

Hokkanen Hanna-Kaisa & Höylä Sari (ed.)

# INternational and OUTstanding



UNIVERSITY OF  
APPLIED SCIENCES



# **INternational and OUTstanding**

A Short Book about International Affairs at Humak University  
of Applied Sciences in Degree Programme in Civic Activities and  
Youth Work

Hokkanen Hanna-Kaisa & Höylä Sari (ed.)

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# INTRODUCTION

Humak is a Finnish University of Applied Sciences working as a network all over Finland. With 1500 students Humak is rather small but it is one of the biggest educators in Finland in its fields of sign language and cultural management, and the biggest educator in civic activities and youth work field.

At Humak, most of the studies are offered in Finnish but there are possibilities to study in English as well. At the moment one degree programme is offered in English: European Master's Degree Program in Sign Language Interpreting. In addition, Erasmus exchange students and Humak degree students studying Civic Activities and Youth work can take part in two international programmes offered on Nurmijärvi campus: Adventure Sports and Young People and Social Inclusion. (Humak 2015.)

This collection of short articles is about the international activities of Humak, concentrating especially on the Degree Program in Civic Activities and Youth Work. Within the degree programme there is an international contact person in each of four regional centres of Humak: southern Finland (Helsinki), Turku, Jyväskylä and Kuopio. The writers of the articles are senior lecturers who are involved in the international affairs.

The first article *International Networking at Humak – The diverse role of international contact persons* represents the work and respon-

sibilities of the international contact persons working in the Degree Programme in Civic Activities and Youth Work. The article is written by senior lecturer Hanna-Kaisa Hokkanen who is the contact person in the international affairs in Jyväskylä. She has been working at Humak since 2010. She is a language teacher both in the Degree Programme in Civic Activities and Youth Work as well as in Cultural Management.

The second article *Community Educators in the Global South – Looking for ways to promote global responsibility* represents the international Joint Evaluation Project conducted in Tanzania in 2015. The article is written by Hanna Laitinen who is a senior lecturer at Helsinki RDI-centre. Her main responsibilities focus currently on teaching and supervising students who specialize in NGO work. She has been employed by Humak since 2002 and has also been acting part time as a consultant for NGOs, mostly within the field of development co-operation.

In the third article *A Buzz of Multiculturalism and Internationalism – Exchange students on Nurmijärvi campus* senior lecturer Kim Lindblad describes the life and studying of the exchange students. Lindblad started working at Humak in Tornio in 2008 but works nowadays on Nurmijärvi campus. Kim teaches English and Swedish. He is also responsible for the international affairs on Nurmijärvi campus. At the moment he manages a project related to activity-based teaching methods used at secondary schools.

In the article *Go Abroad! – Exchange brings new perspective to the work of university personnel* Satu Riikonen, senior lecturer in Turku, encourages teaching staff to go abroad by describing her own exchange experiences in Austria. Riikonen has been working at Humak since 2013. She teaches in the Degree Programme in Civic Activities and Youth Work. She is also the contact person in the international affairs for the students in civic activities and youth work in Turku.

The article *MPOYWE - Humak in an International Project* is written by senior lecturer Sari Höylä. The article describes Humak as a partner of an international project called Mapping Professional Open Youth Work Europe. Sari Höylä is the departmental and academic coordinator for international affairs in NGO and Youth Work Unit. She works at Helsinki RDI-centre.

In the article *Future in our Hands? – How to Organize an International Week* senior lecturer Anu Turunen tells about the international week organized in Jyväskylä 2015. Turunen worked on Jyväskylä campus from 2013 to 2015. Back then she taught English, Swedish and intercultural communication. At the moment she is working in a primary school where she teaches English and Swedish languages.

In the last article *Nordic Perspectives– Student trips to Nordic Countries* senior lecturer Minna Hult writes about the student trips that Humak has been organizing to Nordic countries since 2011. Minna Hult teaches on Kuopio campus. She started working at Humak in 2009. Hult's principal teaching subjects are English and Swedish. She is responsible for the international exchange of students on Kuopio campus as

well as for the international affairs in the Degree Programme in Sign Language Interpreting.

Enjoy reading about the multifaceted international work at Humak University of Applied Sciences!

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Hanna-Kaisa Hokkanen

## **INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING AT HUMAK**

–The Diverse Role of International Contact Persons

This article examines the diverse role of international contact persons at Humak University of Applied Sciences. The article focuses particularly on the role and tasks of international contact persons in the Degree Programme in Civic Activities and Youth Work. Within the degree programme there is an international contact person in each of four regional centres: southern Finland (Helsinki), Turku, Jyväskylä and Kuopio. Tasks vary to some extent on different campuses and regional centres, but all contact persons share the same main tasks and duties.

### **The role of contact persons**

According to Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences Arene (Arene 2015), international work is an essential part of the activities at Universities of Applied Sciences. The general objective of the international activity is to increase and support the international knowing among the lecturers, students and other staff. The international activity demands the cooperation of education, research, working life and the society. The common practices of internationality are the staff changes, teaching in foreign languages, internationalization at home and international education, research and development projects.

At Humak, the international contact persons play an essential role in the international activities. The role culminates in three objectives; in

developing, planning and implementing international activities, in supporting the students' occupational growth through the international activities, and in guiding the students with the international studies done abroad. The planning and implementing of international activities are done in cooperation with other members of the staff, or with the occupational and educational partners. Supporting the students' occupational growth through international activities means that contact persons give their support and guidance when students are interested in working or studying abroad. The contact persons are not only giving their support and guidance before students leave the country, but they have also an important role when students have returned from the exchange period.

### **The prior tasks**

The prior common task of an international contact person is to inform students and other staff members about the international activities and exchange opportunities. The contact persons promote the international mobility through information sessions, held once or twice a year on each campus, and giving students personal guidance in terms of their exchange period or other issues related to international affairs.

The students need personal guidance both before and after their exchange period. Before going abroad, the students need guidance on deciding

the target country and the place where to study or complete the practical training. International contact persons help with fulfilling the applications and other documents. It is contact persons' responsibility to confirm that the study units the student is planning to complete abroad answer the studies at Humak. After the exchange, the contact persons help with crediting the studies done abroad and they give their support in the orientation back to studies in the home country. It is important to secure a quick and fluent transition back to studies at home university of applied sciences, so that the exchange period won't delay the studies and graduating on time.

According to the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (Opetusministeriö 2009, 14-15), the interest to complete studies abroad has decreased. Even though Finland has been an active operator in the European cooperation of Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences, the number of visits of lecturers and researchers abroad has also been falling during the past two decades.

