

**TALLINN UNIVERSITY
Rakvere College**

REGI PROJECT STUDY VISIT TO TURKU, FINLAND

14-16 February 2017

Marju Pärn
Margit Saluotsa

2017

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 3

PROGRAMME OF THE STUDY VISIT..... 4

WHY WE NEED THIS KIND OF PROJECTS 4

WHERE DID WE GO, WHAT DID WE SEE 5

SUMMARY 13

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROJECT.....13

INTRODUCTION

Tallinn University Rakvere College participates as a partner in the Central Baltic programme project „REGI – Reacting to Growing Immigration – Strengthening social inclusion of Estonian migrant families in Finland and Estonia" which aims to solve problems related to the growing work migration through engaging the families. The project is lead by Turku University of Applied Sciences and in addition to TLU Rakvere College the partners are South East Finland Estonia Center and the Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association. The activities of the project are financed by the Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020.

This gave 15 students a wonderful opportunity to contribute to the project and our students showed high interest. We quickly formed a plan about how we could introduce our beloved Estonia and which themes to include in our presentation at the spirited Estonian cultural event held at Turku’s Old Town Hall. We were waiting for the swell study visit from which we hoped to gain great experience, contacts and knowledge.



PROGRAMME OF THE STUDY VISIT TO TURKU

14th of February

18.00-20.00 Chat night and children's Valentine's Day event for Estonian families (in shopping centre Skanssi's premises, Skanssinkatu 10, Info Point Monitori, 2nd floor)

15th of February 2017 / Study visits

8.45-9.45 Visit in school in Halinen (Paavinkatu 13, 20540 Turku)

10.00-10.30 Visit in Mannerheim League for Child Welfare and family house Heideken (Sepänkatu 3, Sepänkatu 3, 20700 Turku)

11.00-11.30 Meeting with Head of Education and Research Meeri Rusi in the premises of TUAS

11.30-12.30 Lunch

13.30-14.30 Turku City Library / guided tour

17.30 Meeting at the hotel and walking together to the Viro-keskus

18.30 Estonian evening in Turku's Old Town Hall

16th of February

8.30 Meeting with partners (at the hotel)

WHY WE NEED THIS KIND OF PROJECTS

We had 15 participating students, even though more would have wanted to take part. It is very important for students to go abroad and acquire more knowledge about the local life. We as kindergarten teachers also meet families in which fathers or mothers work in Finland. Unfortunately, as time passes, we see more and more of that kind of families. This family model may be difficult for the child and that is why the teacher should also be a counselor that helps the child to deal with his or her emotions and feelings. Our knowledge about living abroad improved significantly through participating in such a project. We acquired a lot of information about the local child services, aiding families and preventing problems. We also developed some skills in order to give some suggestions and tips for those in need in the future.

WHERE DID WE GO, WHAT DID WE SEE

On February 14th

Chat night and children's Valentine's Day event for Estonian families took place at Monitori, Skanssi shopping center (2nd floor) (www.turku.fi/monitori). While visiting the Infotori counselling point at the premises of Monitori and participating in the discussion where the professionals of the field talk about their work, we definitely got much food for thought. The presentations were very interesting and the audience delved deep into the subject and asked intriguing questions.

Issues related to raising children were discussed by family therapist Pille Murrik from Rakvere, Estonia, and Maarika Pukk, the importer of the Reggio Emilia methodology to Estonia, and professor Jarmo Kinos talked about the concept of child-initiated activity culture. Jarmo Kinos and Maarika Pukk are also the authors of the book "Lapsest lähtuv kasvatus; Lapse huvid esile" (Child-initiated pedagogies; Bringing forward the child's interests).



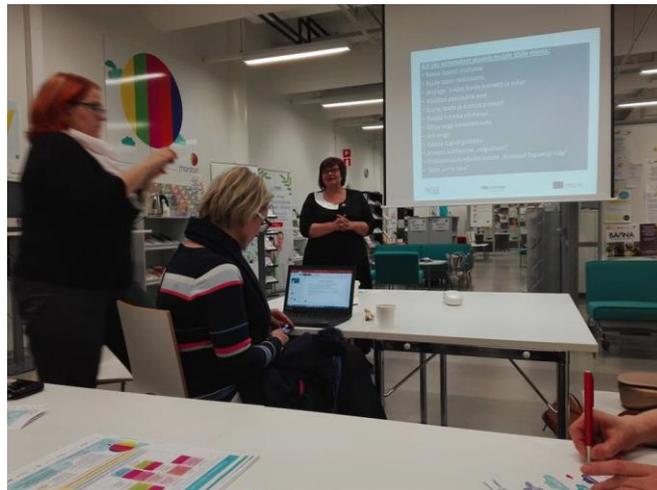
These two educational scholars claim that raising a child should stem from the goal of the child being able to cope with his or her everyday life. This means that the child should be engaged into every activity. The main question was why the children of today behave disrespectfully toward the adults. Mrs. Pukk drew attention to the essence of the Regi project – that nowadays family members are scattered all over the world. Therefore the importance of pedagogy keeps growing. As teachers we must teach children to take responsibility for everything they do. Teach children to respect each and every individual. Being a role model is the greatest teacher and we can do much through this. The teacher should bear in mind that the teacher, the assistant teacher, the cook, the cleaner, the janitor, etc. – they all are equal teachers. Unfortunately, this tends to fade away in our society today. Kinos and Pukk emphasize history in their teaching, they also pointed out that the teacher has the freedom, but he or she also has the responsibility. But the most important aspect of the work of educators is to recognize the strengths of the child and to develop them.



