



Kajaani University
Consortium

DESERVE

**Mobile services in remote and rural areas
in Kainuu and North Karelia:
Mobile libraries and Mobile shops**

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Net of libraries

- 16 libraries in Kainuu, 32 in North Karelia (Fig 1).
- 71 % of population located less than 5 km and 81 % less than 10 km from nearest library in Kainuu (population in 2002)
- Corresponding population shares were 75 and 89 % in North Karelia (Tab 1 and Fig 2)
- There is high variation between municipalities before mentioned population shares
- Relative high shares due to population is accumulated in built-up areas

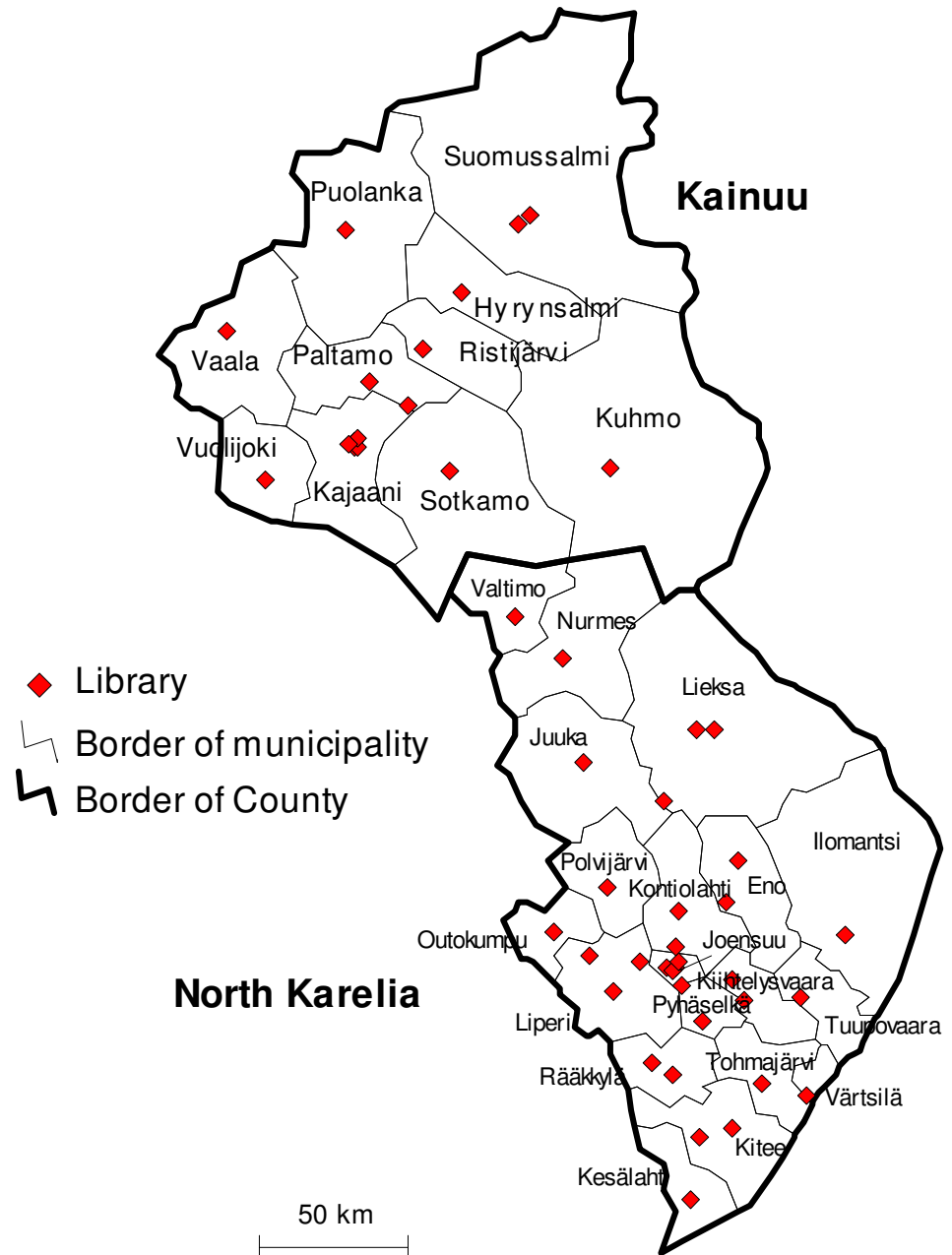
Table 1. Population located less than 5 or 10 km from the nearest library in Kainuu and North Karelia 2002.

