

KANTAMA

Member Magazine of MVM Association #1



CURRENT EVENTS &
PERSPECTIVES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SPEECH

Shaho Jaff



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Three Steps for a New Beginning

Moving into a new country is a major life change that requires courage. However, history shows that people are incredibly adaptable: it is possible to build a new life if you find the right keys to participation. A new home is not just made of walls, but of the feeling that you belong to a community and are a valuable part of it.

As the Executive Director, I would like to offer three tips to help you find your place in Finland:

1. Learn the language.

Language is the most important key to society. Every word you learn makes daily life easier and opens new doors. Be brave and use the language every day – it is your bridge to other people.

2. Seek work or meaningful activity.

Work gives life rhythm and purpose. It is your way to contribute to society. If paid work is not immediately available, volunteering and internships are excellent ways to build networks.

3. Adopt and share Finnish values.

Trust, equality, and responsibility keep our society together. One of the core elements of Finnish identity is a strong willingness to defend the country – the desire to take care of our shared home.

Bonus tip: Join the activities of MVM Association. By getting involved, you will see in practice how you can participate in voluntary national defence and preparedness. At the same time, you move from being an observer to an active contributor. Let's build a safer Finland together – for all of us.



Shaho Jaff

Executive Director
MVM Association

*How could we help you
take your first step in
voluntary safety work?*

Safety is shared language

Welcome to building a more sustainable Finland

Finland has been chosen as the world's happiest country for the ninth consecutive year, according to the latest World Happiness Report 2026. This achievement is no coincidence; it stems from the trust and stability. On the flip side of happiness and its foundation, lies safety – the feeling that in an emergency nobody will be left behind.

This is the first editorial of the KANTAMA magazine. The name symbolises an impact that reaches every home and community. For us, safety is more than technical systems or the work of authorities. It is a shared language that we all speak, regardless of our background.

Why is safety a language? Because it is based on communication, understanding, and care. When you know what to do during a power outage and where to find the nearest civil defence shelter, you are speaking the language of preparedness. When you help your neighbour or participate in volunteer work, you are speaking the language of community.

The goal of MVM Association is to turn safety awareness from fear into action. We want to bridge the information gap and ensure that no language nor cultural barriers stand in the way of safe everyday life. In this newsletter, Finns with immigrant backgrounds are not just recipients of information, but active experts and contributors.

We invite you to join us. Safety strengthens when each of sees Finland as a home worth protecting. Let's build a more sustainable and safer society, a word and an action at a time.



*Welcome
to the journey!*



What Should You Trust in a Crisis Situation?

Recent news about drones straying into Finland and the related media coverage have raised questions and uncertainty. In March 2026, Ukrainian long-range drones ended up in southeastern Finland, in places such as Kouvola and Luumäki. Although the situation was caused by a technical deviation due to GPS interference, it showed how quickly speculation and incorrect information can spread.

In a crisis, the primary and most reliable source is always the authorities.

Kantama and MVM Association Support You

Kantama magazine and Immigrants' Preparedness and National Defence Association (MVM) are committed to breaking language barriers and making safety information accessible to everyone. Our principle is to turn fear into action by providing clear and reliable information in your own language.

Remember:

authorities continuously monitor the situation. In unclear situations, stay calm and check information directly from reliable sources. Finland is our shared home, which we protect together through knowledge and preparedness.

Official Information Is Your Anchor of Safety

Follow official channels:

Trust communications from authorities such as the police, the defence forces, and the Ministry of the Interior.

Use the 112 Suomi app:

You will receive immediate alerts about potential dangers directly to your phone.

Avoid speculation:

Do not share unverified images or location data on social media, as it may hinder the work of authorities

Preparedness in Everyday Life

The Home Medicine Kit

In this column, we go through everyday preparedness each month. Our goal is to turn safety awareness from fear into action by offering clear tools for handling disruptions.

As spring gets underway, it's an excellent time to check whether your home is prepared to handle minor accidents and illnesses. In a crisis situation, help may not be immediately available, which makes personal preparedness even more important. A home medicine kit is part of the 72-hour emergency supply.

What Should a Home Medicine Kit Contain?

Make sure your home has at least a few days' supply of:

Prescription medications:

Essential medicines for family members

Pain relief:

Medicines for pain and fever

Self-care treatments:

Medications for allergies and stomach issues

First aid supplies:

Bandages, gauze, disinfectant, and a thermometer

Iodine tablets:

To be taken only upon official instruction (for radiation risk)

Store medicines in a dry place out of children's reach. Check expiration dates regularly and always return expired medicines to a pharmacy – they are hazardous waste



The Women Involved section is both an invitation and a platform. It is a place where your voice can be heard and where your experiences can encourage others. Safety is not only the responsibility of authorities—it is created through the contribution of each one of us.



Women Involved

Making Invisible Work Visible

Nearly 300,000 women with immigrant backgrounds live in Finland. Although our stories and paths here are different, there is one important thing that unites us: Finland is our home. We are an inseparable part of everyday Finnish life, its future, and most importantly its safety.

Women play many roles in their communities: as mothers, entrepreneurs, students, and bridge-builders. Safety and national defence are often perceived as traditionally military matters, but in reality, the resilience of society relies heavily on everyday actions. Safety is about care, reliable information, and the ability to act in unexpected situations. Women do this work every day as they strengthen the crisis resilience of their families and neighbourhoods.

