



Out-of-school care for children living in disadvantaged areas

Estonia

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Introduction and policy context

Estonia is the smallest and Northernmost of the Baltic countries. The state language, Estonian, is obligatory for everybody but most Russians still only use Russian, and this can pose particular challenges – for example these circumstances have a negative impact on their situation in the labour market, making it more likely for them to be economically inactive. The breakdown of the population by ethnic nationality in the 2000 Population Census shows 68% Estonians, 26% Russians, 2% Ukrainians and 4% others (Minifacts about Estonia 2003).

In 2002 the monthly average gross income per employee in Estonia was €377.80 and by 2005 this had risen to €502. This average differs between counties. Average income is highest in Harju county and lowest in East-Viru county where the proportion of non-Estonians is the highest. The levels of average wages were directly related to the local governments' distance from Tallinn. The average wages in the local governments situated near Tallinn were higher than the average wages in those situated further away. For example in 2002-2004, Harju county was the only county where the monthly average gross income per employee exceeded the Estonian average. (Servinski & Kivilaid 2006, 49, 52). The average income is lowest in borderland: in East-Viru county and in South Estonia.

Disadvantaged areas in Estonia are in the Eastern and the Southern areas but there are families facing disadvantage in other areas too, and evidence suggests that three quarters of the country consists of disadvantaged areas (Lõo 2006, 71). Some parts of Tallinn have disadvantaged areas, for example in North Tallinn. In Estonia, there are no Out of School activities exclusively for children from disadvantaged areas. Hobby schools are universal and there are no specific strategies for OSC in disadvantaged areas, because there is no official designation of areas.

In 2002, based on the European Union relative poverty indicators 17.9% of the population in Estonia lived in poverty. The number of children living in absolute poverty decreased from 40.4% in 1998 to 25.3% in 2004. For 2006-2008 Estonia has set itself two priority objectives:

1. prevention and reduction of long-term unemployment and exclusion from the labour market; and
2. prevention and alleviation of poverty and social exclusion among families with children.

One of the problems in rural areas is the residents' poor mobility: there are no local jobs and there are difficulties in accessing jobs that are located away from home due to poor public transport and limited access to private transport. 75% of unemployed people in the South of Estonia cannot accept a job offered to them due to its distance (poor transport) or the cost of transport. Two-thirds of unemployed people in the South are long-term unemployed (Mäger et al 2006, 105).

According to the Statistical Board in 2006, 101,747 children (five to 12 years old) live in Estonia, forming about 7% of the population.

In the Republic of Estonia basic education is the general education that is available to everybody and basic education in state schools is free. Children attend school from the age of seven years until they are 17. School hours are from 8.00. until 13.30, 14.30 or 15.30 –depending on the level of education. There is a national curriculum and each school develops its own study program based on the curriculum. An individual study plan is prepared for students who require special support.

Out of school care services for children living in disadvantaged areas

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the national policy for the development of children which includes a specific emphasis on Out of School Care (OSC). There is currently no central data gathered or held about Out of School Care (OSC) activities in Estonia and there is no detailed outreach level information about activities. Most regions in Estonia do not have a development plan for working with children and young people. In Tallinn, Tartu and Jõgeva, and a further three local governments are currently developing a plan, and two are due to start developing a plan soon. (Huviharidus... 2005, 8)

In 1999 the Youth Work Act was implemented which includes concepts in youth work.

Out-of-school care in Estonia

Hobby schools form the main type of Out of School Care in Estonia. Hobby School activities are regulated by the Ministry of Education which provides a common curriculum and certifies instructors. They are supervised by the government and receive most of their funding from municipal governments (Palu 2000, 23). Hobby education is a field of youth work that enables young people to participate in extra curricular activities which facilitate their development in different fields outside formal education and work.

Hobby education is a field of youth work that is regulated as a part of the education system. It enables young people to improve their knowledge, creativity and skills with the help of feasible activities. Theoretical knowledge is used in practical activities: both traditional and modern learning skills are used and as a result young people acquire a creative attitude to life.

Sub-categories of hobby education are culture in general (handicrafts, folk art, languages, history of culture, regional studies, etc.), creative work (music, art, dance, etc.), nature and environment, technology and sport.

Hobby education institutions co-operate with different public, non-profit and business sector institutions.

Hobby education is aimed at improving the integration of young people into the work environment.

State support is prioritised for hobby schools that provide introductory vocational skills.

(Estonian youth work concept approved by government 3 July, 2001)

The state and local governments help to organise hobby education outside schools. Parliament passed the Hobby Education Schools Act that regulates the activities of sports, music, arts and creative school centres. There is a network of sports, music and art schools throughout Estonia, where pupils can pursue their hobbies with support from the state budget.

Local government is responsible for hobby education but there is not a consistent approach across the country. There is no national strategy for hobby education and development is ad hoc based on local need and circumstance. Terms and conditions for staff are not considered to be favourable. (Huviharidus 2005, 18, 21). Hobby education is part of the Estonian education system. They are organised through schools, public youth centres, interest group centres, youth associations and non-profit organisations. The most popular activities are visual art, applied art and handicraft, music, dance, technology and sports.

Hobby schools are places where children can spend their time after their normal schooldays. Pre-school age children (starting from four years) can participate if they wish. Participation rates in the under seven year old age group is not as high as the 7-plus age group. (Huviharidus... 2005)

According to research the after school activities are important, because they improve:

- the image of the school and area;
- the life quality of the area in general, because most cultural events are open for everybody (concerts, exhibitions, theatre);
- old traditions are revived, for example small Estonian zithers are built and used once again;

- hobby education and children's handicraft are valued more and more at all levels: for example local governments use the product of the children's creative work as souvenirs and gifts at public events;
- according to parents, hobby education keeps the children away from bad behaviour on the streets (Huviharidus... 2005, 7).

There are 206 licensed hobby schools in Estonia, and about 49,000 young people study in them. Approximately 13,300 of these study music and art, 13,400 participate in sports, and the rest focus on other interests. The official Hobby Education Schools Act regulates the activities of hobby education schools.

The total number of hobby-schools and youth centres in 2006 was 557 (Mets 2006). The difference between hobby-schools and youth centres is that the first has a curriculum and is more specific – the responsibility in hobby-schools is bigger and it is staffed by a teacher. Youth centres are less formal and structured. In hobby-schools, in contrast, you have to develop in your subject, for example music schools usually require you to practice at home.

