

European Community
initiative

EQUAL

in Estonia



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EQUAL



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What is EQUAL?

The development of Estonian economy is characterised by rapid growth, but not all have equal opportunities to enter the labour market. To reduce exclusion and inequality on the labour market, the European Union has reached out a helping hand through the EU initiative EQUAL. The programme is financed by one of the Structural Funds of the European Union, the European Social Fund (ESF), and EQUAL might figuratively be called an extension of the hand of ESF.

The old Member States have been supported by EQUAL since 2000 and its influence is already felt in their societies. In Estonia, the one and only round of applications was announced in the autumn of 2004. 13 projects were chosen, which offer employment-related help and support to the people with disabilities, their caregivers, mothers of small children, residents of peripheral areas, former prostitutes, problem gamblers, farmers, young probationers and others for whom entry or return to the labour market is difficult for some reason.

EQUAL's main principles are innovativeness, mainstreaming, partnership, active involvement and international cooperation.

The main objective of EQUAL programme is the development of **new and innovative** methods to reduce unequal treatment on the labour market. The **innovativeness** may lie

in the EQUAL projects being directed towards target groups previously neglected. It may also mean new approaches regarding working methods and technologies.

The program aims at long-term results, at mainstreaming of the knowledge and experience being put to practice and used to shape the labour market policy.

As the problems related to labour market policy are complex and a single organisation's efforts would be insufficient to solve them, an attempt is made to reach the objectives of the programme through **development partnerships**. Development partnership, at first glance an unclear notion perhaps, expresses a simple idea – cooperation between several organisations, which jointly determine their objectives, activity plan and distribution of tasks.

Different interests meet in **partnership**, and each organisation invests into problem solving. All partners of the project are included in the **decision making process, they are actively involved** in the development and implementation of the common strategy. This is supervised and coordinated by the lead partner of the development partnership.

In addition to national partnership, the EQUAL programme also includes **international cooperation**. All in all, there are close to 3,388 EQUAL development partnerships in the Member States of the European Union. Each project selects international partners with whom to work jointly and exchange experience.

These are the working principles for the EQUAL programme, which lasts till the end of the year 2008. No more application rounds for the European Community's initiative EQUAL are expected. The best practices and experience will be integrated in the European Social Fund.

EQUAL programme in Estonia

EQUAL takes a thematic approach to problems. From the nine themes possible, Estonia chose three to be implemented.

Theme A: *Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated into a labour market which must be open to all;*

Theme G: *Reconciling family and*

professional life, as well as the reintegration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services;

Theme I: *Supporting the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers.*

The EQUAL programme budget in Estonia is 5.42 million euros. The European Social Fund finances EQUAL with 75% or ca 4,1 million euros. Plus the co-financing of Estonia: 25% or 1, 4 million euros.

An EQUAL projects' length of activity is approximately three years and its budget must be minimum 192,000 euros (except the Theme I project). Structural aid to a project is 95% of its budget, 5% are to be covered by the development partnership itself.

The Estonian EQUAL programme is organised by the Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia (managing authority), the Labour Market Board is responsible for receiving the applications for development partnerships and for later monitoring (national support structure). Ministry of Finance is the paying authority.

The project application round was held in 2004, where 13 projects were chosen from 68 applications.



Within Theme A (Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated into a labour market which must be open to all), five projects are supported in Estonia.

- **We Friends (West Estonian Development Partnership)**, project of Foundation Tuuru helps to increase employment of women of low competitiveness and young women raising their children alone in Hiiumaa and Lääne counties. Target group: women.

- **RE – START (Comprehensive Measures for Integrating Youth with Criminal Records into the Labour Market)**, project of Caritas Eesti, provides young people who have committed criminal offences the opportunity to (re)enter the labour market through employment and study options with socio-psychological support. Target group: young men aged 16–24 with criminal penalties.

- **Integration of Women Involved in Prostitution into the Labour Market**, project of National Institute for Health Development, increases social coping skills of women formerly involved in prostitution, incl. victims of trafficking in persons, and their integration in legal labour market. Target group: women involved in prostitution, victims of trafficking with persons.

- **Re-integration of Compulsive Gamblers into the Labour Market**, project of Liider Grupp OÜ, returns problem gamblers to labour market by systematic rehabilitation and prevention of problem gambling. Target group: problem gamblers.

- **HAPECO (Handicapped People Employed in Cooperatives)**, project of NGO Eurohouse increases the opportunities of employment and self-realisation for handicapped people in the counties of (the island of) Saaremaa, (the island of) Hiiumaa, Lääne, Järva, Põlva and Viljandi through the creation of cooperative enterprises, and based on the experience of the European Union. Target group: people with special needs.

Within Theme G (Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the reintegration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services), seven projects are supported in Estonia.

- **Flexible Forms of Training and Work (Choices and Balance)**, project of Estonian Employers' Confederation to improve opportunities for reconciliation of family and professional lives of men and women by way of extended dissemination of flexible forms of work and affecting of attitudes. Target group: parents of small children and employers.
- **Connected Services for Integrating Young Mothers into the Labour Market**, project of Viljandi County Government to improve access to labour market for unemployed young mothers of the Viljandi County by use of connected services and methods. Target group: mothers of children under 7 years of age with incomplete education and no working experience, and young people.
- **WHOLE – Work and Home in Our Life in Europe**, project of Tartu Folk High School, is expanding the opportunities and develops the personal skills of working parents through the training, avoiding their inure to the discriminated group because being parents. Target group: working parents from counties bordering on Lake Peipsi.
- **Development of Multifunctional Care Service to Enhance Employment**, project of Tartu County's Board of Disabled People for creation and practical testing of supportive multifunctional service directed towards families of disabled persons with the help of international cooperation. Target group: disabled persons (from children to the elderly), their family members, support persons, heads of organisations for the disabled, and social workers of local governments.

- **Children Taken Care of, Mothers at Work**, project of State Chancellery increases the employment of parents (mainly mothers) by creating a flexible system of childcare services. Target group: women and parents who are unemployed or work unofficially as child-minders.

- **Models of Distance Working for Estonian Islands**, project of NGO Arhipelaag improves the employment in Estonian islands and peripheral regions through implementation of models of teleworking and flexible work arrangements. Target group: employees and employers, who are in a geographically unequal situation on the labour market.

- **Development and Application of Farmers' Replacement Service**, project of Estonian Farmer's Federation, creates a substitute service for farmers-cattle breeders for substituting for them in days of illness and days off, and during holidays; creates employment in rural areas. Target group: part-time family farmers interested in additional work; former employees of agricultural enterprises; graduates of general agricultural colleges interested in work with animals and seeking opportunities for work in rural areas, and unemployed persons interested in working with animals and work opportunities in rural areas.

Within Theme I (Supporting the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers) there is one following project in Estonia:

- **Increasing the Readiness of the Estonian Society for Integrating Asylum Seekers**, project of Jaan Tõnisson Institute develops the proposals to governmental authorities, local governments and organisations of the third sector on how to organise social and employment integration of seekers of asylum. Target group: refugees, politicians, officials, NGOs and the public.

On the following pages, all the EQUAL projects in Estonia are introduced.

Theme: Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated into a labour market which must be open to all.

We Friends (West Estonian Development Partnership)

Objective: to help increase employment of low competitive-ness women and young women raising their children alone in Hiiu, Saare and Lääne counties.

Activities:

- organising sectoral labour market research (labour force need-offer);
- cooperation with target group and employers active in labour market;
- introduction of mentorship;
- organising innovative trainings;
- motivating employers to create new jobs for women;
- increasing awareness of gender equality among the population of the region and valuing the social roles of women.

Budget: 453,773 euros.

Lead partner: Foundation Tuuru.

Partners: Hiiu County Government, Association of Local Authorities of Hiiu County, Hiiumaa Tourism Association, Saaremaa Training Centre, Lääne County Development Centre, Labour Market Board Hiiumaa Department, Vetsitall Ltd.

International partners: P.E.R.LA DP in Italy, DIANA DP in Spain.

Homepage: www.wefriends.hiiumaa.ee; www.tuuru.edu.ee



Young active mothers participating in the opening lecture of the training in Saaremaa.

Against gender inequality with a project for women

The We Friends project constitutes the continuation of Phare project “Female Entrepreneurship Development in West Estonia” and concentrates on female entrepreneurs and young non-working mothers.

According to Foundation Tuuru project manager Mare Ellen, there has historically developed a situation on the islands of West Estonia, where men work on mainland, at sea or abroad, whereas many women live as single mothers and are forced to stay home with their babies. They lose the qualification and the confidence they once acquired and are unable to return to the labour market on their own. Life is also difficult for young women with insufficient educa-

tion, who are unemployed, having given birth at an early age, and who have neither professional skills nor psychological support to cope with life. However, the project We Friends is specifically standing for the rights and better opportunities for women of Hiiu, Saare and Lääne counties in the labour market.



