



# EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND IN ESTONIA



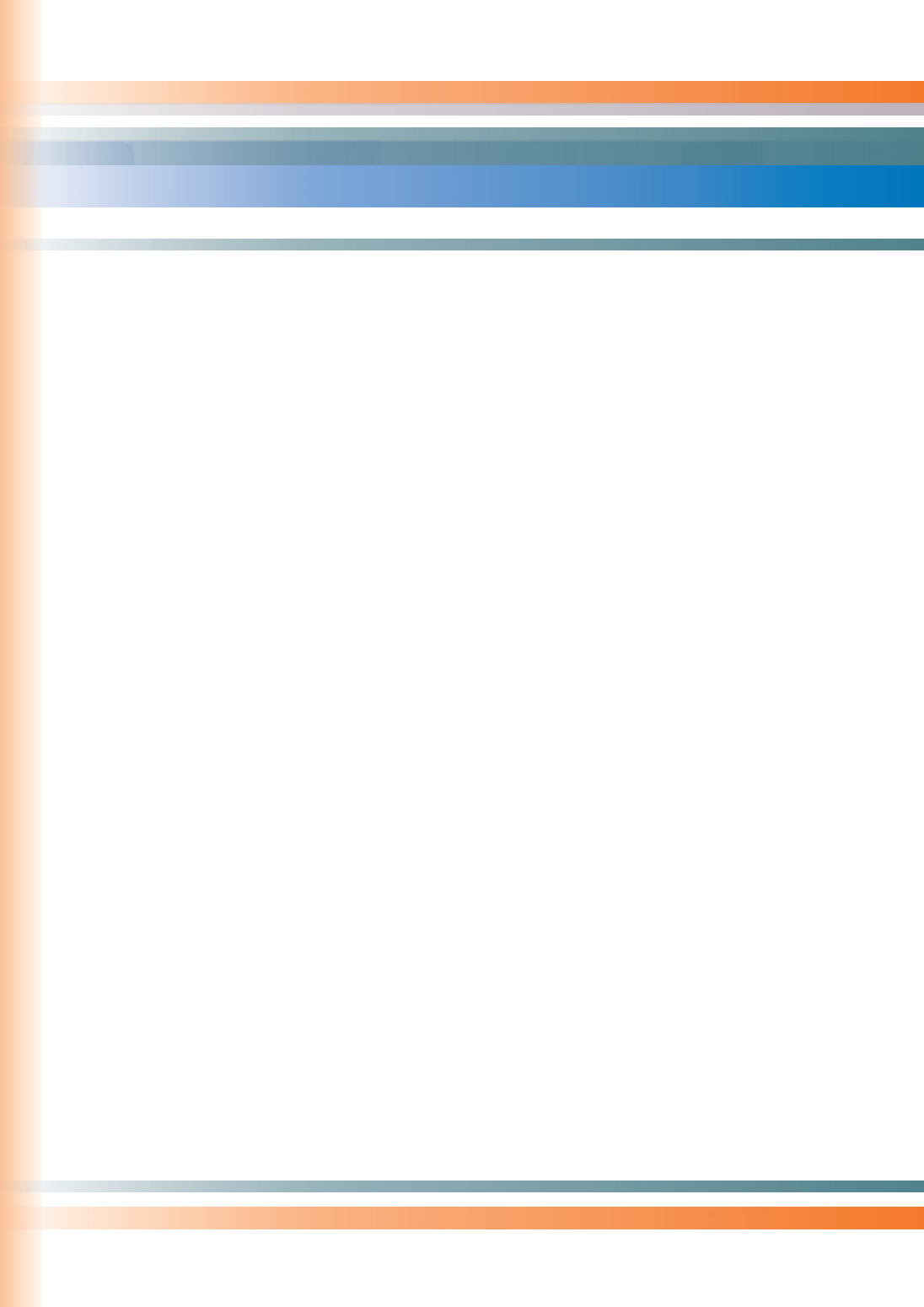
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**RAK**  
Eesti Riiklik Arengukava



**ESF**



## *European Social Fund- For the Benefit of Estonian People*

European Social Fund reached Estonia in 2004 when Estonia became a member state of the European Union. The aid that we have received from ESF during the four years exceeds 70 million euros, with an additional 23 million euros share of the Estonian state.

Thousands of projects have created better opportunities and conditions for the self-realisation and development of the Estonian people. The projects are based on ideas and ideas come from people. A person is what we must value and protect!

The projects carried out in Estonia have supported vocational and higher education, developed interesting learning methods, advanced youth activity and enhanced public officials' in-service training options. The projects have improved the opportunities of the unemployed in the labour market, promoted the creation of new businesses and enhanced the qualification of workers in various enterprises.

The ESF contribution can now be seen throughout the society. For example, Estonia's unemployment rate is among the lowest in Europe. The educational sphere has improved through the launching of new programmes and the perfecting of current curricula in vocational schools. The businesses that have received aid have shown improved economic indicators and an increased number of employees.

Maret Maripuu  
Minister of Social Affairs



## *European Social Fund in Estonia*

The book in your hand gives an overview of the projects financed by the European Social Fund in Estonia during the first three successful and active years – a period from 2004 to 2006. The collected examples show through pictures and words how people's options in the labour market have been improved with the help of ESF – new and interesting learning methods have been developed, the training systems has been perfected, new businesses have been created, disabled people have been helped to the labour market, and much more.

A strategy document titled “**Estonian National Development Plan for the Implementation of the EU Structural Funds – Single Programming Document for 2004-2006**” (ENDP) was compiled during the programme period of 2004-2006 for the planning and implementation of structural funds; this document includes four priority spheres that are developed with the help of structural funds. The first priority financed by the European Social Fund is “Development of human resources”, the general aim of which is to increase and make better use of Estonia's work force potential. The said aim has been put into practice through four measures:

- **Measure 1.1 - Educational System Supporting the Flexibility and Employability of the Labour Force and Providing Opportunities of Lifelong Learning for all.** The total volume of the measure is 46,6 mil EUR (incl. 35,4 mil EUR from ESF). The spheres most supported by the measure have been vocational education, higher education and lifelong learning. Special focus was on introducing flexible learning options (such as e-training), developing the in-service training system and the vocational guidance system, the further education and in-service training of teachers, and developing Doctoral studies.

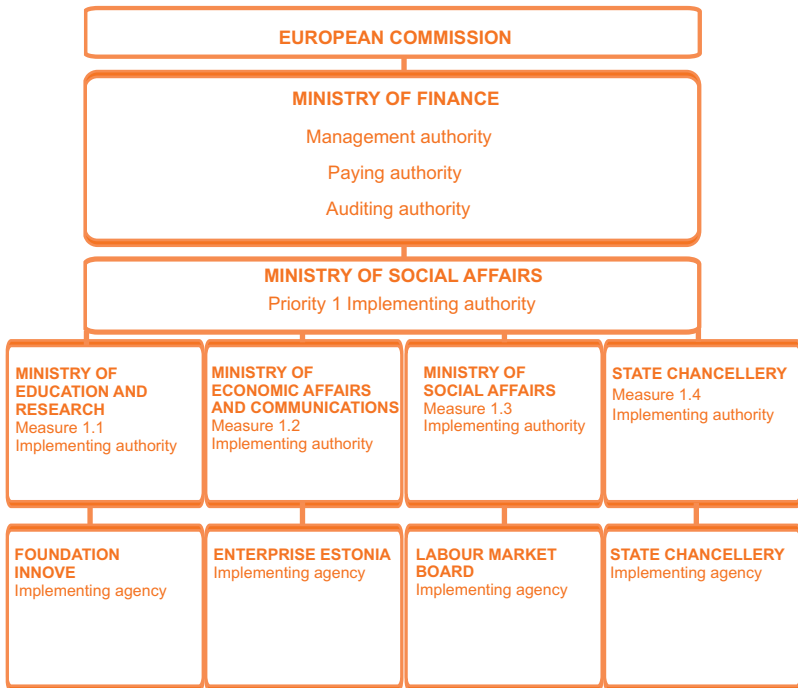
- **Measure 1.2 - Human Resource Development Increasing the Competitiveness of Enterprises.** The total volume of the measure is 10,6 mil EUR (incl. 8 mil EUR from ESF). Business operators have been able to apply for training aid for their employees, and participate in mentorship and innovation audit programmes that have helped to increase knowledge, skills and awareness both among leaders and workers.



- **Measure 1.3 - Inclusive Labour Market.** The total volume of the measure is 30,4 mil EUR (incl. 23,9 mil EUR from ESF). The target group of the measure consists mostly of the unemployed, but also of people who have been made redundant. The measure is especially focused on enhancing the competitiveness of risk groups in the labour market. A significant improvement has occurred in the working options of people with special needs, also several innovative labour market measures have been introduced and implemented.

- **Measure 1.4 - Enhancing Administrative Capacity.** The total volume of the measure is 2,48 mil EUR (incl. 1,9 mil EUR from ESF). Both state authorities and county and local governments (Estonia has 15 counties, 33 towns and 194 local governments) were eligible to apply for the aid. The measure has been used to develop the professional competence of civil servants, to improve management quality in state authorities, and to ensure the constant development of public administration in Estonia so that Estonia could function as a successful European Union member state.

## ***Structure for the implementation of European Social Fund in Estonia***



Several innovative ideas that have helped to improve people's work life and education in Estonia have been put into practice through the projects. We hope that the selection of illustrative pictures and stories will be able to pass on good thoughts and ideas to future project promoters in other European countries.

### **USEFUL LINKS**

Estonian ESF homepage (period 2004 – 2006): <http://www.sm.ee/esf>

EU Structural Funds homepage in Estonia: <http://www.strukturifondid.ee>

## *ESF success stories in Estonia*



## Computer training and access to the Internet for disabled persons

1.1

**Promoter:** Tallinn City's Board of Disabled People

**Budget:** 19 232 EUR, of which ESF support is 14 424 EUR

**Duration:** October 2005 – June 2006

**Objective:** To increase awareness and computer skills among disabled people, to increase the level of activity and options for activities by arranging computer training for beginners, by creating a free public Internet access point, and by offering the experience and help of support persons, either hired or working as volunteers.

In autumn 2005, an Internet access point was opened on the premises of Tallinn City's Board of Disabled People at Endla Street, which was used for computer training courses. A broader aim was to teach computer skills to disabled persons living in Tallinn and thus to provide them with better opportunities for communication and participation in public life.

69 people successfully completed the courses in October 2005. It took two weeks for a group of an average of ten persons to finish the course. Tallinn City's Board of Disabled People free Internet access point received nearly 700 visitations in a period of seven months.

"A survey conducted at the end of the course revealed that people felt that their competitiveness in the labour market had improved," says Tauno Asuja, executive director of the Board. He also adds that interest in computer training is so great that people started enrolling for courses that began in autumn in good time. A number of interested people were left out of the training in the first stage of the project because there simply were not enough places. According to Asuja data in 2005, there are more than 17,000 disabled persons living in Tallinn – 3,300 of who belong to member organisations of Tallinn City Board of Disabled People.

The project was funded by the European Social Fund until June 2006, and was replaced by Microsoft from August 2006. Another 100 persons will undergo computer training in a period of nine months. "The participants of the computer course are mainly middle-aged and older," says Aron Urb, support person of the project. "We even had a lady who was more than 90-years old and a gentleman of nearly 90 who participated in a course together. And they were very successful in their studies! Younger people, however, have normally had computer experience since childhood, but we have had some participants who are 15-20 years old," he adds.

Training is offered on two levels – for beginners and for advanced learners. The beginner course includes basic knowledge about computers, Windows, and the Internet. Advanced learners learn how to use Microsoft Office applications, E-mail, and various Internet based communication programmes.



**ON THE PHOTO**

*Endel Ojasild, who is 72 years old and has a physical disability, came to the course because he wanted to buy himself a computer. "I research the history of Nissi parish," he explains. "Computers are meant for older people," he laughs, "the youth have no idea what to do with them, they spend all their time playing computer games."*

Evgeny Berezovskiy is an experienced computer teacher. He has been teaching at the Board of Disabled People for quite some time now. "I have to take different needs into consideration than I normally would," he explains. "For example, some people have difficulties with using the mouse or the keyboard." However, Berezovskiy says that a special need does not always bring about slower work pace, and even the elderly have proven to be relatively fast learners.



## **Professional and social rehabilitation of disabled persons in west part of Harju County**

**Promoter:** Keila Social Centre

**Budget:** 147 051 EUR, of which ESF support is 116 710 EUR

**Duration:** January 2005–December 2006

**Objective:** To increase the level of employment and social involvement of disabled persons living in west part of Harju County.

The central square in the town of Keila locates a social centre that started to offer rehabilitation to adult disabled persons living in west part of Harju County in 2005. A more spacious work centre was created in Keila and smaller workrooms in surrounding rural municipalities for that purpose. The centre in Keila is a get-together and leisure time place as well as a social institution for the locals.

The project, co-funded by the European Social Fund, started with the training of support persons for 11 local governments. “The first thing we did was to announce a competition for support persons,” explains Arge Lärm, project manager and former health care professional. “After that, we had a 5-day training course in Roosta, which started off with the Social Welfare Act and ended with communication psychology. We also had continuation courses later.”

When the support persons had been trained, the next step was to find disabled persons who had been left out of the help services provided by the social system. 175 persons with a physical or mental disability have joined the project by now. Many of them spent their childhood in the Soviet Union when the prevailing mentality was that sick people should not leave their homes. For that reason, the workers at the social centre have had to go through a lot of trouble to convince these people to return to an active life. Thus, coffee nights, hobby classes and excursions were brought to life in order to promote social interaction.

“For example, a small support centre was recently established in Saue rural municipality. The last time I participated in their meeting, they were discussing what to name the society. They finally agreed on Päikesekiir (Sunbeam),” says Arge Lärm.

The project – through the work of support persons – also helps people with more pragmatic problems. For example, 60% of the participants have received help with the paperwork concerning their level of disability, and they have also had assistance in applying for passports and for other necessary documents.

Keila Social Centre also functions as an employment mediator. Agreements have been reached with several employers (such as coffee and condiment manufacturer Paulig, lamp accessory producer Glamox, packaging company Sveiger, and Saku brewery) to hire disabled persons. Work is done in the social centre where equipment and materials are brought. Everyone works according to their capacity – some work two hours per day, others manage four to five hours. The finished product, sending packed condiment mixes or disposable dishes to the employer, and paying the wages takes place through Keila Social Centre. The centre is also responsible for the deadline and quality supervision. 30 persons with special needs have also reached to an open labour market through the independent work contract. This is greatly due to the explanatory work among employers done by the social centre.

**ON THE PHOTO**

*Marju Tui (54) comes almost every day to Keila Social Centre to pack the mulled wine condiment mix for Paulig. The woman with a physical disability is responsible for weighing and packing various components. "Thanks to this work my right hand is moving again. I used to do everything with the left one before. Had I not have moved that hand, it would have stayed like this forever," she says. In addition to using the work as physical therapy, Marju also takes pleasure in feeling useful. "The work has given the meaning of life back to me," she states.*



## **Adjusting the learning environment to the pre-training of people with special needs**

**Promoter:** Day Care Center Kão

**Budget:** 133 333 EUR, of which ESF support is 99 999 EUR

**Duration:** February 2006 – February 2008

**Objective:** *To create a learning environment for post-basic school, age-appropriate development and training of people with a severe and profound disability who are in the vocational training age group; to expand the options of people with a moderate learning disability for post-basic school vocational training; to develop and distribute a vocational training model that has been adjusted to students with special educational needs resulting from an intellectual disability.*

Day Care Center Kão is a social institution that has been providing support services for children with disabilities for more than ten years. Both day-care and rehabilitation services are being offered to children and adolescents with a severe or profound intellectual disability or multiple disabilities. The centre offers an environment that supports age-appropriate development with the help of modern facilities, aids, support services, and rehabilitation.

