

# **International Club at Savonia UAS**

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<p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>The objective was to make a plan for an International Club for Savonia University of Applied Sciences. The author of this thesis has familiarized herself with the international students' life in Kuopio by acting as an international tutor and as well as a person responsible for international affairs in SAVOTTA, Students union of Savonia University of Applied Sciences. The reason for the topic is that the author wanted to work on something concerning international affairs. After discussions, the need for the International Club of Savonia was specified.</p> <p>First the culture and cross-cultural communication are explained. Then the research process is defined and then the research findings from the international tutor training, existing international clubs in other Universities of Applied Sciences. The plan for the club is presented in chapter six.</p> <p>A qualitative survey was sent to business and hospitality management students, all together more than 1000 students. There were only 42 answers, eight of which were in English. The main points of the results are that half of the answers included sports in the activities which they would like to do with other students, it is wished that the international club could be organized once a week or at least once a month, the best way to market the club would be Facebook or email, students are ready to spend small amounts of money on the organized activities, place would be irrelevant and the main factor that would make the students attend the international club is the possibility to get to know new people and cultures.</p> <p>The plan for the International Club includes an explanation of the division of the duties, explanation of the purpose of the club and a marketing plan. Then follows an activity plan in chronological order from September to May including price estimations and other possible details. The plan can be taken to use at any time.</p>			
<p><b>Keywords</b></p> <p>International Club, culture, cross-cultural communication, survey, foreign students, international students.</p>			

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

“Many times I have been thinking in the bus seeing the exchange students travelling with me, what would be the easiest way to get to know them. I have not found the answer. International Club would be the place where I could meet them”(one of the answers in survey 06.05.2013).

The basis for the thesis was a personal interest in the conditions of international students in Savonia University of Applied Sciences. The author could not find the proper subject herself therefore she contacted Jari Smolander, planner of the Student Union at the Savonia University of Applied Sciences, SAVOTTA. He mentioned that there is no place for Finns to get to know foreign students, neither a place for foreign students to know Finns. His proposal was to make a plan for an International Club at Savonia and after discussion with international mobility office, the decision to start to plan an International Club for Savonia, was made. The author saw that there is a need for the plan.

The objective of thesis is to propose the plan for an International Club to be used at Savonia from the beginning of a new academic year by gathering theory about cross-cultural communication and cultural differences supported with ideas from international tutors and existing international clubs. The thesis also includes a survey among business and hospitality management students and their ideas about an international club.

Research questions for whole thesis are the following:

1. What is cross-cultural communication and what kind of problems can occur in cross-cultural communication?
2. What kind of ideas are there for an international club?
3. How is the International Club of Savonia?

First of all, the culture is defined by using the definitions of Hofstede and Trompenaars. The national dimensions of Hofstede are described; Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism versus Collectivism, and Masculinity versus Femininity as those make it easier to distinguish differences (Hofstede& Hofstede 2013). At the end of the chapter also cultural relativity is explained as it is one of the main issues students will learn in the International Club. The second chapter starts with an explanation of cross-cultural communication and the first subheading is about the problems occurring

during cross-cultural communication. In the last subheading tips for better cross-cultural communication are given.

Before explaining the research findings, the research process is described. In the research findings there are material from international tutor training, explanations of international clubs in other Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences, results of the survey and last the activities that are already organized in Kuopio. The main chapter is the sixth one where the plan for the International Club for Savonia is provided. Finally the thesis is concluded with discussion and conclusion.

## 2 CULTURE

The main idea of the International Club is to meet people from different cultures and share the cultural knowledge. It is important to know to what it is referred when we talk about culture; therefore, the term is defined here. Geert Hofstede defined culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one category of people from another.” (Hurn & Tomalin 2013, 17; Lewis 2005, 17.) Another definition for culture comes from Trompenaars: “Culture is the way in which a group of people solves problems and reconciles dilemmas” (Trompenaars 2012,8).

The nature of culture described by social scientists and anthropologists include: culture is a set of values, beliefs and assumptions that influence our thoughts, behaviors and traditions; culture is learnt; cultural boundaries are not clear since many of us have effects of different or blended cultures through family background, studying, living, migrating and travelling abroad; we all have multiple identities; we belong to different groups, every group has a different culture (family, team, organization, etc), and no group has only one culture; cultural ways of being also vary over time and context. (Hogan 2007, 1). “Culture is about adapting to circumstances and transmitting this coping skill and knowledge to subsequent generations. Culture gives people a sense of who they are, of belonging, of how they should behave, and of what they should be doing. Culture impacts behavior, morale, and productivity at work, and includes values and patterns that influence company attitudes and actions. Culture is dynamic. Culture change... but slowly. Culture is considered the driving force behind human behavior everywhere. The concept has become the context to explain politics, economics, progress, and failures.” (Moran & Harris & Moran 2011,10).

In order to compare different countries and their cultures Hofstede defined dimensions: Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism versus Collectivism, and Masculinity versus Femininity. These are the first four and afterwards the fifth dimension Long-Term Orientation and the sixth dimension: Indulgence versus Restraint were added. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2013).

Power distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from above. It suggests that society’s level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders. Anyone who has intercultural experience knows that every culture is unequal. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2013).

Uncertainty avoidance deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity, other cultures can tolerate new situations better than others. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of situations, where they do not know what to do, by strict laws, safety and security measures, and on the philosophical and religious level by a belief in absolute Truth: "there can only be one Truth and we have it". People in uncertainty avoiding countries are also more emotional, and motivated by inner nervous energy. The opposite type, uncertainty accepting cultures, is more tolerant of opinions different from what they are used to; they prefer not to have rules, and on the philosophical and religious level they are relativist. People within these cultures are more phlegmatic and contemplative, and not expected by their environment to express their emotions. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2013).

"Individualism on the one side versus its opposite, collectivism is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups." (Hofstede & Hofstede 2013). On the individualist side we find societies in which everyone is expected to look after her/himself and her/his immediate family. On the collectivist side, people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents) which continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. The word collectivism is not referring to state, only to the group. All societies have the issue addressed by this dimension and it is an extremely fundamental one. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2013).

Masculinity versus its femininity refers to the distribution of emotional roles between the genders which is another fundamental issue for any society. "The assertive pole has been called masculine and the modest, caring pole feminine." In the feminine countries both men and women have the same caring values and in masculine countries the values are more aggressive and competitive. The gap between man and women is still seen, even when they have similar values. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2013).

Research made by Michael Bond and his colleagues led them to adding a fifth dimension called Long- versus Short-Term Orientation. "Long- term oriented societies foster pragmatic virtues oriented towards future rewards, in particular saving, persistence, and adapting to changing circumstances. Short-term oriented societies foster virtues related to the past and present such as national pride, respect for tradition, preservation of "face", and fulfilling social obligations." (Hofstede & Hofstede 2013).



In the same book the sixth dimension, based on Minkov's World Values Survey data analysis for 93 countries, called Indulgence versus Restraint has been added. "Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms." (Hofstede & Hofstede 2013).

An orientation on cultural values and behaviors usually begins with a conversation on the topic of cultural relativity. Cultural relativity refers to the idea that people raised in one culture learn a set of beliefs and behaviours associated with what is right and what is wrong for thousands of situations, while people in another culture learn a different set of beliefs and behaviors connected with what is a better or worse thing to believe, say or do in the same situation. The awareness that people in other cultures hold values different from ours is not something that comes naturally. (Laroche & Rutherford 2007, 92). This awareness can be learnt and the International Club is meant to be place where you can face different cultures and raise your awareness.

Now when the culture and its characteristics are defined it can be seen that they will affect the International Club. The Club cannot run well if the dimensions and characteristics are not understood. By understanding many dilemmas and conflicts can be avoided. The participants of the Club will come from different countries and the most affecting culture will be Finnish culture since the Club is held a Finnish university and mostly by Finnish people.

### 3 CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The International Club will have participants from different countries and cultures. Meetings will be held in Finland and the leaders will vary. There will be lots of communication between the leaders and participants as well as between the participants. In general communication can easily fail, moreover when there is a cross-cultural aspect, the risk is even bigger. “*Inter-*, comes from the Latin word for “between”, and the dictionary defines “communication” as “exchanging information”. In conclusion it can be said that intercultural communication simply refers to exchanging information between two cultures.” (InterNations 2013b).

