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**HOW TO INTEGRATE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
INTO PRIVATE AND BUSINESS LIFE IN YLIVIESKA
REGION**

Thesis

**CENTRAL OSTROBOTHNIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED
SCIENCES, YLIVIESKA UNIT**

Degree Programme in Industrial Management

May 2011

Thesis Abstract

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Degree Programme Degree Programme in Industrial Management		
Name of thesis How to integrate international students into private and business life in Ylivieska area		
Instructor(s) Maija Korpela, Merja Haukipuro		Pages 48 + Appendix
Supervisor(s) Marja-Liisa Kaakko, Ossi Päiväläinen		
<p>This study is related to the situation of many internationals in Ylivieska area. During the last couple of years, students arrived from abroad to the Ylivieska area. These people face different kind of problems and tasks. The aim of this project was to try to help these people to integrate into the society.</p> <p>The project used a website, where all the necessary information was collected. This website is available for everybody. If something is missing from the site, it is possible to contact the project leaders. Nowadays the easiest way to reach big amount of people is to use the Internet.</p> <p>With the help the result of the project based on the opinion of the people who worked on it, it is possible to integrate foreign people, however it is not an easy task to achieve. It requires big amount of time, patience and probably the help of some individual, a person familiar with the processes in bureaucracy and other issues as well.</p>		

Key words

International people, culture, Ylivieska, guide

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Special Thanks

First I would like to thank for my supervisors, Marja-Liisa Kaakko and Ossi Päiväläinen and my other teachers from the school's side, Merja Haukipuro and Maija Korpela from the Ylivieskan Seutukunta's side.

Of course I am really grateful for my family for everything. Thank you mum, dad, Anett and Attila.

I would like to also thank for all my friends who supported me during this not-so-easy time. Éva Molnár and Timi Ács from the Hungarian side, and Tommi Iso-Heiniemi, Hubert Spiz, Mika Haasiomäki, Pekka Suni, Joni Ahmaoja, Sameer Aryal, Henna Toivoniemi, Tero Kujala, Jonne Leminen, Olli Alpua, Jarkko Olmala, Katja Stark, Annika Jukkola, Piritta Käsämä, Harri Käsämä and their family, Kimmo Sipilä and his family and all my other friends and classmates. Thanks guys, keep up the good work!

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, globalization is a vital issue around the world. Ylivieska and its surrounding is not an exception from this either. Finland is an aging society (just like most of the European Union countries) so it needs more young people. In this case it can be achieved by attracting young adults from other countries. This can be useful not only for the society, but also for the companies, which can have fresh workforce and even open for new markets. Keski-Pohjanmaan Ammattikorkeakoulu made a right decision to make one of their study-line in English. With this move, Ylivieska has around 80 students from abroad. To implement these people into the Finnish society, we have to go through several different topics. Myself I am also a foreigner; originally I was born and raised in Hungary. Personally I went through most of those steps what a person from other country must go through. In my opinion I succeeded well, as I was able to get into the everyday Finnish life, not only in private, but also in business life as well.

Ylivieskan Seutukunta offers information for young people in this area. Their website (www.settineti.fi) is for the age between 13 and 29. They offered me a project, where I had to research and make the English version of this website. The first time when they contacted me about the idea was around 2009, but in the end the project started in 2010. The first meeting was held on 1st September 2010. We discussed through what they expect me to do with the website, and how the system actually works. From this time on, I had regular meetings with the supervisors from both Seutukunta's and the school's side and informed them about the progress.

The biggest challenge in the project was to find and filter the information an international person really needs. The regulations and paperwork may differ for a Finnish person than from a person abroad. Moreover there might be differences between students coming from a country which is a member of European Union or a students coming from a country, which is outside of the EU. The next big step was to check all the links which are included on the website. I made sure, that those sites have English part as well. If the information that could be extremely important was only in Finnish, I included it to the list of links anyway, but marked it with a sentence which stated that that page is available only in Finnish.

The main website has ten main topics. It contains the following categories:

- Etusivu (Home page)
- Asuminen (Accommodation)
- Työ (Work)
- Opiskelu (Studying)
- Vapaa-aika (Free-time)
- Terveys (Health)
- Ihmissuhteet (Relationships)
- Kansalaisena (Citizenship)
- Kansainvälisyys (Internationalism)
- Nettlehti (Net magazine)

For the English version, I made some slight modification. The “Citizenship” topic is called “A citizen”, the “Internationalism” is called “International matters” as in my opinion, these descriptions sound better. Also the “Nettilehti” subject is completely replaced by a topic called “Social media”. The reason behind it that the “Nettilehti” part is frequently updated and it would be a really hard task to keep up with the English translation. (Settinetti 2010.) (This part was later quoted in my Cross-Cultural Project Management project analysis assignment)

Of course every single person has different background and has to deal with different problems. However the website and my conclusions in this thesis can give an overall guideline for those people who would like to live and study in North-Ostrobothnia, in Ylivieska’s subregion. During the following pages, I am going to present every topic more detailed, complete with my own opinions.

2. ACCOMODATION

One of the most important subject. Human beings function well in studying, work and private life, if they own a place where it is possible to spend most of their time during the day. It should have sufficient space, well organized and enough sunlight can be useful too. The amount of rent is a vital issue; the student should choose the most suitable for him/her, so later he/she will not encounter with any financial problem.

Also it is important to get an apartment, because it is a vital part of the paperwork later.

2.1. Residence permit and visa

In order to acquire a Finnish Social Security Number, the student must have a visa (if he/she is from outside the EU) or a residence permit (if he/she is from the EU. European Union citizens can stay in Finland till 3 months without registration, after that time it is required to fill up papers in the Police station.)

A student from outside the EU has to fulfil some requirement in order to get the visa. First of all, he/she has to prove, that he/she will be able to support him/herself financially. It is required to show a bank account statement. A student has to have either 6000 euro per year, or 500 euro per month. The second requirement is to receive 60 ECTS points (European Credit Transfer System) per year. The third requirement is to have a private insurance (this is also recommended for students from the EU). Because the studies last more than 2 years, a student will have a home municipality in Finland. Because of this, the insurance should cover up to 30 000 euro. The next requirement is to have some medical tests done. (Finnish Immigration Service 2011.)

After the student gets the Residence permit or the visa, the next step is to visit the nearest Maistraati, which is the Local Register Offices. Here the person has to register into the Population Information System.

2.2 Student apartments

In Ylivieska, there are multiple locations, which can be rented for shorter or longer period. Couples of them are reserved for students only. Residents can stay in these apartments during their official studying period.

Within the international group, the building in Havutie 2 is the most popular one. It has separate apartments with three or two rooms, so either three or two people can live in one. The kitchen and the bathroom are shared. Also there are some minor differences between apartments. There are two versions of the two-room ones. One of them has a bigger kitchen and a window, the smaller ones do not have. Of course the rent is depending of the size of the places. In this building, rent includes the price of the accommodation, the electricity, the water, the trash transportation fees, the sauna, the usage of laundry facilities and a certain speed internet. (It is 2 Megabit/s (Up/Down), if a student would like to have faster connection, he/she has to connect PPO and make a separate contract. The fees will be additional to the bills then)

The building offers some common areas as well. In the cellar of the building which has A and B stairway, there are multiple storage rooms, where one can put his/her belongings. However it is not advised to put any valuable thing there. There is one bomb shelter, as it is required. Then there is one room, where students can have different activities. Inside there is one ping-pong table, couple of chairs and a sofa. Events such birthdays can be arranged there, however it is forbidden to drink alcoholic beverages in the common areas, as there can be under-age people living in the building. (They are the students of Ylivieskan Ammattiopisto /Ylivieska Vocational College and other educational institutes). Smoking is also forbidden in the entire building, however there are certain areas marked for this purpose. There is also sauna, one for the men and one for the women. With this possibility, international students can have the opportunity to try this very nice Finnish custom regularly. As this building is a home for students for couple of years, it is necessary to have a laundry room. There is one quite new industrial sized washing machine, a dryer, a centrifuge and a room, where it is possible to hang the clothes for drying. Except the dryer, all these machines are free of charge. All students have to take responsibility to their own actions and apartments. The common areas of the building are cleaned by professional cleaners; the apartments must be cleaned by the tenants. On every third week on Tuesday,

a cleaner comes and checks every single apartment (only the kitchen and bathroom, they do not enter the private rooms) and observe how clean the place is. If there are some problems he/she leaves a note, which area should be cleaned. If the cleaners have to leave three notes in a row and no change is visible, the landlord has the right to order cleaning by the cleaner company, and the bill will be sent to the tenant.