Mare Ellen

Five study programmes have been compiled so far, two of them for mothers with small children on Hiiumaa and Saaremaa islands – under the joint heading “Back to Working World”. Three study programmes are directed towards female entrepreneurs who plan to take up business in the field of

tourism and tourism related services.

The first training cycle of The School for Mothers involved 22 women in Hiiumaa and 18 in Saaremaa.

The three-week training included family studies, knowledge of raising children, communication, preparing national foods, legislation on the rights of women and children, family traditions, also labour legislation, basics of business etc. Specialists such as lawyers, psychologists, local government workers etc provided the training.

In Hiiumaa the training session was concluded with practical training where a family event had to be organized – this time birthday party for children was chosen. “The ladies made the budget and purchased all the necessary items. The

expenses were covered by the project. Together they drove to a family centre, prepared the food, decorated the rooms and held a birthday party for all the children they had taken along,” resumes Mare Ellen. She adds that it was amazing how determined all mothers were while participating in the training. The group in question passed the whole course “in full force”; each participant receiving a certificate. “No one dropped out,” says Ellen. Travel costs were compensated, childcare guaranteed, scholarship was also granted. The training is due to be continued with the same group in April. During the April training session, individual psychological and legal counselling will be offered.

“First of all our project promotes female business,” says Mare Ellen concerning the second target group. Business courses are planned for approximately 25 women, which should enhance business in tourism and service sectors.

Introducing mentorship is an innovative idea. “We have successful entrepreneurs who could counsel the less successful.

In our endeavours we also involve our target groups – those desiring to take up business. With this group a mentor will take a tour in the enterprise analysed, putting on paper the pros and cons noticed,” relates Ellen. Hopefully it will help one party to gain constructive

criticism, and the other one to develop analytical abilities.

In spring a project application round will be organized for small size business. The aim of it is to motivate small business in creating new jobs for women. “We hope to get interesting projects,” says Mare Ellen.



Husband of Urve who is at home with their second child:

“This was one splendid training! The best thing in Hiiumaa for years!”

Theme: Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated into a labour market which must be open to all.

RE-START (Comprehensive Measures for Integrating Youth with Criminal Records into the Labour Market)

Objective: young people who have committed criminal offences can, thanks to employment and study options with socio-psychological support, (re)enter the labour market.

Activities:

- development of a complex services and support structure, its execution as a pilot project, and its multiplication for implementation elsewhere;
- offering continuous employment and study opportunities together with socio-psychological support in the Viljandi (Juvenile) Prison;
- such an efficient implementation of the project in cooperation with partners, that it would be a weighty piece of evidence both to politicians, the public and employers of the effectiveness of integrated intervention methods.

Budget: 636,889 euros.

Lead partner: NGO Caritas Eesti.

Partners in Estonia: Viljandi (Juvenile) Prison, Harju County Court.

International partners: NEW HORIZONS in Finland, Holland, Poland, Great Britain, France and Italy.

Homepage: www.kesa.ee, www.equal-newhorizons.org

Crime avoided is value created

The RE-START project dates back to a first visit by the project manager Jaano Räsä to the Viljandi Prison in the year 2000. At that time, he went there with friends to demonstrate motorcycles, so the young prisoners would get some variety and more practical ideas for their future. This developed into systematic crime prevention work. Since 2002 it was already being carried out in the form of a department of Caritas Eesti in the crime prevention centre. In the year 2004, Crime Prevention Foundation (KESA) was founded and they also manage the RE-START project.

There are seven people on the payroll of the EQUAL project, numerous services are outsourced. In cooperation with

A handloom rug weaved by prisoners was taken off the loom in Viljandi Prison on November 21, 2005.



the Defence Forces' Sports Club, military boot-camps are organized for the inmates and other members of the target group. For security reasons, the young criminals are "sifted" with extreme care for the military-style camps (called "m-camps"), surveillance and multi level risk diversification are guaranteed. The boys learn to know and respect the nature, and they are involved in sports.

The head of KESA Jaano Räsä says that among the risk youth he has been boot-camping with, the inmates are the most disciplined bunch. "They know how to appreciate the opportunity given them," is a reason he can point out. The project RE-START involves those aged 16 to 21, occasionally youths up to 24 years of age, whose family (parents, caregivers or orphanages) have failed to do their duty, often already since the very childhood.

"Working with those on the criminal careers is hard," admits the project manager Jaano Räsä, but he adds that it is all based on one fundamental acknowledgment – every human being is precious (the motto of KESA). And every crime prevented is also a value.

According to statistics, the average rate of recidivism or repeated crime among those already having been imprisoned is close to 75 %. With active and systematic intervention, the percentage can be lowered to 60. The objective of the project is to lower recidivism among participants by 20 %, but even 10 % of the cases would be worth the effort.

Ats (19), inmate:

"I would never have believed that I can obtain my driving license while in prison – and for free. It took many additional driving lessons, I became all nervous, never seemed to manage the crossroads. But now I have the license, I will surely be able to go work on constructions or in a forest brigade. At times we also went camping with the project instructors while in prison. I had blisters on my feet for five days after that."

The most important KESA endeavour has been the establishment of a probation hostel. "We want to try, which support services need to be applied for the people to obtain the vital support and inner motivation," explains Jaano Räsä. Of course, the purpose is to help them enter the labour market and, better yet, to continue their studies.



Jaano Räsä

Among the success stories of RE-START, we should mention the installation of a handicraft workshop in the Viljandi Prison in the summer of 2005. This was started at the sugges-

tion of a prison employee and success was not to be taken for granted. However, the workshop was launched 'full load' at the beginning of 2006, and there are continuously 12 boys at work on the six pairs of loom. Instructed by handicraft expert Riina Piir, rag carpets are initially made, followed by the goblin techniques. "It was really surprising that the boys welcomed an enterprise like this. But it's something one makes with one's own hands, the magic lies in seeing the results immediately," says Räsä. Part of the carpets can be

kept by the boys and sent home, others will remain with the project as an example of work accomplished. "We will certainly be organising exhibitions as well," says Räsä.

Theme: Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated into a labour market which must be open to all.

Integration of Women Involved in Prostitution into the Labour Market

Objective: to increase the social coping skills of formerly prostituted women, incl. victims of trafficking in persons, and facilitate their integration into the legal labour market.

Activities:

- conducting background research among formerly prostituted women and the general population, and informing the public of the problems in this sphere;
- creating a centre for social and psychological rehabilitation of prostituted women, offering various services in order to help them return to the labour market;
- conducting training for specialists and support persons who in their work come into contact with the target group of the project.

Budget: 568,807 euros.

Lead partner: National Institute for Health Development

Partners in Estonia: NGO Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre (ENUT), NGO Lifeline, Open Estonia Foundation, NGO Sigmund.

International partners: Associazione On the Road in Italy, Comissão para a Igualdade e para os Direitos das Mulheres in Portugal, La Strada Fundacja przeciwno Handlowi Kobietami in Poland, IOM Deutschland in Germany, Missing persons' families support center in Lithuania.

Homepage: www.tai.ee



New beginning, new life – independent and autarky.

“We don’t cure, we help make choices”

Prostitution is the second most lucrative business for organised crime after illegal drugs. It is difficult and time-consuming to leave it. European countries’ experience shows that via a system of special rehabilitation centres and support persons, it is possible to help former prostitutes psychologically, and have them get an education and a new profession.

“Our project is innovative. To date nothing has been done in Estonia to offer psychological rehabilitation to prostituted women and the victims of trafficking in persons, and to help bring them to the legal labour market,” says EQUAL project manager Riina Enke from National Institute for Health Development. “In order to enter the labour market, they require improved social coping skills and psychological support. They need to believe in their ability to lead a wholesome life. It is equally important to influence public opinion, to keep up an open debate leading to reforms in prostitution legislation and the reduction of disparaging attitudes, which would convince society that former prostitutes can become reliable members of the labour force.”

The EQUAL project call announced at the end of 2004 opened up a wonderful opportunity to start working in this field. The initial step was to map the situation in order to find out what help the target group needed. Thereafter, the society’s attitude toward prostitution was studied. Two wide-ranging polls were conducted. As a consequence, the book “Vaikijate hääled” III (*Voices of the Silent, III*) is to be issued.

