods for the field study England
Issues affecting the need for a coworking space	Interview potential coworkers (semi-structured interviews).	Interview coworkers (structured interviews).
Issues affecting the attractiveness of a coworking space	Interview potential coworkers (semi-structured interviews).	Interview coworkers (structured interviews), observe, analyse brochures and web sites.
Importance of the sustainability issues	Interview potential coworkers (semi-structured interviews).	Interview hosts at the coworking spaces (structured interviews), observe, analyse brochures and web sites.

Structured interviews were found to be the most appropriate for the field study, because there was likely to be a limited time for each interview. It was also possible that people would not have the same kind of interest towards the study as they did have in Mietoinen. Therefore there were not very many questions in an interview as other methods were emphasized in the field study.

In addition to the structured interviews, an observation was made at coworking spaces to get a comprehensive image of how coworking spaces and coworkers operate. Observation is a good method for a qualitative research. It is also a very good method when exploring interaction between human beings. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2001, 200). Coworking is largely about social behaviour and therefore observing was a suitable method for the field study. Observation was made by taking pictures and by writing notes of the issues that were found interesting by the author. Brochures, leaflets and web sites were analysed in order to get better overall image of the coworking space.

4.3 Visits to the English coworking spaces

Field study consisted of visits to three different coworking spaces. Aim of the field study was not only to find an example of rural coworking, but also to benchmark coworking spaces in bigger cities and see how they operate. Even though all the ideas and practises cannot be copied to rural coworking in Southwest Finland, benchmarking may deliver new ideas which are more suitable for local circumstances.

In addition, the information gathered in urban coworking spaces can be later exploited in Southwest Finland if there are any attempts to establish a coworking space and the audience need to be convinced of its benefits and popularity worldwide. There is a risk that new ideas may be neglected at first as has happened in the USA, the home of the coworking movement.

> One of my early lessons in space catalysm was the realization that hardly anyone in my community had ever heard about coworking. It became very clear that I would need to spend a significant proportion of my time educating people about the coworking movement.
>
> Kwiatkowski, A. (Kwiatkowski & Buczynski 2011)

In addition to being different in their style and their focus, the visited coworking spaces had a very different geographical location as one can see on figure 7.

Figure 7   A map showing the visited coworking spaces in England (Google maps 2012).

The first visit was made on 11th of April 2012. The visit was made to Appleby Business Centre in Cumbria, which is near the border of Scotland. The meeting with the owner Carl Bendelow was arranged by David Horn, who lives in Cumbria and who was the tutor for the field study in England.

Appleby Business Centre came up on 10th of April in a meeting with Caroline Turner, who is a development officer for the organisation called Cumbrian Action for Sustainability. Mrs Turner did not know the term coworking but had heard of a place which sounded like it could have something to do with rural coworking. The place was called Appleby Business Centre and it was located in Appleby, which has a population of 3 500. (Turner, interview 10.4.2012.)

Already during the arrangements for the visit it turned out that Appleby Business Centre was not an actual coworking space, as the owner Carl Bendelow had never heard of a term coworking (Horn, personal communication 10.4.2012). Instead they rent office space to local entrepreneurs and offer services that small business owners might need e.g. office equipment. It became apparent that Appleby Business Centre had only a little to do with coworking as the owner Mr. Bendelow told that there are only little opportunities for social interaction between entrepreneurs who work there. (Bendelow, interview 11.4.2012.)

The centre was established already in 1986 and back then, the only fax and copier in Appleby was located there. However, as years went by computers and other IT equipment became cheaper to buy and it was more difficult to find people who needed the services that Appleby Business Centre was providing. (Bendelow, interview 11.4.2012.) This is the development

that seems to have taken place in Finland as well, as described in the end of chapter 2.4. At the time of an interview, four out of ten office spaces were empty and it was, according to Mr Bendelow, due to the global recession.

Even though it was somewhat disappointing not to find a rural coworking space, the visit to Appleby Business Centre was fruitful as Mr Bendelow was able to provide the author with the current challenges of renting office spaces in the rural England. Those challenges can be seen connected to coworking as well. Mr Bendelow (figure 8) was particularly worried about the decreasing importance of rural areas in the English society. "Government is urbanizing the community" (Bendelow, interview 11.4.2012). He also said that there is a contradiction between government's policy and the reality, because the modern mobile technology and the need for high quality housing seem to give grounds for the opposite measures. In addition, he had wondered why even the projects concerning rural areas are usually conducted in urban surroundings instead of a rural office space.

Figure 8   Owner Carl Bendelow in front of Appleby Business Centre.

The second visit was made to HUB Islington in London (figure 3 in chapter 2.2) and it took place on 19th of April. HUB Islington was chosen to be visited because, according to their web site, it was there that the first HUB was established in 2005 (HUB London Islington n.d.; What is the Hub? n.d.). HUB Islington was contacted by email and they replied soon to tell that they were interested to hear about the study and that one of the hosts would show the coworking space to the author.

HUB Islington was a proper coworking space and the visit gave a lot of data for the study. According to the host Anna Levy (interview 19.4.2012), there are nearly 40 coworkers who use the space actively, which means that it was nearly fully-booked. She also said that many oth-

er coworking spaces in London are more formal and not so local either. "There is a strong community in HUB Islington. You can share your personal things whereas it isn't possible in some other coworking spaces." (Levy, interview 19.4.2012.)

HUB Islington is privately owned by a company that also owns another HUB in London. However, the company is not trying to maximize the profit.

> HUB Islington is a social enterprise; they keep their prices low so they can support social businesses. Majority of the money goes back into running and developing the space.
>
> Levy, interview 19.4.2012

The author was invited to a thing called sexy salad (figure 9), which means making salad together with fellow coworkers and eating it together every Thursday (Levy, interview 19.4.2012). Among other things in the HUB Islington, sexy salad was a fine opportunity to observe the dynamics of a coworking space. In addition, a visit to HUB Islington produced a contact to a rural coworking space called West Lexham, which was later contacted by email to get additional data for the study.

Figure 9   Sexy salad at HUB Islington (Justinien Tribillion 2012).

The third visit to a coworking space took place on 4th of May in Leeds. The author of the thesis was a visiting student in the University of Leeds during the spring 2012 and a coworking space called Old Broadcasting House was easily reachable due to its location near the campus area. Old

Broadcasting House was contacted by email 1st of May and soon after the author was welcomed to visit Old Broadcasting House.

The visit was hosted by Alistair Hay, who was responsible for client relations at the coworking space. Mr Hay told the author (interview, 4.5.2012) that the name of the building dates back to the time when BBC, British Broadcasting Corporation, used the building as its unit in Leeds. In addition, he told that the building (figure 10) is currently owned by Leeds Metropolitan University, which gives financial and also operational support to coworking and other activities that take place in Old Broadcasting House. Financial help includes coworkers who would otherwise have to pay more for the usage of the space. (Hay, interview 4.5.2012.)

Due to being in close cooperation with the university, the coworking space is targeted for people who are so called digital workers. At the time of the visit there were 35 coworkers who used the space actively and there were few workstations available. Most of the coworkers use the coworking space two to three times a week and no one has an own workstation. (Hay, interview 4.5.2012.)

Figure 10   Old Broadcasting House in Leeds.

During the visit, the author received a lot of information, but had to arrange second visit to Old Broadcasting House in order to be able to get all the data available. The email discussion which took place before the first visit failed to give hosts in Old Broadcasting House a full view of the measures that the author was willing to conduct during the visit, e.g. observing. Therefore second meeting was arranged and it took place on 22nd of June.

Lack of resources was a reason why no more visits were made to coworking spaces in England. In case there had been more money and time available, it would have been useful to visit at least another rural, or at least less urban, coworking space. A decision to focus on two urban coworking spaces in London and Leeds was made by author of this thesis when there

was no luck in finding any rural coworking spaces. Suitable rural spaces to visit were being looked for already in Finland through the rural network in Finland and their contacts to rural England (Markkola, email message 17.11.2011). This, however, did not produce any results. Additional information was collected through emails and by using internet to get a better image of the whole coworking scene in England.

5   CASE STUDY MIETOINEN

Case study in Mietoinen took place in March 2012, which was before the field study in England. This chapter will tell about the preparations for the case study and the implementation of the interviews.

5.1   Preparation for the case study

In a qualitative research the data is typically gathered in a way, which emphasizes the point of view of the participants. In order to enable this, some sorts of interviews are usually conducted. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2001, 155.) In this study, semi-structured theme interviews were used. Typical feature for the theme interview is that the interviewer is aware of the subject and the themes of the interview, but the precise form and order of the questions are missing (Hirsjärvi et al. 2001, 195). However, in this study an interview had a structure, which also gave the respondents a freedom to mention things they find important.

According to Räsänen (lecture, 1.10.2011), the preparation for the interview should be made carefully by following the steps below.
1. Analyse the research questions.
2. Find out what information will be needed from the respondents.
3. Compose an interview guide and questions for the interview (compare them with the research questions).
4. Decide who can offer the required information.
5. Make the first draft of the interview form.
6. Test the draft as test interviews.
7. Finalize the interview guide and the questions.
8. Decide how the interviews will be recorded.
9. Contact the respondents and motivate them to attend.
10. Tell respondent that an interview will be recorded and ask whether she or he wants the collected data to be kept confidential.

In this study the steps presented above were followed precisely. The preparation process is described in detail in the following chapters.

5.2   A guide and questions for the interviews

An interview guide is needed to be able to conduct the interviews fluently and to advice respondents with the similar background information. An agenda below is formed to enable a smooth start to each interview. Aim of this study was that the interviews would take about thirty minutes each, but it was defined to be forty-five minutes after the test interview.

An interview guide was conducted in Finnish due to the fact that all the interviews in case study Mietoinen were made in Finnish. Below is the structure of the interview guide summarised.

1. Contact a respondent and ask if she or he would like to attend to the interview. Make an appointment with the respondent.
2. Conduct a little story about a fictional rural coworking space (appendix 4) and send it to the respondent to orientate her or him and ask the respondent to read it before the interview.
3. In the beginning of the interview, tell the respondent some basic information about the study and ask if she or he wants to know more about coworking or any other issue before proceeding. Use simple and understandable language.
4. Give the respondent some practical information on how the interview will be conducted.
5. Tell the respondent when you switch on the recorder and conduct the interview. Be flexible enough to let the respondent express her or his own views freely as it may provide additional and valuable information for the thesis.
6. In the end summarize the interview briefly and thank the respondent.

The questions for the interview are shown in appendix 3. In order to make the answers for the interview relevant to the study, they are listed below three themes which help to find adequate data for the research questions shown in chapter three. The three themes were also used to divide the collected data into appropriate subchapters as seen later in chapter six.

Each respondent represented one group of respondents, for example a group of telecommuters or small business owners. All the questions were formed in a way that highlighted the opinion of the whole group instead of a mere respondent. It is a way to decrease the risk of socially acceptable answers, which may occur during the interviews (Hirsjärvi et al. 2001, 193).

5.3 Groups to be interviewed

It is important to choose the right people for the interview i.e. who are able to contribute to the study. Equally important is to make sure that selected respondents really represent the majority of the people who are potential rural coworkers in Southwest Finland.

To be able to pick up right people for the interviews, it is necessary to explore who are usually welcomed to work at a coworking space and get some kind of benefit through it. It seems like there has been no need to precisely define the universal target group for coworking, and that coworking spaces do not usually want to restrict what kind of people are allowed to join them. On table 2 there are a few examples of the main target groups for a few coworking spaces, according to the explored web sites from around the world.

Table 2   The main target groups for some coworking spaces.

Name of the coworking space	Target groups
HUB Helsinki, Finland (n.d.)	Entrepreneurs, freelancers, social innovators, change makers.
Coffice Club Bratislava, Slovakia (n.d.)	Entrepreneurs, freelancers, small businesses, designers, consultants, writers, artists, IT professionals.
Office space coworking, USA (n.d.)	Small businesses, telecommuters, independent workers, freelancers.
Fishburners, Australia (n.d.)	Tech startups, mentors, advisors, investors.
Co-creation Hub, Nigeria (n.d.)	Hackers, designers, tech companies, entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs, academics, investors and everyone interested in technology innovation and application for prosperity in Nigeria.

It is important to remember that table 2 is a very small sample of all the different coworking spaces around the world. Nevertheless, it gives some idea of the typical target groups for coworking spaces. It seems like coworking can be easily associated at least with the following professions and occupations, which were mentioned in most of the cases.
- Entrepreneurs
- Freelancers
- IT professionals
- Social innovators/ change makers.

Other groups were mentioned only once or twice, which may indicate that they might be special characters for some coworking spaces. According to the Hay (interview 4.5.2012) from a coworking space called Old Broadcasting House in Leeds, and Levy (interview 19.4.2012) from HUB Islington in London, all the coworking spaces in Leeds and London have different target groups and special characters. It is reasonable to presume that specialization is a global phenomenon, which would partly explain the variation between coworking spaces shown in table 2.

There is, however, one group which is among the least mentioned groups in table 2 and one that is especially interesting to the commissioner of this study - telecommuters. Although telecommuters were only mentioned once, it is a group that is very interesting to interview and to find out about their needs and requirements concerning rural coworking.

When choosing suitable groups to be interviewed about rural coworking, it is logical to take a look at demographic information as well. At the end of 2010 there were a total amount of 465 183 people living in Southwest Finland. The land area is 10 700 km^2, which means that the average residential density is only 43,5 people per square kilometer. (Regional council of Southwest Finland n.d.)

The number of employed people in Southwest Finland at the end of 2010 was 202 007. If one takes a closer look at the fields and industries which, according to table 2, may benefit from coworking, the number of potential coworkers in Southwest Finland is 6 147 (table 3). (Statistics Finland 2011.) The number merely includes people from the chosen fields who work as entrepreneurs, as self-employed people seem to be the most common target group for coworking spaces. Number 6 147 is obviously a rough estimation, but it gives some kind of idea on the number of people who might be potential coworkers in Southwest Finland.

Table 3   Number of potential coworkers in Finland (Statistics Finland 2011).

Field or industry	Number of people
Information and communication	260
Financing and insurance	128
Professional, scientific and technical activities	2 420
Other services	1 812
Unknown	1 527
Altogether	6 147

Telecommuters are one of the interest groups in this study, but it seems to be very difficult to find any statistical information about the number of people who telecommute. According to Heinonen & Saarimaa (2009, 10), the number of telecommuters varies in Finland between 20 000 and 200 000 people, depending on the classification and the different ways of measuring it. Approximately one tenth of all the Finns live in Southwest Finland which means that there are roughly 2 000 – 20 000 full-time or part-time telecommuters in Southwest Finland.

If one sums up the number of entrepreneurs working in the field that enables coworking, and the number of telecommuters, the total amount of potential coworkers in Southwest Finland is somewhere between 8 000 and 26 000 people. However, this study is interested in rural coworking and it is important to keep in mind that the number of potential rural coworkers is significantly smaller, although very hard to estimate.

The information above results in choosing the following groups to be interviewed. There is a good reason to believe that coworking might attract other groups as well, but taking into account the resources in this study, one has to settle for six groups which are main target groups for coworking or especially interesting for the commissioner of this study.

Groups to be interviewed:
1. IT entrepreneurs
2. Small business owners
3. Part-time telecommuters
4. Full-time telecommuters
5. Freelancers
6. Local innovators.

5.4 Implementation of the interviews

Six interviews were made between the 13th and 22nd of March 2012. The respondents got to choose where the interview would take place i.e. which place would be the most convenient for them. Three of the respondents chose to be interviewed at their workplace, two at a nearby restaurant and one came to meet the author at his home.

It was fairly easy to get people to take part in the interview. Only one was somewhat reluctant at first since he had no need to start working at a coworking space. Nevertheless, he agreed to attend when he was made clear that he merely represented a group in an interview and did not have to take his personal needs into account.

All the respondents had read the fictional story that was sent to them in advance (appendix 4). It helped to get a quick and smooth start for each interview. At this point it was easy to see the value of the test interview, which was made during the planning process. Almost all the questions were short and simple enough so the respondents understood them straight away. It took about 45 minutes to take the interview and it was short enough time to maintain the concentration of the respondent.