Maakunta	5km	%	10km	%	yht	%
Kainuu	61 959	71	70 907	81	87 094	100
P-Karjala	125 902	75	149 826	89	168 056	100

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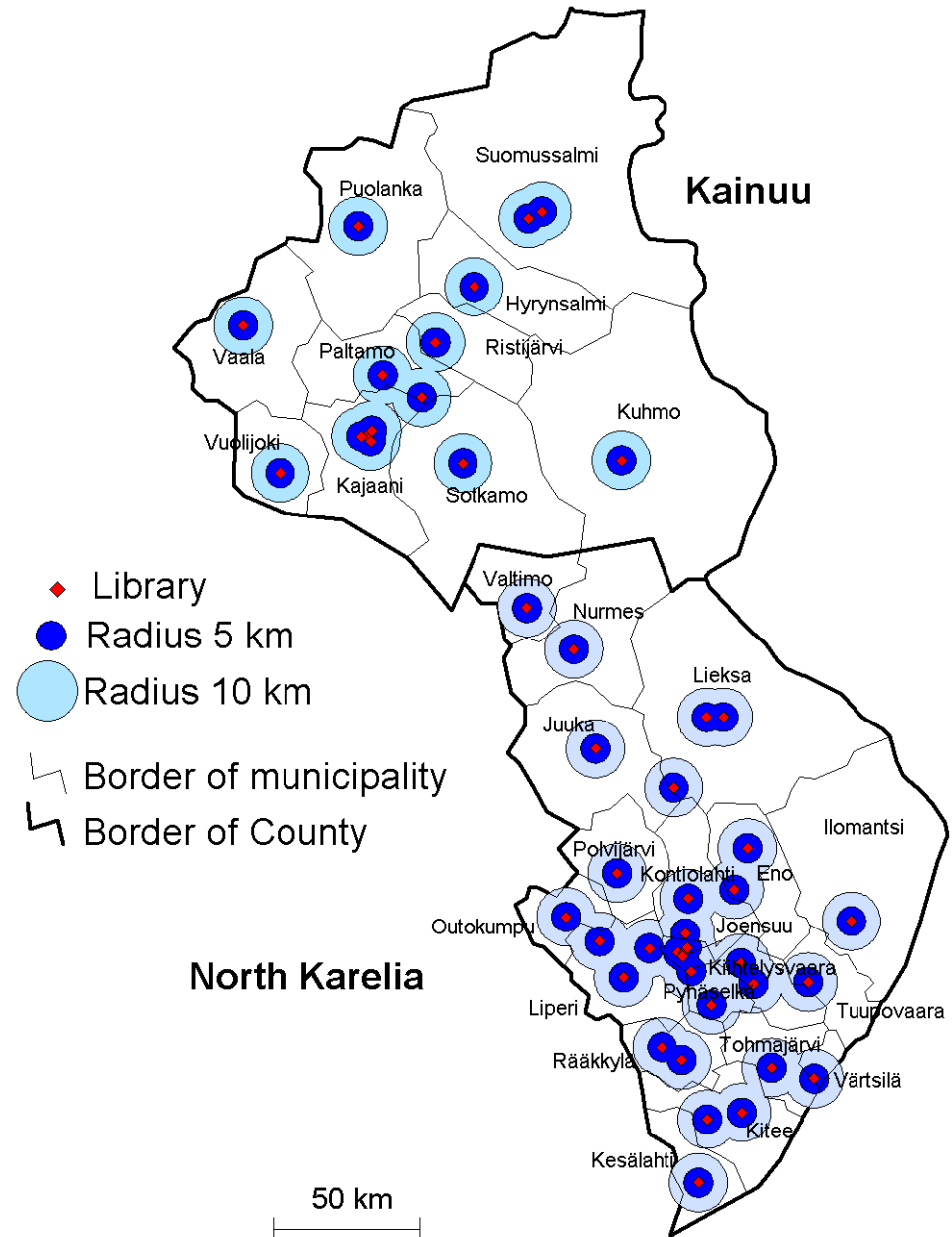
FIGURE 1. Libraries in Kainuu and North Karelia in October 2004.

Source: Addresses from the www-pages of municipalities, located with Mapinfo-program.



Net of libraries

FIGURE 2. Libraries and circles with radius 5 or 10 km around them in Kainuu and North Karelia in 2004.



Mobile services in Kainuu and North Karelia: Mobile libraries

A questionnaire-survey in Autumn 2004 sent to the 29 municipalities of Kainuu and North Karelia.

Questions:

- the mobile library service cover and routes?
- state support for investments in library busses, selection of products and demand?
- differences of the activity between towns and rural areas?
- problems?
- feedback from the customers?
- future of the service?