“Within the business context, cross cultural communication refers to interpersonal communication and interaction across different cultures. This has become an important issue in our age of globalization and internationalization. Effective cross cultural communication is concerned with overcoming cultural differences across nationality, religion, borders, culture and behaviour.” (Kwintessential 2013a).

“It has often been said that communication and culture are inseparable. As Alfred G. Smith wrote in his preface to communication and culture, culture is a code we learn and share, and learning and sharing require communication. Communication requires coding and symbols that must be learned and shared. Godwin C. Chu observed that every cultural pattern and every single act of social behavior involve communication. To be understood, the two must be studied together. Culture cannot be known without a study of communication, and communication can only be understood with an understanding of the culture it supports.” (Jandt 2013, 39).

“Communication is a two-way process, involving not only the communicative skill of the speaker but, just as important, the listening habits of the interlocutor or audience. Just as different cultures do not use speech the same way; neither as they listen the same way.” (Lewis 2005,69). The responsibility for good communication lies with both the initiator and the receiver of the message. When a message makes its way out of the sender’s cultural filter to be received through the listener’s cultural filter, the meaning received is rarely the exact meaning intended. The idea has been misinterpreted, sometime a little and sometimes completely. (Laroche& Rutherford 2007, 100). “Listeners are sources of communication problems. People are not listening correctly. They assume they know what the other person is saying or will say (because they have heard it before, or they assume that one person is “just like” another person from the same group). Also, when people are in conflict, they often concentrate more on what they are

going to say in response to their opponent's statement, rather than listening to their opponents' words with full attention. The result, again, is misunderstandings, and often unnecessary escalation of a conflict.” (University of Colorado 1998).

### 3.1 Problems in Cross-Cultural communication

There are many reasons why words spoken are not received as intended. We might think the other person did not hear us, so we repeat or try speaking more clearly and perhaps louder. If that does not work, we might think that we are dealing with someone who is stupid or does not speak English very well. (Laroche & Rutherford 2007, 121). “Two additional skills are of fundamental importance today for global people. The first skill is listening to understand. Many global leaders, particularly of nation-states, do not seem to possess this skill to a high degree. Listening is a symbol of respecting the dignity of others. The second is the skill of locating and using many very sophisticated cultural interpreters. It is impossible for any individual, given the complexity of culture, to have a free understanding of other systems. However, cultural interpreters, individuals from each culture, can teach leaders. Having listened and been a student with cultural interpreters as teachers, the global leader is equipped to face the many opportunities and challenges that will be continually presented.” (Moran & Harris & Moran 2011, 34)

One of the factors leading to poor communication is often overlooked: the nationals of each country use their language and speech in a different way. Language is a tool of communication, delivering a message- but it is much more than that: it has strengths and weaknesses which project national character and even philosophy. (Lewis 2005, 63). Of course, speaking the native language in a foreign country is a big part of intercultural communication. However, intercultural communication does not stop at the verbal level. Intercultural communication is not only about the language, it is more about cross-cultural competence. (InterNations 2013b). Learning the word definitions and grammar of a new language is only the first step in successfully communicating in that language. The second and much more challenging part is being able to “read between lines”, understand the nuances, and use of nonverbal signals properly. Nonverbal communication issues include the list below:

- Space
- Touch
- Gestures and body language
- Display of emotions
- Tone of voice
- Dress

- Scent (Laroche & Rutherford 2007, 102)

A variety of problems of communication across cultural boundaries can arise from the differences between affective and neutral approaches. In our workshops we frequently ask the participants to describe the concept of intercultural communication. They list instruments- language, body language- and more general definitions such as the exchange of messages and ideas. Communication is of course essentially the exchange of information, be it words, ideas or emotions. (Trompenaars & Hampden- Turner 2012, 93). Southeast Asian proverb says: "Misunderstandings don't exist; only the failure to communicate exists." "The essence of effective cross-cultural communication has more to do with releasing the "right" response than with sending the "right" messages" (Hurn & Tomalin 2013,10).

All differences between peoples can potentially lead to misunderstanding, even in cases when both are from the same culture but more when the persons are representing different cultures. It is important to understand what kind of problems can occur during the cross-cultural communication and recognize different ways of communicating. The way to do this is to take into account different communication patterns, also causes to different types of behaviours and tries to analyse differences between linguistic and cultural communities with regard to communication behavior and influencing factors. As for communicative behaviour, a difference can be made between behavior that is created by a single individual and behavior that requires the interaction and/or collaboration of several individuals. (Allwood 1985 <http://sskkii.gu.se>).

The first action to reduce the risks of misunderstanding would be to gather good insight into the differences and similarities that exist to be able to avoid difficulties. Similarities between two unknown persons to each others can form a general human base that can help to solve some problems even when the differences between cultural and communication patterns are in focus. "As emotion and will are so closely connected with the process of understanding, no education in intercultural communication should ignore these factors." This means that if a person is not interested in to other cultures and does not have any empathy for other cultural patterns, he/she will not have understanding of other cultures even if they are taught. To make people get insight of other cultural patterns through education, the studies would thus need to include methods that are able to appeal to emotion, desire and action. ( Allwood 1985 <http://sskkii.gu.se>).

One of the main challenges when managing people from different cultures is to balance apparently opposite cultural values and practices. It is important to appreciate how much

culture affects the way we do business. Even when speaking the same language, opportunities for misunderstanding and therefore mismanagement exist. It is a serious mistake to believe that because there are common business interests, there are necessarily common ways of achieving business aims. Multinational teams do not happen naturally- they have to be created and carefully nurtured. Gains from cultural diversity are not automatic; indeed, in order to achieve their full potential, multinational teams may often have to overcome barriers that single-culture teams may solve relatively quickly. “The very richness of the cultural diversity makes the group dynamics much more complex”. These differences can create interpersonal conflict and communication problems. (Hurn & Tomalin 2013,142)

### 3.2 How to follow better cross-cultural communication

The following are practical guidelines to follow for more effective intercultural communication. These statements briefly outline several important characteristics of intercultural communication. All, if internalized and understood, will result in more effective communication.

- No matter how hard one tries, one cannot avoid communicating
- Communication does not necessarily mean understanding.
- Communicating is irreversible
- Communicating occurs in a context
- Communicating is a dynamic process (Moran & Harris & Moran 2011,47)

Certainly, employees react against lack of communication on topics they consider vital, but also dislike being bogged down in communication they consider irrelevant. More communication does not necessarily mean better communication, and quantity alone does not guarantee greater involvement by the receiver. (Mead & Andrews 2009, 94). It is important to find out the most effective way of communication and make sure that it will be understood by the receiver.

“In general, intercultural competence training can be described as having two main aspects and three key stages. The essential dimensions of intercultural competence are cognitive content as well as emotions and affects. To use less fancy terms than the academic experts in intercultural learning, we could put it this way: Intercultural competence is about what you *know* and what you *feel*. Awareness – knowledge – skills are therefore the three basic steps in intercultural competence.” (InterNations 2013c). “Through cross-cultural experiences, we become more broad-minded and tolerant of cultural “uniqueness”. When this is coupled with some formal study of the concept of

culture, we not only gain new insights for improving our human relations, but we become aware of the impact of culture shock and maximize intercultural experiences, as well as increase professional development and organizational effectiveness. Cultural sensitivity should teach us that culture and behavior are relative and that we should be more tentative, and less absolute, in human interaction. "(Moran & Harris & Moran 2011, 28).

In the International Club, the point is to meet new people from different countries and learn about their cultures so that the students can raise their intercultural competence. It can be said that the International Club is intercultural competence training. Cultural adaptability is the willingness and ability to recognize, understand, and work effectively across cultures. It presumes that such interactions will have successful outcomes. The implication for managers who want to be or remain successful is clear. Cultural adaptability is essential competency for leading in a global environment. Employees at all levels of contemporary organizations bring different values, expectations, and perspectives- their culture- with them to work. Those differences affect how individuals in these organizations lead, manage, and interact with others, and how the work gets done. (Deal & Prince 2003, 7).

"Sharing a laugh is probably the best way to build rapport with another person. A good joke brings people together, but a bad one pulls them apart." (Laroche & Rutherford 2007, 145). However, the main problem when trying to use humour in a multinational group is that it does not always translate well across the cultures. If that happens, there is always the possibility that some offence or frustration may be caused because of a lack of understanding. Different cultures also have different views of humor. The degree of humor displayed within a multinational team is itself a positive sign of trust and cooperation, particularly if the members can openly laugh and joke among themselves in a relaxed atmosphere. If used correctly, humor can help a team to bond. It can often aid in putting cultural differences on the table, but at times it can be a double-edged weapon. (Hurn & Tomalin 2013,142).