6 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The case study in Mietoinen and the field study in England gave a lot of information to be analysed. The majority of the information was gathered through the structured or semi-structured theme interviews whereas other methods, such as observing, produced additional data for the author to get a better understanding of the whole phenomenon.

According to Eskola (2007, 174), theme interviews are usually analysed by locating each answer under the appropriate theme. Once it is done, it is easy to analyse the data theme by theme by choosing the most fruitful answer and then seeing what it contains. The image that is received is then edited with the next answer and so forth, until the whole data has been analysed.

Both the interview for the field study (appendix 2) and the case study (appendix 3) were divided into three themes which were as follows.
1. Issues affecting the need for a coworking space
2. Issues affecting the attractiveness of a coworking space
3. Importance of the sustainability issues

These themes were used to make the most out of the interviews in both studies and to get adequate data in order to be able to give answers for the research questions. Table 4 shows how these three themes help to give answers for the research questions of the study. Every green cell indicates which part of the study has produced information for which research question.

Table 4   Linkage from the themes to the research questions.

Themes of the interviews	Part of the study	Research question		
		What experience is there of coworking in England?	Are there sustainable impacts associated with coworking in England?	What are the needs of potential rural coworkers in Southwest Finland?
Issues affecting the need for a coworking space	Field study England	🟩		
	Case study Mietoinen			🟩
Issues affecting the attractiveness of a coworking space	Field study England	🟩		
	Case study Mietoinen			🟩
Importance of the sustainability issues	Field study England		🟩	
	Case study Mietoinen			🟩

The findings of the studies should be reported by using quotations and by making conclusions and summaries of all the interviews. It is also important to bring up the answers that differ from the main line. Furthermore, one has to keep in mind that people may speak in another way in an interview than they normally would. This has to be taken into account when analysing the answers and not to generalise the results too much. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001, 194.)

6.1 Issues affecting the need for a coworking space

The first theme of the studies was about issues that affect the need for a coworking space. In the case study Mietoinen issues affecting the need for a coworking space were explored with six questions asked from the potential rural coworkers. In the field study England those issues were explored by asking two questions from the coworkers, having a conversation with the host and by analysing the basic information about a coworking space where they work.

There were six potential coworkers who replied to the questions in Mietoinen and nine coworkers in England, who gave their opinion on this matter. Two of the respondents worked at Appleby Business Centre, three at HUB Islington in London and four at Old Broadcasting House in Leeds. Respondents working at Appleby Business Centre gave their answers via email whereas the others were interviewed face to face.

6.1.1 Field study England

All the three visited coworking spaces were quite different from each other and in fact, Appleby Business Centre was not even an actual coworking space (see chapter 4.3). Therefore it is sensible to analyse the findings separately at first and present a short summary at the end of the chapter. Key findings will be presented later in chapter seven.

Even though Appleby Business Centre offers rental office space i.e. is not an actual coworking space, there are some issues according to the visit which are identical with a coworking space. Below is a list of the issues that both coworking space and rental office space provide.
- Place to work at.
- Fast and reliable internet connection.
- High quality office equipment.
- Meeting room.
- Kitchenette.
- Opportunity to separate home from work.

The biggest difference between a coworking space and a rental office space is in the amount of social interaction that takes place between the people who work there. A coworking space is designed to support collaboration and is usually an open floor plan office, whereas at a rental office space all the entrepreneurs work at their own space and privacy. Accord-

ing to the owner of Appleby Business Centre, Carl Bendelow (interview 11.4.2012), the people who use the office space at Appleby Business Centre do not interact with each other, unless they happen to meet in the coffee room. It is easy to see the most significant difference between a coworking space and a rental office space just by comparing the pictures shown in figure 3 in chapter 2.2 and figure 11 below. However, it is interesting to see that an office room at Appleby Business Centre does not differ that much from the rural coworking space shown in figure 5 in chapter 2.3.

Figure 11   An office room at Appleby Business Centre.

Two people who work at Appleby Business Centre told about the factors which made them use the office space in the first place. One of the respondents said that a shop was selling up and he had an opportunity to take it over. The other one simply found it an easy solution to run one's own business. "Ease of use, easy in and out terms, no utility bills or business rates to pay. Basically lack of hassle." (A tenant at Appleby Business Centre, email message 22.5.2012). Even though a rental office space may lack social interaction, there seem to be factors which make them important for rural entrepreneurs. An indication to this is that some entrepreneurs are ready to drive a long distance to be able to work at Appleby Business Centre – one as much as 50 miles one way (Bendelow, interview 11.4.2012).

Nevertheless, there are also issues which disturb the use of Appleby Business Centre. The other respondent said that traffic noise disturbs his work occasionally and the other respondent had similarly tangible issues which disturb the usage. "Lack of parking, proximity to living accommodation and main road." (A tenant at Appleby Business Centre, email message 23.5.2012). In addition, there may be more fundamental issues decreasing the need for a rural office space, as Mr Bendelow argued that rural areas are neglected by the government although the mobile technology, need for high quality housing and also other factors would give grounds for many operations in the rural areas (Bendelow, interview 11.4.2012).

A few factors stood out when coworkers at HUB Islington were asked what made them work at a coworking space in the first place. Respondents emphasized the meaning of them being able to be more sociable and to have a community around them. It seems like the social interaction delivers collaboration at coworking spaces as all the coworkers at HUB Islington said something related to it.

- Working with other people who are experiencing the same challenges.
- To share your ideas with like-minded people.
- You have someone to discuss your ideas with and you can work with others. (Coworkers at HUB Islington, interviews 19.4.2012.)

Lack of social interaction and collaboration seem to be the most significant issues which create a need to work at a coworking space as there were only a few other things which were mentioned. An interview with the host Anna Levy supported the coworkers' view of the need for a work related community.

> People help and support each other also in personal level because many people are freelancers and London is an alienating city and so you need that kind of support as well - - people have joined here because they were going mad.
>
> Levy, interview 19.4.2012

One of the respondents at HUB Islington told that he had a need for a coworking space because it is cost-effective. Another respondent said that coworking is a good way to test your business and to learn from the others. He also said that working at a coworking space gives you an opportunity to find competent people and subcontract with them. According to the host Anna Levy (interview 19.4.2012), coworkers hire each other, because people trust each other and they can also recommend other people that they have worked with.

Only a few issues came up during the visit to the HUB Islington which decrease the need for the coworking space or disturb the use.

- There isn't anywhere to have quiet phone conversations.
- Some coworking spaces aren't so friendly.
- If people don't get to interact they leave - - that is more like a shared office but not a coworking space.
- If you are the only one in the industry. (Coworkers at HUB Islington, interviews 19.4.2012.)

Coworkers at Old Broadcasting House in Leeds had several reasons why they had decided to work at a coworking space. Clearly the most significant issue seemed to be lack of social interaction, which is easy to see in the samples below.

> I had been looking for something like this for a long time. I have been self-employed since 2003 and I have spent a lot of time sitting at home - - when I came down here I thought there must be a place where people can come together.
>
> A coworker at Old Broadcasting House, interview 22.6.2012

> Agency gave up an office space and everyone started to work at home, which was great for a little while but then I got cabin fever and a bit bored. Then somebody told me about this place.
>
> A coworker at Old Broadcasting House, interview 22.6.2012

One of the respondents said that coworking helps one to separate work and home, which creates higher motivation for work (a coworker at Old Broadcasting House, interview 22.6.2012). Another coworker (interview 22.6.2012) said that social interaction at a coworking space creates a network around you, which means safety for a self-employed person. Host of the coworking space, Linda Broughton, said that people who work at Old Broadcasting House are very supportive to each other in all areas, which seems to confirm the coworker's view of safety. Another sign of a strong social network is that even though there are no casual social events organized by the coworking space itself, coworkers tend to meet each other also outside of work. (Broughton, interview 22.6.2012.)

According to Alistair Hay (interview 4.5.2012), the man who is responsible for client relations at the coworking space, most coworkers at Old Broadcasting House are freelancers and some of them have been working there for five years. It seems like freelancers need a place like Old Broadcasting House as it allows one to employ other coworkers or become employed oneself.

> There was a guy called James who ran a business here and for a while he employed I think about five or six other coworkers. That was really good for him because he could easily grow.
>
> A coworker at Old Broadcasting House, interview 22.6.2012

Due to so many talented freelancers working at the same space, employing and subcontracting seem to be easy and take place frequently. One of the coworkers said that he can start even the most challenging projects with peace of mind as there is always someone at the coworking space who can do the work that he cannot (a coworker at Old Broadcasting House, interview 22.6.2012).

Coworkers at Old Broadcasting House could hardly name anything that would disturb their use of a coworking space, which is why they said about more general issues. Two respondents said that many people have not heard of coworking and do not know that there are such places as Old Broadcasting House. (Coworkers at Old Broadcasting House, interviews 22.6.2012.)

To end up with, it was interesting to notice that coworkers and Mr Hay had somewhat conflicting views of the time that freelancers are supposed to exploit Old Broadcasting House. Coworkers' opinion (interviews 22.6.2012) clearly was that when your business starts to grow one should move elsewhere and find an own office space. Mr Hay (interview 4.5.2012), however, said that some of the freelancers have been there from the very beginning, which was about five years ago and that nobody has been asked or expected to leave the coworking space no matter how big their business has become. Additionally, one of the coworkers knew that

the owner of the space is planning to offer a higher price level for the coworkers, which would allow them to get a permanent desk and a filing cabinet (a coworker at Old Broadcasting House, interview 22.6.2012). This could, indeed, be an easy solution to prevent confusion and possible conflicts in the future.

This chapter described the issues which are affecting the need for a coworking space, according to the field study in England. The findings especially at HUB Islington and Old Broadcasting House are very much in line with the results from the 2nd global coworking survey (2011), as shown in figure 1 in chapter 2.1. In accordance with figure 1, the respondents said that social interaction is the most significant issue that creates a need for coworking. There is a reason to believe that if the number of respondents would have been bigger, also the other issues shown in figure 1 would have eventually come up. There were also findings which may have produced new information to the field of coworking. They have been introduced in chapter seven together with all the other key findings of the study.

6.1.2   Case study Mietoinen

All the potential coworkers in Mietoinen could describe situations in which it would be good to work at a coworking space. In addition, they also named many things that would disturb the use of a coworking space. To clarify the difference between these issues, they are listed in figure 12. The issues in the list are not in any particular order.

+ competence workforce available

+ makes it easier to employ new people - no need to rent an office

+ space where you could work and invite your customers

+ social network and work related community

+ fast and reliable internet

+ more efficient to work there than at home

+ shared resources

+ short trip to work

+ need to separate work and family life

+ peer support available

- data security

- business as usual -thinking

- special equipment which are not easy to move

- unsuitable for certain tasks

- need for silence/ lack of privacy

- well-equipped home office

- work includes a lot of customer visits

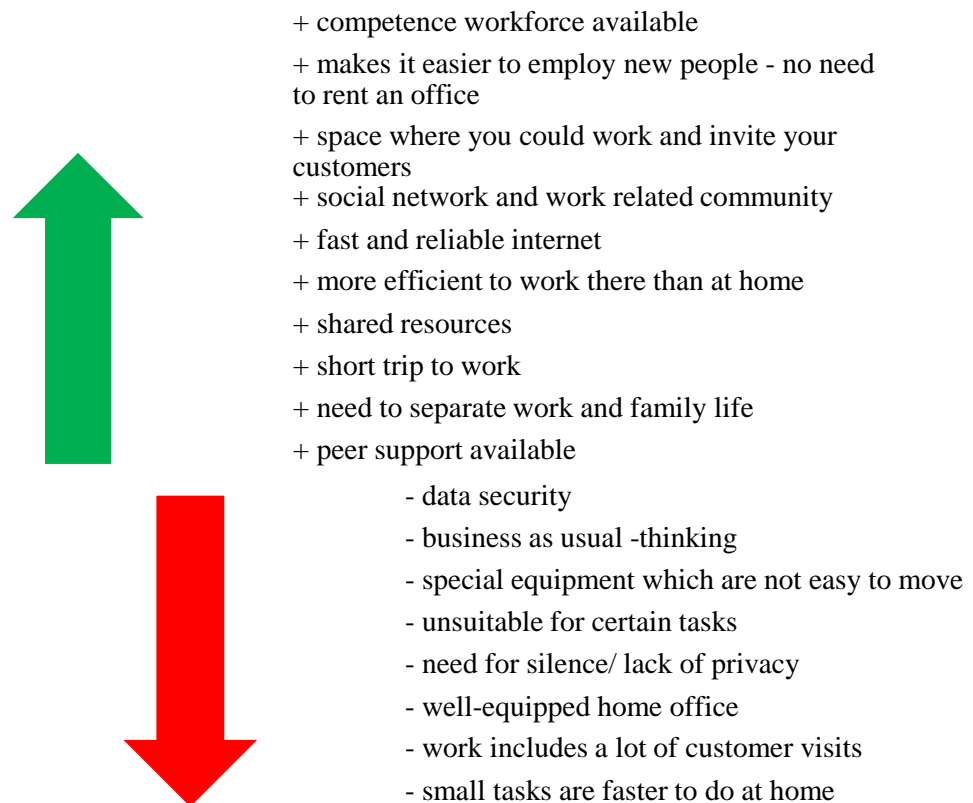- small tasks are faster to do at home

Figure 12   Issues affecting the need for a coworking space.

The respondents had almost equal amount of arguments for and against a need for a rural coworking space. Social network and work related community were found one of the things that create a need for a coworking space. It was especially emphasized by the respondents who usually work alone at home. "Nobody wants to be stuck at home for too many years" (IT entrepreneur, interview 13.3.2012). According to the IT entrepreneur there are plenty of small business owners who have no social meeting point.

One of the downsides at a coworking space is lack of privacy, which was named by some respondents. One of the respondents was afraid that her telephone conversations could disturb other coworkers. Another respondent said that many of his projects are confidential and that he cannot talk about them if an outsider is able to hear the discussion. A part-time telecommuter was thinking about how often she would need a coworking space. "Is it worthwhile to go to a coworking space if you only need it for a couple of hours?" (Part-time telecommuter, interview 14.3.2012).

The respondents were asked about the things that could increase their need for a coworking space in the future. A telecommuter saw a coworking space as a chance to collaborate with the colleagues. "If there were people who lived in the same area and worked for the same company, then you could use a coworking space to telecommute as a group - - and you could really concentrate on the work at hand" (Telecommuter, interview 22.3.2012). An IT entrepreneur (interview 13.3.2012) thought that the need for a coworking space could increase in the future, if people took a new attitude towards work and also simply by finding out about the benefits of coworking.

The respondents were also asked about the things that could decrease their need for a rural coworking space. One respondent replied that if a coworking space lacks a sense of community or he does not get any feedback of his work, it will decrease his interest towards it. Also increasing need for privacy and silence was mentioned as a factor, which could reduce the interest towards coworking. Another respondent said that if you get a feeling that you could do the same work faster by working at home, then you would probably quit working at a coworking space. The same respondent said that another thing that might reduce the need for a coworking space could be the increasing amount of IT technology that people have at home.

All of the respondents had found a place to work at and for four respondents that place was home. The existing two respondents were working at a rental office space. Quite many seemed to be relatively satisfied with the current arrangement since no one was desperate to find any other solution. However, all the respondents were interested in the idea of coworking and were able to estimate the need for it on behalf of the group that they represented in the interview.

There seems to be strong arguments both for and against the need for a rural coworking space in Southwest Finland. The strongest argument for a coworking space and an argument brought up by many was a social network that you get, if you are working at a coworking space. The strongest

argument against coworking space seemed to be the lack of privacy or the fear for the data security.

6.2   Issues affecting the attractiveness of a coworking space

The next theme of the field and case study was to find out, which issues affect the attractiveness of a coworking space. In this theme, 16 questions were asked to find out about needs and requirements of potential rural coworkers in Southwest Finland. In field study England only three questions were asked from coworkers, as observation and photographing were emphasized instead. Also the hosts of the visited spaces got to express their views on this matter.

There were six potential rural coworkers who replied to the questions in Mietoinen and nine coworkers in England, who let the author know about their needs concerning a coworking space. Again, two respondents at Appleby Business Centre gave their answers via email whereas the others were interviewed face to face.