In most hobby schools administered by the local government there is a tuition fee which varies between areas and between schools. The prices are about €15 to € 40 a month, they are influenced by many things, mostly by how often the child participates in the hobby school. It is possible to participate five times a week. There is no general price level across the country: the prices can differ considerably. Most parents in Estonia spend about €20 a month per child on hobby education (Factum 2005). It is possible for the parents to claim some of the money back through the tax system. The Estonian tax system with its flat 22% rate of individual taxation is one of the most liberal tax regimes in Europe. All spendings on children's education reduce the sum from which one has to pay the taxes. It means that the final price of tuition fee is about one-fifth cheaper than the original price.

More is invested in hobby education in more affluent areas, and hobby education is best developed in these areas. There are differences between urban and rural areas. In bigger cities local government spends on average €182 per child a year, whereas the amount spent in rural areas is €49. (Ainsaar jt. 2004, according to Huvialaharidus ... 2005, 17)

All of the hobby schools and OSC activities are open to everybody. In Estonia there are no OSC activities targeted specifically at children with special needs. Hobby schools are available for every child, but some children who need it receive financial support from city government depending on the income level of the parent(s). Other parents (with at least the average income level) have to pay at full cost. The income level eligible to apply for financial support from the local city government for hobby education is:

If the net income of a family with two members is under €104 a month;

If the net income of a family with three members is under €150 a month;

If the net income of a family with four members is under €196 month.

If the household income is less than these figures, they are eligible to apply for support called "money for sports and hobby-education". At first the bill has to be paid by the parent(s) and the parent(s) gets some money back when they present a receipt. Subsidies do not exceed €128 a year or €107 a month.

Income levels are very important in the out of school care field in Estonia. According to research, if parents have more money, children participate in hobby-education more actively. This is illustrated in Table 1 which shows good provision in Tallinn and poorer provision in the south and east parts of Estonia. According to the Statistical Office, families without

financial problems spend over three times more on the children's out of school activities than poorer families. (Tiit 2005, 58) This reflects the fact that the OSC activities are more affordable and accessible to more affluent people. There is support to help the less wealthy families to access activities, but poorer people in Estonia have other priorities for expenditure.

Table 1: *Hobby-schools and Youth centres in Estonia*

	Number of 7-26* year old people	Number of hobby-schools and youth centres	Children per OSC- institution
The capital Tallinn and its Harju county	130,562	209	625
East part of Estonia: East-Viru county	43,628	41	1064
South part of Estonia: Põlva, Valga and Võru county	29,334	36	815
Average of Estonian	359,613	557	646
Saaremaa (our biggest island)	10,030	18	557
Pärnumaa (west part of Estonia)	24,658	45	548

(Mets 2006)

There are increasing numbers of open access Youth Centres in Estonia for people aged between seven and 26 years. The activities in these centres include hobbies, activities, access to information technology, project work, special events and counselling. (Huviharidus 2005).

Where hobby schools and youth centres differ from ordinary general education schools is that transport to them is the responsibility of the family. If a parent is working, the child has to go to the hobby school alone, or the grandparent, relative or friend must take him/her there. During the school year very many grandparents, who live in the cities, take care of the children after school. The grandparents will take the child from the school to the hobby school and then collect them.

In addition to hobby-schools and youth centres there are hobby activities in general education schools which are organised by the director of extracurricular activities. This is out of school care in that children can participate in hobby education after the school day, but clubs in this case are located in the school building. Specialists, who are responsible for children's hobby education, work in bigger schools. Hobby education which is organised by the school is very important in the rural areas or in smaller towns, because this is the only way for many of the children living there to spend the time after school. This is an important field of out of school care activity in Estonia because it is free and voluntary. The activities are not as demanding as hobby schools and the curriculum is not fixed. It is easier for a child to participate in it. Although hobby-activities in schools are situated in the school-buildings, they are not a part of compulsory education, this is an important service, especially for children in the rural areas, because outside bigger towns there are only some clubs and hobby-schools in and transport to them can be difficult.

Availability of hobby education depends to a certain extent on location – in larger towns and cities and in municipal centres there is a wider selection of hobby schools and clubs and good public transport. In smaller towns and villages and in less densely populated regions where there are few or no opportunities to obtain hobby education, the sparseness or lack of public transport services presents a problem if parents do not have their own means of transport. This is the reason why hobby activities after school which are based in the school building are especially important for children in rural areas.

Camps in Estonia as a 'babysitter'.

The summer holiday for under 12 year old children in the Estonian schools lasts from the 1st of June until the 1st of September. In October there is one week off, during Christmas time two weeks, and one more week in March. The average holiday for working parents is about four weeks a year and so care is needed during a significant proportion of school holidays and parents have to consider what to do with the child during the long summer holiday.

A key service addressing this need is holiday care. There are residential camps outside the cities during the school holidays and there are city-camps where activities are organised during the day-time and children go home at night. The children are looked after and kept active to enable parents to work. City camps are becoming more specific, for example art-camps, where children visit museums, talk about art, and they can create something new.

Summer camps are a tradition which started in the Soviet time, but city camps is a new field which has developed in the last five or six years. One week in a city camp can cost about €30, but sometimes it is free for all the children. (Aasmäe 2003). For example, projects in some children's libraries in Tallinn, called "Literary fairyland", allow children to watch movies, produce something, read and play during the school holidays. There was free entrance to the workshop "What is a dance", organized by a dance theatre. One city camp was organized by a puppet theatre, where children learnt some acting and the art of making puppets. City camps are very popular and are booked up early (Aasmäe 2003).

There are also youth camps for children and young people aged 7 to 18 years in Estonia. These take place over the summer holidays. The camp voucher has to be paid for by parents and the price is between €70 and €80 per week. The Ministry of Education and Research allocates funds to partially cover the cost of the voucher for Youth Camps and local government supports children from low income and at-risk families by covering the cost of the camp voucher partially or fully. The maximum support for participation in different camps is 128€ per year and parents on low income have the right to apply for this for their children. It means that in Estonia we have support for hobby education in general and for camps during school holidays. This funding is paid to parents by cheque into the account in arrears.