Results of the survey

Is there mobile library service available in your municipality?

Both study areas:

- In most municipalities the service is available

If there is no more library service available in your municipality, when this activity has finished and why?

Kainuu:

- Not own mobile library, but have been bought the service from the neighbour municipality 1992-96. After enthusiasm at the beginning loans decreased significantly leading shut down the mobile library services and library activities were centralized to the main library.

North Karelia:

- Not own mobile library. We buy services from the town of Joensuu since 2003.
- Activity has stopped in 1998. The village school has been discontinued and the neighbourhood municipalities stopped to buy the (mobile library) service: the cost of maintenance was too high.

Results of the survey

How and who make the decisions of the routes of mobile library?

Kainuu:

- Manager of library services makes decisions of time tables and routes cooperation with mobile library services staff.
- Library personnel makes presentations and board of culture and education makes decisions.
- Board makes decisions based on opinions of residents of villages.

North Karelia:

- Driver of the library bus makes presentation to manager of library services and they make decisions together.
- Routes are defined in contract with town of Joensuu (mun. buy services from there), which makes decisions after considered opinions of schools
- Driver of the library bus and other library personnel makes presentation of routes taking into consideration initiatives of library customers. Decisions are made by board of culture and education.



Results of the survey

How often the routes of library buses are changed and why?

Kainuu:

- Timetables are checked once per year, if necessary in the middle of the year too
- Number of stops are decreased or increased according to demands of customers

North Karelia:

- The aim is to conserve mobile library services as extensive as possible, but however some changes have to do. Reasons for changes of routes (about one/ year):
 1. No customers at stop any more (old people have moved to town or have died)
 2. Village school is shut down

Results of the survey

Is mobile library services supported? By whom?

Kainuu:

- **Some told that they get no support**
- **State support (under consideration) for acquisition of new library bus**

North Karelia:

- **Mobile library services is part of normal budgetary activity of municipality, no support from outside**

Results of the survey

What kind of material/ services are most popular in library bus?

Kainuu:

- **All kind of material (books, av-material and magazines)**
- **Domestic fiction is most popular, but also non-fiction books and children books**

North Karelia:

- **Fiction (adult and young) is the biggest group**
- **80 % of loans is material for children (many library buses visits in schools in rural area). Adults customers are most old people and they read mostly war books, life stories, entertainment books for women**

Results of the survey

Is there differences in demand of customers in rural areas and towns?

Kainuu:

- **Same material is interesting in rural areas and towns**

North Karelia:

- **The borrowed material is different in rural areas than in towns: in the main library non-fiction is even more borrowed than fiction, on the contrary fiction is more popular in the library bus. In the main library young people borrow also lot of pop/ rock music, which is not so much asked in the library bus.**
- **Behind the differences there is main customer groups which are in the library bus: (1) children in schools (library buses visits at primary schools) and (2) old people in the villages (not working outside the home)**



Results of the survey

What kind of problems there is in maintaining mobile library services?

Both regions:

- **Problems are mainly economic: library bus is big investment in small municipalities, also budgets of library material has been cut in recent years**
- **Other problems are connected with telecommunications and information technology: software of library computer system, problems with real time telecommunications connection (GPRS) between the main library and library buses (slowness, weak connection)**

Results of the survey

Feedback from customers of library buses

Kainuu:

- Feedback has given directly to the drivers of the library bus
- The feedback from the clients of the mobile libraries is mainly positive, there is enough routes and aim is to preserve service as extensive as possible
- Main criticism has been directed to the material of library bus, clients hope more new material

North Karelia:

- Municipalities have done own surveys about library services: 83 % of clients considered material and services of library excellent and 17 % good
- The drivers of the library bus are regarded as "entertainment experts for the villages"



Results of the survey

Future of mobile library services in your region?

Kainuu:

- **Problems:**

- Old library buses, difficult to find money when investment to the new bus is prevailing in small municipalities
- Cooperation difficult between municipalities due to long distances

- There is clear demand for mobile library services in rural areas

North Karelia:

- Maintaining the mobile library services is a hard task for small municipalities

- There has been investigations about possibilities in cooperation between municipalities to arrange library services and mobile library services

- The rural schools need mobile library services because the school libraries in rural schools are small or non-existing.

