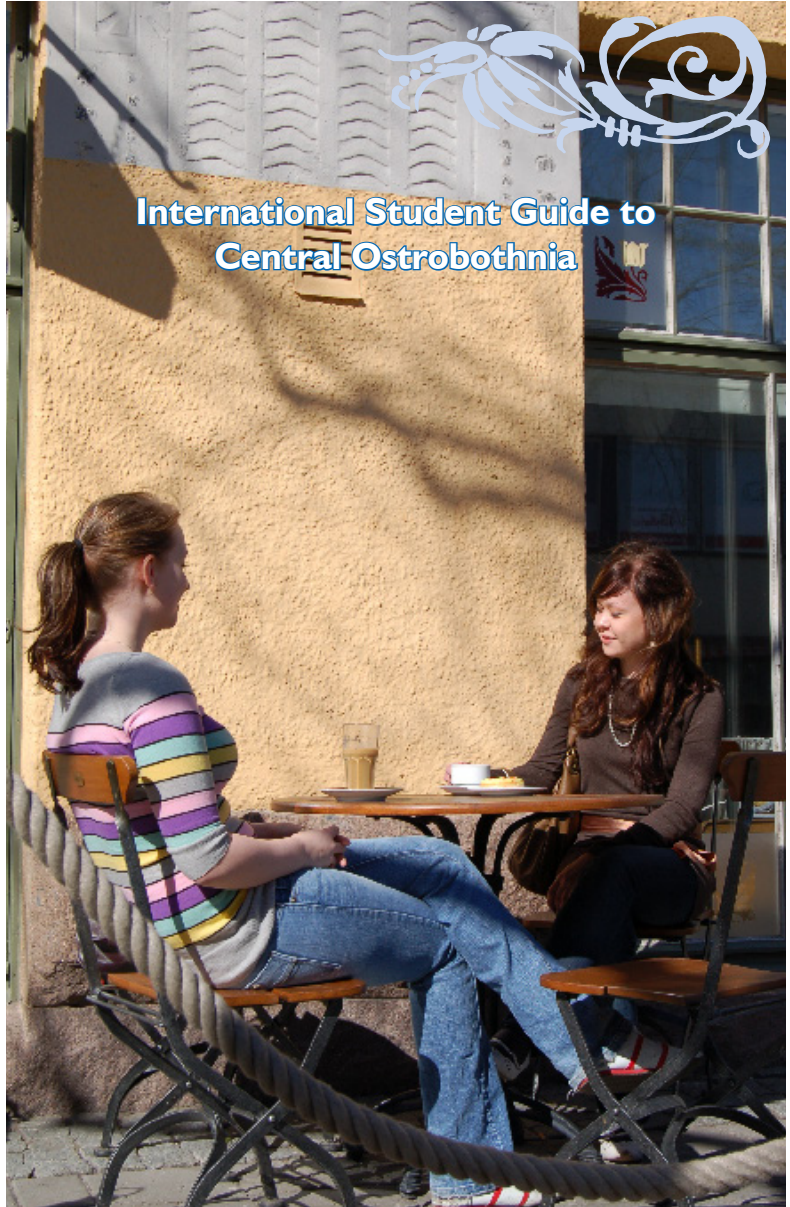


Welcome to Finland!



International Student Guide to Central Ostrobothnia

THE FEDERATION OF EDUCATION IN CENTRAL OSTROBOTHNIA
Keski-pohjanmaan koulutusyhtymä

Tervetuloa Suomeen!

Welcome to Finland!

The main objective of this Welcome to Finland Guide is to provide you information on our institutes, our area and Finland.

This guide will be updated annually and we will do our best to improve its contents so as to best meet your needs. Therefore we warmly welcome your comments and proposals for improvement, which you can send to the international project manager of the federation whose address is: teija.tuunila@kpedu.fi

Internationality is part of everyday life

The Federation of Education in Central Ostrobothnia and its institutes have Internationalisation Strategy, which is valid until 2010. The objective is that we make our students international by arranging student exchange, international on-the-job learning periods, the immigrant integration programme, international visits of students and guest lecturers, as well as through various projects.