Also important to mention, that there are certain rules, that must be taken seriously. The rules can be reached in either the office of the rental company or in the lobby of the building. If the rules are not followed, the tenant can be evicted, which is basically the one-sided termination of the contract. There is a rule about the noise. Loud music should be avoided in any time. Between 10 PM. and 7 AM. every kind of disturbing noise must be avoided. The main doors of the buildings automatically lock themselves after 10 P.M. (This can vary in other apartment buildings in the town.) If there is disturbance, the tenant should inform the janitor and/or the rental company. If the noise is unbearable or it is suspected, that a felony is in progress, the tenant should contact the police on the general emergency phone number, which is 112 in the European Union.

The locks might be strange for the newcomers. The doors can be set in such way, that the lock will close itself. This can happen accidentally, and happened many times, even once for myself couple of years ago. It can happen, that the key is locked inside; in this case the student can connect the janitor, who can open the doors with a master key. Of course this service is not free, if the janitor is called on weekdays between 7 AM. and 4 PM. the fee is 10 Euro. During other times, the tenant must pay 15 Euro. If the tenant does not have cash with him/her, it is possible to pay for the service with an invoice, but then it costs 30 Euro altogether. (Vieskan Kiinteistöhuolto OY 2011.)

In Havutie, it is not possible to share rooms. One person should live in one room. It is not possible to give the room to someone else without the notification of the rental company. The tenant is responsible for those people also, whom he/she invites there. So for example if a friend is visiting the tenant, and causes damage to the apartment, the tenant is responsible for these actions.

There are more apartments for students at Suksitie 3 and Mutupolku 2. These apartments are mostly meant for students with family. The rent is of course more expensive here.

2.3 Paperwork and payments for accommodation

In order to get an apartment here, the student must fill up an application form. If a person gets an apartment, it is required to make a contract, which is between Ylivieskan Vuokra-Asunnot (Ylivieska Rental Homes, the company, which deals with accommodation in Ylivieska town) and the student himself/herself. Usually there is a waiting list, so it is advised to apply for an accommodation as fast as possible. There can be also application deadlines; students can usually apply during the summertime.

The tenant will receive a certain amount of bill, what the person has to pay monthly by the 5th day of the month. It is possible to pay the bills through bank, or nowadays it is also possible to deal with this matter by cash in Vuokra Asunnot's office. Tenants can pay multiple months' rent at the time. The most important issue is to always pay the bills on time, because the consequences are hard ones according to the Finnish law. These laws apply through whole Finland.

As it was mentioned already earlier, there is also one additional fee, what the student has to pay. It is the security deposit, it varies between buildings. In Havutie 2, it is 150 Euro right now. It must be paid only once and if the tenant leaves the apartment in good condition, he/she will get this amount back.

If the student wishes to cancel the contract, he/she has to inform the Vuokra Asunnot in advance, based on the Finnish law, this is one whole month before the moving out. So if the person would like to move out for example at 31st May 2011, he/she has to inform the company before 30th April 2011. If the tenant is moving to another place, it is possible to inform the main offices (The Maistraatti – Local Register Office and Verotoimisto – Taxation Office) through the Post office. There is a form in the Post office, the student fills it with the new address, and the Post office handles the rest. For a certain amount of time, the Post also forwards the priority letters to the new address, if it was sent to the old address. It is possible to use this forwarding service for longer period for certain amount of fee.

2.4 Alternative ways to find accommodation

Of course it is possible to have an apartment from private landlords. Advertisements can be found on the Internet, newspapers, billboards and other multiple sources. The contract between the landlord and the tenant can be either for undefined or fixed-term period. Both the landlord and the tenants are protected by the law.

There is also a possibility to rent apartments in the surrounding towns and villages. Alavieska, Haapajärvi, Haapavesi, Kalajoki, Nivala, Oulainen and Sievi offers places to live. (Settinetti 2010.)

If the student would like to stay for the summertime, it can be managed too. There can be empty apartment in student houses for none-students also during summertime. If there are different wishes for accommodation during the summer, the area offers great opportunities in campgrounds and agro-tourism places as well.

Most of the rental companies have website, but unfortunately mostly in Finnish, so student might have to use some help of a Finnish speaking person.

3. WORK

This is a versatile and sensitive subject. Most of the students are looking for some sort of part-time job during school and a full time job for the summer. Unfortunately it is not that simple for a foreigner. According to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA, United States) the estimated unemployment rate was 8,4% (The World Factbook 2011.)

First of all, the language can be a barrier. Even though English is well-spoken in Finland and in the Ylivieska area, it is not enough to get a job with it. However a basic Finnish knowledge can be a booster, the employer can see the potential of the employee as later in the future he/she can improve and maybe even become a fluent speaker of this language. My experiences shows, that it was very useful that I have a limited, but useable language skill and I hardly met with problems during my working life in Finland. Colleagues can be helpful; the person can pick up the language faster as the student is in an only Finnish speaking environment. It can be useful to learn the dialect and slang words as well, of course with the mix of the working and professional language.

If the company is not located in the town where the person is living, transportation can be a problem. Especially during summertime, buses are rarely going between the smaller towns. If the person is lucky enough, the firm is located in a town which is along the main train lines, because then it is not that difficult to handle this situation. Of course having an own car can be the best solution, if a person can afford it. In this matter colleagues can be helpful too. If a person can negotiate with a work-mate, carpooling can be a great way to not only solve the transportation, but have discussions during the trips. Personally I have only good experiences with carpooling, and it was never a problem to manage to get to the factory and of course return from it.

3.1 Permissions to work

If the student is from inside the EU, he/she does not need any kind of special permission to work. Students from outside the EU have some limitations. It is 25 working hours per week at maximum. During the holidays, it is possible to work freely even as full-time

work. Students who are coming to Finland only to study are not eligible for Finnish study grant. (Finnish Immigration Service 2011.)

The Central Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences requires practical training to do. It can be done during the summer break, and no special permission is necessary for the students from EU countries. More information about the practical training is available in the Studying section.

3.2 How to get a job?

So the question is how to get a job. There are different ways to do it. First and most commonly used method is to look around on the Internet. The website (www.mol.fi) of the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö) collects the available jobs. It is possible to search in the jobs based on different searching methods. The most useful way is to search by the town, where a person would like to work. Of course it is possible to visit the office for unemployed persons personally. It is located in the town center of Ylivieska. (Ministry of Employment and Economy 2011.)

The other possibility is to check those companies, which rent employees for companies. Such companies are like Staffpoint and Varamiespalvelu. It is possible to seek available jobs on these websites.

Then there is another way to get a job. Look around the Internet and search for the big companies around Ylivieska. After this, contact them personally; send them a CV and a nicely written letter about how interested you are about working. It is possible, that dozens of these kinds of mails have to be sent before there is one answer, but it is worth to try it.

The work matters in Finland are similar than any other European country. If the applicant is selected, he/she is informed by phone, e-mail or regular mail. Usually the next step is to get an invitation for an interview. Based on my experiences, the companies are open-minded about the time scheduling, and it is easy to negotiate with them for a suitable time. It is strongly advised not to be late on the interview, as it is considered impolite. Also punctuality should be kept during the employment as well. The interview can be serious,

connected strictly to the working related issues. In the other hand it can be light and open type of discussion. Usually there are questions about the personal details, general information. Employer can ask about the hobbies and free time activities as a hobby can be useful during the work life. Then it is possible to talk about special skills, if somebody has some. Different kind of languages, computer and software knowledge, and special courses, what the applicant has done before. If the company is a producing some material or product, the employer can ask about health related questions. It is vital issue for work safety. For example a person with back problem should not work in such area where lifting heavy objects are part of the job. A person with allergies and asthma should not work with chemicals or in dusty environment. So it is really important to tell the truth for these questions! Then probably there will be a discussion about the required salary. In Finland, there are regulations for salaries.

