

Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto

Guide for EVS Volunteers



Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto

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Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto

Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto is a folk high school that was founded in 1899. In the beginning, the school taught domestic sciences and agriculture, but nowadays it focuses on teaching arts – music, theatre and visual arts.

There are 89 folk high schools in Finland. Folk high school is an institution for adult education. Studying in folk high schools is chargeable, but the students are able to fund their studies with state study grants. The education in Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto does not lead to a degree, but the studies can prepare students for further studies in the field of arts. Many of our students continue to study in conservatories, polytechnics or universities.

The long study lines in Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto last for one school year, from mid-August till the end of May. Which study lines function annually may vary depending on the amounts of students: in the semester 2018-2019, those lines are Pop & Rock Music, Theatre and make up, Musical Technology, and Electric music. In addition to long study lines, Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto also organizes weekend courses on a variety of subjects.

Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto is a small school. Usually we have 30-40 students with us. This makes it possible for us all to know each other and feel at home. Our students are of different ages, from 16 years up, and come from different parts of Finland. Some of them board in the school boarding houses, others reside in Paimio or other towns nearby.

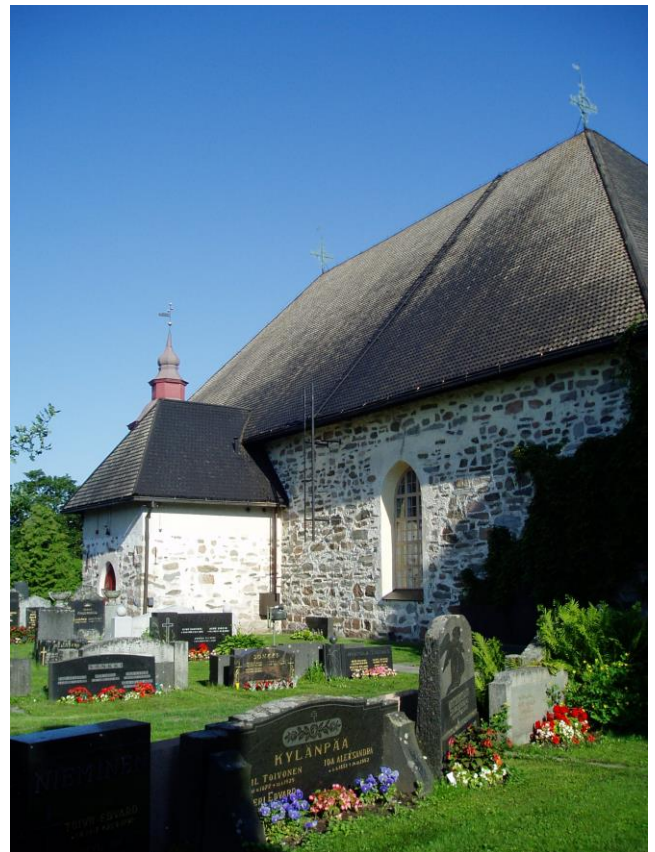
The school is situated along the main street of Paimio, Vistantie. The campus area consists of the main building, which was built for the folk high school in 1906 and two boarding houses called Toukola and Männistö (and Jukola's sauna and laundrybuilding).

There is also a hostel- and catering unit on the premises, called Kuninkaantien Kestikartano, which organizes birthdays, weddings, anniversaries etc., and offers accommodation for people travelling in Paimio.

Paimio

Paimio is a small rural town of approximately 10 000 inhabitants in southwestern Finland. The town center is very compact, and many of the important services are situated along Vistantie. There you can find the grocery stores, school, church (built in 1680's), library and city hall, indoor swimming pool and even 2 small movie theatres.

There are also all kinds of sport facilities in Paimio: ball game fields, ice skating rink and an indoor skiing tunnel. The most famous sights in Paimio are the Paimio hospital, which was designed by the famous Finnish architect Alvar Aalto in the 1930's, and the Paimio Electrical Museum providing information about electrification in the region.



*up: Paimio's Church
left: Park in the Paimio center*

Volunteer's tasks and activities

A volunteer in Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto will be working as a part of our work community and together with our staff. You will have a work supervisor, who takes care that you get to know the workplace, your fellow employees and the practices of the school. You can also always ask help from all the members of our staff – they'll do their best to support you.

The working times are normally from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., including a lunch break of 30 minutes at 12.00. However, sometimes you might be asked to work during the evenings or weekends, if a project you're working on requires this. In that case, you will get a similar amount of hours free during the weekdays.

Volunteer's tasks may vary weekly. Some projects will go on regularly for a long time, the others are more short term.