At Humak, the figures show a better trend. The students of Humak have excellent exchange opportunities. Humak has 35 partner universities and universities of applied sciences in the Europe. The students can also choose to go to the USA, Canada or Russia, or they can join the Humak's international projects, such as Glore-project, which was conducted in Nepal and Tanzania in 2015. (Humak 2015.) The students can choose to study at a foreign university of applied sciences, or they can go for a work placement abroad. The international semester is normally taken during the second year of studies and the length of the exchange period varies from three months to one year. One fourth of the students at Humak completes at least one exchange peri-

od during their studies (Humak 2015). Besides Erasmus exchange there are other short time exchange opportunities as well, for instance the International University Week organized by the SocNet98. Every student, who is willing to go abroad, needs to complete the course Professionalism in International Operational Environment (Ammatillisuus kansainvälisessä toimintaympäristössä). The aim of the course is to prepare the student for the upcoming exchange period in a foreign country and culture. Contact persons are responsible for developing and updating the course as well as evaluating the students' assignments.

Humak receives exchange students as well. International contact persons are commonly responsible for them. They plan the programs and the syllabus and are the contact persons during the exchange. The exact tasks and responsibilities of a contact person are agreed with the other staff members who also take actively part in planning and implementing the studies designed for the exchange students. However, not every campus receives exchange students. The exchange students of each degree program are placed on one campus at a time; the students in civic activities and youth work are studying on Nurmijärvi campus but the students have the opportunity to visit other campuses too.

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More about the Glore in the article Community Educators in the Global South - Looking for Ways to Promote Global Responsibility

More about the Nurmijärvi campus and its study programmes in the article A Buzz of Multiculturalism and Internationalism - Exchange Students on Nurmijärvi Campus

## A team member

In the Degree Programme in Civic Activities and Youth Work the international contact persons are part of a team, which is responsible for the international affairs and activities within the degree programme. The team consists of a departmental coordinator in international affairs and international contact persons. In addition, the international coordinator takes part in the meetings and answers for the issues that apply to the whole organisation. Contact persons' role in the team is to participate face-to-face and video meetings, and to take part in implementing the ideas and activities planned in the meetings. The team also has its own discussion forum where the members of the team can freely share their ideas, opinions and information.

To notice is that only the international coordinator is working full-time in international affairs. International contact persons instead are lecturers that work in general with other duties and have the international affairs as one part of their work.

## Connections outside the organisation

International contact persons do not only operate within the organisation, the cooperation and networks to outside are as important. Contact persons are the contact to the partner universities of applied sciences and to work placements abroad. Contact persons, as well as other staff members, are able to visit the partners through lecturer exchange. After the exchange, the contact persons share their received knowledge and cooperation plans to the team and other staff members. Every year many of Humak lecturers

visit the partner universities of applied sciences or other associates.

The lecturers from the partner universities of applied sciences are also welcome to visit Humak. International contact persons are commonly responsible for hosting the visitors. The students are responsible for the accommodation and expenses, but contact persons are responsible for the other arrangements of the visit. Contact persons give guidance and information already before the visit, and they are also the helping hand during the visit securing that the stay for the visitor would be as comfortable and easily organized as possible. There are about 50 lecturers and other partners visiting Humak campuses every year (Humak 2015). Contact persons are also responsible for updating the compilation of statistics on visitors.

International contact persons working in the Degree Programme in Civic Activities and Youth work are involved in several international projects. One example of these is the SocNet98, which is an Erasmus network for higher educational institutions in social work. Each year some of the Humak's pedagogical staff members take part in SocNet's international weeks. Humak will host the week in 2017. Humak is also a partner in an international project called Mapping Professional Open Youth Work organized by the network POYWE. The network operates with the issues of open youth work in Europe.

International contact persons have been organizing international seminars and field trips. The latest seminar Future in our hands was held in

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More about the lecturer exchange in the article Go Abroad! - Exchange Brings New Perspective to the Work of University Personnel

Jyväskylä on 24-28 March, 2015 as a part of the International week. The seminar was organized in cooperation with the Erasmus and degree students of Humak. The Erasmus partners of Humak were invited to the seminar to take part in discussions and workshops around the themes of work welfare, working life operations, and the latest issues in NGO and youth work as well as in cultural management. Once a year the students have a possibility to take part in a field trip to some of the Nordic countries. Field trips have been a part of the students' language studies and there have been about 20 students on each field trip. The latest field trip was organized to Denmark, Copenhagen.

## Conclusions

The work of Humak's international contact persons is diverse and variable. The work is mostly done on campus and with the students, but the international contact persons take actively part in international seminars, projects and exchange programs as well.

In the next articles you will find out more about the international affairs of Humak within the Degree Programme in Civic Activities and Youth Work.

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More about the project in the article MPOYWE - Humak in an International Project

More about the seminar in the article Future in our Hands? - How to Organize an International Week

More about the field trips in the article Nordic Perspectives – Student Trips to Nordic Countries





Hanna Laitinen

## COMMUNITY EDUCATORS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

– Looking for Ways to Promote Global Responsibility

How to solve the problems of youth unemployment and minimize the risks of social exclusion? How to encourage the participation of young people and adults in civil society organizations and other initiatives? How to increase the social wellbeing of people in their communities?

These are some of the questions relevant to community educators in the Finnish context. Moreover, they are equally important almost everywhere in the world, including countries outside Europe. By looking for answers to questions of this kind globally, Humak can contribute to the overall objective of promoting global responsibility as stated in the Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions in Finland (Ministry of Education 2009).

Being a relatively small University of Applied Sciences, Humak has concentrated its institutional forms of international cooperation mostly on European countries. The developing world has for the most part fallen outside the scope of activities. The few exceptions have included a 6-year long development project in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the years 2005-2010 and practical periods in some African, Asian and Latin American countries arranged and financed by the students themselves.

It was then most encouraging to hear that the project proposal made by Humak with three other Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) was accepted by the Ministry of Education that

granted funding for the UASs to look for ways to promote global responsibility, in a project called Glore (Globally Responsible and Sustainable Higher Education). This gave all in all ten members of Humak staff an opportunity to take time and travel to either Nepal or Tanzania and look for ways to broaden the scope of international cooperation within Humak.

The first finding of these trips was the understanding that Humak is an interesting partner to universities in Nepal and Tanzania. Humak personnel were welcomed by members of various faculties, and ideas for future cooperation were developed both in terms of starting exchange activities, developing common degree programs, supporting curriculum development and looking for ways for the students to do their practical training periods together.

In this article, I will concentrate on describing a specific form of cooperation that we were able not only to identify and plan, but also to implement as a pilot project during the two years of Glore. It is called Joint Evaluation Project and it took place in Tanzania in 2015.

