

Projekt seminar in Rakvere

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**PROJECT SEMINAR  
"EMPLOYMENT RELATED  
MIGRATION – CHALLENGES  
FOR FAMILY LIFE ON BOTH  
SIDES OF THE FINNISH BAY"**

– Rakvere Smart House Competence Centre October  
13th 2016

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This report is a summary of the project seminar “Employment related immigration – challenges for family life on both sides of the Finnish bay” which was kept in Rakvere Smart House Competence Centre on October 13<sup>th</sup> 2016. The seminar was part of REGI project which goal is to support people who are involved in work immigration in Finland and Estonia. European Regional Development Fund is financing the project through the Interreg Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020. REGI projects partners are Turku University of Applied Sciences, South-East Finland Estonia-centre, Tallinn University Rakvere Collage and Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association. The seminar was moderated by Karolina Mackiewicz from Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association.

The project seminar “Employment related immigration – challenges for family life on both sides of the Finnish bay” included different lectures, for example, about REGI project itself, work immigration between Finland and Estonia and the consequences and challenges that families may face when they move from Estonia to Finland. At the seminar, different project participants shared their experiences about this project, for example we students from Turku University of Applied Sciences told about our training at the REGI project. There were workshops at the end of the seminar which dealt with different themes concerning work immigration.

## 2 TALKS

### 2.1 "Mobility - a possibility or a burden? Families on the move between Estonia and Finland", Keiu Telve and Pihla Siim (University of Tartu)

Pihla Maria Siim and Keiu Telve from University of Tartu have been researching migration between Finland and Estonia. They have used many different sources, such as professor Laura Assmuth's researches, their own observations from fieldwork and family interviews.

It is obvious that Estonians are the largest group of foreign citizens in Finland. There are many reasons why cross-border work and migration have been increased. The global economic crisis, Estonians minimal unemployment benefits and wish for a better job with higher income are among them. Siim and Telve have noticed that relocation is a survival strategy for single mothers.

Man's role is masculine in Estonia. Taking responsibility of the family and working abroad for securing a better life is often the man's duty. For the families interviewed by Siim, it is typical that the spouse and children have joined the male migrant later on. The unity of the family was found an important and distracting thing.

Estonians' return migration has increased in recent years. Timing of relocation accords to children's school years. Moving back is not easy because many have got used to the Finnish working culture and lifestyle. Still longing to the home country remains and many migrants have dreams about moving back to Estonia after retirement.

### 2.2 "Challenges of emigration and remigration", Veronika Kaska

Veronika Kaska made a presentation about the challenges of emigration and remigration. She talked about the numbers of immigration and emigration by age and sex. For example, in year 2015 the biggest emigration group was 25-30 years old people. Veronika also talked about unemployment in Estonia and the challenges of emigration.

Many Estonian people go to work in Finland, because the salaries are much better there than in Estonia. This affects the children, parents and spouses hard, as a loved one is away from home almost every day. There are 40000-45000 young Estonians working abroad and 89% of them would be ready to return, if e.g. a right job offer came along.

The future target is that challenges of emigration and remigration are turned into opportunities.

### 2.3 "Estonians' social needs in Finland", Anneli Tamme

The third presentation in the project seminar was held by Anneli Tamme via Skype. Anneli Tamme is an Estonian social worker who has worked for several years in Finland, in Salo area. Anneli told us about the social needs of Estonians in Finland. The data was based on her personal experiences, as well as the research that has been done in 2016 in Southern Finland.

Usually Estonians come to Finland to work and to earn pension. The younger Estonians often come to Finland for studying. Estonians also move to Finland because they are getting married with a Finn or want a family reunion. Among older immigrants there are also Ingrian Finnish returnees.

Estonians have faced some typical problems in Finland. The most typical problem is loneliness and it comes up often when the job ends. Also getting things done is difficult, because Estonians don't have sufficient language skills, the Finnish system is not known and sometimes information is searched from non-official sources. One of the Estonians' social needs in Finland is that they want to belong to a group e.g. work, hobbies or people nearby. In addition Estonians want the information quickly from reputable sources and to obtain relevant advice.