6.2.1   Field study England

As pointed out in chapter 6.1.1, all the three visited coworking spaces differ from each other so significantly that it is rational to analyse the findings separately and present a short summary at the end of the chapter and key findings later in chapter seven.

Appleby Business Centre is located in the centre of Appleby, which is the main service centre for the larger area called Heart of Eden (A leaflet by Heart of Eden Development Trust n.d.). As can be seen in figure 8 in chapter 4.3, Appleby Business Centre has a display window and a sign alongside the main entrance, which make it easy to find. The reception area includes a shop where anyone can buy office equipment. At the back of the ground floor there are two pay by the hour computers for walk-in users, and also printers and copiers for the people who have rented an office room (figure 13). Professional appearance and the reception area make Appleby Business Centre easily accessible and an interesting alternative for entrepreneurs who live in the area, as there seem to be no other serviced offices or coworking spaces within about 30 kilometres (Flexioffices 2012).

Figure 13   Public computers and office equipment at Appleby Business Centre.

The two entrepreneurs who work at Appleby Business Centre were able to name many things that make the place attractive to them.

  – Close to home.
  – Competitive and inclusive rent.
  – Availability.
  – They will allow me to bring my dogs to work.
  – Town centre location.
  – Agreeable landlord.
  – Short term lease.
  – Other businesses in same building.
  – Appleby is a pleasant town to work in.
  – Car parking is relatively easy.
  – The rooms are clean, warm and comfortable. (Tenants at Appleby Business Centre, email messages 22. and 23.5.2012.)

It is very interesting to see that one of the issues that make Appleby Business Centre attractive is the fact that there are other businesses in the same building. This may suggest that although the owner of Appleby Business Centre is aware of hardly any social interaction between entrepreneurs who work there (see chapter 4.3), there may be some sort of collaboration taking place behind the scenes. Most of the other issues in the list are indicating that entrepreneurs value the easiness in renting and using an office space. There are obviously many things missing from the list that the respondents must have taken for granted, e.g. internet connection and office equipment.

The owner of Appleby Business Centre, Carl Bendelow, seems to be quite well aware of the issues that make Appleby Business Centre an attractive place to work at. He said that the rent is only for one month at a time and the agreement is easy to terminate. The rent includes all the maintenance and running costs which, as can be seen in the list above, is one of the things that entrepreneurs seem to appreciate. In addition, Carl Bendelow

said that the reception and the shop as well as the common room seem to attract people despite rare encounters with the other entrepreneurs. Other attractive issues which Mr Bendelow mentioned are fast internet connection and 24/7 access. (Bendelow, interview 11.4.2012.)

According to Mr Bendelow (interview 11.4.2012), they have used very little effort to advertise Appleby Business Centre for there has been no need for it. However, they have an advert on a web site called Flexioffices (2012), and every now and then they have had an advert in the local newspaper as well.

Even though entrepreneurs seem to be quite satisfied with Appleby Business Centre, they were able to mention things that have made them think about moving elsewhere, as can be seen from the list below.
  – No exclusive access/ security can be an issue.
  – Site within town could be better.
  – Access for equipment restrictive.
  – Difficulty of travel for staff to Appleby.
  – Difficulty of recruiting staff in Appleby.
  – Non-centralised location makes it difficult for clients to get to us. (Tenants at Appleby Business Centre, email messages 22. and 23.5.2012.)

The list clearly indicates that rural location of Appleby Business Centre is not ideal for all the entrepreneurs, as non-centralized location causes some obvious difficulties. The other two issues were related to access which can seem to cause lack of security but disturb working as well.

One of the first things to tell about HUB Islington is that it was rather difficult to find, although it is located nearby an underground station in London. The main entrance is on a side street and furthermore there are no signs pointing which way to go. After finding the right door one has to use a door phone to be let in to the staircase leading to HUB Islington at the top floor of the building.

HUB Islington is located in a large attic of an old building. The location at the top floor enables the use of natural light and skylight windows seem to make electric light unnecessary during the daytime. Nevertheless, the fans next to the windows suggest that the space may become too warm during the sunny days. Everything at HUB Islington supports the relaxed atmosphere that you sense at the moment of entrance. The interior, furniture, plants, and even wood burning stoves situated in large open space make it look attractive and cosy.

At the time of the visit there were about 20 coworkers present including a receptionist and two hosts. Most of the coworkers were working heads down, but there were also groups of two and three who were clearly collaborating on some ideas or just asking for fellow coworker's opinion on something. It was interesting to see that these groups were not trying to find any place private, but they discussed with their normal voice and it seemed to disturb nobody. However, there were coworkers who had their

headsets on, which may indicate that they do not appreciate the noise around them or at least they want to try to control it. One of the coworkers was having a telephone call during the visit and it seemed like he did not know where he should be as he was walking between the meeting room (figure 14) and the shared office space.

Figure 14   A picture of the meeting room at HUB Islington (Justinien Tribillion 2012).

In the corner of the shared office space there was a kitchenette with all the necessary utensils and cutlery. Kitchenette seemed to work well enough during the event called sexy salad (see chapter 4.3). Behind the kitchenette there was a small shoe-free area with cushions and a wide selection of books, but it was hardly occupied during the visit. There were many shelves on two walls of the shared space and they were quite full of coworkers' belongings. What was a somewhat surprising was that there were only two safe boxes which could be locked. Host of HUB Islington Anna Levy (interview 19.4.2012) told that coworkers at HUB Islington are very trustworthy and people are not afraid to leave their laptop or papers on the table if they go out for a while. She also said that trust in coworkers' honesty is something that they rely on when pricing the use of the coworking space along with the time coworkers have been connected to Wi-Fi.

There are nearly 40 active coworkers at HUB Islington which are nearly all entrepreneurs or freelancers. Nobody has their own desk so every morning each coworker has to choose the best workstation available. HUB Islington is open from 9 am to 6 pm but the coworkers who pay more can access the space with their own keys. (Levy, interview 19.4.2012.)

Interviewed coworkers found it easy to name issues that make HUB Islington attractive.
- It's a very friendly, sociable and enjoyable place to work.
- Friendly and fun.
- Great atmosphere, the host is important.

- I walked in here and I really loved the place.
- People are very welcoming.
- They have organized things every week to help you to meet each other like the sexy salad day, they also have training events. (Coworkers at HUB Islington, interviews 19.4.2012.)

It is remarkable to see how much coworkers emphasized things like friendliness and great atmosphere instead of easy accessibility, contemporary, professional and so on. In chapter 6.1.1 it was noticed that many self-employed people need coworking spaces to get social interaction and therefore the list above makes sense.

One of the interviewed coworkers at HUB Islington, personal stylist Sudarshan Singh (figure 15), said that he had tried working at many coworking spaces in London without finding a good community, before he came to HUB Islington. It takes him 40 minutes to get to HUB Islington every morning but clearly an ideal working environment makes up for it. (Singh, interview 19.4.2012.)

Figure 15   Personal stylist Sudarshan Singh at HUB Islington.

However satisfied the coworkers seem to be at HUB Islington, there were a couple of issues which had made some of the respondents think about moving to another coworking space.

> From time to time the services or the infrastructure has broken down. There have been leaks, the heating hasn't worked, the copier has broken, the printer has broken and those are the things that can actually fundamentally impact your business".
>
> A coworker at HUB Islington, interview 19.4.2012

Another coworker (interview 19.4.2012) said that distance is one of the things that can make him think about moving to another coworking space as well as if HUB Islington changes its policy or pricing. One of the respondents criticised that prices have risen and they do not allow one to grow i.e. if your company starts to become successful the prices increase too much. Nevertheless, these disadvantages seemed to be outweighed by more positive opinions. "There are no issues why I would have thought of

moving to another coworking space – I'm happy!" (A coworker at HUB Islington, interview 19.4.2012).

Old Broadcasting House in Leeds is a building with an intriguing history. According to the Leeds Civic Trust (2012), it was erected in 1868 and during its early years it was the principal Quaker meeting house in Leeds. Since then it was used as a clothing factory and BBC studios, before Leeds Metropolitan University bought the house. Nowadays there are many activities which take place at the building. One of them is a coworking space, which was first opened in 2007 (Old Broadcasting House 2009).

Old Broadcasting House was very easy to find as it is close to Leeds city centre and right beside the two universities of Leeds. Furthermore, the unique appearance of the building helps to locate the place (figure 10 in chapter 4.3). Overall the accessibility of the building is excellent as there is a wheelchair lift on the main entrance, hardly any obstacles for moving around with a wheelchair, and a lift that takes one to the coworking space upstairs.

The lobby of the building is spacious and bright and includes a reception desk, info screens and a free coffee machine. In addition, there are plenty of tables and chairs for people to have meetings or just sit down for a while. Normally people are able to access Old Broadcasting House during the building opening hours, but coworkers get their own key cards after one month trial period, which allows them to use the coworking space when they wish (Broughton, interview 22.6.2012).
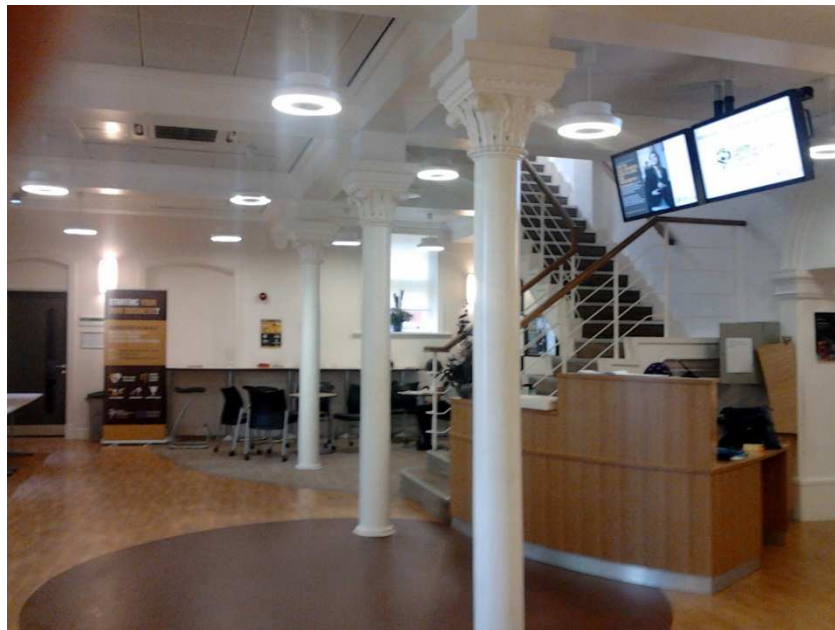

Figure 16   A reception area at Old Broadcasting House in Leeds.

The staircase shown in figure 16, leads to the coworking space on the first floor. The actual coworking space is an open floor plan office space which looks quite plain at the first sight. The colours that have been used in the interior are very neutral and overall there is nothing that would especially

arouse the attention. There are large windows which bring in natural light but still, there is an obvious need for electric light as well.

At the time of the visit, there were only two female coworkers who regularly work at Old Broadcasting House. One of them was interviewed, but she was not able to tell a reason why the coworking space had not attracted more women. Most of the coworkers were men in their thirties and overall the coworkers at Old Broadcasting House seemed to be quite homogenous. This may have something to do with the theme that the owner of the coworking space has chosen – creative and digital industries. (A coworker at Old Broadcasting House, interview 22.6.2012; A leaflet by The Northern Technology Institute n.d.)

The observation at the coworking space showed that there are both wireless and wired internet connections available, coworkers have their own postal boxes, and there is a lockable computer cupboard in the print room. It was also interesting to see that many coworkers were not working with their laptops as they were using the computers provided by the owner of the coworking space, Leeds Metropolitan University.

The workstations have been separated from each other by using folding screens, which are partially transparent (figure 17). Any type of barriers between coworkers can be seen controversial with one of the five values of coworking – openness (Coworking wiki 2012). Nevertheless, transparent folding screens seem to work well at Old Broadcasting House and do not seem to prevent collaboration of any kind. Most of the coworkers were working on their own during the author's visit, but there were also many occasions where people were clearly asking for comments and sharing ideas with the other coworkers.

Figure 17   A workstation at the coworking space at Old Broadcasting House in Leeds.

The coworking space at Old Broadcasting House seemed like a pleasant place to work at, which was confirmed by the coworkers.

> Great atmosphere, more skills here than in an agency, great for collaborating at projects, really inspiring and a quiet good motivational place to work. Fantastic place.
>
> A coworker at Old Broadcasting House, interview 22.6.2012

Unlike at HUB Islington in London, coworkers at Old Broadcasting House did not emphasize the meaning of social interaction as the most important factor that makes their coworking space attractive. Below is a list of the factors that seemed to be equally important to them.

– Coffee machine is free. It makes a big difference.
– Really good address, prestigious issue.
– Location is good.
– Big lobby where you can meet your customers.
– The building, the reception and other competent coworkers make you look professional.
– It is great for scaling up and scaling down.
– Close to all the amenities, facilities are good, security guards. (Coworkers at Old Broadcasting House, interviews 22.6.2012.)

Two of the respondents highlighted the importance of the staff at the coworking space. The other one said that the host is very good at recognizing any problems and taking care of them. There had been especially one issue which had annoyed many coworkers so much that people had been about to leave to another coworking space. Finally the problem had been solved by the host and coworkers were satisfied again. (Coworkers at Old Broadcasting House, interviews 22.6.2012.)

Coworkers seemed to value the fact that their coworking space was owned by the Leeds Metropolitan University. Due to the financial support by the university, all the coworkers pay fixed price no matter how much they use the space (Hay, interview 4.5.2012). Coworkers said that they like the system because the price includes help desk services, the rent of a meeting room and a projector, whereas many other coworking spaces charge them separately. Thus, the interviewed coworkers believed that the overall price is cheaper at Old Broadcasting House than in many other coworking spaces. In addition, the coworking space also provides big screen table computers for the coworkers. (Coworkers at Old Broadcasting House, interviews 22.6.2012.)

Although social issues were not emphasized as much as at HUB Islington, they were not neglected either.

– People that are here, a lot of collaboration, you know what everyone else does.
– Other places are focused on distinctive niche and people are different there.
– Laid back, everyone's friendly, relaxed.
– Someone thinks that the prestigious address is the most important thing but I think that it is the community. People are genuinely happy here. (Coworkers at Old Broadcasting House, interviews 22.6.2012.)

There were a few issues that have disturbed coworking at Old Broadcasting House and there are even issues that have made people think about moving to another coworking space. One of the things that seem to disturb at least some people is noise. "I hate it when I can hear somebody's music playing through the earphones" (A coworker at Old Broadcasting House, interview 22.6.2012). The same respondent said that the beeping sound from instant messaging is annoying. There is also a problem with the phone calls as it may disturb others and because there is no privacy in an open floor plan office.

> If you try to have phone calls you might have problems with that because it is so open. There is no sort of privacy, people do a lot of wandering up and down the corridor and have conversations in the toilet.
>
> A coworker at Old Broadcasting House, interview 22.6.2012

Although coworkers seemed to value the big screen table computers provided by the owner of the coworking space, one of the respondents said that some of the computers and programmes have not been updated for a while and you get left behind if you use them alone. One of the coworkers said that there is another coworking space growing in Leeds that has a good brand and lavish amenities. The respondent believed that the coworking space at old Broadcasting House will probably lose some coworkers to them. Another coworker hoped that there would be more females at the coworking space. The same respondent said that at some point she might move to another coworking space where there are craftsmen and artists working side by side with knowledge workers. (Coworkers at Old Broadcasting House, interviews 22.6.2012.)

This chapter has described the issues which have an effect on the attractiveness of a coworking space, according to the coworkers in England. Many issues were found by interviewing the people who work at the visited places and there were some similarities at least between HUB Islington in London and Old Broadcasting House in Leeds. Appleby Business Centre is located in the rural area and it is not an actual coworking space, which is why somewhat different factors were mentioned there, for example importance of location. All the key findings from the theme have been introduced in chapter seven.

6.2.2 Case study Mietoinen

According to the potential coworkers in Mietoinen, an attractive location for a rural coworking space is somewhere you can cycle or walk to. The coworking space has to be also within the reach of public transport and easy for customers to find. Two of the respondents said that an attractive location would be close to the centre of a town and in that way close to other services.