Rehabilitation centre “Atoll” was opened in October 2005. “Currently we offer career guidance, development of communication skills, help in preparing job applications in the Estonian language, restoring documents. Many women are



Riina Enke

afraid to turn to the authorities, expecting to be fined. We also help with the checking of health insurance cards’ validity and the use of the Internet. Women want to know how to become a self-employed person, where to turn for medical aid if one lacks the money to pay for medical care. Regrettably we cure no-one; we can only help with the choices,”

explains psychologist Eda Mölder.

A typical “Atoll” client would be a Russian girl working at night, earning enough for the daily dose of drugs – not more. Most of them have known physical violence. At times, a freezing and starving prostitute spends the night under a staircase, unaware of the free shelter around the corner.

Should such a client wish to work legally, her options are discussed and we help to prepare a CV. Next, she is supervised by a support person and counselled. Similar support person systems are planned for Tartu, Pärnu and Ida-Virumaa counties.

“Elsewhere in Europe counselling centres deal mostly with immigrants’ problems, but in Estonia we usually help local people whose problems are different from the immigrants. I am convinced that we will soon be able to share our experiences with other European countries,” says Riina Enke.

Theme: Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated into a labour market which must be open to all.

Re-integration of Compulsive Gamblers into the Labour Market

Objective: returning problem gamblers to labour market by systematic rehabilitation and prevention of problem gambling.

Activities:

- investigating the reasons for problem gambling and development of rehabilitation methods;
- helping gambling addicts to break the habit, returning addicts who lost their jobs back to labour market, helping addicts who are in danger of losing their jobs due to addiction and creating a network with other organisations and the addicts' families to offer the addicts systematic rehabilitation and support;
- problem gambling prevention among young people and increasing public awareness of the problem.

Budget: 619,099 euros.

Lead partner: OÜ Liider Grupp.

Partner in Estonia: The Institute for Problem Gambling and Treatment (HUVI).

International partners: G.A.M.E. in France, SEIREN in Great Britain.

Homepage: www.huvi.ee

Back to everyday life from rooms with no windows and clocks

The problem gamblers rehabilitation project is the response of the psychologists to those seeking a way out from problem gambling.

“There are more casinos in our streets than grocery stores and no big shopping centre is without one. Somewhere there are people, who visit these rooms without windows and clocks, where coins clatter and luxury seems close at hand,” says project manager and psychologist Pille-Riin

People suffering from compulsive gambling rely on the help of psychologist Juri Sepel and other psychologists of the centre.



Kaare, adding that worldwide research reveals a positive correlation between the number of casinos and problem gamblers. Too often it never occurs to addicts to seek help before they are deep in debt and all wrapped up in criminal schemes, or when they are losing their families, work, or dwelling places.

In 98% of the cases, people are sadly late as they finally turn to the new and so far the only counselling centre for problem gamblers, which was opened in Tallinn, August last year. Every week, dozens of people sign up to talk to the nine psychologists at the centre.

The visitors include men and women, young and old. Some have lost everything. Their names are not published nor the stories told, for everything shared with psychologists is strictly confidential. Every seeker is approached individually, the length of therapy depending on their condition.

When the group of psychologists initiating the project was still only dreaming of results and making plans, they talked of 96 people whom they wished to free from addiction and help them get back to work by the end of 2008. Today, the prognosis appears to have been clearly too modest.

During this year, 38 people have joined the rehabilitation group, 30 of them problem gamblers and eight co-addicts (those closest to the problem gamblers).

It is another matter, whether the person receiving psychological counselling will be able to resist the temptations in the future. Pille-Riin Kaare still maintains that in most cases the ones receiving therapy do not gamble at all or do it much less frequently. However, backsliding cannot be ruled out.

After four months of practice, two psychologists know of



Pille-Riin Kaare

at least three people who are indeed delivered from the spell of casinos. What are HUVI's (The Institute for Problem Gambling and Treatment) plans for the future?

"We would surely like to have a say about amendments to the Estonian Gambling Act," says Kaare. "We would also like to be paid for our work, for we cannot claim visit fee from our customers – they are in trouble themselves.

For us to be able to keep providing the service, we expect support from local governments and city governments, like the city of Tallinn for instance supports the Crisis Help Centre.

We are also dealing preventively with children, as we are going to offer trainings and courses for social workers and school psychologists."

Quite a paradox, but HUVI has obtained an agreement for cooperation from Estonian Gambling Operator' Association. Kaare finds that this could start with information on the centre on the casinos' websites or on folders: "Should anybody really turn to them for help, they could refer the people to us. We wouldn't also mind if the casinos would themselves support us in sending these people back to life."

Theme: Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated into a labour market which must be open to all.

HAPECO (Handicapped People Employed in Cooperatives)

Objective: to increase opportunities of employment and self-realisation for handicapped people in the Saare, Hiiumaa, Lääne, Järva, Põlva and Viljandi counties through the creation of cooperative enterprises, and based on the experience of the European Union.

Activities:

- conducting integration training and introducing joint activity to handicapped unemployed persons in the target regions;
- creating a working group from people having the desire to launch a cooperative in each region where an introductory training has been held;
- selecting the product or service to be developed;
- supervising the groups at launching and managing the cooperatives.

Budget: 475,889 euros.

Lead partner: NGO Eurohouse.

Partners in Estonia: Saaremaa Educational Centre, Development Centre of Läänemaa County, Foundation Tuuru, Türi Cooperative Development Centre, Rõpina Cooperative Development Centre, Viljandi Cooperative Development Centre.

International partners: Lan Ekintza in Spain, Groupement Aquitain des Réseaux de l'Insertion par l'activité Économique (GARIE) in France.

Homepage: www.eurohouse.ee



Kuressaare Chamber of Disabled People. An elderly woman with vision impairment weaving a wicker basket.

Cooperatives provide handicapped persons with work and joy

The condition of persons with special needs in Estonia is not easy: there are few opportunities for competition at the labour market, and employers lack motivation to hire them. Often the working conditions – working time, environment or place – do not fit either. Disabilities and long-term unemployment have a devastating effect on people. However, many of them would be able to work at least part-time. Employment is the source of both livelihood and rehabilitation, offering wages, self-realisation and social belonging instead of isola-

tion and depending on welfare. An alternative for paid employment is business. Among the handicapped, there is a higher need of psychological preparation and support to launch one.

“At the end of the 1990-ies/beginning of the 2000-ies, representatives of our partner organisations participated in several projects of the Swedish Cooperation Institute, the objective of which was to introduce cooperation in Estonia,” says Merit Trei, head of Eurohouse. “In Sweden we saw how people with special needs had found employment in a cooperative involved in restoration of furniture. Some cooperatives have already been operating successfully for 8–9 years. When the EQUAL-programme opened up for Estonia, we saw an opportunity we had long been waiting for,” she adds.

Eurohouse has organised initial introductory integration training for disabled persons on what might usually be seen as basics – what is the labour market, how to behave in a group, etc. Next, business training will be organised in every region, to give the participants an opportunity to become aware of their desires and abilities. “We have reached people who are often reserved, introvert and timid, and who were quite reluctant to come out of their homes. By now, groups have formed who



Merit Trei

have begun to stick together and to value the provided training, as well as the opportunity to socialise with group mates,” says Merit Trei. By the end of the training

period, the people who have hit upon a common idea will select a product or service worthy of development, and will compile a business plan. When approved by the steering committee, a cooperative will be granted a start-up capital of 40 000 Estonian kroons. After that, there will be professional training to acquire occupational skills

appropriate to the activity selected.

Local coordinators support the launching and management of cooperatives. There have already been requests for offering services of open care and other public services. Handicraft cooperatives with individual production and common marketing are widespread. A cooperative is a democratic unit where all members equally participate in management, irrespective of the capital invested. Each member has one vote in the decision making process. Ca 20 people aged 20 to 55 from each participating/target county have been involved in the HAPECO project. According to project manager Merit Trei, it has been surprising how quickly the people involved in the project have bonded together and started to care for one another.

Maie Rõmmel (40), person with reduced mobility, Paope village chief from Hiiumaa:

“The HAPECO project has given me an idea how to get along in life and to make additional livelihood. We are planning to establish a social campus, a centre where one can make handicraft and be involved in horticulture. Especially for those who do not find employment elsewhere because of disabilities. We want to start making souvenirs for marketing. But these are just initial plans.”

Theme: Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the reintegration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services.

Flexible Forms of Training and Work (Choices and Balance)

Objective: improving opportunities for reconciliation of family and professional lives of men and women by way of extended dissemination of flexible forms of work and affecting of attitudes.