## 3 THE WORKSHOPS

The workshops were divided into three groups representing different points of view: children, adults and professionals. Next, we'll describe two of the workshops, one concerning children and the other concerning a professional point of view.

### 3.1 Children, Pille Murrik (Tallinn University Rakvere College)

The workshop for children's point of view was held by Pille Murrik (Tallinn University Rakvere College). She is a lecturer at Tallinn University Rakvere College, psychotherapist and trainer in Gordon Family school.

In the workshop, we first sat in a circle. We introduced ourselves and after that we did a mental exercise. We closed our eyes and put ourselves into the shoes of a child. We imagined that we were a child, who's parent leaves to a foreign country to work. We considered that child's feelings: how does that child feel about the separation from one parent, how does that child feel towards the leaving parent and what kind of feelings could that child have in that situation in general? What are the positive and negative sides of the situation from the child's perspective? After this thinking break, we divided into three groups according to what was the age of the child we thought we were. The groups were children under the age of three years, three to seven years old and school kids.

Each group talked to each other about what kind of situation they were thinking and what things they should consider regarding that age group. What are the positive and negative aspects of a parent leaving to work in another country, what does the family gain and what does it lose? After that we wrote all down on a paper. Our presentations were supposed to reflect the feelings and thoughts of a child in that situation, how might the child's demeanour change and what kind of support might the child need because of the situation.

In our group some had first-hand knowledge, but some didn't. It was interesting to see what kind of topics the conversation raised. We noticed that nowadays the internet offers perfect platforms to stay in contact and it might be a huge helper in child and parent relationships. Through the internet parent can be a part of the child's daily routines.

Keeping the emotional bond well can take much effort from the parent. The parent that stays with the child has to consider many matters. Like the child's need for more care and special attention. The adult needs to show to the child that they aren't also leaving, that the child can depend on them. And even when one parent is away, the child is special and valuable to both parents.

### 3.2 Professionals, Outi Kivinen (Turku University of Applied Sciences)

Outi Kivinen, a Senior Lecturer from Turku University of Applied Sciences, held the workshop concerning the professional point of view about employment related migration. The workshop group consisted of circa ten Estonian students, one Finnish student and one Estonian person who had previously worked in South-East Finland Estonia-centre.

In the workshop, we did a SWOT analysis about employment related migration (from Estonia to Finland) by using a *Treasure Map* method. The workshop group was divided in half and both halves of the group created their own Treasure Maps by cutting images from magazines. The images were supposed to present either *positive* or *negative sides* of migration from the family/migrant point of view, and the *opportunities* or *threats* of the same point of view. When a suitable picture was found, it was first explained to the others why the picture should belong to the treasure map. Then the picture was glued to the map and explained with a word or few written down. Finally, at the end of the seminar, we introduced our Treasure Maps to all of the seminar guests.

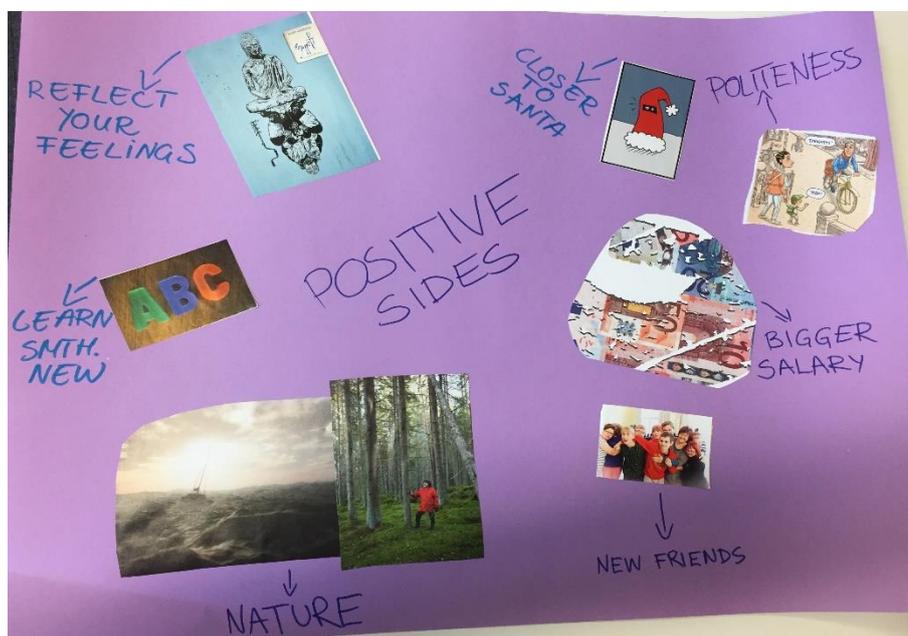


Figure 1. The positive sides of employment related migration.