It seems like the location of a coworking space is a crucial factor at least for some people. "It is not nice to go far if you can do your work at home as well" (IT entrepreneur, interview 13.3.2012). According to the IT entrepreneur, the location of a coworking space determines the number of people who are going to use it. The more there are people who use it, the

more attractive the space is. Nevertheless, location is not an issue for all. "The location is not a crucial factor, because in the countryside someone is always bound to travel a greater distance" (Part-time telecommuter, interview 14.3.2012).

Potential rural coworkers do not seem to require great number of amenities close to a coworking space. The most important amenity for them is a restaurant, café, or a shop, where they can buy their lunch. One of the respondents suggested that the other coworkers could pay someone for buying and bringing food for them. Other amenities which were mentioned were bank, post office, accounting firm, and a nursery or a school, so you could drop off your children and pick them up on your work trip. Only one respondent was thinking about the service providers who could be working at a coworking space.

> Service providers which are working in the field that support my field of work. Then it would be possible to start bigger projects as there would be wide knowledge available. That could be pretty challenging and fascinating and it would also widen my own expertise.
>
> Freelancer, interview 22.3.2012

The answerers had a quite solid consensus on which kind of interior and furnishing would be attractive at a rural coworking space. The interior should rather be casual than formal office design and it could be colourful and have a living room feeling in it. It should also be peaceful and rousing at the same time. It should not look like a youth centre but it should not be all white either. "Advanced and insightful design, not traditional white" (IT entrepreneur, interview 13.3.2012). The tables and chairs should be ergonomic and plants would be nice as well. The furnishing should take into account people who have to use the phone more often.

Apart from a part-time telecommuter, all the respondents said that they have a need for a safety box, which can be locked. An entrepreneur (interview 15.3.2012) said that a mere box is not enough, but he needs a cupboard which can be locked. None of the others did have any special requests for the size of a safety box. However, a freelancer pointed out that it should not be just any safety box. "It should be more solid and safer than they normally are so you cannot open it with a pocket-knife" (Freelancer, interview 22.3.2012).

According to the respondents, this is what is needed to make a good meeting room for a rural coworking space.
– A large table and chairs for up to 10 people.
– More casual chairs for brainstorming.
– Wireless internet access.
– Soundproof and innovative space.
– Equipment for video conferencing.
– Projector and a screen.
– Flipchart.
– Coffee maker.
– Fridge.
– Water.

Potential coworkers would like to use a common room which is casual and light. "The more relaxed atmosphere, the better" (IT entrepreneur, interview 13.3.2012). According to two respondents, there could be a game of pinball or billiards. Despite it being casual some of the potential coworkers would like to use it to meet their customers. Many respondents said it should be a place where one could eat, drink, lie lazy or take a nap. Many of the respondents also said that there should be a kitchenette including a dishwasher, fridge, coffee maker, microwave oven and a table and chairs for all the coworkers.

A rural coworking space should be accessible 24/7, according to the freelancer and entrepreneurs. "A freelancer usually has to work at nights as well when the project is coming to its end" (Freelancer, interview 22.3.2012). The rest of the respondents would settle for so called normal office hours, for example from 8am to 6pm.

The respondents were asked about what kind of access control there should be at a rural coworking space. The question contained two aspects of access control which were 1) a possible need for CCTV or any other similar safety solution, and 2) the way in which coworkers could be able to access the space. Two of the respondents said that there should be a CCTV in use. One of the respondents said that there should also be a burglar alarm. The others commented only the way in which coworkers would be able to access the space. Almost all the respondents said that some sort of access key or badge would be handy and it would allow an easy access to a coworking space. There are also other benefits in using system that enables electronic identification. "An electronic badge is a good way to follow utilization rate of the space and that of each coworker's" (Part-time telecommuter 14.3.2012).

Below are listed all the office equipment that potential coworkers need at a rural coworking space:
- A good quality all-in-one A3 size laser printer.
- Mailing equipment.
- Paper shredder.
- Computer for walk-in users.
- Projector or a big screen TV.
- Normal office equipment, for example stapler, scissors, and a hole puncher.

One of the respondents thought that a common telephone is needed at a rural coworking space. All the potential coworkers said that fast, reliable and secured wireless network is extremely important thing at a rural coworking space. "It gives coworkers a chance to choose their favourite place to work at according to their mood" (Part-time telecommuter 14.3.2012). The IT-entrepreneur gave more specific description of the required network.

> Both wired and wireless reliable network are needed which enable video conferencing and other than traditional data transfer. The network has to be also fast both ways and it should not be limited to any particular kind of traffic.
>
> IT entrepreneur, interview 13.3.2012

The potential coworkers were asked which kind of atmosphere they would appreciate at a coworking space. The IT entrepreneur said that it is important for all the coworkers to understand that coworking space is a community and there are different people working there. "You do not want anyone to ask you to be quieter at a coworking space" (IT entrepreneur, interview 13.3.2012). He also said that a coworking space is not for everybody. However, the IT entrepreneur and the telecommuter (interviews 22.3.2012) stated that it is equally necessary to be able to find yourself a more peaceful workstation within a coworking space.

Another respondent said that you have to get the feeling that the coworking space includes state of the art facilities and equipment. Relaxed atmosphere was emphasized by two of the respondents and, according to the telecommuter (interview 22.3.2012), telecommuting itself generates a casual atmosphere since you are not bound to go anywhere. One of the respondents brought up the role of the host in creating the atmosphere. "The host has a big responsibility in which kind of people are working there. There is no room for a hard competition between the companies that operate in the same field" (Entrepreneur, interview 15.3.2012).

As described in chapter 2.1, openness is one of the five values which differentiate a coworking space from a traditional office space. One of the questions was about the floor plan of a rural coworking space and it brought up different needs of potential coworkers.

Somewhat surprising was that only the telecommuter (interview 22.3.2012) was ready to work at an entirely open floor plan office. The majority of the respondents were supporting the idea of so called semi-open floor plan office, which would contain both open floor plan office and more private workstations. The respondents seemed to value the idea of coworking and collaboration, but were as much concerned about their privacy and the noises that their work could produce and therefore disturb others. Nevertheless, it is important to notice that the respondents who supported the idea of a semi-open floor plan office did not want to see private workrooms at a coworking space either, as it would ruin the whole idea of coworking. "You have to have a chance for privacy and not be forced to work around a single table - - an ideal would be that there would be different kind of spaces within a coworking space" (Local innovator, interview 22.3.2012). The IT entrepreneur said that social interaction is more valuable at a coworking space than silence or privacy. "If every coworker has his or her own workroom, then the space is more like a business centre where you can hire a room and nobody knows each other" (IT entrepreneur, interview 13.3.2012).

Two of the respondents said that they would prefer a space or workroom which they could usually use alone. "I would like to have a space of my own. It does not necessarily have to be a private workroom, but a space that I can use nearly every day" (Entrepreneur, interview 15.3.2012). The entrepreneur also said that his workstation should be between two folding screens so that it would be peaceful and quiet to work there. The freelancer's need for a private workroom was explained by the noise produced by other coworkers. "An open floor plan office would disturb me when I am

trying to do creative work and I am able to hear people speaking and having conversations - - that disturbs my concentration to work creatively" (Freelancer, interview 22.3.2012). However, also the freelancer said that open floor plan office is a suitable place to cooperate with other coworkers, when that kind of work needs to be done.

Potential coworkers were given a chance to speak about issues, which would make a rural coworking space less attractive. Almost all the respondents said that if a coworking space lacks a sense of community, if you do not feel welcome or you do not get enough social interaction, you might as well work at home. For some people, it might be the other coworkers which make a coworking space unattractive. "If the others are knitting socks and you are coding web sites - - you are probably not going to go there" (IT entrepreneur, interview 13.3.2012). Below is the list of other issues that, according to the respondents, make a rural coworking space unattractive:

- It becomes too expensive to use a coworking space.
- You cannot find a suitable workstation for yourself.
- You can only access a coworking space at a certain time of day.
- The network is not fast or reliable or there is any other problem with it.
- The location is not good for you.
- The premises are unattractive.
- The air is not fresh.
- If you can feel a draught.
- It's not clean.
- You do not like the colours used at a coworking space.
- It is not cosy i.e. there are no paintings or textiles on the wall and no plants.

The last question in the second theme was trying to find out whether potential coworkers were ready to pay for the usage of a rural coworking space and if so, where the pricing should be based. All the respondents said that they are ready to pay in order to be able to use a rural coworking space. An entrepreneur (interview 15.3.2012) said that a rural coworking space is attractive especially if it is cheaper than a rental office. The IT entrepreneur (interview 13.3.2012) said that many entrepreneurs are ready to pay just to be able to use a coworking space whenever they need it.

Three of the respondents said that pricing should be based on the utilization rate. Freelancer (interview 22.3.2012) stated that one should be able to choose between monthly-based pricing and utilization-based pricing depending on which one of them is more cost-effective for a coworker. Only the entrepreneur (interview 15.3.2012) said that the price should be based on useable floor area and on the utilization rate of other shared resources, such as printers and mail equipment.

At the end of the second interview theme respondents were able to mention any other things that are related to attractiveness of a rural coworking space. One of the respondents was thinking about making a list of pros and

cons of working at a coworking space in order to be able to decide if it would be suitable for him.

> One has to compare the pros and cons of working at a coworking space - - for example if there are certain special equipment at a coworking space that you don't want to buy yourself, then it is worth going there.
>
> Telecommuter, interview 22.3.2012

An entrepreneur was thinking about the ways which would engage coworkers to a rural coworking space.

> The most effective way to engage people would be that all the coworkers had to buy a share of a coworking space or then they would have to invest in it in another way - - there have to be clear rules which tell you how to sign in, how to sign out and how to accept new coworkers.
>
> Entrepreneur, interview 15.5.2012

The entrepreneur (interview 15.3.2012) also stated that there should be someone who is always present at a rural coworking space, which would help coworking space to be more accessible. According to the freelancer (interview 22.3.2012), price has a big influence on the freelancer's decision whether to start working at a coworking space or not. The costs are especially meaningful at the beginning of a new venture.

6.3 Importance of the sustainability issues

The third theme of the case study was trying to find out how important sustainability issues are for the potential coworkers in Southwest Finland. In the field study, the third theme was exploring if there are sustainable impacts associated with coworking in England. Sustainability was divided into three categories in both studies, which were economic, ecologic and social sustainability.

This theme included 15 questions to the potential rural coworkers in Southwest Finland. In England, nine questions were posed to the hosts and owners of the visited spaces in order to find out how much effort they had put into social, ecological, and economic sustainability. In addition, photographing, observing, and brochures were used in English coworking spaces to find additional information regarding sustainability issues. There were six potential rural coworkers who replied to the questions in Mietoinen and three hosts or owners who were able to express their views on this matter.

6.3.1 Field study England

Being a rental office space instead of a coworking space, Appleby Business Centre may not have a lot to give in terms of social sustainability. However, the reception area together with the shop and public computers for walk-in-users are likely to create social interaction between entrepreneurs who use the space, but also within the local community. Also the fact that the presence of other businesses in the same building was named

as one of the attractive issues at Appleby Business Centre is a sign of social interaction of a kind (see 6.2.1).

Economic sustainability is something that Appleby Business Centre may be more able to support. According to the web site called Flexioffices (2012), Appleby Business Centre is the only serviced office space or coworking space within 30 kilometres, so it is no doubt important to businesses which use the space and for the people who live in the area and are going to start a new venture. Moreover, Appleby Business Centre diversifies Appleby's selection of services and supports other businesses by selling office equipment and renting office spaces. Appleby is the service centre for the surrounding villages, which means that there is good deal of services and shops available (A leaflet by Appleby Chamber of Trade. n.d.). Figure 18 gives a good view of the amount of services located in the center of the town.

Figure 18   Services in Appleby (A leaflet by Appleby Chamber of Trade. n.d.).

According to Carl Bendelow (interview 11.4.2012), they have been thinking environmental issues as well. He said that they have been taking care of recycling and they would also like to renew the heating system of the building by purchasing a heat pump. In addition, Mr Bendelow expressed his interest to do something about the traffic because so many people are dependent on their own cars. Clearly environmentally harmful behaviour is that one of the entrepreneurs who uses Appleby Business Centre drives 50 miles one way to be able to work there (Bendelow, interview 11.4.2012). Nevertheless, it seems like the situation concerning traffic is

not hopeless, as Appleby Business Centre can be reached also by train (figure 18).

HUB Islington is a coworking space with all the elements that define a coworking space. Therefore it was not difficult to find issues that link HUB Islington to different dimension of sustainable development. First of all, social sustainability is supported at HUB Islington by making people enjoy themselves and even be happy, as can be seen in chapter 6.2.1. Coworkers are also able to get help and support from other coworkers for their work as well as share their personal things. An important meaning of trust came up when discussing with the host of HUB Islington. She said that coworkers hire each other because they trust each other. (Levy, interview 19.4.2012.) A very tangible example of the level of trust within HUB Islington is that people leave their laptops and papers on the table when they leave the space to have lunch.

Overall there seems to be a strong sense of community at HUB Islington which enables social wellbeing. An obvious indication to this is that there are many casual social events that take place, for example film nights, pizza Tuesdays, sexy salads, and pub Fridays, even though there are usually 10-20 people who participate in these events instead of all the nearly 40 coworkers (Levy, interview 19.4.2012). In addition to the sense of community, one has to keep in mind that HUB Islington is a social enterprise, which means that they keep their prices low in order to support social businesses (Levy, interview 19.4.2012).

Most of the coworkers at HUB Islington seem to like working there, or as one of the coworkers put it, it is an enjoyable place to work at (Coworkers at HUB Islington, interviews 19.4.2012). This social satisfaction seems to support economic sustainability as well as, according to the host Anna Levy (interview 19.4.2012), businesses have grown at HUB Islington and some of the companies have become very successful. In addition, she said that HUB Islington encourages subcontracting because people trust each other and they can also recommend other people outside HUB Islington that they have worked with. Being a social enterprise, HUB Islington keeps their prices low, which gives new and small ventures a good chance to grow.

However, according to a coworker (interview 19.4.2012), prices have risen at HUB Islington and they do not allow one to grow i.e. if your company starts to come successful the prices increase too much. Another harmful impact on business may be the situation where some of the essential equipment or the infrastructure brakes down, as had happened according to a coworker (interview 19.4.2012). Overall it is fair to say that HUB Islington provides much more positive impacts on economic sustainability within the businesses at HUB Islington but also within the local community, as they operate at more local level than many of their counterparts (Levy, interview 19.4.2012).

Additionally to cosy working conditions, they have put effort into environmental issues at HUB Islington. Easily noticeable once entered into the coworking space are the wood burning stoves which use industrial by-

product called saw dust. There are many stoves located around the shared office space and there is one stove in the meeting room as well, offering energy efficient heating during the winter months. (Levy, interview 19.4.2012.) Equally visible sign of environmental awareness are the desks which are made of recycled cardboard. According to Anna Levy (interview 19.4.2012), there is a company that has made them especially for HUB Islington and for another HUB in London. All the desks are rounded (see figure 15 in chapter 6.2.1) so they encourage collaboration and allow more people to fit around them.

They have also managed to get enough money through crowd funding to install a second layer for the windows at HUB Islington. Also recycling has been taking care of and it seems to be part of everyday routines at HUB Islington. An obvious evidence of HUB Islington being part of the local community is that their food waste is being composted at the community garden not far from HUB Islington. Furthermore, working at HUB Islington gives many coworkers a chance to choose a green way to travel there.

> A lot of people cycle, or take the tube. It is a local and community based coworking space so it is easy to get there. Many other coworking spaces are more formal and not so local.
>
> Levy, interview 19.4.2012

Old Broadcasting House in Leeds (figure 19) calls itself a coworking space, which is why there should be many issues which indicate social, economic and ecological sustainability (Old Broadcasting House 2009; see also Coworking wiki 2012; International Institute for Sustainable Development 2012). According to the host of the coworking space, people enjoy working there as people are very supportive to each other in all areas. She also said that there are no organized social activities which would take place outside office hours, but coworkers tend to meet each other also outside work. (Broughton, interview 22.6.2012.)

