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# **Connecting Host and Migrant Cultures Across Finland**

**A Nationally Targeted Response to the Global Refugee  
Crisis**

Emily Auvinen  
Laura Kortelainen

Bachelor's Thesis  
October 2016  
Degree program in International Business  
Finnish Business Administration

Author(s) Auvinen, Emily Kortelainen, Laura	Type of publication Bachelor's thesis	Date September 2016
	Number of pages 83	Language of publication: English
		Permission for web publication: x
Title of publication <b>Connecting Host and Migrant Cultures Across Finland</b> A Nationally Targeted Response to the Global Refugee Crisis		
Degree programme Business Administration & International Business		
Supervisor(s) Crawford, Steven		
Assigned by George Simons International, Santa Cruz, California, USA		
Description <p>This report explores the development of a project called JAMK United for Refugees (JUfR), conducted in a cross-cultural management course during spring 2016 at JAMK University of Applied Sciences in Jyväskylä, Finland. The report provides a holistic description of the participants' experiences, including developments related to the management team, notable project outcomes and recommendations for further development. JUfR partnered with George Simons International to create a diversophy® training tool for use in multicultural educational settings to further the development of cultural competences across Finland.</p> <p>Participatory action research, conducted by two students in the JUfR management team, documented the project's evolution in order to identify developmental challenges. The research participants included the JUfR management team comprising three lecturers, four degree students, and other degree and international exchange students enrolled in the course, including nine asylum seekers registered as course students through the Open University system. Thick descriptions were obtained from the data collected through observations, interviews, documents and audio/visual materials. The resulting narrative reports each stage of the process as described through the framework of Bruce Tuckman's model of team development.</p> <p>The results illuminate the participants' experiences at each stage of the project development, beginning with raising awareness, embracing diversity and bridging cultural gaps through engagement in inter- and multicultural interaction. The authors present a structural and developmental model, which can be applied to future projects with a similar setting and contexts.</p>		
Keywords ( <a href="#">subjects</a> ) Cross-cultural management, refugee crisis, team development, intercultural communication, cultural competence		
Miscellaneous		

Tekijät Auvinen, Emily Kortelainen, Laura	Julkaisun laji Opinnäytetyö, AMK	Päivämäärä Syyskuu 2016
	Sivumäärä 83	Julkaisun kieli Englanti
		Verkojulkaisulupa myönnetty: x
Työn nimi <b>Isäntämaiden ja maahanmuuttajakulttuurien yhdistäminen</b> Kansallisesti kohdennettu vastaus maailmanlaajuiseen pakolaiskriisiin		
Tutkinto-ohjelma Liiketalouden koulutusohjelma & International Business		
Työn ohjaaja(t) Steven Crawford		
Toimeksiantaja(t) George Simons International, Santa Cruz, California, USA		
<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Opinnäytetyössä selvitettiin keväällä 2016 Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulussa monikulttuurisen johtamisen kurssilla toteutetun pilottiprojekti JAMK United for Refugees (JUfR) kehityksen. Opinnäytetyö esittää kokonaisvaltaisen kuvauksen osallistujien kokemuksista, mukaan lukien johtoryhmän kehitykset, projektin huomattavat tulokset sekä suositukset kehitykselle tulevaisuudessa. JUFR teki yhteistyötä George Simons Internationalin kanssa kehittääkseen diversophy®-kehitystyökalun, jota voi käyttää monikulttuurillisessa kasvatuksellisessa miljöössä kehittääkseen kulttuurikompetensseja läpi Suomen.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tekijät kuuluivat itse JUfR:n johtoryhmään. Kvalitatiivisessa, osallistuvassa toimintatutkimuksessa tallennettiin projektin muotoutuminen haasteiden ja kehityksien määrittelyä varten. Tutkimukseen osallistuivat johtoryhmä, eli kolme opettajaa ja neljä korkeakouluopiskelijaa ja kurssille osallistuneet muut korkeakoulu- ja vaihto-opiskelijat. Näiden muiden opiskelijoiden joukossa olivat myös avoimessa yliopistossa opiskelijoiksi rekisteröityneet turvapaikanhakijat. Tiheät kuvaukset tuotettiin keräämällä aineistoa havainnoinnalla, haastatteluilla, dokumenteilla ja äänimateriaalilla sekä visuaalisella materiaalilla. Narratiivisessa viitekehityksessä raportoitiin prosessin jokainen vaihe ja näiden vaiheiden kuvaamisessa käytettiin apuna Bruce Tuckmanin teoriaa ryhmän kehitysvaiheista.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset toivat esille osallistujien kokemukset jokaisessa kehitysvaiheessa, jotka alkoivat lisätä tietoisuutta ja monimuotoisuuden omaksumista. Tämä puolestaan johti kulttuurisen kuilun pienenemiseen, koska prosessissa sitouduttiin monikulttuuriseen vuorovaikutukseen. Tutkijat esittivät rakenteellisen mallin ja kehitysmallin, joita voi soveltaa tulevaisuuden projekteissa samanlaisessa miljöössä ja kontekstissa.</p>		
<p>Avainsanat (<a href="#">asiasanat</a>) monikulttuurinen johtaminen, pakolaiskriisi, ryhmän kehittyminen, monikulttuurinen havainnointikyky, kulttuurikompetenssi</p>		
Muut tiedot		

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# 1 Introduction

The 2015 global refugee crisis has set a new precedent; never before has there been such a diverse and large population of asylum seekers migrating during the same period of time (OECD 2015). There are currently 60 million people who have forcefully migrated from their homes; one in every 122 people in the world is either a refugee, internally displaced person, or seeking asylum (UNHCR 2015c). Finland is one of the countries in the Schengen zone with a total population of 5.5 million; in 2015 Finland received over 32,000 asylum seeking applicants (The Finnish Immigration Service 2015a).

The pilot project called JAMK United for Refugees (JUfR) started in 2015 by two of the lecturers at JAMK University of Applied Sciences in Jyväskylä, Finland. The first semester was dedicated to raising awareness in the community about the local and global situation. The project continued in the spring of 2016 and partnered with diversophy® in order to create a professional training tool for facilitating cultural competences between Finnish and Migrant cultures.

The study was conducted by two students from the Degree Programmes of International Business and Business Administration. In addition, there were seven other individuals who comprised the management team. The project was embedded in a cross-cultural management course which included thirty students from fifteen different countries. In addition to degree and exchange students, nine asylum seekers were enrolled as Open University students.

The researchers actively participated in the JAMK United for Refugees National Response to the Global Crisis project, experiencing and documenting the discoveries, changes and challenges in the ongoing and developmental project. The aim was to provide a thick and holistic description of the project; Bruce Tuckman's model of team development (1965) acted as comparative

framework for reporting the stages of development. This is a story of a spontaneous response to the global refugee crisis, in creating a community for support, embracing diversity, and connecting across cultures (JUfR n.d.).

## 1.1 Background of the Global Refugee Crisis

There are many factors affecting the rise in forced migration. The complex and unstable situation in areas, such as the Middle East, is a result of a long history of wars, power struggles, terrorism and violence which have been major contributors to the growing number of arrivals. The largest groups presently located in Finland are from Iraq and Afghanistan (Finnish Refugee Council 2015). The conflict and stories from people fleeing from these countries represent only two examples of the global crises of the present day.

Iraq was invaded in 2003 and lost its president, Saddam Hussein. The country was later left alone despite ongoing turmoil. Soon after this, the newly oppressed Sunni rebels started an uprising. Following them, many other extremist organizations and terrorists joined the fight for power in the newly formed state of Iraq. (What is ISIS and what do They Want in Iraq 2014.) In Syria, after the events of the Arab Spring, Bashar Al-Assad's family, when challenged by a movement of popular resistance, refused to relinquish power and a civil war ensued. As a result, Syria's conflicted condition allowed various extremist groups to join the fight for control (Kurzgesagt 2015).

ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) is one of the groups fighting for power in the territory around Iraq and Syria, but their actions have instilled fear in people around of the world. The violent and powerful militaristic Jihadist group's goal is the formation of a new country called The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria; to live a life dedicated to their interpretation of Sharia law. Civilians in these war-torn countries have had little choice but to flee their homeland, risking their lives along the way. (Kurzgesagt 2015.)



Afghanistan does not border with Iraq or Syria and it is located in South Asia. For over three decades Afghanistan has produced the largest amount of refugees worldwide; starting from the revolution in the late 70's, civil war in the 90's and Taliban's control in the 2000's. There have been almost 6 million refugees who have returned to Afghanistan since 2002, but millions still remain abroad (UNHCR 2015a). The country struggles with ethnic discrimination and an armed conflict between the Taliban, ISIS, other extreme groups, and the government. According to NATO, as of March 2016, there are 12,905 foreign troops stationed in Afghanistan. In 2015 fighting between the Taliban and the government escalated once again, with the attacks particularly on schools and civilians increasing. (Human Rights Watch n.d.)

The countries accepting migrants have not been prepared for such a large and sudden influx of people. The host countries are putting in place new systems and reforming their processes, but, despite these efforts, there are many challenges to face in the acculturation of the new migrants.

## 1.2 Definition of a Refugee

The current crisis statistics include all internationally displaced people, asylum seekers and migrants; forced displacement is caused by conflicts, developments, famine and natural or chemical disasters. There are several distinctions to be made between the various types of forced migrants.

The term "internationally displaced person" (IDP) describes those who have fled their homes but remain within the borders of their country and are guaranteed their rights by the international humanitarian law. (FMO 2012.) A "refugee" is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence, fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. War, ethnic, tribal and religious violence are the leading causes of

refugees fleeing their countries. An individual is considered an “asylum seeker” if they have fled their home country to seek sanctuary in another but have not yet been granted refugee status. (UNCHR n.d.b.) The choice to move from one country to another for reasons to improve one’s standard of living is considered “economic migration” (Cambridge Dictionary n.d.).

### 1.3 The Situation in Finland

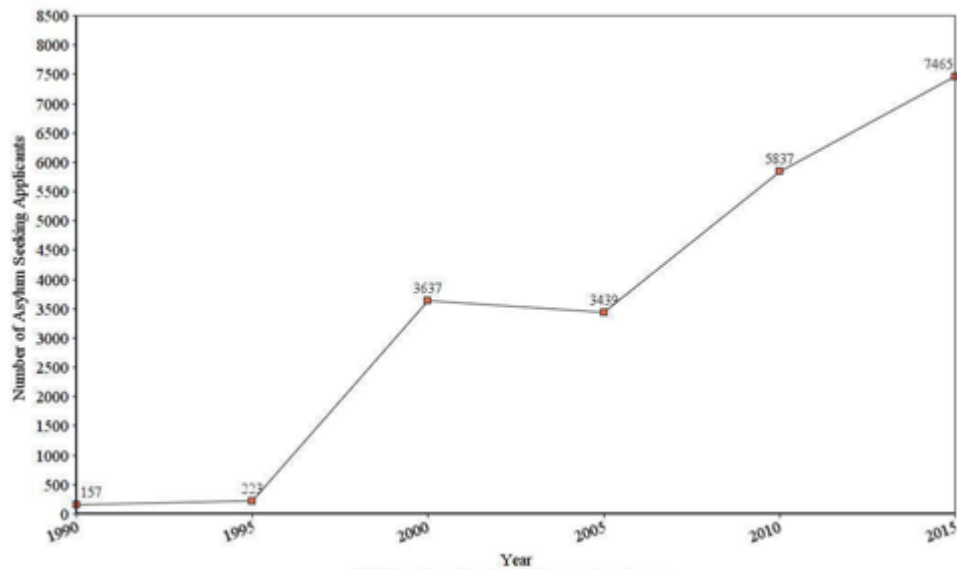
As of September 2015 there has been a total of 29 countries accepting refugees; the Arab Gulf states, neighboring the countries of conflict, have refused to accept any (Khazaal 2015). The Schengen agreement was previously made to abolish EU’s internal borders, which enabled passport-free movement when traveling across its 26 countries. However, the events of the refugee crisis and other events, such as the November 2015 Paris terrorist attacks, temporarily challenged the terms of the agreement, and many countries imposed temporary border controls. (Schengen: Controversial EU Movement Deal Explained 2016.)

The journey to reach safety is long, dangerous and costly. Many individuals coming from places in the Middle East start by entering and passing through Turkey and from there travel to the ports of Greece. The trek continues by land to the countries which welcome refugees. After escaping the countries of conflict, there is still a mortal risk in the voyages crossing the Mediterranean. Many boats have sunk and thousands drowned at sea. To circumvent the fenced-off borders many people walk along railroads and perish due to physical exhaustion. (Dearden 2015.) Many individuals lose their lives during this long journey to reach safety beyond new borders. After arriving in Europe, a new set of challenges arises, starting with facing overcrowded borders, finding camps and starting the application processes.

### **Application Process for Asylum Seekers**

The total number of individuals who may be granted asylum in Finland is a decision made annually by the Finnish government. The quota is based on the state budget, current UNHCR (the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) policies and decisions made by the other 25 countries who create the refugee quotas. The Finnish Immigration website states that the best option for solving the refugee issue, although not always possible, is the voluntary and safe return of migrants and their settlement in areas that are close to their home countries. (The Finnish Immigration Service 2016b.)