The building at Kão Street also locates the nursing education department of Tallinn Boarding School No. 1 that provides basic education training that has been adjusted to the special needs of students with the help of individual study programmes. “Day Care Center Kão has the right conditions to offer children with an extremely serious peculiarity an education suited for their abilities. They learn how to do the simplest self-care operations, to understand simple speech, and to be able to express themselves either through pictures or spoken language,” says Helma Täht, a special education teacher and project mentor.

Nursing education classes take place during mornings in five groups. One group includes seven students who are tutored by a teacher as well as assistant teachers and tutors.

“We have reached a point in which the children are starting to complete their basic education,” says Helma Täht and adds that even though the Vocational Educational Institutions Act obligates the state and local governments to provide all interested individuals with post-basic school vocational education, Estonia (differently from Finland, for example) lacks a model for the vocational training of adolescents with intellectual disability.

To solve that problem, Day Care Center Kão launched a project called “Adjusting the learning environment to the pre-training of people with disabilities”, which aims to create – for the first time in Estonia – a learning environment for post-basic school, age-appropriate development of people with a physical or intellectual disability. The mental age of those individuals is often that of a 1–4-year-old child.





Curriculas were created, specialists trained, and methodical materials compiled in order to achieve that goal. The lectors at the Continuing Education Centre of the University of Jyväskylä (in Finland) have made it possible to organise a 320-hour special education course titled “Special learner”. The training involves 30 teachers who in year 2007 can obtain the new qualification requirements enforced in Estonia, in order to work with people with disabilities. The participants of the course are taught to notice and understand the developmental and educational special needs of adolescents with an intellectual disability, they are also taught how to create a learning environment that would support the development of a special student, they receive basic knowledge about social rehabilitation, and much more is done.

Two pilot curriculas are being formed within the home service curriculum group – one for adolescents who need to learn life skills and another for those in need of nursing education. Vocational training that has been adjusted according to those two programmes will be made available as of September 2008 in three regions: Vana-Antsla, Haapsalu and Tallinn.

The long-term goal of the project is to humanize society more and advance social rehabilitation – people should be brought to an understanding according to which very different people can and must coexist peacefully, and that everyone has a right to development that meets their abilities.

## Smart product design – the speciality of the future

**Promoter:** Estonian Academy of Arts

**Budget:** 33 562 EUR, of which ESF support is 25 172 EUR

**Duration:** July 2005 – June 2008

**Objective:** To develop a joint education and research sphere that is based on the synergy of the information technology systems speciality in the Estonian Information Technology College, which is managed by the design specialities of the Estonian Academy of Arts and by the Estonian Information Technology Foundation; in the course of this project, knowledge and skills for using technology in the sphere of design are developed.

Martin Pärn, head of the department of product design at the Estonian Academy of Arts, is convinced that we will live in a completely different world in 15 years time. We will be surrounded by a more intelligent environment in which large and pointless things have been replaced by smart and multifunctional items. Examples could be a wallpaper displaying digital television, a pillow being both support to the head and an alarm clock, clothes that measure heart beat or change their colour, and so on. Computers will become obsolete or very small so that they can be placed anywhere – inside a door or table, or elsewhere.

“Products containing digital technology are in constant change. To think about it, we don’t actually need a telephone or radio in physical form. We just need the service or function that they provide,” explains Pärn.

The students of the textile and product design departments of Estonian Academy of Arts have been generating precisely those kinds of solutions within the framework of the “Smart product design” project.

Professor Mare Kelpman, head of the textile department, explains that the project, launched in July 2005, was written because there was an actual need to create something new.

“European (textile) design has reached a dead end. There is a lot of cheap merchandise coming from China and the whole industry is moving East. There are two options – design on the one hand, and joining materials technology and engineering on the other hand. We started looking for new options,” explains Kelpman.

Naturally, the innovative ideas and design in the “Smart design” project come from the students of the Estonian Academy of Arts, and the engineering solutions come from the Information Technology College.

While Estonia is slowly trying to get used to the idea of creating an intelligent environment (the idea initially failed to receive funding by the European Social Fund), other universities in Europe and in America have been engaged in this sphere for quite some time. Mare Kelpman mentions some lecturers who have given lectures the Academy of Arts – Katherine Moriwaki, a post-graduate from the USA; Marie O`Mahony, a world-renown textile and technology expert; Turkkä Keinonen, a professor of conceptual design from the University of Helsinki, and others.

A master class titled “Silent helpers” was organised in the department of product design in spring 2006 (supervised by Professor Martin Pärn, project assistant Sixten Heidmets, and a foreign professor from Finland with a lecture cycle), which focused on aids to assist the needs of hearing impaired persons. Marko Uiibo and Veiko Liis were the students to come up with a speech board, which is designed to make the communication between deaf and non-deaf persons easier. One can draw and write on a digital display so that the other person is able to see the message instantly – a message can be read while it is written. Kerli Tamme is the student behind the alarm clock/pillow idea. The inside of a pillow hides a slim and soft mechanism bag made of durable material that includes an electronic clock, a string for setting the alarm time, a button for vibration level, and three batteries for vibration function. The alarm clock time can be set with a special string.

A smaller master class took place in the textile design department as an elective subject, which familiarised the students to paints that change their colour when exposed to heat, as well as to current conducting fabrics. Professor Mare Kelpman and project assistant Kärt Ojavee were acting as supervisors. The master class also included a workshop by Katherine Moriwaki dedicated to current conducting fabrics.



The project “Smart product design” reaches its culmination in 2008 when a new sustainable branch of specialization will be added to the curriculum of Estonian Academy of Arts.

## *Innomet II – Implementation of an innovative human resources development system in Estonia*

**Promoter:** Federation of Estonian Engineering Industry

**Budget:** 48 660 EUR, of which ESF support is 36 4483 EUR

**Duration:** March 2005 – December 2006

**Objective:** Development of human resources and enhancement of competitiveness in the labour market's machinery, appliances and metal industry sector through the improvement and development of in-service training system.

In March 2005, the Federation of Estonian Engineering Industry launched a project for the implementation of innovative human resources development system (INNOMET II) with the help of the European Social Fund. The project continues to establish the in-service training system for the machinery, appliances and metal industry sector, started by Leonardo da Vinci programme in 2003–2004. "Estonia lacks skilled workers such as welders and machine tool operators. On the one hand, INNOMET should help to popularise vocational training, on the other hand, find employees for businesses," explains Jaanus Vaheosalu, project manager at Tallinn City Enterprise Board and regional coordinator for INNOMET.

Manufacturing enterprises' interest in taking part in the project is above all increased by information available regarding specialised trainings. According to Vaheosalu, the main objective of INNOMET II is to bring together employers and educational institutions, in this case institutions of vocational education and higher education providing the specialities of engineering or metal work. The Federation of Estonian Engineering Industry has a total of 17 partners in this project: Tallinn University of Technology (TUT), Virumaa College of TUT, Tallinn Industrial Education Centre, Tallinn College of Engineering, Tallinn Lasnamäe School of Mechanics, Narva Vocational Training Centre, Ida-Virumaa Vocational Training Centre, Sillamäe Vocational School, Tartu Vocational Education Centre, Võru County Vocational Training Centre, Tallinn City Enterprise Board, Tartu City Government, Kohtla-Järve City Government, Jõhvi City Government, Jõhvi Rural Municipality Government, Toila Rural Municipality Government and National Examination and Qualification Centre.

All supply and demand is carried out via the Internet. At the end of the project, the interactive database at [www.innomet.ee](http://www.innomet.ee) shall list the needs of entrepreneurs of a sector or region (data related to a certain business is only available to said business) and schools' options for the organisation of courses. Within the framework of the current project, as well as within all ESF projects in general, the pilot trainings carried out to test the co-operation model are free of charge for employees; in the future, businesses can apply for support for employee training from both local governments and Enterprise Estonia.



In 2003/2004, information system demo version was tested on 4-5 businesses. The main objective of the current project is to successfully and fully launch the system in machinery, appliances and metal industry sector as well as to test whether it would be worth to expand the system to another sector. This has been confirmed by now, and starting from next year the project plans to include the construction sector, timber industry, information technology and electronics industry as well as the area of car service.

The database, which at the moment includes data on 75 businesses and ten educational institutions and in the future shall include data on more than 1,000 businesses and main educational institutions providing in-service training in all areas, is currently administered by the Federation of Estonian Engineering Industry along with Tallinn University of Technology. Jaanus Vaahasalu says that a separate legal body shall be established whose duties shall include development of co-operation of the parties of the database, conclusion of contracts, etc..

INNOMET co-operation model is beneficial to all parties participating in it. "New technologies, machine tools, etc. are developed all the time. Businesses must maintain their competitiveness and often it is more effective to provide in-service training for the existing staff than to constantly be on the lookout for new qualified employees in the labour market," explains Vaahasalu.

Aleksander Stepanov, information coordinator at Tallinn Industrial Education Centre, finds that co-operation with INNOMET gives the Education Centre a boost to systematise and improve trainings and establish firmer relations with businesses. The Centre provides in-depth education in the area of welding and metal work.

Collaboration is also beneficial to local governments, ministries and other organisations of the public sector: businesses' labour requirements gathered from the information system enable to plan the development directed at business sectors.

INNOMET II started out in March 2005 with business mapping. By now, the data has been entered into the database and approximately 30 national trainings have been carried out. By December 2006, 400 people had participated in different courses, 100 of them also received certificates of competency (incl. certificates for various levels). Interactive database must also be ready for use.

In addition to employers, the project also notified students of basic schools and upper secondary schools: a guide to educational institutions offering engineering specialities gives a good overview of studying opportunities; trips to businesses help to get to know the practical side of said specialities.

## *Youth centre as a means of increasing the social inclusion of the young*

### 1.1

**Promoter:** Youth Association Juventus

**Budget:** 87 970 EUR, of which ESF support is 65 978 EUR

**Duration:** September 2005–May 2008

**Objective:** *Counselling, preventive and support services developed and implemented for the Põltsamaa and Püssi youth associations operating in the field of informal education, to increase the social inclusion of young people.*

Youth association Juventus has operated in Põltsamaa since 1999, with an objective to coordinate regional youth work in cooperation with other educational institutions and local organizations. Since then Juventus has worked on three fronts: local level with the projects initiated by young people, county level with campaigns and trainings for young people and youth workers, and international level with youth work mediation and pan-European trainings-meetings.

The members of the association are young people in the age group of 14–26, whom the association tries to include in the everyday events of their home environs and encourage to act for the common good of their needs, in the course of citizen initiative. Methods used in different projects give the young people an opportunity to learn different social skills, participate in educational discussions and working groups, develop tolerance and better behaviour towards each other.

In October 2005, a centre was opened in Allika Street in Põltsamaa, which, owing to its location, is called Allika Open Youth Centre. Heidi Klamp, Chairwoman of the Management Board of Juventus, says that Põltsamaa was in need of a place where young people could interact and spend time with their peers. According to Klamp, around 50 students visit the centre every day.

For opening a youth centre in Põltsamaa the project prescribed for the establishment of a similar centre to another city; the city of Püssi in Ida-Viru County was selected as a partner. Together they applied for assistance from the European Social Fund, in order to develop the youth centres in both cities into centres that would be much more than just places to spend time. Heidi Klamp says that Estonia has never before regarded youth centres as a learning place of social skills. The aim of Juventus is to create conditions and opportunities for local young people for self-education and self-realisation and thus prevent dropping out of basic school and increase competitiveness in the labour market.

According to the website (in Estonian) of Juventus ([www.nyjuventus.ee](http://www.nyjuventus.ee)), Põltsamaa Allika Centre provides 13 different ways to spend leisure time. Some of the services in the list include spending free time (by playing all sorts of board and computer games, listening to music, film watching, reading magazines and newspapers, etc); organization of projects and events of own initiative (e.g. class parties, film and poetry evenings, informative events, trainings); provision of

career counselling, psychological counselling and victim support, as well as organization of public work, holiday, hiking and work camps. Püssi Open Youth Centre houses an athletics club, boxing club, table tennis club and break dance club. There is special supporting system in Ida-Viru County, which is helping Estonian and Russian youths to communicate between each other. While Põltsamaa centre has two employees working daily from 13.00 to 20.00, in Püssi there is one employee who deals with the gathered young people according to their interests and needs. Projects include other leaders who participate as volunteers.

There are certain rules for the visitors of the centre. For example, it is prohibited to consume alcohol and smoke. Attention is also paid to the fact that children would not spend time in the centre while they should be at school. "The most popular service in Põltsamaa is international work," says Heidi Klamp. "Two of our people have voluntarily gone to spend a year in Germany and Scotland, one is about to leave for Macedonia." In Scotland there was a centre for disabled young people that needed assistance, in Macedonia there is theatrical group waiting for a manager. There is a young man from Spain working at Põltsamaa centre, who tries to get the young people away from the computers by teaching them Spanish and first tips and tricks for DJ work.

In 2006, in the framework of youth mediation, the people of Põltsamaa cooperated with youth organizations from the Azores (Portugal), Germany and Scotland, through which 24 young persons from Põltsamaa acquired international project experience abroad. In April, a group of eight young people from Palestine, Lebanon and Malta visited Estonia.

Heidi Klamp is not worried about the sustainability of Juventus's youth centres. At the moment, the association receives support for employing people and operation of the centre from the European Social Fund, local governments have promised their full support for the future. The future of Allika Open Youth Centre is even prescribed for in the latest development plan of the city of Põltsamaa.





## Further training for island artificers

**Promoter:** Saaremaa Educational Centre

**Budget:** 27 107 EUR, of which ESF support is 20 320 EUR

**Duration:** November 2004 – March 2006

**Objective:** To increase the professional competitiveness of handicraftsmen from Saare and Hiiu counties; to expand the knowledge and skills of the project participants; to increase awareness about the importance of marketing knowledge and joint activity; to create increased interest in improving the quality of one's own handicraft products.

March 2006 marked the end of the “In-service training for island artificers” project, which ended with final seminars and handicraft exhibits on Hiiumaa and Muhumaa islands. The exhibits displayed numerous basketry items, ceramics, silk and porcelain paintings, also embroidered and felted items, and items made in batik dyeing and patchwork technique, woven on handlooms and made from leather. Project manager Laine Tarvis from Saaremaa Educational Centre says that such projects are essential to developing handicraft as an important source of subsistence and cultural phenomenon both on the islands and also elsewhere in Estonia.



Laine Tarvis mentions that the trainings and seminars repeatedly included the topics of quality and product development. A handicraft quality workshop was also organised. A statute for a handicraft sign was approved in the council of Muhu Island rural municipality. The Muhu Island handicraft sign shall be issued to deserving items every year on the country's Independence Day in February. The sign will be given to products that are of high quality

and are tied to regional peculiarities and history. Materials originating from Muhu Island are preferred; the products' compliance to requirements is evaluated by a committee. Products bearing the Muhu handicraft sign will also become official Muhu souvenirs and awards in competitions organised by the rural municipality government. The other target group of the project, the artificers of Hiiumaa Island, has not yet developed their sign but they are moving in the direction. They have compiled an action plan and discussed the possibility of expanding the Hiiumaa Green Sign, created in 1995, also to handicraft products. The Green Sign has only been given to accommodation establishments for eco-friendly managing so far.