Some people avoid communicating across cultures for fear of offending another person. The sentiment of not wanting to insult another person is a good one. But if it paralyzes us and stops us from engaging with others, then it is a problem. Most recent immigrants are appreciative when others take the initiative to speak with them, even if some of their cultural norms are broken. Ideally, one is in a relaxed and comfortable state when entering an interaction with another person. If we can pay attention using all of our senses, we are in a better position to understand how the other person feels and what

he or she is trying to say. Good communication is really a fluid and somewhat unpredictable process. Successful communication is like a dance. Each participant adjusts according to the responses of the other person. The single most effective technique for improving cross-cultural communication with new acquaintances is called mirroring. It involves adjusting our behavior to more closely match the behavior we see in the person opposite us. Mirroring is something most people do naturally. (Laroche & Rutherford 2007, 162).

When working with people from another culture, we are often unsure of the intended meaning of their words or behavior. Rather than assuming the worst, we should, in our own minds, step through different possible explanations. When we are still unsure about what is going on, and then it is time to ask. Keeping the information flow going in both directions is the key to smoother cross-cultural relations. Humans are very flexible and capable. When people are motivated to achieve something together, they do their best in understanding and making themselves understood. If people do not trust each other or there is no motivation for accomplish the given task, and then the comprehensions tend to be more negative. You will understand and learn more when you keep building your existing communication skills and listen with all of your senses. (Laroche & Rutherford 2007, 162).

“One feature of the ability to adapt to other people’s cultural patterns is the ability to form a common social identity with the person with whom one is speaking. We are fathers, teachers, and businessmen or interested in stamps.” (Allwood 1985 <http://sskkii.gu.se>).

“Our cross-cultural effectiveness is influenced by our own individual personality, our national characteristics, our corporate culture and our professional training.” By developing our listening skill to not only to “hear” but also to understand, we forward better cross-cultural communication. (Hurn & Tomalin 2013,18). “The global leader, sensitive to cultural differences, appreciates people’s distinctiveness and effectively communicates with individuals from different cultures. A global leader does not impose his/her own cultural attitudes and approaches.” (Moran & Harris & Moran 2011, 27).

## 4 RESEARCH PROCESS

This chapter concentrates only on the research process. The chapter will go through the whole research process in chronological order starting from discovering the topic then going through the methods used, the way they were used and why these methods were used. At the end, the conclusion of the results is drawn.

### 4.1 Research goal and questions

Starting point for the research was that the need of the International Club has been seen for the long time but nothing has been done. The goal was to clarify whether the students of Savonia would like to have an activity like an International Club offers. The international club was explained as an organized activity which varies every time and will be offered to every student of Savonia. Finally the intention was to find out what kind of activities students would like the International Club to offer.

### 4.2 Reliability and validity

A research has to be designed in a way that it is auditable i.e. transparent and clear so that the readers can either undertake the same method themselves and produce the same results, or at least the method is clear enough to instil confidence in the readers that the results were not fudged in any way. If the research could be done again, the same result will occur.

There are three main ways of characterizing validity in research studies. It is important that research methods have “face validity” and “construct validity” and “internal validity”. Face validity means effectively that the non-researcher or lay person can broadly see that this is a valid method of researching this question “on the face of it” it makes sense as a method. Construct validity is a more complex idea and means that the method must actually measure what you think it measures. There are, for example, statistical ways of checking surveys and questionnaires to check that the questions are really asking what you think (factor analysis and item response theory). Construct validity is particularly important in questionnaires which are not administered face to face by a researcher but sent by post, email or done online, as there is no chance then to discuss and clarify the meaning of a question. Sometimes the results can be invalidated because respondents have misunderstood a question and answered in a way which was not intended. Internal validity relates to causality, i.e. does factor X cause factor Y to happen? It is sometimes easy to assume causality when in fact there is only association of two factors. (Greener 2008,37). The survey done is qualitative, not quantitative and therefore it does not have internal validity. But face validity and construct validity requirements are met; non-



researcher can see that the survey and interview are valid as a method and the methods are measuring what they were supposed to.

#### 4.3 Research methods

The subject of the thesis came out from a need. There had been discussions about starting an international club but nothing had been done before. To plan an international club, the numerical information is not needed, neither information about relationships between different variables. Different ideas and thoughts are needed. That is why a qualitative method was chosen.

Qualitative research is a type of scientific research. In general terms, scientific research consists of an investigation that:

- seeks answers to a question
- systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the question
- collects evidence
- produces findings that were not determined in advance
- produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study. (Learning domain 2013).

Qualitative research shares these characteristics. Additionally, it seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations. (Learning domain 2013).

The author of the thesis was organizing the international tutor training due to her responsibility in SAVOTTA. The international tutor training consists of new, anxious students who have their own opinion and thoughts about what could be done in an international club. In the training there were workshops and one of the workshops was asking "How to merge Finnish and foreign students?" The author of the thesis was present so she was able to explain that ideas of the different activities that could be offered in international club were needed. The results are explained in next chapter.

The international tutor training workshop can be defined as an interview. Semi-structured interviews will be based on a question guide, the contents of which will always be asked of respondents. However, since this is not fully structured, the interviewee is allowed to go where they want with the questions and to divert to other things which interest them. Since the focus of a qualitative interview is the interviewee,

not the interviewer, this is fine. Unstructured or in-depth interviews can go right off the point – and that may be the point, ie to discover much more about the interviewee by what they say and think, than how they answer specific questions. (Greener 2008, 89).

“As a group interview did not give enough information, a survey sent to students was made. According to Kerlinger, survey research involves the studying of large and small populations selecting and studying samples chosen from the populations to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables. It is a method of obtaining information about a population from a sample of individuals. Surveys can provide a quick, inexpensive and accurate means of obtaining information from a large group of people. If you want to know about the opinions, attitudes and perceptions of respondents, the survey is an appropriate method of collecting data. Besides, describing surveys can also be used to explain the relationship and differences between variables. The term *sample survey* is often used because a sample which is representative of the target population is used. The survey method is widely used in the social sciences, education, business and medicine. Basically, information is obtained by asking people question either orally or by responding to a written paper.” (Learning domain 2008).

A more recent method of data collection is using the web. The questionnaire is uploaded to a website and respondents are invited to respond to the questionnaire. While it is less expensive and you can reach out to a large audience there are many weaknesses with this method of data collection. The authenticity of the person responding can be difficult to prove, response rate may be low and persons responding to the questionnaire would be confined to those who have internet access which may not be representative of the population. (Learning domain 2008). The easiest way to approach a large number of students is email. By email, link to the web survey was sent. The survey was made with webropol survey database and there were two different versions made; one in Finnish to Finnish students and another in English to foreign students. The survey was sent to more than thousand students but only 42 respond were received: 34 in Finnish and 8 in English.

## 5 RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 5.1 International tutor training 24.04.2013

International Tutor training was organized on 24.04.2013 on Sairaalakatu campus by SAVOTTA to all new international tutors of Savonia. The main organizer was the international issues responsible of SAVOTTA, Jonna Hyttinen. The main purpose of the training is to prepare new tutors for the upcoming year and give ideas and advices to them. During the six hours of training, the new tutors had lectures about international tutoring by Heikki Karvonen, ESN KISA by Saniya Giniatullina and SAVOTTA by Jonna Hyttinen. After the lectures four different workshops were organized; How to be a good tutor, What kind of problems a tutor is facing and how to solve them, What are tutors needed for and How to merge Finnish and foreign students? The group was divided to four and every group had their own theme to discuss and afterwards the ideas and thoughts were shared.