- In the countryside the mobile library is regarded as a "lifeline"

Population statistics of the regions

Kainuu

Municipality	Popu- lation 2003	Share of rural population *		Population change 1990-2003, %
		2000, %	2000, %	
Hyrnsalmi	3 212	46	46	-21
Kajaani	35 713	13	13	-2
Kuhmo	10 630	38	38	-17
Paltamo	4 220	40	40	-17
Puolanka	3 560	48	48	-23
Ristijärvi	1 686	57	57	-22
Sotkamo	10 715	44	44	-8
Suomussalmi	10 376	44	44	-17
Vaala	3 829	65	65	-15
Vuolijoki	2 632	48	48	-16
Kainuu total	86 573	32	32	-11

*) outside the built-up areas (pop. over 500)

North Karelia

Municipality	Popu- lation 2003	Share of rural population *		Population change 1990-2003, %
		2000, %	2000, %	
Eno	6 894	47	47	-10
Ilomantsi	6 690	50	50	-17
Joensuu	52 659	2	2	11
Juuka	6 238	54	54	-15
Kesälahti	2 750	55	55	-13
Kiihtelysvaara	2 681	56	56	0
Kitee	10 024	48	48	-12
Kontiolahti	12 103	47	47	16
Lieksa	14 396	33	33	-18
Liperi	11 471	49	49	0
Nurmes	9 299	36	36	-15
Outokumpu	7 840	33	33	-16
Polvijärvi	5 154	65	65	-14
Pyhäselkä	7 390	48	48	10
Rääkkylä	2 960	71	71	-17
Tohmajärvi	4 941	60	60	-15
Tuupovaara	2 176	70	70	-20
Valtimo	2 816	56	56	-23
Värtsilä	647	100	100	-22
North Karelia total	169 129	34	34	-4

Mobile services in Kainuu and North Karelia: Mobile shops

A questionnaire-survey in Autumn 2004 sent to the TE-Centre (Employment and Economic Development Centre) of Kainuu and North Karelia.

Questions:

- profitability of the service?
- changes in last years?
- information about the routes of the mobile shops?
- demand of the products, seasonally changes of the sales, problems of the service?
- the future of the service?

Results of the survey

How profitable is the mobile shop activity?

Both regions: -It depends very much on the old vans; e.g. how much repairing they need. Shopkeepers are able to search the support. TE-centre and the central firms informed of it.

(Note: There are only 3 mobile shops in Kainuu in Jan. 2005 and 4 in North Karelia in Nov. 2004)

How has the mobile shop activity changed in the past 5-10 years?

Both regions: -When the population of the rural areas declines, it reduces straight the mobile shop sales. The number of mobile shops has declined, but the support of the village shops made possible to continue the mobile shop service (although the cars are old and in bad condition). There are no possibilities to buy new busses, because the provisions of the village shops are small.

Results of the survey

Which enterprises /shop chains have mobile shops (vans) in the province?

North Karelia:

•We have four mobile shops in province. They are all owned by private, very small shopkeepers. They use many deliverers; e.g. the drinks are collected in co-operation and they get some products from home bakeries. The customers have hoped that free local papers are available in our busses.

Who decides about the routes of the mobile shops?

North Karelia:

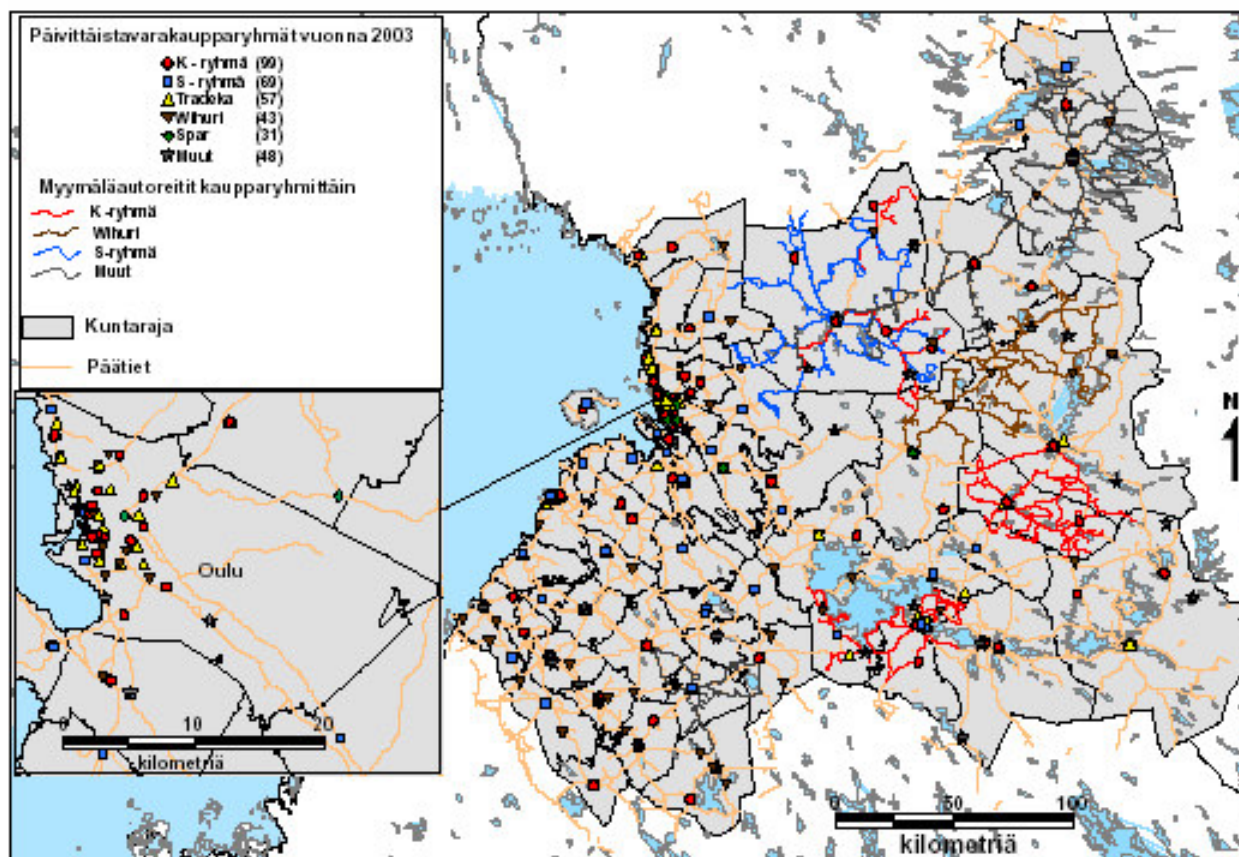
•When we treated the support applications, we noticed, that the mobile shop owners/drivers make the decisions themselves. They are clearly conscious e.g. about the shops that have finished or about the areas where there live older people or summer cottage owners; very client oriented thinking.

FIGURE 3. The daily shops and mobile shop routes in the province of Oulu in 2003 (Source: Evaluation report of the basic services in the province of Oulu)

Kainuu:

- **The mobile shop service in Kainuu is mainly maintained by the K-group (red routes): the routes in the southern and in the middle and northeast part of Kainuu (*some of them have been discontinued in December 2004*).**
- **In the northern part of Kainuu there are also routes of other shop group (brown routes)**
- **In some municipalities there are no mobile shop services.**

FIGURE 3. Groups of the daily shops and mobile shop routes in the Province of Oulu in 2003



Kuva 102. Päivittäistavarakaupparyhmät ja myymäläureitit Oulun läänissä vuonna 2003

Source: Oulun lääninhallitus (State Provincial Office of Oulu) 2004. Oulun läänin peruspalvelujen arviointiraportti 2003. Oulun lääninhallituksen julkaisu 97.

Results of the survey

Which products are the “best sellers” in mobile shops?

-Don't know

Is there seasonal variation in demand (e.g. summer, winter)?

Both areas: In summer the sales are larger (bigger), because of the summer residents.

What kind of problems there are to maintain the mobile shop system?

Both areas: Decreasing demand and the old (and expensive) busses, which are hard to replace.

Results of the survey

What kind of is the future of the mobile shop activity in the province?

Kainuu:

•The mobile shop activity will not alone solve the capability of surviving of the rural areas, but it has it's own emphasizing. Especially for the old people who not have own car, the mobile shop service make it possible to live in rural areas.

•North Karelia:

•Mobile shops are very important, because they maintain the services of the rural areas. I was surprised, how client oriented the (mobile) shopkeepers are. I also have heard how a summer resident proudly tells, that she gets the best warm Karelian Pies to her cottage doorsteps early on Saturday morning.

Other examples of mobile services

- **Vote vans**
- **Service vans**
- **Health services (experiments)**
- **School transport by taxi**
- **Onkibussi in Lapland (mobile fishing material services)**
- **Nettijussi in Lapland (mobile IT services, experiment)**

Finally...

- **Problems of rural areas (Kainuu, North Karelia):**
 - **Population decreases and the age structure gets older**
 - **Local service system is declining: Many schools and village shops are and will be closed (also school libraries, post offices etc.), public traffic services have been reduced**
- **Mobile shops and mobile libraries help to keep on local services and make possible to live on rural areas (elderly people and children, who don't own/drive a car)**
- **Functioning services is also important temptation for immigration to rural areas**
- **Are those services “old-fashioned”?**
- **Possibilities to go on? (state support, common mobile library of several municipalities...)**