The in-service training courses for handicraftsmen took place both on Hiiumaa and Muhumaa islands. A total of 48 persons, 45 women and 3 men, participated in the courses. The people interested in handicraft came from various walks of life – there were rural municipality officials, kindergarten teachers, and others.

The general handicraft skills were the first to be polished. After that, the course in Muhumaa focused on wickerwork, hand looming, patchwork, felting, embroidery, silk paintings and the making of ethnographic slippers; and the participants in Hiiumaa received thorough knowledge about silk paintings, hand looming, the making of leather items, porcelain painting, plant arranging and ceramics. In addition to that, everyone interested could also participate in the handicraft product marketing and joint activity trainings.

“People also received enterprise and joint activity related training,” says Laine Tarvis but admits that only few can live on just making and selling the handicraft. “Handicraft is mostly sold below cost,” she adds. The most suitable form of enterprise is to converge into cooperative societies: cooperatives are a form of coexistence based on natural laws, culture and traditions. A handicraft cooperative was founded in the town of Kärddla in Hiiumaa, which now operates under the name of commercial association “Hiiumaa Käsitöökoda” (Hiiumaa Handicraft Shop). A handicraft shop which attracts many ferry travellers has been opened in Muhu port by the family of Velli Saabas who also participated in the project. The Muhu Handicraft Society – several members of which participated in the artificers' in-service training project – sells its products in a handicraft shop located at Liiva in Muhumaa.

Laine Tarvis shares how five women plan to apply for the title of folk art and handicraft master in the field of textile as a result of the in-service training for artificers. “This is the highest standard of quality and also enables to ask a higher price for one's products,” explains Tarvis and says that one of the sub-activities of the project was to introduce the vocational standard of folk art and handicraft master, and to determine suitable candidates for the title. The vocational standard is a document that determines the requirements that the vocational qualification has for knowledge, skills, proficiency, experience, values and personal characteristics.

## *Training for women in rural areas to produce quality handicraft products*

**Promoter:** *NGO Craft Society of Middle – Estonia*

**Budget:** *22 051 EUR, of which ESF support is 16 538 EUR*

**Duration:** *September 2004 – November 2006*

**Objective:** *Increasing the coping ability of women in rural areas through quality handicraft training.*

A handicraft centre was opened in Jäneda five years ago; a year later, the centre together with the Estonian Folk Culture Development and Training Centre started organising trainings on folk dress making for local women. These trainings were primarily meant for handicraft teachers, handicraft club instructors, folk dance group instructors, and all women interested in handicraft that had acquired the necessary knowledge on their own but needed to polish their skills. “I have noticed that people don't know how to choose and wear Estonian folk dress,” project manager Luule Nurga points out; this is a shortcoming that the present project should try to eliminate, even if only partially.

The training began in autumn 2004 with 30 enthusiastic participants, 27 of whom graduated on 1 May 2006 from the school of folk dress and bobbin lace making. Luule Nurga explains that bobbin lace was the primary type of lace during the height of folk dress. Crocheted lace reached Estonia at a later time.

“People acquired many new skills,” says Nurga, “and were able to find work later as a result of participating in the project. One long-term unemployed woman is now working as an embroiderer, another as a sales person in a handicraft centre. Also farmers are keen to put the new skills into practice. Farm work is periodic, which makes it possible to earn extra money with handicraft.” The making of a complete folk costume – which for women's dress entails a coif for women or a wreath for girls, a shirt, skirt, apron (for women), belt, stockings, shoes, and a long coat – is an extremely time-consuming task according to the project manager, and required the participants to do a lot of work at home. Everyone could choose parish clothes according to their ancestors' place of origin – the participants even went to the Estonian national Museum to copy the design of the clothes, just to be historically accurate.

The handicraft workshop that can be found in the loft of Musta Täku Tall is still visited by loom weaving students who are about to finish their multicoloured carpets. The handicraft society will relocate to the Jäneda manor house during the winter season due to the cold temperatures in the premises of Musta Täku Tall.



***The creation of an integrated counselling and practical training system for professional higher education at Narva College of the University of Tartu***

**Promoter:** Narva College of the University of Tartu

**Budget:** 37 268 EUR, of which ESF support is 27 951 EUR

**Duration:** May 2005 – March 2008

**Objective:** *To increase competitiveness in the labour market through an integrated counselling and practical training system among the professional higher education graduates of Local Government's Administration and Youth Work at Narva College of the University of Tartu.*

Narva College of the University of Tartu launched a project within the framework of the Local Government's Administration and Youth Work curricula to create a practical training system for the students in these fields of study. The tradition of practical training has already been established before, but the novel aspect of the pilot project is to tie the practical training system with vocational counselling. There are two counsellors working within the framework of the project in Narva College – one for Estonian speaking students and the other for Russian speaking students.

Counselling is beneficial primarily to those students who have entered university but have not discussed their choices with a vocational counsellor and may now have doubts regarding their choice of speciality. The counsellor makes it easier to find an answer for such questions and for the students to change their field of study, if necessary. The other beneficial aspect of vocational counselling is used in career planning lectures, in which discussions are held about where to do practical training, taking into account the student's wishes and qualifications. Vocational counselling also helps students in planning their further studies. If a person finds that they have higher ambitions than a diploma from Narva College can be used to start Public Administration Master's studies at the University of Tartu, for example.

Aet Kiisla, project manager and holder of the Local Government curriculum, says that 101 Local Government's Administration and Youth Work 2nd and 3rd year students have been included in the project. Kiisla is also directly responsible for finding practical training bases. Summer practical trainings were done in the city governments of Kohtla-Järve, Jõhvi, Narva-Jõesuu and other towns. Autumn practical trainings target primarily rural municipality governments.

"We have always had practical training but it has never been tied to vocational counselling before," says Kiisla. "Our wish is that the students could go to local governments in order to develop themselves and their skills." It would very easy to get practical experience in one's home town or in the closest place to the school but the College encourages students to acquire more diverse experiences.

“The students have made a good impression even now, during practical training, and several of them have been invited back to work as administrators or secretaries,” says Aet Kiisla with pride and adds that someone with a Local Government’s Administration degree can initially work as a secretary while acquiring a degree in a more specific field and then become a specialist in that field.

The graduates of Local Government’s Administration receive a professional higher education degree, thus the curriculum puts a lot of emphasis on practical work – practical training amounts to a total of 25 credit points. They generally learn about how the public sector functions and carries out affairs. This is incomparable to work arrangement in a commercial enterprise. For example, one has to be able to differentiate between what processes are in the jurisdiction of the council and what are managed by the government.

Also the second group that is included in the pilot project, the students of Youth Work, have the opportunity to participate in the lectures of career planning and to receive personal counselling. The students of Youth Work are future counsellors of youth camps, instructors of hobby classes, advisers in special schools, and youth work specialists at local governments. Youth Work students made their summer practical trainings in children’s camps; autumn practical training sends them to Kaagvere and Puiatu Special Schools and to a juvenile prison.

Aet Kiisla says that the students have already used the opportunity of personal vocational counselling during the first year of the project. They like the fact that they can turn to a specialist when they have a problem or a question that requires more discussion.



## *Creating a framework for continuing vocational training in a lifelong learning context in South-Eastern Estonia and Viljandi County*

**Promoter:** Valga County Vocational Education Centre

**Budget:** 92 603 EUR, of which ESF support is 69 452 EUR

**Duration:** October 2005– September 2006

**Objective:** *Creating a framework for continuing vocational training in a lifelong learning context in South-Eastern Estonia and Viljandi County; increasing the competitive ability of the adults in the region through training.*

The lifelong learning project that had lasted for almost a year finished in September. It gave general and special knowledge to 80 people living in South-Eastern Estonia and Viljandi County, helping them to improve their quality of life. In particular, the project supported the people who could not afford in-service training due to their daily needs.

“I believe that it is already an achievement when someone previously unfamiliar with the computer has learned how to work with Excel and Word software or use the Internet,” emphasised Mare Visnapuu, Head of the Continuing Education Department of Valga County Vocational Education Centre.

The training period of the lifelong learning project was structured in three stages. The first included courses on social skills, such as lectures on the situation of the labour market, career and vocational counselling, document management, legislation and psychology. The second stage included general skills courses, improving the knowledge of modern Estonian language, basic computer skills, English (communication level), entrepreneurship and accounting. The last stage consisted of special study programs offered by vocational schools: shop assistants and welders at Valga County Vocational Education Centre, stove-fitters and restorers at Viljandi Joint Vocational Secondary School, cleaners and construction finishers at Vana-Antsla Secondary Vocational School, joiners and secretaries/office managers at Võru County Vocational Education Centre, and gardeners and florists at Räpina Gardening College.

80 people from South-Eastern Estonia and Viljandi County were selected to participate in the courses. Most of them were men and women aged over 25 years, with secondary education, relatively low wages and limited opportunities for improving their knowledge of foreign languages, entrepreneurship or specific vocation.

According to Mare Visnapuu, the feedback from the trainees has been positive. “One person who initially thought that he did not need to attend the English classes, because everything seemed already familiar, was later very grateful that I convinced him to continue. He even thought at the end that 40 hours was not enough for language studies,” she provided an example.



In general, the studies were made as easy as possible, taking into account the needs of the participants. For start, both the courses and study aids were free of charge for all participants. Suitable study times for the participants were agreed in each region, including weekend and evening hours if they could not attend during business days. 2 euros of travel expenses were compensated for each training occasion and a warm meal was provided during long days.

In the future, in the framework of subsequent projects, the training centre would like to cooperate more with employers to achieve more tolerance from them in permitting the employees participate in the courses also during work hours.



## *Pre-vocational training – direction indicator in the selection of profession*

**Promoter:** Võrumaa Vocational Education Centre

**Budget:** 73 316 EUR, of which ESF support is 54 987 EUR

**Duration:** September 2005 – June 2008

**Objective:** *Implementing pre-vocational training programs as a result of cooperation between Võrumaa Vocational Education Centre, Valgamaa Vocational Education Centre, Põlva Secondary School, Misso Secondary School, Parksepa Secondary School and Tsirguliina Secondary School.*

In 2005, Võrumaa Vocational Education Centre in Väimela piloted a pre-vocational training program for the secondary school students in South-Eastern Estonia in order to present the professions taught at the vocational schools in Võru, Valga and Räpina. According to Kai Laanemaa, Project Manager of Võrumaa Vocational Education Centre, they would like to give the students during the secondary school period an overview of the professions available on the basis of secondary education.

“It will make it easier for the students to choose a profession after finishing the school. In addition, they receive introductory knowledge of the profession,” said Laanemaa. Pre-vocational training was offered to introduce added value to the studies in the secondary schools. The knowledge and practical work experience gained from the studies create preconditions for employment in a familiar profession even without a vocational education certificate, should the young person not wish to continue his/her education.

The youth of the Misso Secondary School acquire environmental knowledge at Räpina Gardening College, while the students of the Tsirguliina Secondary School study stock management at Valgamaa Vocational Education Centre. The students of Parksepa and Põlva secondary schools may choose between the specialities of tourism administration, hotel service, metal or wood processing offered by Võrumaa Vocational Education Centre. Admission procedures to the abovementioned vocational schools are simplified for the young people who have passed the seven-week preparatory training cycle.

Võrumaa Vocational Education Centre admits students with a secondary school certificate to two study levels – shorter vocational training and longer vocational higher education. Education is offered in five specialties: tourism administration, business administration, information technology, woodworking technology, mechatronics or industrial automation, and metal processing.



The graduates from the Võru vocational school are in high demand among enterprises, particularly the metal and wood businesses. The rate of employment of the graduates from the metalworking specialty is nearly one hundred per cent. Active foreign relations have enabled the students of the vocational school to participate in practical training in other countries, such as the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Finland, Germany, Cyprus and elsewhere, in the framework of different programmes.

Võrumaa Vocational Education Centre was established in 1999 as a result of a merger of Väimela Agricultural Technical School and Võru Industrial Technical School. The Centre has more than 700 students.



## *Improved career counselling and vocational orientation in Jõgeva county and Illuka Rural Municipality*

**Promoter:** Jõgevamaa Association of Counsellors

**Budget:** 32 051 EUR, of which ESF support is 24 038 EUR

**Duration:** April 2006 – April 2008

**Objective:** To educate specialists in career counselling and vocational orientation; launch the work of a network of vocational orientation specialists and career counsellors by means of preparing information packages for vocational orientation specialists, parents and students, and creating of a web site. Publish a handbook for career counsellors.



The Jõgevamaa Association of Counsellors located in Jõgeva Town Polyclinic offers psychological and career counselling to school students. This service helps the young people to learn more about themselves, identify their ambitions and abilities, and find access to suitable paths of education. The counsellor is also available to provide support for the children who are victims of school or domestic violence.

The idea to establish this non-profit association emerged some years ago when Ülle Kirkmann, Head of the Social Department of the Jõgeva County Government, Vilve Vend, Paediatrician, and psychologists Ave Palm and Evi Shtukert found that educational advice should be given at first to the parents.

“In 1999, the first psychologists were employed to work with the project of providing assistance to crime victims and crime prevention,” said Maire Püss, Project Manager, recalling the creation of the counselling association. The range of counselling services expanded gradually and currently the number of psychologists in the centre has risen to five. They all have also parallel positions at the local governments, hospitals, schools or the Labour Market Board.

A new and extensive project was launched in April 2006 to provide training, with the assistance of the lecturers from the Tallinn University, to the vocational orientation specialists and career counsellors for the schools of Jõgeva County and Illuka Rural Municipality. An attempt was made to find an interested and already employed teacher in each school. Some of them had been working as vocational orientation specialists for many years, but this was more an exception rather than a rule.

Evi Shtukert who works as a psychologist in Torma and Sadala basic schools said that she has tried to introduce vocational orientation and career counselling in these schools. “To some extent, it can be bound to other subjects, such as Human Science. One opportunity would be to use intelligence tests to give the child an idea of his or her abilities and an opportunity to compare the test results with his/her learning results. There is also a career choice test that indicates the profession a child would like to have. It is a pretty good indicator of who has a talent for arts and who could become an athlete or businessman,” said Shtukert.

In addition to providing training to the teachers, the team of the Jõgevamaa Association of Counsellors also develops information packages for schools, child protection officials and youth police officers; a handbook for vocational orientation specialists will be published as a basis of class preparation for the teachers. Training of teachers in Jõgeva started in January 2007.

The counselling centre cooperates in the creation of the study aids with the Foundation for Lifelong Learning Development Innove and the Ministry of Education and Research.

## Innovation audit in Llc Tervix

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**Promoter:** Llc Tervix

**Duration:** July 2005

**Objective:** To identify the company's unused development opportunities and provide opportunities for future development.

Malle and Mati Rüütel from nature product company Tervix say that they planted the first sea-buckthorn plants already back in 1995 and started producing syrup and sea-buckthorn oil from the berries. Good luck introduced them to Henry and Aili Nuter-Tammin, who established their sea-buckthorn plantation a year later and had witnessed the popularity of nature products in Central Europe. In 2003, they founded a joint enterprises in the premises of Tartu Science Park in order to acquire a proper production technology, gain recognition for the operation of the company and register products that they introduced together and offered for sale in sales networks.

Improvement and development of sea-buckthorn products is carried out in cooperation with scientists from Tallinn University of Technology, Tartu University and the University of Life Sciences. The aim was to develop as many nature products produced from local raw material as possible. By now, Tervix offers approximately 20 different products: sea-buckthorn oil, sea-buckthorn syrup, sea-buckthorn tincture, sea-buckthorn ointment, camomile ointment, goose grease ointment, Hypericum ointment, dandelion syrup, fir-shoot syrup and sea-buckthorn mustard are only some on the list. The products reach the buyer mostly through pharmacies, eco-stores and soon through Selver supermarkets. Tervix receives its raw material from Estonian organic farms and from its own plantations. According to Henry Nuter-Tammin, member of the Management Board, the company wishes to further focus on the production of medicines and provision of medical services.

