

Nykarleby Business Pulse

Participants:

Company representatives, entrepreneurs, academic professionals, and students.

Topics discussed:

- Business situation in Nykarleby (Construction and Agriculture)
- Startup culture
- Business challenges
- Opportunities
- Academic programs

1. Current business landscape in Nykarleby

The discussion began by analyzing the present business environment in Nykarleby, with a particular focus on the construction sector, education and business supporting system. While companies are currently able to find the expertise they need, several challenges were also identified:

- Limited financial resources for established companies and startups alike.
- Startup culture is still in its early stages in the region.
- Initial investment systems such as seed funding and angel investors are currently lacking.
- Many startups are focused on service-based business models, which may not align with the region's strengths in agriculture and construction.
- The business culture in Nykarleby was described as cautious, which hinders companies from expanding or being more ambitious.

2. Challenges facing entrepreneurs and startups

- Selling products and expanding businesses are considered difficult due to cultural and financial limitations.
- Entrepreneurial programs exist but are mostly taught in Swedish and rely on traditional classroom teaching, which may not be ideal for practical business development.
- Startups are particularly affected by:
 - The absence of early-stage investment opportunities.
 - A mismatch between business ideas and the local economic landscape.

3. Opportunities identified

Despite the challenges, several opportunities were recognized:

- The need for a more collaborative business ecosystem, where businesses, educational institutions, and local government work together.
- A chance to diversify the economy by encouraging innovative and sustainable business concepts, especially in the construction sector.
- Tourism opportunities tied to Finnish culture and lifestyle could be better explored.
- A call for better promotion of Nykarleby and NIC at both national and Nordic levels to attract talent and investment.

4. Proposed ideas and future discussions

Several forward-looking ideas were proposed for further development:

Entrepreneurship and education

- Introduce a practical and creative entrepreneurship program in Nykarleby, distinct from current offerings.
 - Potential partners: Kredu and Topeliusgymnasiet.
 - Should move beyond class-based models to include hands-on learning.

Startup and investment support

- Establish a startup support system, including:
 - Early-stage investment options such as seed funding and angel investors.
 - Active involvement from the NIC to lead the development of startup culture.

Business ecosystem development

- Create a cooperative business ecosystem involving companies, schools, and the public sector.
 - The City Council should play a central role in coordinating efforts.

Innovation and sustainability

- Encourage innovative, cost-effective, and sustainable ideas for the construction industry.
- Promote circular business models to improve resource efficiency.

Tourism and regional branding

- Develop business concepts based on Finnish culture and lifestyle to enhance tourism.
- Promote Nykarleby and NIC through national and Nordic summits, expos, and networking events.