Youth camps are operated by commercial enterprises, non-profit associations, foundations and Estonian churches.

Youth camps must have an activity license. The goal of youth camps is to provide young people with care and activities during holidays which have programs to facilitate their development and provide recreation in a secure supervised environment. (From ESTONIAN YOUTH WORK CONCEPT Approved by government 3 July 2001)

The staff in the camps are trained in youth work or pedagogy. Very often they are teachers in schools who make some extra money during the summer holiday. The quality of camps is supervised very carefully by the Ministry of Education and by parents, who are active in them. Parents can visit their child at the weekends in the camp. All staff in the camps are paid and there are no volunteers.

One of the organisers of camps is the Estonian Union for Child Welfare, which supports out of school care activities like child-care centers and camps through different projects (Palu 2000, 24- 25). Two of the projects provide children and young people with the opportunity to attend a summer holiday in youth camps. The project "Discovering Myself" enables children between 7-15 years of age to spend their holiday in two camps organised in the Estonian villages of Remniku and Pivarootsi. Both camps offer thematic recreation programs, which are developed in line with the interests and needs of the target group. The main target groups include children from children's homes, children facing social exclusion or at risk of social exclusion and children from disadvantaged families who do not usually have the chance to participate in hobby and leisure activities. Whilst they do not necessarily come from disadvantaged areas, it would be reasonable to assume that a sizeable proportion live in poorer areas of Estonia.

The project “Adventure” run by the Estonian Union for Child Welfare is targeted at developing childrens coping, communication and cooperation skills through individual and group activities for example hiking, climbing and canoeing.

The project “Fifth Quarter” coordinates the activities of the member organisations of the Estonian Union for Child Welfare at local level and provides recreational programs aimed at improving educational achievement through working with children and young people between 10 and 17 years.

The aim of the camps is to offer holiday care and emotional and social development opportunities to children from low income households. There are many positive impacts on the children and their families. The developmental and recreational holidays offer activities to:

- increase the opportunities for young people to spend time in youth camps that offer varied activities to facilitate their development.
- support the establishment of new youth camps, through work to preserve and renovate existing youth camps and make them accessible for young people with disabilities.
- run special youth work projects and programs in youth camps to involve young disadvantaged people.
- guarantee stable, state financed support for care and developmental opportunities and recreational holidays.
- ensure that public, third and business sector are involved in the organisation of developmental and recreational holidays.
- create possibilities for personnel training, taking into account the developmental and recreational holiday projects for groups of young people with special needs.
- promote international exchange of young people in youth camps.

Monitoring and evaluation of out-of-school care

There is no systematic data gathered or published about OSC activities in Estonia but it is an increasingly important field and has moved up the policy agenda.

Feedback from parents and children on the benefits and impact is not usually gathered. However, some hobby schools do gather children's and parents' views. Some local governments are showing more interest in the area of OSC and including it in their budgets. In West-Viru the local government carried out a survey in 2002 which showed that 33% of school students visit more than one hobby club or school and that 13% of the children in this country do not participate in any hobby school. Reasons for not attending are:

- lack of money;
- lack of teachers;
- lack of capacity in groups;
- lack of time;
- lack of transport;
- lack of parental support.

The most important problem is that there are not enough specialists for the different activities and pay and conditions are poor. The activities offered tend to be in areas traditionally more attractive to girls, with the result that boys are not so likely to attend, illustrated by the fact that only 30% of all participants in hobby-education are boys. (Huviharidus... 2005, 14).

A company called Factum investigated the parents' opinion about the OSC activities in Estonia (Factum 2005). The study showed that the OSC activities are most popular for children aged 10 to 14 years, and less popular for children aged four to six years though 71% of children in this age group still use them. Parents of boys considered the OSC activities slightly more important than parents who have girls. The most important impact of OSC reported in that study are:

- children are cared for in a secure, safe environment away from bad influences;
- it is a good, creative change from school;
- it provides opportunities for a child to learn something new and useful.

It found that the main reason for not participating in OSC is the lack of money. In rural areas and in smaller towns, there is more opportunity for free OSC activities because the local government gives more financial support to it.

The positive impact of OSC activities (according to the study of the Institute for Developing the Life on the Countryside 2005) is:

Individual: deepening of interests; self-confidence; development of personality (mental and physical); new knowledge; opportunity to complete – appreciation and achievement; sense of duty; better, more personal contact with the teacher; more possibilities for continuing their education; development of new ideas; spending time usefully.

School: hobby-education very often supports general education; children's interests and talents are developed; children's life orientations are active and positive; the image of the school is improved.

The Local Community: increased positive activity, positive creativity in all areas; decrease in antisocial behaviour; the image of the area will improve; co-operation, network and sense of community between people will be stronger (Huvialaharidu 2005, 11-12).

Conclusion

Education in Estonia is valued highly by the population. Estonia is a small country and only a good education makes our voice loud enough in the European Union. School education in Estonia is obligatory, hobby education is voluntary but as important for most children as ordinary education and in providing care outside of normal school hours. Out of school care activities in Estonia are well developed.

In general it seems like out of school activities can be divided into two strands: preventive and rehabilitative activities. The first one concentrates on the children's development, the second one mostly on solving problems faced by individuals. Parents consider that the preventive role of hobby education is very important for their children and their household. Some hobby education after school is in the same school building that the children attend as it makes it more accessible. The clubs in school buildings tend to be provided mostly free for children. The specialists who are running those activities are often teachers at the same school who get paid for this extra work.

Youth centres are very popular in Estonia and they are free. Young people can come and go when they want and they can participate in different activities, from games and internet access to counselling and project work. According to specialists, both Russians and Estonians visit these centres very often – this is an effective example of integration. The staff working there are qualified youth-workers. The positive impact of the institution is greatest for children from disadvantaged families because they have increased development and social opportunities. (Huviharidus.... 2005, 7).

The city-camps (in every school holiday) are very popular in Estonia and a key form of care for children of working parents. Different activities are organised during the day-time, but the children go back home to spend the night. Both city camps and residential summer camps (where children live from one to four weeks) are popular among Estonian families. Camps help to socialise children during the school holidays and they also keep children away from the street potentially becoming involved in problem behaviour.

The preventive out of school care and hobby education helps the children to develop socially when they participate in out of school activities.

