

# UNIVERSITY IMPLEMENTING ITS COMMUNITY SERVICE ROLE THROUGH CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN A REGIONAL COLLEGE

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## Abstract

The three roles of a higher education institution are teaching, research and community service. The objective of the article is to analyse how a university regional college can implement the task of community service via its curriculum development. The theoretical base lies on the positions of internationally recognised scientists of education policy as well as OECD definitions and clarifications that are compared to the cases of the regional colleges (in Narva and Kuressaare) of two universities (respectively University of Tartu and Tallinn University of Technology).

The set task enables to study as a whole such components as the content and design of curricula, teaching and assessment methods, extracurricular activities, topics and supervision of students' research works, cooperation with partners. A comprehensive approach is a precondition of a well-functioning curriculum, with community service being the unifying aspect.

The results of current study are applicable in case of the analysed curricula and colleges, they partly applicable in case of any other similar curricula and units. Prerequisites of the colleges' network evolvement, holistic impact and compliance with the region-specific needs is a significant topic the additional study of which has already begun.<sup>4</sup>

**Keywords:** regional policy, higher education, universities' community service, research and development, human capital, curriculum development

**JEL Classification:** I23, I25, O15, O31, R58

## Introduction

Historically, the primary role of universities has been teaching. As a result of Alexander von Humboldt's academic revolution in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, scientific research became the second main function of a university, yet closely connected to

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teaching. Community service, the third role of universities became a discussion issue in the late decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century only. That was caused by changes in the society – globalisation, networking, a closer connection to the community, development of service industry and knowledge-based production. (Chatterton and Goddard 2000; OECD 2007: 21; Bass and Silverstein 1996; Arbo and Benneworth 2007). Research is, as a rule, considered the most important task of a university (among universities research universities are often separately pointed out), on which teaching is naturally based. Community service is mostly called the third task, but is closely connected to the first and second tasks. During recent years, community service has become highly valued, in the countries of young democracies in particular. (Chatterton & Goddard 2000:447)

Rapid changes assume a university to build a closer connection to its environment, a quicker reaction to and higher flexibility in meeting the community expectations. Community service enhances both study and R&D activities, providing services to businesses and public sector institutions as well as contributing to the administrative capacity building of a region. Community service has taken its place next to study and research activities but is closely integrated in them. It is a pro-active activity, enhancing transferring and adapting internationally created knowledge according to the community needs in all its regions. (Chatterton & Goddard 2000; Virtanen 2001)

The Universities Act, adopted in Estonia in 1995, identifies the mission of a university in providing services based on educational and research activities: “The mission of a university is to advance science, academic practice, create and develop possibilities based on integrated instruction and research for obtaining up-to-date higher education corresponding to the Standard of Higher Education, to organise continuing education and provide services to the society which are based on educational and research activities.” (Ülikooliseadus 1995: §4) The 2003 amendment to the Act provides details on the academic levels of higher education but the mission of a university remains unchanged (Ülikooliseadus 2003: §4). The 2008 amendment to the Act §4 provides a subsection pointing out the need for cooperation in the activity of a university: “Upon accomplishing its mission, universities cooperate with each other as well as with the entire society by supporting the development of the society and the preservation of national culture by effective research, development or other creative activities and by creating and developing possibilities based on integrated instruction and research activities for international cooperation, acquisition of higher education based on scientific approach as well as for continuing education.” (Ülikooliseaduse... 2008: §7).

The Universities Act or any other legal acts don't specify the term “college”. The regional colleges of public universities have been established, commencing from the amendments of 1996 in the Universities Act §19 (3<sup>1</sup>), according to which a structure of a university may include institutions of the university that are in their activity guided by the statutes adopted by the council of the university (Ülikooliseaduse... 1996: §1 p.23). In 2011, a provision was inserted in the Act §19 (1), stating that in case of possibility, the structure of the university is developed considering regional needs (Erakooliseaduse... 2011: §3 p.1).

The establishment of university's new units including the colleges is by law an autonomous decision of the university. In 1990s, University of Tartu and Tallinn University of Technology used this opportunity. The creation of Narva College was initiated by the Ministry of Education in order to improve the quality of teacher training for schools with Russian as a language of instruction. The creation of Kuressaare College was initiated by the university and its partners from county and local governments. The reasoning came in both cases from different state and county strategies. For the opening of the new curricula the colleges made an application to their universities where the connection with the region was explained. Expert opinions from regional partners were added. Curriculum development is always done in accordance with regional partners' opinions, since both universities have the requirement of having these partners in every program council.

Since regional colleges in Estonia haven't been established as a result of a wider systematic research, additional research is needed. A broad-based research project is already currently in progress and the results will be reported in 2014. The authors of current paper also participate (including data collection) in the project as it includes all regional colleges in Estonia, and focuses on whether Regional Higher Educational Institutions are the result of intrauniversity competition, local initiative or national innovation policy<sup>5</sup>. While the data for the wider analysis is being collected we concentrate on two colleges and their two curricula and thereby contribute to the better understanding of the possibilities of the regional colleges in the regional development. The uniqueness of this contribution lays in the way how regional engagement is looked at - the combination of the three roles of universities and curriculum development.

The objective of current article is to analyse at the example of Narva College of University of Tartu and Kuressaare College of Tallinn University of Technology whether and how the development of curricula in region-specific fields, research and development as well as contributing to socio-cultural activity support cooperation in the region and the mission of community service.

The research questions for achieving this goal are: What can curriculum development provide in order to foster service to the region? Does a regional college and its curricula have to implement all three tasks of the university in the same proportion as the university in general?

The objective set enables a comprehensive study in a curriculum design: content of the study activity, teaching and assessment methods, extracurricular activities, topics and supervision of students' research works, cooperation with partners. A comprehensive approach is a precondition of a well-functioning curriculum, with community service being the unifying aspect of current article.

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The article analyses the possibilities to support community service via curriculum development, based on the dimensions formulated by OECD: knowledge creation in the region, human capital formation and knowledge transfer, cultural and community development. Upon preparing the article, the following has been studied: analysis of documents based on the documents on curricula design, analyses, reports, minutes of meetings and other summaries of the kind. In addition, colleges and their development plans as well as other strategic documents and regional activity related materials have been studied. Many of these documents are not for public use. Information is presented through authors' experience as they have been active participants and observers of all processes described.

The results of current study are applicable in regional units (counties) in case of all curricula meeting similar conditions, some results are more specific and thus applicable only in the curricula under current study.

The activity of the two regional colleges of the two biggest Estonian universities under study is governed by the same national legal acts, making the cases well comparable. At the same time, the activity of these colleges is independent of each other and therefore the maximum reliability and applicability in a broader sense (to other similar colleges) are secured. The cases under study are independent of each other as the colleges operate under different universities and are geographically located far away from each other. Also the regions under study have quite different socio-economic profiles. Same refers to the curricula, one of them belongs to a social and the other to a technological sphere which in turn secures the validity in case of different curricula and universities.

### **Description of research objects**

There are 29 educational establishments in Estonia where higher education can be acquired (as of 31.01.2013 [www.hm.ee](http://www.hm.ee)). Higher education is provided by both public and private educational establishments. There are six public universities.

Estonian public universities have seven regional colleges, located away from their main campuses in Tallinn or Tartu<sup>6</sup>. The colleges are located all over Estonia, offering curricula and advancing R&D activity specific to their region and university. The rectors of public universities have signed an agreement (24.11.2008) setting the strategic goal of a joint development of a regional competence centres network covering Estonia and required for promoting lifelong learning and entrepreneurship in the region. In addition to teaching, regional colleges contribute to building regional innovation systems and support community development activities.

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<sup>6</sup> Narva College, Pärnu College and Viljandi Culture Academy of University of Tartu; Kuressaare College and Virumaa College of Tallinn University of Technology; Haapsalu College and Rakvere College of Tallinn University.