The workshop about how to merge Finnish and foreign students was meant to be help the research of International Club. Ideas, on what could be organized to merge the students, were gathered. The leader of the discussion was Jonna Hyttinen since as an author of the research, she was most familiar with the subject. All the ideas came from the new international tutors; the discussion leader was just asking supplementary questions and making sure that everybody said something. Ideas were collected to a paperboard. Ideas that were written down are the following:

- student day (getting to know each other, games and so on)
- couch surfing
- picnic (barbeque)
- cultural fair
- winter games
- cooking event
- hobby nights (board games, sports, movies, dancing, language club)
- on-line chat
- Christmas dinner
- party (group tickets)
- light festival
- university night
- show night
- vice versa day (man-woman)

- traditional costumes
- tandem of lives
- speed meeting
- no light party
- organized trips (Linnanmäki, Särkänniemi, Tahko)
- matching party
- homecoming games
- ball

## 5.2 Existing International Clubs at Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences

To find existing International clubs of Universities of Applied sciences, all the web pages of the universities of applied sciences were gone through as well as the web pages of student unions. All of the clubs are offering activities especially to international students but as well for Finnish students who are interested in meeting new cultures and practice their English. The following list was discovered:

- IDS – International Degree students of Helga
- International club of KAMO
- International club of LAUREAMKO
- International Club of LAMKO
- International Club of JAMKO
- International Club of MAMOK
- International Club of CENTRIA
- International Club of TAMKO

An email was sent to international affairs responsible of JAMKO, LAMKO and MAMOK and to chairman of CLINT TAMKO. These international clubs were chosen because at first sight they looked the most active clubs and were easily found when searching the web. Email address of JAMKO was not working and the email sent came back. In the email it was explained that I am a third year BBA-student from Kuopio who is doing her

thesis about international club for Savonia and would need information about existing international clubs. The list of questions was attached to the email. Questions were about the basic facts about the clubs; how often, to whom, how much it costs, how it is marketed, possible co-operators, how popular the club is, are there many Finns, what to you get from attending and who is responsible. (APPENDIX 1) Answers received are used as main information about the clubs.

### 5.2.1 IDS – International Degree students of Helga

“HELGA is the Student Union of HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences. Their objective is to represent the students of their school, work to solve issues regarding student issues such as health care, and provide services to their members and students of HAAGA-HELIA.” (Helga 2013b). Student Union HELGA started an activity group for the international degree students of HAAGA-HELIA in the autumn 2009. The main goal is to induct international students active members of HAAGA-HELIA student community. IDS also gives students a place to meet international degree students by organizing events and small excursions. (Helga 2013a).

IDS organized events where Finns can get to know foreign students and foreign students can meet Finns. Café Lingua, Buddy Program and Cuisine Night which are organized regularly. Talent show, business camp and Vappu activities are also organized during the academic year. (Opiskelijakunta helgan blogi 2013).

### 5.2.2 International club of KAMO

International Club is a part of the Student Union KAMO activities. The International Club arranges activities and events outside of school time for all students. The aim is to offer possibilities for Finnish and foreign students to meet and have fun together. (Kajaanin ammattikorkeakoulu 2013). The activity leader now is Pasi Ahoniemi. The club needs active Finnish or international students who are interested in international issues, enthusiastic and able to speak English to lead the club. International tutors could also be used to help leading the different activities and earn credits. (Rissanen 2013).

All the activities that are arranged are meant for all the students of University of Applied Sciences of Kajaani. Most of the activities are organized with small resources and so that as many students as possible can attend. In previous years activities organized have been for example husky safaris, Ruka hiking, sauna evening, game evening, football matches and pre-Christmas party. Some of the activities have been really popular and not all the interested have been able to attend. The aim is to organize

something for every week. The new plan of action is made for 2013-2104 and there many suggestions for new activities are presented for example movie nights, language clubs, international festival, more sports and dating service for finding new friends. Marketing of international club has been done through email, facebook, web page of University of Applied Sciences of Kajaani, information televisions in campus and presentations to the new students by leaders of international club. (Rissanen 2013).

### 5.2.3 International Club of JAMKO

JAMKO International Club a.k.a. IC organizes culturally oriented events, travels, tours and parties, which are meant to bring Finns and exchange students together. International students get to see Finland at its best and Finnish students get a chance to internationalize and learn languages while having fun. IC operations are organized by the JAMKO board member responsible of IC. He/she operates together with his/her IC team, who help with planning and executing the events in practice. (JAMKO 2013b).

“IC After Hours take you to the restaurant Revolution to enjoy student priced dining and chilling while DJs are playing cool tunes. Crazy partying takes place at the Freetime afterparties! Every evening has its own theme, according to which the program is planned. Don't forget to match your costume for the theme! IC Movie nights show you a culturally interesting (or just fun) films in JAMKO Café about once a month. Come to watch a movie with friends! You might even see something Finnish there. In addition IC organizes guided culture trips in Jyväskylä and a yearly autumn trip IC Goes into the Wild. If you wish to travel further, we offer you trips also to Lapland, sails to St. Petersburg and visits to a Finnish zoo.” (JAMKO 2013b). JAMKO is organizing beach picnic and semester's opening picnic at the beginning of the academic year, hang around evenings, university boat race, JAMKO goes to kitchen, the freshmen party, overall oath party. (JAMKO 2013a). It is hard to separate which happening is organized by IC and which not as all of the activities JAMKO is offering, are meant for everybody. It basically means that JAMKO is not separating where the international students can come and where not since everything is available in English. International club of JAMKO is really active.

### 5.2.4 International Club of CENTRIA and International Club of LAMKO

These two clubs do not have information on their webpage and neither of them answered the emails sent. In their web pages it is still mentioned that they are offering international club to international students.

Centria University of Applied Sciences has a student union COPSA and under them is operating International Club (Centria 2013.) Lahti University of Applied Sciences LAMKO organises for international students an International Club that offers non-alcoholic events and get-togethers for both degree and exchange students (Student union LAMKO 2013.)

#### 5.2.5 International Club of MAMOK

MAMOK is the student union of Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. According to the responsible person for international affairs of MAMOK, International Club of MAMOK is popular among the exchange students and Finns who are interested in going to exchange and who are active international tutors. IC is open for everyone who is studying at Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. Program is organized around the year but more actively during the academic year. The organizing responsibility is with chairman of IC board and international affairs responsible of MAMOK. International tutors are also helping and they get credits of that. For others the club is voluntary. Some activities can be chargeable but mostly the expenses are covered from budget of student union. The club is marketed through Facebook, it is mentioned as a hobby on the university's web page and mentioned in info sessions about the student union and international affairs. IC has the same co-operators as the student union as it is operating under MAMOK.

“IC takes care of tutoring exchange students and arranging free-time events and activities such as sauna parties, ice fishing trips and sports activities. Happenings are arranged throughout the year according to the season and they are mainly meant for exchange/foreign students. You will make friends with students of several different nationalities by attending the IC meetings and activities.” (MAMOK 2013).

#### 5.2.6 International Club of TAMKO

“Club International Tampere is a sub-organization of Tamko (Student Union of Tampere University of Applied Sciences). The main mission of CLINT is to enhance the co-operation between Finnish students and exchange students who come to study at Tampere University of Applied Sciences, and that way facilitate their adaptation to Finnish culture. CLINT is operated by its board members and many active international tutors. Their main activities include maintaining and supervising the Survival Kits as well as organizing various events for the exchange students. CLINT also takes part in training the new international tutors.” (CLINT 2013a).

CLINT is organizing different events every year but there are five traditional events: the City Tour, Stockholm cruise, Survival Weekend, Trip to St. Petersburg and the Farewell party. (CLINT 2013b). Tamko and CLINT in co-operation are maintaining and offering survival kits. The kits are meant for exchange students as well as incoming foreign degree students.(CLINT 2013c).

### 5.3 Substitutes for the International Club in partner universities

International coordinator at Savonia, Inka-Mari Suhonen, proposed a list of partner schools that in her opinion are the most active ones with exchange student activities. Email was sent to international coordinators of Duale Hochschule Baden- Württemberg, University of Applied Sciences Emden / Leer, FH Worms, Noordelijke Hogeschool Leeuwarden, Windesheim University of Professional Education, Oxford Brookes University, FH bfi Wien University of Applied Sciences and ESDES School of Management, Universite Catholique de Lyon. Coordinators were asked if their school is offering “international club” to their students, referring to activities that are meant to international minded students or exchange students.