Activities:

- conducting a research on the juridical, economical and sociological aspects of the implementation of flexible work forms;
- activating the target group, incl. encouraging the parents who have stayed home with children to return to the labour market;
- developing as a pilot project the basic counselling and training programme corresponding to the needs of the target group and the expectations of employers;
- conducting an awareness campaign to disseminate best practices of flexible forms of work and to affect the attitudes and labour-market-behaviour of employers and contractors.

Budget: 394,808 euros.

Lead partner: Estonian Employers' Confederation.

Partners in Estonia: NGO Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre (ENUT), PRAXIS Center for Policy Studies, Office of the Minister of Population and Ethnic Affairs, Estonian Law Centre Foundation, University of Tallinn Open University and Career and Counseling Centre, Estonian Confederation of Midwives (Family School).

International partners: Proceś Inwestycyjne S.A. in Poland, Consortile Ass.For.SEO in Italy, Garnt Visser Beheer BV in Netherlands, Telezentrum Neustadt GmbH & Co. KG in Germany.

Homepage: www.ettk.ee; www.cb.ee



Pilot of the project Choices and Balance – flexible options and balance.

Contemporary families expect flexible solutions from employers

The traditional division of work in families, where the man is the main provider and the woman's principal tasks are to care for the home and children, is beginning to change. The attitudes of society are slow to catch up with the new situation. Often, women do not choose work for its content or career options, but according to working time or location suitable for the family, agreeing to lower salaries. While women are expected to invest more in family life, the expectations towards men are mostly related to success at work, wherefore family life tends to suffer. These expectations are encoded in recruiting preferences, salary figures and promotion plans.

A group of sociologists, former schoolmates, had an idea to change something about this, being in daily contact with the problems in their own families. Together with economists, lawyers, tax experts, psychologists and practitioners, a many faceted research is being carried out, studying the employment related desires and opportunities of parents of small children, and the implementation of flexible work forms in practice. In cooperation with the journal *Pere ja Kodu* (“Family and Home”) and the newspaper *Äripäev*, a contest of employee-and-family-friendly enterprises will be organised, the results of which will be made public at the best practice conference on May 25, 2006.

“We are trying to achieve a situation where recruitment, promotion etc are based on the specific person, his/her ability to be dedicated to the work – not on prejudices,” says project manager Kadri Seeder. “In our project, propagating flexible work forms basically means a friendly attitude toward employees and family. This might mean working part-time, at home, or just not working overtime. New interesting ideas will surely come from projects of international partners.



Kadri Seeder

Our Polish partners, for example, are creating four working centres within the project, where teleworking can be practiced – one way to solve the security risks and IT issues usually accompanying teleworking, while securing ‘residence-related’ employment. The

brain bank idea introduced by the Italian partners is also exciting, for example where X minds the children for two hours, while Y does bookkeeping for X’s company for the corresponding value,” she adds.

During the project, a training and counselling programme will be developed for returning parents of small children to the working world.

“We count it a success if a person, having completed the programme, finds out what he/she could be doing in the future. Whether the solution would be to be registered as an unemployed person, to go on studying or to find employment,” says Seeder.

Marit (25), on the attitude of an employer upon her husband’s sick leave:

“If you are a “new kind” of father and want to be involved with your family, you will not be too popular on the labour market... My husband worked in a small furniture store that had to be open for certain hours. When he took sick leave to be home with a child who was ill, he was told that employees like him were not needed there. It went so far as the employer saying that I was a no-good mother and was dominating my man.”

desires of parents of small children, on the basis of which participants will be selected for the pilot project.

The target groups – support structures, social workers, family centres, employers, the public, and the parents of small children – will be updated on the development and results of the project.

The training and counselling programme consists of three parts, the first developing social and communication skills, the second concentrating more on skills and knowledge related to work, and the third dealing with the problems of reconciling professional and family life. Employers are also involved in the development of the programme. A poll was organized to find out the

Theme: Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the reintegration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services.

Connected Services for Integrating Young Mothers into the Labour Market

Objective: Improving access to labour market for unemployed young mothers of the Viljandi County by use of connected services and methods.

Activities:

- improving access to labour market for young mothers through new methods raising the level of employment of women;
- employing the target group and equipping them with sufficient information on entering the labour market;
- helping reduce the percentage of the target-group families' next generation belonging to the risk group;
- reducing unemployment in Viljandi and in Estonia as a whole;
- increasing awareness of the problem on a wider scale.

Budget: 200,207 euros.

Lead partner: Viljandi County Government.

Partners in Estonia: Association of Local Authorities of Viljandi County, Labour Market Board Viljandimaa Department.

International partners: Donna E Avenire in Italy, ENTER in Poland, Az esély bölcsödéje in Hungary.

Homepage: www.viljandimaa.ee/equal, www.compass-equal.net

Back to working world with help from case manager

The project “To Labour Market with Connected Services” concentrates on young women, generally aged 18 to 25, who a) have had to terminate studies because of the birth of a child and who do not have a professional vocation; b) are raising a child up to 7 years of age; c) have never been employed; d) have not used active labour market measures (in-service trainings, start aid, employment agencies etc). Of course, the participant must be mentally healthy and may not be addicted to alcohol or drugs.

The EQUAL project offers numerous trainings for mothers, mostly ones that instill self-confidence. Mothers may not be emotionally unstable, yet they might be unaware how to proceed, how to seek employment. So they participate in

A case manager is the «saviour angel» in the world of complicated administration.



motivational courses and get psychological advice if needed, they pass courses on seeking for work and have career guidance. The latter differ from vocational guidance in that they can provide a broader vision for the future, where and how to move on in life. A woman will select a domain where she would like to make a work career. The EQUAL project also finances childcare services: starting from the moment when the mother joins the project up to the end of the four month probationary period at the new job.

The project “To Labour Market with Connected Services” is based on case-management approach: one and the same consultant deals with the problems of a person from start to finish, having recourse to local government, specialists, and employers. The emphasis is on an individual activity plan, i.e. career, labour market and psychological counselling on the basis of the young mother’s personal characteristics and needs. Therefore, the training cycle started in September 2005 is of differing length for different persons, generally it lasts for 2 to 3 months.

Two rounds of training are organized during the project, where a total of 30 people will be able to participate. The second round is already underway, and the young mothers who participated in the first round have given their evaluation to the project.

“In the feed-back interviews, the need for motivational courses was mentioned the most,” says case manager Le Hussar, working with the project in the Viljandi County Government. “The young mothers gained added self-assur-

ance, their self-value increased remarkably.” Three from the 15 trainees have found a job by now. Local Labour Market Board’s Department has helped to seek the jobs, offering the target group members various trainings of their own. Negotiations also are being held with local employers.

Project manager Lilit Palmar says that developing an integrated system is in progress, for “finding” young mothers,

as well as training and counselling them all the way to help them enter the labour market. The emphasis is on creating a systematic and working cooperation network in which local government units, employers, and legislators ought to cooperate in solving the problems. At the end of the project, best practice instruction manuals will be compiled, reflecting the aforementioned activities.

The system of involving young mothers in employment is due to be implemented all over Estonia, and to notify the broader public of trainings of case managers and the need of employment. The profession of a case manager would combine social and Labour Market Board services. It would be an excellent field training opportunity for students of social work and psychology to help young mothers find employment.



Lilit Palmar

EQUAL project's case manager Le Hussar:

“A 20 year old woman, who had become pregnant while in upper secondary school, was so ignited by our project that she decided to enter an institution of higher education. Thanks to the change of residence, she also found work in a kindergarten as assistant educator.”

Theme: Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the reintegration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services.

WHOLE Work and Home in Our Life in Europe

Objective: expanding the opportunities and developing the personal skills of working parents through the training, avoiding their inure to the discriminated group because being parents.

Activities:

- training of parents;
- training and counselling of employers;
- changing of attitudes for positive integration of family and working life through notifying the public and employers.

Budget: 269,474 euros.

Lead partner: Tartu Folk High School.

Partners: Geomedia Consulting and Training Centre.

International partners: the project networks SINTONIE in Italy, ELOISA in Spain, SER MAIS SER MELHOR in Portugal.

Homepage: www.rahvaylikool.ee/equal



Art class for the whole family in the studio of the training centre. Integrity of our society is built on family relations as a whole.

Everybody gains from skilful combining of work and family life

The project WHOLE was written with parents in mind, to solve problems related to reconciling work and family life. Mothers and fathers raising small children, and especially single parents, feel the need for flexible working conditions, duty chart, and shorter working days. Sadly however, there is more sympathy among certain Estonian employers for the employee who cannot come to work because of a car that broke down, than for the mother who has to go to the doctor with a sick child during working hours. In the opinion of the WHOLE team such an attitude needed to be changed. It was decided to start with a training programme

to educate parents as well as employers.