University of Tartu has approved in 2008 the guidelines of the regional programme that underpin the development of education and research and development activities in the regions (Tartu... 2008). According to the Development Plan of University of Tartu “the university shall in cooperation with partners, develop and strengthen the university’s colleges as training and competency centres, in order to promote balanced development in Estonia through the transfer of knowledge and skills.” (University... 2009)

The Council of Tallinn University of Technology has approved in 2009 the bases of regional activities, which stresses the need to contribute to the balanced development of the country through training, counselling, and communication, provision of services and applied research in all counties of Estonia. Regional activities are based on its regional colleges; the university has set a strategic goal to develop the Competence Centres in Saaremaa and Ida-Viru counties. (Tallinna... 2009)

The mission of Narva College is to to act as the leading force driving the development of knowledge-based society and to be the guarantor of its continuity in Ida-Viru County, to serve the society through study and research work, to offer its students the best opportunities for self-development and decent education, to help them apply their knowledge in the society; and to promote development of connections between various cultures in Estonia. (Narva... 2008)

Development Plan of Kuressaare College formulates the mission: “Kuressaare College of TUT provides the availability of higher education in West-Estonia and contributes to fostering regional sustainability and capacity in cooperation with community and county organisations, public sector institutions and business sector.” (Development... 2011)

Narva is situated on the border between the European Union and Russia. There are four HEIs operating in Narva but only one of them is public – Narva College of the University of Tartu. The College was established in 1999 as an answer to the needs of the region, mainly to educate the teachers of the schools providing education in the Russian language. Later on, other lines of education have been launched, among them the curriculum of Local Government’s Administration (LGA) at the level of higher professional education.

Ida-Viru County Development Plan emphasizes that integration processes play an important role in the development of communities. Integration should be carried out not only in language-training, but also through other substantive activities, including education and research (Ida-Viru... 2012). Access to higher education for non-native speakers of English has become more complicated, as highlighted in the recent study by Praxis (Praxis... 2013). Thus it is the College’s moral obligation to support the integration process. Developing the curriculum of LGA by Narva College supports the development goals of Narva city: to become the best municipality with highest local administrative capacity in Ida-Viru County. To achieve this goal it is necessary to increase the competence of the officials (Narva... 2007).

Kuressaare College was established in 1999 as an institution of Tallinn University of Technology and a legal successor of the Institute of Islands Development. The College started with education in the field of tourism, characteristic of Saaremaa. Later on, education in electronics, business and small craft building was started, the latter of which has in the process of developing the Estonian regional innovation strategy been brought forward as a production sector with a region-specific and high development potential (Tiits 2007). In 2011, Small Craft Competence Centre, a research and development centre was established as a structural unit of the College.

Saare county development strategy emphasizes the importance of developing a cluster-based entrepreneurship, stating the tourism and the maritime economy as the most important fields of the county. The goal is to make available know-how in these areas, including the development of curricula (Saare... 2008). Kuressaare city's strategic goal is to develop comprehensive educational and career opportunities for the island; in collaboration with Kuressaare College and Estonian Maritime Academy Kuressaare aims to create conditions for the establishment of a maritime education center in Kuressaare (Kuressaare... 2013).

There are less than 100 students of Local Government's Administration speciality in Narva College. Estonians make up about 30% of the students; others are native Russian speakers, mostly of the Russian nationality. As of 1.10.2012, 50 students attended the Small Craft Building curriculum in Kuressaare College. The students of both specialities involve both gymnasium leavers and people employed in the respective sector.

### **Theoretical Framework – Regional Contribution of Higher Education Institutions**

Upon studying the topic of community service, the authors have applied a diversity of approaches: the role of universities in innovation (Charles 2006; Westnes et al 2009; Allison and Eversole 2008), the role of the managing staff of universities (Gunasekara 2004), the perspectives of the academic staff (Bond and Paterson 2005), knowledge transfer via communication networks of the academic staff (Vaessen and Velde 2003), involvement in development activities as a regional policy instrument (Hudson 2006). The aspects closer and more relevant to the focus of current article are observed in a more detail.

While exploring how Nijmegen University (Netherlands) impacts on the study environment of the organisations of the region, Vaessen and Velde (2003) draw a conclusion that just the very existence of a university in a region increases the region's prestige and the academic staff have next to their professional activity an impact on the neighbourhood through their personal contacts as well as various formal and informal networking. The work points out the significance of transferring their knowledge and expertise in the course of social communication outside their work assignments. (Vaessen and Velde 2003: 107).

The quality of the teaching depends, among other issues, on the involvement of the academic staff in community service. Bond and Paterson (2005) questioned over 800 and interviewed over 80 members of academic staff in England and Scotland. The authors point out that the members of the academic staff demonstrate an active involvement in and connection to their community both in principal and practice; the involvement is identified at different geographical levels and often under unfavourable conditions. The authors study involvement from two aspects: social and economic (these aspects are often called 'soft' and 'hard' respectively). The vast majority of respondents believe that the participation of universities in debates outside their institutions is important. 88% also believe that it is important to provide advice to policymakers (Bond and Paterson 2005: 338). The reasons for such activities are mainly related to the sense of duty or responsibility, not practical gain or prestige.

Regional networking can be thought of as an institutional survival or strengthening strategy for universities (Chatterton and Goddard 2000: 481). Higher education institutions provide education, conduct research and play an active role in the development of their economic, social and cultural environment. "Within the individual institution, the challenge is to link the teaching, research and community service roles by internal mechanisms (funding, staff development, incentives and rewards, communications, etc.) that make these activities more responsive to regional needs" (Chatterton and Goddard 2000: 482). Regional contribution to civil society is conducted through extra-mural activities of individual staff as we also read in Bond and Paterson (2005) or through providing liberal adult education, through public lectures, etc (Chatterton and Goddard 2000: 489). From a regional perspective, higher education institutions can be the key local agencies that are able to bring together within the territory different national interests (OECD 2007: 30).

Hudson (2006) has described the development of legislative and financial framework of the third mission of higher education institutions in Sweden during half a century. Despite the fact that the legislation in the field was quite vague, the majority of HEIs proved to be central actors in the regional growth partnerships (Hudson 2006: 398). The author illustrates the process on the example of Umeå University which is similar to Narva and Kuressaare Colleges as it is also peripheral. Their regional engagement was not only answering the needs of the region by conducting research, teaching and offering cooperation but also by widening recruitment to higher education and supplying the labour market with qualified personnel (Hudson 2006: 402). One of the biggest obstacles was that decision-making processes in a big university were often cumbersome and slow moving (Hudson 2006: 404).

Similar to Sweden, the regional activity of higher education institutions was extended in Finland. In line with a regional extension, emphasis on performing the community service mission increased, universities became instruments of regional policy implementation. Just extending is not sufficient, alongside with teaching the university has to contribute to the creation of knowledge-based jobs in cooperation with business and public sectors so that specialists with higher education could find

a job in the region according to their qualification. (Virtanen 2010) The branches of higher education institutions act as focal points of research and innovation networks, mediators of competences and additional resource fostering an international dimension. The activity, impact and quality of the units acting outside university cities have little been studied and thus a more detailed analysis is required to draw in-depth conclusions. (Vihula, Kosonen and Sotarauta 2006)

One of the most extensive researches in the field of the community service of universities has been the OECD initiated under the IMHE (Institutional Management in Higher Education) programme thematic review project “Supporting the contribution of HEIs to regional development” in the course of which HEIs and regions evaluated their cooperation. The first period of 2005-2007 embraced 14 regions across 12 countries (Arbo and Benneworth 2007; OECD 2007). In the second round in 2008-2011 another 14 regions attended and in the last round in 2010-2012 6 regions participated (OECD 2012).

Charles and Benneworth (2002) have developed a tool that benchmarks regional contributions of HEIs, which includes seven themes and can be used in measuring and comparing the regional contribution of HEIs. Very importantly, Charles and Benneworth (2002) draw attention to promoting sustainability. This tool has in some rewording become the basis of the OECD guidelines for self-analysis, according to which it is recommended to evaluate the regional engagement and contribution of HEIs under the following dimensions (Guidelines... 2008):

- The contribution of HEIs to the creation and development of regional innovation systems. **Knowledge creation in the region through research** and its application, e.g. spin out companies, intellectual property rights and consultancy. Usually, by knowledge creation ‘hard’ contributions and innovation are meant. In the ‘soft’ fields different new forms of knowledge and its creation are addressed – data, skills, networking and experience (Chatterton and Goddard 2000: 480).
- The contribution of the study activity to developing knowledge and skills meeting the needs of a labour market. **Human capital formation and knowledge transfer** – re-localisation of a learning process using learning in a real work-environment or practical training, graduate employment in the region, continuing education, professional development and lifelong learning activities. The main question of knowledge transfer is how to get the right knowledge to the right people. The knowledge itself could be either explicit or tacit. (Calo 2008)
- **The support of HEIs to social, cultural and non-waste technological development.** Cultural and community development contributing to the milieu, social cohesion and sustainable development on which innovation in the region depends. Universities have historically had a great role in nation-building, promoting sustainable development, people’s awareness (Arbo and Benneworth 2007: 52; Zilahy and Huisingsh 2009). The role of HEIs in increasing regional administrative and cooperation capacity. Development of the administrative capacity for regional cooperation, community development and management

capacity. The academic staff carries a remarkable role by participating as experts in decision making bodies of regional level (Arbo and Benneworth 2007: 71).