The purpose of this column is to make this valuable, often invisible work visible. We want to highlight the skills and motivation of women with immigrant backgrounds. Preparedness is not only about getting ready for exceptional circumstances. It is about practical skills and composure that belong to all of us.



Join us in sharing your story and building a safer tomorrow together. Every woman, every skill, and every action matter.

YOUTH'S VOICE

MY PATH LED ME TO SERVICE "I WANTED TO SEE WHAT I'M CAPABLE OF"

In Kantama's new article series, young people share their experiences, choices, and thoughts on national defence. In the first part, one young person opens up about their decision to complete military service, what they learned during it, and how wearing green changed their worldview



Rae Omid

WHAT ULTIMATELY MADE YOU CHOOSE THE ARMY?

Starting military service was not an obvious choice for me at first. I thought about it for a long time, and I heard a lot of mixed opinions from people around me: some encouraged me enthusiastically, while others questioned whether it made any sense at all.

In the end, I realized that I couldn't base my decision on other people's expectations. I wanted to challenge myself, learn discipline, and see concretely where my own limits are. If you only listen to other people's doubts or fears, you can easily end up standing still. So, I decided to take the opportunity and see what service could offer me, and what I could offer in return.

HOW DID YOUR SERVICE GO, AND WHAT DID YOU TAKE WITH YOU INTO CIVILIAN LIFE?

Overall, the experience was positive, even though it wasn't always easy. Early mornings, physically demanding exercises, and strict rules required adjustment, but those were also the moments where the most growth happened.

During those six months, I gained discipline, punctuality, and above all, patience. I learned to see things through even when my motivation was testing me. Perhaps the most important lesson was teamwork: how to work effectively with different kinds of people and take responsibility not only for yourself but also for the group's performance. I realized that in difficult situations, people are capable of far more than they imagine within their comfort zone. That boosted my self-confidence in a completely new way.

DID MILITARY SERVICE CHANGE YOUR VIEWS ON SOCIETY AND RESPONSIBILITY?

Absolutely. Before my service, I saw the world more from an individual perspective. During service, I came to understand more deeply that society is like a large system that only functions through cooperation and shared responsibility. Everyone has their role, and if someone neglects their part, it affects others.

I learned to appreciate safety and order in a new way. I realized that peace and stability are not to be taken for granted – these things require people who are willing to work for the common good.

WHAT MESSAGE WOULD YOU GIVE TO YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE THINKING ABOUT THE ARMY OR THEIR PLACE IN SOCIETY?

I would say: pause for a moment and listen to what feels right for you. Decisions shouldn't be made based on outside pressure or peers' opinions. The army is a great place to grow if you are willing to learn new things and challenge yourself. It offers tools that you will need in life anyway, whether you are studying or working. Dare to test your limits – you might be positively surprised.





We interviewed Ari Pakarinen, Executive Director of The Defence Guilds' Federation (MPKL), about the organization's history, goals, and role in voluntary national defence. He emphasizes that safety, preparedness, and the will to defend the country are built through cooperation, regardless of background.

Ari Pakarinen:

“Safety is a shared concern”

What is MPKL – its structure, history, and purpose?

The National Defence Guilds Association (MPKL) was founded in 1963 as an umbrella organization and advocacy body for defence guilds. Since its establishment, one of its core principles has been that all citizens—regardless of military rank, gender, or age—can join the guilds if they are interested in voluntary national defence work.

The association is a nationwide civic organization that brings together guilds and other member associations involved in voluntary national defence. MPKL is one of the largest defence organizations in Finland.

MPKL creates, maintains, and develops the operating conditions for its member organizations and provides them with services. Its key mission is to sustain and strengthen citizens' willingness to defend the country, spread awareness about national defence, and participate in voluntary defence training and its development. In training matters, its partner is MPK, which MPKL helped establish in the 1990s.

The association includes more than 120 member organizations (guilds) and has over 12,000 individual members. These guilds include unit guilds, branch guilds, heritage guilds, regional defence guilds, security course guilds, and regional troop guilds.

What would be your message to immigrants?

As Executive Director of the association, I hope that our shared organization could offer your association an opportunity to operate as part of a community of guilds interested in preparedness, comprehensive security, and national defence, and to find partners for cooperation across different sectors.

Build your association into a community that reflects who you are, where you can achieve your goals together with the association and the guilds. MVM and its members don't need to try to be anything other than what they already are.

I am not a fan of categorizing people based on different backgrounds. Within the MPKL community, we are equal, and we aim to increase awareness in both preparedness and national defence. Safety is a shared responsibility. Both in mindset and in action. There is strength in cooperation.

Participate and Make an Impact

Design a Table Pennant for MVM Association!

Would you like to leave your mark on the history of our association?

We are organizing a design competition for a table pennant that reflects our values: community, safety, and national defence.



Prize:

€100 S-Group gift card

Who can participate?

Members of MVM Association and their family members



Instructions and schedule:

Read more at mvmry.fi



Put your creativity to work and help us stand out!



PÄIVÄ PALOASEMALLA

9.5.2026

Welcome to learn essential safety skills!
Fire Station Open Day is a free, family-friendly event
held at over 350 stations across Finland.



Learn how to act in case of a fire and
how to prevent dangerous situations



Get up close with fire trucks and
explore how fire services operate



You might even discover a new and meaningful hobby!



Find your nearest
event location at:

paivapaloasemalla.fi

⇒ *turvallinen arki alkaa yhdessä* ⇐