Figure 19   The main entrance at Old Broadcasting House in Leeds.

Old Broadcasting House is owned by Leeds Metropolitan University, which is why there are many other stakeholders which use the building beside coworkers (Hay, interview 4.5.2012). According to the interviewed coworkers at Old Broadcasting House (interviews 22.6.2012), they do not interact with the other groups but there are no conflicts with them either. Only one respondent could come up with an issue that had possibly aroused disagreements some time ago. "They wear suits – we wear shorts" (A coworker at Old Broadcasting House, interview 22.6.2012).

Coworkers at Old Broadcasting House seemed to have a good sense of community, as they said that many people in Leeds have not heard of coworking and that it is their responsibility to promote coworking and the coworking space where they work at (Coworkers at Old Broadcasting House, interviews 22.6.2012). One of the coworkers (interview 22.6.2012) said that there is a small company which, unlike others, has been able to get three permanent workstations at the coworking space. He said that it was because the company has been using the same coworking space for many years but still, it is potentially something that may cause jealousy if the same possibility is not offered to anyone else in the future.

The coworking space at Old Broadcasting House is the oldest one in Leeds as it was opened already in 2007 (Old Broadcasting House 2009). According to Mr Hay (interview 4.5.2012), all the coworking spaces in Leeds have a different customer segment, which is why they do not really compete against each other. He also said that they sometimes advice people to go to another coworking space if they think it would be more suitable for the customer.

Coworking has produced plenty of economic activity at Old Broadcasting House, according to the host of the space as well as coworkers themselves. They all said that many businesses have become successful and moved out of the coworking space in order to find an office of their own. (Broughton, interview 22.6.2012; Coworkers at Old Broadcasting House, interviews 22.6.2012.) Coworkers have also started new ventures together and overall there is something new taking place all the time, according to the host Mrs Broughton. Coworkers also collaborate and subcontract a lot. (Broughton, interview 22.6.2012.)

Old Broadcasting House is a big old building with high ceiling height, which may suggest that it is not very energy efficient. However, a certificate next to the main entrance showed that the energy performance of the building was not poor, but somewhere in the middle level. This may suggest that some sort of refurbishment has been made for the building. According to Mrs Broughton (interview 22.6.2012), Leeds Metropolitan University maintains the premises and it has its own environmental policy. People who work at Old Broadcasting House are not even able to adjust the air conditioning or make any arrangements to the recycling. "The landlord takes care of that so we don't have to worry about it" (Broughton, interview 22.6.2012).

There were a few signs at Old Broadcasting House which indicate that the environmental policy is actually working. Recycling had been taken care

of and toilets had driers instead of towels or papers. No more visible evidence was there to indicate that environmental issues were well taken care of, although there is no need to be doubtful about it either. One of the respondents said that many coworkers live quite close to Old Broadcasting House, which makes it easily accessible and makes an own car unnecessary (A coworker at Old Broadcasting House, interview 22.6.2012). There are quite a few cyclists and some take a bus, according to Mrs Broughton (interview 22.6.2012).

Visits to Appleby Business Centre, HUB Islington and Old Broadcasting House have shown that they all have something to give in terms of social, economic and ecologic sustainability. However, each of them seem to have their own area of strength, for example Appleby Business Centre supports vital and diverse rural economy, whereas HUB Islington is especially good at producing social welfare. The most important findings from the theme have been introduced later in chapter seven.

6.3.2 Case study Mietoinen

First section of the theme was about economic sustainability. According to respondents, rural coworkers are able to support a fellow coworker with starting a venture. Especially those who have a business of their own thought they had something to give. "I could tell her or him about my own experiences and perhaps about the mistakes I have made as well" (Freelancer, interview 22.3.2012). "I am able to offer my services but also share ideas and give support" (IT entrepreneur, interview 13.3.2012). According to the entrepreneur (interview 15.5.2012), a new business owner could benefit a lot from working at a coworking space by getting contacts and being able to subcontract. Those who did not have their own businesses were ready to give more general support. "One can be supportive and offer a chance to discuss. One can also share own experiences of life and relations as well." (Local innovator, interview 22.3.2012).

In addition to the capability, potential coworkers seem to have interest to help and support any coworker who decides to start a new venture. However, a few respondents stated that they do not want to share their ideas with their competitors. Respondents gave following reasons to explain why they would be interested to help a new entrepreneur:
  – It would enable coworking space to develop, diversify, and harmonize.
  – It will produce synergy.
  – It will help the area where you live to develop.
  – Different businesses support each other.

The next question was about making contracts with the local companies working either at a rural coworking space or in the nearby area. Potential coworkers seem to be quite ready to make contracts with the other local companies, but it requires that the line of business is suitable or that the contract is made only for a certain project. The local innovator (interview 22.3.2012) reminded that each association has their own field where they operate so associations do not easily cooperate with each other. Also small

and established business owners do not seem to be too excited about cooperation. "It may be difficult for entrepreneurs. Many entrepreneurs want to be independent which means they are not looking for a chance to cooperate" (Entrepreneur, interview 15.3.2012).

According to the respondents, rural coworkers are ready to use their knowledge, skills and relations to benefit fellow coworkers as well. The only condition for doing so is that it should not have any negative influence on one's own business or activity.

> I have learnt over the years that many people are quite strict about those things because they are afraid that someone could steal their ideas and then exploit them - - so they are used to guarding their ideas and thoughts as their income requires an unique idea which no one else has.
>
> Freelancer, interview 22.3.2012

Second section of the theme was about social sustainability. The first question explored if rural coworkers would be ready to employ young people in order to prevent them from social exclusion. According to respondents, attitude towards it would be positive but many companies could be lacking financial opportunities to actually do so. "If the company is facing difficult times there is no chance" (IT entrepreneur, interview 13.3.2012). The local innovator (interview 22.3.2012) also reminded that employing a youngster is not an easy task and it requires a lot of work.

All the potential coworkers were positive towards the idea of attending to a casual social event in order to improve a team spirit at a coworking space. "The better the community at work, the nicer it is to work and the more results you will get" (IT entrepreneur, interview 13.3.2012). According to the telecommuter (interview 22.3.2012), casual social events help people to engage themselves to a coworking space. Some of the obstacles for attending those events are that some people are too busy, some people are not very social, and some people have small children to look after.

All the respondents believed that rural coworkers would be willing to donate their old furniture, art and equipment to a coworking space. The part-time telecommuter (interview 14.3.2012) said in addition that coworkers could also use their skills and relations to maintain and run a coworking space.

Respondents were asked whether a rural coworking space should be targeted and marketed only for people living in a certain area, or should it be open for everyone who is interested in using it. All the respondents said that a rural coworking space should be open for all for the following reasons:
  – It would be fruitful to meet entrepreneurs from other areas.
  – There would be more people to share the costs with.
  – It would produce new views to a coworking space.
  – One would get new contacts.

One of the respondents said though that networking within a coworking space would be very effective if the space would be limited to people liv-

ing in a particular area. Nevertheless, he also believed that any limitations would do more harm than good.

Third section of the theme was about ecological sustainability. According to the respondents, rural coworkers are ready to reduce the amount of waste that they produce and they are also ready to recycle. It seems like companies are able to benefit of so called greening process in terms of improving their brand image, but also to decrease costs by purchasing high quality products. According to the local innovator (interview 22.3.2012), almost everyone will recycle if the system is there and it is simple to use.

Many of the respondents also believe that rural coworkers would consider environmental issues before they make a purchase, if the coworking space is committed to any green office management system. Certain fields seem to be more environmentally aware than other fields.

> "IT entrepreneurs usually take into account also environmental issues when they are making a purchase and also manufactures invest in those kind of things - - due to electricity being so expensive entrepreneurs buy devices that are less energy-consuming and, at the same time, friendlier for the environment."
>
> IT entrepreneur, interview 13.3.2012

In addition, the freelancer said that environmental issues are strongly emphasized in their field. "When you are reading a magazine made for free-lancers you find that there are a lot of different things about environmental issues" (Freelancer, interview 22.3.2012). According to the entrepreneur (interview 15.3.2012), a business owner has to think mostly about the price when making a purchase and environmental issues are not highly emphasized. The local innovator (interview 22.3.2012) stated that in the end it all depends on the personal values that how much you care for those things.

Rural coworkers seem to be ready to cycle or walk to a coworking space, if the distance is less than five kilometres. "It would be a good way to stay fit" (Freelancer, interview 22.3.2012). Nevertheless, a few respondents stated that difficult weather especially in the wintertime or some urgent issues can prevent that from happening.

One of the questions was trying to find out whether potential rural coworkers would be ready to spend a day cleaning the surroundings of a coworking space once a year. Generally speaking, rural coworkers are able to take part in that kind of activity provided that the sense of community is good enough within a coworking space. Only telecommuters find it difficult to participate as it would mean that their employer would actually pay for the time that the event takes.

According to the respondents, rural coworkers do not really mind about the way in which the electricity that is used at a coworking space is being produced. Only the freelancer (interview 22.3.2012) said that it is an important issue for their group, perhaps because environmental issues are strongly emphasized in their field. One of the respondents said that it is up to the owner of the premises to decide in which way the electricity is being

produced. Another respondent stated that green energy would be ideal as long as it does not increase costs.

At the end of the third theme some of the respondents came up with some other ideas on how a coworking space could be run sustainably. They stated that a coworking space should be energy efficient because otherwise it will undo the climate benefit gained for example through telecommuting.

7 DISCUSSION

Both the field study in England and case study in Mietoinen produced plenty of information for the study. In chapter six all the information was presented and there were no attempts to highlight the most significant findings. In this chapter, the key findings of both studies will be collected to lists and tables, where they are easily perceivable. The chapter is divided into subchapters according to the three research questions, which were presented earlier in chapter three.

In the end of subchapters 7.1 and 7.2, the key findings will be compared with the literature review presented in chapter two and moreover all the data, which seems to bring something new or unexpected information to the field of coworking, will be delineated. Chapter 7.3 will summarise the key findings from case study Mietoinen, and furthermore give an answer to the third research question. An answer to the main research problem will be given in the beginning of chapter eight.

7.1 Experience of coworking in England

A guide for visiting coworking spaces in England was divided into three themes (see chapter 4.2). Two of these themes concentrated on the issues which affect the need for a coworking space and the issues which affect their attractiveness. The key findings of those two themes are listed below after which a synthesis is made in order to give an answer to the first research question.

Appleby Business Centre
- Any chances for social interaction attract people at a workspace (shop, reception, common room).
- People like it if things are made easy for them (e.g. easy in and out terms, all inclusive rent, finding, accessing, parking, using the space).
- Central and pleasant location is important for a rural workspace.
- Non-centralised location makes it difficult for staff and clients to get there.
- Proximity to the main road is more important than proximity to living accommodation.
- An agreeable and flexible space owner is important.
- People like a clean, warm, secure and comfortable office space.
- Some people have a need to bring their pets to work.
- Mobile technology and need for high quality housing give grounds for rural operations.
- Projects concerning rural areas are usually conducted in urban surroundings instead of a rural office space.

HUB Islington
- People join it because they lack social interaction and they want to be part of a community and collaborate.
- If people do not get to interact, they leave.
- Other reasons to join are cost-effectiveness, good way to test business and to learn from others, gives an opportunity to find competent people.
- People help and support each other also at a personal level.
- Coworkers hire each other, because people trust each other.
- Some coworking spaces in London are not so friendly, informal, or local.
- Natural light, the interior, furniture, plants, and stoves support the relaxed atmosphere.
- People do not like if they cannot have a quiet phone conversation, they are the only one in the industry, the infrastructure breaks down or prices do not allow one to grow.
- Long distance or changes in policy or pricing make people think about moving to another space.
- People discuss with their normal voice and it hardly disturbs anyone although some coworkers try to control the noise by having their headsets on.

Old Broadcasting House
- The most significant reason for coworking is lack of social interaction.
- Social interaction creates a network, which means safety for a self-employed person.
- Coworking allows one to employ other coworkers or become employed oneself.
- Coworking helps one to separate work and home, which creates higher motivation for work.
- Coworkers are supportive towards each other in all areas and meet each other also outside of work.
- Coworkers can start challenging projects as there is always someone to help.
- It may be confusing if hosts and coworkers have conflicting views of the purpose of the coworking space.
- Coworkers like if a coworking space makes them look professional.
- A neutral interior also works well.
- Transparent folding screens do not prevent collaboration.
- Coworkers appreciate a free coffee machine, good address, location, competent staff, and amenities nearby.
- Fixed price including many services is appreciated.
- Relaxed and friendly atmosphere is important.
- Noise from electronic devices and lack of privacy disturbs some people.
- Coworking space with a good brand and lavish amenities attract coworkers.
- Coworking space with craftsmen and artists attract some knowledge workers.

The three visits to different working spaces during the field study in England produced the data, which is interesting to compare with the literature review presented in chapter two. Many issues, as will be seen, confirm the findings from the previous studies, but there are also issues which bring something new to the field.

As the number of knowledge workers is increasing in developed countries, one in every five knowledge workers are in danger of being alienated (Nair & Vohra 2010). During the field study in England this seemed to be true, as lack of social interaction was so clearly the main driver behind the need to start working at a coworking space. In addition, it became apparent that people did not just want to share the same office space and have rare encounters with others, but they wanted to be part of a community and collaborate with other coworkers. Social interaction at a coworking space was found to be crucial issue as people really leave to another coworking space if they do not get to interact. One of the things that make social interaction so important for a self-employed person is that it helps to create a network which creates financial safety.

Figure 1 in chapter 2.1 shows the other factors issues besides social interaction, which are important for coworkers according to the 2nd global coworking survey (2011). The interviews during the field study highlighted the meaning of low costs, chance to separate work and home, new business opportunities, and a friendly atmosphere. The findings are in line with figure 1, although there are some differences. This may be due to the different methods used in the global coworking survey and the thesis.

Obvious evidence was found during the field study that coworking enables collaboration, shared knowledge and skills, and gives a good opportunity to subcontract, as Cohen (2011) has claimed. All these took place at every turn at both visited coworking spaces (HUB Islington and Old Broadcasting House), and there were even some signs at Appleby Business Centre that the proximity of other business had already resulted in cooperation of a kind. In addition, the interviews at HUB Islington and Old Broadcasting House indicated that coworkers start new ventures together.

According to Rouse (2011), there are a few features that a typical coworking space includes (see chapter 2.1). The field study in England proved his list to be true, although it is not completely sure whether the visited coworking spaces actually had 24/7 access, even though some of the coworkers could access the space with their own key (Levy, interview 19.4.2012; Broughton, interview 22.6.2012). Since Appleby Business Centre was not an actual coworking space (see chapter 4.3), it was missing a shared work space but seemed to have all the other features that define a coworking space.

The coworking pyramid of needs (see figure 2 in chapter 2.1) can be rather effortlessly applied to HUB Islington and Old Broadcasting House, but it would not be fruitful to classify Appleby Business Centre according to it, as rental offices lack social interaction which is so crucial to a coworking space. Both of the visited coworking spaces seem to be somewhere above

the middle level of the pyramid, although some issues seem to refer to a lower level, such as folding screens and fixed rent at Old Broadcasting House, and some issues with accessibility at HUB Islington (see chapter 6.2.1).

There were also some issues in the field study England which seem to bring new information to the field of coworking. The list below brings up the most important issues in no particular order.

- Coworkers hope that a coworking space would make them look professional. A reception, preferably free coffee machine, good address, central location, and competent staff among others attract coworkers.
- Coworkers like things which are easy and simple. Easy in and out terms, all inclusive rent, finding, accessing, parking, and using the space. Also basic things as clean, warm, secure and comfortable space are appreciated.
- Coworkers enjoy a relaxed atmosphere, which is reached with natural light, interior, furniture, plants, and for example wood burning stoves. Transparent folding screens may produce some privacy without preventing collaboration.
- Coworkers help and support each other also on a personal level and meet outside work. People trust each other which helps them to hire one another.
- A central and pleasant location is important especially for a rural workspace, as non-centralised location can make it difficult for staff and customers to get there.
- A coworker does not like it if there is no privacy, there is too much noise, she or he is the only one in the industry, the infrastructure breaks down, or the prices do not allow one to grow.
- Coworking space with a good brand and lavish amenities as well as coworking space with craftsmen and artists attract some coworkers.
- Some people seem to have a need to bring their pets to work in the rural areas.
- Mobile technology and need for high quality housing give grounds for rural operations. However, projects concerning rural areas are usually conducted in urban surroundings instead of a rural office space.