### Working in the context of development cooperation

Eliminating poverty and inequality in tandem with promoting sustainable development in its many dimensions are objectives that most so

called developing countries and their citizens strive towards every day. Official development assistance (ODA) is a tool used by donor countries to support the financially poorer countries in those efforts. In the case of Finland, ODA is mainly channelled bilaterally on a country-to-country basis, through EU and multinational organizations such as the UN family, and through civil society associations. (Ministry for Foreign affairs 2012.) For the field of Community Education, development cooperation implemented by NGOs forms the closest and most natural operational environment. Until 2014, development efforts between the institutions of higher education were also supported through two programs with relatively small funds.

Practically, what characterizes development cooperation is its aim to support development in the Global South. Even though the elimination of poverty and inequality can in the big picture be seen to benefit e.g. the security situation of Finnish people, the strategy of development cooperation is to use the funds available primarily to support the developing country partners in their efforts. This does not reduce the pressure to show what kinds of results are achieved with the funding. On the contrary, the Finnish development cooperation is guided by a results-based approach where evidence for funding well used is asked for from all partners.

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When writing this, the future of these programs, North-South-South and HEI ICI, is unclear. In 2014, an evaluation was made of the two programs. The recommendation was to merge them into one. However, severe cuts made in the development funding by the Finnish government 2015 seem to have influenced the opportunities to provide this form of funding.

The development interventions made by NGOs have traditionally been implemented in the form of 3-year projects that are more and more often expected to show effects and impacts. One way of examining the quality of the efforts is to have a systematic evaluation done by external experts, facilitation oriented consultants – or students, as in this case.

On the principal and value level, the promotion of human rights is the basis for all development efforts supported by the Finnish ODA (official development assistance). Development cooperation is based on the value ideal that all people are born free and have an equal right to participate in development efforts. This kind of thinking is well appreciated by community educators whose primary capacities include the promotion of community participation with broad facilitation skills. In terms of development, the idea of community education can be further elaborated into meaning that all people have the right to learn about the opportunities and conditions for development. Both planning, implementing and evaluating development efforts should then be carried out in such a manner that all parties involved learn by participating.

## **Finnish and Tanzanian students as evaluators**

According to common definitions, the purpose of an evaluation is to assess how well the planned results have been achieved, whether the resources have been used in an appropriate way and what can be learned about the reasons behind success (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2013). In addition to that, an evaluation can be seen as a project that has objectives of its own. In this case, the evaluation project was planned to have

two main objectives: to produce a good quality evaluation report and to enable Finnish and Tanzanian students to learn about development cooperation, community media, evaluation skills and cross-cultural cooperation.

The idea of the evaluation project came up already before the Glore funding was secured, in an unofficial discussion in May 2014 between representatives of the Finnish Vikes (Foundation for Media, Development and Communication), the Tanzanian Mtukwao (Community Media Association in Mtwara, Tanzania) and Humak. Instead of hiring a professional consultant for one or two weeks to carry out the evaluation, Vikes agreed to channel the funds reserved for the evaluation into a joint evaluation made by a multidisciplinary and multicultural student team, supervised by their teachers. In this way, Vikes hoped to get more field level information from the project area, but also to support the learning objectives of Tanzanian and Finnish students.

The actual planning started by initial contacts during autumn 2014, and first agreements were made during the first Glore-funded trip to Tanzania in December 2014. During the spring and early summer 2015, students were selected in three participating institutions: The School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Stella Maris Mtwara University College and Humak. Orientation days were arranged in the various universities, project documents were shared with all participants and a Skype meeting was held between the USDM and Humak students in June 2015.

It is however fair to say that the evaluation project was properly kicked off only when all students arrived in the southern parts of Tanzania

and started to plan for the following four weeks of field work.

The Glore project could only cover costs for Humak personnel so all expenses for the student evaluation team had to be covered either from the Vikes evaluation budget or by the participants themselves. In practice, this meant that seven female and two male students from two continents, three different institutions of higher education and three disciplines, with two native languages and different religious affiliations lived together in a house with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, one kitchen and frequent cuts in both electricity and water. This, itself, was a great learning experience for the students.

The student team was supported by the local NGO Mtukwao in arranging visits to villages with community media activities and with village journalists, village leaders and other stakeholders. The main responsibility for organizing the work was however carried by the students themselves. As there was no leader in the team but everything had to be decided collectively, getting organized was a challenge. Despite difficulty, the students were able to collect a great amount of material in the form of interviews, flip charts, maps, chapati diagrams and other concrete results of participatory methods.

The supervising lecturers arrived in Mtwara during the last week of the students' field work with the intention of supporting their analysis and report writing phases. Upon arrival, the students organized a workshop to present their work and received comments from the Mtukwao leaders and other main stakeholders about their initial conclusions. After that, sessions between the students and lecturers were held to deepen the analysis and to make sure that the conclusions

made by the students were based on solid evidence.

After four weeks in Mtwara, the Finnish students returned to Europe and the Tanzanian students to their home towns. Two more versions of the evaluation report were written before the final report with pictures was published.

## Lessons learned and conclusions

The essence of a pilot project is to try out something new to see if it can be developed into a model, a product or a bigger project that can be repeated. The joint evaluation project described in this article certainly proved that the idea is good and should be further developed.

Surely, a number of things can be done better next time: The terms of reference for the evaluation has to be clear, specific and available, an agreement with all partners and a clear budget needs to be made early so that all partners know what they are committed to. Students from all participating universities will have to be oriented to the project early enough and sufficient competence of evaluation needs to be ensured in the team. Support and guidance from the lecturers have to be available both in the beginning and at the end of the evaluation.

The month that the students spent together working, learning, cooking and cleaning together taught them a great number of things about community development, project work, and facilitation and evaluation skills – but also about team work, languages, cultures, religions and the various ways people interpret their reality and surroundings.

As an institution of higher education, it is Humak's stated duty to do our share in looking for answers to global problems. This article has proven that it does not need to happen as a side-track from our main task, educating young people in Finland. On the contrary, understanding the different premises and opportunities in meeting these challenges in contexts, different from our own, can be very fostering for students. By participating in planning, implementing and evaluating development initiatives on their own and with civil society associations, the students of Community Education can build up useful knowledge and skills for the future.

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When writing this, the final version is not yet published. The intention is to publish it at Vikes' website at [www.vikes.fi](http://www.vikes.fi)



Kim Lindblad

## **A BUZZ OF MULTICULTURALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM**

- Exchange Students on Nurmijärvi Campus

Multiculturalism and internationalism are each year boosted on Nurmijärvi campus by exchange students attending the international programmes in which they study together with Humak's Finnish community educator students. Nurmijärvi campus is located 45 kilometres north of Helsinki by the lake Sääksjärvi, surrounded by beautiful nature, an environment offering great opportunities not only for studies but for all kinds of outdoor pursuits. From campus, Helsinki can easily be reached by bus.