Two of the universities did not answer at all. In one university nothing compared to international club is organized and in three universities ESN (Erasmus Student Network) is organizing activities to exchange students. In ESDES School of Management, Universite Catholique de Lyon is the International Club organized as well as at Windesheim University of Professional Education they have the SUN group. The international coordinator of ESDES answered that there is international club called IBP club and that she will pass my email to them but they never contacted me and the coordinator did not answer me anymore. From the SUN group following information was given: SUN is a committee from Windesheim University of Applied Sciences. The SUN mentors are all Dutch Windesheim students who receive a financial compensation for their work for SUN. In general SUN has 5 committee members (president, secretary, treasurer, mentor coordinator, activity coordinator) and about 6/8 mentors. Only international (exchange) students can join the SUN activities. (International office of Windesheim)

“SUN is short for Student united in the Netherlands. SUN is a committee consisting of about ten Windesheim students, closely supported by the International Office. International students are appointed a Dutch SUN mentor from the moment they enroll. Mentors will make international students feel at home from day one. SUN mentors have received appropriate mentor training and are dedicated to helping you out with any



questions or issues you may come across. You will be guided by your SUN mentors in peer mentor groups throughout the semester or academic year. Besides supporting international students, SUN also provides entertainment, with themed nights and various social meetings scheduled throughout the academic year. Our SUN mentors can also pick you up from the railway station in Zwolle to take you straight to your dorm. The ECTS-activities are part of the (compulsory) cross-departmental module 'Introduction to Windesheim University, and Social and Cultural Guidance'. This module consists of several activities and is organised by SUN in collaboration with Windesheim's International Office. Besides the ECTS-activities, there are a few Mentor-activities per semester which you may want to join on a voluntary basis. Every first activity is the 'Introduction Week', which is held in the second week of both semesters, autumn and spring. Most activities take place in the evening and are intended to enable you to get to know your fellow students, (student) life in Zwolle, Dutch culture in general and academic life at Windesheim. Highlights that appear every semester

- Introduction Week
- Country Presentations
- Multi-Culti Food Night
- SUN trip
- Goodbye Party" (Windesheim university 2013).

SUN activities are mostly free of charge but you may be expected to buy your own ticket for the SUN trip (maximum price per ticket: 20 euro). While some of the events will have refreshments included, you will need to pay for personal items and for most of your drinks and food yourself. The SUN Activities Programme is subject to change, depending on demand and availability. (Windesheim university 2013).

#### 5.4 Survey among the students

The survey was sent to the business students of Savonia as well as tourism students and exchange students in the mentioned fields. The survey was sent to more than a thousand students so the percentage of respondents was really low when only 42 answers were given. From these answers, 8 were given in English and the rest 34 in Finnish. The survey was open to students 06.05.2013-15.05.2013 and two emails were sent to remind about the survey. The survey questions are attached to appendices. (APPENDIX 3 and APPENDIX 4)

The first question in Finnish was: What you would like to do with foreign students if an International Club was organized? Half of the answers were suggesting some kind of sports; football, ice hockey, bowling, floor ball, downhill skiing, basket ball, tennis, boxing

and different kind of competitions. Going to the bars and drinking were mentioned in less than 10 answers which is positive because it means that Finnish students are willing to know foreign students not only when drinking. In more than ten answers eating, cooking and barbecue were brought up. 25% of respondents wish social evenings. They do not describe it better therefore it can be difficult to organize a social evening when it is not known what there should be as it does not work that people just gather to one place to hang around. Finns need a reason for speaking English so the social evenings need a theme or a special reason. The rest of the answers are about sauna, music, trips, language tandem, movies, playing games and exploring the new cultures. In conclusion, Finns would like to do sports, get to know new food cultures, hang around and go to parties with foreign students.

In English the question was: what would you like to do with Finns? There were only 8 answers in English. In three answers drinking was mentioned, in two answers BBQ and in three answers knowing the other culture. Socializing, playing games, going to sauna, go camping and movie night were the rest of the answers. The answers agree with the answers of the Finnish answer. To sum up, Finns and foreign students want the same things from the International club.

The second question was about how often the club should be organized. The question was the same in English and in Finnish. To this question there were all together 42 answers. Ten of the answers were suggesting activity to be organized once a week and another ten answers once in month. There were five answers suggesting that there should be activity twice a week and two answers saying as often as possible, even every day. There was also one answer that could not say any suggestions, one saying never and one suggestion about a couple times in an academic year. It can be seen from the answers that the club should be organized at least once a month or more often.

Then the question was where these activities could be organized, again the question was the same in English and Finnish. The most appeared answer was facilities of our school, meaning the campus of Savonia in Opistotie, Kuopio. Organizing activity in bars was brought up as well. In a couple of answers it was mentioned that it does not matter where the activity is organized, the most important is that the place is easily reached. One answer was "Studentia (I don't know any other place)" which means that organizing the club in an easily reachable place is important but it is also important to organize it in different places to show foreign students more about Kuopio. Organizing the club outdoors and in the facilities of Kuopio city was mentioned in a couple of answers. To

sum up, facilities of the university were the most popular suggestion and mainly the rest highlighted that the place is good if it is suitable for the activity organized or easily reachable.

The fourth question was: What would be the best way of marketing the club? Total amount of the respondents was 40 so two respondents stayed without answering. The question was looking for answers about the way the club should be marketed e.g. via email, text message. Two respondents had understood the question differently and suggested the way; “as an opportunity for the most active students to have their funny activities outdoors” and “näyttävästi ja sporttisesti, jotta saisimme mahdollisimman paljon jumppajia paikalle” (Pretentiously and sporty way that we can get as many exercisers as possible to come). These answers are useful as well but not what was looked for. The other answers were responding the assumed way. Half of the answers mentioned Facebook or social media. More than half of the answers mentioned leaflets at school, school’s notice board or info TVs at school. Email was mentioned in half of the answers. Stands at the school hall, Savonia web pages and SAVOTTA were mentioned in some answers as well. Due to the answers mentioned before it was really clear which the best ways of marketing international club are; Facebook/social media, school’s notice board/info TVs and email.

The next question was about the money making, if the participants were ready to pay for the organized activities. All the 42 respondents answered the question and only 4 answers were saying no. The rest of the answers were saying “yes” with an additional condition. Answers were indicating that costs should be suitable for students’ wallet or an amount really small. Many answers said that 5€ could be the most suitable per activity. The reason why the money is collected was also an issue; participants will pay if they see that there is need for the money. All in all students are ready to pay small amounts if it can be shown where the money is needed.

The last question was different in Finnish and in English. In Finnish it asked what factors would make you attend an activity where Finns and foreign students would be together. To this question 30 answers were given. In half of the answers it was said that the most attracting factor would be exploring the new cultures and people. That is a really good opinion since exploring new cultures is the reason why the international club is wanted to set up. A couple of respondents could not give a reason. An overall badge and credits were also mentioned as an attraction. Two respondents were saying that the fact that alcohol is not the main attraction is already enough to make the international club

interesting. There is a need for the international club since it is designated to make foreign and Finnish students to meet and merge and it can be seen from the answers of the last question that Finnish students are willing to explore their knowledge of other cultures.

The last question in English was: What things the student has enjoyed or would have liked to enjoy during the time in Finland? The purpose of this question was to get more ideas about what foreign students especially like in Finland since it was not seen necessary to ask what factor would encourage students to meet with Finns because in general, foreign students want to learn about cultures and meet Finns when it is possible. All the eight respondents answered to this question. In half of the answers nature was mentioned. One respondent said that he/she does not have any idea and that I should offer something interesting by myself. Partying was mentioned as the best thing in Finland in one answer. To know the daily life of a typical Finn and getting to know Finnish traditions were also interesting from foreign students' point of view. Puijo tower, Tahko trip and Lapland were mentioned in one answer and the last one pointed out sauna, barbeque and playing ice hockey.

There are no big differences in Finns' and foreign students' answers. The number of the respondents is not equal; therefore a valid comparison cannot be made. The answers can still give a line what foreign students want. The purpose of the survey was not to make comparisons of different suggestions of Finnish and foreign students, the main purpose were to get ideas about what could be realized. The fact that the foreign students, especially exchange students are more active to attend events like an international club than Finnish, also forgives the small number of answers of foreign students. It is more valid to get information from Finns and find the way of attracting them. There is a bigger problem to get Finns to attend the club than foreign students.

### 5.5 Activities organized in Kuopio

It is important to take into account all the activities that are already organized for exchange students. Not all the Finnish students know about them because they are marketed only to the exchange students and the most active international Finns. But there is no sense to organize a trip to Lapland when it is already organized by ESN KISA (Erasmus student network, Kuopio International Students' Association). They also organize trip to St. Petersburg, Tallinn and Stockholm. During the year they have other activities as well; welcoming and farewell party, food festival, Smoke Sauna, BBQ, game nights, all different kind of parties and dancing classes.

