

**Twenty-fifth session
Nairobi, 5–12 May 2009**

Item 8 of the provisional agenda

**Implementation of resolutions and activities relating to
the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation**

**Implementation of Resolutions in Finland Publications on the
Origin and Meaning of Geographical Names in Finland ***

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Implementations of resolutions in Finland: publications on the origin and meaning of geographical names in Finland

Summary

Referring to resolutions VII/7 *Cooperation and agreements with consumer enterprises*, VIII/9 *Geographical names as cultural heritage*, IX/7 *Dissemination of information concerning the origin and meaning of geographical names*, the paper introduces two projects in which place names, the related cultural heritage, and place name awareness and knowledge have been promoted.

1. The Finnish Place Name Lexicon (*Suomalainen paikannimikirja*), published in 2007 with 592 pages, was edited by the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland in co-operation with a commercial map agency Karttakeskus. The book is addressed to teachers, researchers, journalists and people interested in local history; it tells about the background of the names and gives answers to frequently asked on their origin and meaning – telling also if the meaning is fully obscure.

The book covers some 4,700 standardized place names from Finland: names of municipalities, cities, towns, villages, biggest lakes and rivers, elevations etc. Also the most common generic terms have articles of their own, with distribution maps. The book contains Finnish, Swedish and Saami names in alphabetical order: about 3,400 headwords in Finnish, 1,000 in Swedish, 200 in North Saami, 40 in Inari Saami, and 4 in Skolt Saami.

The material for the book is based on the systematic name collection, carried out not only for maps but also for the sake of interest in language, folklore and history.

2. A grassroots level project with an aim to systematically gather information and documentation on oral tradition concerning local names and places was carried out by local people in Tervo municipality in central Finland. One of the objectives of the project (2005–2008) was to make the information available on the Internet.

The website, *Places, names & stories* was opened in April 2008 and is available in Finnish from <http://www.tervo.fi/tervo-seura/> and in English from http://www.tervo.fi/tervo-seura/eng_index.php.

A more detailed description of the project (available also from the above mentioned website): Paikkala, Sirkka. Places, names & stories – a pilot project on geographical names in Finland. In: Jordan, Peter; Bergmann, Hubert; Cheetham, Catherine; Hausner, Isolde (eds.): *Geographical Names as a Part of the Cultural Heritage*. Wiener Schriften zur Geographie und Kartographie, vol. 18, pp. 65–70. Wien 2009.

Implementations of resolutions in Finland: Publications on the origin and meaning of geographical names in Finland

Referring to resolutions VII/7 *Cooperation and agreements with consumer enterprises*, VIII/9 *Geographical names as cultural heritage*, IX/7 *Dissemination of information concerning the origin and meaning of geographical names*, the paper introduces two projects in which geographical names, the related cultural heritage, and place name awareness and knowledge have been promoted.

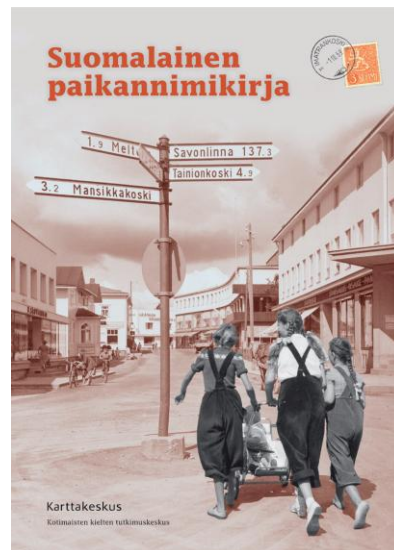
Finnish Place Name Lexicon

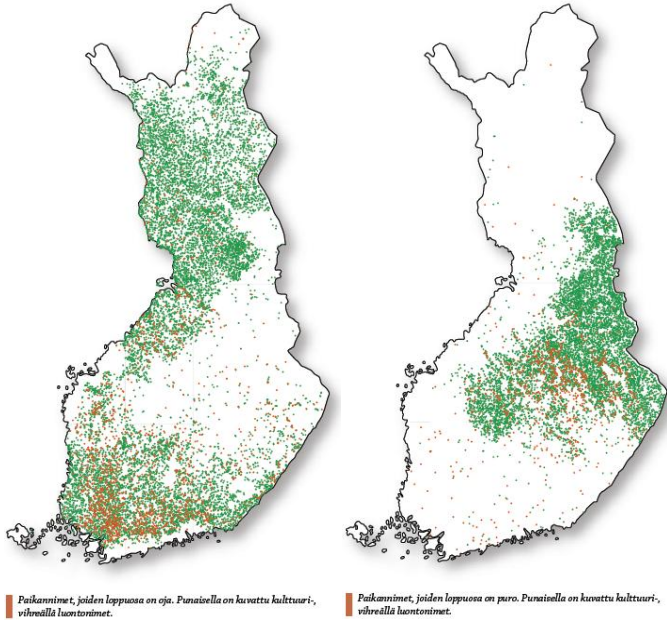
Place names give us a glimpse of the languages, culture, history, and the world of ideas of the name giver. Many names show how the environment has changed and how the uninhabited areas have been cultivated.