This chapter has produced an answer to the first research question of the study. As pointed out earlier, for many parts, the findings were in line with the previous studies about coworking. Nevertheless, there were also many findings which seem to have produced new information to the field of coworking and furthermore information, which can be used to give an answer to the main research problem. Unfortunately, the field study in England failed to find a rural coworking space which could have been visited and which would have produced valuable information for this study. Still, the visit to Appleby Business Centre in the rural area and the visits to the two urban coworking spaces gave decent amount of data for the descriptive part of the study.

7.2 Sustainable impacts in English coworking

A guide for visiting coworking spaces in England was divided into three themes, one of which concentrated on the sustainability issues. Table 5 displays the key findings of the theme, divided into three dimensions of sustainable development. A synthesis is made at the end of the chapter to give an answer to the second research question of the study.

Table 5   Key findings on sustainability issues at visited workspaces.

Workspace/ Dimension of sustainable development	Appleby Business Centre	HUB Islington	Old Broadcasting House
Social	Reception, shop, common room and public computers create social interaction between entrepreneurs who use the space, and within local community.	Coworkers are able to get help and support from other coworkers for their work as well as share their personal issues.	People enjoy working there as people are very supportive to each other in all areas.
		Casual events create a strong sense of community.	There are no organized social activities which would take place outside office hours, but coworkers meet each other also outside work.
		Coworkers enjoy themselves and are happy.	People are friendly and happy.
		Coworkers trust each other.	Coworkers do not interact with the other groups at the building, but there are no conflicts with them either.
		Rounded tables encourage collaboration.	
		The coworking space supports social businesses.	Coworkers feel responsible for promoting their coworking space.
			The hosts advice people to go to another coworking space if they think it would be more suitable for the customer.
			Some of the coworkers get benefits that the others do not?
Economic	The only serviced office space or coworking space within 30 kilome-	Businesses have grown and some have become very successful.	Businesses have become successful and moved out of the coworking space to

	tres.		their own office.
	Important to businesses which use the space and for the people who are going to start a new venture.	Keeps prices low, which gives new and small ventures a good chance to grow.	Coworkers have started new ventures together and overall there is something new taking place all the time.
	Supports other businesses by selling office equipment and renting office spaces.	Encourages sub-contracting.	Coworkers collaborate and subcontract a lot.
	Diversifies Appleby's selection of services.	Do not allow businesses to grow?	
		Some of the essential equipment or the infrastructure has broken down?	
Ecological	Recycling is being taken care of.	Recycling is being taken care of.	The energy performance of the building is somewhere in the middle level.
	Plans to purchase a heat pump.	Wood burning stoves which use saw dust.	University maintains the premises and it has its own environmental policy.
	A desire to reduce the dependency on private motoring.	Desks are made of recycled cardboard.	Landlord takes care of recycling, air conditioning etc.
		Food waste is being composted at the community garden.	Many coworkers live quite close to Old Broadcasting House, which makes an own car unnecessary.
		Have installed a second layer for the windows.	There are quite a few cyclists and some take a bus.
		Location offers coworkers a chance to cycle, or take the tube.	

According to the literature review in chapter two, coworking has all the potential of being a sustainable business as there are factors in coworking, which can have environmentally, socially, and economically positive impacts. Therefore it was interesting to explore how much effort the visited coworking spaces in England had put into sustainability issues.

Isolation and the feeling of loneliness were the main drivers behind the whole idea of coworking, which has to be the reason why social interaction is so strongly integrated to it (Dullroy 2012). In chapter 2.5 a space catalyst Jen Lea told about the moment when she realized that a successful

coworking space is not just about the building, but more importantly about right people who work there (Kwiatkowski & Buczynski 2011). Literature review also showed that coworkers tend to have higher motivation to work and healthier relation between work and family life (DeGuzman 2011).

Visits to the coworking spaces proved these findings to be true, as so many social benefits came up during the visits. One of the most interesting findings was that coworkers support each other in all areas and are willing to share their personal issues with the other coworkers. There seemed to be a strong sense of community at the visited coworking spaces as the coworkers meet each other also outside work, even though the coworking space would not organize any events. People who work at the visited coworking spaces seemed to be genuinely happy and enjoy the collaboration and social interaction that takes place there. It was also remarkable to see how much people trust other coworkers, especially at HUB Islington (figure 20).

Figure 20   Coworking at HUB Islington, London (Justinien Tribillion 2012).

Both HUB Islington and Old Broadcasting House seem to operate in a socially responsible way, as HUB Islington is a social enterprise which keeps prices low in order to help new ventures to grow. The host at the Old Broadcasting House said that they advise people to go to another coworking space if they think it would be more suitable for the customer. Visit to Appleby Business Centre showed that every little chance for a social interaction is appreciated at a rural office space, and that it would not take much to increase the amount of social interaction that takes place there.

According to Buczynski (2011c), a coworking space gives self-employed people a safe environment to try new things, which will eventually benefit the whole community and its economy. In addition, coworking spaces give people an opportunity to stay where they live, which preserves their money, talent and enthusiasm for use in the local economy. One of the economic benefits of coworking is low costs, thanks to shared resources and new business opportunities, as highlighted in chapter 2.5.

A number of issues were found during the visits to the coworking spaces, which had something to do with the economic activity. Both of the actual coworking spaces (HUB Islington and Old Broadcasting House) stated that many businesses have grown there and become successful. All the visited spaces, including Appleby Business Centre, seemed to be important to the people who are going to start a new venture in the area. Collaboration and subcontracting take place all the time at HUB Islington and Old Broadcasting House, and it seems to be the whole idea of the spaces to deliver it. Appleby Business Centre is an important actor locally as it is the only serviced office space within 30 kilometres.

Three different aspects of environmental sustainability were recognized in chapter 2.5, which were environmental impacts of 1) coworkers and their actions, 2) a coworking space, and 3) businesses that take place at a coworking space. Due to lack of resources, only the environmental impacts of coworking spaces were being explored in this study. The literature review showed that owners and hosts have an important role in making the office space become environmentally-friendly.

The field study in England showed that particularly the two coworking spaces had done many things for the environment, but to save costs as well. To begin with, all the three visited places had taken care of recycling. Appleby Business Centre seemed to be somewhat less active about environmental issues than the other two places, even though they had been planning to purchase a heat pump and are trying to do something about the dependency on private motoring. HUB Islington was able to show most issues, which aim to make their office space friendlier for the environment. Wood burning stoves, desks made of recycled cardboard, newly installed second layer for the windows, and the fact that the food waste is composted at the community garden, seem to prove that HUB Islington is operating according to the policy of the global HUB network (Sustainable impact n.d.).

In addition, Old Broadcasting House seemed to be doing its share for the environment, although the interviewed host was not able to give specific details, as the environmental issues are taken care of by the landlord, Leeds Metropolitan University. However, due to its environmental policy, the university takes care of recycling, air conditioning, refurbishment and all the other issues that have something to do with the maintenance of the building. Finally, both the coworkers at HUB Islington and Old Broadcasting House live quite close to the coworking space which is why many of them walk, cycle, take the bus or tube to their work. Private motoring seemed to be a problem only at Appleby Business Centre, as rural location makes many people dependent on their cars.

The purpose of the chapter was to find out if there are sustainable impacts associated with coworking in England. Table 5 and the synthesis made from it show that there are quite a few factors in English coworking that are related to the three dimensions of sustainable development. However, most findings only confirmed the findings of the previous studies, whereas totally new information was hardly found. This was partially due to the

fact that the field study had limited resources and had to focus more on the first research question, which was seen somewhat more crucial for the study.

Again, absence of a rural coworking space in the study has to be noticed, although the second research question was not particularly interested in coworking in the rural areas. However, as stated already in chapter 4.3, the visit to Appleby Business Centre gave the author some understanding of the weaknesses and opportunities that there are in running an office space in the rural location.

7.3 Needs of potential rural coworkers in Southwest Finland

Before any conclusions can be made about the preconditions for rural coworking spaces in Southwest Finland, the needs of potential rural coworkers in the area will be delineated. At first, there is a list of all the key findings from the case study Mietoinen divided into three themes used in the interviews (appendix 3). Furthermore, the third theme is divided into three sections according to the three dimensions of sustainability applied in the study.

Once again, a synthesis is made in the end of the chapter to give an answer to the third research question.

Theme 1. Issues affecting the need for a coworking space
- Many issues support the need for a rural coworking space (e.g. social network, shared resources, separates work and family life).
- Many issues disturb the need for a rural coworking space (e.g. lack of privacy, data security, and well-equipped home offices).
- The need could increase, if people took a new attitude towards work and if coworking would be promoted.
- Telecommuters could need it to collaborate with the colleagues more efficiently.
- People don't like it if a space lacks sense of community, they don't get any feedback, there is no privacy, or there is too much noise.

Theme 2. Issues affecting the attractiveness of a coworking space
- Location should be somewhere one can cycle or walk to and it has to be within the reach of public transport and close to other services.
- The most important amenity is a restaurant, café, or a shop, where one can buy his or her lunch.
- Interior should be casual and colourful and it should be peaceful and rousing at the same time.
- There is a need for safety boxes, which can be locked. Some people need bigger and more secure storage space.
- The most essential issues for a meeting room are a table and chairs for ten people, Wi-Fi, projector and a screen, but some require more lavish facilities.
- Common room should be casual and bright and one should be able to rest there. It should contain a well-equipped kitchenette.

- Some people need to access the space 24/7.
- Some people would appreciate a CCTV or a burglar alarm. A key card would enable an easy access to the space.
- Essential office equipment include an all-in-one A3 size laser printer, mailing equipment and the usual equipment (e.g. a stapler, a hole puncher).
- Both wired and wireless network are needed. The network has to be fast and it should not be limited in any way.
- People need both open floor plan office and private workstations.
- Many issues can make a space unattractive: no sense of community, you are the only one in the industry, too expensive, unsuitable workstations etc.
- People are ready to pay in order to be able to use a rural coworking space. Pricing should include different alternatives.

Theme 3. Importance of the sustainability issues for the coworkers

Economic Issues
- Potential coworkers are able and interested to support new ventures and fellow coworkers provided that it does not have any negative influence on their own businesses.
- Some entrepreneurs find it difficult to make contracts with other local companies as they want to be independent.

Social issues
- Potential coworkers are willing to employ young people in order to prevent them from social exclusion, but many companies lack financial opportunities to actually do so.
- Potential coworkers are interested in attending casual social events. However, there are some obstacles (e.g. people are too busy).
- People are willing to donate their old furniture, art and equipment to a coworking space.
- Rural coworking space should be open for all as it would be fruitful to meet entrepreneurs from other areas, there would be more people to share the costs with and it would produce new views to a coworking space.

Ecological issues
- Potential coworkers are ready to reduce the amount of waste that they produce providing that the space owner has made it easy.
- Potential coworkers would consider environmental issues before they make a purchase especially if there is a common agreement. Certain fields are more environmentally aware than other fields.
- Potential coworkers are ready to cycle or walk to a coworking space providing that the distance is less than five kilometres, there is enough time, and the weather is not severe.
- Potential coworkers are ready to spend a day cleaning the surroundings of a coworking space once a year if the sense of community is good enough.
- Most of the potential coworkers do not care about the way in which the electricity that is used at a coworking space has been produced.

- Coworking space should be energy efficient because otherwise it will undo the climate benefit gained for example through telecommuting.

The first theme of the case study was trying to find out, which issues affect the need for a coworking space in the rural areas of Southwest Finland. According to the literature review, there is hardly any literature available on the possible special needs of the rural coworkers. Therefore these findings will be mostly reflected to the common needs of the coworkers, which were presented in chapter 2.1.

The literature review showed that people who have a need to start working at a coworking space usually feel isolated, which is why they would like to become a part of a community. In addition, there are many other factors which create a need for a coworking space, such as opportunity to separate work from home, shared resources, and need for new business opportunities.

Potential rural coworkers seem to have very similar needs as their counterparts in more urban areas, as for example the need for a wider social network, shared resources, and an opportunity to separate home and work were mentioned repeatedly during the interviews. There are also issues which seem to have a negative effect on the need for a rural coworking space. Respondents seemed to be especially worried about their privacy and data security. The need for a rural coworking space may increase in the future if people take a new attitude towards work and if coworking is promoted. Potential rural coworkers do not seem to need a coworking space which lacks a sense of community, where one does not get any feedback, and which is too noisy.

The second theme of the case study was about attractiveness of a rural coworking space. Again, there was no literature found on the issues that would make a rural coworking space attractive, which is why the findings are reflected to the results of the first global coworking survey (Foertsch 2011a). Most of the issues which were found important in the global survey seem to be important for the potential rural coworkers in Southwest Finland as well. For example, people have a need for both open floor plan office space and private workstations. According to an operator of a rural coworking space, especially new rural coworkers are asking for private office rooms as they are concerned about their privacy (Foertsch 2011e).

According to the potential rural coworkers in Southwest Finland and the global coworking survey (Foertsch 2011a), the most important nearby service is a restaurant, café, or a shop, where one can buy his or her lunch. Most important amenities within the coworking space are internet access, an all-in-one laser printer, a meeting room, and a kitchen.

The first global coworking survey (Foertsch 2011a) showed that a little more than half of the coworkers need to access the coworking space 24/7, and this seems to be the case also in the rural areas of Southwest Finland. The global survey also revealed that coworkers want to have influence on the layout and design of a coworking space. Also in the case study

Mietoinen there were obvious signs that potential coworkers emphasized the importance of interior for the atmosphere and had plenty of wishes related to it.

Some of the issues that came up during the case study may be seen as special needs of the potential rural coworkers, as literature review did not include any of the following.

- Location of a rural coworking space should be somewhere one can cycle or walk to and it has to be within the reach of public transport and close to other services.
- There is a need for safety boxes, which can be locked. Some people need bigger and more secure storage space.
- Common room should be casual and bright and one should be able to rest there.
- Some people would appreciate a CCTV or a burglar alarm. A key card would enable an easy access to the space.
- People are ready to pay in order to be able to use a rural coworking space. Pricing should include different alternatives.
- Many issues can make a space unattractive: no sense of community, you are the only one in the industry, too expensive, unsuitable workstations etc.

The third theme of the case study tried to find out what is the potential rural coworkers' attitude towards economic, social, and ecological sustainability. This was important to explore, as the main research problem is specifically interested in the potential of sustainable rural coworking in Southwest Finland. The literature review concerning sustainability and coworking in chapter 2.5 showed that coworking space can operate in a sustainable way, if both coworkers and hosts do their share. The case study Mietoinen showed that potential rural coworkers are quite ready to act in a sustainable way, as can be seen below.

Kwiatkowski (2012) has explored the impacts of coworking on the local economy and has stated that coworking helps people to stay in smaller towns, which preserves their money and talent for use in the local economy. She has also stated that coworking spaces give a safe environment for the local entrepreneurs to try something new, which will eventually benefit the local economy. Potential rural coworkers in Southwest Finland seemed to be able and interested to start and support new ventures at a rural coworking space as well as collaborate with other coworkers. However, many were somewhat cautious about giving up their independence, and there were people who were also afraid that cooperation could potentially harm their own businesses.

According to the literature review, socially sustainable coworking space requires that there is a sense of community at a coworking space, and that coworkers realize that a cohesive community is more important than for example lavish amenities. Interviewed potential rural coworkers are willing to build up a community by spending time with the other coworkers also outside work. In addition, they seemed to be open for new acquaintances as it would produce new ideas and views to a coworking space. Po-

tential rural coworkers say they are ready to operate in socially responsible way, for example by employing young people in order to prevent them from social exclusion, or by donating their old furniture, art and equipment to a coworking space.