During the study year Nurmijärvi campus also hosts many foreign guest lecturers who come to enrich the courses taught. Also the staff on Humak Nurmijärvi campus visit our foreign university and other partners on a regular basis to share their own and to gain new expertise in the field of youth work and civic activities. This all brings an added value to both teaching and other operations at Humak.

Each year there are about 30 students from different countries, mainly European, attending the two exchange programmes, Adventure Sports (30 ETCS) and Young People and Social Inclusion (34 ETCS), offered by the degree programme in Youth Work and Civic Activities on Nurmijärvi campus. The main target group for the programmes are students of youth and community work, social work and education.

### **Adventure sports**

The Adventure Sports programme is offered in the autumn term, starting in the beginning of September and finishing in mid-December. This means that the students, besides gaining new professional expertise, also get to experience the colourful autumn and the first snowfalls. The content of the course is focused on adventure sports as a tool in youth work. During the studies the students will gain experience of sports and adventure education and an understanding of theories related to the topic. In practice, this means that the studies are practically-oriented and backed-up with theory lectures. Adventure education and experimental learning are excellent tools for working on, for instance, team building, inclusion, self-esteem and -awareness with young people. The Adventure Sports students get to practice their skills with an authentic target group of young people, for whom they have to arrange different types of events during their three months' studies at Humak.

Besides games and other physical activities, trekking, kayaking and climbing are events that are the focus of the programme. The students learn the basic skills of these three events and gain elementary skills for instructing groups in the events. They learn and practice the methodology for how adventure sports can be used as a tool in youth work, all practiced in an authentic environment. At the later part of the programme the students will not only plan but also carry

out their own treks and other adventure-based activities, through which they will develop their instruction, decision making and group management skills.

During the programme in Adventure Sports, the group gets to go kayaking on the lake Sääksjärvi, climbing on climbing walls and rocks as well as trekking in Nuuksio, Oulanka and Pallas-Ylläs national parks, of which Pallas-Ylläs is located in Finnish Lapland. Through the practical studies based on theories the group builds a strong sense of belonging together and many of the students get the feeling of overcoming themselves as well as experience personal growth in many respects.

The programme has a long history at Humak, being the leader among Finnish universities offering studies on adventure education. It is and has always been a very popular programme for both Humak's own and incoming exchange students.

## **Young people and social inclusion**

During the spring term the exchange programme Young People and Social Inclusion is offered on Nurmijärvi campus. The focus of the programme is on the role of civil society, active citizenship, equality and empowerment. The exchange students study partly together with Finnish students offering them a unique possibility to get a better insight into Finnish society.

The studies are based on theories about youth empowerment and intervention as well as European structures and legislation related to young people, inclusion and equality. The lectures are student-centred and based on active participation by the students. Comparative discussions

and group tasks are carried out through which the students will have to reflect on how the field of youth and community work is set up and works in their own country in relation to other countries.

Besides lectures the students do a wide range of individual and group tasks during their own time. Many of the tasks are closely linked to working life in Finland. This has been seen as a very positive and rewarding experience among the students strengthening their own professionalism by getting a clearer picture of working life in Finland in comparison to their own countries. During the last period of the programme the students are given a participatory project to be carried out at a workplace within the field of youth and community work. Through the project the students get to work together with professionals in working life and get a hands-on experience of working in Finland.

Besides the valuable professional experience gained through the studies, the students get to experience the Finnish winter wonderland as well as winter turning to spring with a long day and the midnight sun. All in all, it is a unique experience which can only be offered in the Nordics.

## **Life on campus**

On Nurmijärvi campus we are able to offer student accommodation both for Finnish and exchange students. This offers great possibilities for the mixed group of students to learn about each other's cultures, how their own field works in different countries. It also provides a lucrative environment for practicing languages, all in an authentic informal setting.

Besides receiving and hosting foreign students there are a big group of students choosing to go on an exchange from Nurmijärvi campus each year. This means that many of Humak's own students have experiences of studying or doing internships abroad. Besides our student tutors, this group of students play an important role in making the incoming students feel welcome. The tutors arrange free time activities and meetings for the students on a regular basis, including everything from sports activities to student parties.

The campus itself caters for all different kinds of sports. There is a big gymnasium, a gym and a swimming pool available for the students free of charge. Besides the indoor facilities, the nature is right at your doorstep, offering tremendous possibilities for jogging, trekking, cross-country skiing and any other type of outdoor pursuits.

## **Future plans**

Humak will continue developing its programmes offered to international students in accordance with future trends and needs of the field of youth work and civic activities. The teaching staff, working closely together with working life through actively taking part in research, development and innovation operations, will ensure that the content of the courses offered meets the future needs of working life. By this means, we will be able to ensure that Humak will offer appealing programmes for international students interested in the field of youth and community work also in the future.

We are looking forward to welcoming and hosting both students and members of staff of our partners on Nurmijärvi campus, also in the future.





Satu Riikonen

## **GO ABROAD!**

### - Exchange Brings New Perspective to the Work of University Personnel

Are you bored with your work? Do you think you might benefit from new perspectives? Try lecturer exchange. Visiting another university is a good way to get new insight into your work and new ideas for projects.

An exchange via Erasmus and other programmes has been made easy for the university staff. European Union encourages EU citizens to move within the EU and spurs to the exchange of good practices between the member states. Experiences from abroad give you knowledge and confidence in your work.

There are different kinds of exchanges. If you are too busy for a long exchange, you can go for a shorter one, even as short as one working week. There are different types of exchange for the university personnel, two examples are the lecturer exchange and administrative personnel exchange. Lecturing at the exchange university is an important part of the lecturer exchange, whereas in the administrative personnel exchange, the focus is often on learning and benchmarking a specific technique or skill. Some universities and networks arrange international weeks, where lecturers from different universities and countries across the Europe get together to exchange experiences and ideas.

In this article I focus specifically on the issue of how to get prepared for an exchange, in order to get the most out of it. I made a 5-day lecturer exchange through the Erasmus programme in

Austria, in the degree programme in social work at St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences. The experiences I share in the article are based on this exchange and my other international experiences, but I believe that most of the issues I touch upon can be applied to other types of exchanges, too.

### **How to get prepared for an exchange?**

An Erasmus exchange for university personnel is often quite short, so there is no need for massive preparations. However, making some preparations will make your visit more enjoyable and beneficial. Basically, there are three issues where making some preparations before the exchange is beneficial: 1) learning about your target country and university; 2) taking care of travel practicalities; and 3) mastering the contents – what are you about to give and get out of the exchange.