3.3 Necessary paperwork for work

After the interview is done and the applicant is accepted, there are certain kinds of steps which have to be done. For the work, a person has to have a Social Security Number (Henkilötunnus, the requirements were mentioned in the Accomodation part), taxation papers, (can be managed in the local tax office) a bank account and number for it and of course the work contract.

The contract has to have all the necessary information about the payment and other benefits, the general information about the employee, the general information about the employer, the work tasks and so on. Work contract is also regulated by rules. A contract can be fixed-term, which shows the time interval, what the employee has to work. The other type is the permanent contract, where the time interval is not stated, so the employment is valid till further notice. Most of the contract also states a probation period also. The length of this period can be different in every company. During this time, the employer can terminate the contract. This is an option for the company to let the worker go, if something does not work well.

As I mentioned already it is very hard to get a job, so if a person is successful to find one, it is really advised to cherish it, and work hard so it can be a long term employment. If a

student ends an employment, he or she should ask for a letter of reference (työtodistus). It can be used as a recommendation in the future, and also necessary to have it in order to get credits for practical training during the studying.

4. STUDYING

The reason most of the young people arrive to Ylivieska from abroad is studying. Because of these students, Ylivieska is getting more international and multi-cultural. This gives an extra for a student, as it is possible to see and learn different cultures. Also it is a great opportunity to improve the English skills of an individual.

I arrived to this area first time in 2004 as an exchange student. In Hungary, I finished my high-school final exam and my school had exchange connection with Finland. So I decided to see how the education is different in another country. First I spent 4 months in Oulainen, in the Oulaisten Institutti (nowadays it is called Oulaisten Ammattiopisto) I studied marketing and business there. The subjects were quite similar than in Hungary. Then I spent one and half year in Ylivieskan Ammattiopisto in media-assistant degree. Finally I arrived to Keski-Pohjanmaan Ammattikorkeakoulu (Central-Ostrobothnia University of Applied Science). However I realized some major differences in the education style in the very beginning. First of all, the student-teacher relationship is much different. In Hungary (and many parts of Europe) the teacher is in a higher level, and you can address him/her as teacher. Here the teachers and the students are like colleagues, they call each other by the first name. This gives a much more open-minded and nicer studying environment. It gives a great opportunity to share ideas and talk about problems with the teacher. This attitude could be found in every other school, where I have been studying.

The application period for the 2011/2012 study year was between 3.1. 2011. and 15.2.2011. for the English language degrees and between 7.3. 2011. and 12.4.2011 for the Finnish language degrees. (Finnish National Board Of Education 2010.)

The future applicant had to fill the online application form during these periods and then send the official papers about his/her previous education, which makes them eligible for applying to a higher educational institution. These papers had to be sent to that institute what the applicant marked as his/her first choice. Later the entrance examination is arranged. Myself I wrote my entrance examination in Budapest, Hungary in the Finnish-Hungarian Embassy. After the applicant passes the exam and receives the confirmation letter from the school, the future student has to confirm his/her attendance. If he/she is not

fit into the available spots, he/she can get into a waiting list. If an applicant does not wish to study, and he/she declines, one person from the list can take his/her place.

4.1 Available study lines in Keski-Pohjanmaan Ammattikorkeakoulu

Currently Keski-Pohjanmaan Ammattikorkeakoulu (Central-Ostrobothnia University of Applied Science) offers 6 studying field in English. They are Business management, Chemistry and technology, Information technology, Nursing, Tourism and the only English in Ylivieska is the Industrial Management. As Industrial Management is the only fully English degree program in this area, I concentrate mostly on this field.

4.2 Credits

The school uses the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and a person has to collect 240 credits to graduate in the Industrial Management degree programme. As this system is used, it is possible and very easy to go for an exchange. Currently Ylivieska unit has over 130 connections around the World.

There are certain types of courses what must be done. There are the basic studies, which include subjects like different types of Mathematics, subjects related to Physics, Chemistry, Mechanism, Information acquisition and one of the most important one, the Finnish language. These courses will give 65 credits altogether.

Then there are the professional studies. These studies include subjects like Logistics, Management accounting, Technical Drawing and Computer Aided Design and so on. The Professional Studies also include the so called Alternative Professional Studies, which describes which specialization field a person choose. There are two different fields, one of them is the Supply Chain Management and the other one (what I am going to have) is the Global Marketing and Management. These Alternative Studies give 35 credits altogether. Combining with the rest of the Professional Studies, a student gets 115 credits for these subjects.

Next category is the Optional Studies or the other name the Free Choice Studies. This part can be pretty much every kind of subjects. It is possible to choose courses from other study lines, if the course is in English or the student speaks sufficient Finnish to follow the lectures. Our school offers courses like Photography or Cisco as optional courses in English. COU also has online study courses in English; the system is called the AVERKO. The system offers a more flexible way to study, as it is not connected to classroom activities. However it can happen that some courses require traditional written exams. The online courses have 4 different tools. First is the syllabus, which gives the general information and idea about the course. The second one is the Learning materials and assignments. This is pretty much self-explanatory; this part contains all the necessary tasks and materials which might be necessary. Third tool is the communication tools. It can be E-mail, chat and forum, where the student can discuss the problems. The last tool is the Instructions and feedback. Here a student can give feedback about AVERKO and check how the system works. (Keski Pohjanmaan Ammattikorkeakoulu 2011.)

Very popular choices are the language courses within the Free Choice Studies. Currently it is possible to choose between English, German, Russian, Swedish and Finnish for foreigners.

If a student is interested in project work or organizing events, credits can be acquired into this category. Teachers from abroad come to give some lectures as well, for example the Intercultural Communication, which is done by a teacher from Russia.

4.3 Tutoring

When a new student starts his/her education in this school, he/she is helped by the student tutors. The tutors are students, who are willing to help the freshmen to settle in the new environment and show them how the system works. These students are usually from the second year groups, but it is possible to be as a tutor if the person is in the third or fourth year. It is required to attend a training session before the student can start as a tutor. There are basic tutors and international tutors, who can help to organize event for the international students and also help to get along with Finnish people and everyday life situations. For these activities a tutor can get certain amount of credits, depending on how

many hours he/she sacrificed for the work. These credits are getting into the Free Choice studies category. It is also possible to have some sport activities organised by the student union of the school, which can give some credits. More information about this matter in the Free time chapter. The Optional Studies cover 15 credits altogether.

4.4 Practical training

The next category is the Practical training. Student must complete at least 3 times 7 weeks training. This can be done in one dose, but usually the students do this during the summer time. It is possible to make these trainings in Finland or abroad as well. The school's International Relation Office (IRO) can help organize places in companies around the world.

Within the practical training, the first time it is possible to have any kind of job. For the second and third time, it is required to have that kind of job place, where the work can be connected with the studies. After the training is done, the student must write a report about the experiences and what has he/she learned during the period. This report is evaluated by a teacher. Also the student has to get a letter of reference, (työtodistus, this was already mentioned in the Work section previously) which proves that he/she has been completed the job.

Each practical training give 10 credits for the student, so altogether 30 credits.

4.5 Final thesis

The final part is the final thesis. In this matter student works together with teachers (supervisors) and maybe work on a project. There are multiple tasks to complete with the thesis. Beside the thesis, student must give a seminar about it and also pass an exam called maturity examination. This examination is basically the supervisor chooses couple of topics from the thesis, and the examinee has to choose one and write three and half, four pages about it. With this, the school can be sure, that the student wrote the thesis and not someone else. After this is completed, 15 credits can be achieved. When all the above

mentioned credits are collected, the student has 240 ECTS, which is enough for the Bachelor of Engineer degree. The student can follow his/her earned credits online through the school's portal and/or in the school in Student Affairs Office. Also if somebody has questions or problems regarding credits, he/she should visit the Student Affairs Office.