"Lately, sea-buckthorn oil has been the most popular of our products," says Nuter-Tammin. "It is recommended by doctors." Oil can be used for treating the throat, heartburns, gastric ulcers, and externally, wounds and ulcers that take a long time to heal. Tervix's nature products have been tested by professors Mart Kull and Selma Teesalu, whose patients have found effective treatment in these products for various problems.

In July 2005, Tervix participated in the pilot project of the innovation audit of Enterprise Estonia, mapping the unused development opportunities of 58 Estonian businesses. The auditors were renowned and accredited consultants, namely Noman Konsultatsioonid, along with whom the current situation of the business and its bottlenecks were reviewed, and ideas generated for the future.

“We were more or less aware of our problems. There is a shortage of human resources, this is a touchy subject. After expanding the production even more, we will need more employees,” says Henry Nuter-Tammin. “As a positive aspect it was pointed out that we have developed a local science-intensive product. Our entire business is a big innovation,” he says, chuckling. “Sea-buckthorn has been known in Estonia since 1988 but such combination of products as offered by Tervix, was not available before.”



Nuter-Tammin assesses the need for the audit as very high. “Our activity was analysed and thought through. It was all the more necessary, as we have included various specialists: doctors and scientists from Estonia, Finland and Germany. All we do has to hold water,” says he. An innovation strategy was drawn up with the assistance of the Enterprise Estonia and advice from Noman Konsultatsioonid, based on the results of the audit, which established the next steps in the road towards more science-intensive products.

According to Henry Nuter-Tammin, Tervix marketing activity outside Estonia, even more intensive this year, shall be directed primarily at the markets familiar with sea-buckthorn. On 21–29 October 2006, Llc Tervix participated in the Paris foodstuff fair, where they made some new business contacts. So far, their main partners have been from Finland and Germany. The most popular product for foreigners is sea-buckthorn fruit oil.

As a rather rare example in business, Llc Tervix functions due to the cooperation between two families. “The distribution of roles happened by itself,” says Henry Nuter-Tammin. “Mati Rüütel deals with technology. Together we engage in product development. I am responsible for financial aspects, marketing and documentation, as well as management and coordination of different projects. It is complicated to work alone; you have no one to turn to for advice. By working together we find solutions more easily,” says he.

Malle and Mati Rüütel are sure that in spite of encountering disagreements, the cooperation with their partners is near perfect. The shareholders of Tervix are of the opinion that the best proof for that are good products, they have developed and produced together for the better state of health of their fellow beings.

## Manufacturing enterprise middle managers' training in Ltd EEK-TRADE

**Promoter:** Ltd EEK-TRADE

**Budget:** 5 641 EUR, of which ESF support is 3 590 EUR

**Duration:** June 2006 – December 2006

**Objective:** The aim of the training is to give its participants knowledge and skills in the three main spheres of middle managers' regular work: organising and managing the work process of one's subordinates; motivating people; motivating oneself as a manager, and organising one's work in an effective way.

Ltd EEK-TRADE is an enterprise in the town of Pärnu that has more than ten years of experience in manufacturing and selling laminated products. The company's production is based on particle board which is used to make customised laminated work surfaces, window-sills, furniture doors or details, and also kitchen furniture sets. The company has shops in Pärnu, Tallinn, and Tartu.

EEK-TRADE always makes an effort to be a developing and a customer- and worker-friendly enterprise. Therefore, an ISO quality management certificate was obtained in 2004 to facilitate interaction and trading with foreign partners, and a quality management manual was compiled to determine all strategic steps. In addition to that, the company also enables its employees to constantly participate in various further training courses. Trainings have been held for both managers and sales people, and now also for work masters.



Sales consultant Kadri Kuura says that the initiative to write a work master training project came from production and not from the management. The course, held by Llc Edu Konsultatsioonid, gave work masters, store managers and technologists knowledge that they were able to put into practice already the next day at work. At a time when it is difficult to keep a production worker from not leaving a company as there are higher salaries abroad, one solution can be to offer a pleasant working environment and create good working conditions.

“Production work can involve a lot of routine and it is extremely important to have a good work master,” says Kuura. “He must be able to talk to people and change their positions so that the worker would not be forced to do the same task all the time.”

EEK-TRADE employs more than 125 people, 90 of whom work in production. Every department chooses its best workers at the end of each year who are then awarded with a hefty sum of money – this is done to motivate the employees. The candidates are set up in a democratic way – voting is voluntary and confidential, and the best work master is determined by the production workers and vice versa.

Production director Valdur Hoop explains that the work master training resulted from the need for self-assertion skills, which does not bring about autocratic leadership but rather the implementation of deliberate strategy and more productive work in a more general sense.

“Our work masters are rather young while the workers are already older,” says Hoop, hinting that there is a need for more skilled communication.

The other aspect mentioned by the production director is the art of planning work tasks and work time – problems must be described and determined and then systematised and solved. “There can never be too many very important and very urgent matters,” states Hoop and adds that the work masters in the enterprise have already begun to realise that the person reporting a problem must also be the one to solve it, and that the first step is always to acknowledge the problem to oneself and then try to find a solution.



## *Llc Roomaja's participation in a mentorship programme*

**Mentee:** *Mart Talvar, Llc Roomaja.*

**Mentor:** *Jüri Tümanok, RMG Eesti Ltd*

**Duration:** *December 2005 – December 2006*

**Objective:** *To help an entrepreneur with faster adaptation in the business world and to carry out their business plan more successfully.*

Even though mentorship is a relatively new concept in Estonia, mentorship programmes have been held in the business world here already since the year 1999. The mentorship programmes have been organised by training centres, enterprise offices and banks. Also Enterprise Estonia launched their pilot project in 2004. Mentorship in enterprise means the cooperation of two individuals in which an experienced entrepreneur (mentor) passes his or her knowledge and experience voluntarily and usually for free on to an entrepreneur who is just starting out (mentee) in order to support the mentee's personal and professional (business related) development. The 2005-2006 mentorship programme was joined by the private limited company Roomaja that produces ecological building materials in Saaremaa.

Mart Talvar, a partner in the company, says that they got involved in the mentorship programme when the company applied for start-up aid from Enterprise Estonia. He admits that he knew very little about the mentorship principles previously. At the same time, it seemed likely that an experienced entrepreneur can help someone with less experience to avoid the most typical mistakes. "The relationship between a mentor and a mentee is quite personal," says Talvar. "I have been able to talk to my mentor about everything. We meet quite often and I have received good advice that has had an impact on the company's development."

Llc Roomaja has tried to revive the building traditions that had fostered for centuries in Estonia and especially on Estonian islands; those traditions have made a come-back in the last years due to increasing ecological awareness. Reed, which is a renewable material, can successfully be used to make plates that can be used as a plastering foundation, or for heat or sound insulation. Reed plates and mulch is also used in gardening and interior decoration.

It was a year ago that Llc Roomaja used the Enterprise Estonia start-up aid to buy a reed plate machine that was being sold by another company specialised in building reed roofs. There was demand in the market for ecological building material and the company decided to fill the existing void.





Llc Roomaja, whose headquarters are in Tallinn, has two people working in the village of Mui in the vicinity of Orissaare, whose task is to prepare the reed (clean it and cut it) and then put it in the machine. The machine uses galvanised wire to form the reed into plates that are 60 cm wide, 5 cm thick, and 2 m long. Llc Roomaja buys its reed from companies that make reed roofs in Saaremaa because the reed that left over from reed roofs can be used for making plates. Reed is cut in the winter from the ice with a combine.

At the moment, the production is targeted to the local market, but also businesses in Finland have shown up interest. Roomaja's clients are renovation companies, construction shops and private individuals. The company is planning to expand its production in 2007.

Mart Talvar has the following explanation for the success of niche enterprise: "People are starting to get tired of "Euro renovation" and plasterboards. Synthetic materials cause allergies. But a house that "breathes" and has an even climate is healthy to live in."

Llc Roomaja is convinced that they are following the right cause. People have become much more aware about environment sustainability during the past years and they are also willing to spend more for a healthier living environment.

## *Rajaots Music School's participation in a mentorship programme*

**Mentee:** *Toomas Rannu, Llc Muusikakool Rajaots (Rajaots Music School)*

**Mentor:** *Maie Oblikas, Mainori Business School*

**Duration:** *December 2005 – November 2006*

**Objective:** *To help an entrepreneur with quicker adjustment in the business world and a more successful implementation of their business plan.*

Even though mentorship is a relatively new concept in Estonia, mentorship programmes have been held in the business world here already since the year 1999. The mentorship programmes have been organised by training centres, enterprise offices and banks. Also Enterprise Estonia (EE) launched their pilot project in 2004.

In broad terms, mentorship in enterprise means the cooperation of two individuals in which an experienced entrepreneur (mentor) passes his or her knowledge and experience voluntarily and usually for free on to an entrepreneur who is just starting out (mentee) in order to support the mentee's personal and professional (business related) development.

The 2005-2006 mentorship programme was joined by Rajaots Music School in Rakvere; the school, which was founded in 2003, offers newer directions and a more flexible curriculum, thus creating an alternative to a regular, programme oriented music school.

Director Toomas Rannu started out as a self-employed teacher with eight guitar students. By now, the school has expanded so much that 70 students can learn pop and jazz music in the fields of singing, piano, guitar, base guitar, and percussion instruments. There are also classes for infants and toddlers, which are based on Orff pedagogic – they combine spoken language, music and movement. The teaching is based on games tied to the surroundings, rhymes, intonations, folk song, and playing music instruments.

Toomas Rannu's mentor in the Enterprise Estonia programme is Maie Oblikas who is an appointed lecturer of applied psychology in Mainor Business School. "Our cooperation has resulted with many developments and solutions to problems both in a short-term and in a long-term perspective," explains Toomas Rannu. He adds that participation in the programme has given him a chance to share in the experiences of a person who knows the business world long and well. Cooperation with a mentor has given him determination, broadened his vision, cleared false perceptions, and strengthened his beliefs.

Rannu describes the mechanism of mentorship: "The mentor's role is to inspire and direct the mentee to think in a way so as to come up with the best solutions to his or her problems. The mentee's task is to be open to suggestions and be willing to ask for advice."

Rajaots Music School is the only of its kind of hobby school in the county. The subject syllabuses are based on corresponding syllabuses at Tallinn Georg Ots Music School. In addition to that, the compilation of syllabuses also takes into account the teachers' long-term experiences in their fields of expertise.



Toomas Rannu believes that Rajaots Music School helps to shape children and youngsters into well-rounded and balanced individuals through student-centred musical education and by taking into account individual capabilities, wishes, and natural development. Rannu himself has been engaged in music since 1973; he has graduated from Tallinn Georg Ots Music School and played in various bands. Rannu together with Peep Pihlak and Vallo Vildak (who are now base guitar and percussion instrument teachers in Rajaots Music School) formed the group Okaspindel that became known in the 1980s.

Rajaots Music School holds entrance tests only for singers. Anyone can come and learn instruments as long as there are vacant places. “Any person can be developed up to some point if they are interested. If it turns out that they will not stick with it and will only keep it as a hobby for a few years then there is also nothing wrong with that. The emphasis is not so much on acquiring a musical education but rather on personality development through music,” emphasises Rannu. Studying time is not limited in Rajaots School and the age of students is not fixed. When a young person becomes 19 years old, they go to study somewhere else, but what they take with them is the love for music. The reason behind studying is not only to start a career in music.

The music school combines individual learning with band activity, which gives the students the opportunity to join theoretical knowledge and instrument playing skills, and make music together with other people. Concerts that are also open to the public are held in the city library once in a quarter of academic year.

Rajaotsa has students coming from Rakvere and also from surrounding rural municipalities – from Kadrina, Haljala, Vinni-Paju, Sõmeru, and elsewhere.

## **Management training in Ltd Viking Window: work division arrangement, manager's time budget**

**Promoter:** Ltd Viking Window

**Budget:** 628 EUR, of which ESF support is 440 EUR

**Duration:** April 2006 – May 2006

**Objective:** *The Company's production managers acquired necessary skills to use their time in a more efficient way and to arrange work division in their area of responsibility as a result of this project.*

Ltd Viking Window, located in Mäo in Järva County, is mainly focused on producing wood and wood-aluminium windows and doors. The company was established in 1996 as a successor of the former Paide KEK (Paide Building Cooperative) and has over the years grown independent from the Danish investors who helped to establish the company ten years ago. This cooperation helped Viking Window to achieve a high level of quality, as well as good production culture and customer service.

The idea of the viking window (a wooden window that opens to the outside) comes from Scandinavia that is known for its harsh winds and storms. According to their prevailing principles, a modern window must open to the outside for protection against wind and rain, it must also have an inverse open function for washing purposes, and the wood must be made durable by processing it with a vacuum pressure impregnation method. All the windows have been made from high-quality pine wood that has a natural resistance system in the form of resin.

Viking Window is not engaged in mass production, everything is custom made. Window production offers several choices: bottom, side and inverse open windows in different variations. "We also make windows in special shapes," says Indrek Rütel, the company's quality manager, "whether it is triangular, hexagons, octagons, or round." The company employs 190 persons; production takes place in two shifts. Women make up a quarter of the workforce and are responsible for repair and burnishing work that requires extra care and attention.



Viking Window exports half of its production abroad (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Ireland) and its international operation has also prompted the company to follow international standards – it has applied for quality management certificate ISO 9001 (which was granted in April 2000) and environmental management certificate ISO 14 001 (which was granted in summer 2005). The company together with Enterprise Estonia has organised various training projects, such as teaching sales people negotiation and other skills.

A two-day training was held in April 2005 with the help of the European Social fund for lower managers to learn about work division arrangement and time management. The training involved two workers – the section managers of wood aluminium product assembly and interception. The training providers were the lecturers of Management Training at Estonian Business School.

The aim was to ensure a shared understanding about the role and responsibilities of a manager, and the preconditions of successful work. The participants received knowledge about a better arrangement of work division and time use. “Further training is rather expensive,” says Indrek Rüütel. “You send the people off to study but somebody also has to do the work in the meantime,” explains Rüütel why there was a need for external aid.

The results of the training can be seen when the production managers, who have a relatively short background in their positions, have been able to successfully engage the company's growing workforce in achieving the company's goals.

Viking Window in cooperation with Enterprise Estonia has also launched a project to create an export plan for Swedish and Norwegian markets. “For the most part it has involved market research to compare ourselves with local competitors and producing advertising material,” explains Rüütel and adds that the Norwegian market is complicated because the consumers prefer local production. However, the company hopes to break into the market through advertising and looking for contacts. It was only a few years back that Estonian manufacturers' reputation abroad was that of a cheap product seller, but now things have changed. “We overturn prejudices by inviting customers here to see the plant and learn about the conditions. They have been impressed with what they have seen,” says Rüütel. Most visitors are impressed by the good working environment, cleanliness, and systematic organisation at the Viking Window plant. It is a good start in the path of fulfilling the company's vision – to be the best window manufacturer of their market niche in Europe.

## **Participation of self-employed person (SEP) Tõnu Tamm in the growth strategy training**

**Promoter:** SEP Tõnu Tamm

**Budget:** 949 EUR, of which ESF support is 513 EUR

**Duration:** January 2006 – May 2006

**Objective:** Attend active courses to find solutions to the problems of the enterprises reinvigorate business development and gain courage to implement new ideas.