Relying on the reports analysing the cooperation of HEIs and regions, the OECD analyst Puukka points out that even if the regions that have participated in the self-evaluation process are very different and their differences are diverse, all share the problem of vast development inequalities inside their regions that requires solutions (Puukka 2009). The same problem is pointed out in the analysis of the terms of reference for developing the strategy of regional development of Estonia 2020: inside the country, the development inequalities of regions are too high, in order to attain the objectives of regional development, a more efficient involvement of policies of different sectors is required to implement the strategy. It is pointed out in the analysis that to foster the competitiveness of labour range outside Tallinn and Tartu, the potential of regional colleges of universities can be considered. (Eesti... 2012). Despite the small size of the country, the regional development of Estonia is highly uneven and the results of the 2012 census confirmed the departure of the population from a number of counties. With the support of colleges, it is possible to offer broader possibilities for learning and working that in turn increases the development potential of a region and reduces the level of departure of the population.

In the framework of a regional policy, the innovation capacity may be increased as well as the connection of businesses to universities and research institutions. Economic specialisation, based on the competence advantages of regions, is vital for balancing regional development. The role of regional policy has also been stressed out in the 2020 European strategy for smart economic growth. (Regionaalpoliitika... 2010)

### **Knowledge Creation and Research in the Region**

Knowledge creation and research in the region and their application shows the ways through which higher education institutions are involved with regional innovation systems. Its primary focus is on the 'hard' contributions, such as the inputs to firm-based innovation, including consultancy (OECD 2007: 117-142). 'Soft' contributions mean broader research which helps to create a common understanding of priorities for regional development amongst regional stakeholders and prepare the ground for cooperation between the academic and non-academic community. Public Administration as a discipline generally carries more 'soft' aspects whereas Small Craft Building represents 'hard' ones.

In the context of lifelong learning, knowledge creation takes on different characteristics. In particular, it is important to differentiate between codifiable knowledge (data), tacit knowledge (skills), knowledge required for networking or acquaintances and experience. These forms of 'hybrid knowledge' become the most valuable type of knowledge depending upon interpersonal relationships, trust and cooperation and are most readily developed within the region. (Chatterton and

Goddard 2000: 480) These thoughts will be closely studied in the context of both curricula. Next to research, it is also important to discuss the content of a curriculum or the essence of knowledge from the point of view of regional needs.

Knowledge creation and research in Narva College are mainly oriented to issues of multiculturalism. The results are not directly transferable into regional innovation systems. They are acting as the base for all actions in this multicultural region. This research is appreciated by the state which is continuously ordering cross-cultural communication training-courses for different target groups. This way research is connected to lifelong learning. Research in the Local Government's Administration curriculum is practically absent because of the lack of academic personnel in the field. This might be the biggest shortcoming of the curriculum. The solution seems to lie in a closer cooperation with other universities but their research interests are not clearly connected to multiculturalism (in Public Administration). The students' research papers are mainly in the form of graduation theses which are preferably on the topics with a practical outcome. In case of in-service students it is logical that they write a thesis which has a practical value to their organisation and this is actually very valuable in terms of regional engagement. The cooperation of students and lecturers has little been employed as the lecturers' interests are somewhat broader and more theoretical. Therefore, maybe we just have to accept that there is no jointly created knowledge in such a small regional college.

Since the classical knowledge creation is rather weak in the field of Public Administration, the knowledge creation in the context of lifelong learning and the composition of the curriculum or the essence of the knowledge offered should rather be focused at.

The Standard of Higher Education sets homogeneous general requirements to the curricula of the same level education programmes. Upon designing some curricula, it is possible to commence from professional standards (e.g. Small Craft Building) but in Public Administration no concrete standards exist. "The main regulative mechanism has been competition. This has led to rather similar developments in the programmes' composition as well as using the already existing strengths in the institutions" (Kalev et al 2008: 146).

The objective of the LGA curriculum is to train local government officials, especially for the region. Narva College tries to provide the students with the tools to work in civil service, the general understanding about the public sector and society overall; and more focused knowledge about local government. Practical training makes up a big part of the curriculum. The content of the curriculum is being constantly developed and revised on the suggestions of the Programme Council which consists of future employers, lecturers, students and graduates.

Denhardt (2001) has formulated the big questions of Public Administration education:

- Do we seek to educate our students with respect to theory or to practice?

- Do we prepare students for their first jobs or for those to which they might aspire later?
- What are the appropriate delivery mechanisms for MPA courses and curricula?
- What personal commitments do we make as Public Administration educators?

In respect to the first question about theory and practice, one thing to consider is what graduates are doing in the future. If they wish to go to work in public service immediately as professional higher education graduates usually do, they should get as much practical guidance as possible. If they choose to continue studying at the Master's level, they should have more theoretical subjects. Since both ways are accepted, it makes finding the balance between theory and practice hard but a necessary task. In other words, we are discovering the balance between codifiable and tacit knowledge (see Chatterton and Goddard 2000).

How can the students with different needs and future plans be helped within the same curriculum? This issue is similar to Denhardt's second question. Denhardt (2001: 531) has tried to answer this question but even he said: "Educators in Public Administration have frequently assumed there is one best way to construct programmes and policies and that we should take a one-size-fits-all approach to our students. /.../ Some people are simply more interested in theory than others – and that goes for faculty as well as students".

Denhardt suggests that the differentiation between pre-service and in-service students is needed: "students require different kinds of knowledge and skills at different points in their careers" (Denhardt 2001: 527). Nonetheless he sees the possibility of learning from each other if these audiences are taught together. One part of the class has life-experience and broader world-view; they can link new knowledge to the existing one ('know-how', 'know-who' and 'know-why'). The others are good learners ('know-what') but they do not have the context where to put the new knowledge in. These groups can support each other in acquiring the 'hybrid knowledge' (see Chatterton and Goddard 2000). The challenge for Public Administration educators (see Denhardt's fourth question) is to choose learning methods that take advantage of this composition. Denhardt (2001: 532) recommends, if designing different curricula is impossible due to the size of the programme, a set of common core courses might be followed by different electives. The student interested in continuing studies at next level, should receive more theory and the student interested in entering a labour market should receive more practical knowledge and skills.

The contribution of Kuressaare College to the creation of regional innovation systems and to research activity is more systematic and clearer, compared to the case of Narva College. Small Craft Building is a 'hard' contribution (Chatterton and Goddard 2000), supporting the business sector of the region. Small regions can be successful in knowledge creation in specific sectors (smart specialisation), in which they have competitive advantages compared to other regions and in which the expected benefit is biggest (Foray, David and Hall 2009).

In Estonia, boatbuilding shows major concentration on the mainland coastal areas and the island of Saaremaa. Boatbuilding is a specific field of activity on islands, where there is a respective historical tradition and experience.

Two years ago, Small Craft Competence Centre, a research and development centre was established as a structural unit of the College with the aim of accumulating and developing respective knowhow and transferring it to businesses (scc.ee). The very idea of the Small Craft Competence Centre was initiated in the course of developing Estonian regional innovation system in 2005-2008, where small craft building was identified as the strategic field of activity to be primarily developed in Saaremaa. (Eesti... 2008)

Small craft cluster development strategy has identified the lack of knowhow as the main development barrier of the sector: technical design, product development, development of production technology, certifying and testing small craft (Väikelaevaehituse... 2010). The idea of a Small Craft Competence Centre is based on overcoming this deficit. Next to developing knowhow, services and infrastructure, it is essential to develop education in small craft building at the same time on the level of both vocational training and higher education. Cohesion between the roles of teaching, research and community service is a precondition for the respective activities to meet the needs of a region (Chatterton and Goddard 2000). Since the boatbuilding sector has mainly been concentrated in Saaremaa, the benefit from the cooperation between respective businesses and research is highest to this region (Foray, David and Hall 2009).

The Competence Centre has good preconditions to develop into a substantial service provider and partner to businesses in applied research, relying on the activity of the University of Technology in this field. It is more complicated to meet the needs of businesses in small craft design as Estonia lacks respective competence and the international search for contacts has not given the expected results yet.