The Student Union of Savonia, SAVOTTA, organizes Kauppakadun improbatur, Winterfest, WappuSAVOTTA and international cruise every year. Kauppakadun improbatur is an event where you are collecting stamps to you pass from different bars by eating or drinking there and it is organized every October. Winterfest is organized in February and there teams are competing in different outdoors activities and then there is after party. WappuSAVOTTA is organized on 30.4 to celebrate the First of May. There the traditional food and drink is served and the statue of Minna Canth gets her hat on. The international cruise is organized by the city of Kuopio but SAVOTTA is in co-operation with them. It is organized in the first weeks of September and collects all the international students of Kuopio together. There are exchange students of Savonia UAS and University of Eastern Finland as well as some of the international tutors of the both universities.

KuoTra, Kuopion Tradenomiopiskelijat (Business students of Kuopio) is organizing events, mostly to foreign students of their faculty but sometimes they are open to everyone. They organize different kind of parties, cruise at the beginning of the academic year, trip to Tahko and pole dancing classes. They are also co-operating with SAVOTTA and ESN Kisa. KuoTra is also attending the International Day which is organized on Opistotie campus by the international affairs office. There are stands representing different countries and showing their culture with food, clothes, and other stuff.

## 6 THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB FOR SAVONIA UAS

The international club is active during the academic year, from September to May. At the beginning the club is organized once a month. The events will be organized in different facilities, mostly using the Savonia premises. Other places are used as well, they have been chosen based on their location and cost. When possible, the club is cooperating with other associations who are promoting international issues, ESN KISA for example. The organizing responsibility will be with SAVOTTA, especially with the international affairs responsible. International tutors of different faculties can help and for them credits can be given based their help and workload.

The main purpose of the International Club is to provide possibilities to students to meet new people and learn about cultures. It will offer events where students can meet new people and have a reason to talk to each other. The Club is meant for both Finnish students and for foreign students. Students who are attending the club can be called international students since they are students in touch with international affairs by speaking English and learning about the other cultures. Events organized by the International Club will vary every month and events are organized that way that there is not same kind of event organized within a month. Some of the events have costs to the participants, some of the events need pre-registration and some events are open to every student who is willing to attend. Intent is that the International Club will be organized every academic year again and the events will eventually become as traditions. The official language of the international club will be English.

Marketing for the International Club will be done primarily via email since every student of Savonia has school email and it is surely used. Students from different faculties will be contacted easily that way as well. Secondly, Facebook can be used since that is also seen by many students and it was supposed in the survey as well. As supporting ways of marketing the school's notice boards and information TVs can be used. Pre-registration to different events will be done via email or by signing in to the list when there is stand held in different faculties. The marketing will be done primarily in English but information can be added in Finnish to the end. The events are described below according to academic year order.

### SEPTEMBER

In September there are many parties organized, different events of eating like Barbeque and International Food Festival by ESN KISA, two different cruises; international cruise by the city of Kuopio and academic year start from KuoTra. In September the weather is

normally still quite warm and nice, therefore activities outside should be encouraged. In October there are St. Petersburg and Stockholm trips offered by ESN KISA which means that there is no sense to have any other trip to be organized in October.

In the survey foreign students mentioned that nature is one of the best things in Finland. During my years as an international tutor I have seen that foreigners love to see the specialities of our nature. For this reason, in September a trip to a national park could be organized. The national Park of Koli is two hours away from Kuopio and reachable by bus.

“Koli has many faces. To many, Koli is Finland’s most beautiful natural attraction. Koli National Park and the surroundings provide a unique combination of internationally recognized natural and cultural attractions together with a broad range of quality tourist services in all seasons.” (Koli 2013a). “Ukko-Koli, the highest hill in the Koli range, rises 354 metres above sea level and 253 metres above the surface of Lake Pielinen. There are breathtaking views from the top of Ukko-Koli over Lake Pielinen, after climbing a few steps from the Visitor Centre Ukko. Koli National Park includes many other hills with beautiful views, like Akka-Koli, Paha-Koli, Vesivaara, Mäkrävaara, Paimenenvaara, Pieni-Koli, and many others.” (Koli 2013b).

The estimated price for the bus for 50 persons from Kuopio to Koli and back to Kuopio is 500-600€ based on price estimation of Tilausmatkat OY 19.09.2013 and Kuopion Tilaus-auto 20.09.2013. (Tilausmatkat 2013; Kuopion tilaus-auto 2013). Basically in the national park you do not have to pay about anything if you do not want to. There are possibilities to eat in restaurants or participate to guided tour at the price of 20€-27€ depending how big is the group attending in guided tours (Koli Activ Oy). When filling the bus with 50 students, the price per student is 10€-12€ which is not a high price for an organized trip by bus. On the bus, different activities can be done, for example bingo can be played or games to know each other.

## OCTOBER

The replies of the survey sports came up many times. It is an easy way to start to talk to new people and doing sports does not cost, neither needs special equipment in general. October is as well full of trips already, therefore something different should be offered. School has facilities to use, so why we would not benefit from them. In October the weather is already varying and for this reason an event is better to be organized indoors.

Floor ball or volleyball tournaments can be organized in the gym of Opistotie campus or Sairaalakatu campus. Both of the games are that type of sport that everybody can play at least a little. Neither of the gyms is available at weekends so the tournament should be organized during the week. All together eight teams could enrol to the tournament and every team play at least two matches. There would be two divisions, four teams in both. And how to play; division one: team one towards team two, team three towards team four. From these matches the winners have a match and the losers. The losers of these games will end their tournament here but the winners will match towards each other and the winner will go to the final. The other division will work the same way so in total there will be eleven matches in total. When one match takes fifteen minutes, the total time is less than three hours. The gym is possible to reserve from 16.00 until 20.00 so there is enough time for the tournament. The special rule for the tournament is that every team should have a foreign student in the team; only Finns- teams are not accepted. Teams should have minimum six players and ten in maximum. All conditions above are suitable to a floor ball or volleyball tournament. Enrolling to the tournament is easiest by email.

Without budget, prizes can be diplomas of a good tournament and team pictures that will be seen later on the internet. If there is a possibility to use money to prizes, the prizes can be related to sports, for example single tickets to the swimming hall or discounts to some gyms. Sponsors would be amazing to have because then the tournament would have good prizes and the sponsor higher image among the students.

## NOVEMBER

At the beginning of the autumn semester there is the international food festival arranged. There food of different countries is tasted. Different foods are also served in on the International Day of Savonia on Opistotie campus in November. The foreign students are staying in their own apartments and not in the families; therefore they do not see much Finnish food culture. For this reason in the international club Finnish food will be introduced. Lecturer Seija Mäki from Microkatu campus said that their teaching kitchen can be given to the International Club's use when it is free from other users. In the kitchen there are enough places for 20 students. It can be assumed that when there is food made in the club, there are more that 20 willing to attend the club. There are two options; organized Finnish Food night twice in November or take 20 students inside to cook and then invite more students to eat afterwards. There has to be one responsible in the kitchen who knows the machines and manners of the kitchen. (Mäki 2013).



In the kitchen there are flour and spices available but other ingredients have to be ordered a couple days before. Really Finnish food would be cinnamon rolls and Karelia pasties. They do not need any special ingredients and they both are suitable for vegetarians as well and cinnamon rolls can be made without milk. Someone who knows how to do these is needed as well. If not the organizer, then maybe a student from the Hospitality Management faculty should attend. The best would be if the club was attended by Finns and foreign students and then the Finns could teach foreign students because every Finn knows at least something about baking both Karelian pasties and cinnamon rolls. There would be material cost for the club this time, but it would be only about 3-5€. The precise amount can be known only when the ingredients are bought.

## DECEMBER

In December the best Christmas party ever is organized. Messages (24.09.2013) via Facebook were sent with Saniya Giniatullina, representative of ESN KISA, about organizing the party together. ESN KISA board 2013 agreed that they will organize the Christmas party of 2014 together with the International Club. (Giniatullina 2013). This collaboration is settled because both the International Club and ESN KISA are promoting better conditions for international students and more possibilities to Finns to learn about the cultures. When ESN KISA is joining, the international students of the university of Eastern Finland are attending so there are even more international students. At the same time, ESN KISA will gain more reputation among the students of Savonia. The collaboration enables the best Christmas party ever.

ESN KISA has already lots of experience in organizing different kinds of parties, therefore planning the event with them is the most effective and practical way of finding the best form for the Christmas party. It can be organized in a bar, Savonia's facilities or in the University of Eastern Finland's facilities. The most important is that everyone who wants can join and there are enough places.

Nowadays people take lots of pictures and they are always ready for pictures, therefore a photo booth corner could be organized to the party. There you could take a picture with your friends with provided properties. Then the International Club and ESN KISA would have a funny album to spread from the party. One really important factor is also making the Christmas party show some cultural differences. In the party there could be different foods offered for example German Glühwein, French bûche de Noël or Finnish gingerbread cookies. And mistletoe should not be forgotten.