The process includes nine phases and continues with the ministry drafting a proposal to submit to the government based on the nationalities and regions which have claimed the need for resettlement. The UNCHR has authority to decide which cases will proceed, but the Finnish Immigration Service makes all the final decisions. Representatives from the centers for economic development, transport and the environment (ELY) as well as the Finnish Security Intelligence Service also take part in the process of selection. (The Finnish Immigration Service 2016c.)



**Figure 1. Asylum Applicants by Year (Finnish Refugee Council 2015)**

Figure 1 shows the yearly statistics and changes in the number of asylum applicants between 1990 and 2015. Between the years 1973 and 2012, a total of 42,524 asylum seekers arrived in Finland. The early 1970's mark the first time in history that Finland had received such a large influx of migrants. According to UNHCR, Finland took in 15,845 refugees and internationally protected people in the year 2014. These individuals' residence has been authorized, but citizenship has not yet been granted. By December 2015, a total of 30,820 asylum seekers had arrived in Finland. (Finnish Refugee Council 2015.) Despite the increasing quota, the number of accepted applicants remains miniscule in comparison to the total number of applicants.

## 1.4 The Need for Action

The discussions around the topic of migration continue worldwide. The poor economic situation in many countries, such as Finland, has affected the country's responses in the crisis. There is a current state of distress among the government to find solutions to the overcrowded health centers and

schools, as well as the high unemployment rates and competition for jobs. The majority of the people opposed to accepting refugees into the community think the current economy cannot support any additional people. Some individuals are worried that refugees have become a priority while the needs of the natural citizens remain neglected. On the other hand, there are many individuals who believe that Finland should help refugees and integrate them into society. (Dahl 2015.) According to one proposal, taxpayers' money could be used to ensure that children seeking asylum would get proper education, vaccinations and the other welfare that they need (Merrifield n.d.). These are just a few of the controversial opinions represented in the mass media which have stimulated debate among the Finnish people.

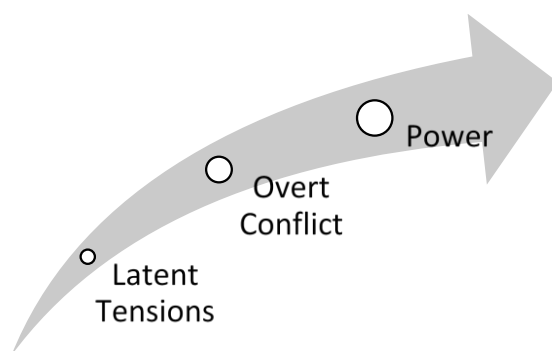
The situation gained widespread attention in 2015 when several global publishers, such as The Washington Post and The Telegraph, featured stories on the anti-refugee activities in Finland. Many more stories have been nationally published, provoking debates and heated public discussions. A member of the parliament representing the True Finns Party and the chairman of the nationalist organization Suomen Sisu stated:

*"I'm dreaming of a strong nation that will defeat this nightmare called multiculturalism. This ugly bubble our enemies live in will soon burst into a million little pieces. Our lives are entwined in very harsh times. These are the days that will forever leave a mark on our nation's future, I have a strong belief in my fellow fighters. We will fight until the end of our homeland and one true Finnish nation, the victory will be ours."* (Migrant Crisis: Finland's Case against Immigration 2015.)

### **Escalating Conflict**

Tensions continue to grow between the opposing sides in the migration debate. There has been an increase in the formation and appearances of anti-immigration groups, followers of Nazi ideology and organizations which exhibit extremist characteristics; some estimates have been published claiming that

Finland has over 700,000 racists. (Dahl 2015.) Groups, such as the Soldiers of Odin, men with neo-Nazi links who patrol the streets for protection against migrants and the Sisters of Kyllikki, a group of women who walk the streets giving out free hugs, claim to be making Finland a safer place. There is also a strong group of individuals who want to help or feel an obligation to support refugees due to the country's migration history. (Kauranen 2016.)



**Figure 2. Conflict Escalation (Ury n.d.)**

Figure 2 shows a representation of conflict escalation. The latent tensions between people have begun to develop into conflicts, and in some cases, they have already escalated into destructive violence in a struggle for power. The process of mediation begins with prevention and advances to resolving and containing (Ury n.d.).

### **Awareness Campaign Fall 2015**

The original mission of JAMK United for Refugees was aimed at raising awareness and uniting a JAMK-wide and local community:

*“Our response to the refugee crisis at JAMK is to create an ongoing awareness and educational campaign that will include the entire JAMK community and focus on serving those in need. Through this campaign we wish to strengthen and unify our community that is aware of its cultural surroundings, embraces diversity as a strength and seeks to find positive ways to make a difference in the world.” (JUfR n.d.)*

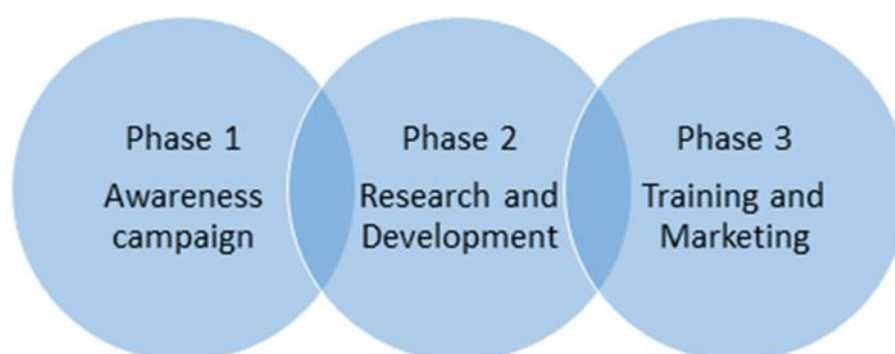
The campaign participants included Finnish and international students, JAMK staff, local NGO's, immigrants, refugees, the local public as well as globally renowned interculturalists. The successful campaign managed to bring together the stakeholders and unify the community. There were several components in the campaign including networking, promotional videos, social media and personal connections for spreading the word. An event was held in November 2015 providing factual information, booths for exchanging stories, various activities and live music from students. In addition, there were several speakers from around the world and a globally known intercultural community. The JUfR awareness campaign influenced local groups and organizations to become involved, and, as a result, other institutions started developing their own projects.

Several interviews at the event showed a wide interest in hearing the stories and about the reasons for migrants to leave their home countries and travel to Finland. The vice rector at JAMK University of Applied Sciences stated in his speech during the Phase One awareness campaign:

*“My first question is how we should continue from that, and one answer from the university’s point of view is certainly education. We believe that in order to have a proper role in the Finnish society, the refugees need education.”*

(Global Crisis, Local Response 2016.)

The reactions and feedback from Phase One revealed the need to continue the project and, more importantly, to move from awareness to action and connect both host and migrant cultures (see Figure 3). The complex situation in Finland, the escalating conflict and recommendations from the awareness campaign contributed to the formation of Phase Two, the research and development phase, in the JUfR project.



**Figure 3. Phases of the JUfR Project**

Phase Two continues to strengthen, support and unify the local community while embracing diversity and finding positive ways to make a difference in the world (Our Future Together: Learning across Cultures 2016). The primary focus during the research and development phase is to connect host and migrant cultures. To reach this goal, JUfR and its strategic partner, diversophy<sup>®</sup>, have teamed up to develop a professional training tool to facilitate cultural competences across Finland.

### 1.5 diversophy<sup>®</sup>

diversophy<sup>®</sup> was first developed by George Simons in 1972 as a tool for training student assistants in university residences. These resident advisors needed skills to handle conflicts and to coach younger students in the challenges and crises they faced in multicultural living situations. It was used in this academic context for a number of years. Later, with the Workforce 2000 impetus given to diversity training, the tool, showed promise as an effective and enjoyable way to raise consciousness of diversity issues and behavior in a multicultural society. (diversophy<sup>®</sup> n.d.) Many developments and additions have been made since establishing the original diversophy<sup>®</sup> card deck. Strategic partnerships have been formed, conferences held and online



applications developed, all made to better the ways of further facilitating cultural competences. There are over 50 versions available in multiple languages; the company continues to revise and create new decks while finding new ways to connect across cultures.

A few of the existing decks were used during Phase One as tools in the cross-cultural management course. The development in Phase Two will be adapted to the context of the situation. According to the assignor or to diversophy®, the same fundamentals apply in the five different types of learning: learning about facts, learning how to make choices, learning from the positive and negative risks that are involved, learning the wisdom of the culture itself and comparing our own cultural approaches with the culture that we are studying. The content and structure of the deck about Finnish and migrant cultures has changed to meet the needs of the players, including translations into three languages on each card.

### **Card Types**

**diversiSMARTS:** Challenge players' factual knowledge about specific cultural topics.

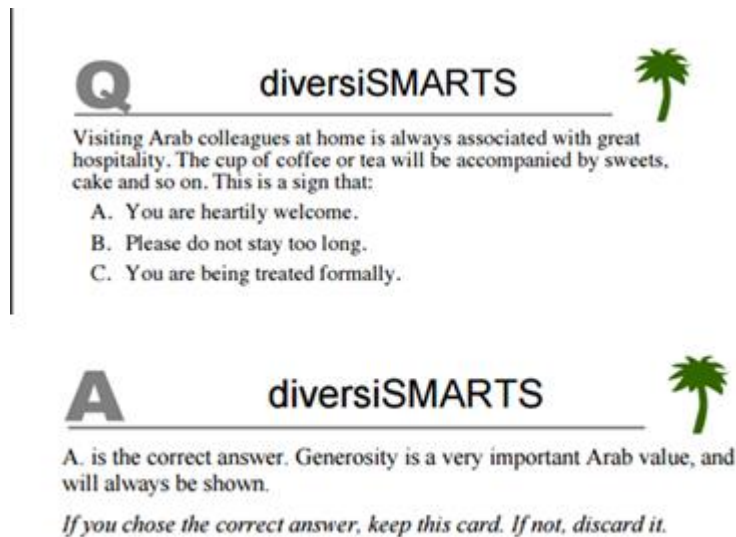
**diversiCHOICE:** Place players in intercultural situations that challenge them to make decisions about how best to behave or respond.

**diversiSHARE:** Enhance communication and teambuilding skills. They encourage discussion by asking players to share something about themselves, their opinions and feelings. They underline the message that we are all different, even in our own cultural groups, and that we can continue to learn from each other.

**diversiRISK:** Put the players in situations that are beyond their control. Some situations are "positive" (+) and some "negative" (-). These cards allow players

to experience, in a non-threatening way, how differences can result in unexpected benefits or costs.

**diversiGUIDE:** Offer wisdom from different cultures and recommendations that encourage the players to look for opportunities to apply it in their work or life.



**Figure 4. Original Card Example (diversophy® n.d.)**

Figure 4 shows an example style of a previous diversophy® diversiSMARTS card from the Gulf Arabs deck.

## 2 Methods

The purpose of the research for Phase Two in the JUF R project is to provide a holistic description of the people and processes involved in the creation of the tangible training tool. Theoretical knowledge will be inducted from the thick data; future recommendations will be made for Phase Three and similar projects across the globe. Geertz described thick descriptions as a way to make meaning that people place on behavior, words and actions (Ray 2011).

The methods of inquiry need to reflect the ambiguous and spontaneous nature of the environment. A qualitative strategy is most suitable due to its flexibility, adaptability and capability of responding to the changing research setting (Kananen 2013, 31).

## 2.1 The Research Setting

The primary research location was JAMK University of Applied sciences in Jyväskylä, Finland. The study project was embedded in a cross-cultural management course. The project participants included three teachers, including a senior lecturer of the school's International Business Degree Programme, a lecturer of the school's Language Center, and a third adjunct lecturer. All of the responsible teachers were non-Finns. The project management team included the three teachers and five students, two of whom implemented this thesis. A majority of the planning process was based on the campus where the meetings and classes took place. The cross-cultural management course included thirty registered students, three of whom were also a part of the project management team. Ten asylum-seeking students enrolled in the course as Open University students, one of whom withdrew after relocating to another country. In total over fifteen nationalities actively contributed to the developmental process. Frequent guests, both local and international, included representatives from NGO's and workers from refugee camps and other universities.

## 2.2 Qualitative Inquiry

Quantitative approaches are appropriate for research conducted on multiple cases, concentrating on numerical data with few variables. In comparison, qualitative inquiries focus on a single or few cases with non-quantifiable

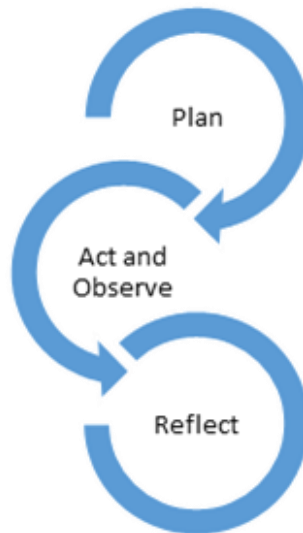
variables and they are researched in the natural environment, providing a holistic description of the complex phenomenon. (Creswell 1998, 15-16.)

In contrast to conventional research designs, participatory methodologies are often characterized by the location of power in the process and they are considered more reflexive, flexible and iterative. A key strength in pragmatic participatory research is the ability to explore the local knowledge and perceptions of the people. (Cornwall & Jewkes 1995.) The role of the authors in the management team and as students participating in the course allowed them to engage directly with everyone involved in the developmental projects. No research has been previously conducted within a similar context, and this would provide an opportunity to generate theory from a new phenomenon (Kananen 2013).