4.6 Grading and failing

The courses are graded with numbers. It is between 1 and 5. 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest grade. If the student fails the course, he/she will receive number 0 in his/her transcript. If the course is completed without a grade, the letter "S" appears in the transcript of credits. Grading is done in multiple ways. The teacher might give assignments, homeworks, projects and/or the combination of these. It can happen that there are multiple exams during course (this usually happens, when the subject is longer than one period) or just one in the end, which test the student about the whole subject.

Sometimes it happens that the student fails the exam. There is a possibility to retake the exam. There are the so called public examination days. It is usually once per month, around the middle of each month and usually Thursdays. A person should apply for these exams a week prior it. It is possible to find the application forms at the Info desk. It is possible to have two retakes. If the student fails all these possibilities, he/she has to redo the whole course. It can be done the next study year with possibly a different group.

Some subjects and teachers allow using material and/or calculator during the examinations. This is usually described before the examination, so the student knows what is possible to use. Before the public examination starts, the supervising teacher checks the ID of the examinee. It is absolutely forbidden to cheat, discuss or use any other electrical devices other than calculator (if it is stated it is possible to use) during these events. Cheating can cause serious consequences, from written warning to expelling the student for certain time period. Also in case of cheating the exam is considered a failure.

4.7 Periods and confirmation of attendance

A study year is divided into four periods. These periods are called S1, S2, K1 and K2. They are coming from the Finnish words Syksy (Autumn) and Kevät (Spring). In the 2010/2011 year the S1 period was between weeks 5-42 in 2010, the S2 period was between weeks 44-50, the K1 was between weeks 2-9 and the K2 period was between weeks 11-18. (Kähtävä 2011.)

In order to have the right of the study, the student must confirm his/her attendance every year in advance. This can be done through the school portal as well.

The school offers a personal e-mail box and address, what can be used for communication between students and teachers. However the size is limited, so it is advised to take good care of it, as it can be filled easily with e-mails.

According to the website called VisitFinland, the literacy level of Finland is currently among the highest. The reason for this is the high level of education and every school is very well equipped. (VisitFinland 2011.)

5. FREE TIME

There are multiple organizations and possibilities which can help to spend free time in the Ylivieska region.

Ylivieskan Seutukunta, the organization where this project is from offers several possibilities. First of all, there is the Assan-Piste project, which created a cafeteria in Ylivieska's center (more precisely the building of the train station) where international students can meet with Finnish people, chat and use internet, while having some coffee or tea. Also there are exhibitions and certain theme weeks related to international issues. Other interesting events include the food events. This is done with the co-operation with Sputnik. (Which is a building mostly for young people age under 18, but nowadays older students are allowed to visit activities there.) Usually these events are on Friday afternoon, when food is prepared from different countries, so in this way a person can try different tastes from around the world. During this, it is possible to interact with other people and play games, so generally have fun time.

If somebody would like to have more education during the free time, there are lots of possibilities for that too. Ylivieskan Kansalaisopisto offers lot of different kind of evening courses in this region. These courses are including language courses (big variety of available languages) handcraft courses (there are also websites online, where it is possible to learn some craftwork made by hands) baking and/or cooking courses, dance and computer skill courses and so on. There might be a fee what student has to pay.

5.1 Free time activities available in Ylivieska

Every bigger towns have an own library. It is possible to rent books and other media from there, also read books or newspapers on location and it can be helpful with studies as well. All the libraries are in one network in Finland, so if a person is looking for a certain book, but it is not available on the location, the workers in library can order the book from other libraries from the country. Keski Pohjanmaan Ammattikorkeakoulu (COU) Ylivieska unit has an own library called Origo, where student can find books; newspapers and can do research in a silent, calm environment. Also the libraries are equipped with Internet, so

more information can be collected. The libraries require registration and give a personal library card what the person can use for renting certain media. There is certain time periods during these books and such items can be rented and of course they must be returned on when this period ends. If it is not done, libraries will give a fine. Ylivieska Library is open on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 12:00 to 20:00, Wednesday from 10:00 to 18:00 and on Saturday from 10:00 to 15:00. (Ylivieskan Kaupunki 2011.)

Ylivieska has a big concert hall called Akustiikka. Since its opening in 2003, the building hosted numerous concerts, theatrical plays, exhibitions and seminars. There are always some programs to attend to. The building has also a fully equipped studio, which can be rented for recordings; also students from the related field (like media-assistants from Ylivieskan Ammattiopisto) are using it for practise. Keski-Pohjanmaan Ammattikorkeakoulu (COU) has a theatre group for students and they are having there rehearsals and plays in this building. Student can earn Free Choice studies credits for this activity. Akustiikka's management is available from Monday to Friday between 8:00 and 16:00. Ticket sales and the exhibition hall are open from Tuesday to Friday between 14:00 and 19:00 and from Saturday to Sunday between 12:00 and 16:00. (Akustiikka 2011.)

Also the town has own theatre group and everybody who is interested about acting can visit these meetings.

5.2 Sport activities available in Ylivieska

One of the widest possibilities are the sport activities. Ylivieska is well equipped with facilities. First of all, there is the swimming pool, which was lately renovated. There is a 25 meter long pool, a pool for children including a slide, steam sauna, water massage and a sauna is also available. In the same area, there is squash-hall, gym hall, ice-hockey rink and bowling hall (also renovated not so long time ago). Also this area is good for winter sports, multiple cross-country skiing track can be found around the town. Currently there are 3 gyms. Two of them are located in the town centre and one of them is in the same building as the swimming pool.

5.3 Shops and restaurants in Ylivieska

If somebody is interested, shopping can be done as well. The biggest shopping mall the Prisma just opened couple of weeks ago. It has pretty much everything, what a person might need. It is possible to buy here some clothes, food, household items, technological products and so on. The only Alko shop is located in this building as well. (In Finland there is monopoly on alcohol retail. The Alko shops are the only ones in the country, where a person can buy alcoholic beverages above 4,7% alcohol level. Lower alcohol beverages can be purchased in common supermarkets. Also alcohol product which contains alcohol level above 22% cannot be advertised. A person must be 18 years and above in order to purchase alcohol. (Alko 2007.)

Nearby there is another big shopping centre called Kärkkäinen. This shop sells pretty much everything except food and fresh groceries. In the same building there is a Lidl, which serves the food part.

Also there is a K-Citymarket, which is another big shopping centre, similar like Prisma. Besides these, there are some smaller shops in the town centre, also gas stations.

The town is famous for the big amount of car dealerships. If somebody would like to purchase a car, here he/she will find the right one.

There are also household and furniture shops available.

As it is visible, this area is rich in shops and other dealerships. There is a great opportunity to maybe find a job or if we are thinking about the far future, some negotiations. A person could start his/her own enterprise or if he/she is from a certain country, he/she can be useful for helping local businesses using his or her connections and resources. For example if a person is from China, it might happen that some company needs a person, who has contact with that country.

The town has a Makuuni, where it is possible to rent dvd and blu-ray discs for overnight or even longer. In order to be able to rent movies, a person has to have a Finnish Social Security Number, which is registered the first time when somebody would like the use the

services of this shop. In the same building, it is possible to buy candy, so it is possible to get everything necessary for a pleasant evening at the same place.

This area is well equipped with restaurants as well. Everybody can find their favourite type of food. There are 6 pizza restaurants altogether. (Sibel, Kotipizza, Turkin pippuri, Mamma Leone, Pizzabag and Myllyranta) Some of them are regular restaurants as well (like Mamma Leone, Myllyranta). King Meal, Macusa, Rose Grill, Hesburger, Hilun Grilli and Scanburger sell mostly burger meals with salads and other fast foods. Abcs are selling some warm food as well. If somebody is fan of the Chinese food, there is a restaurant in the town centre called Taivaallinen Rauha.