One of the main activities is taking part in the everyday life of the folk high school and the activities of its study lines: band practices, dance/theatre/make up classes, making creative projects with music- and theatrelines, and so on. You will also be involved in organizing events at Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto: band concerts, plays, children's events, day dances for senior citizens, schools Christmas festivities – whatever it is that is going on.

You will also be able to work in other places in addition to Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto. This will give you a wider view of a Finnish community. The local secondary school, the senior high and the adult training center would be happy to have visitors in their language classes to talk with their students in the target language (i.e. your native language). You will also be able to visit a work shop for unemployed young people in Paimio, which Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto is cooperating with. The cultural services in Paimio have also offered work in translating the town's tourist information.

One part of the EVS service is disseminating information about EVS and the Youth in Action programme. This may include for example visits to schools or youth clubs to talk about your experiences or organizing an international theme day at Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto. You will also be able to do a project about your EVS – for example by arranging a photo exhibition or by writing a blog about your stay here.

EVS training days are also included in your working time. You will take part in an On Arrival – training a couple of weeks after your arrival, and in midterm evaluation during your service. These trainings are organized by the Finnish National Agency CIMO (Centre for International Mobility) in Kokkola, which is a town in western Finland, in Central Ostrobothnia region and in Sipoo (near to Helsinki).

Language training will also be given to you weekly and is included in your working time. This training will consist of functional studying of Finnish: learning the language will help you in

your work and living in Finland. As a work language we will use English and, eventually, probably also Finnish to some degree.

EVS aims at promoting non-formal learning: learning that takes place in other places than school. To support this process of non-formal learning, EU has developed the Youthpass. Youthpass is a certificate which you can receive at the end of your EVS project. It describes the project you took part in and the learning outcomes it produced for you.

During the service you will acquire new skills and competences. These competences can be, for example, communication in a foreign language, digital competence or cultural awareness and expression. To support this learning process, you will have discussions with your work supervisor and your mentor about your objectives and reflect on your learning.

Your workweek will include a meeting with your mentor(if needed). During this meeting you will be able to discuss your objectives, learning process, achievements and possible problems – or whatever you have on your mind at the time.

During the service, we encourage you to ask questions and voice any wishes or ideas that you have about the activities – then we can do our best to make your service as fulfilling and valuable for you as possible. It is important to us that your service here stimulating, motivating and meaningful for you.

People

Here are shortly introduced some of the people you will meet while working in Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto, and their occupational titles also in Finnish!

Mr. Pekka Kolehmainen, Headmaster (*Rehtori*)

Pekka is the headmaster of Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto. He also teaches in the study lines concerning music.

Ms. Piia Harala, Training Officer (*Koulutussihteeri*)

Piia works as the training officer at Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto. She takes care of students matters and runs the office of the school.

Ms. Merja Kosonen, Matron (*Emäntä*)

Merja takes care of Kuninkaantien Kestikartano, the hostel- and catering unit of Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto.

Non-military Service Man (*Siviilipalvelusmies*)

Non-military Service Man is doing his non-military service in Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto from September 2017 to June 2018. He works on various tasks in the office, in the hostel unit and with the students. New non-military service man starts at August-September 2018.

Teachers (*Opettajat*):

Some teachers of Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto work there daily, others come in once or twice a week. The headteachers of the study lines are:

Mr. Saana Murtojärvi, Head Teacher of Pop & Rock line

Ms. Anu Hoskin, Head teacher of Theatre line

Mr. Jaakko Savela, Head Teacher of the Musical Technology line

Ms. Heli Tikkanen, Head Teacher of the Make-up line

Others:

The mentor (and if needed tutors) is also important contacts for you during your EVS. The mentor come from outside of the work community, and will that way broaden your support network in Finland.

A mentor is a person who offers you personal support during the service and discusses your learning objectives and the Youthpass with you. Tutors are young people who help you to get to know the local community and your new surroundings.

Living

You will be living in the Main House ("Pääatalo") of Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto, which has 12 bedrooms on the second floor of the building. These rooms are mostly used for visitors since the students usually reside in the boarding houses. Especially during the wintertime it is very peaceful in the Main House because there aren't many travellers in Paimio.

Volunteers will have their own bedroom and bathroom. The kitchen is shared by three bedrooms. In the bedroom there is a bed (linen included), a bedside table, a desk and a chair, and closets. The room also has a wireless Internet connection. The bathroom has a toilet and a shower. The kitchen is equipped with a fridge, a stove, an oven, a microwave oven and a coffee maker. There are cooking utensils at your disposal. You are responsible for keeping your own room and kitchen tidy and in good shape.

