



## THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

Yrttiaika (Herb Time) is a co-operative of five women, Soila Nyman, Aira Kurikka, Kati Haipus, Eija Marjomaa and Lea Keränen, who collaborate with the selling and marketing of herb products made of Finnish herbs. All the women and their individual enterprises are in rural Northern Ostrobothnia. Brought together through a shared passion in Finnish herbs and natural remedies, the women met while participating in an herb related training course, organized by Nouseva Rannikkoseutu development organization. After the women got to know each other, it was clear that something more would come out of the meeting.



They all recognized the potential in domestic herbs and wanted to spread herb knowledge. Each woman already had their own herb enterprise, and the benefits of collaboration were clear to all. Making herb products requires a lot of manual labor that takes time away from everything else, such as marketing of products. Forming a co-operation would help to share the workload and offer much needed support for everyone and five people would bring a diverse skillset into operations. The women participated in a competition for new

innovative rural practices and won. The co-operative was established in 2012. Each woman has kept their individual enterprise, where they either grow or pick wild herbs and make by hand various herb products (food products, natural cosmetics, animal products). Besides the online store, the products are sold through various retailers. In building a joint brand out of individual enterprises, trust and open communication between the members is key, and it has been one of Yrttiaika's strengths from the start.

## THE INNOVATION IMPACT

Finding a new way of collaborating has made it possible for small herb enterprises to have a bigger selection of products with lower costs, and to share the workload and time spent, for example, on marketing their products. As a result, the women have a wider reach to spread the awareness regarding the possibilities of domestic herbs.



## USEFUL LINKS

<https://www.yrttiaika.fi/en/>;  
<https://ms-my.facebook.com/people/Osuuskunta-Yrttiaika/100051784010735/>;  
<https://www.instagram.com/yrttiaika/>