There are some bars and pubs as well. In order to enter these places, one must be over 18 years old and has to have an identification card with him/her, which can prove this. This can be a driving license, a European ID card or a passport, the most important thing is to have a picture on it. The most popular places among the students are the places called Mustaleski and 10-kerho. These are regular bar/discos where usually the young people meet, dance, have fun and leave to home. Sometimes there are also live concerts here, but those are not that popular. More bar type places are the places called Jokeri and Bar5. The first one has karaoke and billiard, the second has live concerts.

5.4 Free time activities arranged by the student union YTO

The student union of Keski-Pohjanmaan Ammattikorkeakoulu (COU), Ylivieska Unit is called Ylivieskan yksikön opiskelijat (YTO) organizes events for the student as well. There are always some orientation gatherings in the beginning of the first school year. Checkpoint games are organized, which mean, that there are some checkpoints in the town centre, the teams have to visit these points and solve some funny or demanding tasks. Usually on the end of these events, there are sauna possibility in the backroom of swimming pool (which can be also rented for celebrations and meetings). This helps the new students to get to know their classmates better and also to meet with people from the other study lines. Personally I met some of my best friends in one of these events. There are one more of these checkpoint races during the school-year, usually during springtime. Also there are sport-days twice a year, once in the autumn and one in spring. During these

days, there are no lessons, but the students can participate different kind of sport activities, which include football, skiing, swimming, floorball and so on. Of course these can be affected by the weather conditions.

There are several sport activities during the schoolyear organized by the union. During the current year the following sports were available for students.

On Mondays, from 17:00 to 18:00 Badminton, from 18:00 to 19:00 Squash. These activities can be found in the town's sport centre. On Tuesdays, from 18:00 to 20:00 Volleyball and from 18:30 to 20:00 Floorball in the sport centre. Wednesdays seems to be the most active day. From 18:00 to 19:30 Rugby can be played in the Rahkola school. From 17:00 to 18:00 Badminton, from 18:00 to 19:00 Squash and from 9:30 to 23:00 Futsal can be played in the sport centre. On Thursdays, from 16:30 to 18:00 Floorball and from 21:30 to 23:00 Basketball can be found in the sport centre, from 20:30 to 22:00 Volleyball in Ylivieska High School. Fridays and Saturdays are free. Finally on Sundays 18:30 to 20:00 Rinkball in the Ice-hockey rink. Of course it is not necessary to visit these activities, but they are healthy, fun and in the same time it is possible to earn Free choice studies points for them. (Ylivieskan Tekniikan Opiskelijat 2011.)

5.5 Other possibilities

This area is situated along one of the main train line of Finland. From here, every bigger city is reachable. Helsinki is about five and half hours, Oulu is little bit over one hour by train.

Students can have discounts for multiple things and services. It is possible to get a SAMOK (Union of Students in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences) student card, or the cheaper version is to get a student card made by the train company, VR (this card is valid for buses also) If somebody has a SAMOK card, it offers bigger variety of services. Entrance tickets for student parties and other events can be cheaper with this card and also there are some shops and restaurants, where they accept it for some discount.

6. HEALTH

The definition of health by World Health Organisation is the following: Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. (World Health Organisation 2003.)

If we think about it logically, we realise that a human being has to have all three above mentioned sides of well-being and these three are strongly connected to each other.

The first step what we can do to keep our health is to eat healthy or eat least try to reduce fat and salt in our diet. Fortunately Finland is prepared for this, and it is easy to get healthy food products or raw materials. Also because of the high percentage of lactose intolerance and people who have celiac disease, lactose free and gluten free diet is easily accessible.

The second step is to have some activities, where a person keeps up his/her body in a good shape. For this the local sport opportunities help. The Free time chapter deals with this issue in more detailed. If a student does not want to join any games, it is still possible to walk, run, ride a bike or use any other equipment. There is a big amount of sidewalks in and around the town.

6.1 The healthcare of Ylivieska region

It can happen occasionally that a person gets sick. Hopefully it is just a common cold or flu at worst. Anyway, it can happen that it is required to visit a doctor. The school has a nurse, who can help in mild cases of illness or help to find out what should be done. Her name is Henna Tähtelä. She is available in the Health Care Centre of Ylivieska (Ylivieskan Terveyskeskus) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 08:00 to 16:00 except on Fridays, when she is available till 14:00. It is necessary to have an appointment settled first. It can be done on the +358 8 4195 111 or the +358 44 4195 111 phone number. It is possible to visit her without an appointment on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays only from 08:00 to 09:00. (Keski-Pohjanmaan Ammattikorkeakoulu 2011.)

If it necessary, it is possible to visit a doctor as well. The services of the Health Care Centre of Ylivieska are available during the weekdays from 08:00 to 16:00. It is required to have an appointment. It can be arranged either personally or by calling the following phone number: +358 8 419 5100. (Peruspalvelukuntayhtymä Kallio 2011.)

Outside the working hours of the Health Care Centre of Ylivieska and on weekends, the Oulaskangas Hospital (Oulaskankaan Sairaala) is on-call. It can be found in the nearby town called Oulainen. The Hospital is reachable on the +358 8 429 7500 phone number and in urgent cases on the +358 8 429 7840. This hospital is available non-stop. (Pohjois-Pohjanmaan sairaanhoitopiiri 2011.)

6.2 Emergency situations

If somebody is in an urgent need of help or a witness of such situation, the emergency services should be contacted. First of all, it is important to remain calm. Call the emergency number, which is 112 in most of Europe. After the call is answered, the first thing to tell is the caller's name, the operator might ask for the phone number, from where the call is made. Then tell what happened, what kind of symptoms or what kind of accident happened. It should be mentioned, how many people are involved, so the services can prepare and send the necessary amount of help. Next information to tell is where the event happened. Answer all the questions, which are asked and act upon the orders made by the emergency services. Wait till the operator hangs up the call. Then wait till the ambulance/police/firefighters arrive to the scene. Call the 112 only in emergencies, as unnecessary calls can waste time and resources on real emergency situations. (Peruspalvelukuntayhtymä Kallio 2010.)

The Poison Information Centre is available also non-stop. The Centre answer question about poisonings (whether it is by medication or household materials). The phone number to call is +358 9 471 977. (Hospital District Of Helsinki and Uusimaa 2011.)

6.3 Insurances

For students from a country from European Union, it is advised to get a European Health Insurance Card. With this card, the student can get the medically necessary health care. There are some fees, which have to be paid, but this is a necessary fee for Finnish individuals as well. It is possible to get this Health Insurance Card from the student's own country's national health insurance office. It is necessary to have insurance for it. The card is free of charge. It is still highly recommended to have private insurance, as this card is not covering every possible cost!

For students from a country outside EU needs insurance, as it is required for the visa application. (More information is available in the Accommodation chapter).

6.4 Dental services

Dental services are available from Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 15:00. Appointments can be arranged on the +358 8 419 5380 phone number. In case of emergency and pain, it is possible to visit the dentist office from 08:00 to 11:00. The dentist office can be found in the Health Care Centre of Ylivieska. During nights and weekends, there is emergency dentist service only in Kokkola. The phone number is +358 6 828 7487. (Peruspalvelukuntayhtymä Kallio 2011.)

The health care in Finland is high-level. The hospitals are well equipped. According to the CIA's World Factbook, the general life expectancy at birth is 79,27 years. For males it is 75,79 years and for females it is 82,89 years. (The World Factbook 2011.)

7. RELATIONSHIPS

Interpersonal relationships are a major part of life. Humans are generally social beings, so a person needs another person to feel complete or successful. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the relationships are in the middle.

7.1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs



GRAPH 1. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (adapted from the website of Abraham Maslow. http://www.abraham-maslow.com/m_motivation/Hierarchy_of_Needs.asp)

These layers are strongly connected to each other; one cannot exist without the other. They built on each other, so it starts from the bottom. The first two levels are considered the basic level, which represents the basic needs.