## 2.3 Action Research

In the English literature, design and action research are treated as equals. Design and action research can be concluded at the stage where statements are made or recommendations are given, and the cycle preceding the change does not eventuate. Prerequisites for action research are a change in operations, cooperation, research and the researcher's participation in the change. (Kananen 2013, 41-42.)

Action research approaches are responsive and orientated towards problem solving in social and organizational settings through the concept of learning from experience. The term action research was credited and formally recognized by Kurt Lewin who focused on problem-based research on the understanding of groups and experiential learning. Lewin's original model, developed in 1956, comprised of three steps: planning, executing and reconnaissance for the purpose of evaluating the results and further modifying the overall plan. (Smith 2001.)



**Figure 5. Action Research Cycle (Steps to the AR Cycle n.d.)**

Shown in Figure 5 is the spiral action research model designed by Kemmis and McTaggart which emphasizes the importance of reflection in action research methods (Steps to the AR Cycle n.d.). Participatory action research takes a qualitative approach to emphasize the researcher's role as an active learner who can tell the story from the participants' view rather than as an "expert" who passes judgment on participants (Creswell 1998, 17-18).

## 2.4 Data Collection

According to Denzin (1989, 83), "thick" descriptions produced in spoken language or written texts help to establish the significance of events by describing contextually the importance of various speech acts. A "thin" description, as exemplified by surveys conducted employing large samples, reports facts that often are unable to convey richly and deeply the contexts and thus the broader meanings embedded in the communication. (Ponterotto 2006.)

To extract thick descriptions researchers need to spend time in the field as active learners and are committed, engaged and participating in the action. Data is inducted from the people, processes and developments from the various perspectives with emerging themes, dimensions, codes or categories. (Creswell 1998, 15-16.) The qualitative data collection came from all four categories: observations, interviews, documents, and audio and visual materials.

*Observations* were collected in the natural setting by two students on the management team. Each researcher took field notes, kept a diary and collected oral data from the meetings, classes, debriefs and listened to the individual stories which provided personal knowledge, feelings, and different perspectives about the experiences of the project.

*Documents* were important for organization, planning and spreading information between members on the team. Many of the critical changes in the project can be seen in documents such as the proposals, meeting memos, card developments, and self-reflections. Emails are also a critical component to the developmental organization of the project.

The collection of *audio and visual* materials provide descriptive data. The audio and visual data captured included in class photos, exercises and activities and the mind maps and other visual representations.

*Semi-structured interviews* provided detailed descriptions from the various perspectives of the people working on the project. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer uses an 'interview guide', a list of questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation. The interviewer follows the guide, but is able to follow topical trajectories in the conversation that may stray from the guide when he or she feels this is appropriate. (Cohen & Crabtree 2006.) The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The main

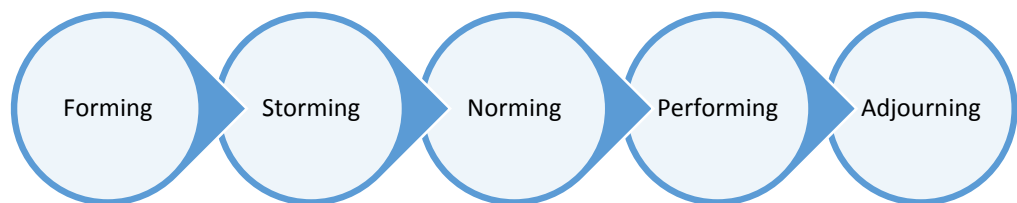
variables were identified along with information about the team's dynamics, changes, and challenges in the process. The opinions and stories help to discover the relevant themes, dimensions, and categories which emerged.

## 2.5 Analysis of Data

Qualitative data analysis lacks the strict rules of quantitative studies; participatory action research gathers a wealth of rich data (Kananen 2013, 32). In a narrative inquiry, relational issues are at the center of analysis but grounded theory focuses on the researcher-participant connection in the data collection. Although it is not widely practiced, joint reporting methods can be complimentary, if the knowledge of the approaches are drawn from a thoughtful consideration of the rationale for combining the methods. (Lal, Suto & Ungar 2012, 11.)

## 3 Tuckman's Model of Group Development

Bruce Tuckman's group development model explains the stages every team experiences, including but not limited to the challenges, problems, and conflicts which lead them to ultimately achieve their purpose (Manage Train Learn n.d.). The five stages, including forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning (see Figure 6) were used as a foundation to construct the natural narrative of events which occurred in Phase Two of the JAMK United for Refugees project.



**Figure 6. Tuckman's Stages for Group Development**

### 3.1 Forming

Forming represents the first stage in Tuckman's theory. This stage begins with introductions and the first discussions. People rely on the leader's guidance, trying to identify who is who and where they fit into the plan. The focus is not necessarily on the work but in creating a safe environment and in building a solid team foundation. (Cain n.d., 1-2.)

#### 3.1.1 Project Continuance

The idea to create a business training tool about Finland and the refugee crisis transpired during the 2015 autumn awareness campaign, after the assignor had visited JAMK and held a workshop for the students. The successful awareness campaign revealed a strong need to create empathetic connections between the refugees' and the local cultures.

Video interviews were conducted during the autumn awareness campaign event and included the students, participants and guest speakers. The questions asked about the various topics included the level of knowledge and awareness they had, how the crisis may affect their life and what type of information they would like to know more about. A few of the emerging themes revealed the interviewees' curiosity to know more about the cultural



backgrounds of the refugees and the current situation in Finland. In addition, the majority of the people mentioned they would like to help those who have fled from their home countries, hear their stories and learn more about them. However, many people expressed their worry about the current situation and future concerns.

diversophy® had previously partnered with JAMK in 2011, when two students from the Finnish business department, created a game in collaboration with the company. The mission for Phase Two of the JUfR project was to help refugees to acculturate and Finns to learn about their background by creating a game with different topics, such as religion, dating culture, traditions and equality. To fulfill the mission, the team began by selecting cards from the already existing Finnish deck. This well-researched and easy to use deck can also be played with migrants to help them to understand the Finnish culture. To create the new cards based on the new migrant cultures, ten refugees were invited to join the project.

### 3.1.2 Educational Opportunities

The project continuation for the spring 2016 semester was embedded in a cross-cultural management course, a part of the International Business Degree Programme at JAMK. The successful awareness campaign in Phase One continued with the development of new goals for Phase Two, focusing on the educational developments and in creating new learning opportunities. The participants were provided with an opportunity to become a part of the national response to the global crisis as well as to gain exposure and insight in the intercultural field. Local and global meaningful and empathetic connections were made in a rich and culturally diverse learning environment.

The decision to merge both cross-cultural management courses was made on the first day to increase the number of active participants. The first session

included a series of ice breaking activities, the history and showing of the documentary, as well as an introduction to Phase Two. The class was a mix of degree, exchange and asylum seeking students. Many of the degree and exchange students were shocked to learn that the asylum seekers would be attending the course and were already present in the classroom. The day ended in nervous excitement and anticipation for the future events.

### 3.1.3 The Management Team

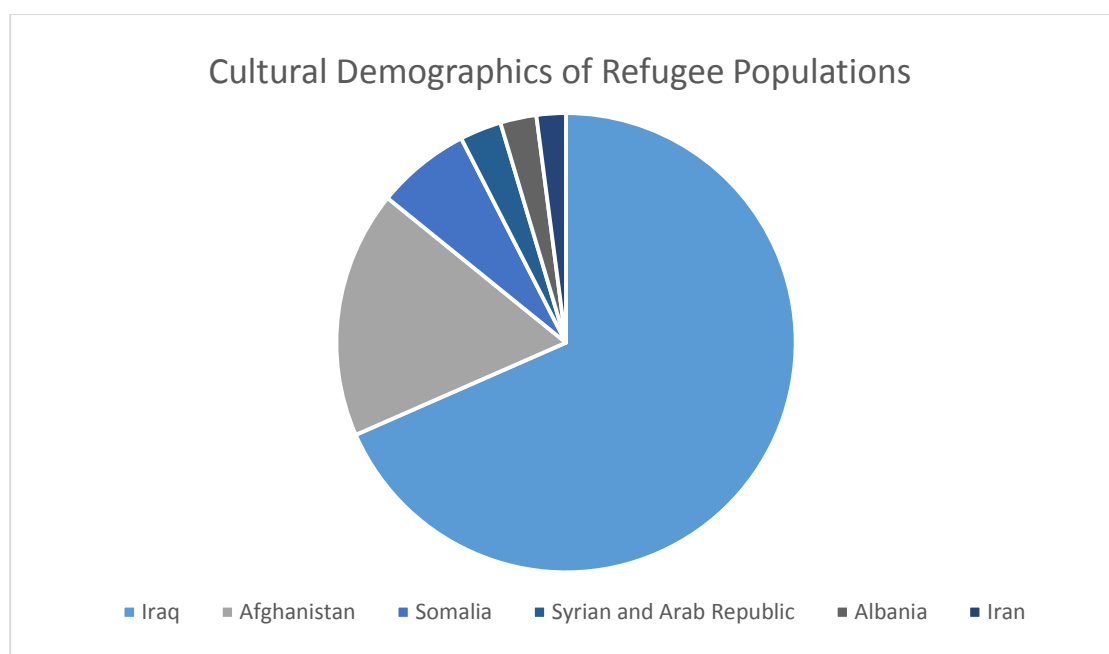
The management team was first established based upon immediate connections to the three remaining individuals from Phase One, but additional members were added to the team based upon personal interests in the project. There was no clarity of who would be involved, how the team would develop or what the vision would become. The beginning weeks were filled with brainstorming, exchanging ideas and researching other global initiatives, the current situation in Finland, gamification and project management for students who did not know each other. The newly formed management team consisted of various nationalities: US Americans, Finns, Irish, and Vietnamese, as well as a mix of professions and positions. All of the members were motivated and willing to contribute to the project.

The motivation for involvement in the project was to create more awareness of the background of the crisis, the situation in Finland and of the people who had fled to Finland to seek asylum in a safer environment. Moreover, working in a multicultural environment, obtaining new experience and learning drove the team members to work hard on the mission.

### 3.1.4 Connecting Finnish and Migrant Cultures

The driving question for the team was, how can meaningful and empathetic connections be established between the host and the new refugee cultures in Finland. The initial plan was to create a game based upon the already existing

Finnish deck and create new cards based on knowledge about the Iraqi and Syrian cultures. It became evident immediately that a game based upon Finland, Iraq and Syria would not be the best answer because the game needed to represent the wide range of cultures in the demographic makeup of the refugee communities living in Finland.



**Figure 7. Population of Refugees Living in Finland in 2015 (The Finnish Immigration Service 2016c)**

Figure 7 shows the population of refugees in Finland by percentage: Iraqi (65%), Afghani (15%), Somalian (6%) and Syrian (2%) (Finnish Refugee Council 2015). With this new information the vision changed; the game needed to represent the diversity in the local refugee cultures. Nine asylum seekers were enrolled as Open University students into the course and to participate in the project. With their knowledge and language contribution the game content could now be based on the Finnish, Afghani and Iraqi cultures and translated from English to Finnish and Arabic. The ideal situation would be for Finns, refugees and migrants to play together in order to acquire

knowledge and to create meaningful and empathetic connections. However, with several languages the game could be played separately by either Finns or migrants in order to advance their knowledge about each other's cultures. (JUfR 2016).

### 3.2 Storming

The foundation of the project continuance in the "local response to the global crisis" was the mutual motivation to take further action by connecting Finnish and migrant cultures. The focus taken from the mission statement was on strengthening a community aware of its cultural surroundings, embracing diversity and serving those in need (JUfR n.d.).

In order to move forward in the action process, a new vision and objectified goals needed to be collectively agreed, upon which both the business standards and educational requirements were taken in consideration. The first project proposal included the mission, a new need for the game and a section dedicated to the milestones and goals. The first prediction placed the finished product to be ready for distribution with training and facilitation sources by the first of June.

#### **Goals of Phase Two in the JAMK United for Refugees Project**

- To engage local (Central Finland), national and international stakeholders in the development of the relevant content for creating the diversophy<sup>®</sup> migration intercultural competence training game.
- To focus the development of content based on the Finnish culture, refugee communities within Finland, as well as information about the current refugee crisis and the needs of the main stakeholders.
- To make the game's content available in English, Arabic and Finnish.

- To create training resources for game facilitation.
- To nationally promote the use of the training product in Finland.
- To bridge the gap between Finnish and refugee cultures through dialogic interactions. (JUfR 2016a.)

The goals supported the mission of JUfR and reflected the urgent need of action. The targets provided the first step in the answer to the question of what can be done to connect the host and migrant cultures, but the details in how to achieve these goals had yet to be defined. The next stage focused on identifying and engaging the stakeholders, discovering the needs and relevant topic areas for the Finnish and migrant cultures and obtaining the necessary resources for the research, development and production of the training tool.

### 3.2.1 Diversity

The project's rich cultural diversity was not solely based on nationality but also included various ages and professions. Organizational cultures and human interaction operate on six levels: national or societal, organizational culture, group identity, functional, team and individual culture (Six Levels of Culture 2014). On each of these levels people interact with one another, they contribute with their own understanding of shared cultural meanings and expectations (Shaules 2008, 11).

