

European Network of Living Labs

– a first step towards a new Innovation System!



Read more at
www.livinglabs.info

Laurea Living Labs network

Laurea (www.laurea.fi) is a R&D oriented university of applied sciences. Laurea operates in the Helsinki metropolitan area and it is focused on service innovations. Laurea's strategic choice is to integrate its three tasks - education, R&D and regional development. It has created the Learning by Developing (LbD) model as a tool for reaching its strategic goals and implementing them in practise. Through its several locations and its LbD-based innovation process Laurea acts both as a host organisation for a few Living Labs, and as an innovation service provider in Living Lab and Test Bed context. The focus of R&D is welfare, knowledge intensive business services and social responsibility.

Description of Concept

Working in Laurea's R&D projects is based on cooperation of companies, 3rd sector, public sector and universities together with end users. The basis for R&D is a holistic view of well being which provides sustainable direction for businesses and for the development of the entire service system. End users are developers during the whole R&D process. Students are developers and creators of new professional knowledge together with other actors. To facilitate professional knowledge creation and rich interaction Laurea operates in several development environments, including Active Life Village (former Well Life Center) and BarLaurea.

Action research approach and LbD-model are the main instruments for user involvement, as well as 3rd sector's active role in the projects. Research and data collection methods and tools vary from project to project, including ethnographical methods, participatory observation, interviews and focus groups. The LbD –model with Laurea's 8000 students is an essential R&D resource which enables rich interaction with end users. It also makes us less dependent on project financing.

References and Track Record

Laurea's first Living Lab, BarLaurea, has been operating for 5 years. The restaurant provides catering services and is in daily use as a student restaurant. The focus of R&D is on the development of the whole vocational branch, the knowledge creation and data base collection, and completing various R&D projects. Applying ICT in the solutions is crucial.

The Caring TV is a Finnish innovation developed at Active Life Village (former Well Life Center) www.activelife.fi by the City of Espoo, Laurea, TDC Song Ltd and Videra Ltd. It enables a new way of delivering healthcare & welfare services directly to home through interactive TV. The pilot project was started in 2006 and now Laurea has several Caring TV projects for different user groups going on in Finland.

Laurea's competence center at user centered design (UCD) has had several successful R&D projects. For example the aim of the project with Polar Electro Ltd. was to increase the understanding of heart rate monitor users for Polar Electro's product development and conceptualization process needs. UCD is also involved in the Helsinki Virtual Village project.

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