The psychological needs are pretty self explanatory. People need food, drinks, breathing, sleeping and all the other physical needs. The second level is the safety needs. Security and safety are belonging here as well as the financial safety, steady income and family background.

The third and fourth layers are the psychological needs. Human needs emotionally based relationships; it can involve friendships, family relations and intimacy. These are the social needs. The fourth layer is the esteem needs, which shows accomplishments, attention and recognitions.

After all these layers are fulfilled, a person can self-actualize him/herself. He/she can create, can solve problems and basically live a successful life. (Project Management Course 2009.)

As an example, let us go through an average 20-25 years old male student's needs during one day. In the morning, he wakes up and visits the bathroom. He has a breakfast, which includes scrambled eggs, bacon, milk and an apple for dessert. He leaves home and goes to school. He has couple of lessons there; when those are over he has a lunch in the school cafeteria. His friends are joining to this lunch. After they finished, he goes to the gym with one of his friend. The gym session is over, he goes to the shop. During this time he gets a phone call from his parents, discussing about some important matters. In the shop, he buys every important item and some of those food items which are not that necessary to have (chocolate and so on). He goes back to his apartment. His partner visits him there; they spend couple of hours watching movies. After the partner leaves, he is eating and handles every necessary thing. In the end of the day, he thinks about his future and also considers to start an art piece. Then he goes to sleep.

With this example, we can see that our student went through the whole hierarchy of needs. He slept, ate, drank and of course fulfilled every obvious need. He had a place to stay, where he could feel safe. He had a family, friends and a partner who care about him. He could buy all he wanted, which assumes financial stability. Because he had all these above mentioned needs, in the end he was able to express himself with art.

There are different kinds of interpersonal relationships. It can be either in professional life or private life.

Professional life can include every day connections between workmates, between student and teacher, people between different countries and companies. Professional connections can be useful in later life, as it can help in the career.

Private life connections include friendships, romantic relationships and family relationships.

7.2 Levinger's development of relationships

A psychologist called George Levinger created a theory about the development of relationships. He divided the development into five steps.

The first step is the acquaintance stage. During this stage people meet and start get to know each other. First impressions are really important in this stage. If people like each other, the relationship can develop into the next stage, or simply stay in this level and continue like this.

The second step is the build-up stage. People will start to trust and care about each other. They receive more information about the other person and then it turns out do they continue to interact with each other.

In the third stage the relationship develops into a long-term friendship, romantic relationship or even marriage. This stage usually last the longest from all.

The fourth stage is the deterioration. Not every relationship reaches this level, but signs of problems might occur. Less interaction, less communication can be the result of this. In case of betrayal, it is really hard to re-establish trust and can lead to the end of the relationship, which is the last stage of the relationships. This is the saddest part of the relationships. A relationship can end by either the separation of the two parties or by the death of one of them. (Levinger 1983, 315–359.)

A friendship can involve lot of shared activities. It can be sport activities, watching movies, cooking together, having discussions, having parties, playing games, study together, helping each other and million other ways to spend time together. As friendships are based on equality, that kind of activity should be pick, which both of the party can enjoy. (Helm 2009.)

7.3 STDs and contraception

Romantic relationships can be affected by society and even by religious habits. Different cultures can react in different ways in the case of romantic interactions. However it is important to mention, that if the relationship goes physical, necessary actions have to be done. Because of the several sexually transmitted diseases which exist and because of the unwanted pregnancies, it is necessary to use contraception. If a person needs information or have questions, he/she should visit the local Health Care Centre. If a person needs information about HIV, it is possible to visit the Oulu AIDS Support Centre. Here they can give information and advices about HIV and AIDS and can perform HIV tests as well. The Centre also organises awareness activities and gives out materials such us presentations.

The address of Oulu AIDS Centre is:

Oulu AIDS Centre
Kirkkokatu 11 B 23
90100 Oulu

Phone number: 379 458 and their e-mail address is oulu@aidscouncil.fi. They are available from Monday to Thursday from 10:00 to 16:00. All the services of the Centre are anonymous and free of charge. (Settinetti 2011.)

7.4 Culture shock

There is one more important thing, which should be mentioned. A foreigner person who arrives to Finland (or as a matter of fact, any country) will face culture shock. Culture shock is divided to different stages as well.

The first is called the honeymoon phase. During this time, the new environment, foods and drinks, people and habits are new to the individual. Because it is new, people usually find every aspect positively.

The next phase is the rejection phase. Usually it happens after couple of months of the staying in a new country. The individual starts to realize the differences between their original place and Finland. These differences (which can be the food, weather, habits and so on) can create home-sickness, the feeling of loneliness and generally bad mood. The language barriers can be frustrating.

The third step is the regression phase. It happens usually after 6-12 months. The person starts to get familiar with the new culture. Person starts to find friends and activities, which are affecting positively. Things do not feel that new anymore.

The final phase is the adaptation phase. The individual is comfortable and familiar with the customs of the new place. However the person still keeps his/her own culture as well. It is much easier to cope with culture shock, if a student gets a Finnish friend. With his/her help, the integration is much faster and more successful. (Harvey 2005.)

Based on the idea of Geert Hofstede, culture is a learned part of the life. Because it is a learned issue, it can be achieved in certain amount of time, the person should just adjust him/herself to the new environment. (Bartlett & Davidsson 2003, 15)

Finland is a monochronic country. It means that people here value if somebody arrives to the meeting on time, people like to concentrate on one thing at the time and they do not like to be interrupted. They like to keep a distance if they are talking to another person. People from polychronic countries can find these issues strange. These can lead to stereotypes. (Bartlett & Davidsson 2003, 20-21)

7.5 Small talk

Small talk can be useful with new relationships. However there are topics, what a person cannot just discuss in the first meeting with a Finnish person. (As a matter of fact, it is true in other countries as well.) If a person would like to make sure, that everything goes well with a meeting or when meeting a new person, he/she should not ask very personal questions. There are certain topics, which can be used safely. These are usually about a person's interest. Can be about movies, books, music, sport (In Finland it especially works

with ice-hockey) and other general topics. It should be noted, that a person should not complain about the country itself. (Bartlett & Davidsson 2003, 55-57)

7.6 Own experiences in Finland

Personally, I also had some problems in the beginning. For me the first interesting and different experience was the weather. Of course because Finland is situated more North than my country, it is colder. The second strange thing was the differences of the food products. The people are really nice here, but first it is difficult to “open” them. After a person achieves this, he/she can have a friend for a lifetime.

During my 6 years in Finland, I met lot of wonderful people, who helped me and still helping me in multiple ways. They invited me to their homes, to see their families. They showed me how to use the sauna properly. (It is a really nice Finnish custom; everybody should try it at least once) They showed me how the Christmas looks like in this country. I was able to see and experience the wonders of the summertime here and also other nature phenomena, what I cannot see in my country. There is no better feeling in the World, when a person comes out from a small cottage, in front of him/her is the frozen sea and above him/her are the stars and the Northern Lights.

I consider myself lucky, that I could almost fully integrate myself to the Finnish lifestyle.

8. A CITIZEN

This topic deals with general information about what are the rules and obligations what a person has to follow. This information is mostly important for Finnish citizens, but if a foreign person would like to become a Finnish citizen, he/she must follow these regulations. Of course there are laws and rules what has to be followed even if a person stays here for just a short period. A foreigner has to respect the host country's regulations.

8.1 Student unions

If a person would like to participate actively in the society, it can be done by contacting youth councils. If a student would like to affect the student life, he/she should join the school's student union. Keski-Pohjanmaan Ammattikorkeakoulu (COU) has the student union called COPSA and within this organisation, there is the union for the students of Ylivieska unit called Yto.

8.2 Finnish Army

Every Finnish male citizen above the age 18 has to serve in the Finnish Defence Forces. The time interval can be 6, 9 or 12 months altogether. There is also possibility to perform non-military services and females can join the army as volunteers as well. If a foreign male is getting Finnish citizenship or multiple citizenships, it might happen that he has to serve in the military. (The Finnish Defence Forces 2011.)