The literature review in chapter 2.5 showed that environmental sustainability is easier to reach at a coworking space if both coworkers and their hosts do their share. The case study Mietoinen was particularly interested in the ability of potential rural coworkers to act in a way that is environmentally-friendly. The interviews gave some idea on which way the potential rural coworkers would think for example about introducing the Green Office programme (WWF 2009) at a rural coworking space. Case study Mietoinen showed that potential rural coworkers seem to be ready to do their share for the environment, provided that the host makes it easy for them. In addition, some common agreement could be an efficient way to engage people to act more environmentally friendly. Certain fields are clearly more environmentally aware than others, but overall all potential rural coworkers are ready to make small decisions in favour of the environment.

This chapter has given an answer to the third research question, which was interested in the needs and requirements of potential rural coworkers in Southwest Finland. The comparison between the information gained through the case study Mietoinen and the literature review has shown that potential rural coworkers seem to have very similar needs and requirements as their counterparts in more urban areas. In addition to the common needs, potential rural coworkers have special requirements, such as a central location of a coworking space. One essential part of the third research question was to explore if potential rural coworkers are able and ready to operate in a sustainable way. When the three dimensions of sustainability were analysed it became apparent that most of the potential rural coworkers are capable to create and support economic activity in the area, they are socially responsible and understand the importance of a strong community, and finally, they are ready to do their share for the environment.

7.4   Limitations of the study

To conclude the study, it is usually essential to evaluate the validity and reliability of the research. Even though those terms have been traditionally used in quantitative research and may therefore not be suitable for a qualitative study as this thesis is, some sort of evaluation has to be done. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2001, 214). Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2001, 186) state that reliability of the study means that either the study will give the same results if it is repeated, or that the same results will be received by a different researcher. Validity of the research means the ability of a study to explore precisely the issues that it is meant to explore.

The basic level of reliability in this study was secured by giving specific details on how the research was conducted, for example time that was used on interviews and places where interviews took place. In addition,

usage of quotations from the interviews in the thesis increases the reliability of the study, as it is a way to show where the author's conclusions are based on. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2001, 214.) There are, however, a few issues which may decrease the reliability of this study. One question is whether the sample in the field study England was large enough, as there seem to be big variety of coworking spaces is England and only two of them were visited. One has to also keep in mind that the third visited workspace was a rental office space, although the visit there gave valuable information concerning the challenges of running an office space in rural surroundings.

Another issue with the reliability of the study is about the interviews in the case study Mietoinen, as some of the respondents were familiar to the interviewer which may have affected their answers. Nevertheless, the risk was taken into account during the planning process, which is why the questions in the interviews were not personal but interested in the views of the whole group. Although there was an attempt not to talk about personal needs and requirements in terms of rural coworking, there were signs that some respondents had to do so in order to be able to answer the question.

The validity of the study seems to be satisfactory. Throughout the process the aim was to find preconditions for sustainable rural coworking in Southwest Finland, which was successfully reached. The key to the good validity of the study was the field study in England, which was essential to increase author's understanding of the coworking phenomenon, and thereby he was able to introduce ten preconditions in the beginning of chapter eight. In addition, the case study Mietoinen was successful and managed to produce the information that was crucial in order to be able to give the preconditions.

Overall, this study has been able to accomplish the goals that were set in the beginning of the process. However, some issues have to be brought up for future purposes. It would have been useful to have more respondents with different occupations in the case study Mietoinen, as the study later showed that rural coworking spaces have to be open for all in order to thrive. Additionally, a field study in England or in any other country with a vivid coworking scene, should include a visit to at least five different coworking spaces to be able to say more about typical features of coworking and coworking spaces. Two global coworking surveys could also be used more thoroughly than this study has managed to do. There is no doubt that the amount of available information and also academic researches on coworking will increase drastically over the next few years, which will allow more in-depth studies of coworking and also rural coworking.

8   CONTRIBUTION

The aim of the study has been to find preconditions for sustainable rural coworking spaces in Southwest Finland. The descriptive part of the study managed to increase the author's understanding of the whole coworking phenomenon, whereas the mapping in Mietoinen revealed the needs and requirements of the potential rural coworkers in the area. This information alongside with the previous studies and their findings made it possible to name a comprehensive list of preconditions for rural coworking in the area.

8.1   Preconditions for sustainable rural coworking spaces in Southwest Finland

In addition to the more tangible preconditions, there seem to be large scale issues that are more difficult to estimate or to change, such as cultural issues. The supervisor of the thesis in University of Leeds, Lucie Middlemiss, had seen that coworking works extremely well in the Netherlands because, generally speaking, Dutch people like to do things together. Furthermore, she said that one has to take into account national characteristics of people when estimating a potential for coworking in Southwest Finland. (Middlemiss, personal communication 20.6.2012.) The literature review of the study hardly included any information about the cultural issues in the rural areas of Southwest Finland, but case study Mietoinen indicates that people in the area may be somewhat more cautious about sharing their ideas or collaborating, than for instance people in England.

Another large scale issue that can be recognized is age, as it became apparent in the data collection phase in Mietoinen that interviews may be affected by the age of the respondents. In case study Mietoinen respondents who seemed to be the most interested in the phenomenon were between the ages of 30 and 40, whereas people in their fifties were somewhat more reserved. This age range from 30 to 40 is corresponding to the age range of most coworkers in the visited coworking spaces in England, which seems to suggest that coworking is especially appealing to people between those ages. However, previous studies have shown that the average age of coworkers in smaller towns in the USA is much higher (43 years) than in big cities (32 years) (Foertsch 2011d). Therefore rural coworking spaces should not exclude any potential coworkers, no matter what their age is.

The list below aims to give tangible preconditions for sustainable rural coworking in Southwest Finland based on the knowledge from the literature review, field study England, and case study Mietoinen. The most essential parts of the preconditions have been bolded.

1. **Any venture to start a rural coworking space in Southwest Finland should begin by building up a community of people**, who are ready to spend some time together in order to create a cohesive community. The first step to build a coworking community in a rural area

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could be to start with an event called jelly. Jelly is a casual coworking event which can take place for example in a person's home or a cafeteria. (Jelly – working together is more fun for everyone n.d.). In addition, a promoter of a rural coworking space should make people realize that it is more important to have a good team spirit than lavish amenities at a coworking space.

2. **Planning and designing a coworking space should be done together in a group of engaged coworkers in order to prevent potential conflicts in the future.** It is equally important to decide how the group understands the five coworking values, what kind of common rules there should be and so on. Guidelines for a rural coworking space are presented elsewhere in this study, but one should note that even the basic things will take you far, such as clean, warm, comfortable, and safe office space. Also concerns about privacy and data security should be taken into account during the planning process.

3. **Location of a coworking space is highly important in rural surroundings**, as it should be easy to get there and it should be close to other services, such as a restaurant or a shop. Fortunately, there are usually many public places available which satisfy those conditions, and which may be used partly as a coworking space, such as banks, buildings of the local parish, former town hall, mall, and library. It should be noted that easy access to a rural coworking space is more important than proximity to it. However, long distance may mean that coworkers use the space less often.

4. **There is no need to take a severe financial risk when establishing a rural coworking space**, as it is usually low in overhead and cooperation with other actors in the area helps to save costs and manage risks. It is likely that for example a municipality will be interested to support rural coworking providing that it can be seen beneficial for the area. In addition, potential rural coworkers are ready to do their share for a coworking space by contributing their skills, relations, and property in order to make the space both functional and attractive. They also understand a need to operate in a sustainable way, which gives grounds to save more money for example by purchasing second hand equipment and furniture. However, sustainability should not be an excuse to a shabby appearance of the space.

5. **If a rural coworking space will be owned or operated by many actors, the importance of a host increases.** The host should be flexible and even-handed, and she or he should be able to recognize problems at a coworking space and take care of them. Furthermore, a host will probably take care of the reception as well at a small coworking space, which will increase the host's role even more, as it would be almost entirely up to her or him to make coworkers look and feel professional.

6. **Fast and reliable internet connection is crucial to any coworking space.** However, literature review showed that it can be difficult to get such an internet connection to a rural coworking space, as it can be too expensive. Again, cooperation, shared resources with other local ac-

tors, and even public funding make it possible to acquire a fibre optics network to a rural coworking space.

7. **Coworking is such a new phenomenon in Finland that it requires plenty of time to promote it to potential rural coworkers.** The promotion should include the issues that are most important to the potential rural coworkers, which have been described in this study. All the knowhow at a coworking space and other experienced people attract new coworkers, which is why marketing material should focus mostly on people and their stories. Social media is an easy tool to reach potential rural coworkers, but one has to use also more traditional media, such as the radio and local newspapers. Finally, international forums like Coworking wiki should be used to get the latest ideas on how to promote coworking and how to make a coworking space attractive.

8. **A rural coworking space should respond to the needs of all the potential rural coworkers** as well as possible. Big cities, such as Manchester in England, have enough population so that one of the coworking spaces there has decided to offer their services merely for women (Turner, interview 10.4.2012). This kind of segmentation does not seem possible in any areas with low population density, such as rural areas of Southwest Finland. On the contrary, a rural coworking space in Southwest Finland should try to appeal to groups such as freelancers, entrepreneurs, telecommuters, local innovators, cottagers, students, craftsmen, masseurs, artists, digital workers, as well as associations, municipalities and parishes. In addition, a rural coworking space could explore an opportunity to offer workspace for special groups like WLAN-wanderers, as described by Sitra, the Finnish Innovation Fund. (Sihvonen 2011, 5-9.)

9. **Rural coworkers in Southwest Finland are ready to operate in a sustainable way if it is made easy for them** and if it is expected of them for example due to an environmental campaign. Some coworkers are more aware of the sustainability issues than others, which means that focusing on those issues could help a rural coworking space to attract certain groups, such as freelancers. It is recommendable that a rural coworking space would cooperate for example with a service centre for sustainable development and energy issues in Southwest Finland, Valonia, in order to get the sufficient knowledge and support to operate in a sustainable way.

10. **Social interaction is the main reason why people are interested in rural coworking and therefore it should be supported in every way.** Like their counterparts in urban coworking spaces, rural coworkers are looking for a chance to collaborate and share their ideas. Therefore it is essential that there are coworkers and businesses at a coworking space, which can give peer support to each other. It became apparent during the study that no one wants to work at a coworking space feeling that she or he is the only one in the industry.

Despite the small amount of suitable literature as seen in chapter two, the study has been successful due to the large amount of data gathered in

Mietoinen in Southwest Finland, and the three workspaces in England. Only severe setback during the process was that no rural coworking spaces were found in England apart from West Lexham, which came up during the visit to HUB Islington (Levy, interview 19.4.2012). However, an attempt to contact them failed to produce any useful information for the study. Overall, the most useful data for the study was collected by interviewing and observing, as emails and phone calls to such organizations as Telework Association in England and the Rural Network of Finland did not help the study.

Somewhat disappointing was that nearly all the coworkers in England seemed to be freelancers or entrepreneurs, and no telecommuters were found at the coworking spaces. The literature review of the study showed that coworking spaces suit telecommuters as well, but for some reason they do not seem to exploit the visited spaces in England. This may indicate that companies do not want their employees to telecommute at a shared office space but home, or telecommuters have not found their way to coworking spaces yet. Absence of telecommuters at the visited coworking spaces should not, however, mean that they should be left out of the plans to promote coworking in rural Finland. On the contrary, rural telecommuters may be more interested in social interaction with other knowledge workers, as rural surroundings can get quite isolating.

8.2 Contribution of the study

There are a few levels of actors for which this study has managed to contribute. The contribution for each level has been declared separately in this chapter starting from the commissioner of the study, Valonia, and ending with the global field of rural coworking.
1. Commissioner of the study, Valonia
2. Mietoinen
3. Field of rural development in Finland
4. Field of Finnish coworking
5. Global field of rural coworking

Commissioner of the study, Valonia
First of all Valonia, a service centre for sustainable development and energy issues in the Southwest Finland, has received information about the preconditions for sustainable rural coworking spaces in the area. This study includes a great deal of information, which Valonia can use to make a project concerning rural coworking, or any other actions related to it. Valonia has also received valuable information about the environmental awareness of the knowledge workers in the rural areas of Southwest Finland. Valonia can use the findings of this study for example to pilot a rural coworking space, or to promote telecommuting or any other environmentally friendly behaviour to the rural knowledge workers. Finally, findings in this study will help Valonia to guide municipalities and communities in Southwest Finland to develop and establish a sustainable rural coworking space.

Mietoinen

A small town of Mietoinen was selected to be the place where the case study took place. At the time of reporting the study (August 2012), a former town hall in Mietoinen was selected by Valonia to demonstrate rural coworking as part of the national telework day in September 2012. Potential rural coworkers will be invited to try coworking for one day and furthermore, many other interest groups, such as media, municipal managers, researchers and regional developers, have a possibility to find out about coworking and particularly rural coworking during the day. If the demonstration is successful and the event will get a decent amount of media coverage, Mietoinen will get a positive image in the area and maybe eventually, funding and premises for a permanent sustainable coworking space.

Field of rural development in Finland

As shown in the literature review in chapter 2.4, there are many issues which would give grounds for coworking spaces in rural Finland. Information found on this study will not only help regional developers and municipal officers in Southwest Finland to get tools to work for rural coworking, but also elsewhere in Finland. For long, teleworking has been thought of as a solution to maintain the rural areas of Finland inhabited (see Cronberg, Kolehmainen & Lehikoinen 1990, also Leinamo 2009), but according to this study coworking may have even more to give.

In addition to the benefits of teleworking, rural coworking supports local economy by enabling collaboration, subcontracting, joint ventures, and all other forms of shared activities. It should be noted that the key factor in the success of small communities is an opportunity for creative people to cooperate (Hyyryläinen 2008, 109-110). That is exactly what coworking is the most capable of delivering. Furthermore, coworking delivers social interaction for self-employed people which, according to this study, seems to be the most important issue for coworkers themselves.

Field of Finnish coworking

Coworking is a new phenomenon in Finland since it was not until 2009 that the first Finnish coworking space was opened in Helsinki (Janhonen 2011, 9). Since then, many new coworking spaces have opened their doors for the public, but the definition of coworking space seems to be somewhat blurred in Finland, as highlighted in chapter 2.2. This study and its findings may help Finnish coworking community to grow and to be more clearly separated from so called business incubators, which are nearly always targeted for a limited group of people, and which help businesses to grow and encourage them to find a space of their own (see for example Grazy town n.d. and Boost Turku n.d.). The idea is therefore quite different from coworking, as for example field study England has shown. The study and the publicity it may get can also help to get a common Finnish translation for a word *coworking*, as during the literature review it became obvious that the translation in Finnish varies a great deal.

Global field of sustainable rural coworking

Rural coworking is a very new phenomenon globally, which is why this study may be of interest to the people who are either researchers or trying to help the progress of a rural coworking space wherever they live. Sus-

tainability was an essential part of the study and it will give especially the hosts and owners of coworking spaces new ideas on how they could make their space operate in an economically, socially, and ecologically sustainable way.

This study has successfully managed to define preconditions for sustainable rural coworking in Southwest Finland, and rose up new questions concerning for example the implementation of such a workspace in the area. The literature review showed that there are usually a number of buildings in rural areas which could be suitable for coworking purposes. An interesting topic to explore would be whether towns and municipalities in Southwest Finland are interested to use their premises for this kind of purposes once they are aware of the benefits of coworking. As soon as the first permanent coworking space has been opened in rural areas of Southwest Finland, it will be interesting for someone to research for example the impacts on the local economy, sustainability of the place, and satisfaction of the coworkers.