Aside from surface level differences, values and normality, there are deeply rooted patterns of culture which provide a pilot response in all humans in interaction (Shaules 2008, 11). The perception of events is filtered by motivational values which are the driving force of behavior, any differences or misunderstandings can be a potential cause of conflict (Mitchell, Patterson & Scudder 2011, 78-79).

Previous studies have shown that in culturally diverse organizations the members will have a significant group identity-related differences in norm and value orientations in the areas of time and space, leadership styles, individualism-collectivism, cooperation-competition, locus of control and communication styles (Small Group Communications: Culture and Small Groups 2000).

### 3.2.2 Challenges

Three main challenge areas emerged from the people and processes in the project: uncertainty, resources, and communication.

#### **UNCERTAINTY:**

Generally, individuals with weak uncertainty avoidance take ambiguity as an inherent part of life and take each day as it comes. In comparison, individuals with strong uncertainty avoidance need structure, clarity and in ambiguous situations may feel a high level of stress or anxiety. (Hofstede 2011, 10.)

The uncertainty in the direction of the project was described by one of the members as feeling like, *“we’re just swimming against the tide and just holding it together but not actually thinking what the future is”*. The individuals who were uncomfortable with uncertainty identified the lack of clarity and clear structure as one of the biggest challenges.

#### **RESOURCES:**

There was a general lack of resources in the project, but the most valuable, important and finite resource of time was what the team lacked the most (Miller 2014). Each member of the management team had a full professional or academic schedule in addition to their involvement, which severely limited the amount of time for and dedication to the project. The allocated time for the tasks was minimal for what would have been optimal, which created an ongoing challenge. During the interviews many of the team members also

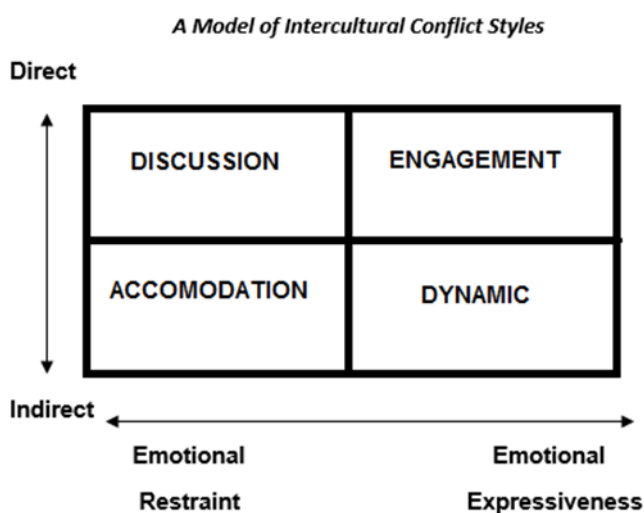
expressed that the small amount of time used for the project could have been spent more efficiently than what it was.

**COMMUNICATION:**

The main challenge with interpersonal relationships was communication, due to several factors including the limited time, different locations and preferred technological platforms. Keeping global teams going without face-to-face meetings is a challenge; it is important to make explicit efforts to maintain good relationships, communication practices and consideration of the cultural and preferred communication style differences (Kreitner n.d., 162).

### 3.2.3 Cultural Conflict Styles

Culture creates lenses through which the causes of conflict are refracted; the differences between resolution styles are grounded in cultural communication patterns (Avruch 1993). Cultural conflict styles are defined as 'the manner which contending parties communicate with one another around substantive disagreements and their emotional or affective reaction to one another' (Hammer 2009, 224). The four main categories of styles include discussion, accommodation, engagement and dynamic (Kirby n.d., 4).



**Figure 8. Model of Intercultural Conflict Styles (Kirby n.d.)**

As illustrated by Figure 8, the two main measured and compared factors are emotional expressiveness/restraint and how direct/indirect the approach is. Each style has its own perceived strengths and weaknesses; intentions may not be clear when individuals are engaging using different approaches in communication. Adaptation is common in a different environment, but stress and crises provoke individuals to resort back to their primary learned cultural conflict styles. (Kirby n.d., 2.)

How each individual, team or group responded to these areas of conflict impacted the level of functioning. The patterns of cultural correlation on the country level could be strikingly different from what is found on an individual level. (Hofstede 2011, 6.) The differences in the cross-cultural conflict include gender, age, ethnic, religious, regional and professional groups (Malek 2013). Strong variations and approaches were seen on multiple levels in the project for the co-creation of the training tool. Being aware of one's own approach as well as the differences between styles can lead to an increase in sensitivity and more effective communication (Hammer 2009, 230).



### 3.2.4 Strengths and Weaknesses

The project's functioning and outcomes were influenced by the team's set of self-identified strengths and weaknesses. The characteristics of the team strengths included the high level of motivation, a quick reaction time, enthusiasm, collaboration in decision making, and the team support and diversity, which created a different set of skills and networks. It had also been described by two team members that each person had an antenna on the top of their head detecting the potential problems.

The most frequent topics in the discussion about the weaknesses included areas directly impacted by the challenge areas of uncertainty, resources and communication. The two hours of allocated time for the weekly meeting was too short, and in reflection the team observed that, on many occasions, it could have been more efficiently used. The high enthusiasm and motivation for working on the project gave birth to a substantial number of ideas, but due to the lack of time and resources, they could not be implemented. A high level of ambiguity was perceived as one of the main challenge areas, but the lack of clarity in the direction of the project was identified as a weakness by all but one member on the management team.

## 3.3 Norming

A group cannot become a team without commitment to a common purpose, complimentary skills, performance goals and mutual accountability (Kreitner n.d., 157). Strong relationships and cohesion demand different levels of trust depending on the task at hand. It is especially important in a multicultural classroom which is dealing with real life and sensitive issues. Trust provides a safe environment in which team members can surface and explore values, sensitive issues and make decisions for each other. (Lane, Maznevski, Mendenhall & McNett 2009.)

### 3.3.1 Characteristics

The characteristics of an effective team include, but are not limited to, shared leadership, participation, a shared purpose, informality, open communication, clear roles, external relationships, style diversity, and civil disagreements (Kreitner n.d., 158). The low power distance team culture created a student-centered education in which the subordinates were consulted and the power was distributed legitimate and fairly (Hofstede 2011, 10).

The responsible teacher explained his role was to teach and not to manage in the educational setting. It is essential for everyone to benefit and learn from the project in this type of environment. At all levels the participants were encouraged to actively contribute, keep open communication and embrace the team's diversity.

#### **A Collective Purpose**

The development of group culture did not emphasize titles, nationalities or discriminate against any individual differences; a collective understanding was formed from trust, acceptance and a united purpose for the project. In one of the classroom activities, the students were asked to express their idea behind the meaning of the project and what it was that they were trying to accomplish. These are the most common themes which emerged:

The collective meaning indicated the students were motivated to **impact** and **change the community, bring people together** with **friendships** and **empathic connections** while uniting as a one big **multicultural family**.

The students expressed how this would be achieved through **exchanging perspectives, sharing experiences** and **stories**, thereby gaining **knowledge** by both **teaching and learning**. **Acceptance** of the cultural differences came from **self-reflection** and creating a **shared understanding**.

### 3.3.2 Team Culture

Individuals bring both their shared cultural background as well as their individual experiences to the project. The new group culture is shaped from both the similarities and the differences in the ideas of group governing, norms and behavior. The six characteristics which indicate the distinctive dynamics of a group are: culture, vocabulary, practices, metaphors, rituals and symbols. (Small Group Communications: Culture and Small Groups 2000.)

The team's **Vocabulary** can be seen in the project proposals, Facebook postings and heard in the meetings, classes and conversations. These common words are frequently used to describe the mission, the participant's experiences and help convey the meaning of the project (see Figure 9).

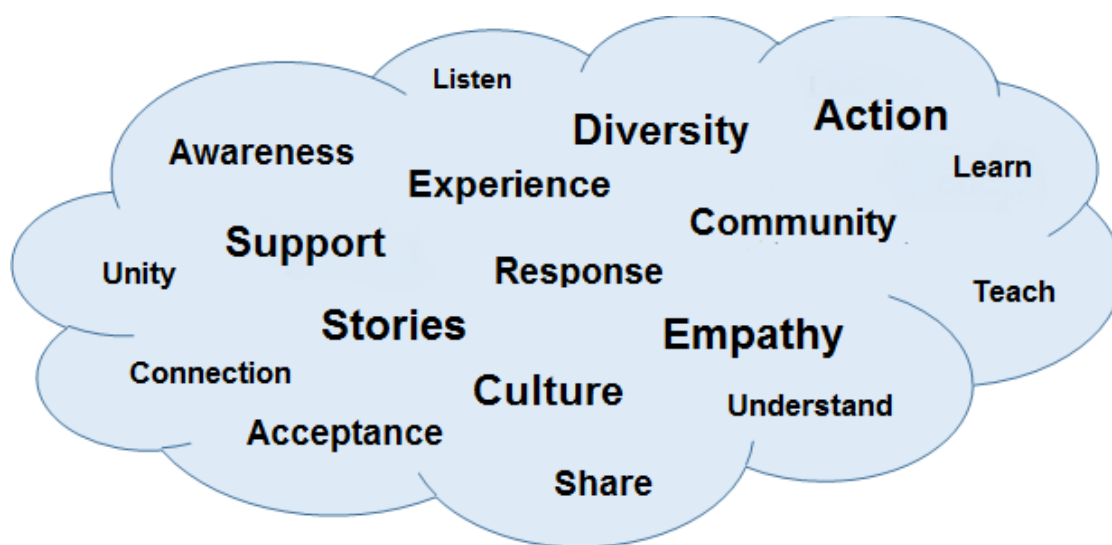


FIGURE 9. Vocabulary of Discourse in JUfR's Phase Two JUfR Project

The proposal defined the goals needed to achieve the project's mission. The **practices** were put in place for achieving these goals and formed in response to every new situation.

JUfR's response to the global crisis is an accumulation of the knowledge, experiences and **stories** shared within the community. These stories have the power to connect and unite individuals across borders and look at the world as *Our Future Together*.

**Metaphors and sayings** rooted in the project were apparent since the first class. The original quote by Brené Brown (2010), "*Stories are just data with a soul*", was used repetitively to describe the power, importance and knowledge in a single story. There was a tendency to take the participants outside their comfort zones; one team member described the attitude towards decision making in the uncertain environment as "more risk is more gain". The responsible lecturer stated, "Education is a highway to acculturation", to convey the deeper meaning, value and the impact education has on the acculturation of migrants in the local community.

**Rituals** were embedded in the routines and collective actions among the team members. A few examples of apparent rituals in the weekly management meetings and the classes included the teachings about various cultural aspects, ideating, discussing, card creating and debriefing. Students continuously stepped outside their comfort zones and engaged in discussion about sensitive and challenging topics. Aside the professional and classroom activities the students participated in various activities together, helping the students to connect, bond and form meaningful relationships.

The **symbol** in Figure 10 was designed during Phase One and used as a logo to represent the project.



**Figure 10. Logo for JAMK United for Refugees (JUfR 2016a).**

### 3.3.3 Management

Cross-cultural management is not about the management of cultural differences; it is about the managing of cross-cultural relationships and creating synergies from them (Holden, Mabileau & Majidi 2010, 2).

Cross-cultural engagements invariably produce knowledge; the two categories in this field for knowledge are depicted as: “hard”: facts, statistics and documentary sources or “soft”: knowledge derived from experience, observations and intuition. Soft and hard knowledge when combined can produce tactical knowledge, what is defined as how people contextually interact with one another. (Holden et al. 2010, 3.)

Each of the five self-managed teams obtained a high level of discretion in choosing their approaches to gather the cultural knowledge needed to complete the weekly card creation requirements. The process of card ideation and card generation took place both in and outside class time, each team developed a unique working style to complete their weekly requirements. Card

topics were derived from the interests, experiences, classroom learning, research and other interactions. All five of the card types: guide, risk, share, choice, and smart are based on cultural knowledge.

Every team had the freedom to choose how they operated and there were apparent differences between the fundamental working styles. Guidance and support were made available for any individual or team in need. The team shared responsibility and developed the migrant and diversophy® game communally.

### **Team Card Creation Process**

The start to each week in the card creation process varied between the groups and was stimulated by storytelling, asking questions, providing research or discussing other relevant topics. The cards consisted of both hard and soft knowledge, or as researchers refer to as factual and experiential knowledge. A majority of the teams relied on technological tools to aid in the finding and the organizing of information. Alternatively, some of the teams preferred a more human based approach over using online sources and factual information. The various ways in which the teams divided tasks and completed the card creation requirements was done individually, with partners or collectively as a group.

#### **3.3.4 New Challenges**

The exchange of relevant interpretations, opinions and open discussions are all characteristics in the norming stage (Tuckman 1965, 70). The majority of the students claimed to have created all of the possible and relevant cards based on the knowledge they were provided with. Feelings of frustration were expressed and a need for a change in the card creation process.

The need for change in the card creation process was the first topic addressed in the following management meeting. During this time, a second concern was raised about the avoidance of some crucial topics due to their sensitive nature and difficulty to discuss. These two minor obstacles marked a critical point for the change and development in the card creation cycle.