8.3 Netiquette

A person has to respect the rules on the Internet as well. Such rules are called Netiquette. If someone is writing an e-mail, he/she should do it in a way as he/she would do it personally. The recipient's mailbox should be respected and try to avoid huge attachments. The attachments should be checked, so they do not contain any viruses or threats to the recipient's computer. If he/she is posting something on a forum or a chat, he/she should do

it related to the topic and with polite manners. The instructions of the operators of the website have to be followed. When somebody is registering into a website or service, he/she has to read through the information about it. If he/she does not understand some part, he/she should not register. Also it is important to consider what kind of personal information he/she would share. It should be also considered, that not every information is necessarily true on the Internet. Beware of the scams! Those actions which are illegal in real life are also illegal in web environment. Copyright and trademark laws have to be respected. An individual should not share any files, logos and such if he/she is not the copyright holder. Hacking into systems, write harmful viruses and files are forbidden. Sending advertisements (spams) should be avoided. Racism of any kind is forbidden as well. Any form of child-pornography (possession and distribution) is strictly prohibited and should be reported to the authorities. (Settinetti 2007.)

8.4 When to contact police?

Police is willing to help and give advises for students as well. Bullying is not an accepted behaviour, if somebody is facing with such action, he/she should contact a teacher or the police. A student should contact the police through emergency services (112) if the following happens:

- he/she committed a crime,
- he/she is witnessed a crime,
- he/she suspects that a crime about to happen,
- he/she is involved or witnessed a traffic accident,
- he/she is threatened by someone else,
- he/she has a knowledge about somebody being at risk.

The police office should be informed in the following cases:

- if a student suspects, that a crime was committed,
- he/she has information about a committed crime,
- if he/she has information about a planned crime.

The Police Department of Ylivieska can be found in the following address:

Katajaojankatu 4, 84100 Ylivieska.

Phone number: +358 71 87 65463, e-mail: palaute@ylivieska.poliisi.fi (Settinetti 2010.)

If a student needs legal aid, he/she should check the website of the Judicial System of Finland. www.oikeus.fi. (Judicial System 2011.)

8.5 How to get Finnish citizenship?

If a student decides to obtain a Finnish citizenship, there are several criteria, which he/she has to fill:

- the person must be at least 18 years old, or married,
- the person lived in Finland for long enough (it is the last 6 years period without any interruption, if he/she is married to a Finnish person, than only the last 4 years are counted)
- he/she did not commit any punishable act during the time period of his/her stay in Finland,
- he/she can prove his/her financial and accommodation stability,
- he/she has a sufficient level of Finnish or Swedish language or can use Finnish sign language (this has to be proved with an exam). (Finnish Immigration Service 2011.)

It is also possible to have multiple nationalities. In order to receive Finnish nationality, the person should fill the KAN_1, which can be found in the Finnish Immigration Service's website or the local police station. After the papers are filled, it should be returned with all the necessary identification papers and certifications. There is a process fee, what has to be paid. After this, the Service will process the application and send the information about the decision by post. (Finnish Immigration Service 2011.)

8.6 New law about integration

There will be a new law in Finland, which will enter into force from 1st September 2011. This law will promote the integration of foreigners. One part of the law says that municipalities and offices of labour will try to help and guide foreigners with counselling and will give services, which can be useful in working life as well. (Finlex 2010.)

This will be a huge step in order to help the situation of the international people in the Ylivieska area.

9. INTERNATIONAL MATTERS

This subject on Settinetti's website is concentrating more on the Finnish students, but of course there is some information, which can be useful for the international students too.

9.1 International students in Ylivieska

As it was previously mentioned, it is possible to go for an exchange program from the school. In the same time, Keski-Pohjanmaan Ammattikorkeakoulu (COU) Ylivieska unit receives an average of 20 exchange students per year. These students are mostly from Poland, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Spain, Hungary, Japan and other countries as well. These students can join those international students who are studying in Ylivieska permanently. As it was already mentioned currently there are about 80 international students from countries such as Poland, Estonia, Russia, Hungary, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, China, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and so on.

9.2 Organisations and information

There are also different kinds of organisations, which handle international co-operations. One of them is called CIMO. (www.cimo.fi) It is an agency, EU educations, trainings and other programmes offer for young people. Also they handle scholarships for Finnish students who are leaving for an exchange, or those internationals, which come to Finland. (CIMO 2011.)

If a student needs more information and guide about Finland, it is possible to visit the website called VisitFinland. (<http://www.visitfinland.com/en/web/guest/finland-guide/home>) (VisitFinland 2011.)

About education, it is possible to check the website of The Finnish National Board of Education (<http://www.oph.fi/english>) or the Ministry of Education and Culture (<http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/?lang=en>). (The Finnish National Board of Education 2011.) (Ministry of Education and Culture 2011)

9.3 Transportation

Within Finland, the transportation can be managed by train (VR offers these services) and by bus (Matkahuolto deals with these matters). Finland also belongs to the InterRail countries, so it is possible to make trips by train from and to the country.

Transportation can be handled between Finland and another country by airplane easily. The main Finnish company is called Finnair. Currently there are 44 European, (for example: Amsterdam, Budapest, Frankfurt, Krakow, London, Moscow, Munich and so on) 3 North American (New York, Miami and Toronto) and 11 Asian destinations (Bangkok, Hong Kong, Osaka, Beijing, Tokyo, Sydney and so on). (Finnair 2011.)

Of course Finland is reachable by lot of European companies, but it can happen, that a layover is necessary. Personally I mostly use Lufthansa, with layovers in cities such as Frankfurt or Munich. I also use Austrian Airlines quite frequently; I have to fly through Vienna mostly. There was one occasion, when I flew with KLM, this time I changed plane in Amsterdam.

There are multiple low-cost airlines, which offer flying in relatively cheap prices. These companies are like Wizzair, Ryanair, Easyjet and so on. It is possible to find information about these flights on their official websites. Online searching offers good opportunities to find a suitable and cheap flight to Finland.

There is one more form of transportation available. If somebody would like to take a ferry, that is also possible. There are multiple companies offering these services, the most known one is the Tallink Siljaline.

If a student owns a car and lives relatively near to Finland, he/she can also travel here by his/her own car. Some of the students from Estonia and Russia studying in Ylivieska bring their car here.

If a students need to arrange transportation, it is possible to contact the local travel agency. It is called Matka-Rasti They can also manage accommodation if it necessary. The address of the office is the following:

Matkatoimisto Matka-Rasti

Asematkatu 4, 84100 Ylivieska

Phone number: +357 8 4694 470, e-mail: ylivieska@matkarasti.fi

They are opened from Monday to Friday, from 09:00 to 17:00. (Matkatoimisto Matka-Rasti Oy 2011.)

10. SOCIAL MEDIA

Nowadays, social media has a big and important role in the student life. Young people not only share their thoughts and feelings on these sites, but also communicate and help their friends through them. It is possible to discuss courses and materials through chat.

The most commonly used website is of course Facebook. Through this service the student is not only able to keep in contact with friends and relatives, but nowadays most of the events and parties are organised through this interface. Facebook is also a great opportunity for companies to make advertisements, as they can reach millions of people very easily.

Within Finnish students, Finnish based websites such as Irc-Galleria and Kuvake.net are often used for the same reason as Facebook.