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ASSIGNMENT AGREEMENT

HAMK
HÄMEEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

OPINNÄYTETYÖSOPIMUS

OPISKELIJA

Etu- ja sukunimi	Opiskelijanumero	Puhelin
Juha Heikkilä	1102400	040 509 1043
Koulutusohjelma Maaseudun kehittämisen koulutusohjelma (ylempi amk)		

OPINNÄYTETYÖN AIHE
Preconditions for Sustainable Rural Coworking Spaces in Southwest Finland

OPINNÄYTETYÖN TOIMEKSIANTAJA

Yrityksen/Työyhteisön nimi
Valonia - Varsinais-Suomen kestävän kehityksen ja energia-asioiden palvelukeskus

Opinnäytetyölle nimetyn toimeksiantajaa edustavan ohjaajan yhteystiedot:

Nimi Paula Väisänen	Osoite Vanha Suurtori 7, 20500 TURKU
Puhelin 044 907 5986	Sähköposti paula.vaisanen@valonia.fi

Opinnäytetyöstä mahdollisesti aiheutuvien kustannusten korvaaminen opinnäytetyön tekijälle (mitä, miten)
Valonia ja opiskelija sopivat tästä erillisellä sopimuksella.
Mahdollinen korvaus HAMKille (mitä, miten)

Opinnäytetyön tavoite ja tavoiteltava hyöty: Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on tuottaa taustatietoa suunnitteilla olevalle hankkeelle, jonka aikana edistetään yhteisöllisten työtilojen syntymistä Varsinais-Suomen maaseutu-alueille. Taustatietoa tuotetaan tekemällä tapaustutkimus yhteisöllisen työtilan toimintamahdollisuuksista ja hyödyistä Mietoisissa.

OPINNÄYTETYÖN OHJAAVA OPETTAJA (HAMK)

Nimi Jarmo Levonen	Osoite Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulu HAMK, PL 230, 13101 Hämeenlinna
Puhelin 050 574 5500	Sähköposti jarmo.levonen@hamk.fi

Opinnäytetyöt ovat julkisia. Jos työ sisältää toimeksiantajan kannalta luottamuksellista tietoa, tämä esitetään varsinaisesta työstä erillisessä tausta-aineistossa. Tausta-aineistoa säilytetään HAMKin koulutusohjelmassa 6 kk opinnäytetyön arvioinnista, minkä jälkeen se tuhotaan, ellei toimeksiantajan kanssa ole muuta sovittu. Teki-jänoikeuksista on sovittava kirjallisesti erikseen.

Sovimme seuraavaa mahdollisesta luottamuksellisesta tausta-aineistosta

Kyllä ☐ Opinnäytetyö sisältää luottamuksellista tausta-aineistoa.
Opinnäytetyön toimeksiantajana pyydän, että seuraavassa perusteltu ja tarkennettu opinnäytetyön tausta-aineisto käsitellään luottamuksellisena, eikä julkisteta valmiissa opinnäytetyössä:

Opinnäytetyön digitaalinen julkistaminen
Opinnäytetyön toimeksiantajana olen tietoinen, että mikäli opiskelija antaa luvan, hyväksytty opinnäy-tetyö julkistetaan ammattikorkeakoulujen verkkokirjastossa Theseuksessa, www.theseus.fi

Theseuksessa julkistetussa opinnäytetyössä toimeksiantajan nimi
x saa näkyä
☐ ei saa näkyä

Tämä sopimus on voimassa 31.12.2012 saakka.

ALLEKIRJOITUKSET
Paikka ja päiväys _____ HÄMEENLINNA _____ 29.8.2012 _____

Työn toimeksiantajan edustaja	Opiskelija	HAMKin koulutusohjelman edustaja / ohjaava opettaja

Tätä opinnäytetyösopimusta on tehty kolme samansisältöistä kappaletta, yksi toimeksiantajalle, yksi opiskelijalle ja yksi koulutusohjelmalle. Sopimus arkistoidaan voimassaoloaika + 3 vuotta.
L4 2010

GUIDE FOR VISITING COWORKING SPACES IN ENGLAND

Contact a coworking space by sending them an email and ask them if it's ok to visit them and gather information for my master's thesis. Tell them that I would make short interviews, observing and photographing. Agree on time.

1. Visit the coworking space and start with talking to the host. Show him/her the invitation received from University of Leeds and tell that you are making a field study of coworking spaces. Make sure that short interviews, photographing and observing are ok.

2. At first interview the host about sustainability issues (Theme 3. Importance of the sustainability issues for the coworkers). Make sure it is ok to record the interview.

    Economy
    a. Do you know if the coworkers in this coworking space have started any new ventures alone or together?
    b. Do you know if there has been any subcontracting in this coworking space?
    c. In which ways do coworkers help and support each other in this coworking space?

    Social
    d. How does the idea of a social enterprise come true in your coworking space?
    e. Do you have any casual activity in the evenings for the coworkers?
    f. Do coworkers use their own resources as knowledge, skills, or relations to benefit the coworking space or fellow coworkers?

    Ecological
    g. Can you please describe how the ecological issues are being taken into account in your coworking space?
    h. Is there anything else that you are doing for the environment?
    i. Do you know how people travel to your coworking space?

3. Interview a few coworkers (questions below). Tell them briefly about the subject of my thesis. Make sure it is ok to record an interview.

    Theme 1. Issues affecting the need for a coworking space
    a. Can you remember which were the things that made you use a coworking space?
    b. Are there any issues, which disturb the use of a coworking space?

    Theme 2. Issues affecting the attractiveness of a coworking space
    a. Can you tell me why you have decided to work in this coworking space?

      b. Can you name at least three things that make this coworking space attractive?

      c. Are there any issues in this coworking space that have made you think of moving to another coworking space? If so can you name them?

4. Get more information for the themes 1 and 2.
   a. Take pictures of services, interior, furniture, spaces, safety lockers, meeting room, social facilities, surroundings, "machine room", and people if they permit it
   b. Observe the coworking space and coworkers and write down where and how does collaboration take place?
   c. Analyse the coworking space via brochures and web sites (for example who is the administrator, what is the price, what equipment is available, what other activities take place).

5. Get more information for the theme 3.
   a. Take pictures of the notice board and posters
   b. Analyse sustainability via brochures and web sites
   c. Observe the coworking space and write down the issues regarding sustainability.

GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWS IN MIETOINEN (in Finnish)

Theme 1.
Issues affecting the need for a coworking space
a. Millä perusteella _____ voisi olla tarvetta yhteisölliselle työtilalle?
b. Mitkä _____ toimenkuvaan kuuluvat asiat haittaavat tai estävät yhteisöllisen työtilan käyttöä?
c. Mitä tulisi tapahtua _____ toimenkuvassa, jotta yhteisölliselle työtilalle syntyisi tarvetta tai tarve olisi suurempi?
d. Mitkä muut asiat voisivat lisätä _____ yhteisöllisen työtilan tarvetta?
e. Mitkä asiat voisivat vähentää _____ yhteisöllisen työtilan tarvetta?
f. Tuleeko vielä jotain mieleen liittyen _____ yhteisöllisen työtilan tarpeeseen?

Theme 2.
Issues affecting the attractiveness of a coworking space
a. Minkälaista sijaintia _____ vaatisivat yhteisölliseltä työtilalta?
b. Mitä yhteisöllisen työtilan lähellä olevia palveluita _____ vaatisivat?
c. Minkälaista kalustusta ja sisustusta _____ vaatisivat yhteisölliseltä työtilalta?
d. Minkälaisia säilytystiloja _____ vaatisivat yhteisölliseltä työtilalta?
e. Minkälaista neuvotteluhuonetta _____ vaatisivat yhteisölliseltä työtilalta?
f. Minkälaista taukotilaa _____ vaatisivat yhteisölliseltä työtilalta?
g. Minkälaisia aukioloaikoja _____ vaatisivat yhteisölliseltä työtilalta?
h. Minkälaista kulunvalvontaa _____ vaatisivat yhteisölliseltä työtilalta?
i. Minkälaisia toimistolaitteita _____ vaatisivat yhteisölliseltä työtilalta?
j. Minkälaisia viestintäyhteyksiä _____ vaatisivat yhteisölliseltä työtilalta?
k. Minkälaista ilmapiiriä _____ vaatisivat yhteisölliseltä työtilalta?
l. Minkälainen työtilaratkaisu olisi paras _____, jos ääripäät ovat avokonttori ja jokaisella omat työhuoneet?
m. Mitkä työtilassa olevat tai työtilasta puuttuvat asiat voisivat sammuttaa _____ kiinnostuksen työtilan käyttöön?
n. Mitkä muut asiat voisivat sammuttaa _____ kiinnostuksen työtilan käyttöön?
o. Ovatko _____ valmiita maksamaan yhteisöllisen työtilan käytöstä? Jos kyllä -> Mihin hinnan tulisi perustua?
p. Tuleeko vielä mieleen työtilan vetovoimaan liittyviä asioita eli mikä tekee työtilasta vetovoimaisen _____ mielestä?

Theme 3.
Importance of the sustainability issues
Talous
a. Jos joku on perustamassa uutta yritystä yhteisöllisessä työtilassa, niin millä tavoin _____ voisivat auttaa häntä?
b. Minkälaiset mahdollisuudet ja intressit _____ on auttaa tai edistää uuden yritystoiminnan syntyä yhteisöllisessä työtilassa?
c. Miten kiinnostuneita _____ ovat tekemään yhteistyösopimuksia muiden paikallisten toimijoiden kanssa?

d. Miten kiinnostuneita _____ ovat käyttämään omia tietoja, taitoja ja suhteitaan muiden työtilan käyttäjien hyväksi?

Sosiaalisuus

e. Jos kunta pyytää yhteisöllistä työtilaa osallistumaan nuorten syrjäytymisen ehkäisyyn harjoittelupaikkoja tarjoamalla, niin millä tavoin _____ vastaavat?

f. Mitkä mahdollisuudet _____ on osallistua yhteisöllisen työtilan yhteishengen luomiseen (mm. satunnaiset ja vapaamuotoiset iltatilaisuudet tai kehittämisristeilyt)?

g. Osallistuisivatko _____ yhteisöllisen työtilan kehittämiseen esimerkiksi lahjoittamalla omia vanhoja huonekalujaan, taidettaan ja laitteitaan tai tietoja, taitoja ja suhteitaan?

h. Jos Mietoisten yhteisöllisessä työtilassa kävisi vain mietoislaisia, niin mitä hyötyä tai haittaa siitä olisi _____?

i. Jos Mietoisten yhteisöllisessä työtilassa kävisi ihmisiä myös Mietoisten ulkopuolelta, niin mitä hyötyä tai haittaa siitä olisi _____?

Ympäristö

j. Millaisena näet _____ valmiuden osallistua jätteiden määrän vähentämiseen ja kierrättämiseen (esim. kompostointi)?

k. Mitkä mahdollisuudet _____ on kävellä tai pyöräillä yhteisölliseen työtilaan, jos se on korkeintaan viiden kilometrin päässä?

l. Jos yhteisöllisessä työtilassa otettaisiin käyttöön Green Office -ympäristöohjelma, niin olisivatko _____ valmiita huomioimaan hankinnoissaan myös ympäristönäkökohtia?

m. Voisivatko _____ osallistua Mietoisten alueen viihtyisyyden parantamiseen esimerkiksi keräämällä roskia työtilan lähistöltä yhden työpäivän ajan kerran vuodessa?

n. Miten merkittävä asia yhteisöllisessä työtilassa käytettävän sähkön tuotantotapa on _____?

o. Tuleeko vielä muuta mieleen kestävään kehitykseen liittyen?

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STORY OF A FICTIONAL RURAL COWORKING SPACE (in Finnish)

Arkiaamu jossakin päin Varsinais-Suomen maaseutua vuonna 2014

On kaunis huhtikuun aamu. Marko on juuri saanut aamiaisensa syötyä ja alkaa nyt valmistautua työpaikalle lähtöön. Tottuneesti hän nappaa autonsa avaimet keittiön tasolta ennen kuin muistaa, että tänään hänelle riittääkin kulkupeliksi polkupyörä. Vanhalle kunnantalolle ei ole kuin muutama kilometri matkaa ja pyöräilyhän tekee kunnollekin hyvää. Edellisellä viikolla ostettu uusi pyörälaukku saa kuljettaa mukanaan läppäriä ja muuta työpäivän aikana tarvittavaa tavaraa.

Pyöräillessään Markolla on sopivasti aikaa mietiskellä maailman menoa. Muutama vuosi sitten he olivat vaimon kanssa muuttaneet maalle paremman elämänlaadun toivossa, mutta kaupunkiin tehtävä työmatka oli vuosien mittaan osoittautunut yllättävän raskaaksi ja aikaa vieväksi. Silloin tällöin Marko oli kokeillut etätyöntekoa kotoa käsin, mutta kotona vaimon kanssa olevat lapset puhumattakaan hitaasta ja epävarmasta nettiyhteydestä varmistivat, että homma jäi kokeilun asteelle. Esimieskään ei luottanut siihen, että kukaan pystyisi kunnolla kotona keskittymään työntekoon.

Niinpä Marko olikin kiinnostuneena noin vuosi sitten lukenut paikallisesta kyläportaalista, että entiseen kunnantaloon oli suunnitteilla yhteisöllinen työtila, jonne kuka tahansa voisi mennä tekemään omia töitään. Idea yhteisöllisestä työtilasta oli jutun mukaan virinnyt jo lähes kymmenen vuotta sitten Yhdysvalloissa, joissa pienyrittäjät, freelancerit ja etätyöntekijät olivat kyllästyneet työyhteisön puuttumiseen ja yksinäisyyden tunteeseen. Sen seurauksena joku IT-alan yrittäjä oli vuokrannut toimistotilan, hankkinut sinne langattoman nettiyhteyden ja muut tarvikkeet sekä alkanut kutsua sitä yhteisölliseksi työtilaksi. Muutaman kuukauden kuluttua porukkaa oli ollut yllin kyllin. Homma oli osoittautunut niin toimivaksi, että kyläportaalissa olleen jutun mukaan yhteisöllisiä työtiloja oli maailmassa jo lähes 2 000. Niin myös paikallinen työtila oli sitten vihdoin avattu edellisenä syksynä ja se oli tullut Markollekin tutuksi melko nopeasti, vaikka edelleen suurin osa työpäivistä piti tehdä kaupungissa pääkonttorilla. Pomo kyllä suhtautui paljon paremmin etätyön tekemiseen yhteisöllisessä työtilassa kuin kotona varsinkin nyt, kun yhteisöllisistä työtiloista oli alettu puhua julkisuudessa. Olipa hän kuulemma jossain neuvottelussa maininnut siitä jopa esimerkkinä yrityksen ekologisuudesta ja ennakkoluulottomuudesta.

Marko kurvasi entisen kunnantalon pihaan ja laittoi kulkuneuvonsa muiden pyörien tavoin pyöräparkkiin. Näin kauniina päivänä pihalla näkyi vain yksi auto, ja sekin näytti olevan kauempana keskustasta asuvan omistama. Sisällä rakennuksessa oli yläkerta varattu työtilan käyttöön. Paikalla oli jo kolme muutakin – paikallinen IT-alan yrittäjä ja kaksi hieman vieraampaa henkilöä, joilla oli kuulemma jokin yhteinen hanke suunnitteilla. Porukka vaihteli päivästä toiseen hyvin paljon ja Markokin oli tutustunut moneen ennestään tuntemattomaan täkäläiseen. Työtilassa olevan vieraskirjan mukaan tiloja oli hyödyntänyt muutaman kuukauden olemassa olon aikana mm. muutama etätyöntekijä, freelanceri, juuri alueelle muuttanut artesaani, taitelija paikallisesta residenssistä, kolme tietoalan yrittäjää sekä suuri joukko satunnaisia vierailijoita. Kesällä työtilassa järjestettäisiin kuulemma mökkiläisille tarkoitettu esittelypäivä toiveena saada heitäkin hyödyntämään työtilaa ja verkostoitumaan paikallisten kanssa. Paras puoli työtilassa oli Markon mielestä siellä työskentelevä moniammatillinen porukka, jonka keskuudessa syntyi

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välillä loistavia ideoita – juuri sellaista eri ammattien ja ajattelutapojen luovaa törmää-mistä, josta oli kirjoitettu jo iät ja ajat.

Marko istahti alas vapaana olevalle tuolille ja kaivoi läppärinsä esiin. Tässä se taas oli. Tutuksi tullut työtila, jossa oli kahvilan tapainen virikkeellisyys ja kodinomainen jous-tavuus, ja silti varustettuna kaikilla toimistotyössä tarvittavilla laitteilla ja tarvikkeilla. Valokuituyhteyden kautta toimiva nettiyhteys oli mukava lisä ja selvästi houkutteli ih-misiä työtilaan kauempaakin.