Tõnu Tamm (40) studied ski sport at the University of Tartu and then worked as a manual training teacher at school. He acquired a house near Kääriku in Valga County, more than ten years ago, when the establishment of tourism farms was a topical issue. However, today, the man has reanimated quite a different tradition that goes back for several hundred years. Tõnu Tamm has become an expert in water rams.

“Water rams have unlimited usage opportunities,” said Tõnu Tamm and explained: “In principle, these are pumps that enable lifting water higher than the natural water level. Prerequisites are overflow and drop-off of the water. They use the energy of the water itself without needing motors or other equipment.”

A water ram is suitable for locations where existing water reserves exceed the water requirements, e.g., agriculture, water supply of small buildings, etc. A water ram could be used to drive an irrigation system or fountain. “The major benefit is stable work capacity. There is no fear that something could be jammed or fused,” said Tamm. “The Estonian name Vesioinas derives from the butting sound made by this type of pump.”



Tõnu Tamm is interested in alternative energy sources and everything else related to nature and has relied heavily on common wisdom even in his business activities, but in the beginning of this year, he decided to participate in a company growth strategy training organised in Tartu by the Estonian Euro management Institute. This was an active training course for medium or small undertakers who have invested in equipment but now want to expand the conceptual scope of their business. The small group of fellow company managers makes it easier to find new solution for the burning problems of one's business, while instruction from the lecturers/practitioners gives courage for implementing the new ideas. Tõnu Tamm said that in this winter and spring, the course participants came from a wide range of business fields, from veterinary medicine to car tuning.

The training consisting of six modules focussed on the current situation, growth potential and development strategies of the businesses. It included formulation of key issues of successful development and creation of a business plan. In addition, the participants gained knowledge about communication, marketing, teamwork, business etiquette, image, legislation, etc. As a practical assignment, all participants had to defend the business plan of their enterprise and make a convincing presentation of their funding application in front of a bankers' panel. "I was the only one who did not request any funding," said Tõnu Tamm who simply presented his idea – to make and sell water rams and promote environmental mentality.

"The training gave me confidence to remain myself and not to swing with the wind. The underlying idea was that one should do the things that are close to one's heart. You are talented in this field," said Tamm and added that he never dreamed of becoming a large entrepreneur. "I liked when the instructor said that everyone does not have to become big. Even small entrepreneurs can cope very nicely," he added.

In a situation where economy can change overnight and business directions become obsolete with dizzying speed, Tõnu Tamm has been able to cope thanks to his mastery in craftsmanship and unceasing ability to learn. He has made almost every item in his farm himself. For example, he built a chip machine when he started to make a new chip roof for his house. In a similar manner, he has had to learn smithery and many other skills.

After training, Tõnu Tamm started active sales work to promote and offer his water rams to a wider range of customers. Even though this seemingly antique device is unknown to many people today, Tamm hopes that people will increasingly appreciate their privacy, acquire houses in countryside and will prefer solutions that conserve natural and other resources.



## *Participation of the self-employed person (SEP) Ulvi Mäesalu in a mentorship program*

**Mentee:** SEP Ulvi Mäesalu

**Mentor:** Ain Kaval, Hansa Law Offices

**Duration:** December 2005 – December 2006

**Objective:** Help the sole proprietor to cope faster in the business world and be more successful in implementing her business plan.

Ulvi Mäesalu is a comprehensively educated artist. She has studied applied art in the former State Art Institute (currently Estonian Academy of Arts) and has received further education in drawing, technical drawing, handicraft, flower setting, ikebana, ceramics, leather-work, stained-glass window art at various institutions and has also studied pedagogical mentorship at the Master's level. She has been involved in art-related pedagogical work since 1989. Mäesalu has been working as handicraft and art teacher in several general education schools in Viljandimaa and is currently a teacher of painting, art history, sculpture and composition at Viljandi Art School.



“I have shown my paintings and carpets at exhibitions since the national youth exhibition in 1980. I have been invited to teach art courses in the framework of various projects or family events, and to be a lecturer of style and colour studies. I particularly like to teach colour studies and painting, especially oil, silk and porcelain painting,” she tells about herself.

Ulvi Mäessalu came to Viljandi from Tallinn after marriage. Unfortunately, it is not easy to find suitable professional work in a small town, particularly if you do not have a network of acquaintances and relations. “I could make a long list of the positions that I have applied to, where the required level of education matched mine or was even lower. Sometimes I was considered 'too educated' while at other times they preferred a person who had already worked in the same institution in some other position or someone who had previous experience of work in a similar field,” said Mäesalu and added that entrepreneurship would be for her almost the only option for sustaining herself with the work she has studied.



Ulvi Mäesalu has been thinking about starting an art business in Viljandi already since 1996. “In 2004, I bought a house in Viljandi and intended to use the ground floor for my business. Tõnu Mõistus, Head of the Viljandi Business Counselling Centre, helped me to prepare a business plan. I was registered in the commercial register and applied for setting-up aid to purchase a ceramics kiln and other applied art tools, and to renovate the premises. Unfortunately, Enterprise Estonia did not grant financial support to my idea,” said Mäesalu.

Despite the setback, Ulvi Mäesalu decided to participate in the mentorship program of Enterprise Estonia. This one-year program involves cooperation between experienced entrepreneurs (mentors) and beginners (mentees) for the purpose of sharing their experiences. Many beginners are familiar with their specific field, but lack experience of business management. In this case, it is good to ask advice from someone who has already faced the problems associated with setting up and managing a business. The activities take place in the form of monthly training events, study trips and individual meetings. The mentor of Ulvi Mäesalu is Ain Kabal, a lawyer with Hansa Law Offices.

“The mentorship program has enabled me to attend marketing, export, competitive ability improvement and business support, and strategic management training. This has helped me to establish a clearer definition of the vision, mission and long-term goals of my business and to test them by presenting them to other course participants,” said Mäesalu. She said that the training has given answers to the questions she was interested in and believed that she is now more aware of her skills and opportunities, is able to find target groups and service the customers so that they would be satisfied with the work and the work would generate some income.

“During these training courses and my professional work, I have tried to systematise my knowledge, reflect on it and draw some conclusions. The new knowledge is automatically integrated with earlier learning. Preconceptions do not matter, because experience could gift you a different knowledge. Studying in a group and sharing our experiences helps to maintain mental freshness,” said Ulvi Mäesalu.

Talking about her plans for the near future, the artist revealed that participation in the 'Be Employed with Handicraft' project of the Estonian Academy of Arts and the Estonian Folk Art and Craft Union, designed for integration to the labour market of mothers with infants or women aged over 40 years, enables her to exhibit her silk scarves, tapestry and small paintings at the St. Martin's Day Fair in Tallinn from 16 to 19 November 2006, which is the tenth and largest Estonian exhibition of traditional handicraft organised by the Estonian Folk Art and Craft Union.

## *Innovation audit in Ltd Lapi MT*

**Promoter:** *Ltd Lapi MT*

**Duration:** *May 2005*

**Objective:** *To identify unexploited development opportunities of the company and propose possibilities for future development.*

For already 13 years, Ltd Lapi MT has been doing business in the building complex of the former Võru EPT in Parksepa (situated in Võru County), offering metalworking services, producing various plastic products, and selling electrical and occupational safety equipment.

Initially, in 1993, the company started with the production of agricultural machinery. A new branch of production – plastic products – was launched in 1998. This segment is, in turn, divided in two large units: the divisions of seats (e.g., for motor sledges) and vacuum production. The technology for making safety pipes for veneer line drying chambers was introduced in 2003; the metalworking machinery was supplemented by a CNC plasma and gas cutting unit in 2004, and by a CNC face press in 2005.

In order to gain solid reputation, Ltd Lapi MT has in the last few years invested its profits in the development of production and improving the qualifications of the employees. 12 managers and specialists of the company have passed quality management training and the company has received the international ISO certificate.

In April 2005, Enterprise Estonia was contracted by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications to launch a pilot project for the innovation audit program and map the unexploited development opportunities in 60 Estonian companies. The audit provided an overview of the current situation, identified bottlenecks and unused opportunities, and proposed ideas for future development. Short- and long-term targets were developed in cooperation with the company managements. The audits were performed by recognised and accredited Estonian consultants. The audit in Lapi MT was conducted by Pera Estonia, the Estonian branch of the Europe's leading provider of innovation services. As a highly respected developer of innovative ideas, Pera works in 12 European and Asian countries (incl. Estonia) and acts as a mediator of the most novel thought.

Kalev Priimägi, Chairman of the Management Board, was not exactly sure why Lapi MT was selected for the innovation audit by EE, but he certainly was surprised by the result. "Firstly, we became aware of some shortcomings in management. However, we still turned out to be highly innovative so that Pera decided to include us in their new projects at the European scale. One of them was the idea to develop in research institutes a new type of composite material and use it as a basis of certain products," said Priimägi.

In cooperation with Lapi MT, Pera elaborated the idea of 'intelligent' plastic that could change colour. Such plastic could be used, for example, to make protective helmets for cyclists and racers or rescue capsules for ships. In essence, the idea is that the micro-cracks created during impact would take on another colour, making it possible to assess whether the use of a helmet can be continued or not. The project was also submitted to the European Commission but was not approved at first. Pera is hoping to finally secure funding for the improved project in 2007. In any case, this would be an unprecedented material in the world and it would have many usages both in sports and everyday life.

Kalev Piirimägi, Chairman of the Management Board of AS Lapi MT, said that if this project would take off, it would raise the business of the company to a whole new level, although it is clear that Lapi MT alone would not be able to produce the total volume required. "For us, this would mean an enormous increase in turnover and implementation of completely new technology," said Piirimägi.



At the current level of production, Lapi MT is a medium-sized enterprise in Estonia according to Piirimägi. Slightly more than half of the production is delivered to the subcontracting Finnish and Swedish partners. One of the major partners is a motor sleigh factory in Rovaniemi for which Lapi MT is manufacturing seats.

*Training of unemployed persons as call centre operators*

**Promoter:** BCS Koolitus Ltd

**Budget:** 392 810 EUR, of which ESF support is 306 537 EUR

**Duration:** October 2004 – February 2006

**Objective:** To improve the qualification of unemployed persons and their placement through the operators' (customer service assistants) training system of the launched call centre.

The author of the idea to train call centre operators is IT expert Linnar Viik, who is also a partner of ICT training company BCS Koolitus. In cooperation with the Labour Market Board's Tallinn and Harju Department and Rapla Department, BCS Koolitus developed a project to train unemployed persons as telephone operators for companies with call centres. Student groups were composed with the help of the Labour Market Board; BCS Koolitus was responsible for the organisation and execution of studies.

At first, a preliminary testing of the people interested in the training was carried out: to identify their professional suitability, check their knowledge of English and Russian as well as their computer and communication skills. "There was no system, as many people have learned to use the computer on their own. We gave them an overview of how to use office software and e-mail, as well as principles of databases and colloquial English and Russian," says Signe Teder, project manager at BCS Koolitus.



The most intensive part of the training was call centre operator training in theory and practice. Trainings of telephone operators took place in four-week cycles, with 30 people studying in each course. A total of 390 people were included in the project. Approximately 20 of them were men, the rest of the participants were women. By now, ca 95 % of the people taking part in the course has found jobs. Ekspress Hotline employed in its call centre five persons who participated in the project of BCS Koolitus.

“At first we tested them. There was an interview and also a test to identify the person's logical thinking ability; there is a need for it here as the database is rather complicated. It was followed by a week of theory and practice under the supervision of an experienced operator,” says Marika Rähn, Director of the operator service. According to Rähn, the main prerequisites for operator's position are briskness, swiftness, ability to think logically, etc.; everything that helps to get to know different databases, quickly locate and provide necessary information.

Ekspress Hotline is extremely pleased with the persons who have completed the call centre operators' training and has promoted two of them to a more responsible position.

BCS Koolitus has received the support of the European Social Fund also for follow-up project which, in addition to telephone services, also wishes to teach the unemployed persons customer service and sales skills in order to increase their options in the labour market.

**Persons seeking work who are over 50 years of age are more competitive in the labour market due to in-service training**

**Promoter:** Saaremaa Department of the Labour Market Board

**Budget:** 62 441 EUR, of which ESF support is 42 339 EUR

**Duration:** August 2004 – December 2005

**Objective:** Employment of unemployed persons over the age of 50 has increased in Saare County.

In 2004, when 30 % of the unemployed persons in Saare County was made up by people 50 years of age or older, employees of the regional department of the Labour Market Board had an idea to write a project to alleviate the problem. For people advanced in years but not yet retired it is more complicated to start all over again and acquire a new profession or find a new job.

60 people of those registered as unemployed in the Labour Market Board expressed a wish to participate in the project. 30 men and women were selected to take part in it, most of them country people who had no prior experience in participating in a similar project or training, or partaken in employment services in another way.

At first, the participants had to complete a three-week search for work training at the Saaremaa Learning Centre, most of which was dedicated to shaping ones career. "This provided a basis for self-analysis. People started thinking about other subjects they could study and refresh their knowledge in," says Silja Kruuser, manager of the project. Everyone had to consider which position they would like to have in the future. Kruuser says that self-assessment as well as assessment of the environs was objective.

"People planned on finding work precisely on positions offered in the county. People over 50 years of age are rather compliant, aware of their opportunities and do not set goals that are beyond reach," adds Kruuser. Thus, places in professional training were found for electricians, lorry drivers, cleaning personnel, accountants, salespersons, domestic help, etc. One lady even studied school pedagogy, as her wish was to work with children.

The next step after having acquired the profession was searching for work. 90 % of the people taking part in the project succeeded in finding a job. Those six persons, who took the chance of completing an additional business training and apply for a setting-up aid, are now employers in the fields of handicraft and sewing, apiculture, bed-and-breakfast for tourists, electrical work and sheep breeding.



“The number of enterprises is much larger in urban areas than in the country,” says Silja Kruuser. “Thus, it is important for the people to be able to provide themselves with work.” Kruuser, who has worked in the employment system for 12 years, has only words of praise to say about clients at the age of 50 or older. “They are very dutiful, put their heart into what they are doing and are not likely to leave things unfinished.



## **Labour force assignments within Estonia with the language practicing purpose**

1.3

**Promoter:** *Non-Estonians' Integration Foundation (NEIF)*

**Budget:** *477 100 EUR, of which ESF support is 333 311 EUR*

**Duration:** *May 2005 – March 2008*

**Objective:** *To assure that the official language skills of non-Estonian rescue and police officers are sufficient for their daily work and enable them to fulfil their in-service requirements.*

On the initiation of the Estonian Integration Foundation, labour force assignments to an Estonian-speaking working environment are organised mainly for police officers and rescue officers from Ida-Viru County, whose knowledge and practice of Estonian are almost non-existent.

“In the period of 2000-2005, the assignments of approximately 300 non-Estonian employees to Estonian-speaking regions were funded in the framework of different programmes, so as to improve their skills of language usage in addition to language classes and find Estonian-speaking cooperation partners,” says Project Manager Liilika Raudhein.

The participants included police officers and rescue officers, state and local government officials, medical staff and libraries' employees, teachers of vocational educational institutions and general education schools. The amount of teachers and local government officials was the largest, as being proficient in Estonian is professionally important for them.

Liilika Raudhein says that the idea for labour force assignments came into being when it became clear, as a result of many surveys, that many employees of the public sector in Tallinn and Ida-Viru County have spent years studying Estonian, participated in various courses and tried to learn the language on their own, but regardless of their efforts their proficiency in Estonian has not improved significantly. Project “Labour force assignments within Estonia with the language practicing purpose” offers an opportunity for practical training in an Estonian-speaking working environment for a total of 145 non-Estonian police and rescue officers. “It is very important to enhance the professionalism of the employees participating in said assignments, acquire a more thorough knowledge of Estonian culture and make personal contacts,” believes Raudhein.