The reaction was positive to the changes put in place; the card creation process opened up and the weekly task was no longer limited by card type. In addition, the students were asked to anonymously submit the questions they “dared” not to ask. The following class these “dared” topics and difficult discussion areas were brought up by the facilitators. This activity demanded a high level of trust. The students were encouraged to step outside their comfort zones, listen and respect each other’s differences about the sensitive topics such as religion, alcohol, and relationships.

To change up the routine and spark new ideas the class embarked on different “cultural walks” around Jyväskylä, rotating walking partners every so often and stopping at various detours along the way to the mutual end point in the local tower café.

The shared purpose, development of a group culture, and the tolerance to ambiguity, increased the team’s risk taking, which resulted in additional positive learning outcomes. The project moved forward with an expanded knowledge base and the continuous engagement of new stakeholders.

### 3.4 Performing

The norming of the card ideation process, positive response to conflict and strong interpersonal relationships moved the team into the stage of performing. Task performance was supported by the structure of the card generation process. The high level of trust, appreciation and confidence in the

other team members enhanced the flexibility and functionality in the roles (Tuckman 1965, 66). The team cohesively worked towards the project's goals and exhibited the characteristics of a high performing team, high motivation, interdependency and efficient functioning without oversight (Abudi 2010).

A majority of the management team members did not have clearly defined roles, but collectively relied on the different strengths and areas of expertise. The team's role in the nationally targeted response was shaped by the emerging needs of both the community and the academic project. Consequently, the individual roles developed based on ones' schedule, skill set and comfort level with ambiguity. An array of responses was given when the management team was questioned about how they perceive their individual roles. Two of the varying responses during the performing stage included, *"I have no idea what kind of title or job description..."* and contrastingly, *"I wanted to have that there was some kind of structure... I think that has somehow been my role, to put some kind of foundation, and it's not just things happening from week to week."*

The team collectively agreed, that there remained no particular process to handle the challenges, but the response depended on the nature of the problem and available resources. The fluid team roles adapted to every new situation, reaching a higher state of interdependency. It was stated by the responsible teacher, *"We are collectively a lot stronger than we are separately"*.

### 3.4.1 Conflict Resolution

Adaptations at both the team and individual level were essential in responding appropriately to the challenge areas of time, communication, and uncertainty. Despite the lack of clear process, the team developed a conflict management strategy by anticipating and responding to the conflicts as they came. The



weekly meetings consisted of discussing the current situation, both the positive and negative aspects, and planning for the near future.

Decisions were made and problem solving techniques were created based on all of the different strategies, consequently integrating them into one solution. Embracing the diversity in knowledge, perspectives and approaches, created a stronger and richer response. During this time the challenges began to be viewed as merely road blocks instead of potential conflicts; this new rhythm led to higher performance. (Maznevski, Mendenhall & McNett 2004, 242.)

### **Accepting the Differences**

According to Tuckman (1965), the prime requisite for successful behavioral change is strong and genuine interpersonal bonds, meaning the contribution of mutual and evaluative support. One observation taken during the beginning of the course was a few of the students explicitly denied any differences between people, making claims such as, "all people are the same and alike".

This attitude towards cultural differences can be placed in the first stage of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), created by Dr. Milton Bennett. (1986, 1993, 2004, and 2013). The DMIS is a conceptual model which defines six stages in the development of intercultural sensitivity, starting from ethnocentrism and transitioning to ethno-relativism (Saphiere 2013). The stages provide a framework for determining how to improve the capacity for intercultural sensitivity and collaboration; some of the stages include behaviors or adaptations the authors define as "cultural competences" (Adams 2010).

As team members gained trust they began to feel more comfortable in accepting the cultural differences. Ana Morgan (2015), a freelance writer and author said in a speech:

*Stories have the power to connect people across social, cultural, political and even geographical divides; giving humans the potential to unite together in these extraordinary times.*

Through the sharing of stories, knowledge and experiences, a transition from denial to acceptance occurred. Many of the minor challenges and small disputes between the team members were resolved without intervention by developing a better understanding of one another and accepting the challenges between the different points of view. According to Abudi (2010), in the performing stage, the team members can work through a disagreement and come to consensus without interrupting the project's progress.

The students came to an agreement on their own without reliance on the team leader, in this case the senior lecturer of the course. Schroder and Harvey (1963) postulate positive interdependence as autonomy and mutuality in which task achievement is superordinate to social structure (Tuckman 1965, 77). It was apparent the project did not only consist of multiple individual or team identities, instead a collective identity formed as a result of the group's support.

### 3.4.2 Sharing the Story

The initial idea had been to play the game in refugee centers, Finnish high schools, language classes, churches, organizations, and NGO's, such as the Red Cross. It was discussed to include a future testing session in refugee centers and high schools, as a way to engage the business of education. The previous diversophy® customers had typically been trainers and developers, but due to the specific needs and the new situation, further market research was needed. The team split the research and began to contact external sources and request collaboration.



**Figure 11. JAMK United for Refugees' Target Market Groups**

The project was widely known in the local community and actively engaged with the first three target groups: global publics, local stakeholders and other Finns' and refugee cultures. The options for funding, distribution and information about the potential purchasers needed to be explored.

The *National Response to a Global Crisis* document was shared within the local and global community to raise awareness, empowerment individuals in the community and encourage contribution for a local solution. The JUfR Facebook page was used as the primary channel for communication. Twice weekly, the page posted content about the project, in addition to the sharing of stories about the members. A few of the key messages shared with the JUfR's audience are listed below:

*A Response of taking action*

*Uniting as a community*

*Discovering the needs*

*Support for one another*

*Creating and innovating solutions*

*Embracing diversity*

*Building bridges*

*Creating empathetic and meaningful connections*

*Empowering yourself and others*




The first card testing session was arranged at JAMK. A diverse group of 30 participants engaged in a few rounds of game play, contributing constructive feedback on the selected cards and overall experience. These players included a mix of Finnish and international students from multiple universities, refugees and workers from various organizations, all of whom were considered to be potential purchasers. Each of the management team members had to make a choice to either participate, observe, or facilitate during the two-hour card testing session.

The general feedback response was positive and supportive about the cards, experience and potential product. The constructive comments suggested that some of the cards were unclear and certain areas, such as the perspectives by women, were missing. In addition to the feedback, the card testing session expanded the project's network, plans and opportunities for future collaboration.

### 3.4.3 The New Card

The feedback from the first card testing session provided insight on the areas in need of development. Some of which included the introduction of new topic areas, updating the teaching materials, hosting more activities and expanding the perspectives in the knowledge base. The assignor and his intern briefly reviewed and sent back a few of the cards for the team to improve and edit. The translation process began with the two Finnish students on the management team and the Arabic translations were in the process of being translated by some of the Iraqi students.

**diversiSMARTS**

QUESTION	KYSYMYS	سؤال
<p>What Finnish celebration is called <i>Juhannuspäivä</i>?</p> <p>A. Christmas. B. Midsummer. C. Whit Sunday.</p>	<p>Millä nimellä kesäkesän juhla kulkee Suomessa?</p> <p>A. Joulu B. Juhannus C. Helluntai</p>	<p>ما هو الأحتفال الفلندي الذي يسمى <i>Juhannuspäivä</i> ؟</p> <p>أ - عيد رأس السنة . ب - منتصف الصيف . ج - الأحد الأبيض .</p>
MIG-4007	   <p style="font-size: small;">©2016 OUI &amp; JAMK All rights reserved.</p>	<b>2 Points</b>

**diversiSMARTS**

ANSWER	VASTAUS	إجابة
<p>B. Midsummer takes place on a day between June 19<sup>th</sup> and June 25<sup>th</sup>. Celebrations of midsummer take place on the evening before this day when bonfires are very common. Many Finns spend time in the countryside with their family on this festival. They enjoy the sunshine and sauna together.</p> <p><i>If you chose the correct answer, keep this card. If not, discard it.</i></p>	<p>B. Juhannusta vietetään Suomessa Kesäkuun 19. ja kesäkuun 25:n päivän välillä. Juhannuksen juhliminen yleisesti tapahtuu iltaisin ja juhannuskokot ovat suuressa osassa tapahtumaa. Moni suomalainen viettää juhannuksensa maalla perheensä kanssa. Auringon ja saunan nauttiminen kuuluvat juhlaan.</p> <p><i>Jos vastasit oikein, pidä tämä kortti. Jos vastasit väärin, laita kortti pots.</i></p>	<p>ب - منتصف الصيف يقام في يوم ما بين 19 يونيو و 25 يونيو. أحتفالات منتصف الصيف تقام مساءً قبل اليوم الذي يصادف المناسبة التي تكون الألعاب النارية تالعة جداً فيها. العديد من الفنلنديين يقضون أوقاتهم في ريف المدن مع عوائلهم في هذا الأحتفال يتمتعون بأشعة الشمس والسونا مع بعضهم البعض.</p> <p><i>إذا أخترت الإجابة الصحيحة، أحتفظ على هذه البطاقة. وإذا لم يكن، تخلس منها .</i></p>
MIG-4007	   <p style="font-size: small;">©2016 OUI &amp; JAMK All rights reserved.</p>	<b>2 Points</b>

Figure 12. Example Card from the new Finnish Migrant deck

To represent the future and finished product, a few translated cards were formatted, finalized and used as samples to show. The senior lecturer and the assignor's intern attended a SIETAR Europa conference in Brussels, to present about JAMK United for Refugees' ongoing project. Other conference attendees included professionals in the intercultural field, academics, practitioners and others active and concerned with the global humanitarian needs. JUfR was shown as just one example for the many possibilities in the higher education sector to provide learning opportunities for students, refugees and the local community. (JUfR 2016b.) As a result, the JUfR network expanded and connections were made with new stakeholders and future potential partners.

### 3.5 Adjourning

A year and two successful semesters had gone by since the start of JUfR, and six months since beginning to implement Phase Two. The stage of adjourning consists of final wrap up activities, reflections, the project official closing and ends with the team departing (Abudi 2010).

This time of the year was extremely busy for both the students and professors. The end of the semester meant final exams, grading and preparing for the departure of the international students. During this time, decisions were made for those who had been waiting to hear about their processed applications to seek asylum in Finland. Despite the stressful period of time the team members showed up to complete the knowledge base and actively supported each other in their external affairs.

### 3.5.1 Final Class and Awards

A party and award ceremony was held to rejoice all the team had accomplished during the semester. The guests came from around world, varying in culture, age and profession. In addition, the students and members of the management team gave short speeches. Some were filled with gratitude, others congratulating the team members, and some wishing all the best for the future to come.

All nine of the registered Open University students received awards and may have been the first asylum seekers to complete a university course in Finland. One student stated, being a part of the course felt like a step towards integrating into society and expressed his gratitude for the project: *“Life is something other than a normal life in the centers.”*

A few students wanted to continue their education in the university and were given the opportunity to do so. Another speech described the experience as being *“A big opportunity because I can get involved in society, get to know people, learn new things and gain knowledge.”* Their intellectual and social contribution enriched the environment and the outcome of the game.

Smiles were seen, laughter was heard and the reminiscing of the multicultural family’s memories left the members with emotional amplitude. It is a natural part of the adjourning stage to have separation and termination anxiety, sadness and strong feelings toward the leader and other group members (Tuckman 1996, 66). A whole year had passed by for some of the students, for others who had just arrived to Finland, it was a difficult couple of months. These classes and the other team members had been the hope and support for the future.

### 3.5.2 The First Public Card Testing

After the school semester's official end, the three lecturers and two students conducting the research for this thesis stayed for the last event and the planning for Phase Three. The idea was to host the first public card testing session of the new deck. The team sorted through and picked the most appropriate cards for the event held at the local multicultural center, Gloria, which offers multicultural activities for every individual in Jyväskylä (Introduction to Gloria n.d.). This event was shared and promoted, and general public was invited to take place in the playing and testing of the unfinished product.

Four members of the JUfR management team were present, but the total number of participants far exceeded the team's expectations. Approximately fifty people joined and variety of different languages spoken. The game was played in a multilingual environment without a common language, therefore in a few cases other participants acted as translators for the players.

The two students conducting this thesis observed and participated in the game play. In addition to answering questions about the topics of acculturation, migrant issues and one's own cultural perspectives, twenty-two of the players submitted comments and constructive feedback about their game experience. The three critical areas in need of improvement were evident from the researchers' observations and answers given on the participant feedback forms.

The unclear structure caused confusion, players were not aware of the purpose of the game nor how the point system operates. Also the difference between the card types was confusing. The overall feedback suggested that clarifying the general rules of the game would help fix these issues.

Translating the cards for the other players in the multilingual environment proved to be difficult and time consuming. One proposed solution was to provide additional language options for all of the cards. Overall it was



suggested to review and improve the content for the cards. There were too many unreadable, difficult or unclear cards. In addition, some of the text had grammatical errors and structural problems.

Despite the challenges in having a few language barriers and issues with the card content, the testing session received good feedback and positive comments. One participant exclaimed she, “enjoyed *the conversations that the game inspired. It created a good structure to share feelings and insights that can otherwise make us vulnerable*”. Many of the volunteers and participants at the multicultural center expressed their desire for future collaboration.

### 3.5.3 Phase Three

Telling stories, the exchanging of cultural perspectives and adding to the knowledge base were not the only important outcomes of Phase Two. Furthermore, this phase was a means to connect, support and unite as a community and in doing so, empower others to join in taking local and global action. The students stepped outside their comfort zones, pushed through obstacles and began to embrace uncertainty. Something very important happens when individuals come together and find something that unites them, which is greater than any individual competence (Logan 2009).