When the Russian Army left Estonia, a situation was created in which the families (and sometimes only the children) of Russian soldiers preferred to stay in Estonia. The children who stayed now face economic difficulties which, in some cases, have caused them to be alienated from their own families and school. (Tiit & Eglon 2000, 20). Small town Paldiski in Estonia is a former army town and is a disadvantaged area with social problems. Youth work and OSC is very active there and the area is a good example of how intensive out of school care activities can have a positive influence. In small places this is easier, but in bigger cities the new problems hinder good results. One example here is North-Tallinn, where only 40% of the inhabitants are Estonians, most people are Russian and people of other nationalities.

One third (about 400,000 inhabitants) of the Estonian population lives in the capital-city, Tallinn which has affluent areas as well as disadvantaged areas. According to several indicators, one of the most problematic areas of the capital is North-Tallinn.

The OSC is a little bit different in this area as it is based more on addressing problems. For example, some of the OSC activities in North Tallinn are church-based through voluntary work and non-governmental organisations. The OSC opportunities for children in this disadvantaged area are coordinated by the local city quarter council. One of the oldest and most well known support centre for children is located in North Tallinn providing out of school care and support for children from disadvantaged families. It offers a range of activities and psychological support. This service is free for children and results are quite positive, for example increased engagement if required in school.

Rehabilitative youth work includes student homes which have developed in Estonia during the last seven or eight years. Care is provided for children after the school day involving leisure activities, and homework supervision. Children are resident in these centres during the week and sometimes over the weekend so whilst they do not fit the traditional OSC model in other parts of the EU it is an important part of the OSC infrastructure in Estonia. Most student homes are situated in disadvantaged rural areas or small towns.

List of interviewees

- 1) Alar Tamm, chief manager of Child Protection Union in Estonia. (alar&lastekaitseliit.ee)
- 2) Elsa Leiten from Ministry of Education in Estonia. (Elsa.Leiten&hm.ee)
- 3) Ene Raid and Pille Luiga from Centre of Youthwork in Estonia. (pille.luiga&entk.ee)
- 4) UNICEF officers in Tallinn. (Phone: + 372 6413300)
- 5) Enna Tikas, the leader of Youth Centre in small town Võhma (enna.tikas&mail.ee)
- 6) Tiit Terik from Pylades (summer-camp organisation): tiit&pylades.ee
- 7) Aime Lauk from Statistical Office of Estonia: aime.lauk&stat.ee
- 8) Eve Annus, the chief councillor for youth and children activities in Lasnamäe City government (Phone: + 372 6457719).
- 9) Kadri Voolaid from Vodja Student Home (kadri&jkk.ee)
- 10) Katrin Laur from city government of North-Tallinn: 6457040

Summary of methods:

- 1) content analysis of documents,
- 2) interviews with officers, teachers, youths workers and children,
- 3) observation of different OSC activities in Tallinn and outside of capital (in Paldiski, in Võhma, in Vodja Student Home).

Case Study 1: Paldiski

Paldiski is a town and Baltic Sea port situated on the Pakri peninsula of north-western Estonia. Originally a Swedish settlement known as *Rågervik*, it became a Russian naval base in the 18th century. The Russians renamed it *Балтийский Порт* – Baltiyskiy Port (i.e., Baltic Port) – in 1762, and the Estonian pronunciation, *Paldiski*, became the official name in 1933. In 1962, Paldiski became a Soviet Navy nuclear submarine training centre. With two land-based nuclear reactors, and employing some 16,000 people, it was the largest such facility in the Soviet Union. Because of its importance, the whole city was closed off with barbed wire until the last Russian warship left in August 1994. Russia finally relinquished control of the nuclear reactor facilities in September 1995. Now the town has only 4,000 inhabitants; amenities are limited to a supermarket, a hotel and a small pub. Derelict Soviet-style apartment buildings make up much of the town, and the relics of military occupation are widespread. For those interested in such things, it is easily accessible from Tallinn, and provides a grim and atmospheric feel, befitting its post-Soviet status

Located some 45 km west of Tallinn, Paldiski is a municipality within Harju County and has a regular ferry connection with Kapellskär in Sweden (operated by Tallink). When the Russian Army left Estonia, a situation was created in which the families (and sometimes only the children) of Russian soldiers preferred to stay in Estonia. The children who stayed now face economic difficulties, which, in some cases, have caused them to be alienated from their own families and school. After Estonia got independent, the soviet army had to leave, but some of their family members still stayed there with their children. This area is now known as one with social problems.

According to Jaanus Saat (a social worker in the child protection field of this town), from inhabitants of Paldiski, 1030 are Estonians and 2800 are non-Estonians (mostly Russians). All together there are people from 31 different nationalities. 1300 of them have an Estonian citizenship. 25% of inhabitants are children and youngsters, 25% are retired senior citizens.

Evidence of good practice

From children from 5 to 12 years, there are about 200 non-Estonians in Paldiski; and about 40 of them are quite poor. But children from such families (in need) can participate in all the out of school activities, if the family asks some financial support from the city government (parents should turn to social officers and ask social help).

- Children with special needs can spend their out of school time in a play-room at the library of the town (which is designed for children with special needs) and in Hobbycentre of Paldiski. The city government also supports excursions and trips for them. The Red Cross organization of Paldiski offers a possibility of a summer camp in Klooga each year (the financial support for this comes from Finland).
- In Paldiski ordinary schools are very active in the hobby educational field. Different circles and clubs at schools are free of charge. For example in the Gymnasium of Paldiski there is a choir for small children (under 10 years old), acting circle, sport games and art club; dancing, computer, a course where one can learn to play the drums, a club for handicraft, constructing and textile-work. The motto of this school is patriotic: „The most beautiful country is your homeland, and the most beautiful language is your mother tongue.“ And one speciality of this school (according to the home page of school) is that they have a milion dollars view from the school; another speciality - there is a school magazin/journal which is published by the pupils themselves. Paldiski Gymnasium is taking part in a bigger project of the Child Protection Union: „No violence“.