Even though the cultural differences between the countries within the EU have diminished, some cultural differences still remain, and if you are going to a country that is new to you, making some investigation about the local habits and cultural traits will certainly repay the effort and make your visit more enjoyable. For example, if your target university is in Spain you might still encounter the university staff having a siesta after lunch and working then until six pm, so be prepared to adjust your own schedule accordingly.

In addition to cultural knowledge, you should get some information about your target university. This sounds self-evident, but in the middle of everyday rush obvious things like this often get forgotten. When you are at the university and meet university staff, it is much easier to make good questions and get useful information if you already know about the history and curriculum of the university. Especially, when neither the guest nor the host speaks English as his/her mother tongue, it might sometimes be difficult to follow the conversation, and it is especially on those occasions when having some basic knowledge about the university comes in handy.

Basic questions for preparation:

- What are the “must know” things about the local culture? Are there some topical issues (in politics, sports, culture etc.) that you should be aware of?
- What is the history of the university and what is its significance in the area?
- What is the number of students and staff?
- What faculties there are and what degrees can be attained?
- What kind of research is done in your host faculty? What ongoing projects do they have?

Each university in the Erasmus programme has a contact person, whose specific task is to help with paperwork. The contact person also helps in crafting the overall programme for the exchange period, and in finding suitable themes for lectures. In my case, I made a list about the topics I could teach and which I thought would

suit the curriculum of the faculty. My contact person then decided which topics I would teach and when.

Before the exchange:

- What topics could you teach in a foreign language?
- Make a list of topics and send it to your exchange university’s contact person
- What would you like to learn during your exchange? Think about the topics together with your colleagues and communicate your wishes to your contact person. Your exchange visit will be over sooner than you thought and being well-prepared helps you make most out of it.

Teaching at a foreign university in a foreign language is challenging but also rewarding. As a Finnish teacher, your way of teaching will be an example of teaching in Finland, at your university. Being an example puts you under pressure, but if you do it well, you also encourage local students and staff to visit your university. For them it is much easier to come to a university that is somehow familiar and where they know at least one person. Being an advertisement for your university is nothing to be scared of, but being well-prepared makes it easier.

Practicalities, like lodging and travel plans, are arranged by following each university’s own procedures. It is important to keep all documents for reporting after the exchange. The reporting bureaucracy is not too heavy, and it is also understandable that economic support from the EU requires some reporting. The main idea is that the exchange needs to be planned and

implemented in cooperation with the target university, and properly reported afterwards.

## **Exchange sounds like a good idea but in my hectic life there's no time for that**

The main reason for the university personnel not to go for an exchange is that their work at home university is hectic and the workload is too heavy. Many are afraid of that an exchange period would just increase the workload at home, without bringing any real benefits. My personal experience was not like that. In my case, the exchange brought new perspectives and helped me to structure my own work. It also made me see that other universities struggle with the very same problems as we do. Universities can really benefit from other universities' experiences. For example, coaching pedagogy is taking its first steps at some universities, and at those universities they are curious to hear from our experiences in using it. On the other hand, exchange helped me see some of my home university's work processes from a new perspective; some things can be made differently and even in a more straightforward-fashion than we are used to! After the exchange period I had many new ideas, of which some have been tried out and taken into use at my own university. So there are real benefits, and universities can learn from each other's good practices.

## **After the exchange – how to make all my new ideas come true?**

I did my exchange in social work degree programme at St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences in May 2015. St. Pölten is a small en-

chanting town approximately 30 minutes from Vienna. The staff welcomed me warmly and the international unit offered me a typical Austrian lunch. The university had prepared me a busy and fruitful programme for the five-day visit. I learned a lot about their way of teaching and making projects.

After your exchange period you are probably very excited to tell everything to your colleagues, you are sure you will enhance some of your or your organization's practices and you will certainly keep in contact with the people you met at your target university. Here are some tips how you can make these plans true.

First, make sure that your colleagues know that you are leaving. Send a short note to them and tell where and when you are going. Some of your colleagues may have some information or other useful tips for you, or they may know some contact persons that you should know. When you are back let them know what you have learned. Prepare a short report especially for your colleagues. You have to write one report for the Erasmus too, but for colleagues you could pick the best practices you have noticed during the exchange. If it is possible, you could organize a short meeting at your work and discuss which practices you could start using at your work. And of course, bring some souvenirs as chocolate.

Secondly, write down to yourself which are the practices you have learned during the exchange. Then choose some of them and make a plan how you will start to use those at your work. At St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences they had a small publishing event at the library for the students that had finished their thesis. The event was really nice and I got an idea to have a similar kind of an event to our students as well.

To keep in contact with your new international colleagues is sometimes challenging because of lack of time but it is worth it. Sending a message a few times a year is a good way to do it. And there will certainly be projects or other exchange opportunities where you will meet and work together again. Your international network gets larger and tighter as you get more international contacts.



## Sari Höylä

### **MPOYWE**

#### - Humak in an International Project

If we turn our attention to youth work tradition in different European countries, we do notice that there is a strong support for youth work on political and financial level in Finland. Finnish state finances youth work by giving money for municipalities, and municipalities invest tax money in youth work on a large scale.

In Finland we have a long tradition in formal youth work education as well, even the history of youth work started on the voluntary basis. Today there is a possibility to achieve the education in the youth work field at different levels: many upper secondary institutions offer Youth and Leisure Time Instructor education, Universities of Applied Sciences (Humak, Mikkeli, Novia and Centria) offer bachelor level education (Bachelor of Humanities / Community Educator) and Humak and Mikkeli provide master level education (Master of Humanities/ Community Educator) and University of Tampere offers master level degree programme in Youth Work and Youth Research.

### **Humak - the biggest educator in the youth work field in Finland**

Despite the size of institutions - Humak is the smallest university (of applied sciences) in Finland but absolutely the biggest provider in youth work field education. At Humak there are ca 900 students, in four regional centres around Finland, studying youth and community work with a close link to working life.

Humak shares the enthusiasm to develop youth work practice and theory with many other actors around the world, and especially in Europe. At European level the youth work done by associations or non-governmental organisations has been recognized, but in many cases the traditional youth work providers in the Nordic countries – the municipalities – have been left out. In Finland the most of the municipalities are running youth centres that are open for all young people. Open youth work done by professionals is not a piece of cake! This way the work is demanding for youth workers, variable skills and adjectives to describe youth workers in their expertise are certainly needed. Due to that fact, Humak is very keen on strengthening the quality of youth workers' education, and through that the main task of Humak also attests the position of professional open youth work and develops this work to meet contemporary needs.