The positive sides found were about learning something new, getting new friends or getting a better salary, for example. The negative sides concerned loneliness, difficulty fitting in, separation of the family members or poor living conditions that Estonian workers may have in Finland.

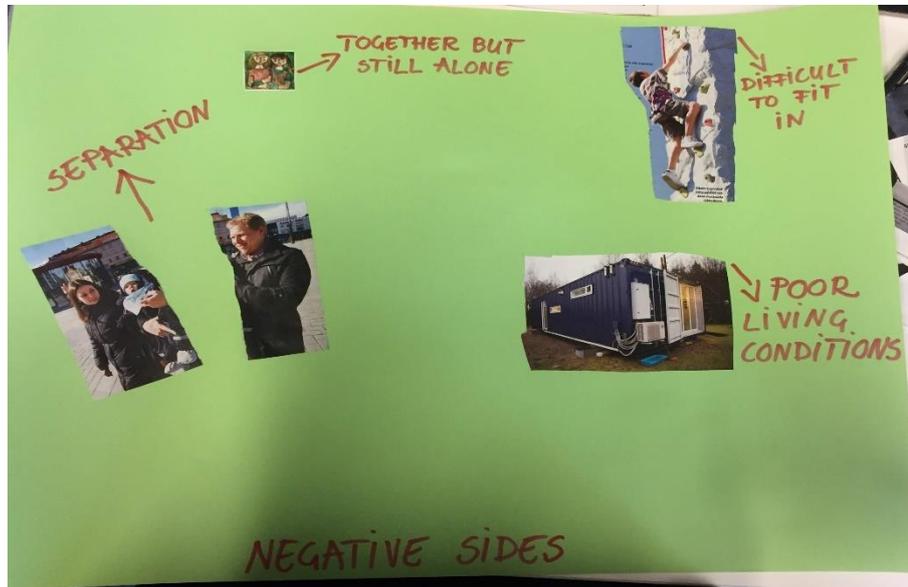


Figure 2. The negative sides of employment related migration.

The opportunities were quite similar to the positive sides. In a nutshell, one could make their dreams come true by working in another country.



Figure 3. The opportunities of employment related migration.

Many threats were also found. One could burn out, or the opposite – become lazy because of the Finnish social benefits. The possible loneliness could lead to heavy drinking. One could also suffer from other bad conditions, like sleeplessness and stress. Also the dishonest employers could take advantage of the foreign employees who don't know their rights in Finland.