Our institutes welcome about 70 international students annually, and roughly the same number of our students go abroad every year. Currently we co-operate with our partners in 30 countries on five continents: Europe, Asia, Africa, North America and Oceania. Most of the incoming students come to our region to embark on the four-week on-the-job learning periods in a wide range of workplaces. These students come from cultures different from ours. As a result, our visitors and ourselves do not always behave or think the same way. We are different to a certain extent, but that is precisely the joy and beauty of international activities!

Get new experiences and improve your language skills



There are MobiTutors for you

Tutoring means providing help, support and guidance. When you arrive in the country, the international tutor = MobiTutor is your first Finnish contact, your friend and guide in their adjustment to Finland.

It is tutors job to reduce your homesickness and help you in ordinary, everyday tasks regarding living and studying in Finland.

The international co-ordinator of the Finnish institute is responsible for the official arrangements of the visit and helping you with matters regarding their on-the-job learning is the supervisor's responsibility. Do not hesitate to ask your teachers, tutors and international co-ordinators for help!

MobiTutor Guide

This guide consists of information to help you when arrive, during your stay and upon your departure. In addition, the guide provides information on leisure activities and on getting used to Finnish customs.

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*Welcome to Finland and
Have Great Experiences!*

*Internationalisation team and staff
MobiTutors and students*

Internationalisation team

Each institute of the Federation has an international co-ordinator who is responsible for internationalisation activities of their institute. These international co-ordinators are more than happy to help you!

The international co-ordinators of the institutes and of the common supporting services form the Internationalisation Team of the Federation, which meets on a monthly basis. This team is the body that plans, develops and coordinates all international activities of the institutes. In addition, some units have an internal internationalisation team, where teachers have, for example, been appointed responsible for co-operation with a certain country.



International co-ordinators of the institutes

Kokkolan ammattiopisto/ Kokkola Vocational Institute

Helena Sälli
Tel. (06) 825 2178
Substitute: Tom Bjön

Kokkolan kauppaopisto/ Kokkola Business Institute

Eeva-Liisa Jylhä
Substitute: Anne-Maija Leppälä

Kokkolan sosiaali- ja terveysalan opisto/ Kokkola Institute of Social Services and Health Care

Satu Kauppinen
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Substitutes: Sari Haglund

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Kannus: Ritva Jaakkola, Hannele Ilola
Kaustinen: Sonja Anttila
Perho: Eevi Fiskaali
Toholampi: Eira Kekkonen-Orava

Keski-Pohjanmaan kulttuuriopisto/ Central Ostrobothnia Culture Institute

Elina Tuikka
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Substitute: Mervi Huttula

Keski-Pohjanmaan oppisopimustoimisto/ Central Ostrobothnia Apprenticeship Office

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eExchange-projekti

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E-mail: firstname.lastname@kpedu.fi



My MobiTutor

name:

telephone:

e-mail:

address:

institute/class:

Contacting your Mobitutor

Your mobitutor will contact you. S/he will check out your accommodation and its condition. If you arrive during office hours, you can naturally collect the key together.

Checklist

- You mobitutor will be there to meet you. S/he will tell you how will recognise each other, eg. a sign with their name on it, a rose, a green coat.
- Your mobitutor will inform you the address of your accommodation and its equipment, such as kitchen and cooking appliances, washing facilities and towels, toilet, laundry, cleaning, bed linen, duvets and pillows, room temperature, television etc.
- Make sure that you have a valid travel insurance (possibly through your home institute).
- Check current weather in Finland: www.fmi.fi
The Finnish dresscode depends on the place and situation that you are attending.
- Take with you an alarm clock.
- Bring enough cash (€) for the first couple of days! You may not be able to withdraw cash with all credit cards! Find out already in your home country how to withdraw cash and check your balance while in Finland.
- Take photocopies of your important documents (passport, tickets etc.) ; it makes things much easier in case you loose any of them.
- Visit the website of the Federation and our institutes at: www.kpedu.fi