### **Making professional open youth work more visible**

In central Europe the youth workers working in open youth work noticed that they need to make their work more visible and noticeable. The position in the European youth policy discussion was also recognized to be worthy of achieving. The network of Professional Open Youth Work in Europe (POYWE) was created by different actors from different countries in Vienna 2012. (POYWE 2015.)

POYWE has an aim to make open youth work performed by professional youth workers more well-known around Europe. Due to that POYWE has collected nine European partners together for a two-year project to develop and strengthen the position of professional open youth work.

## **Erasmus+ - a revised programme for education and learning**

Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020) is an EU Programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport. The core idea of the programme is to deepen European dimension and efficiently use the potential of human talent and social capital of programme countries. It concentrates on the idea of lifelong learning by supporting the formal, non-formal and informal learning by using the means of cooperation and mobility. Erasmus+ programme increases the opportunities for cooperation and mobility with Partner Countries (countries outside the EU and EEA but with certain terms), in particular within the fields of higher education and youth. (Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2015: 9-10.)

Earlier the European educational programmes were divided; for youth there was a programme called Youth in Action (before Youth for Europe) and Leonardo Da Vinci for vocational training and Erasmus for higher education. Due to a really good reputation of the Erasmus programme, this combined programme for the years 2014-2020 got the name from the previous programme for higher education. This programme is partly decentralized – each member country has its own national agency for taking care of the programme nationwide. Some parts or some calls are centralized.

The biggest part of Erasmus+ programme supports mobility – the mobility of pupils, students, young people or professionals in different fields. But learning from others, benchmarking, exchanging the knowledge of good practices and creating the strategic partnerships are also strongly encouraged.

On the Erasmus+ programme there is Key Action 2 that aims to promote the cooperation for innovations and the exchange of good practices.

Key Action 2 supports:

- Strategic Partnerships in the field of education, training and youth
- Knowledge Alliances
- Sector Skills Alliances
- Capacity Building in the field of higher education
- Capacity Building in the field of youth

The results of this support are expected to bring positive and long lasting effects on the participating organisations and institutions. The innovative approaches are searched under the Key Action within these different activities. (Erasmus + Programme Guide 2015: 104.)

## **The Strategic Partnership Programme**

The aims of strategic partnership projects are to promote cooperation and to support the development and implementation of innovative practices and to share knowledge and practices within the partners involved. These projects should



meet the programme priorities, e.g. in the field of youth these priorities are to promote high-quality in youth work or to promote empowerment, participation and the active citizenship of young people. The supported projects could content a broad range of different activities. With these activities should be achieved new methods for daily activities, increased capacity and professionalism to work on European Union level or even on a wider international level. (Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2015: 104-108.)

This Key Action under the Erasmus+ programme Strategic Partnership is completely a new chance for the youth work field. Strategic partnership makes it possible to cooperate between formal education institutions and youth work organisations. The previous experiences in different international projects in the academic field or in the youth work field are not necessary transferable. Due to that fact it is very important for project partners to have enough planning time before submitting the application, and to make sure that all spheres of responsibility are clear and the share of budget is agreed.

## Developing Professional Open Youth Work

POYWE took the initiative and invited different partners from different countries to join together in the aim of developing professional open youth work within Strategic Partnership. This application was submitted to National Agency of Austria and it was accepted in 2014. The partners in this Strategic Partnership are:

- POYWE – applicant organisation/coordinator
- bOJA – Bundesweites Netzwerk Offene

Jugendarbeit/Austria

- Ungdom og Fritid/Norway
- n.e.t.z. – Netzwerk der Jugendtreffs und -zentren Südtirol/Italy
- Udruga „ZAMISLI“/Croatia
- Stichting JONG Rotterdam/The Netherlands
- AGENZIJA ZGHAZAGH/Malta
- HUMAK University of Applied Sciences/Finland
- Institute for policy research and analysis/Lithuania
- Newman University/UK

(Mapping Professional Open Youth Work 2015)

On this list of partners there are bodies from open youth work associations of grass roots level and from an academic arena, higher educational institutions which provide youth work education and research. The partners have deep interest in European networking and cooperation in this field of youth work. The experimental background of partners varies a lot; there is a mixture of different experiences from non-formal education to formal education, and from very experienced people in international work to newcomers to this field. The common approach is the quality development of professional open youth work by using this partnership as a tool.

The aims of the project “Mapping Professional Open Youth Work in Europe” are:

- create a common understanding of professional open youth work and its guiding principles in Europe.
- create an online platform for debate, exchange of best practice, inspiration and capacity building through the use of modern technology such as e.g. video.
- create more cooperation and exchange of knowledge between practitioners in youth work, formal education on youth work and youth research.
- provide a base for future development of blended learning curricula and offers for capacity building of youth workers (on a global level).
- provide a platform for knowledge about professional open youth work in Europe.
- strengthen and enlarge the network of professional open youth work in order to enhance the quality and innovation within youth work in Europe.

(Project application 2014:34)

During this two-year project it is planned – and promised – to organise four transnational project partner meetings in different partner countries. These project meetings are organised for project implementation and coordination purposes. Finland has a privilege to be one of the hosting countries – and Humak one of the hosting partners - the other hosts are Austria and Croatia.

Four face-to-face meetings are not enough for tackling all the issues during this project. More

meetings are needed, and already on the planning session it has been aimed to have on-line meetings between these transnational project meetings. These on-line meetings are conducted via Skype.

During the project the partners will produce so called intellectual outputs. These outputs are concrete results and achievements of this project.

One of the core results is to write a document “Principles for Professional Open Youth Work” (Project application 2014: 34). Finland has a strong tradition of professional youth work – and youth work education. But there are many countries in Europe, where they do not even have youth work education. Open youth work is very strong in Finland as well, the most of the municipalities are running youth centres or youth clubs with the principles of open youth work.

For sharing and disseminating all that gathered knowledge and information this partnership will create an online platform for debate, capacity building and dissemination of knowledge of professional open youth work (Project application 2014: 35). The partners have shoot videos under the topic of professionalism among open youth work and these videos will be shown on a video channel.

In the project there is an editorial team for preparing the E-Magazine “Professional Open Youth Work in Europe”. The content of this E-Magazine is not focused on this project, but on the framework of open youth work. At the end of this two-year project there will be a dissemination conference for to share and debate the results of the project.

One essential achievement of this partnership is what the partners gain through this kind of project. The partners should invest resources - time and even money – but how these inputs will affect the daily work and development of the youth work field?

