

Translated from Finnish
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Written by Sini Kuvaja / Photo by Hanna Laasanen

[Title] **Forced to Write by Life**

- Writers in Satakunta self-publish books about their experiences.
- They all have a passion for writing and a desire to share their experiences from around the world.

"With self-publishing, it is enough that I feel I have something to say." EELIS LAINE

[Caption] EELIS LAINE is the author of a recent self-publication entitled "Green Grass, Red Tape" in which he narrates his experiences of voluntary work in Thailand, Australia, Japan, Taiwan and Vietnam.

[Article text] Eelis Laine, Pori

I began to write in 2002. I had been working in software design and wanted to try writing a book. I took a leap in the dark. Deep down, my motivation was a feeling that I had something to say.

The story behind this latest book is that I had been unemployed for some time and wanted to explore the opportunities the world had to offer. In 2011, I left for Thailand to work as a volunteer in a Buddhist community established by Westerners.

After a couple of years, I began to think that I should write down my experiences. A book would substantiate the significance of my voluntary work.

THE BEST place for voluntary work was this first community in Thailand. We lived together 24/7: we practised yoga, ate and worked together.

My most negative experience was a spiritual community in Australia. It was led by a female guru who believed that she was enlightened. She would manipulate people to make them do what she wanted.

In the end, they tried to swindle me for money although we had agreed that no-one would have to pay to do voluntary work. That was the last straw for me.

Anything is possible in the field of spirituality. For someone interested in developing their self-knowledge, it is difficult to find the places that actually allow you to do that.

VOLUNTARY WORK involves working for, say, five hours a day in exchange for food and a place to sleep. There are problems though. For example, at one place in Australia, they only served sandwiches for breakfast and lunch. Conflicts may arise, because the voluntary sector is not regulated.

I started to write down the most significant events, such as a theft that I experienced. When there is a theft in a community, it is a huge deal. Soon everyone will be thinking about the possible culprit. It has the makings of a detective story.

Over the years, I have sent my texts to publishers but I stopped after a while. I have a feeling that I am not the type of writer that appeals to publishers.

With self-publishing, it is enough that I feel I have something to say. An author has to deal with the expectations of the publisher and the readers. Self-publishing is completely independent.

Even if no-one reads my text, writing it has brought significant content to my life.

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