Getting started in Finland

MobiTutor will help you with the following things when you arrive:

Housing in flats/halls of residence

- How/when the doors close
- Rules of the hall regarding eg. smoking
- Municipal ordinance and regulations (eg. At what time is silence required)
- What to do if you forget your key
- What furniture/equipment the rooms have
- How to use the electronic appliances
- How to do the laundry and cleaning
- It is both possible and very much recommended to recycle most waste at all our housing options. glass, metal, paper and mixed waste.
- Smoke detector
- General emergency number 112
- Telephones. With prepaid mobile phone cards you pay for the talk time credit in advance. If you run out of credit, people can still phone you.
Use the ICE (in case of emergency) acronym to mark your ICE contact person in your mobile phone directory.



Getting around

- Ask your mobitutor how to get around in your Finnish town/municipality
- Bikes are often handy to get around. Bikers must follow traffic regulations: it is forbidden to ride a bike on pavements and when driving in the dark, your bike must have a functioning light. By law, bikers need to wear a helmet.
- Luminous tags or reflectors should be used in the dark, even in town centres.
- If you want to drive a car, you must find out about driver's licence requirements and insurances and learn traffic regulations.
- Useful links:
 - Official website of the Finnish municipality
 - Website for maps
 - Website of Civil Aviation Administration www.finavia.fi
 - Railway traffic and trains www.vr.fi
 - Coach traffic and buses www.matka.fi
 - Taxis www.taksiliitto.fi, tel. 0100 8511

Municipal services

The official website of your municipality provides information on a variety of topics, such as sports, cultural activities, sights, libraries, as well as social and health care services available.

International visitors are eligible to visit the nurse's reception at their institute. The switchboard number for the Federation and the institutes (excluding the Rural Institute) is (06) 825 000.

The general practices at the local health centres are usually open during office hours on weekdays. The emergency service at weekends, evenings and nights is most often in the Central Hospital of Central Ostrobothnia in the town of Kokkola. You can access the emergency clinic through the first-aid station of the hospital without an appointment.

Regional helpline from 7 am to 7 pm,
tel. 100 23

Kokkola Region Health Centre/regional
emergency service after office hours,
tel. (06) 8287350

Central Hospital of Central Ostrobothnia/
emergency clinic, tel. (06) 8264 500

General Emergency Number 112
(ambulance)

Poison Information Centre tel. (09) 471 977
or (09) 4711

Going to the doctor's

You have to be on time for your appointment, even though you may occasionally have to wait for your turn. International students are entitled to an interpreter, if they need one. In order to get an appointment at the Central Hospital in Kokkola, you must first get a referral from a doctor at your local health centre. If you need laboratory examinations or x-rays, you must proceed by contacting your local general practice or school nurse.

What does it cost?

- Visit to the school nurse does not cost anything
- Visit to a doctor at your local health centre is 11€. Alternatively, you can pay the annual fee, which is 22€.
- Visit to the emergency service clinic is 15€
- You will be charged the fee after your appointment. If you miss an appointment without prior notice, you will be charged 27€. International students should find out if their travel insurance covers medical expenses.
- If you are under 18 years of age, you get health care services free of charge

In case you need urgent dental care, please contact the dental clinic of the Kokkola Region Health Centre, tel. (06) 8287 450.

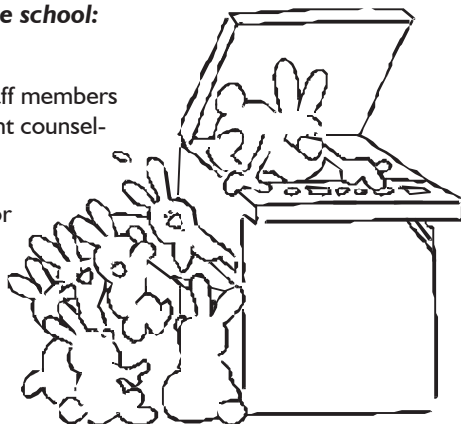
In case of mental health or substance abuse problems you should contact either your school nurse or your local health centre.