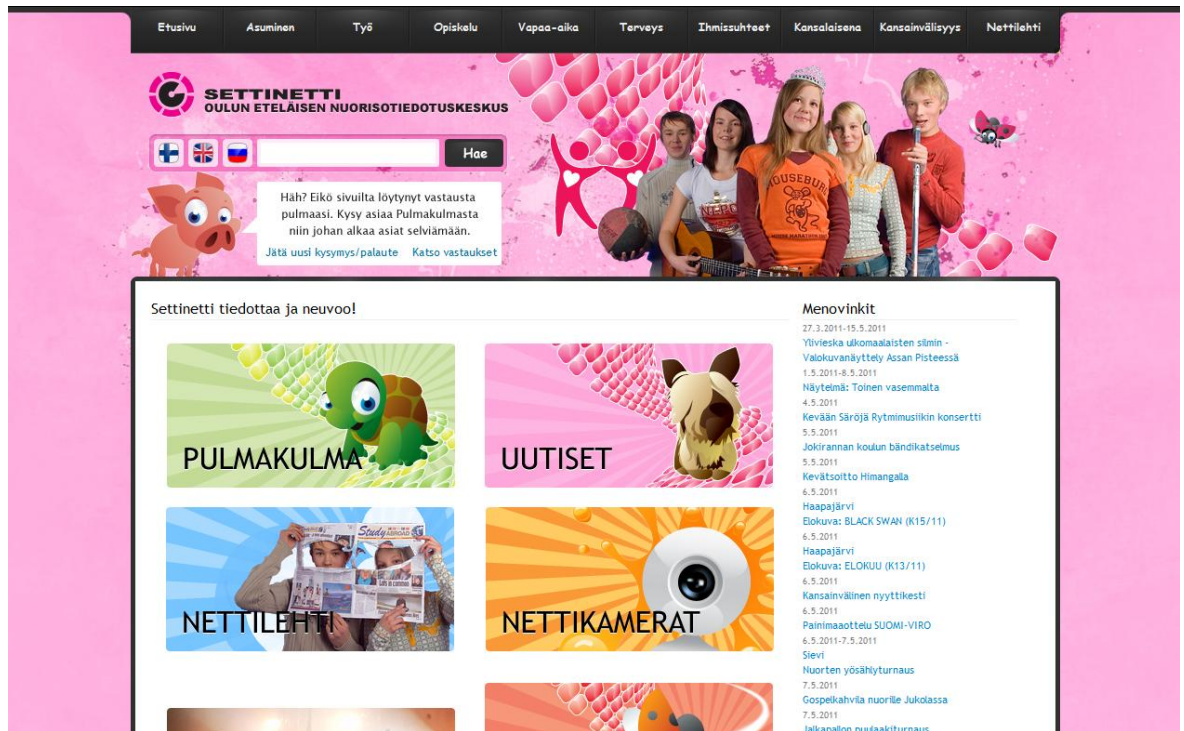
The most popular instant messaging software is the Msn Messenger, made by Microsoft. It is a software, which can be used for chatting in live, talk and use web-camera. Also it is possible to use for sharing files between students.

Skype can be very helpful for internationals. This software allows talking between computers for free. (It is possible to call landlines or cell phones too, but for that, the user has to pay) Personally I found this software a great opportunity to handle the homesickness, as I can use it to talk with my home any time for any length.

With studies, of course Google is the most used website. With the help of this site it is possible to find resources, materials, publications and other necessary information.

Wikipedia can be used as well. It is a freely editable and useable encyclopaedia. However some of the information can be unreliable or just simply not correct, so it is hardly advised to check the resources multiple times before using them.

11. PROJECT DESCRIPTION



GRAPH 2. The main page of Settinetti website (Settinetti 2011.)

The leaders of the project were Merja Haukipuro and Maija Korpela. The aim of the project was to create a portal for international students in English language based on an already existing website. With this website and the thesis itself, it is possible to help the students to get integrated in Ylivieska area.

The base of the website was in Finnish, this contained all the necessary topics as well. The information sources were mostly found on the Internet, but Ylivieskan Seutukunta, the International Relations Office in Central-Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences, Ylivieska unit and my own experiences were also useful.

The time was sufficient enough and I have enough meetings with the leaders.

The outcome of the project will be helpful in the future for different organisations.

12. KNOWLEDGE USED DURING THE PROJECT

I have used lot of the knowledge and methods what I learned during the last four years. Without these it would have been much harder to handle situations. I could implement the theory what I learned into practise.

First of all, the course called Cross-Cultural Management. With this, I was able to plan the whole project and handle the time management.

With the Professional Ethics, I could handle the cultural issues and the interactions between the student and professional work-life.

The Personal and Professional development helped me with the self-management issues. Also during this time I was able to meet and discuss with one of my supervisor.

The knowledge what I gained with the Information Technology was mostly used during the actual thesis part. The way how to use the word processor was learned during these lessons. Also it was a big help during the technological side of the website what I was working on.

Basics of economics made me understand the way how a business background works, connected with personal experiences it was possible to contribute to the research and the thesis itself.

With the help of Commercial law, it was possible to understand the necessary rules and laws, which are important for a student to follow.

The English courses were necessary to have in order to make the project. Since the project is bilingual, the Finnish was also really important.

One more subject I found really useful, but I have to go back for that till the high-school. During a two years period I was studying typing and official document writing. It turned out useful during this time.

In the end, as a good project analysis has to contain a section, which shows the positive and negative things what I experienced. Here are those:

Pros:

- All of my supervisors were available any time, if I met with some problem.
- There was enough time to gather information and upload it to the website.
- Because of the online nature of the project, I could do 95% of the job from home, in comfortable environment.

Cons:

- I had to deal with all the other school tasks, private life and other issues in the same time, so it was very stressful to control everything.
- I could have arranged my time schedule better.

As it was already mentioned, the project started on 1st September 2010. We had the other start-up meetings on 9th and 20th September 2010. We signed the thesis contract on 14th September 2010. The following months we had meeting several times. The thesis itself went through several drafts. The maturity examination was written on 14th April 2011. The seminar presentation of the thesis is going to be on 26th April 2011.

13. CONCLUSION

During this project I realised, that it is hard and demanding task to integrate a foreign person into a new environment. Of course it is not impossible to do; it just requires lot of time and patience. The new person faces lot of problems and challenges. However it is worth to try, because when every goal is achieved, it gives big satisfaction. The fact, that the teaching language is English can help to improve a person's self-confidence. When I first arrived to Finland, I had a certain level of English skills. After couple of months speaking only in this language, I upgraded my knowledge and just continued to learn more words and phrases. After couple of years, I am able to give presentations in English for hundreds of people.

I was having discussions with one of my supervisor Ms. Maija Korpela from Ylivieskan Seutukunta about the integration. We both agreed that even though it is possible to achieve it alone or with the help of friends, it would be good to employ a person in Ylivieska, whose only job would be to help the foreigners to get into the society. It would make the international students life much easier.

Hopefully this thesis can help as well for a start; I tried to collect all the necessary details together. However there are issues, which cannot be discussed, researched or found anywhere. These issues must be experienced personally and try to find a solution for them according to the individual's personality.

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General Information about Finland

Area

Total: 338 145 km²

Land: 303 815 km²

Water: 34 330 km²

Land boundaries

Total: 2654 km

Border countries: Russia 1313 km, Norway 727 km, Sweden 614 km

Coastline: 1250 km

Elevation extremes

Lowest point: Baltic Sea 0 m

Highest point: Haltiatunturi 1328 m

Natural resources

Timber, limestone, gold, silver, copper, zinc, chromite, nickel and lead

Population

5 259 250 (estimated)

Age structure

0-14 years: 16% (male 429 450/female 414 570)

15-64 years: 66.1% (male 1 759 059/female 1 719 173)

65 years and over: 17.8% (male 385 671/female 551 327)

Median age

Total: 42.5 years

Male: 40.8 years

Female: 44.3 years (estimated)

Ethnic groups

Finn 93.4%, Swede 5.6%, Russian 0.5%, Estonian 0.3%, Roma (Gypsy) 0.1%, Sami 0.1%

Religions

Lutheran Church of Finland 82.5%, Orthodox Church 1.1%, other Christian 1.1%, other 0.1%, none 15.1%

Agriculture products

Fish, wheat, barley, potatoes, dairy cattle, sugar beets

Industries

Electronics, pulp and paper, chemicals, shipbuilding, clothing, textiles, food products, metal products and machinery

Import partners

Russia 16.28%, Germany 15.76%, Sweden 14.65%, Netherlands 6.99%, China 5.29%, France 4.22%

Railways

Total: 5,794 km

Roadways

Total: 78,141 km

(The World Factbook 2011.)