At first, the project offers the opportunity to study Estonian in Tallinn and Ida-Viru County for 150 police officers and 105 rescue officers. This is followed by a four-week assignment for 105 rescue officials from Ida-Viru County and a total of 40 police officials from Tallinn and Ida-Viru County. 30 Estonians shall be assigned to work in the Eastern Police Prefecture to liven the communication in Estonian in Ida-Viru County.



Participation in assignments is voluntary. All rescue officers taking part in language courses can participate; coordinators in police prefectures make a selection of police officers. Assignments started in June of this year and last till November 2007.

Language skills are mainly improved in Southern and Western Estonia by doing professional work and getting to know said region's places of interest. Supervisors and support persons are Estonian-speaking colleagues. Already 20 people have completed the assignment, spending a month working in Tartu, Põlva, Võru, Valga, Pärnu, Haapsalu or Narva.

According to Liilika Raudhein, the participants of the assignments say unanimously that their development has been very fast: their language skills improved greatly in a short period of time. Their professional qualification has also improved.



## Risk group rehabilitation in Lääne County

**Promoter:** NGO *Samaaria Eesti Misjon* (The Samaria-mission in Estonia)

**Budget:** 105 852 EUR, of which ESF support is 746 350 EUR

**Duration:** January 2005–December 2007

**Objective:** To support the work capability and work readiness of long-term unemployed people, people with housing problems and people with a criminal record through rehabilitation and re-socialization.

On 21 August 1991, the Day of Restoration of Independence in Estonia, the missionary organisation Samaria opened its doors near the town of Haapsalu. The goal of the organisation was to help people caught in quicksand of life – those mostly lacking both a home and a job. Several persons released from prison had lost their family and friends and had been left alone in the world.

The Samaria-mission in Estonia has obtained four buildings over the years (two in Ridala rural municipality in Lääne County, one in Pärnu and one in Putkaste in Hiiumaa) that offer shelter to 36 persons altogether. Almost everything necessary has been obtained with the society's own funds and with the help of partner organisations in Scandinavia. The centres also facilitate second-hand clothes and furniture shops. The state has provided aid for accommodating people coming from penal institutions.

The Samaria-mission in Estonia works in a former kindergarten in Hiiumaa and rather fills the role of a shelter there. Women and children come there to find protection from domestic violence and the elderly to find shelter from the winter cold.

The centre in Haapsalu is for men only. The Samaria-mission has started building a new complex of buildings there with the support of the European Social Fund. The houses in Ridala rural municipality do not enable the conditions that are necessary to keep a rehabilitation centre going. Subsidies are being used to hire site managers who train the men living in the centre and instruct them at construction works; the money has also been used to buy tools.

The house set to be completed by the end of 2007 will offer accommodation up to six months to 19 men, even though demand would be much greater, estimates Toomas Vallimäe, director of the Samaria-mission. Vallimäe explains that there is even a waiting list during the winter period. Unfortunately, the waiting time is too long for some people. "The main building will include a canteen, kitchen, bedrooms and common-rooms; the outbuilding includes a boiler plant, sauna and workshops," details Toomas Vallimäe, "So that the men could receive accommodation, counselling and work."



The house will intentionally be kept from being very big and luxurious: firstly, to stop the spreading of a so-called prison mentality and secondly, to keep the men from feeling too comfortable in their temporary living residence.

Certain rules must be enforced to keep the life in the rehabilitation centre going smooth. First and foremost, no alcohol can be used. “We can influence them with persuasive words and the help of a minister,” says Vallimäe. An important part belongs also to new acquaintances and psychologists who help to cope with such major changes in life. But the most important thing is the men’s own attitude – they must want to deal with their problems. An important aspect is also the shaping of work habit and the sense of duty, and the new house about to be completed offers excellent opportunities for this. The sense of dignity comes also from the knowledge that you are being needed and that your work has tangible results.

190 people have passed through the Samaria-mission over the years; 62 of those people have found work. Toomas Vallimäe estimates that approximately 1/3 of the rehabilitated persons returns to normal life. He tells a story of Valdur, a man in his 50s who was literally brought to the centre from under a tree. The man was able to turn his back to drinking after a half a year, and has now created his own band, has gotten married and works in a shop in Pärnu.

### *Integrating laid-off persons in Hiiumaa County to the labour market with the help of combined active employment measures*

**Promoter:** Foundation Tuuru

**Budget:** 159 183 EUR, of which ESF support is 127 327 EUR

**Duration:** March 2005 – December 2005

**Objective:** Counselling, training, and employing laid-off persons in Hiiumaa with the help of active labour market measures.

2005 marked the year when Ltd Dagotar, Hiiumaa's largest and also the only fishing industry enterprise, went bankrupt. 249 people lost their jobs and contributed to the region highest unemployment rate with altogether 400 unemployed persons. As the plant employed people across Hiiumaa, the project also includes people from all rural municipalities. Trainings were held in Kärđla and also in rural areas, such as Kõrgessaare – the former location of the plant. The unemployed were given knowledge and information for finding a new job with the help of counselling, work clubs (informal gatherings to exchange information), adjustment trainings, professional trainings (for cooks and construction finishing workers), individual plans of action, work practice, starting aid, and subsidised work positions. The project participants also met with social workers, Labour Market Board officials, and entrepreneurs and employers who talked about employment legislation, social security and everything else thought to be of help to people who had become unemployed.

71 of the fishing plant's 249 former workers joined the labour market project – 47 of them have now found a new job. There were five European Social Fund projects that were carried out in Hiiumaa at the time, all meant to help bring people back to the labour market – so there was positive competition in that respect. A number of people employed in the fishing industry had already joined other projects.

Aasa Saarna, head of the social and health care department in Hiiumaa County Government and manager of the Tuuru employment project, says that the most difficult thing in such situations is that the project organisers may motivate the unemployed and keep them active but what they cannot do is create new jobs. Thus, the fate of an unemployed persons depends greatly of good luck and strong will. She brings an example from a fishnet sewing workshop that enabled a woman to participate in practical training but still could not offer her a steady job.

Despite that, the project participants valued the moral support, practical information and communication possibility highly. Adjustment training and practical training received the most praise.

**ON THE PHOTO:**

*Malle Roosa (35) is a woman from Kärđla who worked for two and a half years in Lehtma, in the culinary department of the fishery plant. After being made redundant, Malle stayed home for a half a year before she came to the Tuuru labour market training and was chosen for a practical training position in Llc Abermex, a fishnet sewing workshop. Malle learned how to sew net ends, which according to her is much easier than making tinned fish gravies. Unfortunately the employer was unable to offer Malle a permanent position in the company after the practical training. She is now working as a sales person in a shop.*



## Development of the Järva County Activation Centre

1.3

**Promoter:** Paide City Government

**Budget:** 158 910 EUR, of which ESF support is 121 730 EUR.

**Duration:** January 2005– May 2006

**Objective:** To decrease unemployment and social exclusion among the long-term unemployed of Järva County through the development of human resources.

The idea for the project, which ran for almost a year and a half, came from the workers at Paide City Government social department who were directly working with subsistence benefit applicants and the long-term unemployed. When in the year 2000 there were 47 long-term unemployed persons in need of financial aid then the number had increased to 95 by 2003. The change in numbers was tied to the dropping of the mandatory working hours fulfilment requirement. This, however, eliminated the last obligation that people had to society and caused many to hide in their homes even more or to look for comfort in alcohol. Some started working off the record while also applying for subsistence benefit. Since the town lacked the means to help such people, it turned to the European Social Fund to rehabilitate such outcasts and bring them back into society. Four local governments in the South Järva County region were included in the project.



The first task was to find mentors who would be ready to handle the unemployed. Mentors were found with the help of local social workers and employment offices. The requirements for mentors were a positive attitude to life, empathy, and helpfulness. A course was held for the selected mentors in which they received information about the current situation in the labour market, of how to be a mentor and how to carry

out counselling, work club methodology (job seeking supported by a group) was introduced to them, and a training about addition problems was held.

The so-called activation centre also received separate freshly renovated premises on the ground floor of the social house located at Aiavilja Street 13 in Paide. Additionally, the unemployed in the South of Järva County received their own grounds in Oisu.

The people, who had in most part been unemployed for years, were involved with the project for 6-12 months. Everyone had their own mentor who helped them to put together an individual plan of action, checked that it was being followed, and offered support with search of work. Also social problems were solved. A great deal of time was dedicated to a work exercise that aimed to create or restore work habits, simpler work skills, discipline and a sense of duty. The work mostly involved cleaning or maintenance work, helping out at social houses and taking care of the elderly or disabled people. In addition to that, the unemployed could participate in psychological group therapy, job search, coping course and a basic computer training course. Non-Estonians were also taught the Estonian language. And food was served during work exercise and training so that the participants would not become hungry.

“The trainings gave people confidence and will to deal with their problems,” says project manager Tiina Larven. “They also had a chance to receive psychological counselling, to participate in the work of self help groups and at joint events. The unemployed do not have that many options to go out, which brings about fear of communication and alienation from other people. We had several people who were initially distant but became more open and less afraid as the communication barriers came down,” she explains.

The project managed to raise the problems of long-term unemployment to the centre of wider discussion. A conference called “Long-term unemployment – a problem in Estonian society” was held on 19 April that was attended by rural municipality mayors, social workers, council members and other officials from Central-Estonia. Also the Järva County Activation Centre continues its work in Paide as a part of the Central-Estonian Social Centre (NGO Süda-Eesti Sotsiaalkeskus). Rehabilitation service for the long-term unemployed is offered both to the town of Paide and to the Järva County department of the Labour Market Board.

The project included altogether 164 workers, 77 of them in Paide and 87 in Türi rural municipality in the South of Järva County. 36 people found work right after the project ended and another 11 people became employed within the next three months.

“I suppose each project participant found something useful there for him- or herself,” hopes Tiina Larven and says that individual attention and moral support are just as important as unemployment benefit.



### *The reduction of unemployment among women and young mothers and the promotion of entrepreneurship in Valga County*

**Promoter:** Valga County Department of the Labour Market Board

**Budget:** 214 075 EUR, of which ESF support is 152 991 EUR

**Duration:** July 2004 – April 2006

**Objective:** Reduction of unemployment among women and young mothers in Valga County through active labour market measures promoting female entrepreneurship.

In spring 2004, the Valga County Department of the Labour Market Board announced an open application procedure for small business training targeted specifically at women who had been registered as unemployed, wanted to educate themselves and had a business idea worthy of implementation. According to Bruno Rääk, Project Manager, the number of applicants was surprisingly high and the committee had a lot of work in selecting those with the best potential.

The program consisted of general and special training. While the introductory courses were meant to improve the self-image and motivation, vocational training, preceded by vocational guidance to test suitability for the chosen profession, enabled to acquire knowledge in service and retail business and tourism. In total, 45 women aged between 18 and 40 years passed the special training. Childcare for young children was provided during the study period of the mothers.

The most popular and also the most extensive was the service business program that included courses on foreign language, service culture, food hygiene and business management. In addition to theory, the trainees also had to pass a practice period. The newly trained tourism entrepreneurs had a chance to practice in Taagepera Castle and Kubija Hotel. Retail entrepreneurs could practice in various stores.

Currently, 12 women have been employed by stitching, retail and industrial companies, supported by the wage subsidy paid by the Labour Market Board (monthly wage subsidy of EEK 3000 payable to the employer on the condition of conclusion of an employment contract with the respective employee after six months). Further 12 women received setting-up aid to start their own business. Bruno Rääk assesses that it was a particularly successful project in the history of the Valga County Department of the Labour Market Board. "No earlier projects have led to the creation of private limited companies or receipt of additional support from Enterprise Estonia," he said.



*ON THE PHOTOS: are depicted some of the women who participated in the project and have become successful entrepreneurs after the training.*

Aive Purason (35) manages a tourism farm suitably named Järvesilma (Eye of the Lake) in Jetti village, Hummuli rural municipality. Indeed, there are a number of lakes around the farm: Valgjärv, Laanemetsa Lake, Virtsjärv, etc. “This region has the most lakes in Estonia,” said Kaido, Aive's husband. “We have 25 lakes on ten square kilometres,” he added. The current Järvesilma Farm was previously the location of the Koorküla forest district house, and Kaido Purason worked there as a forester. “We have always had many visitors – family and friends. “Something seems to draw them here. It is probably the nature and kind hosts,” contemplates Aive, laughing.



After the training of the Labour Market Board, the woman has received enterprise support and has also received funds from Enterprise Estonia. With this support, they purchased kitchen equipment, consumer electronic products and partially also a boiler house. The Järvesilma Farm has been operating for about a year and most visitors come here through the recommendation of their acquaintances. So far, there has been no need for advertising. The visitors have the opportunity to rent bicycles, play Indiaca, volleyball, giant checkers (standing on the game board and making moves by lifting game pieces cut out from a tree-trunk), go fishing, ride a boat or go skiing in the winter. There is a playground for children and a new meeting square will be completed soon for the people of the Jetti village who are already frequent visitors at the Purasons' farm.



Helen Rimm (28) has been running a funeral home Sinilill for about a year. Her first experiences with this aspect of life came from her mother's flower shop where funeral wreaths had to be made from time to time. Having passed the business training after spending six years at home, Helen decided to establish a funeral home offering full range of services. The home has a customer service room, a mourning hall for 120 people and a mortuary with a six-place freezer. The home also has a representative van customised specifically for the transport of funeral frames.

Communication with the mourners is the responsibility of Kaja Kõomägi who has worked in this business already for 17 years. "Communication with people suits me. The skill to listen is very important in such cases. Everybody has a different opinion on how to organise the funeral of a close person," said Kaja. While Kaja Kõomägi finds that she has lost some of her cheerfulness as a result of the sad nature of her work, the young Helen Rimm believes that managing a funeral service company is a job like any other and should not be taken too close to the heart.

Aita Koosapoeg (33) manages the private limited company Tervise Tuba in the centre of Valga. Having moved from Põlva to Valga, she was urged by her sister to participate in the business training of the Labour Market Board. Now the two sisters run a health salon that includes a massage room (Aita's sister Anneli works there as the masseur) and a salt chamber that cost nearly EEK 140 000 to furnish. Support was received both from the Labour Market Board and Enterprise Estonia. A master from St Petersburg was invited to build the salt chamber and it took one week to complete.

The salt chamber is quite a novelty in Valga. At the same time, people have known the healing effects of salt for centuries. Half an hour in the small room lined with table salt helps to relieve cough and cold, throat infections, bronchitis, bronchial asthma and other ailments. In addition, a session in the salt chamber is good for the skin and nervous system. During the autumn and winter season, Tervise Tuba is visited by more than 20 people daily.





Riia Cafeteria, the only pizza and pancake restaurant in Valga, was opened in mid-July on Riia Street. The manager Kaie Säinas passed the service and business training of the Labour Market Board and founded together with her partner the private limited company Piiri Pagar, indicating only the opening of a cafeteria in the initial business plan. Later, a bakery was added to the business to make bread rolls, cakes, tarts and knot-buns. The cafeteria that has room for 30 customers employs five people in addition to Kaie – service staff, cooks and a pastry-cook.



The only rat farm in Estonia is located in Riisali, Valga County, where Aire Elias (38) who has received education in zootechnics farms feed animals for the reptiles, crocodiles and eagles of the Tallinn Zoo. This unconventional business idea was conceived by Aire's partner. Today the farm that has been operating for more than a year houses more than a thousand smaller and larger white, black, tawny and greyish animals.



