

Cramo and SOS Children's Villages in Keila, Estonia (November 2016)

The Baltic states in the southeastern part of the Baltic Sea includes the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. These three countries are quite different, but there are also some similarities when it comes to poverty and social insecurity.

In Latvia, up to a quarter of the population has severe difficulties to make incomes suffice. Even in Lithuania, poverty is widespread and the income gap between urban and rural areas are great. In Estonia, a lot has happened in recent decades, and in a short time, the country's financial situation improved markedly. Yet there are many children who are still living in difficult conditions.

In late 1994, the very first children moved into the first SOS Children's Village in Keila, Estonia. Today, there are over 60 children in the village, and 24 adults in the two youth lodging.

Efforts to give lonely and vulnerable children a safe and loving upbringing continues and Cramo is involved in making it possible.

The brothers take the next step in life

Seven years ago, the brothers Kuldar and Kevin came to the SOS Children's Village Keila in Estonia. Now they are preparing to move to the youth living in the area. This will obviously be exciting, but it is with mixed feelings that the brothers leave their mother and security in the village. They have felt at home from the first moment, and liked to help and fix things at home and in the rest of the village.

"The biggest thing for me has been the feeling of belonging. To have a place on earth to call home. It seemed natural for us to help at home, and we did it with pleasure," says Kuldar, and Kevin quickly adds:

"It was not just the house that was our home, but the entire children's village. We have never really understood the children who find it hard to help out at home. We enjoy tweaking and fixing, it has become like a hobby. "

"It is not everyone who has a home and a mother who takes care of them, and we are very happy to have grown up here the last seven years," says Kuldar.

"I can do a lot myself"

Little Liris - as we see in the image at the top of the letter - came to the SOS Children's Village in Keila in the summer of 2015. She is the youngest of four siblings in her family, and while the other go to school on the days she stays home with her mother. Liris is smart and alert. She's small, but she is always the first to start a conversation and she is not afraid to speak her mind.

"I can do lots of things! I pick up after both my siblings and adults. And look! My sister has learned new dance moves! "

While Liris is dancing around the room, she continues: "This dance I knew already before. And I can do anything if I train just a little. Do you know what my favorite color is? It's green! Just look at my new fancy dress? It's green. So cool! "

Liris radiates confidence, bubbling with chatter and laughter and it is impossible not to be carried away by her joy and enthusiasm. At such times, we at SOS Children's Villages are incredibly happy and proud of our business. No one knows what would have happened with Liris, or how she would have been today if she had not gotten a home and a family in the SOS Children's Village in Keila. Spend five years of his life before she got help from SOS Children's Villages. Lara had not been going to preschool or elementary school. Despite this, she showed enormous courage and commitment, and with extra support and tuition assistance she managed to catch up with her classmates, and complete both primary and secondary school with good grades. Today, Lara has a bright future, and plans to continue her studies and go on to university.

My father left me, my siblings and my mother when I was a baby. My mother could not take care of us. We are six children and no one wanted to adopt us. Only my sister could move to grandma. My other siblings had to move to an orphanage. I was too small and had not had so much to eat so I ended up in hospital. I was also sick from the things I had been eating. The first time I met my village mom I lay all alone in a big bed in a large room at the hospital. I was moved to the SOS Children's Village and later my siblings too could move in. Now we are a family again and have a village mother who takes care of us. I love to curl up in her lap and tell her what happened in kindergarten during the day. And now I can eat almost any food."