As a conclusion, it may be stated that university colleges provide access to new knowledge and develop the competence of public and private sectors across Estonia; they support the creation of regional innovation systems and the development of region-specific fields of economy. Certain services, like training, information requests, mediation of contacts, consultancy, project management, technology and product development and applied research become the instruments of cooperation.

The case of Kuressaare College characterises one of the possible cooperation forms, where an education and research institution together with private and public sectors contribute to the development of the small craft competence centre, vocational training and higher education in Saaremaa. The region-specific sphere has been identified in common discussions, in which the college had the role of a leader, connector of target groups and mediator of contacts. The strengths of the college in this process have been good contacts with necessary institutes in the university, international connections and project management competence. The weakness identified is the different speed of activity of education and research institutions and

businesses, the development processes in universities and the time required to apply for funds in several agencies are time-consuming and differ greatly from the pace, businesses are used to. Businesses require quicker results and their needs for services change quickly in time.

The case of Narva College is directed at a softer knowledge creation, the development of cooperation between academic and non-academic communities and to the knowledge creation through lifelong learning and graduation thesis of a practical nature. Like in Kuressaare, the competence of project management is essential in Narva College. Project based solutions are applied to mitigate regional problems: unemployment, professional training and integration.

Current chapter reveals region-specific activities that may on the one hand be a weakness and on the other hand – a strength. Authors have realised that regional colleges focus on applied research mainly. The proportion of research compared to the study activity and project management in different networks is less than in the faculties of universities.

### **Human Capital Formation and Knowledge Transfer**

The core idea of human capital formation is how to transfer the right knowledge to the right people and what the role of higher education institutions in a regional labour market is.

Knowledge transfer is the focal topic in studying the cooperation of universities and businesses. Respective studies have been conducted also in Estonia, e.g. “Indicators measuring university-industry cooperation” (Seppo and Lilles 2012), “The policy suggestions concerning motivations and barriers of university-industry cooperation” (Seppo and Roolah 2012), “Benchmarking of governmental support measures for university-industry cooperation” (Rõigas, Seppo, Varblane 2012).

One of the most effective mechanisms for knowledge transfer is the knowledge which is embedded in students and graduates. This is a critical element of the regional role played by higher education institutions. Thus, human capital formation considers the broader significance of labour market processes for the technological and organisational dynamism of regions. (OECD 2007: 143-164) Chatterton and Goddard (2000: 489) elaborate that the most effective knowledge transfer mechanism between HEIs and the external environment is through the institutional teaching function, that is to say through staff and students.

Universities’ role in the human capital system is performing two functions. Firstly, it is supplying highest level skills for the national economies: graduates. Secondly, universities also play a role on the demand side of human capital – if universities become better at opening pathways downwards to access non-traditional higher education students, they can increase the upwards drive within the general population for a process of upskilling that will help to produce economic growth. In this way, universities are seen as a critical connection in the human capital pyramid

that, in turn, helps to determine competitiveness and economic growth in particular places. (Arbo and Benneworth 2007: 39)

OECD (2007: 143) states three points that explain how HEIs are involved in human capital formation: first, higher education institutions can widen access to higher education, particularly from remote areas and/or communities with low traditions of participation in higher education e.g. through lifelong and e-learning activities. Second, they can improve the balance between labour market supply and demand through creating improved labour market intelligence, enhancing links with the employers and supporting new enterprising. Third, higher education institutions can attract talent to the region and help to retain it. For example, the people taken up a job in Narva College, are mostly non-local, but while working and living in Narva they participate in the city development activities outside the college. Kuressaare College has involved new people in the region through the activity of the Competence Centre mainly.

Taking that as the basis, current chapter analyses the questions of widening the student body and its connection with the local labour market.

To ensure the inflow of highly motivated students, Narva College carries out projects that help to increase trust towards the College and improve its image. With activities aimed at the general public, the College prepares and develops the target group for themselves and the other HEIs.

Kuressaare College, in cooperation with the City Government, operates a robotics group for basic school students all the year round to increase the interest in a technical field among the youth. In the framework of the Kuressaare Maritime Days, the College has since 2008 carried out vision conferences on maritime topics. High level conferences and a hobby group for the youth improve the image of the College in the region and increase the interest and trust among the potential students.

For finding the best Public Administration students there are some additional and more specific measures. The speciality is introduced in the events of public servants, in-service training courses are arranged as well as public lectures and debates that facilitate introducing the programme. To increase trust towards the curriculum, the best graduation theses are sent to well-known and respected professionals for revision.

Finding motivated students from all over the country is important in many ways; mostly it is useful for the region, also for the students themselves. Finding good students is just the first step, it is quite a challenge to keep them in a peripheral college. A number of students hold speciality related jobs prior to entering the College, others take up jobs during their studies. It is very important to offer the students flexible ways to study, at the same time without compromising on the quality. One way of doing that is e-support and e-courses. An additional advantage of e-courses for PA students is that in this way students get better acquainted with different e-services which are well developed and highly appreciated in Estonia both

in public administration and businesses. E-learning is an advantage also therefore that not all lecturers are local. The combination of distance learning and contact education is comparable to the Provincial University of Lapland which is situated in the sparsely populated northern part of Finland (OECD 2007: 150).

Human capital formation in the region can be achieved by HEIs, if they observe the needs and changes of a labour market and react to them. The unemployment rate in Ida-Viru County has always been beyond the national average, 10.5% and 6% respectively (September 2013). “Statistical research concluded that Russian-speaking minorities in Estonia and Latvia have a significantly higher probability of being unemployed compared to the titular population of these countries” (Elsuwege 2004: 23). For Narva College it means that the education it offers should not be too abstract or too theoretical. Also the specialization must not be too narrow.

The LGA curriculum is taught in Estonian that is too difficult to many people. Since civil service prerequisites speaking Estonian at the highest level, the College cannot change the language of instruction. Instead, different CLIL (content and language integrated learning) methods are used. By the graduation time students are good specialists and speak fluent Estonian. Even if they do not seek for finding a job in the public sector, they still have an advantage on the labour market.

The university assists to build a good living and working environment. If our graduates succeed in their career, the university can attract better students and, as a result, there will be more educated people in the region. If the society is more mature and innovative, more people have a good education, HEI can operate with wiser partners.

The curricula in Kuressaare College are based on local specifics and needs, but in preparing specialists, the needs of Estonia on the whole are considered and recruitment campaigns are targeted across Estonia, not only at the local county.

The curriculum in Small Craft Building is one of a kind in Estonia, on both vocational training and higher educational level instruction in this field is provided in Kuressaare only. According to entrepreneurs, one of the biggest barriers of the boatbuilding sector development is the shortage of qualified labour force (Hartikainen 2008, 2010). In the Tallinn University of Technology, shipbuilding related education was provided until 1975. Currently, it is possible to specialise in shipbuilding during Bachelor’s studies under the curriculum of Product Development and Production Engineering in the TUT Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and to continue Master’s studies in the Helsinki University of Technology (Aalto University) according to a cooperation contract. The Kuressaare Regional Training Centre was the first vocational training institution in Estonia to provide vocational training in boatbuilding ten years ago.

The Small Craft Building curriculum in Kuressaare College is a joint curriculum, launched in cooperation of Tallinn University of Technology and the Estonian Maritime Academy by integrating the existing curriculum modules and developing

new modules and subjects missing in Estonia so far. The success of a curriculum depends on academic staff (Bond and Paterson 2005). The Small Craft Building curriculum involves teaching staff from Tallinn University of Technology and the Estonian Maritime Academy, specialists from boatyards and experts from partner universities (Croatia, Finland, Sweden, Germany).

The strength of small craft building lies in the boatyards' concentration in Saaremaa that enables connecting theoretical studies to practical training in boatyards. Cooperation with the Kuressaare Regional Training Centre allows the cohesion between educational levels and provides a possibility for those finishing vocational training to continue with higher education. The College participates together with the Association of Estonian Boatyards in developing and carrying out professional examinations.

Prior to launching the curriculum, a survey in training needs was conducted by Kuressaare College. There are about 600 people employed in the sector, out of engineering jobs 60% and of managerial jobs 55% were occupied (Hartikainen 2008). The years of recession had had no major impact on the sector (Hartikainen 2010). Beside the businesses involved in boatbuilding, repair and maintenance, the curriculum is of benefit to the businesses manufacturing products of light materials. The competence of material studies in the curriculum is secured by cooperation with the TUT Faculty of Mechanical Engineering. The language of some of the subjects is English and they are instructed by the partners of the College from Finland, Sweden, Croatia etc. The objective is to develop a business training module in English that could also be offered to Erasmus-partners.