The project will support strengthening of professional open youth work in Europe by:

- giving the project partners the opportunity to meet (online and offline) regularly and discuss underlying principles of their work.
- establishing an easy access point for joining in the debate for interested individuals and organisations on all levels via the online platform.
- creating the means for dissemination of knowledge and know how within this field of youth work.
- creating the basis for further development and innovation by creating tools through this project which will be available also after completion of the project.

(Project application 2014: 35-36.)

## Conclusions

This article is an example of an international project where Humak is a partner, but not a leading partner. The role of the leading partner is always very demanding in such a demanding project like this one. But the role of acting partner actually requires strong commitment and interest to achieve the needed and desired results.

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More information about Erasmus+ Programme : [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus_en)

[http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/discover/guide/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/discover/guide/index_en.htm)

More information about POYWE: <http://poywe.org/site/>



Anu Turunen

## **FUTURE IN OUR HANDS?**

– How to Organize an International Week

Humak University of Applied Sciences, Jyväskylä regional centre, organised the first international week in the history of Humak. The name of the week was “Future in our Hands?” and it took place in Jyväskylä RDI-centre on 23-27 March, 2015. The main goal of the week was to discuss the future challenges faced by non-governmental organisations, youth work and cultural management with local and international lecturers, students and working life partners.

### **Topics and themes of the week**

Jyväskylä regional centre concentrates on two degree programmes: Civic Activities and Youth Work degree programme leads to a Community Educator, Bachelor of Humanities Degree, and Cultural Management students get a Cultural Manager, Bachelor of Arts and Culture Degree. Therefore these two areas and points of view were in the spotlight in the seminar. As the focus was on working life, teaching and studying in the field of NGO, youth work and cultural management, we were especially interested in the following issues:

- How will NGO and youth work, and cultural management look like in the 2020’s?
- How to react to the changes in working life?
- What kind of educational challenges we face now and in the future?

The working life of NGO, youth work and culture is changing constantly, so it is not always easy or possible to predict what is going to happen and when. On the other hand, education seems to be thought as something more stable, even stiff and conservative. Does education need to be traditional for to be good or recognized? What should be done so that working life and education would meet?

Humak has developed a pedagogical model to answer this need and the model was also present during the week. One part of the pedagogical model is that students perform working life-related tasks instead of studying a lot of theory in the class. The aim is that students learn by doing instead of only listening to a lecturer and writing notes. The model is called coaching pedagogy and you can find more information about it for example on Humak’s webpages [www.humak.fi](http://www.humak.fi).

### **Before: the planning part**

As we wanted to take advantage of the coaching pedagogy in the organising of this week we wanted that our students would take part in it. In addition, we wanted the International week to be a part of the courses that were running in March so that organising the week would not be extra work for students. Because of this, it was important to start planning and arrangements early on, so that every detail would be taken into consideration.

International and Finnish Cultural Management students took care of producing, PR, and writing a blog and posts for Humak webpages about the week. Community educator students had varied tasks related to their English studies. For example, they organised the evening activities, activities during the day-time programme, and helped workshop leaders with the English language if needed. Tutor students had also an important role during the week because many of them accommodated international students coming from the Humak's Nurmijärvi campus. We lecturers stayed in the background as much as possible and guided the students in their tasks when needed.

## **During: the programme**

The programme of the week consisted of seminars, workshops, field visits, and a closing session on Friday. In addition, the local and international Humak students organised different types of evening activities for the participants. The programme was planned so that Monday was for arriving and the actual programme started on Tuesday. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 10 to 12 o'clock were for seminars. After lunch, the afternoon from 13 to 15 o'clock was for workshops and field visits. On Friday morning we had a closing session with a possibility to give feedback about the week.

About 100 participants altogether took part in the week. Topics of the seminars and workshops varied from spaces and places for youth and culture, from youth's substance abuse prevention to work welfare now and in the future. We had the possibility to hear what kind of differences there are between Irish and Finnish youth cultures, what is happening on the field of youth work in

the UK, and how youth work at home works in the city of Jyväskylä.

## **After: feedback**

According to feedback, lecturers, and many other participants, the week was successful in many ways. Participants found the topics interesting and the discussions had been enlightened and thought-provoking. Finnish students commended especially that it was a joy to get to know international students better. Some even got the courage to apply for Erasmus+ exchange programme.

Apart from this, improvements were suggested. Firstly, the plan was to have a lot of discussion but there was not enough time for it. This was mentioned in the feedback several times. Secondly, even though the students were involved in the planning of the week, they wished they could have been making the plan already from the beginning. That way it would have been possible for them to influence the selection of the topics of the week. Lastly, it is good to mention that it is important to double-check technical equipment beforehand. It is like Murphy's Law: if something can go wrong, it will. With technical issues, it can and it will at some point, so be prepared.

## **Tips for future**

In conclusion, here are some tips for future International week –organisers.

- Start the planning in time – there will be problems you cannot figure out beforehand
- Ask your students if they want to take part

in organising/planning/making seminars and workshops – they might want to make their own workshops and show their expertise

- Remember to spread up-to-date information about the week as much as possible – do not forget to use social media
- Technical equipment do not always work when needed so check and test them, and have a plan B if something goes wrong
- There cannot be too much time for discussion
- Do not hesitate - organising a whole week for students, both international and local guests, and staff, takes a lot of effort but it is certainly worth it!





Minna Hult

## **NORDIC PERSPECTIVES**

– Student Trips to Nordic Countries

As part of their studies, Humak students have had the opportunity to travel to different Nordic countries since 2011. The primus motor behind these trips has largely been senior lecturer Kim Lindblad who has applied for grants to fund these trips and has also had the expertise and contacts for making the arrangements needed. There have been trips to all four Nordic countries (Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden). This year (2015) the trip was to Copenhagen, Denmark, and for the first time there were students from all three degree programmes of Humak.

The idea behind these trips is to offer students an affordable possibility to see other Nordic countries, broaden their professional perspectives, as well as to offer a possibility for them to use Swedish (and English) language in a natural setting. Humak in addition aims at international studies for all students. International expertise and co-operation skills are considered of great value for students in today's working life.

These trips are very motivational for the students as they very often find out that their Swedish skills are quite adequate and their language skills improve when they have the possibility to use Swedish in a purposeful context. The language used during these trips is generally Swedish although some hosts find it more convenient to use English. In addition, the students increase their knowledge of their own field of studies, and last but not least, the students can gain credits.

In order to gain credits (traditionally 2 ECTS) the student has to consider where the contents of this trip would fit in his/her curricula. The student compares the contents of a course with the contents of the trip and then contacts the lecturer responsible for the chosen course. The lecturer then decides whether it is possible to include the two credits in the course. The trip can in some cases also be included in Swedish language courses. In any case, the trip can be marked under optional studies. There are assignments the students do before, during, and after the trip that have been planned by lecturers arranging the trip. The students may have additional assignments connected to the other courses mentioned above.