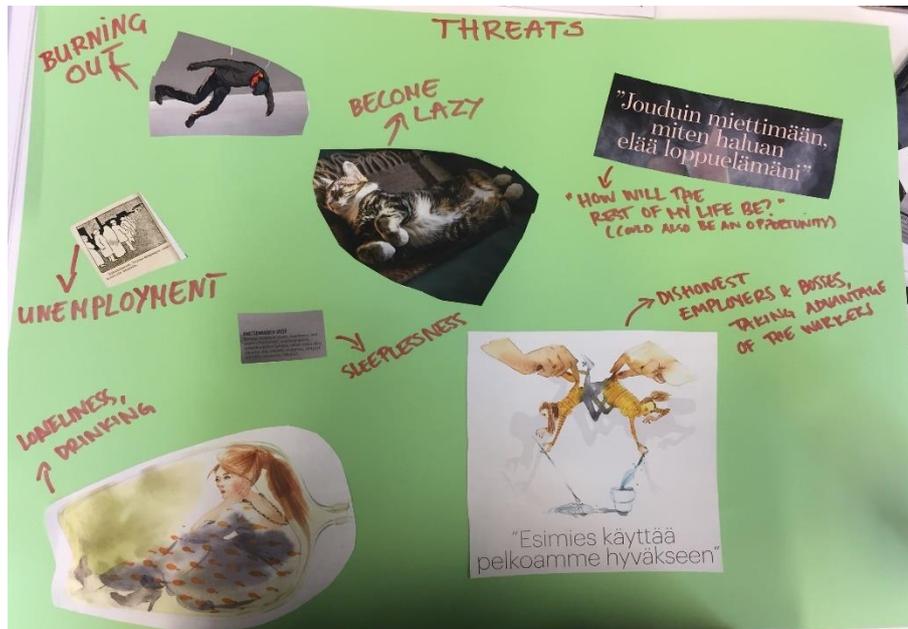


Figure 4. The threats of employment related migration.

Why is it important then that the professionals in the social services analyse the positive and the negative sides, and the opportunities and the threats of work related migration? That is, to notice that there indeed are areas in which a social service professional could be needed in advancing the wellbeing and the rights of work related immigrants and their families.

## 4 FINAL THOUGHTS

Participants' thoughts on how the ideas or learning from the project/seminar can be utilised in the future in working life, or other comments:

In my opinion the project seminar was interesting. I got a lot of useful information, for example the overview of the challenges faced by families moving to Finland from Estonia was very informative. I hope I can use this seminar material when I write my thesis for Social Services. *(Kati)*

During our project training, we heard many stories about problems that Estonians had in Finland. This seminar highlighted those same things. In the future I can use that knowledge in my work and think things from different angles. Without our training I wouldn't even have thought about those things, because many of them are just normal to us Finns or easier because we are Finns. The seminar was interesting because it was multi-lingual. If I have to organise a multi-lingual seminar one day, I will know better what kind of things to consider. *(Katja V.)*

This seminar gave me more important information about work immigration and the consequences of it. It helped me to understand better the different aspects of work immigration and what meaning it has for the family of immigrants. I can use this information at my work with immigrants in the future. *(Juulia)*

I'll have to follow the others with my opinions. First, before this whole project I didn't even realise that indeed the Estonians have to face quite a lot of difficulties here in Finland. I've always thought that we are very similar, but there are differences, for example, in the culture or in the education system. Work related immigrants are "an invisible" group comparing to refugees who already have a system that helps them to fit in the Finnish society. In the seminar, the most enlightening moment was when the talk was in Estonian and I could understand only a word from here and there. I was a bit annoyed and finally could not focus anymore. Now I have experienced myself how it feels when you don't completely understand what people around you are talking about. You feel left outside. In the future, I'll try to keep that experience in mind while working with foreign people. *(Maria)*

The seminar day was exciting and interesting because I haven't been in an event like that before. Because of our practical training in Regi project, I already knew some parts

of the information and problems that were reviewed. There were also new facts and perspectives of immigration between Finland and Estonia. I think I can use the information in my future work as kindergarten teacher and adapt it also to other immigrants from somewhere else than Estonia. Nowadays there are many children in day care who are migrants and it is an important thing to pay attention to in children's day care. (Annina)

I have also learned a lot during this whole Regi project. I didn't know anything about Estonians or immigration between Finland and Estonia before. At the same time I have learned many things about the Finnish systems. I really liked our trip to Rakvere. The seminar was interesting and useful, but I didn't understand almost anything from our workshop, because all the others talked only in Estonian. The kindergarten visit was more interesting than I assumed. I got new points of view and ideas. I have never used my English language skills anywhere before. I understood almost everything I read in English and the Estonian students understood what I said. I got more self-confidence and I would like to do more international studies and things in the future. (Miku)

I was pleased to get the opportunity to attend the seminar in Rakvere. The topics of the seminar were spot on considering my thesis work. My thesis is about Estonian immigrant children in Finland and what it is like for them to live in a new country. Especially Pihla Siim and Keiu Telve's presentation held some very useful information from my point of view. All in all, the seminar presentations addressed the matter of work related migration from multiple points of view and formed a balanced and complete picture. (Joanna)

## PROGRAM OF THE PROJECT SEMINAR



TALLINNA ÜLLEKOOL  
**Rakvere**  
Kõlledž



Varsinais-Suomen  
Viro-keskus ry



BALTIC REGION HEALTHY CITIES ASSOCIATION



**TURKU AMK**  
TURKU UNIVERSITY OF  
APPLIED SCIENCES

The goal of the REGI-project (Reacting to Growing Immigration – Strengthening social inclusion of Estonian migrant families in Finland and Estonia) is to give a contribution in solving problems and challenges related to work migration. REGI-project is financed by the European Regional Development Fund through the Interreg Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020. Project partners are Turku University of Applied Sciences, Tallinn University Rakvere College, South-East Finland Estonia-centre and Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association.