A laundry machine is at your use in another building. The sauna is heated weekly for the students, and you may use it then as well if you wish to. There is a common room, which students may use during the evenings to watch television or to just spend time together, and there are some computers in common use.

There is a grocery store called M-market right across the street. There you can find groceries and other things you need daily. You will have an account opened there and will be able to do your grocery shopping there. You can prepare your own meals in the kitchen. The staff of Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto brings in their own lunch because the school doesn't have its own cafeteria. There is a staff room where one can eat lunch and make coffee and tea.

You will have a key to your room which applies also to the front door of the Main House. The main door is locked in the evenings, but with your own key you will be able to come and go. There is a Maintenance Man Service on call, which you can phone in case you get locked out, lose or break your key or face any other problems during evenings or weekends.

Free time

There are many things you can do during your free time. As mentioned earlier, Paimio offers possibilities for different sports as well as for some cultural activities and sightseeing. It is also possible to use the music classrooms in Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto after school time for practicing.

There will probably be other EVS-volunteers working in nearby towns during your stay. We will help you get in contact with them; this way you can also organize common free time activities with other volunteer workers in the area.

It is also possible to visit other towns and cities from Paimio during evenings and weekends. Turku is one of the biggest cities in Finland, as well as the oldest city of the country. Busses from Paimio to Turku commute regularly, and it takes 45 minutes to get to Turku by bus. In Turku you can find the Turku Cathedral dating back from 1200's, Turku Castle, parks, museums, theatres and concerts as well as restaurants and cafés, among other things.

From Paimio one can also easily visit for example Naantali, which is beautiful small town by the sea and the home of Moomin World, or Salo, which is a town of 50 000 inhabitants 45 minutes from Paimio. Paimio has good bus connections to the directions of Turku and Salo, and from Salo, there are regular train connections to Helsinki, the Capital of Finland.



Paimio library and town hall

Practicalities

There are several practical issues to be taken care of after your arrival. You will be assisted in these matters by your supervisor/mentor/(tutor).

Registration

After your arrival, you will have help in getting registered in register office and tax office.

Bank account, pocket money, mobile phone

You will be helped to open a Finnish bank account . During your service, you will receive an allowance of 125 euros per month. This will be paid to your account in the beginning of each month. You will also have a food money account opened for you in the nearby store where you can do your grocery shopping. We will also help you to acquire a Finnish mobile telephone subscription.

Health services

You should do your insurance ready and send print of your Cigna Card and your insurance documents before your evs-period start. You will be able to use the occupational health care of Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto during the working time or, during evenings or weekends, the communal health center. You will receive information on using these services upon your arrival.

Language

In Finland it is rather easy to get along by English: most people speak at least little bit of it. In the workplace, you will be able to communicate in English. You will also be supported to learn some Finnish, and your language training will aim at you learning to use Finnish in useful, everyday situations.

Climate

As your service begins in September and ends in June, the weather conditions and temperatures will change quite much during your stay. In September it can still be rather warm. During the autumn, the warm and sunny and rainy days may vary.

The first snow usually comes in November, and during the wintertime the temperature can some days drop down to 20-25 degrees Celsius below zero. However, it is not that cold all the time even in the winter, and mostly the temperature stays in more moderate degrees. In the wintertime the day gets shorter, as sun sets earlier and rises later. There is still light during the daytime even in the darkest time of winter, and in the winter sun can often shine very brightly.

The springtime can be very wet, when the snow melts. The amount of light increases quickly in the spring. In May the weather can be very summery already. In June it is very light even late in the evening.

The weather conditions in Finland are nothing to be worried about – it is only a question of attitude and weather appropriate clothing!



A bedroom in Päätälo



A kitchen in Päätälo

Contact information

Here are put together the contact information of a few key persons. Upon your arrival, you will receive a more complete list of contacts you may need in work or on your free time.

In Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto

Mr. Pekka Kolehmainen, Headmaster:
pekka.kolehmainen@paimio.fi, +358504327410 (work)

Ms. Piia Harala, Training Officer:
kansanopisto@paimio.fi, +358509134656 (work)

Some useful Internet addresses

- <http://www.vsko.fi> – *The Internet Pages of Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto (in Finnish)*
- <http://www.facebook.com/VarsinaisSuomenKansanopisto> – *You can also “like” the pages of Varsinais-Suomen Kansanopisto in Facebook!*
- <http://www.cimo.fi/> – *The pages of Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) also in English*
- <http://www.youthpass.eu> – *Read more about Youthpass*
- www.paimio.fi – *Information about Paimio also in English*
- www.finland.fi – *Page that presents facts, news, and articles about Finland covering various topics from politics to fashion*