

Miksi kv-opiskelijat ovat järjestöjen voimavara?

How can international students be a strength for subject associations?

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SIA

Lanka ry



SIA (Subcommittee for International Affairs)

- What do we do?
 - Monthly meetings
 - August Kickoff events
 - Excellence in International Affairs awards
 - Advocacy: Linguistic accessibility, internationalization at home and abroad, inclusion

This year's focus: To help student associations in their actions to be internationally accessible, tackling language barrier and raising cultural understanding.

Lanka ry - Subject association

- Born out of a need for a community of (mainly international) students who studied our subjects
- As a subject association with success having both international and domestic students and traditions come together, one of our goals is to pass on what we learn
- A tip from one group to another: the beginning is the hardest part-- once you normalize internationalism, it will begin to draw in more people and become easier and more natural

Inclusion

- Internationalization plans and Universities: Groundwork happens in **student interaction**
- International students are interested in being involved: that requires a continuous process of inclusion
- Inclusion can have many different looks: what does it look like for your association?

Language competences and accessibility

- Most of our international students are using their second best language in their daily life. Switching language to lingua franca puts you to the same level: you both use language not your own
- Many international students are also learning Finnish and you might share some other languages too
- Sometimes the linguistic accessibility is not only about translating, but explaining what some concepts mean

Integration

- International students coming to Finland from few months to few years: The importance of integration
- Subject and student associations can play remarkable role in their lives if they have a **community to belong to**
- People can see the imbalance and it reflects poorly on the associations that are not being inclusive

Two way road: You get what you give

- Seeing your association through the eyes of another might be an educating and eye-opening experience for you
- Raising cultural understanding: it goes both ways
- Beneficial for each party:
 - International students have interest and time to join the events
 - You get the chance to meet people around the world
 - If you put the effort to include the international students as part of your community, you can be sure to find students that commit to your association

The *importance* of subject associations:

*“My subject association has offered me the feeling of being **a part of community**. They’ve organized lot of great events full of amazingly friendly people. **I got to know many locals** who are always happy to talk with me and it allowed me to not only observe Finnish student traditions but to be part of them and fully enjoy them.”*

Exchange students
celebrating Vappu
Lööppi ry, 2019



Raise your hand if...

- Your association bylaws allow exchange students to become members? Or come to events?
- Your association wrote a welcome letter to new international students?
- You know if there is an English language Masters programme associated with your faculty (tiedekunta)?
- You have collaborated with an international organization?
- You have actively recruited international students?
- You feel like you are doing well in including international students?

Wherever you're at, take small steps from there!

Finally...

- It is not about how well your website is translated (although, would be a good idea to have all the necessary information there in English too) but about **acceptance** and **attitude**.
- Be open minded and include your international fellow students as part of something unique – *your association*.
- If international students show interest towards your association, take them seriously. It might be their first (or only!) way to meet the locals and feeling belongingness.
- International students will enrich your community even more. They are happy to meet you and be part of your association, if given a chance.

**Kiitos ja thank you for your
attention!**