Three new curricula have been developed: general training of (working) parents, training directed towards fathers and business training (self-employed persons' training for parents to create possibilities for working at home).

An attempt has been made to link traditional parent oriented training with cultural trainings and practical activities, such as art and handicraft classes, where skills are acquired for flower arrangement, photography, lace crocheting, icon painting or Japanese-style paper casting. Good Parent Course is offered, based on Th Gordon Parent Effectiveness Training. At the training courses organised by the training providers and psychologists of Private School for Holistic Self-Development, people are taught to divide their time and energy between work and family, the roles of mothers and fathers and men and women in the changed conditions of today, as well as the importance of childhood experiences in the formation of the future course of life. Emphasis is laid on the skill of sharing the responsibilities and obligations between family members, growing in self-value and confidence. Childcare is provided during the training period, so the



Ene Nobel

Tõnu Lumi, father of 4 children:

"I am interested in family relations and communication techniques. The issue is how to communicate so that you don't manipulate the other one or force your ideas. I have a 12-year-old son growing at home. At the age of puberty, it is most difficult with communicating. I think that when the kids have problems, the parents need teaching."

parents can be at peace and concentrate on acquiring new knowledge. If needed, personal counselling is provided.

During the EQUAL project, more than 200 parents and 20 employers will participate in trainings in eight locations bordering on Lake Peipus, on the east border of Estonia and EU. There are groups in both the Estonian and the Russian languages. Both cycles of general training of parents end with a summer camp in July-August, where the participants gather with their families.

The latest news is the fathers' school starting in Tartu in the autumn. The objective is in-depth study of the role of the man and father and its importance in the family in the conditions of the Estonian society today. As project manager Ene Nobel from Tartu Folk High School explains: "Fathers' training is a totally new phenomenon in Estonia. Why do we do it? Look at the statistics on the men of Estonia – they die earlier, are sick, overworked, tired and stressed out."

The trainings of the WHOLE project are held in seminar format. There are no traditional lectures; the people are seated in a circle, there are question-answer sessions, exercises, and group work. Practical exercises are given as home assignments: tasks related to active listening, problem solving,

expressing one's needs etc, to be tried out in the family circle and with the kids.

There has only been positive feedback.

"They start by saying they want to come back and do some more," says Ene Nobel.

"The need is so great. We can see that the people get something from the training that makes their eyes sparkle and gives strength for time to come."

Theme: Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the reintegration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services.

Development of Multifunctional Care Service to Enhance Employment

Objective: creation and practical testing of supportive multifunctional service directed towards families of disabled persons with the help of international cooperation.

Activities:

- training of multifunctional caregivers (who manage with home care of disabled persons or the elderly, care and organising activities of disabled children, and are ready and able to do household work);
- effectual use of human resources;
- guaranteeing a normal length of working days prescribed by law for providers of the service and guaranteeing round-the-clock care for disabled persons.

Budget: 287,602 euros.

Lead partner: Tartu County's Board of Disabled People.

Partner in Estonia: Estonian Agrenska Foundation.

International partners: Carers UK in Great Britain, A.R.C.O. in Italy, Palliative Care Centre for Children in Latvia, Qidos and LOT the Dutch Carers Association In Netherlands.

Homepage: www.tartukoda.ee

Disabled family member gets a friendly caregiver while homefolk are absent

For years the staff of the Tartu County's Board of Disabled People have entertained the idea of offering multifunctional care service to disabled persons.

"Family members have often called us, saying that they need to be away from home for a couple of hours, but they have no one to leave the disabled person with," comments the centre's manager Senta Michelson.

17-year-old Tairi needs the assistance and guidance of a caretaker every day.





Senta Michelson

Although there are indeed a few caregivers serving elderly and disabled persons and also bringing food into their homes, they are unable to cover the wider need for multifaceted care service. The situation is even further complicated by the Family Law Act, pursuant to which family members are obliged to maintain a family member

incapable to work, even if the family members with the obligation of maintenance often live and work in an other part of Estonia.

“Those completing the planned course will be more than diaper changing caregivers, simply bringing foodstuff from stores,” says Senta Michelson. “It would be good if the caregiver could replace a family member in his/her absence. Cleaning, preparing the food, being a companion and attendant – if needed. Someone able to react quickly and correctly in emergency situations, like when there’s a fit of illness. The best option would of course be a person with an education in medicine, psychology or special pedagogy. But we’ll be down to earth,” admits Michelson. Personal characteristics are emphasised over theoretical knowledge and academic

degrees. The primary thing is a heartfelt desire to help one’s fellow men, the ability to cope with hard situations. And discretion of course.

By now, the project of multifunctional care service has reached the phase of the preparation of the training programme. Tartu County’s Board of Disabled People intentionally did not involve the academic circles, but rather the customers of the centre, who are the best at describing their needs, and the specialists – teachers in schools for disabled children, parents, students of the specialty of caregiving in medical schools.

For example, the 280-academical-hour training programme prescribes acquisition of elementary cleaning skills, communication training, knowledge of disability types, general knowledge of humans (both grown-ups and children) and diseases. And of course there is practical training, working in families of people with special needs.

“We have no gender or age preferences. However, life has proven that such jobs are usually taken by women with earlier experience in caregiving,” says Michelson.

When the EQUAL project ends in 2007, it is hoped to launch an enterprise offering caregiver services.

Both the city of Tartu and other local governments are more than likely to be interested in purchasing the service.

Sirje Tihhanov, mother of a daughter with mental disability:

“I wish I had at least 3 to 4 hours of free time in a week, when I should not worry with whom to leave the child. From a home caregiver, I would first of all expect company, that my daughter would not be alone in my absence. My daughter has a genetic disease, which requires a special compulsory diet. Thus I also expect the caregiver to be able to prepare the food Tairi needs. I want my child to be observed and taken care of.”

Theme: Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the reintegration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services..

Children Taken Care of, Mothers at Work

Objective: to increase the employment of parents (mainly mothers) by creating a flexible system of childcare services.

Activities:

- preparing a model of family daycare; mapping opportunities for care of small children;
- creating the service of family daycare;
- training and consultation of family daycare minders;
- adjusting homes and facilities for family daycare;
- organizing a conference on alternative childcare opportunities in Estonia and in other countries;
- publishing and spreading the research results;
- developing methodological material;
- opening a playgroup for children in the town of Põlva.

Budget: 216,632 euros.

Lead partner: State Chancellery of the Republic of Estonia (Office of the Minister for Population and Ethnic Affairs).

Partners in Estonia: Family Education Institute, Põlva Union for Child Welfare.

International partners: international co-operation agreement "Primavera"; Welsh Development Agency in Wales, Great Britain; Res International in Italy; Conseil General des Cotes d'Amor in France.

Homepage: www.pki.ee



A morning in Janne Liidik's (right) family day-care in Rapla.

Professional child-minders are in great demand among parents

During the initial years of independence the number of children dropped and a large number of kindergartens were prematurely closed and sold in the major cities of Estonia. At the moment there is again a shortage of places in nurseries and kindergartens, the problems being the severest with care for 1 to 3 year olds, and with combining the family and working lives of parents.

This is the way that Erika Vahtmäe, adviser to the Minister for Population and Ethnic Affairs and a project manager

of EQUAL explains the process of seeking alternative forms of childcare long practiced elsewhere in the Western countries, adding that no experience of other countries has been copied one-to-one, as the new idea needed to be adapted to the Estonian context. The so-called Estonian model of home childcare constitutes a childcare service where not more than six children of various ages are taken to the child-minder's home. Home childcare has many advantages: first of all, the limited number of toddlers makes it possible to have an individual approach to every one of them, secondly the children of different ages support each other and the bigger ones are teaching the smaller ones. Worldwide research reveals that in groups like that the children do not fall ill so often.

Every homecare child-minder must, of course, pass a national professional examination. The first 29-member pilot group has passed the professional examination and received their certificates. According to Erika Vahtmäe the



Erika Vahtmäe

telephones were buzzing in the Family Education Institute and the Office of the Minister for Population and Ethnic Affairs after the graduation of the first professional child-minders, with calls coming in from all over Estonia: where are these child-minders!

“As a pilot project, we are a step ahead of time. When the state started creating a qualification system for

child-minders, the group of our project was the first to test the professional examination; when the state lays down the requirements for child-minders this summer, the minders of our project will be the first to conform to these requirements,” says Vahtmäe.

Among other things, the 160-hour training programme included 8 hours of training on first aid. The examination question-

naire tested the child-minders' knowledge on educational science, pedagogy, children's health, home management etc. Those

trained include recent graduates from schools as well as grandmothers, who have already minded their own grandchildren.

