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## **Aurora Entrepreneurialis Laid the Foundation for Future Collaboration – Final Event in Tornio**

### **Tornio, Finland – 28 November 2025**

The three-year Aurora Entrepreneurialis project concluded with a final event that brought together students, teachers and decision-makers to learn about sustainable food production practices, celebrate achievements and lay the groundwork for collaboration beyond the project. The event culminated in the signing of a framework agreement between upper secondary schools in the Tornio-Haparanda twin city and an announcement by the Bothnian Arc Association to support the school network established during the project in the future.

### **A Celebration of Learning and Partnership**

Participants began the two-day event at Lappia Vocational College's Loue campus. Guided tours to the cowshed and sheep shelter, along with the story of an ice cream and honey entrepreneur, offered practical insights into sustainable food production. *"It was truly inspiring to hear about beekeeping and fun to see sheep after a long time. As a high school teacher, it was also interesting to see the operations and workspaces of an agricultural college,"* said Anja Moilanen (Haukipudas Upper Secondary School).

*"The visit to Loue taught us so much. It was great to hear the story of food, for example, seeing cows in the barn and finally tasting ice cream made from their milk. It was also fascinating to learn about beekeeping and discover that Finland has its own bee species. And the entrepreneur's story was captivating – how he and his spouse came up with the business idea in their own kitchen and now run their own company,"* described students from Oulun Suomalaisen Yhteiskoulun lukio during the bus ride to Tornio.

The first day ended with a gala dinner at Tornio's Grand Hotel Mustaparta. The gala highlighted Aurora Entrepreneurialis' commitment to creativity, community and entrepreneurship. Participants enjoyed a three-course dinner, took part in an interactive competition and experienced artistic performances such as a light show and an impressive fire show.

*"The whole day was so much fun, great food and an amazing light show. I will miss all of this,"* reflected Laura Myllylä wistfully, and Ronja Tervahauta (Tornedahlskolan) agreed: *"The fire show was incredible."*

### **Formalizing Future Collaboration**

On the second day, attention turned to the past three years and future prospects. A significant milestone was reached as Anne Tryyki, Education Manager at Lappia Vocational College, Tarja Konola-Jokinen, Director of Education for the City of Tornio, and Monika Ingvall, Administrative Director of Haparanda Municipality, signed a framework agreement strengthening cross-border educational cooperation between upper secondary schools in Tornio and Haparanda.



*"I listened to teachers' comments during the workshop, and everyone said the same thing – how the project has connected people, how it has opened students' eyes. They have made new friends, both students and teachers. Most importantly, this will continue. Many projects end when funding stops, but this collaboration will go on," commented Tarja Konola-Jokinen on the significance of the project and the agreement.*

## **Aurora Entrepreneurialis – Together Towards International Competence**

Aurora Entrepreneurialis has advanced entrepreneurship education in Northern Finland and Sweden's Norrbotten region. Through the project, as many as 18 upper secondary schools and units have promoted an entrepreneurial mindset, sustainable development and cross-border cooperation between Finland and Sweden. The project has provided teacher training, innovation competitions and international events, as well as created networks that strengthen the development of both student and teacher competencies. Its core themes — sustainable entrepreneurship, cross-border collaboration and entrepreneurial culture — reflect the growing need for a global perspective in education.

*"Personally, I came here to practice speaking English. My goal is to attend an IB high school. Here I got to meet different people from different backgrounds and share my own thoughts. It felt great to talk about important things and be heard," said TUVA student Hung Ngyen from Oulun aikuiskoulutuskeskus at the end of the event.*

The final event concluded with the symbolic handover of the Aurora Entrepreneurialis baton to the Bothnian Arc Association, which will integrate coordination of the school network created during the project into its operations, ensuring continued support for school collaboration in the future. The project team visibly rejoiced in transferring the legacy of their work to a permanent actor.

*"This has been more than a closing celebration. It has reflected a commitment to the future and further developed participants' skills to create and choose sustainable solutions in leisure and working life. I look back to our project time with pride, with a touch of sadness at this moment of letting go and with excitement for what lies ahead. Here in the North, on both sides of the border, we have amazing young people and dedicated teachers who will now continue the work that Aurora Entrepreneurialis has started. This is a new beginning," summarized Project Manager Kati Ilkka.*

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### **Photos: Laura Vendelin**

*Final Event 1:* Project staff with all participants in the background. From left: Pietu Niinimäki, Raija Paasimaa, Päivi Innala, Linda Strandén, Sini Viinikka, Malin Åsén, Kati Ilkka

*Final Event 2:* Framework agreement signatories. From left: Monika Ingvall, Tarja Konola-Jokinen, Anne Trycki

*Final Event 3:* Students participating in a workshop on sustainable food.

*Final Event 4:* Jarmo Saariniemi presenting Lappia Agricultural College in Loue.

*Final Event 5:* Project staff facilitating a discussion exercise in Loue. From left: Sofia



Persson, Raija Paasimaa, Malin Åsén, Päivi Innala, Linda Strandenhed

*Final Event 6: Students and teachers visiting the sheep barn at Lappia's Loue campus.*

*Final Event 7: Malin Åsén from Young Entrepreneurship Norrbotten with winners of the interactive gala competition.*

#### *Aurora Entrepreneurialis*

*The Aurora Entrepreneurialis project is led by the City of Oulu, Ung Företagsamhet Norrbotten (UF), and Lappia Vocational College. It is funded by Interreg Aurora, Region Norrbotten, and Lapland Regional Council. The three-year project has developed entrepreneurship education in upper secondary schools in Norrbotten (Sweden) and Northern Finland, targeting both students and teachers. The project has had three main themes: promoting an entrepreneurial culture in schools, developing sustainable entrepreneurship education and fostering cross-border collaboration. We have created networks, provide teacher training, promote exchanges and organized innovation competitions and study visits for teachers and students.*

*More information: <https://www.ouka.fi/en/aurora-entrepreneurialis>*