There were some Estonians taking part in the discussion who were very brave to ask questions about different situations that have caused difficulties for them in the Turku region. By the way, it is possible to obtain information from the counselling center anonymously. It is also possible to get counselling in one's native language at this center – about various documents, place of residence, education, residence permits. Estonians get information from the Infotori counselling point on Thursdays from 15.00 to 17.00.



Presentation by the representative of the Finnish Children's Welfare Union, Julia Kuokkanen.



The lecturer of our Rakvere College, Pille Murrik, talked about previous activities in the framework of the Regi project.

The main focus was on spontaneous conversation and questions. At the same time there was a fun Valentine's Day party for the children organized by the students of the Turku University of Applied Sciences. The evening was funded by the REGI project.

On February 15th

Our day started with **visit to school in Halinen** and we learned a lot about the Finnish education system. As a lot of refugees children are learning in that school, we heard about practices how the integration of migrants is organized into Finnish society.



Following visit led us to the **Mannerheim League for Child Welfare** (www.mll.fi/en/). The Mannerheim League is an NGO and membership is open to everyone. It promotes the wellbeing of children and of families with children, increases respect for childhood and seeks to make it more visible, and sees that children's views are taken into account in public decision-making.

The Mannerheim League is the largest child welfare organization in Finland. It has 87 000 members and 556 local associations throughout the country. The work of these local associations is supported by the League's 10 district organizations.

The Mannerheim League relies on partnerships. It works with numerous organizations, businesses and networks in Finland and abroad. The League's Central Office in Helsinki cooperates closely with ministries, officials and other organizations while the district organizations and local associations operate on the regional level.

The Children's Welfare Union in Finland has thoroughly thought through its function, all population groups have been taken into consideration. A lot of preventive work is being done with problematic families and quite often the problems are solved. The Children's Welfare Union invests mainly in prevention work in order to avoid major problems and misfortunes. The children are protected and if problems arise, the state immediately steps in and helps. Unfortunately, there is no database between Estonia and Finland from which it would be possible to obtain more information about families that have migrated.



Projects like this make the students and the scholars more eager to change something and get things done in their own country. They enable to observe different views and different kind of prevention.



Next visit led us to **Turku University of Applied Sciences** (www.tuas.fi/en/). Studying at universities of applied sciences is strongly working life oriented. Teaching at TUAS is based on innovation pedagogy, which links together professional know-how and theoretical research. In addition to lectures, learning at universities of applied sciences revolves extensively around project and teamwork, and includes also independent studying.



We also visited a **Turku City Library**. Turku City Library is the Regional Library of Southwest Finland and its task is to support the library services of the entire region and their development. In the Main Library there are several event and exhibition spaces and many reading spots. The library's atmosphere was very warm, we felt right at home. While moving around in these rooms, we could see that people enjoy the place and that young people find their way there to spend their free time. It needs to be mentioned that the building itself is very special, combining the old and the new, and both parts are unique and interesting.





In the evening we visited **Varsinais-Suomen Viro-keskus ry** (www.viro-keskus.fi/et/) where we got acquainted to the work done there and their goals. Their aim is to develop cultural cooperation between the two countries and to support the activities of Estonians in the Turku area. We had the chance to answer the questions asked by Finns taking a lesson in Estonian there. It was a very entertaining and warm encounter. In the end, the questions came from both sides and the interest showed no signs of fading. The students performed their runic song for the local learners of Estonian.



The culmination of the day was a spirited and successful **evening with Estonian culture, which took place at Turku's Old Town Hall**. A purpose of the evening was to introduce the Estonian culture to Finnish people and also to strengthen the identity of Estonians living in Finland.

REGI project's **new publication „Vigurivända kaks kodumaad/Viguriväntin kaksi kotimaata“** was presented to the audience. The publication is targeted to Estonian children and their families who are planning or who have moved to Finland. Also professionals (e.g. social workers and teachers in kindergartens) can utilize the book in their work with work-related migrants.



In addition to that the audience could cheer for the quick-paced performance of the folk dance group “Nopsajalad”, enjoy beautiful music by the young pianist Lilian Finch, and songs by the EMMA-quartet created only a few weeks earlier. Young gymnasts Mirell and Mia showed their skills and Hede Liis and Benjamin presented their steps on the dancefloor.

Students from Tallinn University’s Rakvere College were also asked to perform. We tested the knowledge of the guests and invited them to sing runic songs and participate in the dance song „Me lähme rukist lõikama“. The evening was very well organized. The evening ended with the concert of Urmas Sisask that was a special experience to us, the Estonians, and the Finnish people.



SUMMARY

The study visit was an excellent opportunity to participate in the international cooperation activities and to acquire new knowledge, establish useful contacts and expand our horizons. Our knowledge about moving and confronting the problems one have to deal with while moving to live and work abroad improved significantly. Due to the gained experiences we as future professionals are able to offer advice and tips for those who will face with issues related to work migration. Such projects are very important. The world is changing every day, therefore we should communicate with people from other countries and participate at cultural events. It is crucial to involve specialists. So far, the countries are not collaborating enough in the field of family issues, so we will stay connected and share information on different levels.



PARTICIPANTS FROM RAKVERE COLLEGE

Kristel Mänd, Project coordinator; Marje Lepanen, Head of Studies; Lehte Tuuling, Lecturer of Early Childhood Education; Pille Murrik, Lecturer of Early Childhood Education, trainer. Students of Early Childhood Education programme: Marju Pärn, Aili Järvsoo, Margit Saluotsa, Merli Kuklas, Elina Perli, Külli Hallik-Vilu, Annika Nässi, Kristiina Kool, Maret Pukk, Evelin Oll-Teterin, Malle Dimitrejeva, Eve Kõrs, Gerli Klink, Margit Kaarna, Marina Gerts.