Getting to know the school

Your mobitutor will help you to get to know the school:

- Offices/Information desk
- Introducing teaching staff and other relevant staff members (eg. principal, information office staff and student counselors)
- Where to find the international co-ordinator
- Where to find the on-the-job learning supervisor
- Cafeterias
- Computer classrooms
- Library
- Photocopying
- School nurse
- Student lounge
- Smoking
- Studies: common rules and regulations of the institute.
Please make it clear that cheating in exams and plagiarism are strictly forbidden.



Cafeteria

- Opening hours
- Lunch
- How to operate (eg. how to take food, where to return used cutlery and dishes)

School Health Care

- Reception hours of the nurse
- The nurse's phone numbers

Computers & e-mail

- Computer classrooms and other computers available for students
- Rules regarding the use of computer technology and initialising the user account
- How to log in/out
- How to print, eg. how to choose the right printer

Libraries

- Library of the institute
- Public municipal library
- Educational library in Kokkola
- Newspaper reading room

How about learning Finnish?

- Finnish for Foreigners courses are offered at Business Institute and Kokkola Regional Institute
- CD-roms are available at libraries and institutes
- www.travlang.com/languages

About the on-the-job learning

It is mainly the responsibility of the on-the-job learning supervisor to inform the visitor of the following matters.

At work place you'll get information about practical matters:

- Contact information and location of the on-the-job learning workplace and how to get there
- Introducing the workplace and the contact person or supervisor
- Drafting and/or signing the on-the-job learning contract
- Working hours (normal working hours in Finland are 8–16, lunch break 30 minutes)
- Procedure for notifying absences
- Finnish work culture and work clothes
- Supervision of the on-the-job learning/the supervisor's visits to the workplace
- Evaluation of the on-the-job learning period
- Possible health certificates, allergies
- Occupational safety

Studying and working in Finland

All citizens of the European Union are allowed to study, participate in any training or do research in any of the EU member states. Within the union, all EU citizens have equal rights of residence in any member state, regardless of their nationality. For further information, please visit: www.eurooppa-tiedotus.fi (information also available in English, French and Swedish)



You do not need a work permit to participate in on-the-job learning which is part of your curriculum. EU citizens and those with a similar status, do not need a work permit. They have a right to work full-time while studying. The right to perform gainful employment in Finland is determined according to citizenship, as follows:

- Citizens of the European Union have a right to work in Finland without a worker's residence permit. Citizens of Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland have the same right.
- Citizens of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia must report information on their employment to the Employment Office of Finland for registration
- Citizens of other countries are required to have a worker's residence permit. Further information available at www.mol.fi
For information on taxation, please visit www.vero.fi

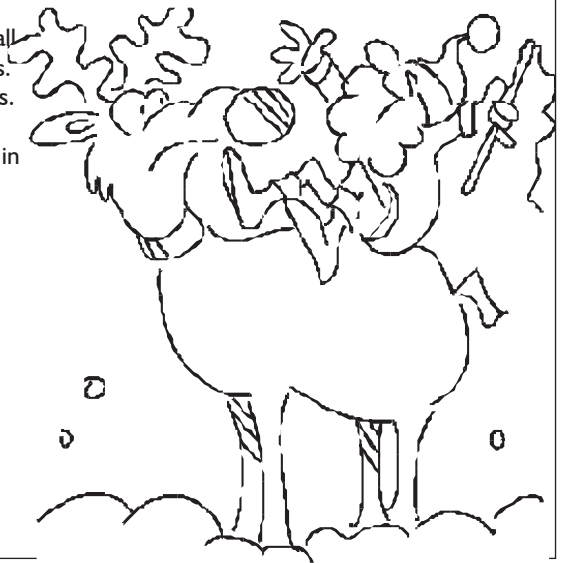
About Finnish culture

Typical aspects of Finnish lifestyle and culture:

- Different seasons; dark winters, light summers
- Finnish people can be rather quiet but it does not mean that they are angry. It is part of many Finns' personality to be quiet and calm.
- Most Finns can speak foreign languages, but they may not be used to doing so, or being around foreigners at all.
- Punctuality is important; if you are meeting someone at 1 pm, it really means 1 pm sharp.
- Finnish people usually mean what they say, which also means that they do as they promise.
- Finnish people queue nicely and quietly. Fees and prices at offices and institutes are not open for negotiation.
- Food and meals: when people normally eat, emphasis on big breakfast, dark bread, drinking milk with meals, all the food on the same plate, tap water drinkable
- It is polite but not necessary to tip at restaurants, so there are no guidelines as to the appropriate amount.
- Age limits for drinking and smoking. Remember that smoking is forbidden in all public buildings, schools and school yards. Please note the designated smoking areas. It is also forbidden to use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol anywhere in the school area.
- It is illegal in Finland to use, possess and sell any drugs.

For further information on Finland, please visit:

- <http://virtual.finland.fi>
- www.visitfinland.com
- <http://finland.cimo.fi> (Discover Finland)
- www.luontoon.fi
- www.finfood.fi/tasteoffinland
- Finnish public administration/Everyday life of citizens www.suomi.fi
- Directorate of Immigration www.uvi.fi
- The Social Insurance Institution of Finland www.kela.fi
- Ministry of Education of Finland www.opetusministerio.fi
- The Finnish National Board of Education www.oph.fi
- Finland in figures www.stat.fi
- Educational statistics www.csc.fi/kota/kota.html



Free clubs at schools

Staff and student tutors can tell you about recreational activities provided at their institute, including structured sports, gym, social clubs and activities organised by student organisations.

Cultural activities

Local tourist information provides information on various cultural activities, such as free exhibitions, concerts and other happenings. In addition, you can collect a timetable of free student concerts at the Central Ostrobothnia Conservatory from their information desk. The concerts are usually on Thursdays and Fridays. You can also go and see band and orchestra rehearsals free of charge.

Sports and other activities

If your will stay for a longer period of time and you are active in a certain sport, you may ask the local association of the sport in question whether your guest might be able to participate in their training.

Bowling is a popular spare time activity. Typical Finnish winter and summer sports will most likely be a wonderful new experience for you. But please do not forget safety!

Information and timetables of recreational activities for youth in Central Ostrobothnia are available online, also in English at www.kenuti.fi



Truly Finnish experiences

For example walks in the forests, picking berries and mushrooms, going to summer cottages, light summer nights, Finnish holidays, visiting a Finnish home, skiing, skating, kick-sledding, winter swimming in the outdoors, sledging, walking on the frozen sea (again, do remember safety!).

If you want to, now you have a chance of getting to know one of the typical and very old Finnish traditions; the sauna. If you feel more comfortable wearing a swimsuit or a towel, you are certainly welcome to do so.

Everyman's rights in nature in brief

Nature is natural part of Finland. The country is big and forests are large. Here is some advise:

Everyone may:

- ☺ walk, ski or cycle freely in the countryside, except in gardens, in the immediate vicinity of people's homes, and in fields and plantations which could easily be damaged
- ☺ stay or set up camp temporarily in the countryside, a reasonable distance from homes
- ☺ pick wild berries, mushrooms and flowers, as long as they are not protected species
- ☺ fish with a rod and line
- ☺ row, sail or use a motorboat on waterways, with certain restrictions; swim or wash in inland waters and the sea
- ☺ walk, ski and fish on frozen lakes, rivers and the sea

You may not:

- ☹ disturb other people or damage property
- ☹ disturb breeding birds, or their nests or young
- ☹ disturb reindeer or game animals
- ☹ cut down or damage living trees, or collect wood, moss or lichen on other people's property
- ☹ light open fires on other people's property, except in an emergency
- ☹ disturb the privacy of people's homes, by camping too near them, or making too much noise, for example
- ☹ leave litter
- ☹ drive motor vehicles off road without the landowner's permission
- ☹ fish or hunt without the relevant permits

www.ymparisto.fi

Travelling

Some of the institutes organise trips for international students and you are welcome to participate in these.