In 2007, a long-awaited book, the Finnish Place Name Lexicon (*Suomalainen paikannimikirja*) was published, in Finnish, with 592 pages. The book was edited by the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland in co-operation with a commercial map agency Karttakeskus. Some 30 researchers contributed to the writing, most of them with a long term experience in scientific onomastic research.

The book is addressed to teachers, researchers, journalists and people interested in local history; it tells about the background of the names and gives answers to frequently asked questions on their origin and meaning – telling also if the meaning is fully obscure.

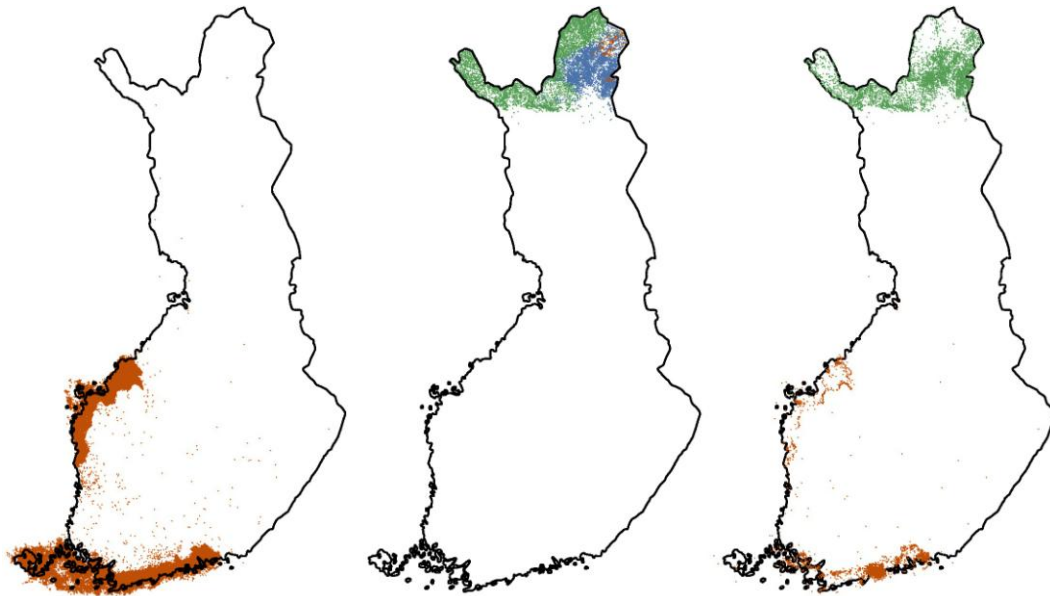
The book covers 4,700 standardized place names from Finland: names of municipalities, cities, towns, villages, biggest lakes and rivers, elevations etc. Also the most common generic terms (some 100) have articles of their own, with distribution maps.





Examples of distribution maps: place names with terms *-oja* and *-puro* (both meaning the same thing, brook/rivulet). Data source: Geographic Names Register, National Land Survey of Finland.

The book contains Finnish, Swedish and Saami names in alphabetical order: about 3,400 headwords in Finnish, 1,000 in Swedish, 200 in North Saami, 40 in Inari Saami, and 4 in Skolt Saami.



Examples of distribution maps: on the left, Swedish names; in the centre, Saami names (North Saami green, Inari Saami blue, Skolt Saami red); on the right, places with at least two names in different languages. Data source: Geographic Names Register, National Land Survey of Finland.

The book is based on systematic name collection, initiated in the 1870s. Names in the archives have been collected not only for maps but also for the sake of interest in language, folklore and history. The place name data gathered by scholars, researchers, teachers and students contain information on the pronunciation of names as well as the location and description of the named places. Sometimes also oral tradition and etymological information was recorded. As a result of the collection work, the archives now (2009) amount to some 3.2 million name cards.

A name cannot be interpreted without dating and without information about the place as a part of its environment at that time. This is why historical maps and publications have been much used in the editing process. In interpreting the present circumstances and environment the National Land Survey's Basic Map browsing system (<http://www.karttapaikka.fi>) has been useful.

Website *Places, names & stories*

A grassroot level project with an aim to systematically gather information and documentation on oral tradition concerning local names and places was carried out by local people in Tervo municipality in central Finland. One of the objectives of the project (2005–2008) was to make the information available in the Internet.

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The website contains, e.g., maps and documents about the major land reform in the late 18th century; stories related to Tervo in the 1930s from the archives of the Finnish Literature Society; various background material about place names in Tervo; and publications by the local history society.

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