**REGI**

Reacting to Growing Immigration – Strengthening social inclusion of Estonian migrant families in Finland and Estonia

### Project seminar "Employment related migration – challenges for family life on both sides of the Finnish Bay"

**October 13th 2016 10:00-16:00**  
**Rakvere Smart House Competence Centre**

**Agenda:**

09.30-10.00 Registration, welcome-coffee

10.00-10.10 **Opening of the seminar, Silver Pramann** (Tallinn University Rakvere College)

10.10-10.20 **What is REGI project? Kaisa Jokela** (Turku University of Applied Sciences) and **Kristel Mänd** (Tallinn University Rakvere College)

10.20-10.50 **"Mobility - a possibility or a burden? Families on the move between Estonia and Finland", Keiu Telve ja Pihla Siim** (University of Tartu)  
Drawing on fieldwork conducted among Estonians living and/or working in Finland, this presentation explores mobility and related inequalities from the perspective of different family members, including children. The aim is to understand, to whom is a transnational way of life possible or desirable in the first place and how this affects family. How do different family members narrate mobility? How do people deal with the various hierarchies and inequalities related to their social and economic positions, both in Estonia and in Finland?  
*Pihla Maria Siim* (MA in folklore) is Research Assistant at the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore (University of Tartu, Estonia), finishing her PhD thesis for the University of Eastern Finland. Her thesis concentrates on questions of identity and belonging among transnational families living in the area of Estonia, Finland and North-Western-Russia. Since 2013, Siim has continued to study transnational families in the Estonian-Finnish context.  
*MA Keiu Telve* majored in ethnology at the University of Tartu and graduated in January 2015 with the thesis "Qualitative Approach to Work Migration: A Case Study of Estonian Male Commuters in Finland". Currently she is PhD student of ethnology in Tartu and continues to study cross-border mobility in two projects led by Prof. Laura Assmuth (UEF). She is also a founder of the Centre of Applied Anthropology of Estonia.

10.50-11.10 **Moving and living in Finland, Lennart Komp** (Varsinais-Suomen Viro-keskus ry)  
*Questions, short break*

11.20-12.00 **"Challenges of emigration and remigration", Veronika Kaska**  
*The presentation will give an overview of the state of play of emigration and remigration (for a context and comparability, statistics of immigration will be provided) in Estonia. Then the challenges that emigrating families are faced with are discussed, followed by challenges that families encounter when remigrating. What kind of practices are favored by other countries? What has Estonia done so far?"*  
*Veronika Kaska* has worked with the issues of migration for many years and has experience both, as a policymaker and coordinator at the Ministry of the Interior, and as a researcher under the auspices of the European Migration Network. She also concentrated on migration issues during her studies with her Master's thesis concentrating on the right to family reunification by a static citizen of the European Union.

12.00-12.40 **Estonians' social needs in Finland, Anneli Tamme**  
*Anneli Tamme is an Estonian social worker who has worked for several years in Finland. She has a good overview of the challenges faced by families moving to Finland from Estonia.*

12.40-13.15 **Sharing experiences about the project's activities: TUAS students, Kirsi Äyräs** ((Varsinais-Suomen Viro-keskus ry), **Kristel Mänd** and **Pille Murrik** (Tallinn University Rakvere College)  
*Pille Murrik is a lecturer at Tallinn University Rakvere College, psychotherapist and trainer in Gordon Family school*

13.15-14.00 **Lunch**

14.00-15.30 **Workshops**

15.30-16.00 **Conclusions**

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The seminar is moderated by **Karolina Mackiewicz** (Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association ).



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