The subject syllabi of the Small Craft Building curriculum are also fit for in-service training for businesses of other marine-related sectors like tourism, fishery, port services etc. In connection with the existing curricula in Kuressaare College, further development in specialisation (maritime tourism, recreation, experience industry, electronic systems for small craft) is possible.

By 2013, there are yet no graduates from the Small Craft Building curriculum, thus, it is not possible to analyse feedback from graduates or the contribution to the industry. Still, in-service training courses have transferred the knowledge of the speciality to small craft building businesses both in Saaremaa and across Estonia. To develop the curriculum, also representatives of respective businesses are included in the Programme Council in order to secure the study programmes and students to meet the needs of a labour market in the best possible way.

The chapter of human resource formation confirms and complements the fact that regional colleges focus their activity either on increasing their strengths or decreasing weaknesses. A college can focus on the knowledge existing in a certain location and this location is best for a further development and application of the knowledge. In such a case, students are expected to enter the college not on the basis of their place of residence but of interest. On the other hand, it is possible to focus on the shortcomings that are the biggest barriers of a comprehensive development of

the region. In such a case, the main focus is on educating local students. In both cases, it is important from the sustainability point of view to maintain a connection with other specialities provided by the education institution that gives the students certain possibilities for choice and/or specialisation. It is also important to keep an optimum work load of the lecturers whose competences are most valuable if they live locally and participate in the life of the community instead of just participating in the study activity.

Both Narva and Kuressaare colleges extend an access to education in their regions, providing learning possibilities to the young people of the region who for different reasons can or will not go to schools further away. When acquiring education in the region, the probability of them later working in the region is also higher. A number of students from other regions in the college often enter a labour market in the region where they have studied, a college offers in the form of lifelong learning a possibility to bring together studying with work and family lives. It is impossible to objectively evaluate if regional colleges have to make bigger efforts to recruit student candidates than the faculties of universities in bigger centres. It still may be assumed that to compete with the possibilities of the capital and university cities, more advertising and explanatory work is required. Cooperation with the public sector institutions and organisations secures up-to-date and relevant content of teaching, the graduation thesis of students support the development of the institutions and businesses of the region.

On the one hand, the strength of a regional college lies in the connection to its university as the unified requirements assume the quality being attained in all units of the university, incl. colleges. On the other hand, their location and closeness to the institutions and businesses of the region is another strength as direct communication and common discussions give a possibility for a flexible reaction to the needs of a labour market. A regional college cannot due to its limited capacity offer a wide range of specialities, but in cooperation with the university and other HEIs it is possible to bring education programmes and in-service courses to the location in accordance to the existing demand. The specialities of a college must have a certain common part but not to be very similar, otherwise the possibilities of choice and specialisation are reduced. In case of a too narrow focus, some region-specific fields may stay uncovered and sustainability of a college may be jeopardised. When its original mission gets accomplished the need for a college ceases to exist. Hence regional colleges should broaden the variety of specialities.

### **Contribution to Social, Cultural and Environmental Development**

The attitudes and practices of higher education institutions are studied in relation to the social, cultural and environmental development of the region, not only as means to economic progress but also as ends in themselves. (OECD 2007: 165-180)

Higher education institutions shape the local civic society through community service. There are several ways to act as a community developer, for example, providing leadership, analysis, credibility while participating in regional networks.

They also can provide a framework through which ideas can be shared and transmitted. A second aspect of the service role of HEIs concerns community and voluntary action in the region. Thirdly, HEIs own a number of facilities such as libraries, sports centres, and arts and cultural venues that are often significant regional facilities offering public access. (Chatterton and Goddard 2000: 490, 493)

The keywords of regional development are social cohesion and sustainability. Next, it is explored how Narva College and Kuressaare College, incl. the Local Government Administration curriculum and the Small Craft Building curriculum support them. It is analysed if there are any threats or shortcomings in this matter.

One can observe obvious differences in the cultures of Estonians and Russians in Narva. In this case it is not just cultures we are talking about, but different civilisations. "The countries around Baltic Sea are in possession of two civilisations of global relevance: the Western Christian and the Orthodox." (Maciejewski 2002: 33-34; see also different writings of Samuel Huntington) Narva is standing on the border of those civilisations. In recent decades integration in Estonia has had both success stories and failures. Integration should not be a task of one ministry; it should be a common interest of several stakeholders. As a large portion of the Russian speaking population lives in Narva and in Ida-Viru County, it is the College's moral obligation to support the integration process.

Social cohesion or unity in the community can be supported only if HEI's presence is felt by the community. In addition to academic affairs, it is sometimes good to retreat from the core competence just to remind the community of HEI's existence and offer something else. In case of Narva College, there are different cultural and sports events organised. Since integration and cross-cultural communication is such an important issue, it is necessary to support it outside and inside the College.

Kalev et al (2008: 127) in their overview of public administration curricula of Estonia judge rightly that Narva College is an institution of integration. A public servant has to know, how things are organised in other regions and be able to learn from the best ones. To ease the problem the College organises field trips for every speciality. The aim of the field trips is broadening, deepening and illustrating the knowledge the students gain during lectures and other forms of classroom work as well as to establish networks (Chatterton and Goddard 2000) with future employers. The other reason is less connected to the curriculum and studying: the more people travel, the more they feel a connection with other regions and the less they feel excluded. "The language barrier has created a situation that the non-Estonians feel being trapped into their own world" (Küün 2006: 129).

Recruiting some students outside Ida-Viru County would promote integration and language studies as well. Joint activities give common memories and unite people. Lecturers have to acknowledge the fact that they are teaching in a multicultural environment and overcome the difficulties that sometimes occur. Students from outside Ida-Virumaa create a bigger need to use Estonian as the language of group work and other conversations. Estonians have an ideal possibility to study Russian

in Narva – language classes are supported by the Russian speaking environment outside the study activity. It is useful for officials to know the language that is spoken by a quarter of Estonia’s population. Moreover, the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia §51 states: “In localities where at least one-half of the permanent residents belong to a national minority, everyone has the right to also receive responses from state agencies, local governments, and their officials in the language of the national minority.”

Obviously, integration and social cohesion play a very important role in Narva College’s community service but the other important keyword is sustainability. Sustainable development of the region can be achieved only in cooperation of many interest groups (local government, entrepreneurs, non-governmental organisations and volunteers).

Narva College could be more steadily and profoundly present in local networks. The College has an extensive experience in writing strategic documents, reports, project applications. City and county governments could have a bigger gain from it. Since it is easier to change one’s own behaviour, the members of the academic staff and administration should be better aware of the ongoing developments in their field in the region. If the trust of being competent and interested has been built, proposals of cooperation may follow.

The Public Administration curriculum has exceptional possibilities of supporting cooperation between sectors, e.g. practical training is carried out in a local government, state agency and the third or private sector organisation. Such experience definitely helps to a better understanding the partners. There are also some subjects that promote public-private partnership and teach students to see the society as a whole not just from the point of view of their job position.

For Narva College, the function of community service is neither complicated nor requiring extra effort. This is a natural part of the College’s existence. Sometimes the ‘third role’ may become overwhelming and seem like the most important one. Probably Narva College should be careful not to lose the focus as all three roles have to be in balance. Another issue is if the balance should be the same as in the university on the whole. The College’s challenge is to connect the role of community service tightly to the tasks of the study and research activities. Every separate action should support the College’s mission and not to be sporadic.

HEIs have a major impact on the organisations of their location region both through formal and informal communication (Vaessen and Velde 2003). Universities hold an important role in the community awareness raising and capacity building of the region (Arbo and Benneworth 2007).

Boatbuilding has been a traditional field of activity in Estonian coastal areas, thus the Small Craft Building curriculum and R&D activity in Kuressaare College are closely connected to the culture characteristic of islands.

The academic staff carries a significant role of experts in the work of regional decision making bodies and management networks (Arbo and Benneworth 2007). For a better understanding between entrepreneurs and the university, it is crucial to have direct contacts, to be present and located in the same region for creating the so-called local buzz and communication forum (Bathelt, Malmberg and Maskell 2004). Such a forum is a pre-condition for networking, discussions, developing and implementing common strategies.