The state will certainly never banish the traditional form of childcare: talking the grandmother into minding the grandchild or seeking a minder through an advertisement. However, in these new times not all grandmothers have the time, and the background and suitability of a person found over an advertisement need to be evaluated by the parents personally. Added value of the project is that the homecare child-minder, a qualified service-provider who as a rule has something to teach the children and who loves the ones she is caring for, finds employment – and the parents can go to work.

Pille-Riin Moilanen, a trained child-minder on her further career:

“I have no great ambitions. I want to deal with children and make a priority of their interests. I hope over the years to provide services for children who need it and for their parents, who can peacefully go to work, while their children are kept and happy.”

Theme: Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the reintegration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services.

Models of Distance Working for Estonian Islands

Objective: to improve employment in Estonian islands and peripheral regions through implementation of models of teleworking and flexible work arrangements.

Activities:

- mapping the labour market situation of the island region of Estonia;
- evaluating the options of application of internationally used teleworking and flexible work arrangements;
- developing suitable models of teleworking and flexible work arrangements;
- developing the subject syllabus, study materials, training the training providers;
- organising trainings for segmented target groups;
- carrying out models of teleworking and flexible work formats;
- evaluation of strengths-weaknesses of the project and of the effectiveness/economy within the framework of development partnership and international cooperation;
- organising a conference for the parties;
- distributing informational material to wider public.

Budget: 357,690 euros.

Lead partner: NGO Arhipelaag.

Partners: Foundation Tuuru, Fontes Project Management.

International partners: Equinex in Wales, Great Britain; DP9 in Ireland.

Homepage: <http://equal.arhipelaag.ee>

Modern times: workplace is where worker is

The non-profit association Arhipelaag on the island of Hiiumaa has since 1997 been actively involved in the field of nature conservation, culture and rural economy. In cooperation with Fontes Project Management, Arhipelaag initiated a teleworking project in 2004, to introduce the hitherto underdeveloped models of teleworking and flexible work arrangements on islands and in the coastal areas where geographical peculiarities limit the options of finding work on the spot or in the neighbouring county. The aim is to enhance the spreading of teleworking and flexible work arrangements on the islands, to reduce emigration

Working place at seaside? Why not!





Toomas Kokovkin

and improve the quality of life.

Teleworking means that the work is done via computers and telephone, and partially or entirely outside the usual working place. The movement of information replaces the movement of people.

Work is accomplished both at home and in teleworking centres. For example, a teleworker can be a single person whose specialty is translating, programming, accounting, sales work etc. Another possibility is that an enterprise stations a subdivision outside the main premises. Work related to digitalisation can be done like this – archival services, cartography, image processing.

“The preferred option is the one of teleworking centres, where single teleworkers use specially designed buildings for their work which have good connection with the outside world and decent office conditions,” explains head of NGO Arhipelaag and the teleworking project manager Toomas Kokovkin.

As an example of a functioning teleworking option he points out the family physicians’ counselling telephone started in August 2005, which came into being in cooperation with the Medical Family Counselling Centre. Fontes indeed launched the

project earlier, but the training was conducted within the framework of EQUAL and the counselling telephone was started on the basis of teleworking. The service is being provided around the clock and all over Estonia, it is meant for those in need of medical and health-related advice in both the Estonian and Russian languages. Professional medical nurses and physicians do the counselling. For a service like this, the teleworking arrangement suits well.

The project managed by Arhipelaag also stands for the introduction of flexible work arrangements – working part-time. In that case an employee spends a limited number of days a week at the working place of the employer, teleworking the rest of the time. This helps to save the transport and housing costs, time etc of employees from distant areas.

“There is sufficient interest on the islands towards our topic, which gives us hope for continued results of the project in the future. By the end of the project we hope to launch two-three teleworking centres on the islands,” says Kokovkin.

At the moment, the EQUAL teleworking project is in the stage of background research and developing teleworking models. Polls have been organised in the local governments of the islands of Saaremaa, Hiiumaa, Vormsi and Kihnu. For

a longer period there has been a questionnaire available for the passengers on the ferries travelling between the islands. Ahead of us lies the work with business people who might be interested in optimising their expenses by means of teleworking.



Tiit Laja, possessor of family physicians' counselling telephone services:

“The counselling telephone 1220 was awarded the title of Estonia’s best public service in 2005 and is unique in the world. The family physicians’ counselling telephone has been doing very well. Over 10 thousand calls come in during a day. The quality of calls is good and uniform everywhere, whether the call is from downtown, Tallinn, or from peripheral areas.”

Theme: Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the reintegration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services.

Development and Application of Farmers` Replacement Service

Objective: creating relief service for farmers-cattle breeders to substitute them in case of illness, days off and vacation. Creating employment in rural areas.

Activities:

- mapping of necessity, working out strategy and structure of the service, selecting of coordination units and potential relief workers;
- training of relief workers including field training in the farms;
- notifying and counselling of farmers;
- lobby work, participating in legislation process;
- implementing the system in 1–2 regions;
- analysing and publishing the results.

Budget: 458,119 euros.

Lead partner: Estonian Farmers` Federation.

Partners in Estonia: Harju Farmers` Federation, Ida-Virumaa Farmers` Federation, Pärnumaa Farmers` Federation, Raplamaa Farmers` Federation, Viljandi Farmers` Federation, Võrumaa Farmers` Federation, Labour Market Board Pärnumaa Department, Labour Market Board Raplamaa Department, Labour Market Board Viljandimaa Department, Labour Market Board Võrumaa Department.

International partners: WEB for Empowerment in Italy, Cíteres per la Igualtat in Spain, Lesnický výskumný ústav Zvolen (Union of Female Forest Owners) in Slovakia.

Homepage: www.taluliit.ee



Kalev Kann, owner of Päivila farm in Võrumaa, is able to manage business outside his village due to the availability of relief service for farmers.

Relief worker provides for country people earned vacation

In Estonia, the Working and Rest Time Act and the Holidays Act do not extend to the farmers who usually are self-employed persons. Fatigue and stress as a result of overwork has plagued the dairy farmer and his family for years. They can not take days off or sickness leave and are discriminated on the labour market compared with other entrepreneurs.

For years there has been talk on substituting dairy farmers but so far resources for implementation were lacking. EQUAL provided the way to implement it.



Riina Kaldaru

By the words of Riina Kaldaru, adviser of Estonian Farmer's Federation and EQUAL project manager, the planned national service would enable cattle breeders from all Estonian parts to turn to the closest office in Western, Northern, Southern, Central and Viru regions and order relief worker for agreed time, ensuring waited rest for one and employment for the other.

"Training of initial group of 14 potential relief farmers will start in March at Türi and in the end of May the graduates will start practice in different farms," says Kaldaru. "From August 1st to October 1st farmers are supposed to submit the first applications to the Estonian Agricultural Registers and Information Board to obtain substitute workers."

There is a section on payment of substitution support to agricultural producers in Rural Development and Agricultural Market Regulation Act but so far there are no regulations to implement it. This year Ministry of Agriculture has allocated the first sums to reimburse agricultural producers payments on relief service and Ministry of Social Affairs hopes to complete the regulations.

Project Steering Committee has prepared relief service development strategy on the basis of which service will be launched. Simultaneously with informational and launching seminars in every county where a new service and its opportunities are introduced, training of substitutes was started. Inquiry of 350 dairy farmers were requirements of

the service and relief workers are determined is in the last phase.

Riina Kaldaru has been somewhat saddened by the lack of initiative among farmers now when the opportunity is here. No wheel needs to be reinvented: experience of numerous countries, incl. Denmark, Finland, Holland and Ireland are in favour of the relief service.

"At the beginning we cannot guarantee full-time work for all trained reliefs and maybe there will not be enough orders either," thinks Kaldaru, "but it is planned to recruit and train 200 people

during the project, about 80 ought to start working. It is important that the relief farmers will not seek work on their own nor become attached to any particular farm, but are coordinated by

regional office which can guarantee work in longer perspective not casual. Regional office will guarantee constant availability of the service, competency of recruited relief workers and quality of the services."

The requirements for training candidates are high: they must have agricultural education or minimum 2 years working experience in agricultural enterprise.



Arvo Veidenberg, milk producer and Chairman of the Board of Estonian Farmer's Federation:

"The relief service makes my life as a milk producer a lot easier. I do use a substitute for holidays or in case of sickness. Currently I am substituting the milker myself, but that is often hard to arrange. The relief service is also needed in feed production and other activities related to dairy cattle."

Theme: Supporting the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers.

Increasing the Readiness of the Estonian Society for Integrating Asylum Seekers

Objective: to develop proposals to governmental authorities, local governments and non-governmental organisations on how to organise social and employment integration of asylum seekers.