International visitors may naturally also travel in Finland on their own time and at their own expense. There is a lot to see in Finland, but it is also possible to visit Sweden, Estonia or Russia, for example. Your mobitutor will help you with the travel arrangements or direct you to someone else who can help you.





The starting point for all internationalisation is that differences are first and foremost enrichment in life. It is not only polite but part of civilised behaviour to take each country's customs into consideration. Living in a different culture is an extremely valuable experience, which helps you to broaden your views and experiences and increases tolerance as well as awareness of yourself and your own cultural background.

The difficulties in adjusting to a new culture are often referred to as culture shock. Culture shock can be defined as *“a state of stress and tension caused by a loss of familiar signals and meanings in social interaction, which results in the loss of balance and irritating sensations when in contact with physical and environmental differences in a foreign culture”* (Craig 1984: 159 in Metsälä 15).

Culture shock is a normal phase that people go through when they go to a new living environment and two different cultures come in contact with each other. Experiencing culture shock varies greatly from one individual to another. Studies indicate that those who feel culture shock very strongly are also the ones who then manage to accomplish most in their work and pass their knowledge and skills on to their colleagues most effectively. In general, extroverted people experience culture shock more powerfully than people who are quieter and used to being alone.

Culture shock usually consists of 4 phases

- 1) Initial enthusiasm when faced with everything new
- 2) Frustration (fatigue, depression, home sickness)
- 3) Acceptance: things are done differently
- 4) Adjustment

How does culture shock manifest itself?

- You do not like the food
- You find the local people and their manners “stupid”
- Irritable humour, difficulties with concentration, boredom
- Insomnia, headache, stomach ache, ill health, crying

People usually experience culture shock when they stay in a foreign country for a longer period of time (from a month to a year), but this really depends on the individual. Therefore, it is very much possible to experience culture shock even on shorter visits to a different country.

How to cope with culture shock?

- Get to know the target country in advance: learn about its culture, traditions and customs
- Be aware of culture shock and accept it
- Keep in touch with people
- Find things to do, hobbies
- Talk to people
- Phone home
- Avoid being alone
- Learn the language of the country
- Please remember: returning to your home country requires another adjustment period!