As a regional educational and R&D institution, Kuressaare College has a significant role in being an active partner to the businesses of the region, vocational training establishments, local governments, county government and other social partners. The employees of the College participate in the work groups for developing and monitoring the implementation of regional strategies, the City Council and its committees, management and directing bodies of the Association of Saaremaa Entrepreneurs, the Association of Estonian Boatyards and other development organisations. Two thirds of the College employees are involved in professional or other bodies and organisations. The employees of Kuressaare College participated in the development process of the national maritime strategy for 2012-2020 (adopted by the Decree of the Government of the Republic on 2.08.2012)

Kuressaare College initiated the establishment of the Saaremaa competence network bringing together 15 partners from public, NGO and private sectors. The network is an association of partners, performing the role of a central information and development platform of the region that analyses the competence fields of the region and elaborates the common activity plan for developing the region-specific competences. As a result of discussions, the network compiled the development ideas of Saare County into the conception of a so-called Maritime House, having four pillars: small craft building, small harbours, fishery, aquaculture and maritime tourism. The activity of the network has become less active during a couple of recent years as apart from the College, no other partner has been ready to take leadership.

Contribution to social, cultural and environmental development gives regional colleges a number of and diverse possibilities to be useful for their regions and to gain from it in a long run. Each college identifies the ways that are most needed in the region and that the college is strong in. As described earlier, activities can efficiently be linked with concrete specialities and, thus, give more variety to activities. A contribution to social, cultural and environmental development through specialities is more concrete and focused and supplements the general respective activities of a college. It is important to secure regular monitoring of the activity, in order to identify the fields of improvement or withdrawal at some extent. It is essential to realise when an excessive contribution starts holding back development as the partners have started to take the share of a college for granted and to reduce their own share.

Also in this chapter it may be stated that a region-specific contribution may be based on both weaknesses and strengths. Kuressaare College relies on its strength in developing strategies in cooperation with partners. The network relying on one

leader organisation too much may be considered a weakness here. The strength of Kuressaare College may turn into a weakness in case of a little initiative from partners. In case of a strong leader, other partners do not necessarily feel enough responsibility and the activity of the network slows down if the leadership of the college reduces. Narva College relies on the weaknesses of the region in social sphere. Due to these weaknesses, Narva College cannot afford relying on its strengths only. These strengths will have to be developed in respect to the weaknesses of the region.

Current chapter reflects the most typical part of community service. As a matter of fact, it has a bigger scale in the activity of regional colleges than that in the faculties of universities. Hence the confirmation of the statement that the three roles of the university do not have to and cannot be similar across a university. All three have to be present but it has to be pointed out and supported that regional colleges have been established with the aim of serving the community and therefore meeting the region-specific needs is somewhat more acute than a traditional research activity. The authors of the article find that it is not possible to stress on specific research work and a broad-based community service simultaneously.

## **Conclusions**

The article analyses at the example of the Narva College of the University of Tartu and the Kuressaare College of Tallinn University of Technology how the curriculum development in region-specific sectors, R&D and participation in socio-cultural activity support cooperation in a region and the implementation of the task of community service. Cooperation and regional engagement are evaluated in three aspects: knowledge creation in the region; human capital formation and transfer of knowledge; social, cultural and environmental development.

Rapid changes assume universities to have a closer connection to their external environment, faster reaction and higher flexibility to meet the expectations of the society. Regional colleges are the mediators of knowledge between their universities and local needs. On the one hand, colleges carry the competence and quality standards of the university and on the other hand, they are flexible and facilitate the adaption of the university competence to be applied in a region. Therefore, the curricula of professional higher education are of utmost importance in colleges. In addition to sectorial knowledge, regional colleges mediate the knowledge in project management, cooperation forms, fund raising possibilities, research, strategic planning etc.

The R&D activity of colleges is directed to the development of their study fields, promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation and increasing the development potential of a region in general. The case of Small Craft Building represents the creation of knowledge in a 'hard' sector and a contribution to support entrepreneurship and Local Government's Administration represents the creation of 'soft' knowledge (Chatterton and Goddard 2000), while the examples prove the importance of both kinds of knowledge to contribute to the development of a region.

In regions, mainly applied research is carried out and the volume of research work is somewhat smaller than in university faculties where different community service activities show a smaller proportion. It has to be born in mind that establishing regional colleges including the decisions about opening the curricula is a part of the community service of universities, thus a bigger share of respective activities, compared to research work, has been embedded in them.

Upon studying the topic at the example of two regional colleges, the authors have reached the conclusion that the role of representing the university and of a mediator is successful primarily in the framework of the specialities taught in the college and the related target groups. At a closer look at the specialities taught in the colleges, it may be concluded that the region-specifics may at the same time be a strength and a weakness of the region. Some specialities are created to support the strengths and some to mitigate the weaknesses of a region. The specialities taught have to have at least some inter-connection, otherwise the sustainability of specialities will suffer. Still, focusing cannot be an objective in itself as it may leave essential region-specific topics uncovered. When its original mission gets accomplished the need for a college ceases to exist. Hence regional colleges should broaden the variety of specialities.

More important than just detailed examples and suggestions of regional engagement through curriculum development (which can be found in different parts of this article) are the following generalizations. After the comprehensive study in a curriculum design (content of the study activity, teaching and assessment methods, extracurricular activities, topics and supervision of students' research works, cooperation with partners) the authors conclude that community service is not a separate extra activity for a university, it is integrated in all aspects of its activity. Thus, the title "third role" is only conditional in the sense that community service has appeared next to the two traditional roles of teaching and research but it is closely integrated in both (Chatterton and Goddard 2000). The tasks of the third role have to be connected to the specialities of a regional college, providing support to the curriculum development, quality of the study activity and marketing a curriculum and being useful to the region in a number of ways at the same time. All community service tasks can and have to be implemented in connection with concrete specialities – research, cooperation with partners, project management, carrying out events etc. It may be claimed that the community service activities not connected to the specialities fragmentize the college activities and disperse its objectives and are therefore not sustainable.

A regional college is a development engine in its region. Every speciality/curriculum is the engine in its own field. The academic staff has a remarkable role in participating as experts in decision-making bodies and management networks at a regional level (Arbo and Benneworth 2007). Colleges contribute to cooperation initiatives and preparation of regional development strategies together with partners but a cooperation network must not rely on one leader organisation too much. In case, the biggest share of responsibility lies with colleges for a long period, partners may become lazy and assume someone else to take the responsibility and implement

assignments. If in such a case, the strength of a college weakens or priorities are rearranged, the cooperation ceases due to the lack of leadership.

Colleges facilitate an access to education in their regions for young people and by offering possibilities for lifelong learning. Cooperation with local partners secures up-to-date and relevant content of studies and supports the process of the specialists with higher education finding a job relevant to their qualification in the region. In addition to the teaching role, a university has to contribute to the creation of jobs (Virtanen 2010). Studying in a place creates a probability of a number of people from other regions to stay on the labour market in the place of their studies.

Surveys on the regional development of Estonia often admit that the in-country development differences are way too big for such a small country and to address them, it is not enough to apply regional policy measures only, it is important to achieve a more efficient coordination of the policies of other sectors. These other sectors are supported by and tightly connected to the curricula taught in the regions.

To increase the competitiveness of a labour range outside Tallinn and Tartu, the potential of regional colleges of universities and their curricula can be considered, as stressed out in the analysis of the terms of reference for developing the Estonian regional development strategy 2020 (Eesti... 2012). The network of colleges serves an instrument in Estonia that can be used to facilitate a balanced development in a more efficient way.

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# ÜLIKOOI ÜHISKONNATEENIMISE ROLLI TÄITMINE REGIONAALSE KOLLEDŽI ÕPPEKAVAARENDUSE KAUDU

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## Sissejuhatus

Ülikoolide ajalooliselt esmane roll oli õpetamine, 19. sajandi keskpaiku sai Alexander von Humboldti akadeemilise revolutsiooni tulemusena teaduslikust uurimistööst õpetegevuse kõrval teine, kuid esimesega tihedalt seotud ülikooli põhifunktsioon. Ühiskonnateenimise ülesandest, ülikoolide nn kolmandast rollist hakati rääkima alles 20. sajandi lõpukümnenditel. Põhjuseks said muutused ühiskonnas – globaliseerumine, võrgustumine, tihedam seos ühiskonnaga ning teenusmajanduse ja teadmismahuka tootmise areng. (Chatterton and Goddard 2000; OECD 2007: 21; Bass and Silverstein 1996; Arbo and Benneworth 2007). Teadust peetakse üldjuhul ülikooli olulisimaks ülesandeks (ülikoolide hulgas rõhutatakse sageli eraldi teadusülikoole) ja õpetamist arusaadavalt sellel baseeruvaks. Ühiskonnateenimist nimetatakse enamasti alles kolmanda ülesandena, kuid viimane on tihedalt seotud kahe esimesega. Ühiskonna teenimist on viimastel aastatel hakatud kõrgelt hindama, eriti noortes demokraatlikes riikides. (Chatterton and Goddard 2000: 477)

Artikli eesmärk on analüüsida, kuidas on ülikooli regionaalsel kolledžil võimalik täita ühiskonnateenimise ülesannet läbi õppekavaarenduse. Kas ja kuidas toetab kolledžite regionispetsiifiliste valdkondade õppekavaarendus, teadus- ja arendustegevus ning sotsiaal-kultuurilises tegevuses osalemine koostööd regionis ning ühiskonna teenimise ülesannet? Püstitatud ülesanne võimaldab terviklikult uurida selliseid komponente, nagu õppekavade sisu ja ülesehitus, õppe- ja hindamismeetodid, õppekavavälised tegevused, üliõpilaste uurimustööde teemad ja juhendamine, koostöö partneritega. Terviklik lähenemine on eelduseks hästitoimivale õppekavale, kusjuures antud artiklis on ühendavaks teguriks ühiskonnateenimine.