- In the Russian Gymnasium of Paldiski, there are dancing circle, acting club, handicraft circle, singing-groups, a puppet theatre, rhythmic, basketball, school of ball games. Russian children can participate in the language courses at school as well: there are possibilities to study Estonian and French.
- There's also a football club and swimming team in Paldiski; the studio of design is also open for children under 12 years old. And the Hobby centre of Paldiski is open for everybody from 13.00. till 20.00.
- One of the most popular places in Paldiski is a Music School with three specialities: piano, violin, wind-instruments. The curriculum consists of solfeggio, history of music, orchestra, main instrument, and an extra instrument. There are 74 students and 10 teachers in this school. The participation fee is 20 EUR per month. The Music School of Paldiski took part in the 4th Festival of Piano in Harju county in February this year.
- The aim of youth centre of Paldiski (supervised by A. Sadovnikova and M. Sherstjuk, the project manager is J. Saat) is to motivate young people to spend the out of school time in an useful and interesting way. This youth centre is specialised for children and youngsters under 18 years. For younger children (under 12) find board-games like Monopoly (2 different versions), Alias (2 different versions), Master Labyrinth, the bombing of ships, Imagi, Chinese draughts, 300 different board-games, The world of Candy, chess, draughts, dominoes, and others very popular. They also like the constructor of Lego, drawing, watching video films and listening to music.
- There is also a computer game and table-tennis in the Youth Centre. Children can use computers and internet all the time. There are interesting books in this centre (in Estonian and in English, both popular-scientific and fictional) – children can read them in this centre, not lend out. Every Tuesday at 18.00. there is a quiz (general knowledge contest). Some children use the Youth Centre just as a nice possibility to learn and to prepare for the next school day (do their homework). This place is a good opportunity to communicate with friends; there are also conversations-circles (organized by an educator/specialist from the youth centre). Youth Centre is open from Monday till Thursday from 13.00.- till 20.00. and on Friday from 13.00. till 19.00. The participation is free for everybody. There is a possibility in this centre to organize your own birthday party and/or a class evening.
- One more activity there is the counselling of children and youngsters. This activity can be social, psychological, or just informative if needed. The method is both individual or group counselling, conversation's circles, video training (supervision), test and other possibilities. This centre (with city government and with other institutions of Paldiski) organizes every spring a song festival for children, a Family Day and the Day of Paldiski Town; an orientation day, and a Christmas party for those children under seven who are at home (not visiting kindergarten).
- In the Rehabilitation Centre of Paldiski, a swimming pool is open from 17.00. – 21.00. (from Monday till Friday) and from 14.00. – 20.00. on weekends. Small children can learn to swim every day (except weekends) from 18.30 – 19.45. (then the coach is there for them). There are also possibilities to use the athletic club, to play table tennis and 'ordinary' tennis.
- Very active is the sports club of Pakri, where 45 boys play football (there are three teams all together). In 2000, youngsters from Pakri sport club were the best team in Harju county.
- The city library is open for everybody with the free internet possibility (maximum two hours per week). You just have to book your time. And if you are 10 minutes late, somebody else can use your internet-time. For using computer/internet the child has to be at least 10 years old.

- There is a Museum open three days per week in Paldiski. Guided tours are possible if you call at least five days before. The ticket costs 0.60 EUR for adults, 0.30 EUR for children and the ticket for the whole family costs 1.20 EUR.

Evidence of impact

The impact of this positive development (inc. OSC activities) in Paldiski is that there are no national, ideological or criminal scandals in town. At least not so visible that people all over Estonia hear about them. Taking into account that about 4000 inhabitants are from 31 different nationalities this is a really good result (and an example). Because the proportion of youngsters and children in Paldiski is about $\frac{1}{4}$, the education and OSC activities certainly influences this peaceful situation. Even more. The rest of Estonia can read positive news about Paldiski even in the newspapers.

- For example (according to Siiri Tibbing) on 27.03.07. a new stamp comes out designed by 10 y. old girl from the Gymnasium of Paldiski. Marlene Kirss took part in a competition (called *Krossu*) and drew/designed a pink/red flying piggy. This competition was organized in honour of the 50th birthday of the Estonian Puppet Theatre, sponsored by the Estonian Post and Estonian Phone companies. And the result was that the young winner comes from Paldiski.

Key findings and lessons learnt

I have been to the city government of Paldiski and visited some hobby schools there, and I am impressed about the enthusiasm of people in this small town. People in Paldiski love their home and they are eager to cope. Actually they don't have any other possibilities. there are really much out-of-school-care activities for about 1000 children and youngsters. It seems like children just don't have time to make something stupid. The lesson I learnt, is that in such a multicultural society with such a difficult history a peaceful development is still possible, but you have to work hard to achieve it. Childcare officers in Paldiski are not alone. Only one example here: all students from Paldiski Gymnasium got a calculator as a nice present on the Valentine's Day this year, from J. Tammeka and T. Viidemann – the leaders of the South Port of Paldiski. An organization named The Lions of Tallinn was behind this donation, it was looking for the best place for a present like this. The principal of the gymnasium, Mrs. Liilia Kärp was happy and thankful – and all students made a big map, on which every child had written his/her name, as a present to the benefactors. A calculator is not a very expensive gift but it shows that somebody cares. Small things can have big results.

Commentary

Sometimes being small, poor and problematic is a good opportunity. For example donors, mentors, grantors and others good people seem to love such an isolated, disadvantaged, in borderland located, multi-problematic area, because the donations there don't get lost. If all children get a calculator, if everybody can swim free, if every child can participate in a project, it means that the effect is 100%. It's easy to be fear, it's easy to make everybody happy. I should say according this Paldisky case: if problems gather in some small area, the effect of any positive activity is bigger, including out of school care activities as well.

The problem is, that there are borders of opportunities to help, even if the officers are really enthusiastic and want to help somebody. For example the financial support for single mothers is as small everywhere in Estonia. A single mother officially gets 19.- EUR a month from the state (complementary to the ordinary child support: another 19.- EUR per month) for a child under 18 years. If after counting the taxes, rent, electricity and water there are less than 110.- EUR left per month, the mother should/can ask some extra financial support from the city government (one should ask for each single month = this support doesn't come automatically). <http://www.pereklubi.com/>

But this is not the case/problem of Paldiski anymore – this is the general situation in all Estonia.