## Reintroduction of the mothers of infants to the labour market in Võru County

**Promoter:** Võru County Department of the Labour Market Board

**Budget:** 101 142 EUR, of which ESF support is 80 448 EUR

**Duration:** January 2005– October 2006

**Objective:** Integrate unemployed mothers with small children to the labour market by means of coping training, vocational studies, and employment subsidy payable to the employers. A total of 25 unemployed persons should be integrated to the labour market and a total of 35 unemployed persons should be prepared for the integration.



The idea to write a project to improve the welfare of the mothers raising small children in Võrumaa was proposed to the Head of the Department of the Labour Market Board by Pille Penk. "For example, if the children are born with small intervals, a woman could be away from the labour market for 4 or 5 years. This is a long time," said the project manager.

Therefore, the project targeted the mothers of children aged up to 8 and registered in the Labour Market Board; an information leaflet was printed and possibilities of the project were presented. The final target group included 35 people, mostly women who had given birth to several children with small intervals. As all projects usually entail some movement of the people, the number of young mothers in this initiative has grown to 47. The project started out with a 2-week training on job search. It was followed by specific courses for customer service agents/sale consultants, shop assistants, cleaners, cooks and seamstresses. Everyone could choose a preferred specialty. The customer service turned out to be the most popular. The course also included a month of school practice.

As the project dealt with young mothers, the organisers had to take account of the small children who could not be left home without a nanny and could not be taken along to the training, either. Therefore, the offered services also included care for a family member (infant) during the training period. "This service was provided to four mothers," said Pille Penk and explained: "In essence, we paid for the childcare during the time when the mothers participated in training."

After completion of the specialty courses, 27 mothers found a job, including 17 mothers under the employment subsidy scheme. One woman who had completed the sewing training submitted a business plan to the Labour Market Board, received setting-up aid, and is now a self-employed person offering sewing services.

"The results of the project have brought us great joy," said Pille Penk. "The people sent to training courses completed them well." The increased confidence has reduced the sense of exclusion. And an optimistic person is able to establish herself in the labour market.

**Promoter:** Jõgeva County Department of the Labour Market Board

**Budget:** 56 253 EUR, of which ESF support is 44 722 EUR

**Duration:** December 2004 – February 2006

**Objective:** Increase the competitive ability of unemployed persons in the labour market. Facilitate and improve the access and adaptation of the unemployed persons to the labour market. Provide the unemployed persons in a shortest time possible with the knowledge and skills to compete successfully in the labour market and find employment. Facilitate entry and staying in the labour market for the persons excluded from the labour market.

The key idea of the project was to bring the training as close to the people as possible, i.e., to rural municipality centres. The parties involved were the rural municipalities of Jõgeva, Tabivere, Puurmani, Torma and Palamuse, and the towns of Jõgeva, Mustvee and Põltsamaa.

According to Katrin Soopalu, Training Consultant, 225 long-term unemployed people participated in the project and 195 of them attended the training. Groups of 20 were established in each location, with two groups being assembled in the towns due to large number of participants. The participants included both younger and older people, with the average age being 39 years.

The adaptation training gave the participants an overview of the requirements and opportunities of the labour market, and the labour legislation. They were also offered psychological preparation for competing in the labour market. Computer training was provided to facilitate job search on the Internet and drafting of documents required for job applications. In addition, the participants received knowledge of modern Estonian language conventions for official letters.

The Labour Market Board invited Luua Forestry College, Põltsamaa Household and Farming School and Central-Estonian Development Centre as providers of training in the project. According to Katrin Soopalu, Project Manager, 70 or 80 per cent of the project participants have found a job. The men work mostly as builders or drivers, while the women are employed as cleaners and shop assistants.





## Integration of long-term unemployed persons into the labour market

**Promoter:** NGO Activation Centre of Jõgeva County Local Authorities

**Budget:** 526 697 EUR, of which ESF support is 356 082 EUR

**Duration:** November 2004 – December 2006

**Objective:** To increase the efficiency and quality of the rehabilitation service and improve the access to the labour market for the long-term unemployed.

In the autumn 2004, six local governments of the rural municipalities of Jõgeva County – Pala, Jõgeva, Kasepää, Saare, Torma and Tabivere – launched a project for providing assistance to the people excluded from the labour market and returning them to employment. The centre of rehabilitation activities was established in Voore with its now modernised activation centre that also performs the functions of village community centre, offers conference and workshop premises, a cafeteria and library.

According to Triin Pärism, Project Manager, the rural municipalities were motivated to write this project by the large number of unemployed persons, which amounted to 20 % of the residents of the region at the time. The local governments adopted a “Procedure for Rehabilitation of the Long-Term Unemployed” that put the long-term unemployed under an obligation to participate in 20-hour work practice once a month. The local governments followed the principle that a person should not receive subsistence benefit simply for doing nothing but should be somehow useful for his/her local rural municipality. Workrooms were furnished in each of the rural municipalities – wood workshops for men and handicraft workshops for women. They can also do some outdoor work (e.g., cleaning and maintenance work) under instruction, but in other times, they practice handicraft (weaving on a loom, patchwork, sewing, etc.) or woodworking (chipping, furniture restoration, turning and grinding, etc.).



“The long-term unemployed tend to have very few skills,” said Triin Pärsim. “Sometimes they do not have the ability to complete a task from start to finish.” Pärsim defines the long-term unemployed as persons who have not worked for over 10 years. Many of these people lost their jobs after the bankruptcies of agricultural companies. A large part of them are subject to several social risks, such as alcohol addiction or housing problems.

According to Pärsim, around 400 people have been involved in this project. They started out with 230 but the number has gradually increased due to mobility of the people (some have found work and have been replaced by others). For example, Sille Kirjutaja, Support



Person of Torma Rural Municipality, said that she initially looked after 36 people and now only 6 of them remain associated with the project. The majority of project participants have found work in agricultural associations and private farms.

The unemployed persons of Jõgevamaa were selected for the rehabilitation project with the assistance of the local governments from among the recipients of the subsistence benefit. The priority target groups were young people aged between 15 and 24 (many of them without basic education), people aged between 50 and 64 nearing their retirement, and mothers of infants. The Project Manager Triin Pärsim estimated that the number of long-term unemployed and discouraged people in Jõgeva County could be significantly higher, but there has not been time to reach them all. The Activation Centre has already drafted a follow-up project to find these people and help them to return to active life.

### *Pilot project of home care workers*

**Promoter:** Labour Market Board

**Budget:** 559 951 EUR, of which ESF support is 427 548 EUR

**Duration:** November 2004 – December 2006

**Objective:** *To develop Estonia's welfare and health care systems by training the unemployed to become care workers with the help of the Danish experience; activate discouraged persons and the inactive unemployed for their return to the labour market (in cooperation with local governments); increase employment rate among the part of the Russian-speaking population that has lower level of education and insufficient knowledge of the official language; design, develop and test flexible training programmes for the unemployed; build an image of care workers as a profession among the unemployed; develop regional partnership in order to promote employment – the project involves approximately 70-75 local governments via four partner county governments.*

In the autumn of 2004, the Labour Market Board launched the pilot project of home care workers to relieve several general labour market and welfare problems. "The initial idea was born from cooperation between three people," said Tiina Ivask, Project Coordinator for Tartu and Valga counties, "Patrick Rang, the former Head of the Labour Market Services Department of the Labour Market Board, Terje Vammen, Danish expert and Kirke Maar, Project Manager."

The project was designed on the basis of the Danish experience, where people without professional training and limited Danish skills were taught the knowledge and skills required for a care worker. Another important aspect was promotion of cooperation between four counties – Tartu, Valga, Ida-Viru and Harju. The main target group of the project included long-term unemployed people without specific education (sometimes even without secondary education) whose ability to return to the labour market needed improvement. The acquired knowledge and skills should enable them to work as care workers in social welfare institutions or in the homes of the people who need care. The training was based on the curriculum developed with the assistance of Tartu School of Health Care and took place from September 2005 to June 2006 in five cities (Tallinn, Tartu, Valga, Kohtla-Järve and Narva). Information about the project was distributed during the summer 2005 through newspaper adverts and information days.

"More than 30 interested people assembled in Tartu," said Tiina Ivask. "The main precondition for participation was previous registration of unemployment with the Labour Market Board. The required personal qualities naturally included empathy and caring. We conducted interviews in order to clarify this," she added. 18 people started the studies and 15 completed the nine-month course. Male care workers are very highly valued, but unfortunately, their interest in this field is not particularly large.

The training consisted of a block of general subjects – language (Estonian for Russians and Russian for Estonians) and computer studies, and of speciality subjects – psychology (incl. special and communication psychology), ergonomics, care work, action therapy, adult education, gerontology, household economy, and social welfare of disabled persons. In addition, the participants gained knowledge of social policy, occupational health and safety, professional ethics and legislation. A very important part of the course was practical training that lasted for three months in total.

“The first practical training took place in a social welfare institution; there were five practice locations in Tartu. The second practical training was carried out at homes, under the supervision of an experienced care worker,” recounted Tiina Ivask and explained that home care and work in a social welfare institution are different that people in the latter need 24-hour care and attention and would be unable to cope at home. “Traditionally, families used to live together, from children to grandparents. Now there are no alternatives if the parents develop coping difficulties and the children live far away,” she said.

By the end of September, 13 of the 15 trainees had been employed and 11 of them directly in care work: five in Tartu Mental Health Care Centre, two in Tartu University Hospital, one in Tartu Care Home, one in Peipsiveere Care Therapy Centre, one in Laeva Rural Municipality Government, and one as independent home care worker in Tartu.

**ON THE PHOTO:**

*Kadri Piller (25) says that she found this project through the Labour Market Board. The career counselling tests indicated that being a nurse would suit her. Even though she passed practical training at the Tarty Day Care Centre Kalda, she applied for a permanent job in the Mental Health Care Centre where she is now responsible for cleaning and assisting customers.*



Angelika Armolik, Head of the Eldercare Department of Tartu Mental Health Care Centre, has hired three care workers from among the training participants. “I am satisfied with them,” said Armolik and added that the work is relatively difficult, particularly with patients suffering from dementia. A care worker must be able to remain calm, discrete and professional in any situation.

### **Development programme of senior officials of Rapla County Government and Rapla County local governments**

**Promoter:** Rapla County Government

**Budget:** 11 289 EUR, of which ESF support is 8 467 EUR

**Duration:** March 2006 – June 2006

**Objective:** To enhance the management capability and self-awareness of top and middle managers of Rapla County Government and Rapla County local governments, improve the structure of the organisation and implement common principles of strategic management for the purposeful and more effective use of state budget funds, for the functioning of the authority and for ensuring the general increase in performance to contribute to the increase of the employees' contentment, increase the quality of public service and ensure a better notification of the public of the activities of the County Government and local governments.

From March to June, 2006 Rapla County Government organised a four-step training cycle for Rapla County local governments' top and middle managers. Participants included Count Government's heads of departments, county governor, county secretary, rural municipality mayors and chairmen of councils. The training was carried out by lecturers from Invicta training company.

The courses gave an overview of the theoretical basis for knowledge necessary in management activities, such as organisation of meetings, communication with the press, strategic management, effective time use, etc.



“Conducting meetings is more or less an elementary skill, but we received many good tips and suggestions on the subject. A successful meeting must be well-prepared. Often they just turn into chatting sessions. However, if topics and presenters, as well as the assumed decisions or alternate decisions have been fixed and the chairman conducts the meeting in a

concrete and expert manner, it prevents the procedure from becoming vague,” says county secretary Ene Matetski. She also considers communication skills, communication with the media in particular, very important.

“I have been a national official for over 11 years and from the press I often get the impression that 'national official' is a pejorative word,” says Matetski. “In reality, the journalists do not know how to or do not want to delve into our work. According to a dominating opinion the national officials have nothing to do. Recently, county governments collectively prepared an excerpt of laws and other legislation assigning different duties to the County Governor; this resulted in a 50-page list of duties.



One of the principles of our activity is openness, i.e. people have to have a clear picture of what is going on in one state authority or local government or another. Therefore, the topic of communication is extremely important, so we would know how to communicate with the press, how to draw up press releases, how to provide information in a better way so that that the County Government could describe its activities and people would know the topics in relation to which they can ask for County Governments' help."

In the strategic management module, Invicta lecturers directed the county officials' attention to effective time use. Very often the working day of the official does not end at 5 pm. There are many duties and the responsibility is huge. That leads to overworking. However, the problem may lie in incorrect planning or inability to delegate duties. This results in fatigue, stress and burnout. The county secretary provides an example, "There is a simple trick of reserving some time for yourself in the calendar. Usually, we only write down duties, meetings, etc., but if free time is scheduled in the calendar, you will use it as such and do not fill it with other duties later."

In addition to everything else, in the course of the training the officials had to formulate vision and mission for the County Government. The objectives of the state should be the first ones to take into account. Decisions on where and in which direction to move in a specific district, are made on the basis of local conditions. County Government must perform the duties assigned to it by the law (this is provided by ca 400 different legal instruments), represent the state and its objectives on local level, and attend to the development and progress of the county in all areas of life.

Above all, Rapla County Government applied for the aid of the European Social Fund for the organisation of said training because the funds available in the authority's budget for training are quite scanty. Training expenses, however, have been increasing by the year and therefore it is not always possible to provide sufficient training to all officials.

The courses took place in Mahtra Folk School in Juuru Rural Municipality which, due to historical events, has evolved into an original place of spiritual awakening.



## **Management capability development programme of Local Government Association of Pärnu County**

1.4

**Promoter:** Local Government Association of Pärnu County

**Budget:** 19 897 EUR, of which ESF support is 14 923 EUR

**Duration:** March 2006 – October 2006

**Objective:** Provision of integrated knowledge in the area of local government management to improve the management quality of Pärnu County local governments and Pärnumaa Local Government Association. Aggregate and disseminate among Pärnu County local governments the best practice for local government management.

Through joint training of the officials of Pärnumaa Local Government Association and representatives of the City of Pärnu contribute to the strengthening of county-level cooperation and more effective shaping of common positions in order to create a better development and operating environment.

In the spring of 2006, Local Government Association of Pärnu County launched a management capability programme, in the framework of which a series of trainings dealing with team work and strategic management was carried out for 92 top and middle managers of Pärnu County local governments. In addition to Pärnumaa Local Government Association and Pärnu City Government there were participants from Are Rural Municipality, Halinga Rural Municipality, Kaisma Rural Municipality, Kihnu Rural Municipality, Koonga Rural Municipality, Lavassaare Rural Municipality, Paikuse Rural Municipality, Saarde Rural Municipality, Sauga Rural Municipality, Surju Rural Municipality, Tahkuranna Rural Municipality, Tootsi Rural Municipality, Tori Rural Municipality, Tõstamaa Rural Municipality and Varbla Rural Municipality, as well as from the town of Vändra.

The programme, which consists of six modules, was launched under the supervision of NGO Public Administration Development Centre (MTÜ Avaliku Halduse Arengukeskus) with a course of achieving and managing team work. This was followed by courses dealing with the preparation of strategies, development of partnership and cooperation, preparation and drawing up of investment projects, and management competence. Trainings covering the financial management of local government and cooperation between the European Union and local governments were carried out in the autumn.

According to Kristel Ernits, Project Manager and secretary of Pärnumaa Local Government Association, the participants could select modules that corresponded to their professional orientation. "Some trainings had either a manager or a specialist participating from one local government but there were also those who took part in every course," says Ernits.