Uuringu tulemused on rakendatavad konkreetsete analüüsitud õppekavade ja kolledžite puhul, kuid tänu valitud juhtumite olemusele laiendatavad ka teistele regionaalsetele üksustele. Kolledživõrgustiku tekkimise eeldused, terviklik mõju ning vastavus regionispetsiifilistele vajadustele on oluline teema, mis vajab

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täiendavat uurimist.<sup>2</sup>

Artiklis käsitletud kahe suurema Eesti ülikooli (Tartu Ülikooli ja Tallinna Tehnikaülikooli) kahe regionaalse kolledži (Narva ja Kuressaare) tegevus riigi eri piirkondades on reguleeritud samade üleriigiliste õigusaktidega, mis teeb juhtumid hästi võrreldavaks. Samas on nende kolledžite tegevus teineteisest täiesti sõltumatu, mistõttu on tagatud tulemuste maksimaalne usaldusväärsus ja rakendatavus ka laiemalt (teistele taolistele kolledžitele). Vaadeldavad juhtumid on üksteisest sõltumatud, kuna kolledžid tegutsevad erinevate ülikoolide koosseisus ja geograafiliselt asuvad maksimaalselt eraldatult. Vaadeldavad regioonid on ka sotsiaal-majanduslikult küllaltki erinevad. Ka vaadeldavad õppekavad (kohaliku omavalitsuse korraldus ja väikelaevachitus) on üksteisest täiesti erinevad, üks kuulub niinimetatud pehmesse, teine kõvasse valdkonda, mis veelgi kindlustab tulemuste paikapidavust erinevate õppekavade ja ülikoolide puhul.

Teoreetiliseks aluseks on võetud rahvusvaheliselt tunnustatud hariduspoliitika teadlaste seisukohad ning OECD definitsioonid ja selgitused, mida võrreldakse kahe ülikooli regionaalsete kolledžite näidetega. Artiklis analüüsitakse ühiskonna-teenimise toetamise võimalusi läbi õppekavaarenduse OECD sõnastatud dimensioonide põhjal: teadmiste loomine regioonis, inimkapitali arendus ja teadmiste ülekandmine ning kultuuriline ja kogukonna arendus. Artikli koostamisel on kasutatud dokumendianalüüsi, aluseks on võetud õppekavade koostamise dokumendid, analüüsid, aruanded, koosolekute protokollid jms kokkuvõtted. Lisaks on uuritud ülikoolide ning nende kolledžite arengukavasid ja teisi strateegilisi dokumente ning regionaaltegevusega seotud materjale. Autorid kirjeldavad juhtumeid ka läbi oma töökogemuse uurimisobjektiks olevates kolledžites.

## **Ülikoolide regionaalne panus**

Ülikoolide ühiskonnateenimise teema uurimisel on autorid kasutanud mitmeid erinevaid lähenemisviise: ülikoolide roll innovatsioonis (Charles 2006; Westnes et al 2009; Allison ja Eversole 2008), ülikoolide juhtivtöötajate roll (Gunasekara 2004), akadeemiliste töötajate võimalused (Bond ja Paterson 2005), teadmiste edasikandumine akadeemilise personali suhtlusvõrgustike kaudu (Vaessen ja Velde 2003), kaasatus arendustegevustesse kui regionaalpoliitiline instrument (Hudson 2006).

Vaessen ja Velde (2003) jõudsid Nijmegeni ülikooli (Holland) uuringu põhjal järeldusele, et ainuüksi ülikooli olemasolu regioonis lisab piirkonnale prestiiži ning akadeemiline personal mõjutab ümbruskonda lisaks ametialasele seotusele ka isiklike kontaktide ja kõikvõimalike formaalsete ning mitteformaalsete võrgustike kaudu. Uuring osutas, et märkimisväärne on just see teadmiste edasikandmise maht, mis toimub läbi sotsiaalse suhtlemise väljaspool tööaega (Vaessen ja Velde 2003: 107).

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<sup>2</sup> Vastav uuring on käimas teadus- ja innovatsioonipoliitika seire programmi TIPS raames, mille raport valmib 2014. a <http://tips.ut.ee/index.php?module=32&op=1&id=3464>

Kohalikku võrgustumist võib käsitleda kui ülikoolide ellujäämis- ja tugevnenemisstrateegiat (Chatterton ja Goddard 2000: 481). Kõrgkoolid pakuvad haridust, teostavad uuringuid ning on aktiivsed oma majandusliku, sotsiaalse ja kultuurilise keskkonna arendamises. "Üksiku institutsiooni siseselt on väljakutseks õpetamise, teadustöö ja ühiskonnateenimise rollide sidumine sisemiste mehhanismide abil (rahastamine, personali areng, boonused ja autasud, kommunikatsioon jne), et need tegevused oleksid rohkem vastavuses regiooni vajadustega" (Chatterton ja Goddard 2000: 482). Panustamine kodanikuühiskonda regioonis toimub töötajate töövälise tegevuse näol, nagu seda kirjeldavad Bond ja Paterson (2005), või täiskasvanute täienduskoolituse pakkumise, avalike loengute jms pakkumise kujul (Chatterton ja Goddard 2000: 489). Lähtudes regionaalsest perspektiivist võib kõrgkool olla võtmefiguur, mis esindab erinevaid rahvuslikke huvisid konkreetsel territooriumil (OECD 2007: 30).

Eesti regionaalarengu strateegia 2020 koostamise lähteolukorra analüüsis rõhutatakse: riigi siseselt on piirkondade arenguerinevused liiga suured, regionaalse arengu eesmärkide saavutamiseks on vajalik eri valdkonnapoliitikate tõhusam kaasatus. Analüüs osutab, et tööjõuarealide konkurentsivõime tugevdamisel väljaspool Tallinna ja Tartut saab arvestada ülikoolide regionaalsete kolledžite potentsiaaliga. (Eesti... 2012) Riigi väiksusest hoolimata on Eesti regionaalne areng väga ebahühtlane ja 2012. aasta rahvaloenduse andmed kinnitasid paljudest maakondadest elanike lahkumist. Kolledžite toel on võimalik ka kohapeal laiemaid õppimise ja töötamise võimalusi pakkuda, mis tõstab piirkonna arengupotentsiaali ning pidurdab lahkumist.

Regionaalpoliitika raames saab edendada innovatsioonivõimet ning tugevdada ettevõtete sidemeid ülikoolide ja teadusasutustega. Piirkondade konkurentsieelistele tugineva majandusliku spetsialiseerumise soodustamine on regionaalse arengu tasakaalustamiseks hädavajalik. Regionaalpoliitika panust rõhutatakse ka Euroopa 2020 strateegias aruka majanduskasvusaavutamiseks (Regionaalpoliitika... 2010).

### **Regionaalne kõrgharidus Eestis**

Eesti avalik-õiguslikel ülikoolidel on seitse väljaspool Tallinna ja Tartut asuvat regionaalset kolledžit. Kolledžid paiknevad hajusalt üle Eesti ning pakuvad õppekavasid ja edendavad teadus-arendustegevust lähtuvalt regiooni ning oma emaliikooli spetsiifikast. Avalik-õiguslike ülikoolide rektorid on allkirjastanud ühisleppe (24.11.2008), millega seavad strateegiliseks eesmärgiks arendada koos välja kogu Eestit kattev regionaalsete pädevuskeskuste võrgustik, mida on vaja elukestva õppe ja piirkonna ettevõtluse hoogustamiseks. Lisaks õppegevusele panustatakse regionaalsete innovatsioonisüsteemide loomisse ning toetatakse kogukonna arendustegevusi.