Developing a vision for Phase Three began after identifying the goals which had been reached and those that had been unaccomplished during Phase Two. The idea for the autumn 2016 semester is to focus on further developing the knowledge base, as well as enhance the marketing and training for the first version of the finished product. The game played in small facilitated groups builds cultural bridges between refugees and Finnish cultures, creating personal connections between all immigrants, visitors, foreign and host citizens of Finland. (JUfR 2016a.)

The new 'Our Future Together' plan was published and proposed new operational objectives: To continue, on an ongoing basis, the development of an extensive knowledge base that is relevant to various stakeholders in Finland.

- To make content available in English, Finnish, and Arabic.
- To create training resources to help facilitate game play in the form of a video-based training resource and a written guide.
- To promote the use of the product across Finland and to provide training and facilitation support in the field as requested.
- To offer students opportunities for personal and professional growth, including educational opportunities in the form of course credits, project study credits, and thesis projects.
- To engage with other global actors in the area of multicultural development. (JUfR 2016b.)

## 4 Results

The management team reached all of the stages in Tuckman's group development framework. In spite of the uncertainty present throughout the project, the team successfully, stage-by-stage, created a trustful environment to work in, overcame the challenges, and were aware of the differences between each individual's working style. The management team developed a strategy for handling the conflicts as they came, furthermore, creating and completing a mission with the help of the goals formed previously for Phase Two. Opportunities to learn and develop were given to all of the participants, including the invitations given for the asylum-seeking students to enroll in the

course. By building these empathetic connections, the participants were able to learn, grow and develop their competences together.

Creating this tangible training tool gave the students a unique learning experience and responded to a very important social need at the national level. One result was an expanded knowledge base; by the end of Phase Two of the project, a total of 260 cards were created, 10 of them completed with all three translations; English, Finnish, and Arabic. These ten cards were then used as sample cards for product promotion. The card contents focused on a variety of cultures, including Finland, Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, Arabia, China, France, and Nigeria. Topics featured in the cards included social values, lifestyles, etiquette, languages, and religions.

Both card testing sessions provided the management team with valuable feedback and recommendations for the further development of the cards. The story of the JUfR's response was shared via social media, resulting in the project gaining a significant amount of attention and the engagement of new stakeholders.

## 4.1 Outcomes of Phase Two

The original timeline projected by May 18 was that the cards would be completed and translated into all three languages: English, Finnish and Arabic. In addition to the finished product, training and facilitation resources would be made available for the purchasers. The project did not achieve all of the proposed goals by the deadline of May 18th; the game was not ready for distribution and only a few sample cards had been translated into all three languages. Further research was needed about the potential purchasers, distribution methods and developing the additional resources for this specific *diversophy*<sup>®</sup> product.

Only a few of the participants were of Finnish nationality in the culturally diverse group. All of the educational goals were reached but the developmental product's outcomes were not fully achieved. In addition to the intended outcomes, there were many unanticipated opportunities for the students to both teach and learn about various topics, such as language, culture and history. The global attention Phase Two received was far larger and more impactful than what had been anticipated. JAMK United for Refugees set a precedent for future similar projects. Other schools, organizations and countries expressed their interest in taking similar action by engaging stakeholders, uniting their communities and connecting the host and migrant cultures.

## 4.2 Project Limitations

The two main factors hindering the progress included the limited resources of time and funding. It was explicitly stated in the interviews, the time dedicated for working on the project was not enough. The management team had two hours per week scheduled for meeting and the students' class time totaled a maximum of three hours per week. The majority of the project was planned in the two hour weekly meetings, the card creation process started in class during three hours per week.

The budget for Phase Two included the Open University student fees for the asylum-seeking students, the professors' salaries and small uncategorized expenses. Exceptionally, the university sponsored the tuition for each one of the asylum seekers enrolled as Open University students and provided round trip bus tickets and meals twice per week. The total budget for marketing was one hundred euros, however, only about five-percent was used due to the organically attracted attention and the steady increase in popularity for the

JUfR Facebook page. The majority of the Facebook postings were created by a student specifically assigned to the role of marketing.

The largest limitation was the available amount of time for the project; the professors had a very small amount of allocated hours budgeted for this project. In addition, all of the students had full course schedules, the professors, students and diversophy® team worked many additional hours at their own expense. Supplementary resources of time and funding could have impacted the project's outcomes. The goals, such as the reviewing and translating the final deck into Arabic and Finnish, were not achieved due to these insufficient resources.

## 5 Discussion

### 5.1 Study Limitations

The researchers' ability to focus on the study and gather thick descriptions remained limited due to the size and complexity of the project's scope. Ambiguity was present in every stage of the project and thus the research approach was shaped by the changes and developments in the project.

Language challenges restricted some participants' ability to fluently describe, express and otherwise participate fully in all activities. Language itself has inherent ambiguities; the meanings are dependent on the interpreter (University of Southern California 2016).

Action research requires personal engagement in the contexts of the study; the researchers attempt to objectively study the phenomenon (Rajendran 2001, 3). The two research students collected the data for this study; potential biases can be present in the interpretations of self-reported data. There are four main categories to consider: selective memory of events, recalling events

in a different order than they naturally occurred, exaggerating the significance of events and false attributions to variables such as placing blame of negative events on external factors and positive outcomes on internal factors (University of Southern California 2016.)

The interviews of the assignor, lecturers and students, compromising the management team were conducted by two of the students who were also course participants themselves. Although the data collected in the cross-cultural management course included audio, visual, observations and oral data, due to the large number of people and the limited time there was no in depth discussions during the events and activities with the participants.

Analysis and interpretation of the results suggested, additional methods of data collection, such as focus groups and interviews with more participants, may have enhanced the thick descriptions and resulted an increase in the quality of findings. The researchers were restricted to access some of the information due to their status as active students; certain matters were dealt with by the professors due to the confidentiality and the sensitive nature of the particular situations. The quality of research is highly dependent on the capabilities and skills of the researchers (Advantages and Disadvantages of Qualitative Research 2014). Both of the research students had no prior experience nor was there any prior research found in a similar context to the study's situation. The researchers learned through implementing the project and developed the necessary skills from doing so.

## 5.2 Descriptive Project Model: Phase Two

A descriptive model of the Phase Two iteration of the project was constructed and based on the key elements in the research findings. According to Madigan (n.d.), this type of model is defined by a summary of the main features in the data. The features of Phase Two revealed an underlying

structure in the processes, formed from the strengths, the weaknesses, the limitations and the factors of construction in the project. A new rich learning environment was created by the merging of multiple pre-existing processes, contributing to the overall construction of the project. The structural model includes the factors that induced change, challenges and impacted the team's overall functioning and development. The model based on the main factors of development, organization and communication, provides a clear picture of the structure and processes for project participants.

### **Considerations**

This model's design was created by identifying the key variables which influenced the project. Before considering applying the structural design to a new project, a few critical areas need to be considered. This model is suitable for developmental projects in an educational setting that has formed in response to the global refugee crisis or for the need to facilitate cultural competences between people.

Research about local demographics can aid in identifying the largest migrant populations in a community. After identifying the cultures present in a community, it is suggested to first and foremost identify some of their needs as well as the factors contributing to the existing social problems. After the process of identifying the local cultures and beginning to understand the unmet needs of the stakeholders, a mission, vision, and goals can be created.

### **Project Construction Factors**

The design for the project model features the factors which made the project possible, including the areas of development, organization, and communication. The developmental factors include the people, resources and the educational environment the project was conducted in. The individuals managing the project need the time and financial resources necessary to

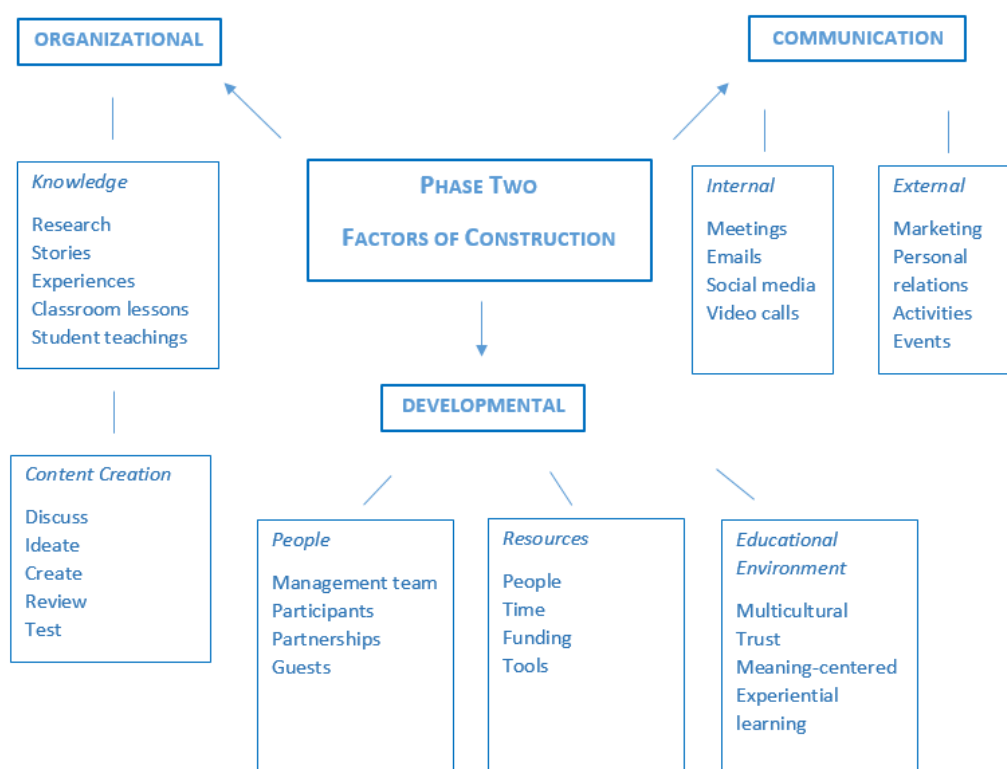
achieve the project's outcomes. The project comprised of the management team, course and other participants, project partners and frequent guests.

The JUfR project, activated in a cross-cultural management course for bachelor's students, is part of a broader intercultural communication curriculum embedded in an international business degree program at a Finnish applied sciences university. The responsible teacher emphasizes an experiential learning processes in a multicultural environment, while employing a meaning-centered approach that helps students to reflect on and learn from their intercultural and multicultural experiences. (Crawford 2015.)

Organizational factors relate to the knowledge development and card creation. A database of knowledge needed to be collected for the creation of the game. Phase Two's knowledge base was developed by researching, the sharing stories and experiences, and from teaching sessions provided by asylum seeking students, Finnish students, and course and guest lecturers.

The two types of communication factors include internal and external communication. Internal communication occurred within the management team and the students enrolled in the course. The management team held regular meetings supplement by a social media platform; in this case a project management Facebook page, where agendas, news and meeting memos were shared. Another technological communication tool was the school's electronic learning platform, Optima, where the knowledge bank for the content of the game was stored and where communication between students and teachers occurred. External communication was achieved by marketing, organizing various activities, both inside and outside the school and through interpersonal relations.





**Figure 13. Structured Model for Phase Two**

### **Limitations of the Model**

Identifying and combining multiple aspects in order to create a descriptive model including the relevant and key factors, was done through reanalyzing the data. It is not possible for the researchers to accurately complete a holistic depiction of the multitude of phenomena presented in the project in one model, but a generalization of the main factors was included.

### **5.3 The Researchers' Experience**

The first year research student enrolled in the International business degree program had completed the cross-cultural management course in the first semester and participated in the autumn 2015 awareness campaign. The third year student from the Finnish business administration program completed the

cross-cultural management course during the time of the research and Phase Two of the project. The significant learning outcomes taken from the JUfR project, came from the complementary experiences of being researchers and members of the management team. This project became an integrated part of life; working together with a diverse team of other students, professors and professionals was a unique opportunity, providing a rich setting to explore and learn.

The new environment and overflow of information proved to be overwhelming; with no previous experience, it was a struggle to create a vision, find a starting direction and develop roles. Functioning at a high level of uncertainty was one of the most challenging aspects for the researchers in the project. Both previous educational and work experiences had been in traditional and structured settings, where examples and clear expectations had been given. The growth and development in these challenge areas came from accepting and embracing the ambiguity, venturing outside the perceived comfort zones and from building trust within the team.

The experiential learning approach made it possible to use theory in action for the areas of education, business and cross-cultural management. It was an unforgettable experience to hear the personal stories from refugees and was striking to see the significant individual and group changes throughout each stage of the project. The spontaneous idea of a local response in 2015 became an ongoing project, attracting global attention, spreading awareness, and creating local support communities, where individuals were empowered to unite, take action and connect across cultures.

Forming this story from the experiences and researched data allowed the researchers to recast the story for reflection, sharing and the future developments based on our recommendations. This narrative provided is not just the story of the JUfR project, it represents real moments and meaningful

memories from the experiences of the participants. The many changes and challenges were valuable learning lessons, created in an environment designed for continuous growth and development.