As the number of people interested in the training was rather large and said training was the first of its kind, participants had to be divided into groups of 30 in order to carry out group work and make it easier to get feedback from the training provider. Vello Tiidermann, Executive Director of Pärnumaa Local Government Association, says that he has been studying management theories for a long time and this training only confirmed the known principles of how decisions are born. At the same time Tiidermann stresses that Avaliku Halduse Arengukeskus used a fresh approach: serious topics were interlaced with playfulness, although not for the objective of playing but everything dealt with contained the basic components of management.

For example, the group was given the task of reaching their target while wading in snow, blindfolded. The only person to have their eyes open was the leader of the group, who had to lead the others to their target by explaining what was happening.

Of group work Vello Tiidermann pointed out situation solving tasks. He gives the example of differences of opinion regarding the pier planned to Rüütli Street. The official responsible for said topic in real life had to provide explanations for the goings-on in the course of role play. Said official introduced and gave reasons for his own point of view as well as those of different groups of interest. In the end it became evident that opposition to the construction of the pier was due to ignorance. The public had not been sufficiently informed of the topic. "Whenever there is a problem, it should be discussed," summarises Tiidermann the moral of the story.

Another aspect was to bring together in a non-work situation the people with different levels of responsibility and working in different areas. "We composed mixed groups on purpose, so that everybody would be equal," says Kristel Ernits. Naturally, different characters immediately stood out in every unit, but this was the purpose of the task: to make the group solve a problem on every level with the participation of decision-makers.

According to Ernits, the knowledge provided during the courses has already been of use. In many things, people are used to acting on the basis of instinct and experience. Training providers helped them to get a structural perception of, say, the causes of conflict or nature of management models, so that it would be possible to analyse the acquired knowledge and practical experience on the basis of mutual relationships.

## *The development of leadership capacity for structural unit's managers in Lääne County Government*

1.4

**Promoter:** Lääne County Government

**Budget:** 7 221 EUR, of which ESF support is 5 416 EUR

**Duration:** March 2006 – May 2006

**Objective:** *To broaden the knowledge of managers of the county government's structural units regarding the theoretical foundations of teamwork, teamwork skills and feel, and the implementation of strategic management principles for a more efficient usage of state budget funds.*

After several years, Lääne County Government organised a more extensive leadership capacity development training for 15 executives and middle managers. The 5 day course was primarily divided between teamwork and strategic management. A great deal of time was devoted to the methodology and stages of writing development plan documents.

"The knowledge of shaping and planning a strategy cannot be within a few individuals in an organisation," explains Helena Järviste, head of the development and planning department of Lääne County Government. "All people, including specialists, should be trained on the same level."

Sulev Vare, Lääne County Governor, feels that such trainings should take place on a regular basis. "It gave our employees a sense of belonging to the same team. What is very positive about this is that they could break out of their daily routines and think about problem issues; for example, on how to improve cooperation between departments, and how to look further into the future. The primary focus of the training was for us to be able to compile the county's strategic documents later," says Vare.

The workers of Lääne County Government were trained by Margus Alviste from NGO Masters' Path (MTÜ Meistrite Tee). Management knowledge was acquired through role plays and through theoretical lectures. Alviste had compiled a special workbook which included tasks to be solved during group work. "The training provider had experiences with both public sector organisations and commercial enterprises. He could ease the tensions very well and we opened up quickly as a result. We were not dictated as to what we should tackle in our work or what conclusions we should reach in our discussion," praised Järviste.

A brainstorm session to formulate Lääne County Government's mission and vision was also held within the strategy course. The County Governor explains that a shortened and simplified version of the institution's work mission is activity that enables the people of Lääne County a life that is as good as life in the capital. Lääne County also has a calm, relaxed and naturally beautiful living environment speaking in its favour. This might affect the average lifespan of a person in a more positive direction.

Helena Järvis says that the feedback from her colleagues regarding the management strategy training was very positive. “Half of them lacked any experience with strategic planning. At the same time, we had people with very good knowledge, of which we had no idea before. We discovered who and in which circumstances is able to generate ideas,” she explains.

The management course left another permanent mark in Lääne County – through a small experiment arranged by Margus Alviste. He asked all the course participants how much money they would be willing to give for a joint activity without specifying what he was talking about exactly. Everyone had to explain why they chose to give that specific sum of money. The final sum was slightly over 190 euros. After that, strategy was included in the activity – people, divided into three groups, had to find an outlet to the money within prescribed rights and limitations.

“The strategic head, which I was a part of, determined that the aim was to do something with a charitable aspect and something to tie us more together,” says Järviste. We finally decided on planting forest. The same group of County Government officials eventually planted 4,000 pines in Piirsalu forest district in Palivere on 10th of May.



## Management training for Järva County Local Government officials

**Promoter:** Association of Local Authorities of Järva County

**Budget:** 2 399 EUR, of which ESF support is 1 802 EUR

**Duration:** January 2006 – March 2006

**Objective:** To provide Järva County local government officials with the theoretical knowledge and practical skills for compiling and renewing a local governments' integral development plan, for creating activity plans, for the project based management of the development plan and to tie it with the budget.

The Association of Local Authorities of Järva County together with Järva County Development Centre decided to launch a management training project last year for the leaders of 12 local governments. "The aim of the training was to help local governments with creating new development plans because the old ones were outdated or about to become outdated," explains Krista Nurm, executive director of the association.

The participants circle consisted of rural municipality and town leaders and of development workers – two people from each local government. "We gave them practical tips on how to create development plans more efficiently and how to include the necessary people in the work groups. The requirements just change over time," says Katrin Puusepp, head of the Järva County Development Centre.



A development plan requires the defining of a mission, a vision, historical background, social infrastructure, and the population. Even though the frame of reference for the document stays the same, the planned activities and budget do change over time. Puusepp says that a development plan should be used daily in the work of a local government, and thus ought to be updated more frequently than once in a couple of years. Krista Nurm emphasises that it is imperative for the local people to be involved in the creation of a development plan. The practice of previous years was to hire professional consultants who were unfortunately quite uninformed about local conditions, which brought about the creation of the so-called “shelf documents” that are hard to implement in real life.

The training provider for Järva County local government officials was Riho Noorkõiv, a lecturer from the Tartu based consultation firm Geomeedia. Puusepp and Nurm believe him to be one of the most valued development plan writers in Estonia. Noorkõiv educated the participants in terms of theoretical knowledge and also gave practical home assignments. One assignment was, for example, to analyse a section of the development plan of the rural municipality of the participants. In the next meeting, the participants received feedback from the lecturer on how to address the issues in a more efficient way.

“The development workers of various rural municipalities had a chance to meet one another,” explains Katrin Puusepp how the training programme created new opportunities for the participants. “They have started to exchange their experiences in their daily work much more. Cooperation always proves to be more productive than working separately,” she adds. Järva County Development Centre has since then held regular round table meetings in order to follow up on the progress that the rural municipalities have made with their development plans. Katrin Puusepp also stresses the importance of constant information exchange.

Krista Nurm admits that the local government previously lacked a cross-county training experience. Now, however, they are anxious to make the most of the newfound unity and are planning a new training for next year on the topic of creating feasibility and cost-benefit analyses. The participants would also be local government advisers, assistant rural municipality mayors, and development specialists.

## **Strategic management training for Lääne-Viru County Government senior officials**

1.4

**Promoter:** Lääne-Viru County Government

**Budget:** 2 270 EUR, of which ESF support is 1 702 EUR

**Duration:** June 2006

**Objective:** *Increasing awareness regarding strategic management among Lääne-Viru County Government senior officials, and for them to acquire methods necessary to create strategic development documents and put them into practice.*

The beginning of the summer, when most other offices make vacation plans, was when Lääne-Viru County Government held a two-day training on strategic management for its senior officials. It was the first of its kind, if not to consider the organisation training that took place a year earlier. 17 people – among them the County Governor, county secretary, heads of departments, advisers, and specialists – completed the programme that included lectures, discussions and practical tasks.

County Governor Urmas Tamm finds that trainings are important because they help to increase the competitiveness of public sector institutions. “We started thinking about what the county government’s aims, mission and vision are,” says Tamm and adds that if the workers can come together and think together then this also motivates them to move in one direction and towards the goals that they have set for themselves.

The lecturers of training company TJO Konsultatsioonid, which has been engaged in the development of management systems since 1997, covered all the major topics: the process of strategic planning, control questions of planning, running an organisation with a perspective on time, setting goals, critical success factors etc.

In addition to formulating the mission and vision of Lääne-Viru County Government, the participants also had to do a SWOT analysis in groups, which determined the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation, and the possibilities and dangers that need to be taken into account. Project manager Katre Kuresson shares what the analysis showed: more attention should be given to setting goals, to discussion within the organisation, and to implementing the results in daily work.

The solving of practical tasks was a challenge to those participants who although knowing the direct obligations of their field of responsibility very well, could not always see the organisation as a whole. The work of a county government includes many different spheres and is regulated by a tremendous amount of legislation, but the county government’s general task is to ensure the balanced development of the county as a whole.



In addition to its emotional and intellectual contribution, the management training also formed the foundation for compiling the county's development plan. The conclusions drawn from joint discussions will become a specific document and the necessary agreements will be created.

Katre Kuresson says that her colleagues valued the two days of training highly. The comments of the participants praised the competence of the training provider in terms of knowing public sector institutions. "I have met training providers who cannot make a difference between county governments and local governments, or just place them in the same category as commercial enterprises. Public and private sector do have a lot in common but they also have many differences," says County Governor Urmas Tamm.

The feedback questionnaires also revealed that people liked the fact that the discussions also moved beyond the theoretical level and touched upon the work of Lääne-Viru County Government. Project manager Katre Kuresson assures that regular follow-up seminars shall be organised from now on so that what was started at the training would also be carried on.



## **Enhancement of the management capacity of the top and mid-level managers of the Põlva County Government**

**Promoter:** Põlva County Government

**Budget:** 10 807 EUR, of which ESF support is 6 461 EUR

**Duration:** September 2005 – May 2006

**Objective:** *Increasing the self-awareness of the top and medium managers of the County Government, implementation of uniform strategic and quality management principles for purposeful and more efficient use of state budget funds, ensuring general increase in the efficiency and performance of the institution, contribution to the greater satisfaction of customer service and employees, and improving the quality of public services.*

“There have been no integrated management trainings at the Põlva County Government for the past seven years,” said Kristina Krantsman, County Secretary, explaining why the project of management training was launched in the autumn 2005. Management of a modern organisation requires knowledge of the current nature of management and latest management theories. As an organisation, Põlva County Government has been in the process of continuous changes; both managers and employees have changed in the last years. However, persons responsible for the smooth running of the organisation should be able to prepare clear and systematic development plans and long-term strategies, and this is significantly easier after passing a relevant training course.

Another aspect is the continuous development of the society that places even higher demands on public servants and expects improvements in the (service) quality and planning. In general terms, one could also state that the trust of the citizens in the public servants largely depends on how they are treated during the conduct of affairs and how much intellectual support they get for solving their problems. “This is why it is extremely important to improve the quality of management in and outside the organisation and combine current theoretical knowledge with practice,” said Krantsman.

Twelve higher officials – the County Governor, County Secretary, heads of departments, and advisers – participated in the management capacity enhancement training that lasted for nine months. It included workshops, practical training and group work. One of the training tasks was to formulate the vision, mission and values of the Põlva County Government. An action plan for initiating improvements in the County Government has been prepared and the county development plan will be completed soon.

Urmas Klaas, the County Governor, said the following to sum up the project: “Such training courses create a very good environment to strengthen the team and establish a nice and animated cooperation atmosphere. It is clear that the value of what was said and taught cannot be underestimated.



Indeed, if the discussions create such tone and open up the people, the training must have been spot on. We focussed mainly on strengthening the values that unite the team and highlighted some weaknesses. And this was done in the format of training. As a public body, we tried to conceptualise our role and identify our customers – this may sound rather general but it is important to know who the customer really is.”

The officials who participated in the training judged that the course supervised by the instructors from AS Invicta was active, informative and well timed. The parallels drawn by the instructors with management in private sector helped to achieve a better understanding of customer service in the public sector.

*Integrated management training for the top and mid-level managers of local governments of Võru County and Võru County government to enhance the management and administrative capacity of the public sector organisations*

**Promoter:** Local Government Association of Võru County

**Budget:** 16 824 EUR, of which ESF support is 12 618 EUR

**Duration:** November 2005 – June 2006

**Objective:** *Conducting integrated management training in six modules with 35 top and mid-level officials from the local governments of Võru County and Võru County Government to improve the shared values in the organisations – structure, systems, strategy, style, cooperation skills, enhancing the administrative capacity of the organisation and improving the knowledge of management.*

In the end of the last year, Local Government Association of Võru County launched a six-module training project for the top and mid-level managers of the county local governments and the county government. A total of 35 people participated in the project and training in each module was conducted in two groups – top managers and mid-level managers. This selection was based on the assumption that people working in similar positions would have a number of common issues and tasks to be solved during practice exercises. It would also have been complicated if both key persons of the local governments – assistant mayor/rural municipality mayor and city secretary/rural municipality secretary – would have been absent from work at the same time.

“The training highlighted weak or overlooked aspects in the management style, which the manager is often unable to see or finds difficult to solve,” said Mirjam Salvet, Managing Director of the Office of the Local Government Association of Võru County, and added that the fast pace of life makes it easy to overlook another person – a colleague, partner, subordinate. In addition, people are often unable or afraid to discuss problems. This is a particular concern in the employment relations between a mid-level manager and his or her superior. A similar training project was initiated by the Local Government Association of Võru County ten years ago, but then it was mainly training for politicians.

The integrated management training focussed on the following topics: strategic management, assertive management style, successful management in an organisation, motivating a team, the role of communication in an organisation, and development of cooperation in a team. There was also a video training during which skills of finding solutions for a situation created on a freely chosen topic were observed. “I enacted with the Misso Rural Municipality Mayor a situation in which he was a visa coordination official and I was an ordinary citizen who wanted a Russian visa to visit my grandparents' grave in St Petersburg,” recounted Salvet. “In this role, I ended up being hysterical and affirming with all my heart that the visa was expensive but this trip was extremely important for me. However, the 'visa coordinator' solved the situation calmly with explanations and offered other possibilities for settling the issue.”

Other training modules focussed on management style, team motivation and the role of communication in an organisation, incl. establishment of internal communication procedures. Mirjam Salvet recalls: “The issue of motivation created a huge discussion, because the tax policy does not favour motivation of employees with money. True, money is not the only source of motivation, but an opportunity to visit a swimming pool or gym once a week, for example, is a sign of caring for the health of the employees.”

Equally important, according to Salvet, is for the manager to notice good work and good employees. “A good word is very important motivator. Often, things are assumed as elementary, like, 'he is a diligent person; he will probably do everything that is needed'. And he will. But a manager should not forget to notice and recognise this, even if only with a good word.”

The lecturers/instructors of the consultation company Invicta received a lot of praise from the Võrumaa Local Government Association. The local government managers felt that such workshop-style training, combining theory and practice, was exactly right for them. Even basic facts that have been once learned should be repeated from time to time and integrated again in the work life.

Immediately after the abovementioned training project, the Local Government Associations of Võru County launched another integrated management capacity training for the employees of the local governments that lasts until the end of December and involves, in particular, the specialists responsible for preparing the development plan in the rural municipality, city and county governments. They receive training for better planning of local development, coordination of development plan creation, and local government image development.



The instructors participating in the project include Garri Raagmaa, Director of the Pärnu College of the University of Tartu, Ülle Puustusmaa, Consultant of the Development Agency of Võru County, and others. Organisation of this project was also supported by the European Social Fund with more than 5900 euros.



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