

Building Social Capital by Improving Multicultural Competence in Higher Education and Labour Market (Soulbus)

Harjula Settlement Association, Lahti, Finland

Harjula Settlement is an organization of public utility founded on Lahti in 1941. Harjula Settlement provides various welfare services for people living in Lahti region. Harjula Settlement's action is based upon the values of solidarity, fellowship and equality and Harjula Settlement is part of the The Finnish Federation of Settlement Houses. Services provided are the open college, 2 day-care centers for children, rehabilitation, homecare, sports and recreational services for the elderly as well as catering services. Harjula-Mainos is a fundraising-unit that rents out outdoor advertising devices for companies in Lahti, Nastola and Hollola.

- **Harjula Open College** is a private educational establishment that offers versatile possibilities for studying and hobbies for people living in Lahti region.
- Harjula has **two day-care centers for children**. Day-care centers act as day care units for the City of Lahti. All together day-care centers offer care for about 100 children.
- Harjula provides **homecare and nursing services** for old or elderly people who need help in surviving at their daily activities at home.
- Physiotherapy unit provides safe, professional and reliable **group-physiotherapy** (gym, balance-exercise, aqua therapy etc.) services, **day rehabilitation** (for war veterans, old people who have dementia etc.) and **home rehabilitation** (for those who have problems with their mobility and coping at home) for elderly people.
- **Day activities for the elderly** consist of various guided activities from memory groups to singing and dancing events. Groups are available for everyone. Some groups are coordinated by volunteers.
- **Catering services** contain the services of Lunchroom Kesti (open daily from 11 am until 13 pm) and home delivered meals for elderly people as well as catering services for both companies and private people. Harjula-centre has good settings for meetings and events such as weddings, memorials, birthday-parties etc.
- **Harjula-Mainos** gathers funds for Harjula Settlement by **renting outdoor advertising devices** in Lahti region for companies and other organizations. Advertising devices are located in Lahti, Hollola and Nastola.

Harjula Settlement is also an important social actor and supporter by contributing employment and social inclusion with its non-profit activities. Through the wide range of services Harjula provides yearly about 75 -80 work placements for different kinds of students and trainees coming from various educational institutions and rehabilitation organizations. These numbers of practical placements include about 8 - 12 international students and trainees yearly.

Our expectations from the Soulbus project

Harjula has a long history in providing practical placements for different kinds of educational institutions, e.g. LUAS. Already during the project Harjula is able to increase cooperation with LUAS, but after the project we expect that the results enable even better practices and ways of cooperation regarding the multicultural students. We hope also that after the project the Multicultural coaching program is working and shows concrete improvements in multicultural challenges concerning teaching, mentoring and learning whether the students are international or immigrant students. We believe it could be also possible for Harjula Open College to establish some kinds of learning groups for immigrant students through the Soulbus project results. In addition we expect that the project is able to have an impact to unify the bureaucracy and mentoring fee practices between the HEIs and working life organizations (e.g. e-based systems).