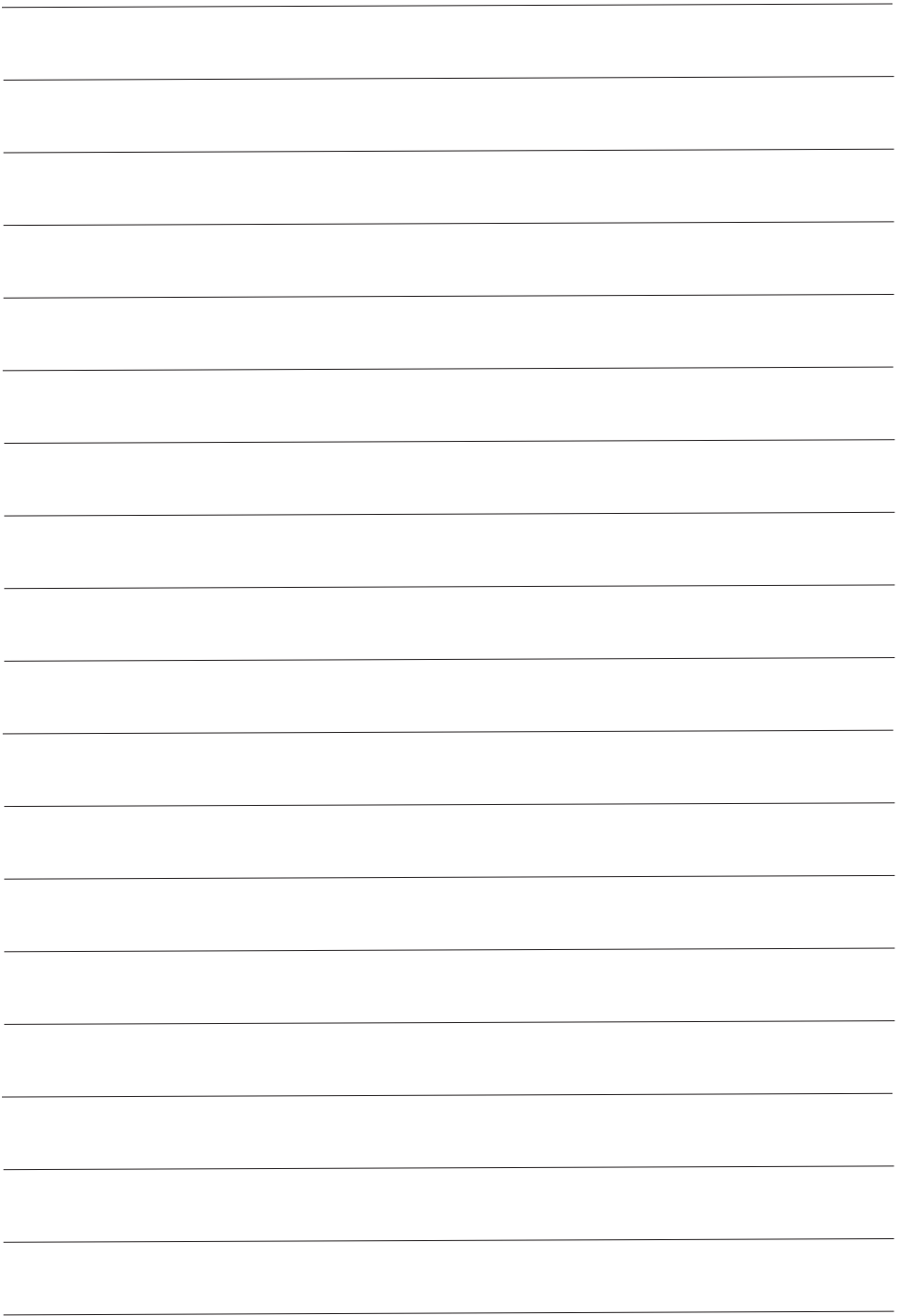
Intercultural communication

People often have more or less similar ideas of the population of a certain country or a particular ethnic group. In such situations the term stereotype or stereotypical image of a country is applicable.

Stereotypes are not right or wrong as such. They are usually based on a common feature in the target culture which is very striking to outsiders and causes them to attach this stereotype to the culture in question. It is, however, common that the explanation behind the stereotype is incorrect from the target culture's perspective. Your own culture tends to affect the way you act in a different culture.

References:

FINTRA, Ihminen ja Kulttuuri – Suomalainen kansainvälistyvässä maailmassa (*Man and Culture – Finns in the Internationalising World*), 1994.
University of Nebraska-Lincoln www.unl.edu



KESKI-POHJANMAAN KOULUTUSYHTYMÄ

Kokkolan ammattiopisto
Kokkolan kauppaopisto – Karleby handelsinstitut
Kokkolan sosiaali- ja terveysalan opisto
Keski-Pohjanmaan maaseutuopisto
Keski-Pohjanmaan kulttuuriopisto

Keski-Pohjanmaan oppisopimustoimisto
Keski-Pohjanmaan aikuisopisto
RegiOnline – IT-palvelut

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