## JANUARY

When there is a sport event organized in the first semester, there should be one in the second semester as well. January is winter time, therefore some winter sports should be benefited. The easiest and simplest to organize would be snow football. The snow football is normal football but played in the snow. The more snow, the better.

The tournament would work the same way the tournament in the autumn, eight teams and they have to include at least one foreign student. The place for the tournament would be Valkeisenlampi since there are enough places to play and Sairaalakatu campus is next to it so there is a toilet and cafeteria nearby. The CafeSAVOTTA could be open during the tournament since surely the players want something to eat or drink during their waiting time. If that is not possible, the organizer could sell sausages and hot juice next to the playing field. The tournament could be arranged some week day evening or even on Sunday when everyone is free. If the tournament is arranged on a Sunday, then the organizer has to take care of selling the refreshments.

If there was a budget for the tournament, hot juice could be offered to everyone. Prizes could be tickets to downhill skiing centre Antikkala for example. In this case sponsors could be useful to have. Still, the prizes are not the most important ones in the tournament; the most important is that everybody has fun with new people.

## FEBRUARY

February is the time to go to a bar and test the knowledge of the students in an international quiz! To make the quiz as international as possible, the questions will be gathered from international students. The questions need to be about some country but the subject can be anything; sports, history, music, news, education. There is no obligation of international teams but obviously an international team will get more points as there is wider knowledge.

Why organize this kind of event? This event is an answer to the people who wanted "just hang around" but still there is some reason why to talk to people. The quiz would be boring if it was organized at school or on a bus for example. But when it is organized at a bar, there is a possibility to other activities meantime, for example drinking or eating or going out. This is again an event where you can choose if you want to continue to other places afterwards or go home. An email was sent on 21.09.2013 to Amarillo and Freetime of Kuopio and both said that organizing quiz on their facilities is possible and

they can also participate to the prizes somehow. The best evening for the quiz would be some evening during the week, not in the weekend. (Amarillo 2013; Freetime 2013).

As the person contacted in Amarillo and Freetime said, they can participate somehow in the prizes and also special discounts can be arranged in Amarillo (Amarillo 2013; Freetime 2013). There are no costs for organizer if the organizer does not want to. The prizes always can be supported but the main contribution is collecting the questions to the quiz and hosting the evening.

## MARCH

Normally in student's life the Friday and Saturday evenings are for drinking or at least preparing to drink. Why not have a different evening with sports and new people? There is a possibility to go bowling to Kuopion keilahalli next to Opistotie campus and there are even student prices. According to the pricelist in the web page in September 2013, in the Friday evening one bowling alley costs 10€ / hour at 22-23. When there are four persons per alley, the price is 2,5€ per person (Kuopion keilahalli 2013.) Bowling is an event which is easy to join and if you like, during the activity you can enjoy some drinks. Moreover after bowling it is easy to continue to some other place.

All the students of Savonia are welcome to bowling. In this case, pre-registration is needed to know how many alleys to reserve. The easiest way of registration is Facebook because it is reachable for everybody. There is only one small change that neither student of the pair is in Facebook. If it happens, pre-registration can be done by email. If there was a name list physically in some place, it would be harder for students from other campuses to sign in. The pre-registration has to be done completely at least two weeks because many alleys are needed and if they are not reserved in advance, it can be that there are not enough alleys. The maximum number of students is 4 persons per alley and 16 alleys= 64 students. To make people get to know new faces, the teams will be created on the spot. Students need to pre-register as a pair and then the teams are made of these pairs. If possible, every team has an international student. The international student means a student who is from another country, studies in English or is an international tutor. When the groups are formed from pairs, no one has to feel lonely in the team. For Finns it is many times hard to get along immediately with strangers, therefore mixing pairs is needed.

If there is money available to use, the three best teams could be awarded. The reason for the award does not have to be "who played the best" or "who got most points" but

something different. The team with the best atmosphere could be awarded or the team with the best screaming or helping others. The prize could be tickets to come again to the bowling or play snooker. After the bowling people would be free to continue their Friday evening as they like, with their new team or with another team.

#### APRIL

Traditionally in Finland on May Day which is celebrated in first of May, the brunch is enjoyed. The May Day brunch is offered by many restaurants but the price is quite high and students are normally tired on first of May because of the celebrating previous night the May Day. That is why in April the International Club will organize the pre-brunch of May Day; organized already before the May Day at student prices.

Restaurant King's Crown is potential to organize the pre-brunch for students. They offer brunch normally; therefore they know how to do that. King's Crown has also done cooperation with student before. It will be organized on Monday or Tuesday before May Day, there are two different settings at 12 and 14 o'clock for example. The settings will have pre-registration by email and also the payment will be collected in advance. Based on the pre-registrations, a seating plan will be done. No one will be left without friends but the nationalities will be mixed. There is again possibility to meet new people and learn about the cultures.

The pre-brunch is open to everyone who wants to sign in but the number of participants will be limited based on the places in King's Crown. The precise price cannot be said yet, it depends on how many students are coming and how much SAVOTTA can support. The price will be settled later on together with King's Crown.

#### MAY

Spring is already here and the weather starts to be warm and nice again. At the beginning of the autumn semester there are many barbeque events organized but there is no big one at the end of the academic year. What would be better way to end the studying period than a nice trip to a barbeque place with food and people you already know? The barbeque is a farewell for exchange students and ending of the year for other students. There people who already know each other can make their last good memories.

The place for a barbeque has to be as wide as possible. There is no entrance fee, neither pre-registration to the event so basically everyone who wants can join the event. The most important is the international atmosphere and possibility to meet your old friends or make new ones. The best place to barbeque would be Pölhö, which is an island around four kilometers from the Kuopio city center. The organizer would take care of the lighting the fire and making the group picture but the rest is in the hands of participants. Traditional Finnish outdoor games Mökky and Petankki can be brought.

If there were a budget for barbeque, disposable dishes could be offered as well as ketchup and mustard. By communicating in Facebook for example, common transport for example cars could be organized. As said already before, the most important in a barbeque is to gather all together one more time before starting summer vacations.

## 7 DISCUSSION

The international Club is meant to be a place where students are melting together, where there are no more Finnish students or foreign students but international students. The international Club offers place where you have a reason to talk to each other, where you can meet people you cannot meet at lessons. The international club is totally optional and as often as possible it is open as many students as possible.

To make a plan for international club is easy but the hardest part was to find theory that suite to the planning of the club. When I made the plan, many things came automatically from my head but actually there is theory behind that, I just could not recognize it. All my times abroad, acting as an international tutor and studying in international club have made me really culturally aware. The cultural awareness can be learnt and international club is good place for that. There it can be seen how people see the situations differently and solve the problems another way than you do.

Communication and culture is inseparable (Jandt 2013,39.) That means that you cannot understand one if you have not studied the other. By attending the international club one can learn about both and be able to better cross-cultural communication which is important in international companies nowadays. When people from different cultures meet, can any differences lead to misunderstanding (Allwood 1985 <http://sskkii.gu.se>.) Some people also avoid communicating across cultures for fear of offending the other person (Laroche & Rutherford 2007, 59.) These are two factors that make us many times careful, especially Finns who do not want to lose their faces. To become more open-minded and tolerant for the cultural uniqueness we have to face other cultures. The more intercultural experience you have, the more you wider your world.

When the plan will be taken to use, it can change the reputation of Savonia. If the plan is organized successfully, it can have a reputation among the students and the International Club can be one factor that makes students to come to Savonia. The plan is made as practical as possible and it is really useful because there has been for a long time a discussion about the international club but nothing has been done for it before. This thesis can have a really significant role at Savonia and in SAVOTTA as well. SAVOTTA has not been very active with the international affairs before and this will make SAVOTTA more seen among the international students. As the plan affects Savonia and SAVOTTA, it has an impact on employment. The best would be if SAVOTTA could hire an international coordinator to take care of international issues together with the board.

With the survey I found out that the students are interested to meet students from other countries but there is no easy possibility for that. As one answer in the survey said, riding on the same bus with exchange students makes him/her think about how to talk to them but he/she could not have found a way to near them and the International Club would be the place. The survey showed that students are not looking for anything special to do together, they would be happy just to play together or eat something new. Information of other international club in Finland was also quite limited in some cases and the contact emails were not working. It is important to keep information always available.