Practical knowledge was gained by participating, researching and working closely with a diverse team in the fields of education and business. The JUfR project impacted lives at multiple levels, individually, as a team and in the local and global community. Hearing the refugees' stories and working with students and professionals in the global network enriched the learning experience. The connections will continue to flourish and grow from the memories lasting a life time.

With time, a better understanding of the project and its implications unraveled, clarity is now apparent in the areas, which were filled with uncertainty. It was incredible to see the teaching and learning tool created within the course and played, thereby helping to facilitate the development of cultural competences and connections in the community. The journey as active participants and researchers was fulfilling in all areas of the project. It is the researchers' hope that the time spent in the field and the research findings, presented in this paper, can help in piecing together the puzzle which was once Phase Two, leading towards the development of new and emerging projects alike.

## 6 Conclusion

The global refugee crisis has left over 60 million citizens of the world internationally displaced, with no solution in sight for these complex conflicts (UNHCR 2015c). Many countries are facing new challenges in the urgent need to acculturate such large numbers of newcomers; in many cases the needs of both the host citizens and migrants have been left neglected. The spontaneously created project, JAMK United for Refugees began as an

awareness campaign in 2015 and continued in 2016 by taking action to discover the emerging needs of Finland's increasingly multicultural inhabitants and connecting across cultures in the midst of the escalating conflict.

The holistic description, produced through participatory action research, was created from the rich data collected through observations, documents, interviews, and audio and visual materials; the findings identified the main actors displayed in the model to show the project's structure as a whole. The narrative captured the changes, challenges and the team developments in the nationally targeted response to the global crisis. It is the narrative of the project members including the staff, partners, degree, exchange and asylum seeking students, who united to take action in overcoming these challenges; the result being far greater than the game cards created. JUfR stands united as a community, embracing diversity and learning across cultures and extends its invitation to the local and global community. Each story and experience contributed to build meaningful and empathetic connections and the cultivation of a new inclusive group culture.

## 6.1 Credibility

The research for this narrative report was conducted by two students, coming from different cultural backgrounds and degree programs which provided two different perspectives and a separate recollection of all the accounts. The thick description of the project's setting, participants and the emerging themes helped to establish credibility in the findings ("Believe It or Not:" Evaluating the Credibility of Qualitative Studies 1999). The participant observations were compared with the other forms of data collected. In addition, the responsible course and project lecturer acted as a research supervisor in the process; the other management team members were consulted frequently in informal discussions.

In the qualitative paradigm the assumption is reality is socially constructed and is what the participants perceive it to be (Creswell & Miller 2009, 125). The purpose of this research is not to seek a truth or imply a right or wrong way to perceive the chain of events in the second phase of the JUfR project. This report is a holistic narrative description, viewed through the lenses of the two participatory action researchers.

Tuckman's stages of group development were used as a framework for this description, as it is a well-known, adaptable model which provided structure to the ever changing and uncertain project. Tuckman's model recognizes groups do not start off fully-formed and functioning. His suggestion is a team grows in clearly defined stages, from their creation as groups of individuals into cohesive and task-focused teams (Teamwork Theory n.d.). It is notable that the framework was applied in the context of the multicultural higher education project, responding to a highly uncertain situation, the global refugee crisis.

Using various elements from the four types of data, observations, interviews, documents, and audio and visual materials, a multi-faceted depiction of the changes in both the people and processes emerged. The data collection began in the early stages of planning for Phase Two and the final observations were taken after the completion of the last event. The majority of the data, such as the meeting memos, project proposals, observations and interviews, with the exception of informal data, have been electronically recorded. These documents and materials captured the project's state in real time and provided a way to support the development of present findings.

The researchers returned to the large data collection base for further analysis to conclude Phase Two of the project. Altheide and Johnson (1994) refer to this interaction as "validity-as-reflexive-accounting" with the purpose of making sense of the process. (Creswell & Miller 2009, 125).

Documentation is one of the important ways to raise the credibility of this thesis. The researchers documented the choices and reasons for making those decisions in the various stages of their work (Kananen 2011, 67).

## 6.2 Recommendations

The recommendations section is based upon the research conducted by two students on the management team in Phase Two of the JUfR' project and from the resulting model, constructed from the findings of their research. Further considerations were taken from other members on the team, from students in the cross-cultural management course, as well as the feedback given by players in the two card testing events. The goals which were not reached during Phase Two need to be integrated into Phase Three. The new focus will be on distributing the present content across Finland and supporting the teachers, facilitators and players. In addition, there will be ongoing creation for an extensive knowledge base, which is relevant to particular stakeholders in Finland for business and economic opportunities, as well as for students in upper-secondary schools and higher education. (JUfR 2016b).

### 6.2.1 Card Content

The two card testing events uncovered the need for content development. In addition to the unclear and lengthy English text, the few cards being tested in Arabic and Finnish included many critical errors. The Arabic text flowed in the wrong direction and a few of the Finnish cards had inaccurate translations. Only one or two individuals made and checked the translations, the finished card was then inserted into an online data base to check for errors. The two recommendations for improving this process were to review the existing deck before proceeding to Phase Three and to start the process of translation.

## 6.2.2 The Game Experience

The primary challenge experienced in the playing session, due to the limited amount of time and being in a multilingual environment, was in describing the rules and structure of the game. To actively engage the players, before directly proceeding to the game play, an introduction for the game, followed by one or two ice breaking activities and description of the objects and rules of the game session should be included in the session. Similar to previously created games the rules could be placed in the box or as it was proposed during the testing session, the directions could be printed on the card. Trained facilitators or teachers should be present to aid in the processes and enhance the quality of the discussion, the experience and the learning outcomes. These individuals would have access to the guides, short videos and other resources for support.

A multilingual environment without a common language is a challenge which was introduced during the last stages in the game development. Verbally translating had proved to be a difficult and time consuming task but without it many players would not have been able to participate. In addition to translating the cards into additional languages, photos or other visual elements could be added to the cards. To do so, a simplified version of the game would be created for those who have limited language capabilities or in situations where there is no common language. It was suggested to create a tangible playing piece, similar to a board game, to enhance the element of fun in the game play. Another option to explore would be to create a digital application for the game with a purpose to play individually or online and to network with distant others. Implementing these small changes would still enable the learning and connecting across cultures without the pressure of performing at a level of language which is not a possibility for some

individuals. Additionally, this option would allow for players to participate regardless of the distance between them.

### 6.2.3 Recommendations: A New Model for Development

A new developmental model has been constructed from the same three factors: development, organization and communication. This structure has been redesigned based on the researchers' recommendations. These proposed changes have been adapted from the challenge areas, general feedback and the participatory action research outcomes.

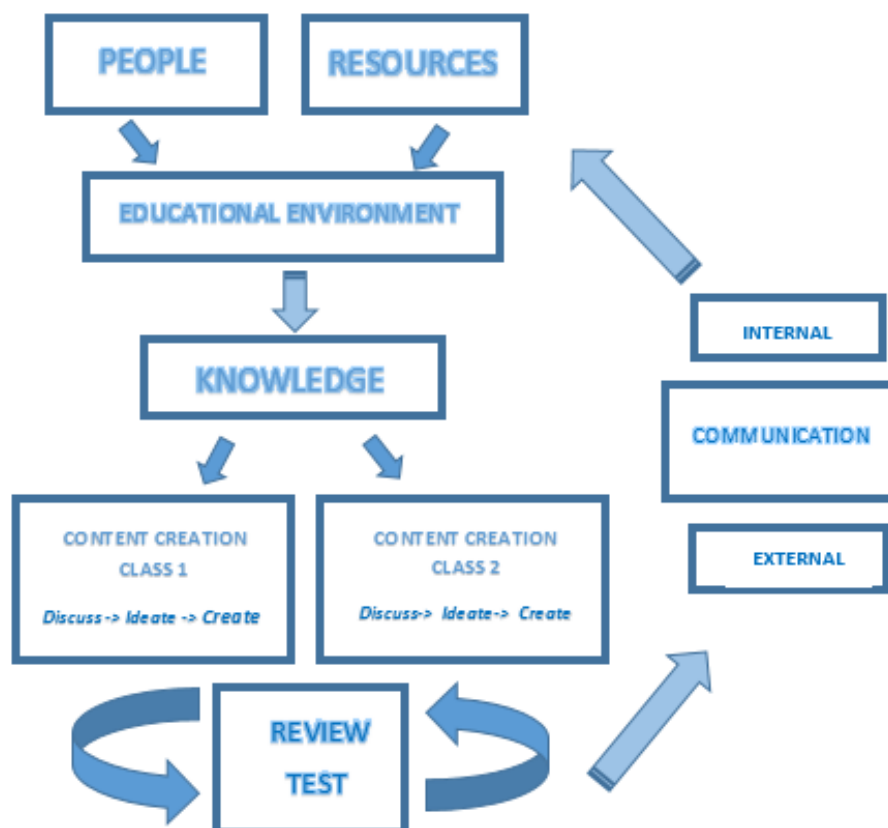


Figure 14. Proposed Developmental Model for Phase Two



### **Redistribution of Factors**

This proposed model indicates the need for improvement in the developmental processes of the content creation, the efficiency of resources and the area of communications. The category which previously included the people, resources and educational environment has now been established separately. The inputs of the people and resources are the main contributors in the educational environment.

The educational learning environment is divided into two separate groups to enhance the diversity in the creation of card content which derives from the cultural knowledge of the participants.

The reviewing and testing is a collaborative activity; the JUfR community sends external invitations to the various stakeholders, target groups and the community, to participate in part of the developmental process.

External communication is built into the developmental processes. National game testing and engaging with the local and global community to help in the developmental process, not only extends the JUfR network but has the potential to further generate ideas and create more partnerships.

The project's foundation was based on the management team's internal communication, making this a leading factor influencing the structure, allocation of resources and the implementation of ideas. The redistribution of factors at the organizational, developmental and communication levels, enhance the diversity of knowledge, the quality of the experience and the overall creation of the product. Dividing the class into two groups would double the topics flowing into the knowledge base, therefore doubling the diversity in the card content. The previous processes of reviewing and testing can be implemented earlier into the routine procedure.

These proposed changes efficiently use the resources of people and time, giving individuals who identified the lack of clarity and uncertainty as a challenge a better idea of the overall processes. Viewing this project as a whole enables the team to identify the strengths, the weaknesses and the areas in need of improvement in the ambiguous and changing environment.

### 6.3 Suggestions for Further Research

The JUfR project will continue in the autumn 2016 semester by incorporating additional research students in addition to the students enrolled in the cross-cultural management course. The suggestions for future research are based on the relevant topics missing, the participants' feedback and the emerging needs in the project. The previous deck focused primarily on the experiences and knowledge from the perspectives of the participants in the classroom. Additional research should be conducted about the other local migrant cultures, what their needs are and how to get them involved in the society. No formal research has been conducted specifically about the Finnish citizens' feelings, thoughts, and needs.

The new research should not be limited to finding card content ideas and activities for the participants; market research needs to be conducted to find the most suitable ways to promote, distribute and provide training resources for this game. Exploring the other initiatives taken in response to the global refugee crisis, as well as exploring other existing game products, can provide further knowledge and insight for the further development of this project and product.

The suggestions for improving the game experience and existing product were discussed during Phase Two. A few of the most elaborate ideas were to create a traditional board for the game and develop an electronic and online application which would allow people to play together both nationally and

globally. These ideas could not be implemented without further research about the creation methods and the new user experience. Additional funding and external collaboration is a necessity; the training tool's potential and possible impact would increase with the implementation of these new ideas.

These research suggestions include opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds and various levels of expertise. Research about the local cultures, content and the game experience can be conducted by students at JAMK University of Applied Sciences. There are opportunities for higher level academics to research the impact of education in the acculturation of migrants. This dynamic project, taking into consideration the complex situation and uncertain environment, provides the perfect opportunity for further research at multiple levels. These suggestions represent a few of the many ideas which could be put to action.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Round 1 Interview Questions

Steven Crawford (responsible lecturer):  
14.04.2016

1. What was your motivation for pursuing a project at JAMK to address the refugee crisis?
2. How did Phase 2 of the project emerge? What are the goals?
3. Since this project is embedded in a course, how would you describe your overall pedagogical philosophy and approach?
4. In your opinion what have been the main challenges encountered so far?
5. Reflecting back, how has the team progressed this far?



6. How did you see your role in the project at the start, and has your role changed? If, so, in what ways?

7. What do you perceive to be the group's strengths; what are the weaknesses?

8. What does the team need to do now to ensure the project's outcomes?

Ronan Browne:  
14.04.2016

1. What was your motivation for pursuing a project at JAMK to address the refugee crisis?

2. What was your motivation for continuing the project after the autumn awareness campaign?

3. How would you describe your role in the project; is it different than you had imagined it to be?

4. How would you describe your relationship with your team members? Have you encountered any particular challenges working with the team?

5. Reflecting back, how has the team progressed thus far?

6. What do you perceive to be the group's strengths; what are the weaknesses?

7. What does the team need to do now to ensure the project's outcomes?

Diane Ruppert:  
14.04.2016

1. Why did you want to join this project and bring your class into the course?

2. When thinking about significant team and course project challenges, what comes to mind?

3. How would you describe your role in the project? How has it changed over time?

4. Reflecting back, how has the team progressed thus far?

5. In your opinion what are the group's strengths; what are the weaknesses?

6. What does the team need to do now to ensure the project's outcomes?

Dr. George Simons:  
17.05.2016

1. What was your motivation for creating a diversophy® game about Finnish and migrant cultures with JAMK United for Refugees?