Activities:

- to make a research on the possible scope of the problem in near future;
- to make a research on the possible number of asylum seekers and their geographical, social, cultural and religious background;
- determining the readiness of Estonian state institutions and local governments and of the society to receive asylum seekers.

Budget: 108,650 euros.

Lead partner: Jaan Tõnisson Institute.

Partner in Estonia: Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia.

International partners: ROC Nijmegen in Netherlands, Community of Goodwill NGO in Slovakia, Uganda Community Relief Association in Great Britain.

Homepage: www.jti.ee

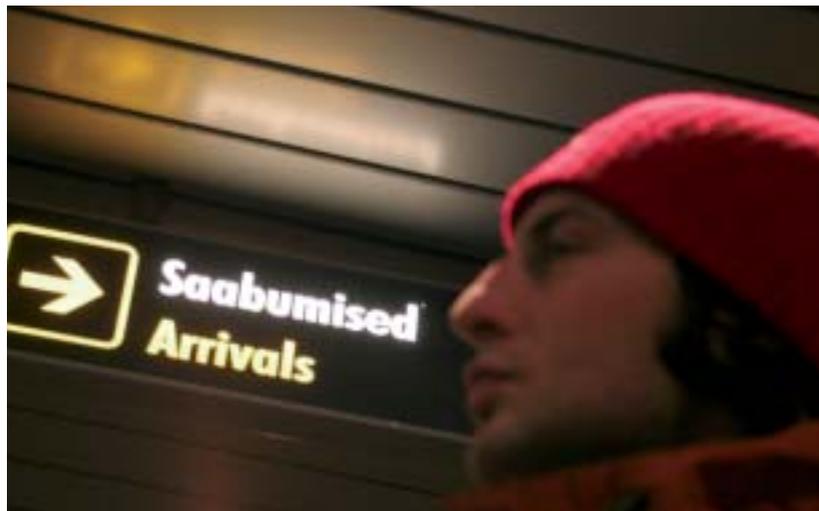
Who lives well in Estonia?

It is not easy to enter the Estonian labour market for those whose language, culture and social background are completely different from us even if the state has approved their reception.

Jaan Tõnisson Institute in cooperation with Mart Nutt, one of the authors of the Estonian Aliens and Refugees Act, initiated a project within EQUAL to increase Estonia's readiness to integrate asylum seekers into the society.

According to the opinion of the project manager Lehte Roots, the greatest achievements of the project so far are

10 to 15 people a year apply for asylum in Estonia.





Lehte Roots

the two researches. The first one comprises all previous studies and information related to migration, including what relevant laws currently affect asylum seekers. The other one deals with the awareness and attitudes of the population of Estonia towards the refugees. It was assumed that after joining the European Union and the Schengen visa system the number of refugees might increase

and Estonia should be prepared for that.

“The analyses revealed that the Estonian society is not ready to receive refugees,” says Roots, “91% of the population does not know the topic and people have surprising opinions about defining refugees. While 35% of those questioned accepted immigrants from CIS (as a large part of our population comes from CIS countries that was to be expected), only 1% accepted immigrants from Islamic countries, while 2% agreed to those from Africa. At the same time there was a contradiction in the answers: for example, 53% of those questioned agreed to live next door to black people. There is more tolerance among younger people.”

Based on the analyses, proposals will be made for issuing legislations, and proposals will be prepared for governmental authorities, local governments and NGO-s – for those who are in direct contact with immigrants – on how to organise

the social and employment integration of asylum seekers. Finally, Jaan Tõnisson Institute has received numerous ideas from foreign partners, as well as opportunities to compare their project with those carried out in other countries.

Lehte Roots has personally been in touch with refugees as a lawyer of NGO

called Estonian Refugee Council and she finds that a country which desires to see refugees integrated into its society should make sure that school-aged children of refugee families should attend schools where

the language of instruction is Estonian.

It has been expected that the number of asylum seekers will increase during the ten years when Estonia has received asylum applications and it was foreseen that the number would increase after Estonia joined the European Union in 2004. In reality the numbers have been stable. An average of 10 to 15 persons apply for asylum in a year. Estonia has granted asylum to four persons and residence permit on the basis of subsidiary protection has been granted to ten people, as they cannot be sent back to their homeland because of persecution or torture.

Lehte Roots:

“A Kurdish family from Turkey sought asylum in Estonia, a mother with two children. The mother was illiterate. During the proceedings of application for asylum, the children attended an Estonian school. The elder child, a boy at the age of 12, became the head of the family, whose task was to communicate between mother and the society. Through school the boy acquired a closer relationship with the Estonian language and the society. By now the family has left Estonia as they were not granted asylum.”

Summary



The EQUAL programme has been successful in the Member States of the European Union. As it ends in 2008, there is reason to believe that the Estonian society will also be impacted by the influence of the development partnerships. Our development partnerships are diversified and it is difficult to generalise their innovative methods. What we can say is that close to 2,500 people are involved in the 13 projects with 1,500 people all over Estonia being trained, including parents, problem gamblers, former prostitutes and victims of trafficking in persons, farmers, residents of islands and peripheral areas, employers, young probationers, disabled persons and their caregivers. Close to 250 new jobs are being created within the development partnerships, and about the same number of unemployed people will be helped to find work.

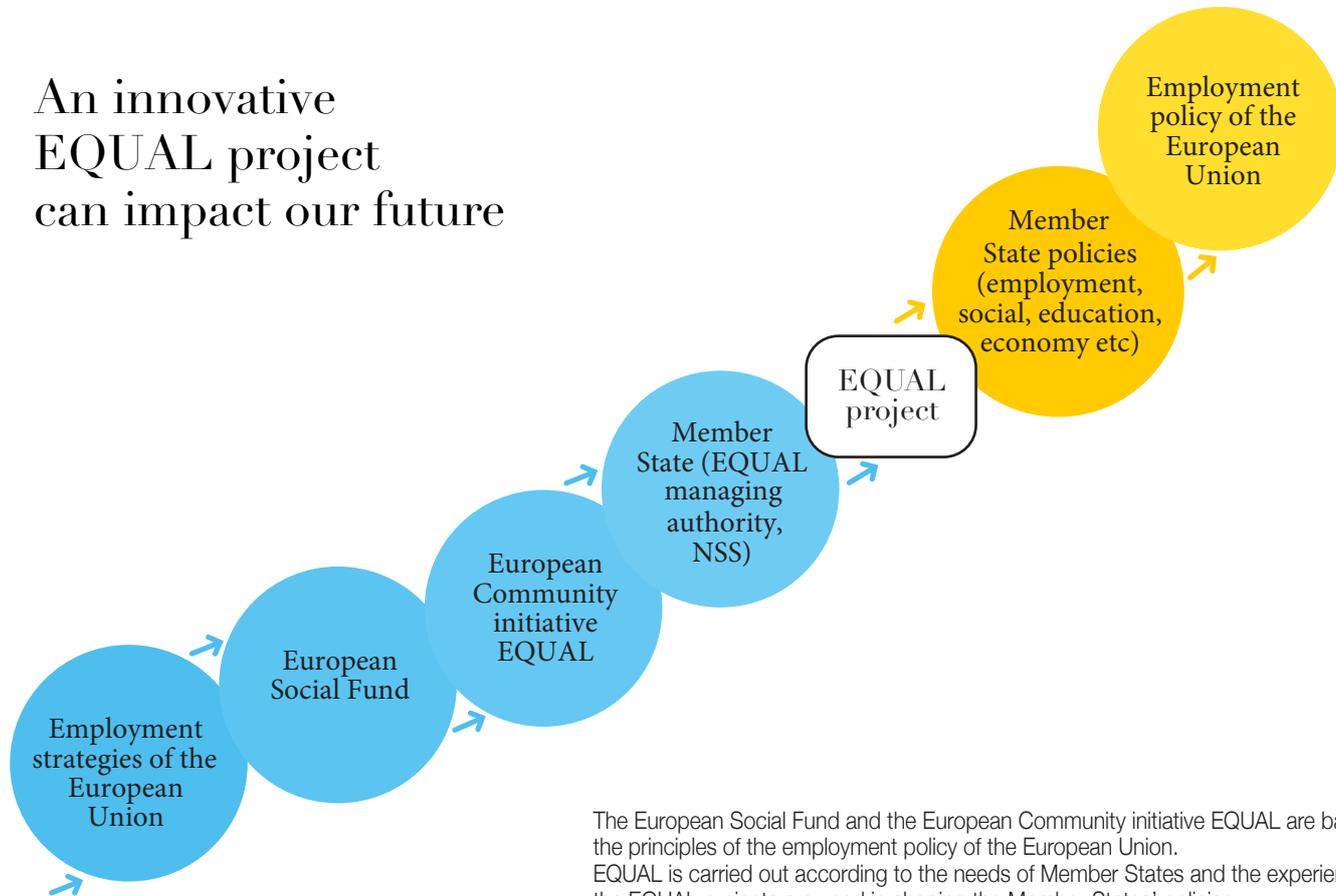
The European Community initiative EQUAL contains challenges to change the Estonian labour market policy on both local and pan-European levels. All in all, the Estonian development partnerships have 44 international cooperation partners. Together, glossaries are developed to change professional terminology, research is carried out, seminars are held to share experiences etc.