If I could start again, I would talk with more people, make interviews and have many views to the subject. As I was writing the thesis in summer, not many people were able to be contacted by email and as I was in Barcelona, I did not have people near me. Now everything that is written has come from my head and I cannot always think out of the box, someone's else opinion would have been useful as well. I would also have started to contact people earlier if I could do everything again. I left many facts until the end and because of that I almost did not managed to be on time. Successful in the process was the plan because I was able to find many examples and also ideas from international tutor training were useful. I have not been using enough time to my thesis, lots of pages have become just because I have forced myself. I should have not taken the thesis with me to Barcelona as in Barcelona there is always something really interesting to do and you think that you have time to your thesis later on.

I took the International Club as my topic because it really interested me. I wanted to do something practical and something that really will be used. I saw that there is activity of international club missing from our students and I am sure that it will be success when it will start. I think that a person, who has not been in contact with international students, could not have worked on this topic. Any other topic would have stayed without writing in Barcelona but because topic of International Club is near of my heart, I have been pushing myself to write it.

The limitation of the topic was a little bit hard as there were many ideas about how the club could be done and who could be included. Savonia has not only campuses in Kuopio but also in Iisalmi and Varkaus. As Kuopio city is making their image more international friendly, more co-operation with the city could have been possible as well. The theory was a challenge as well since the club does not have a clear theory to use

but somehow there are so many theories that could apply. Because of the time and distance limitations, a possibility to make a thesis together with my colleague was left out. She wrote her thesis about international tutoring at Savonia and these two topics; international club and international tutoring, could have been wrote together because they both have same theory and by doing the thesis together, international club and tutoring could have been made more unified.

If I had written my thesis in Finland, I would have made more interviews; mobility office, ESN KISA or existing international tutors for example. Spreading the survey physically would have helped to get more answers since now the participant number of the survey is quite small. With higher number of participants there would have been more ideas that would have helped planning the club.

I started the thesis process on time. I presented my topic early in the spring and had the first meeting with my first supervisor right after. But then I had my work, courses and tutoring duties to do that I almost forgot the whole thesis. I had to leave Kuopio at the end of May for my internship and a month before my leaving I realized that I still have many things to do that needs to be done when I am in Kuopio. I managed to do everything I needed and I left to Barcelona with peaceful mind. In Barcelona I was thinking that I have five months time so I do not have to worry. I think this happens to everyone and then the last month is like a nightmare. I had one problem in the beginning; I tried to borrow books from our library when it was just closed for the summer. That caused me some problems to find enough material for my thesis. The writing process has been quite easy but I know that I would have done better. That is one thing that I am regretting.

In the future the international club can be made better in many ways. First of all we have to try the plan, then there can be surveys and questionnaires if the club is what students want and if it is organized properly. A wider plan could be done as well. When it is known which countries are normally presented in the club, Hofstede's dimensions can be taken into account more precisely and the activities of the club can be planned taking into account the different dimensions and their representatives.

All in all, the thesis process has taught to me that there are many small details that you have to take into account even in bigger projects and the only thing you can do is your best, you cannot be perfect. I think that the plan is ready to be put in use but it needs a good leading person that it will success.



## 8 CONCLUSION

This thesis is made for Savonia University of Applied Sciences. Savonia is missing a place where Finnish students can meet foreign students and vice versa. There was a need for this thesis and the thesis will be in use as soon as possible, latest in the autumn 2014. The thesis is providing theory related to culture and cross-cultural communication, ideas what an International Club could offer and the final plan of the International Club.

The first research question was about cross-cultural communication and possible problems in cross-cultural communication. Cross-cultural communication means exchanging information between two cultures (InterNations 2013b.) Culture can be defined as a set of values, beliefs and traditions (Hogan 2007,1.) Culture is often considered the driving force behind human behaviour everywhere (Moran & Harris & Moran 2011,10.) Communication and culture are also inseparable; therefore both have to be studied (Jandt 2013,39.) The problems can occur if a person does not know how to listen even if the other one knows how to communicate. Many problems also occur since the language and speech is used differently in different cultures (InterNations 2013b.) Differences in approaches are also causing problems. Basically, all differences between two persons from different cultures can lead to a misunderstanding (Allwood 1985 <http://sskkii.gu.se>.)

The ideas to the International club plan were gathered first at international tutor training. There the new tutors had a workshop where they were brainstorming what kind of activities they would like to do with foreign students. Ideas were also collected from existing international clubs at other Universities of Applied Sciences; JAMK, TAMK and in MAMK. Partner schools of Savonia were also contacted but only one university gave information about an activity that can be compared to our international club. It is the SUN group at Windesheim University of Applied Sciences. As the last part of the ideas, the activities that are already organized in Kuopio were also listed. This list was done to avoid the too many similarities among the international club and other associations.

The result of combining the theory and the ideas is the plan for the International Club at Savonia. The International Club will be organized once a month and it is a place where all the students of Savonia are welcome, it is a place where you can meet new people from different cultures. It is the place that you have been missing when travelling on the bus. The responsibility for organizing and leading the International Club will be assumed by SAVOTTA, Student Union of Savonia University of Applied Sciences. The main leader

is the international affairs responsible of SAVOTTA. The marketing plan is also provided; the most active channels for marketing will be emails and Facebook. The plan provides as detailed information as possible for every month.

For September a trip to Koli is planned. It is good to start September with a trip since then the weather is still quite good and in October there are already many trips organized. In October there is a floor ball or volleyball tournament organized. In the survey it came up that sport would be nice activity to do together. In November cooking class will be organized since also food was mentioned many times in the answers of the survey. The Christmas party in December will be organized together with ESN KISA to enable the best and biggest Christmas party as possible.

The second semester will start with sports tournament, this time with snow football. In February an international quiz will be organized in Amarillo or Freetime of Kuopio. What makes the quiz international is that all the questions will be about different countries and in English. More sports will be organized in March when the International Club will gather to the bowling hall where international teams will compete in bowling. In April students will gather to pre-brunch of May Day. As the last activity of the academic year, a huge barbeque is organized and it will be open to everyone.

The plan is made for use and all the details that were able to do ready in advance, have been included. Many places have been contacted and ideas discussed, not all the reservations are able to be made so early but it will be easy to start the International Club now. If the plan for some reason is not satisfying, the thesis includes many more ideas that have not been included to this plan and are free to use.

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## APPENDIX 1

### INTERNATIONAL CLUBIT SUOMEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULUISSA

Opinnäytetyöni aiheena teen kartoitusta jo olevissa olevista clubeista ja kerään opiskelijoilta ideoita mitä Savonian international clubi voisi olla. Näiden tietojen pohjalta laadin suunnitelman Savonian International Clubille.

1. Kenelle clubia tarjotaan?
2. Kuinka usein ohjelmaa järjestetään?
3. Kuka clubia pyörittää?
4. Kuinka clubia mainostetaan?
5. Maksaako clubi koskaan?
6. Onko yhteistyökumppaneita?
7. Kuinka suosittu clubi on?
8. Osallistuuko clubin toimintaan paljon suomalaisopiskelijoita?
9. Saako osallistumisesta jotain vastiketta vai onko osallistuminen täysin vapaaehtoista?

## APPENDIX 2

### INTERNATIONAL CLUBS IN SAVONIA'S PARTNER UNIVERSITIES

1. For whom the club is offered?
2. How often the club is organized?
3. Does it cost for participants?
4. How do you market the club?
5. Who are in response of the club?
6. How popular the club is?
7. Do the students who are attending get anything in exchange?
8. Does the club have any partners?
9. Are the participants only foreign students or are there also local students?

## APPENDIX 3

### International Club kysely suomeksi

1. Mitä aktiviteetteja haluaisit tehdä ulkomaalaisten kanssa?
2. Kuinka usein toimintaa ulkomaalaisten kanssa tulisi järjestää?
3. Missä toiminta tulisi järjestää?
4. Miten toimintaa tulisi mainostaa?
5. Olisitko valmis maksamaan järjestetystä toiminnasta?
6. Mikä olisi tekijä, joka innostaisi sinua osallistumaan toimintaan, jossa olisi mukana sekä ulkomaalaisia että suomalaisia opiskelijoita?

## APPENDIX 4

### International club survey in English

1. What would you like to do with Finns?
2. How often different activities should be organised?
3. Where the activities should be organised?
4. How the club should be marketed?
5. Would you be ready to pay for the organised activities?
6. Which things in Finland you would like/have liked to see and enjoy?