2. How has the team progressed so far and what are the main challenges from the perspectives of project and team development and the creation of the tangible training tool in the multicultural and educational setting?

3. What do you see as the team and project's strengths and weaknesses?

4. What does the team need to do to ensure successful outcomes for phase 2?

5. How is this diversophy® deck different than any previous games?

6. What is diversophy®'s role in this project? How can diversophy help to connect host and migrant cultures while further facilitating intercultural competences?

7. From the business and developmental perspective what would you like to see happen in phase 3 and in the future for this project and diversophy?

8. What ideas and thoughts do you have for the development of phase 3?

Nghi Dang:

15.05.2016

1. What is your role in the project, how has it changed over time?

2. What have been the biggest challenges for this team and the developments?

3. What do you see are the group's strengths and weaknesses?

Pertti Pönkkä:

14.05.2016

1. Why did you want to join the R&D phase 2 project at JUfR?

2. Do you think your role has changed during the project and if so, in what ways?

3. Why would this be a good opportunity for writing your thesis? What do you intend to learn?

4. What do you perceive as the group's strengths and weaknesses?

5. What do you think are the biggest challenges for this team?

## **Appendix 2: Round 2 Interview Questions**

For Diane Ruppert, Ronan Browne and Steven Crawford

31.05.2016, 01.06.2016

1. How did you and the team deal with the project's uncertainty?
2. Describe for us the process of how the team responded to the challenges in the project?
3. How did you feel working in a diverse team and in a multicultural environment; do you think it influenced the team functioning and outcomes of the project?
4. What are your hopes for phase 3?
5. What could be improved when looking back at phase 2?

**Appendix 3: Project Proposal January Draft:**

**Making Connections across Finland**



-DRAFT January 7, 2016-

Working Project Title- *Making Connections Across Finland*

International Business Degree Programme  
School of Business  
JAMK University of Applied Sciences

Steven Crawford  
Senior Lecturer

Ronan Browne  
Adjunct Lecturer

Dr. George Simon  
George Simons International

Matti Hirsilä  
Programme Head



### Overview

Following the success of the JAMK United for Refugees awareness campaign in the fall of 2015 we wish to continue the momentum through our network of partners to create a tangible training tool in the form of a card game that will serve to build bridges and make personal connections between refugee immigrants and host citizens in Finland. Our target date for implementation of the results is May 2016. The game will be based on the Diversophy®Finland game created in 2011 by two JAMK International Business Degree for IB's strategic partner George Simons International.

### Goals

1. To engage local and outside stakeholders in the development of relevant content for the formation of an intercultural competence training game as a means of addressing pressing social issues in Finland that emerge from the refugee crisis.
2. To create relevant content from the perspectives of Finns and refugees, starting with refugees from Iraq and Syria.
3. To make the content available in English, Finnish, and Arabic.
4. To create a training program to help users understand how to use the materials.
5. To distribute the complete game to municipalities across Finland.

### Specifications

In 2011 two JAMK International Business Degree students created the Diversophy® Finland game for IB's strategic partner George Simons International. The Diversophy series of games is designed to facilitate the development of intercultural competence through the acquisition of cultural knowledge and through interaction with others.

This diversophy training instrument is designed to enhance the cultural competence of your organization and its people. It empowers those who play it to work and communicate productively across differences.

The game takes players from "ethnocentricity" — being centered in one's own culture, the way we find ourselves when we first face diversity — to "diversophy," a state of higher cultural sensitivity and skill.

In their path to cultural competence, players respond to up to five kinds of cards that make up the deck:

1. **diversiSMARTS** (green) cards challenge players' factual knowledge about specific cultural topics.
2. **diversiCHOICE** (yellow) cards put players in inter-cultural situations that challenge them to make decisions about how best to behave or respond.
3. **diversiSHARE** (blue) cards enhance communication and teambuilding skills. They encourage discussion by asking players to share something about themselves, their opinions and feelings. They underline the message that we are all different, even in our own cultural



groups, and that we can continue to learn from each other.

4. **diversiRISK** (red) cards put the players in situations that are beyond their control. Some situations are “positive” (+) and some “negative” (—). These cards allow players to experience, in a non-threatening way, how differences can create unexpected benefits or costs.
5. **diversiGUIDE** (white) cards offer wisdom from different cultures and recommendations that encourage the players to look for opportunities to apply it in their work or life.

The Diversophy Finland game features approximately 250 cards in the five card categories.

For the *Making Connections Across Finland* game we plan to review the Diversophy Finland cards and identify cards that seem to be relevant to the current refugee crisis situation. New cards can be created as needed. For this version of the game we aim at 150 Finland cards.

With our outside partners and working directly with local refugees and immigrants, we plan to initially generate approximately 50 cards each for Iraqi culture and Syrian culture, respectively, and we plan to do so by involving immigrants themselves as cultural informants.

The cards will feature questions and answers in English, Finnish and Arabic.

The game can be played by Finns alone as desired in order to advance their knowledge about the Iraqi and Syrian cultures.

The game can be played by refugees and immigrants alone in order to advance their knowledge about the Finnish culture.

*Most ideally, the game can be played at the same time by Finns and refugees/immigrants in order to advance their knowledge of each others culture and, most ideally, to make personal and lasting connections between Finns and the immigrant communities.*

#### Milestones (all dates are 2016)

1. (January). Form and complete the project management team to include two JAMK lecturers, our strategic partner George Simons International, two JAMK IB thesis students, and other inside and outside partners and collaborators including local and national NGOs.
2. (February). Organize the base of the project in the the Spring 2016 course Cross-cultural Management.
3. (February). Organize
4. (January-February). Organize refugee volunteers to help develop and test the product.
5. (February-March). Identify relevant cards from the current Diversophy Finland deck and create new and possibly more relevant cards.
6. (February-April). In collaboration with partners, develop card sets initially for Iraqi and Syrian cultures.
7. (May). All cards should finalized and tested by both host and immigrant participants.
8. (May 18). All product developmental activities for this iteration of game development will be concluded and the product should be available for printing and distribution.



9. (May 18). Training (train-the-trainer) materials should be completed.
10. After June 1, we plan to either or both distribute copies of the game to selected municipalities, and to develop a means to support users through training and support activities.

#### Budget

TBA

#### Ownership

The *Making Connections Across Finland* game is a collaboration of JAMK University of Applied Sciences and George Simons International. George Simons reserves the right to use any content created in this project in other Diversophy games. Funding for this project is primarily targeted at covering developmental, production and delivery costs incurred by George Simons International and JAMK University of Applied Sciences. The project is visualized as a “not-for-profit” initiative whose primary goals and objectives are to create educational opportunities for JAMK students and refugees, and to address compelling social issues in Finland pertaining to the current refugee crisis.

## Appendix 4: Project Proposal May Draft:

### Our Future Together Proposal



JYVÄSKYLÄN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU  
JAMK UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

#### *Our Future Together: Learning Across Cultures*

(updated) May 4, 2016

International Business Degree Programme  
School of Business  
JAMK University of Applied Sciences

*We celebrate the present and future human diversity within Finland. We embrace interpersonal interaction and dialogue through game play as a means to develop empathy between different peoples residing in Finland. By different, we mean all people and all ethnicities in Finland, including ethnic Finns and Swedish-Finns, Roma, Sami, and also past, present and future immigrants and their families, as well as those who are visiting from outside of Finland as students or professionals.*





### Background: From Awareness Campaign to a Research and Development Project

In fall 2015 the student project JAMK United for Refugees (JUR) executed a very successful campus-wide awareness campaign that brought many local stakeholders together, including faculty and staff, foreign and Finnish students, local immigrants and asylum seekers of diverse origins, local NGOs, and notable academics, education executives and global interculturalists. (On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/jamkunitiedforrefugees/>)

A video, *Global Crisis, Local Response*, documents the JUR project activities last fall: <https://vimeo.com/154578003>

In 2016 we continue our momentum by transitioning to a research and development mode, with the aim of producing tangible training tools in the form of card-based games that feature cultural knowledge researched and compiled by students, teachers, and other professionals, or that are suggested by game participants and fact-checked by our project team.

Our research conducted in 2015 showed that there is a strong need in Finland to create enduring empathetic connections between members of distinct cultural and ethnic groups across Finland. The JUR team now responds to this need by creating constructive educational activities to foster the development of intercultural competence and foster an inclusive national identity. Recent product testing confirms that playing our game in small groups with effective facilitation helps to create personal connections, thus building cultural bridges between refugees, immigrants, visitors, foreign students and host citizens in Finland.

The JUR project is embedded in a Cross-cultural Management course in the International Business Degree Programme at JAMK. We target fall 2016 for the implementation of the project results across Finland. The game is built on diversophy@ Finland game content compiled in 2011 by two JAMK International Business Degree thesis students with JAMK's strategic partner George Simons International as assignor and co-supervisor: (<http://diversophy.com/collections/europe/products/finland>).

### The Game Experience

The diversophy@ series of training games are designed to facilitate the development of intercultural competence through the sharing of cultural knowledge and through interpersonal interaction with distinct others. It empowers those who play it to work and communicate productively across differences. The game takes players from "ethnocentricity" — being centered in one's own culture, the way we find ourselves when we first face diversity — to "diversophy," a state of higher cultural sensitivity and skill.

In their path to improved cultural competence, players respond to five types of cards that make up the deck:

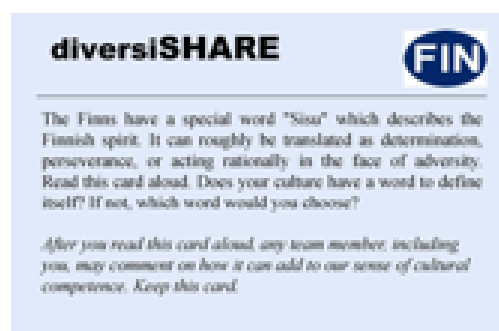
**diversiSMARTS** (green) cards challenge players' factual knowledge about specific cultural topics.

**diversiCHOICE** (yellow) cards put players in intercultural situations that challenge them to make decisions about how best to behave or respond.

**diversiSHARE** (blue) cards enhance communication and teambuilding skills. They encourage discussion by asking players to share something about themselves, their opinions and feelings. They underline the message that we are all different, even in our own cultural groups, and that we can continue to learn from each other.

**diversiRISK** (red) cards put the players in situations that are beyond their control. Some situations are "positive" (+) and some "negative" (—). These cards allow players to experience, in a non-threatening way, how differences can create unexpected benefits or costs.

**diversiGUIDE** (white) cards offer wisdom from different cultures and recommendations that encourage the players to look for opportunities to apply it in their work or life.



Example SHARE card from the 2011 diversity@Finland game.

Our new games feature carefully researched content about various cultures represented in Finland. We plan to offer game content in English, Finnish and Arabic.

At this date the JUR team has developed over 300 cards. The represents the base from which our national multicultural game emerges and which will in the future form a much larger knowledge base for future game development that will target other needs in Finland, e.g., youth culture, middle and high schools, health care, immigrant employment and **entrepreneurism**.

Generating constructive interaction between **players** benefits from the support of a facilitator who has learned how to guide players through the game and can lead a debriefing session to help players to reflect on their experience, identify "take **aways**," and **create** sustainable relationships that will continue long after the play session has ended.

The game can be played by Finns alone as desired in order to advance their knowledge about non-ethnic Finnish cultures present in Finland.

The game can be played by refugees and immigrants alone in order to advance their knowledge about Finnish culture.

*Most ideally, the game can be played at the same time by Finns and refugees/immigrants in order to acquire knowledge about each other's culture and to make personal and lasting connections between Finns and members of the immigrant communities.*

#### Project operational objectives (01.05.16)

1. To continue, on an ongoing basis, the development of an extensive knowledge base that is relevant to various stakeholders in Finland.
2. To make content available in English, Finnish, and Arabic.
3. To create training resources to help facilitate game play in the form of a video-based training resource and a written guide.
4. To promote the use of the product across Finland and to provide training and facilitation support in the field as requested.
5. To offer students opportunities for personal and professional growth, including educational opportunities in the form of course credits, project study credits, and thesis projects.
6. To engage with other global actors in the area of multicultural development.

#### Further Information

Steven L. Crawford (responsible teacher for the JUR project)  
Senior Lecturer, Cross-cultural Management  
School of Business  
JAMK University of Applied Sciences  
Rajakatu 35, 40200 Jyväskylä, Finland  
(+358 40 525 9912)

#### JAMK United for Refugees:

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/jamkunitedforrefugees/?fref=ts>

#### George Simons International/diversophy®

<http://diversophy.com/pages/about-us>

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Dr. George Simons ([diversophy@gmail.com](mailto:diversophy@gmail.com))

#### JAMK Teachers involved in the project

Steven Crawford ([steven.crawford@jamk.fi](mailto:steven.crawford@jamk.fi))

Diane Ruppert ([diane.ruppert@jamk.fi](mailto:diane.ruppert@jamk.fi))

Ronan Browne, Adjunct Lecturer ([ronan@fullfocus.fi](mailto:ronan@fullfocus.fi))

Matti Hirsilä, Head of International Business Degree Programme ([Matti.Hirsila@jamk.fi](mailto:Matti.Hirsila@jamk.fi))