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Case Study 2: North-Tallinn

About 1/3 (400,000 inhabitants) of the Estonian population lives in the capital-city, Tallinn. Tallinn itself has areas which are different like day and night. According to several signs, one of the most problematic areas of the capital is North-Tallinn, where a lot of homeless people also stay. 14% inhabitants of Tallinn are living in the Northern-Tallinn district, that is 53 696 inhabitants and with a population density 3103 inhabitants per 1 km². The main problems there are poorer population, higher criminality, bad conditions of buildings, logistic shortcuts, shoreline is conquered by ports and industry and there are few public areas. A journalist Imbi Jeletsky describes North-Tallinn in an article as follows: "This is a district where several historical periods are still existing next to each other: block-houses from soviet time, shacks/barracks of line-factory, nice private houses in deep, green gardens, worn out wooden houses from the 19th century. And inhabitants are as multicoloured as the architecture. There are more non-Estonians living in North-Tallinn than in other parts; poorer people; single parents and older people living alone. The Russian working class used to live there in the soviet times, now most of them have gone back, and those who decided to stay, are getting old. They don't speak Estonian, they don't have an Estonian citizenship, and sometimes they even don't understand what's going on in Estonia. There are a lot of homes where children are continually hungry and cold in that area. Yes, there is a foster home at the church of Peeteli; and the so called House of Tootsi (Tootsi tuba) for street children, but this is not enough.

Unemployment is a big problem in this area, criminality, too. Many previous hostels and flats are out of order (so that officially one can't live there at all) – this is the reason why people, who can not cope somewhere else, come to North-Tallinn – there they can at least have a roof over their heads. (One can stay in out-of-order flats for free, but there is no electricity, no water, no gas, no heating.) The truth is, that problems of North-Tallinn are symptomatic (to a certain extent) for the poverty, non-Estonians who can't speak Estonian language, 27.- EUR unemployment's support per month and 33.- EUR a month as coping support all over Estonia, – this is the reality." Imbi Jeletsky <http://www.videvik.ee/508/jalad.html>

Evidence of good practice

Besides of extremely difficult situation there is an other part of life in North Tallinn as well: ordinary schools and a lot of out of school activities. Most children under 12 go to school every day and hobby education is one important way to make the education attractive for them. To be honest I am impressed about many interesting after-school-possibilities in North Tallinn. But first, shortly about the ordinary schools.

In North-Tallinn there are 10 general educational schools with hobby education (after lessons): six Estonian language Schools: Pelgulinna Gymnasium, Art Gymnasium of Tallinn, Sõle Gymnasium, Kalamaja Elementary school, Ristiku Elementary School, Helen's School in Tallinn.

There are also four Russian Language Schools in North-Tallinn: Humanitary Gymnasium of Ehte, Ranniku Gymnasium, Karjamaa Gymnasium and Pelguranna Gymnasium. In schools there are about 4500 students all together in North Tallinn and at every school there are out of school activities as well (meant for children under 12 years old). Here I'll give a list of them:

Out of school activities in Estonian schools:

folk-dance, rhythmic, childrens choir, variety artists, porcelain painting, restore, glass-art, metal-art, wooden work, general handicraft, leather-art, textile, graphical design, play-circle, indian dance, computer club, ball games, acting club, draughts, chess.

In Russian language schools the list of out of school activities includes: music studio, languages circles (French and English), basketball, handicraft, art studio, dzudo, interesting maths, skilful hands, small mistress, folklore, choir, history.

I am impressed about those nice, witty names of circles and clubs. I've seen such nice names nowhere else. One can guess that out of school activities are quite attractive for children in this area. Or: adults are eager to make those possibilities attractive, because it is extremely important, exactly in this area. And it's important that there are circles about folklore and about history in the Russian school. General cultural background is very important for better inclusion.

There's also a Youth Centre (Tallinna Kopli Noortemaja) in the North of Tallinn, where about 20 different activities are meant for 600 children. The list (for under 12 year old children's after-school-time) includes: aerobics, dancing studio for different dances, piano teaching, song studio, choir for small children, art for children, applied art, Estonian language, English (for preschool children as well), French, circle of massage, learning's club, radiotechnic, hip-hop, show dance, studio of song ansamble. (<http://www.kopli.noortemaja.ee>).

The Cultural Centre of Salme is also open, 16 circles are active including 700 children. The clubs and circles are mostly the same as mentioned already, but in Salme there is for example a circus club, boys choir and a brass band. A Centre named Pelgulinna Rahvamaja has 19 circles working for 200 participants. The list includes a piano course, guitar course, children's art, creative singing, jazz-dance for small children, acting club, body moving, show dance, pop- and jazz song studio,folklore club, yoga lessons, fast course of needlework.

In North Tallinn the See Club of youngsters is open; a club named LÜÜRA, where different nationalities have a possibility to practise their own national culture.

There is a place named Kotree Sport club for doing sports in North-Tallinn, with nine different field, where 860 children and youngsters participate.

There are many possibilities for footballfans: club Dünamo, club `Tallinna Spordiklubi Jõud`,club `Kalevi Kergejõustiku Kool`, club `Uspex` and others.

All those circles are not free of charge, the average cost per circle is about 20.- EUR per month. If the family doesn't have the money, social support from the city government is possible. So the child, who really wants to participate in some club or circle, can get the possibility.

The first OPEN YOUTH CENTRE in North Tallinn is working from February this year. One of the official aim of this centre is to support integration of Estonian and Russian children and youngsters (Suutre 2007). The building has about 800m² room and every day about 70 children are expected to visit this place (everything in this centre is free for children). Till autumn this year the centre will be open from 12.00 till 18.00. After that till 21.00. According to the leader of this centre, it is a very special place, there is a big hall for 800 people, and a tape-recording studio with modern technic. There are special art tools in the art class. There are also different games and possibilities to spend the good time after school. Seven specialists who are working in this very new centre can speak both Russian and Estonian language.

The leader Elena Vareiko thinks that in North Tallinn, at least one more centre like this should be open in the nearer-future, because youth centres are the best opportunity for intensive integration (Suutre 2007).