During the trip there are traditionally visits to different institutions and organizations. When possible, the students also visit educational institutions in their own field. The purpose of these visits with different actors is to increase the students' knowledge on how these fields are similar and/or differ from their Finnish counterparts. One aim is also to create networks with these actors for future benefits (student exchange, work placements, and other co-operation). Nordic co-operation and culture are also on the trip programme realized through visits to, for example, the Finnish Embassy of the destination country, different art exhibitions, and meetings with authors.

The pedagogical aspect behind these trips concurs with Humak's new pedagogical ideology,

coaching. The students have the main responsibility for making the visits and the programme successful. Questions and presentations are prepared and performed by the students. The lecturers mainly function as “guides” helping the students find the way to the sources of information. The feedback from the students has been without exception very positive. The reward for the lecturers is the apparent enthusiasm of the students.

## **Copenhagen, Denmark 2015**

This year 2015, as mentioned before, the destination was Copenhagen, Denmark. Three lecturers: Kim Lindblad (Community educator education), Päivi Ruutiainen (Cultural management education), and Minna Hult (Sign language interpreter education) and 15 students, five from each degree programme, attended the trip. The visits on this trip were planned in a way to allow all the different student groups to find out about the Danish systems in their respective fields. In addition, there were visits to targets that were seen as useful and important for everyone.

On the first day in Copenhagen the whole group visited Kulturhus Islands Brygge, an instance offering residents in the area facilities and other means to arrange different kinds of activities (concerts, yoga, drama groups etc.). One could see this visit as appropriate for cultural management students and community educator students and maybe not as fitting for the sign language interpreter students. However, all the students were well prepared and had questions on and started discussions connected with their own field of expertise.

On Tuesday, the second day of our trip, the whole group visited the Embassy of Finland. At the

Embassy we were told about Denmark’s policies concerning education and Nordic co-operation. We also found out about what happens in the embassy and what kind of duties they have. Once again the students were very active and had a lot of questions from various points of view. We, for instance, found out how the Danish system of student grants works and how to go about finding student accommodation.

Later the same day the whole group visited the Finnish Cultural Institute in Denmark. The Finnish Cultural Institute in Denmark is a foundation and its purpose is to promote Finnish art and culture in all its different forms in Denmark. At the institute we met artist Mari Keto who told us about her way from a small, remote village in Finland to Copenhagen, Denmark. In Denmark Mari Keto graduated from Copenhagen’s Institute of Precious Metals in 2008. She has also a degree of an art blacksmith from Pirkanmaa vocational institute. Keto’s works are widely exhibited and internationally awarded. Keto’s unorthodox choices in education and the original path to fame attracted attention among the students. Later we got the chance to admire her art at a nearby gallery.

On Wednesday sign language interpreter and community educator students visited UCC Professionshøjskolen which is a university of applied sciences educating, among others, sign language interpreters and pedagogues. The program for the two Humak educational groups was partly mutual and partly separate and both degree programmes got information on Danish education on their own field. The Humak lecturers had meetings with the personnel of UCC mapping out possible co-operation (exchange, partnerships etc.) in the future. In the afternoon there was a lecture on deaf children in Uganda

which seemed to affect our students deeply. Later in the evening our students and students from UCC got together to dine and get to know each other.

The cultural management students and their lecturer had their own destination on Wednesday: meeting with project director Marie Myschetzky from KulturNatten. Later the lecturers and some of the students also visited the famous Danish art museum ARKEN.

On Thursday the cultural management students visited first the International House with community educator students. International house is a public-private partnership consisting of organizations, departments, and companies. The objective of the house is to provide international citizens the best possible start to life in Copenhagen helping with subjects as job search, Danish classes and family reunification.

The interpreter students visited CFD, a service center for the deaf. CFD provides residential, vocational, interpreting, and counseling services as well as psychological assessment and counseling for deaf and deafblind people. The students heard about the interpreter situation in Denmark and about the interpreting services provided by CFD. The other services were also introduced and we had the chance to visit the residential and vocational services. The students were also introduced to CFD's sign language program and teaching to the staff. There was vivid discussion throughout the visit and especially the interpreter situation in Denmark acquired attention from the students as the situation in Finland is quite similar to the Danish situation.

As CFD is an NGO, the community educators joined the interpreters after their visit to Inter-

national House to hear about CFD as an organization. Meanwhile the cultural management students went on to visit Byens Hegn ("City fence"), a project designed to make the new Copenhagen metro building sites more attractive by decorating them with different kinds of artworks. The cultural management students and community educators also visited Creative Roots. The aim of Creative Roots is to activate urban citizens and create a platform for ideas, skills, shared experiences and networks of people.

On the last day in Copenhagen we only had one visit for all students. Kraftverket is a youth culture house for young people between 15-30 years. The mission of Kraftverket is to educate the cultural entrepreneurs of tomorrow and democratically engaged citizens. The focal point of the activities in Kraftverket is the young people themselves. In the house young people have the opportunity to gain experience in democratic decision-making and organization. The young people are involved in decisions about finances, personnel, operations, activities, visions, goals, and plans. The house has a variety of facilities for the young people to use such as a music studio, film studio, venue for concerts and theatre performances, and spaces for workshops and meetings. Our students were impressed by the trust afforded to the young people and the apparent freedom given to them. A variety of subjects were discussed from the points of view of the different student groups: the attendance of deaf young people and other minority groups; youth culture; the role of the adult workers in the house; the dynamics between different groups using the house etc.

The rest of this last day the students could see the city on their own. We met at the airport

in the evening and flew back to Finland. Once again the days had gone by too quickly.

## **Conclusions**

The trip to Denmark was fruitful in information and connections, as has been the case with the previous Nordic trips as well. The students spoke both English and Swedish and were not afraid to communicate on either language. Both the students and the lecturers gained professional expertise and information from different sources. The planning for the next year's trip has already begun.







This collection of articles gives a brief but varied glance at the international activities of Humak University of Applied Sciences. The writers of the articles are senior lecturers involved in the international affairs in the Degree Programme in Civic Activities and Youth Work.

The reader gets to know about the diverse work of pedagogical staff members within the international affairs. Humak has many liable international partners in the higher educational field and within the practical work providers. With these partners it is fruitful to develop the field of civic activities and youth work by organising variable projects and activities. The students of Humak take actively part in Erasmus+ student exchange and practical placements abroad, but the international cooperation offers other possibilities for the students as well.



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