

QUIN Finland, report of Maila Hakala:

OSAVAD NAISED – event

6–8 May 2004, Viljandi, Estonia

QUIN-Estonia and QUIN-Finland were offered the opportunity to participate in the international “Osavad Naised” seminar and exhibition event of Women’s Entrepreneurship that took place in Viljandi, Estonia.

The event belonged to the programme of the Women Entrepreneurs project financed by the European Union and organized in co-operation with following partners:

Viljandi City Municipality, Estonia

Tartu Council Women’s Union, Estonia

Association of Rural Women, Latvia

Jurmala City Municipality, Latvia

Varsinais-Suomen Liitto, Regional Council of Southwest Finland

St. Petersburg Women Association, Russia

The programme consisted of

A seminar “ Osavad Naised” May 6, 2004

And the affiliated exhibition May 7-8, 2004

We, the Finns participating in the seminar, made a group of 16 people; entrepreneurs representing several fields and companies. Some members of our group were looking for Baltic contacts and participated in the exhibition with their own exhibition booth. Kirsti Pakkala from TAD-Centre was the group leader.

The presentations of the lecturers from the Baltic countries were mostly on the studies made of entrepreneurship in these countries, difficulties of new entrepreneurs when starting and running their business and the measures taken to promote entrepreneurship. It was interesting to learn that most of the experiences of new entrepreneurs were approximately the same that we know of the circumstances in our own country.

The lectures were delivered in three languages thanks to the interpretation in Estonian, English and Russian.

The Finnish contribution to the seminar was the lecture of Ms. Mirja Ehrlund, president of the Central Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Finland, who reported the activities of KARELLIKESKUS OY and their projects. The presentation of Anne-Mari Rannamäe, president of QUIN.Estonia Association, titled “Innovation and knowledge as possibilities to enlarge companies development and competitive abilities. It is very important to increase knowledge of citizens of intellectual property rights and good practices in the innovation field now that Estonia is developing the country towards a more innovative society.

The role of private entrepreneurs in the society, and especially that of women, being a pretty new issue in the Baltic countries, the seminar must have been important opening to increase general awareness of the importance of free entrepreneurship and the new opportunities that an own enterprise may offer as a way to self employment and better income.

Siia tuleb üks pilt Viljandi näitusel olemisest. Valime koos. See ei ole kahjuks digi.

Exhibition

The sport hall, where the exhibition took place, was in the very centre of Viljandi and close to the seminar venue.

There were about 30 exhibition stands of participating women, most of them displaying traditional works of women, that is handicraft, in many cases of national style, those we are used to see in women's exhibitions. The exhibition of QUIN-Finland and QUIN-Estonia represented a different approach; new and unique ideas of inventive women. The QUIN exhibition offered another type of female entrepreneur's role model – that of courageous modern women who are making their future on the basis of their own creative ideas.

QUIN-Finland was represented by the following delegation:

Maila Hakala, President of the QUIN-Finland Association

Tuula Allen with her fancy products made of chopped Finnish money (FIM) before EURO

Helena Laisi, Board Member of QUIN-Finland

The group organized a display introducing the following new innovations:

- Merja Lönnqvist textiles, bowls, trinkets and other jewellery all these made of nettle
- Melocoton, an awarded in the Inno-Finland contest 2003 and with the GWIIN (Global Women Inventors and Innovators Network) award in Singapore 2004
- Illuminating stone of Ulla Pohjola (Prize winner in the Inno-Finland 2002, awarded by GWIIN in London 2003)
- An illustrative summary of various inventions of Finnish women (a series of 20 posters of size A3)

This was an important opportunity for QUIN-Estonia to give information on their activities and to give visitors many. Samples how a woman has commercialized a productive idea. We missed to count visitors but we believe that the exhibition aroused attention and interest because there were visitors all the time at our stand. We owe thanks to the organizers for offering us all the exhibition facilities and Anne-Mari Rannamäe who was on duty in the exhibition all the time without rest explaining to the visitor's women's innovations in Russian and Estonian. It all together was a very positive experience.