Commentary

Work with children in North Tallinn is more social work based than in other parts of Tallinn. This is because there are many children (even under 12 y. old) in North Tallinn, who don't go to the school at all. The problem is, that street children don't have an address and nobody can find them all (= no exact statistic). As next, I'd like to describe one church-based organisation where very important work has been done. Voluntary workers from non-governmental Social

Work centre at church Peeteli help the street children. (This is out of school care activity, because children like this are out of school in direct meaning.) The leader of this 'special youth work' is Mati Sinisaar. After the trust was established between helpers and street children, they renovated a vicarage of an old church in North Tallinn together (during the soviet time a film-pavilion was situated in this building). At the beginning there were no heating, no water, no sewerage, even windows were bricked up. Voluntaires from the church Peeteli and street children together made a home for 16 children out of this building. The year was 1998. Now 17 children are living in the official private foster home, in this building, there is also a day care centre (for 50 children). The quality of the children's rooms follow the norms set by the EU: a nice canteen, space for free time, bathrooms with 12 shower-baths.

A new project of a new building for children and youth centre is ready (in territory of the same church). The state supports new building with 7 Million EEK and the city with 5,3 Million. The rest of money is coming from sponsors (it will all together costs about 40 million EEK). So, this Peeteli church is a very good example how a private initiative can start something really important.

Maybe it is hard to imagine how small children (under 12) can be street children already. As next only two quite typical examples:

Maria is seven year old (will be eight soon). Her mother left home three year ago already. Maria had to stay in mothers (girl)friend home. But the life there was 'multicoloured'. Her voice is hoarse after very stabile trinking and the face is full of scars. But she has a good hart. She did not send Maria away. Even when she had different men as visitors. Or even when her own husband returned from prison, the father of her murdered daughter. Maria still lived there, but more and more time she spent on the street. Probable this was the reason why she survived when the house took fire during the ordinary party. In to school this autumn Maria did not come anymore. From her mother Maria does not know anything. She lives in Peeteli church and often in the night she wake up with jerk.

9 years old Valentina knew only six letters. Her name she could not write. Her mother lived together with Dimitri, who put under girls bed a infernal machine. Luckily nobody died. In church it took some years before Valentina started to read. Valentina left the church before she was 18. Now she works in a catering establishment.

Avo Üprus, Anne Schotter,

http://blog.irl.ee/Avo_Uprus/2007/02/06/rist-ja-risk-ehk-kiriku-kriminaalpreveniivsest-toost-laste-ja-noortega/

Evidence of impact

North Tallinn is quite famous in Estonia and not in a best way. Some students from social work department in Tallinn University (Kraanvelt) investigated this area, because many social problems concentrate exactly there. Every research is important: if one knows more, the help is at least theoretically possible. According to researches the future in North-Tallinn is more optimistic now as it was about 7-8 years ago. At least we are strong enough to talk about the problems. Being in EU means EU-living-standards as well. Every people is important and we should try to help as much as possible. The situation of street children is better now as it was. But the problem is of course, that they still exist and one doesn't know exactly how many children are on streets. But: street children are marginals of course; and most children still are eager to learn and visit hobby schools. I am impressed about the huge youth centre and cultural centre where about 700-800 children (in each) can participate in some activities. It means that city government is active enough to organize different possibilities. And I like those original names of circles in Russian language school. It seems like out of school care activities are really attractive for children.

Key findings and lessons learnt

Nowhere else volunteers are so active as in this part of the capital, which is a good lesson as well for the rest of Estonia. Thanks to those active and nice people, a lot of humanitarian help comes to North Tallinn: even food, clothes, toys. Humanitarian help was an actual subject in Estonia about 15-10 years ago, now only very disadvantaged areas need this kind of practical help. North Tallinn is one like this. There are many positive trends in North Tallinn, but everything takes time. The most important thing is that politicians and leaders, who have to make decisions, at least try to improve the life in such a multiproblematic area. This is the beginning.

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Case Study 3: Youth centre of Võhma

Background

Võhma is a small town with 1544 inhabitants (inc. 353 children under 18-years old). Two running bankruptcies in 1994 and in 1996 caused in Võhma difficulties in the social-economic crisis. The population in Võhma has decreased about 25% during the last 10 years. A lot of families moved away to look for a job. The problems in Võhma are people who can't cope, who are unemployed, older people, disabled persons, families with many children. According to the social workers, one can name Võhma a town without fathers, because one part of men just drink too much, and others are working somewhere far away (in Viljandi or in Tallinn). Children have to be alone. The big problem in Võhma was a youngsters gang who gathered in a bus station, where they troubled people walking by and people who were just waiting for the bus. Children like this are so called street-pull children. And – they even didn't have any place to go in Võhma, because there were no possibilities to spend out of school time culturally: no cinema, no clubs; no actions to participate in; there were even no cafés in the whole town. The founder of the Youth Centre, Enna Tikas, remains:

“At first (in middle of 90ties) we sold second hand clothes from Sweden in a previous department store (which was still the warm place), because we wanted to get some money for our children's society. Then we got the idea to create a youth centre in Võhma. The city government agreed and gave us some empty rooms. And in 1996 the first non-governmental youth centre (based on civil initiative) in Estonia was established. The legislative background has been the Child Protection law of Estonian Republic. So it started. The first year passed very fast. Since our first rooms were temporary, the future was dark. We had good results and the children's trust – this was the reason why the Estonian Child Protection Union bought a half of a house in Võhma in 1998 for our centre.”

Evidence of good practice

The Youth Centre of Võhma is open from September till May from 14.00. till 20.00., during the summer holiday from June till end of August it is closed. Every child is welcome at every time (it is free for everybody). Children under 12 years can participate in different activities:

- For smaller children there are different materials and tools for manual training (like things for porcelain painting, ceramics, glass-works, including special moulds and kiln)
- In this centre children can play table tennis, billiards and different board-games.
- Children can use computers with very fast internet connection.
- In activities very important are children's own initiative. There are different possibilities for experienced learning through activities and communication. Special interest has been paid on social knowledge. For example in youth centre children can learn how to cook and how to do the housekeeping. In many ways this youth centre is like a parent (compensates home education).
- For less than 12 years old children one extra important concept is supervision: they are in a safe place till the mother comes home; and children are with a specialist who is interested in their development.
- Smaller children participate in puppet play and perform with this in schools and kinder gardens.
- The school holidays are a very important element of activities in the Youth Centre. Children from poor families and from families with many children are involved in different projects. The adventure pedagogic is one possibility for working with children at risk. This is the learning through practical activity to support the development of human beings. Different adventure-groups are also working there from 1999 already.