The EQUAL programme is also characterised by public disclosure of results that those seeking solutions to similar problems might benefit from the examples provided. The majority of Estonian EQUAL development partnerships make use of research and polls. The first research results are already evident and being introduced to the target groups, media and the public. Study programmes, instructions and handbooks are also developed. All EQUAL development partnerships will mainstream their results and conclusions known at home and abroad. Several projects conclude with a conference.

Seeking solutions to social problems starts with internal cooperation in Estonia. Almost a half of the projects aim at impacting the public structures, the remaining half is dealing mainly with innovation on local or regional levels. Policy makers, local government officials and employers are involved in carrying out the plans of the development partnerships.

EQUAL reaches everywhere – to cities and the countryside, to the workplace and the home, to offices and to fields!

An innovative EQUAL project can impact our future



The European Social Fund and the European Community initiative EQUAL are based on the principles of the employment policy of the European Union. EQUAL is carried out according to the needs of Member States and the experiences of the EQUAL projects are used in shaping the Member States' policies. This, in turn, has an impact both on our lives and the EU employment policy.

EQUAL development partnerships in Estonia 2004 2008

| LEAD PARTNER | PROJECT | PARTNERS | INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS | CONTACT PERSON | BUDGET, EUR |
|---|--|--|--|--|----------------|
| Theme A: Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated into a labour market which must be open to all. | | | | | |
| Foundation Tuuru | <p>We Friends Development Partnership)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hiiumaa County Government - Association of Local Authorities of Hiiumaa County - Hiiumaa Tourism Association - Saaremaa Training Centre - Lääne County Development Centre - Labour Market Board Hiiumaa Department - Veistitali Ltd. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PER.LA.DP in Italy - DIANA.DP in Spain | <p>Mare Ellen mare@tuuru.edu.ee +372 489 8201 www.wefriends.hiiumaa.ee</p> | 453,773 |
| NGO Caritas Eesti | <p>RE-START (Comprehensive Measures for Integrating Youth with Criminal Records into the Labour Market)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Viljandi Prison - Harju County Court | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NEW HORIZONS in Finland, Holland, Poland, Great Britain, France and Italy | <p>Jaano Räsä jaano@kesa.ee +372 55 638 800 www.kesa.ee</p> | 636,889 |
| National Institute for Health Development | <p>Integration of Women Involved in Prostitution into the Labour Market</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGO Estonian Women's Studies and Resources Centre (ENUJ) - Open Estonia Foundation - NGO Lifeline - NGO Sigmund | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Associazione On the Road in Italy - Comissão para a Igualdade e para os Direitos das Mulheres in Portugal - La Strada Fundacja przeciwno Handlowi Kobietami in Poland - IOM Deutschland in Germany - Missing persons' families support center in Lithuania | <p>Riina Enke riina_enke@tai.ee +372 659 3901 www.tai.ee</p> | 568,807 |
| OU Lider Grupp | <p>Re-integration of Compulsive Gamblers into the Labour Market</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Institute for Problem Gambling and Treatment (HUVI) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - G.A.M.E. in France - SEIREN in Great Britain | <p>Pille-Piin Kaare pille-piin@uvu.ee www.huvu.ee</p> | 619,099 |
| NGO Eurohouse | <p>HAPECO (Handicapped People Employed in Cooperatives)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Saaremaa Educational Centre - Development Centre of Lääne-maa County - Foundation Tuuru - Türi Cooperative Development Centre - Põhja Cooperative Development Centre - Viljandi Cooperative Development Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lan Ekintza in Spain - Groupement Aquitain des Réseaux de l'Insertion par l'activité Economique (GARIE) in France | <p>Merit Trei eurohouse@eurohouse.ee +372 453 9008 www.eurohouse.ee</p> | 475,889 |

Theme G: Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the reintegration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work, organisation and support services.

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|---|--|---|--|--|---------|
| Estonian Employers' Confederation | Flexible Forms of Training and Work (Choices and Balance) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGO Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre (ENUU) - PRAXIS Center for Policy Studies - Office of the Minister of Population and Ethnic Affairs - Estonian Law Centre Foundation - University of Tallinn Open University and Career and Counselling Centre - Estonian Confederation of Midwives (Family School) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Process Investyvcyjne S.A in Poland - Consortiile Ass. For-SEO in Italy - Garnt Visser Beheer BV in Netherlands - Telezentrum Neustadt GmbH & Co. KG in Germany | Kadri Saeder kadri@electric.ee +372 50 90 039 www.cb.ee | 394,808 |
| Viljandi County Government | Connected Services for Integrating Young Mothers into the Labour Market | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Association of Local Authorities of Viljandi County - Labour Market Board Viljandimaa Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Donna E Avvenire in Italy - ENTER in Poland - Az esélybőlcsoedje in Hungary | Liit Palmer liit.palmar@kft.ee +372 555 22 306 www.viljandimaa.ee/equal | 200,207 |
| Tartu Folk High School | WHOLE – Work and Home in Our Life in Europe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Geomedia Consulting and Training Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SINTONIE in Italy - ELOSA in Spain - SER MAIS SER MELHOR in Portugal | Ene Nobel ene@rahvaylikool.ee +372 736 1539 www.rahvaylikool.ee/equal | 269,474 |
| Tartu County's Board of Disabled People | Development of Multifunctional Care Service to Enhance Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Estonian Agrenska Foundation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carers UK in Great Britain - A.R.C.O. in Italy - Palliative Care Centre for Children in Latvia - Oidots and LOT the Dutch Carers Association in Netherlands | Senta Michelson tantukoda@hot.ee +372 736 6762 www.tantukodia.ee | 287,602 |
| State Chancellery of the Republic of Estonia (Office of the Minister of Population and Ethnic Affairs) | Children Taken Care of, Mothers at Work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family Education Institute - Põlva Union for Child Welfare | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International co-operation agreement «Pimavera» - Welsh Development Agency in Wales, Great Britain - Res International in Italy - Conseil General des Cotes d'Armor in France | Erika Vahmäe erika.vahmae@riigikantslei.ee +372 693 5259 www.pki.ee | 216,632 |
| NGO Arhipelaag | Models of Distance Working for Estonian Islands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foundation Tuuru - Fontes Project Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equinex in Wales, Great Britain - DP9 in Ireland | Toomas Kokovkin toomas@arhipelaag.ee +372 463 2133 http://equal.arhipelaag.ee | 357,690 |
| Estonian Farmers' Federation | Development and Application of Farmers' Replacement Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harju Farmers' Federation - Ida-Virumaa Farmers' Federation - Pärnumaa Farmers' Federation - Raplamaa Farmers' Federation - Viljandi Farmers' Federation - Võrumaa Farmers' Federation - Labour Market Board Pärnumaa Department - Labour Market Board Raplamaa Department - Labour Market Board Viljandimaa Department - Labour Market Board Võrumaa Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WEB for Empowerment in Italy - Cierres per la Igualtat in Spain - Lesnický výskumny ústav Zlolen in Slovakia | Riina Kaidaru riina@talulit.ee +372 604 1403 www.talulit.ee | 458,119 |

Theme I: Supporting the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers.

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|---------------------------------|--|---|--|--|---------|
| Jaani Tõnisson Institute | Increasing the Readiness of the Estonian Society for Integrating Asylum Seekers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ROC Nijmegen in Netherlands - Community of Goodwill NGO in Slovakia - Uganda Community Relief Association in Great Britain | Lehte Roots lroot@titi.ee +372 561 54 540 www.titi.ee | 108,650 |
|---------------------------------|--|---|--|--|---------|



EQUAL in Estonia is prepared and its implementation coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia.
Labour Market Board coordinates the implementation of the projects.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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USEFUL LINKS

- * European Commission's EQUAL homepage: www.europa.eu.int/comm/equal
- * Estonian EQUAL programme homepage: www.tta.ee/equal
- * EU Structural Funds homepage in Estonia: <http://www.strukturifondid.ee>