Narva asub Euroopa Liidu ja Venemaa piiril. Narvas tegutseb neli kõrgkooli, kuid avalik-õiguslikest ainult Tartu Ülikooli Narva Kolledž. Kolledž asutati vastavalt regiooni vajadustele peamiselt venekeelsete koolide õpetajate koolitamiseks. Hiljem on lisandunud teisi eri alalasi, nende seas kohaliku omavalitsuse korralduse

rakenduskõrghariduse õppekava. Nimetatud erialal õpib Narvas alla 100 üliõpilase. Eestlasi on nende seas ca 30%, ülejäänud on vene emakeelega üliõpilased, peamiselt venelased.

Kuressaare kolledž asutati Tallinna Tehnikaülikooli asutusena ja Saarte Instituudi õigusjärglasena 1999. aastal. Alustati Saaremaale omase turismivaldkonna õppega, millele hiljem lisandusid elektroonika, ettevõtluse ning väikelaevaehituse õpe, viimane neist on regioonispetsiifilise ning kõrge arengupotentsiaaliga tootmisvaldkonnana esile tõstetud Eesti regionaalse innovatsioonistrateegia koostamise protsessis (Tiits 2007). Kolledži koosseisu kuulub 2011. aastal moodustatud teadus- ja arenduskeskus – väikelaevaehituse kompetentsikeskus. Kuressaare kolledži väikelaevaehituse õppekaval õppis 1.10.2012 seisuga 50 üliõpilast.

Mõlemal erialal nimetatud kolledžites on õppurite seas nii värskeid gümnaasiumilõpetajaid kui juba vastavas valdkonnas töötavaid inimesi.

### **Regioonispetsiifiliste õppekavade arendus ja regiooni teenimine**

Kiired muutused eeldavad ülikoolidelt tihedamat sidet ümbritseva keskkonnaga, kiiremat reageerimist ning suuremat paindlikkust ühiskonna ootustele vastamises. Regionaalsed kolledžid on oma olemuselt teadmiste vahendajaks emaliikooli ja kohalike vajaduste vahel. Kolledžid kannavad ühest küljest ülikooli kompetentsi ja kvaliteedistandardeid, teisest küljest on paindlikud ning aitavad kohandada ülikooli kompetentsi regioonile rakendatavaks. Seetõttu on regionaalsetes kolledžites suur osatähtsus rakenduskõrghariduse õppekavadel. Lisaks valdkonnateadmiste vahendavad regionaalsed kolledžid teadmisi ka projekti-juhtimisest, koostöövormidest, rahastamisvõimalustest, uurimistööst, strateegilisest planeerimisest jms.

Kolledžite teadus- ja arendustegevus on suunatud oma õppevaldkondade arendamisele, ettevõtluse ja innovatsiooni hoogustamisele ning piirkonna arengupotentsiaali tõstmisele tervikuna. Kuressaare kolledži näide esindab teadmiste loomise osas nn "kõva" valdkonda, panust ettevõtluse toetamiseks, ning Narva kolledž "pehmet" teadmusloomet (Chatterton ja Goddard 2000), näited kinnitavad mõlema valdkonna olulisust regiooni arengusse panustamisel. Regioonides tehakse enam rakendusuuringuid ja teadustöö maht on mõnevõrra väiksem kui teaduskondades, kus ühiskonnateenimise erinevad tegevused on selle võrra vähemkaalukad. Tuleb meeles pidada, et regionaalsete kolledžite loomine on üks osa ülikoolide ühiskonnateenimisest, seega nende tegevusse on sisse kodeeritud vastavate tegevuste suurem osakaal kui see on teadustööl.

Uurides teemat kahe regionaalse kolledži näitel tulid artikli autorid järeldusele, et ülikooli esindaja ja teadmiste vahendaja roll on efektiivne eelkõige kolledžis õpetatavate valdkondade raames ja nendega seonduvates sihtrühmades. Vaadates lähemalt neid valdkondi, mida kolledžites õpetatakse, võib täheldada, et regioonispetsiifiline võib olla nii selle regiooni tugevus kui ka nõrkus. Mõni eriala luuakse regiooni tugevuste rakendamiseks, mõni regiooni nõrkuste leevendamiseks. Õpetatavad valdkonnad peaksid praktilisest küljest olema omavahel mingilgi määral

seotud, vastasel korral kannatab erialade jätkusuutlikkus. Samas ei saa olla eesmärgiks fokuseerimine, sest niiviisi võivad katmata jääda olulised regiooni-spetsiifilised valdkonnad ja võib kannatada kolledžite jätkusuutlikkus.

Kolledžid laiendavad oma piirkonnas ligipääsu haridusele, seda nii noorte õppima asujate jaoks kui elukestva õppe võimaluste pakkumisel. Koostöö kohalike partneritega tagab aja- ja asjakohase õppesisu ning toetab protsessi, et kõrgharitud spetsialistid leiaksid piirkonnas ka kvalifikatsioonile vastavat tööd. Lisaks õpetamise rollile regioonis peab ülikool panustama ka töökohtade loomisse (Virtanen 2010). Kohapeal õppides on suurem tõenäosus sinna tööle jääda, samuti jäävad mitmed teistest regioonidest õppima asunud tudengid kohalikele tööturule.

Autorid leiavad, et ühiskonnateenimine ei ole ülikooli eraldiseisev lisategevus, vaid on integreeritud tema tegevuse kõikidesse valdkondadesse. Nimetus "kolmas roll" on ses mõttes tinglik, ühiskonnateenimine on ülikoolide kahe traditsioonilise rolli õppe- ja teadustegevuse kõrval kerkinud, kuid nendega tihedalt integreeritud osa (Chatterton ja Goddard 2000). Kolmanda rolliga seotud ülesanded peavad olema seotud regionaalse kolledži erialadega. See toetab erialade õppekavaarendust, õppetöö kvaliteeti ja õppekava turundust, samas ollakse regioonile mitmekülselt kasulik. Kõiki ühiskonnateenimise ülesandeid saab ja peabki täitma seoses konkreetsete erialadega – teadustöö, koostöö partneritega, projektitegevus, üritused jne. Võib väita, et erialadega mitteseonduv ühiskonnateenimine pigem killustab kolledži tegevusi, hajustab selle eesmärgi ning pole seetõttu jätkusuutlik.

Regionaalne kolledž on oma regioonis arengumootoriks. Akadeemilisel personalil on märkimisväärne roll osaledes ekspertidena regionaalsel tasandil otsustuskogudes ja juhtimisvõrgustikes (Arbo ja Benneworth 2007). Kolledžid panustavad koostöö initsieerimisel ja piirkondlike arengustrateegiade koostamisel koos partneritega, kuid koostöövõrgustik ei tohiks tugineda liialt ühel eestvedajal. Kui suurem osa vastutust on pidevalt just kolledžite peal, siis võivad partnerid mugavaks muutuda ning loota, et keegi teine teeb nende eest töö ära. Kui siis kolledžil peaks jõud raugema või prioriteetid muutuma, lakkab kogu koostöö, sest pole eestvedajat.

Ülevaated Eesti regionaalarengust tõdevad korduvalt, et Eesti sisemised regionaalsed arenguerisused on väikese riigi kohta liiga suured ning nende ohjamiseks ei piisa puhtalt regionaalpoliitilistest meetmetest, oluline oleks saavutada ka muude valdkonnapoliitilike tõhusam koordineeritus. Tööjõuareaalide konkurentsivõime tugevdamisel väljaspool Tallinna ja Tartut saab arvestada ülikoolide regionaalsete kolledžite potentsiaaliga, nagu rõhutatakse ka Eesti regionaalarengu strateegia 2020 koostamise lähteolukorra analüüsis (Eesti... 2012). Kolledžitevõrgustiku näol on Eestis olemas instrument, mida saaks riigi tasakaalustatud arengu tagamiseks efektiivsemalt kasutada.

Kokkuvõtteks tuleb öelda, et olulisem kui detailsete juhiste või näidete väljatoomine, on järeldus, et ülikooli ühiskonnateenimine kolledžite toel on kõige mõistlikum erialadepõhiselt. Alates erialade valikust, lõpetades erialaga seotud üritustega, mille vahele jäävad teadus, õppemeetodid, lõputööde teemad, arendusprojektid, täienduskoolitus, koostöö partneritega jpm.