- In 2001-2004 special project for six years old children named “I will be a pupil” was popular. During this project, children were prepared for the first year of school. The children met the very first teacher already before the school started. This project was supervised by psychologists and volunteers. There were lessons for parents: how to prepare the child for school, how to support and communicate with the child.

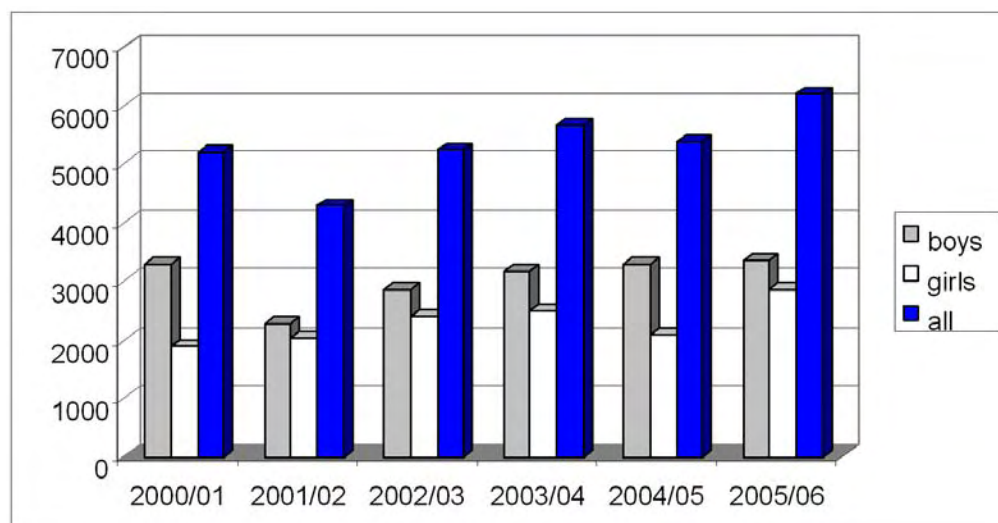
In 1999 (thanks to one project of the Open Estonian Foundation) the Youth Centre was open on weekends as well (the main group were schoolchildren from basic schools). They had the most visitors on weekends, less on Monday. The centre has been very popular among children. If we take the average of six years then there were 34 children every day in the centre. This is even more than one class at school. The maximum number of visitors has been 714 a month and 37 children in one day. The extra growth was in 2005/06 school year, when there were 6194 visitors all together.

Evidence of impact

From figure 1 we can see, that boys visit the youth centre more than girls. According to Tikas (2006), there might be several reasons for this: the number of boys in this age group is bigger; and girls probably have more duties in housekeeping. Girls have more responsibility and are more involved in school staffs.

There has never been an empty house: we have had visitors every single day. And the record is about 70 children per day, which is a huge number, taking into account how small Võhma is ; and that there is only one pedagogue/educator (project based) in this youth centre.

Figure 1: *The activity of participation, boys and girls.*



The feedback from children (from research of E.Tikas (2006)):

According to the questionnaire the most important activity in the youth centre for under 12 year old children is table tennis, just playing, running, card-game “UNO” and playing with friends. The children wish for more and more different games, art circles, florist’s knowledge, billiards. One small girl wishes to have a small room especially meant for small children.

Children in Võhma are pleased with the Youth Centre and they like everything about it: they want to be in a warm and clean place and are happy about this possibility. It is also important how the adults communicate with them: the company is nice and pleasant (including the educator).

If the child is in Youth Centre all the maximum time (6 hours), s/he's there most of his/her after-school time. So we can't underestimate the influence of this institution in a small, disadvantaged town.

It's also very important for children that parents are involved in the events in Youth Centre (for example birthday parties, style parties or something else when children have been prepared carefully). This centre is an important impulse for all community life.

Key findings and lessons learnt

With Võhma town the youth centre has a joint work since 1998. From city budget maintenance costs are coming from 1998 also. Through different projects financial support has been come from Estonian Child Protection Union, Open Estonian Foundation, Local Initiative Program, from Educational Ministry, from Financial Ministry, from Viljandi County Government, from East European Foundation in Nederland and from Youth Work Centre of Estonia.

Table 1: *The proportion of Võhma city government compared to project money (in EEK)*

	city	projects	together
1999	12000	277255	289255
2000	14520	190696	205216
2001	19662	196452	216114
2002	33000	277325	310325
2003	38000	120312	158312
2004	33000	173465	206465
2005	33000	90225	123225
2006	76775	90231	167006
2007	7330	5000	12330
kokku	267287	1420961	1688248

The part of the "city's money" is already bigger than earlier, but still quite small compared to financial support from outside of Võhma. Chart nr 1 is not taking into consideration maintenance costs, because this money does not come to the Youth Centre's bank account. The reason of the bigger number in 2006 is salaries of people who worked in different camps (31 992. – Estonian croons), which was carried forward onto the Youth Centre's account. The most important key finding for me is that with such a small money from local government results can be so good. (1 EUR = 15,6 EEK)

E. Tikas pointed out: "Till now we've been working nine years already and the 10th is going on. It is a big pleasure to notice that the youth centre has been viable. In 2006 we can see that there are youth centres over Estonia, in every county (all together 135 centres!). In our Viljandi county there are 17 youth centres like this. But the difference is that most of these centres are part of the city government and educators get the salary from city government. In Võhma we have not been so lucky so far. As far as I know, we are the only long lasting project based youth centre in Estonia. Võhma town

has supported our activities through different projects from 1998 already. And from the city budget communal cost are paid. But money for activities and for materials we still have to ask through different projects outside Võhma.

In May 2006 the city government of Võhma and the Child Protection Union of Võhma made a contract about sale and purchase of services. It means: the town buys a service from the Youth Centre, but there is no word about the capacity and the extent of service, and about the costs and money. Unfortunately there is no information about this in budget of 2007 as well. Nice of course, that now we have reached the new level of joint work. But without regular salary the pedagogue/educator might quit this job. Sad, that the city government doesn't understand how important it is to have a qualified youth worker* in a place like this. “

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* Mrs. Enna Tikas got her master degree from Tallinn University (social work department) in December 2006, supervised by M. Leino.

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