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Bachelor of Social Services  
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**EXPERIENCES FROM STREET MEDIATION OF CHILDREN AND  
YOUNGSTERS**

**Street Mediation in Helsinki**



## ABSTRACT

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Experiences from street mediation of children and youngsters

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This thesis is research-oriented done in cooperation with Aseman Lapset ry in Helsinki, Finland. The thesis is based on the data gathered from the Helsinki city mediation office voluntary mediators and Aseman Lapset mediation workers.

This thesis is a study on the cooperation of Aseman Lapset ry and Helsinki city mediation office in the mediation process of children and youngsters in Helsinki. The thesis seeks to find out the viewpoints and experiences from street mediation and to analyse the model, to understand and provide knowledge of the importance of the pilot project.

The thesis also focuses to look at the usefulness of the pilot project, to investigate the strengths and weaknesses. Also, to analyse the benefits, impact and to explain the necessity of the pilot project and provide the required information to the pilot project sponsors. Qualitative research method was used in the data collection.

Research permit was obtained from Helsinki city social service and health care division. Four voluntary mediators and three mediators of Aseman Lapset ry were interviewed with the use of an audio recorder and a questionnaire. To get their viewpoints and experience of their job, the data was later analysed using thematic content analysis by coding for themes and hypothesis that answers the research questions and objectives.

The findings show that street mediation shapes the children. That it has a positive impact and benefit on the children and youngsters plus the entire city. The thesis respondents agree that the street mediation model is the best way to do mediation involving children and youngsters. The findings show that street mediation has a positive contribution to the wellbeing of the society of Helsinki. All respondents said there is additional value in this type of mediation model due to the combination of voluntary mediators and street mediators.

Keywords: Mediation, Restorative justice, Conflict, Dialogue, Youngsters, Street mediator.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis study analyses the pilot project of street mediation of children and youngsters done by Aseman Lapset ry and Helsinki city mediation office. The thesis focuses on the personal experiences of the voluntary mediators of Helsinki city mediation office and the street mediators and professionals working with children and youngsters in Aseman Lapset ry. The initiative was initiated during a practical training period with Aseman Lapset ry. I did experience one of their mediation case which was a great inspiring experience.

This ignited the motivation to study their street mediation work done with youngsters in Helsinki. During the practical training time in Aseman Lapset ry, many of these types of street mediation cases were mediated. This personal exposure and experience created the motivation and interest to carry on this research study about this type of mediation work.

### 1.1 The aim and objectives of the thesis

The aim of this thesis is to investigate and document the pilot project street mediation model of Aseman Lapset ry and Helsinki city mediation office. The thesis is based on the interviewees' experience and the information they provide. Documentation of the model does not exist, it is only written in the funding applications, but they are not public. The thesis is research oriented to investigate and understand the benefits, strengths, and impacts of street mediation from the perspective of the free volunteer mediators and street mediators of Aseman Lapset ry.

The thesis will bring to light what aspect of the street mediation process that has been working well and those aspects that have not. This thesis aims to reveal findings that will help the professionals to have a holistic view of their job. Also, they the thesis aim to help the mediators understand the things they can change to improve the quality of their mediation work.

This thesis is important to the work life partner Aseman Lapset ry as they need the finding for justifications to changes and implement the development of their work. The working life partner Asemn Lapset ry needs the discovery of this thesis to defend their application for funds to continue the pilot project.

## 1.2 The Fundamental issues

The street Mediation model is used in cases involving children and youngsters only when there are two parties involved. Speeding, drug, and abuse cannot be mediated since there is only one participant. When there is no injured party some action can be against the Law but not against another person so cannot be mediated. The additional value that the Street mediator brings to the Mediation process is their knowledge about the Youth as a phase in a person's life. Street mediators have the possibility to work holistically and for a longer period with the youngsters. (Nikula 2014.)

## 1.3 The subject matter and its current significance

This theme and topic is very much current in today social work in anti-oppressive work. When it is about the anti-oppressive practice in social work context as a social worker. When working with service user's social workers should recognize in a frame of time the forms of oppression and the extent of oppression. (Leavitt, 2010.)

This helps in increasing and improving the wellbeing of the youngsters. Mediation promotes dialogue and restoring justice in our societies today. During the mediation Minor offense and crimes are mediated. This makes the youngster responsible for their actor. Mediation also teaches youngsters to learn after having committed a crime to face the person who suffered the harm. (Aseman Lapset ry 2018.)

The traditional youth work still has its values, but it is quickly going out of place in our today society since youths are more mobile and active in social media. There is more freedom of movement today and increasing hangout in city center public spaces, shopping malls by youngsters. Today Youngsters can travel by bus and metro much more than 10-20 years ago. Also, there will be coming a metro that will be Circulating from Espoo to Helsinki which youths will use to travel easily. (Aseman Lapset ry 2018.)

Therefore, youth workers should develop new models of youth work and to try out reach approach within different localities. Youth workers should find new working methods that will meet the new demands of youth work. There is a need for a new system that will encounter and reach youth as the society is fast changing in many ways. Social workers should not only be waiting and aiming to reach youngsters in traditional youth houses. Hence going to the street and meeting the youngsters in actions is a new way forward. (Aseman Lapset ry 2018.)

There are conflicts and crimes occurring within these action grounds and hanging out places of the youngster. These conflicts can quickly be resolved or prevented by the presence of the streets mediators. By this way, youngsters that have no contact with any traditional youth house will not be excluded from youth social services and will be reached. (Aseman lapset ry 2018.)

Youth workers and other social workers should always be updating and changing their approach and methods to reach out to their services user. To make sure, the most vulnerable and oppressed people in the society can be reached and their voices heard. This pilot project street mediation is meeting the youngsters in actions of conflicts on the streets and shopping malls in Kamppi Helsinki and give quick intervention. (Aseman lapset ry 2018.)

## 1.4 Definition of key Concept

This thesis is focused on the following key concept mediation, youngsters, retro-active Justice, dialogue, conflict and street mediator

### **Street mediator**

These are the mediators from Aseman Laspset ry. They can be either a youth worker or other social workers active in the pilot project street mediation with children and youngsters in Helsinki. (Aseman Lapset ry 2018.)

### **Mediation**

Mediation is a process of solving dispute whereby an intermediary helps parties in conflicts to face each other to jointly find solutions to resolve their dispute. It starts and ends with those parties involved cared about. Mediation process usually has a sequence that goes very differently with every case but still with some recognizable phases. (Beer & Packard, 2012.) The parties involved in mediation can be a person, group of persons or a nation. Regarding the dispute usually, the parties can have a specific incident or even a disagreement that brought them to mediation. Literally, the intermediary is a person who goes between parties in a conflict with impartiality and detachment from the outcome such person is called a mediator. (Beer & Packard, 2012,1.)

Mediation works best when both parties realize that keeping their conflict may have heavy consequences. This makes mediation a free self-initiated issue meaning it cannot be forced on any party. Mediation call comes only when both parties realize that continuing their conflict may have costly consequences. Only then that both parties will genuinely want to end the conflict and call for dialogue. The First step to mediation call is the recognition of conflict consequences. When there are no heavy consequences parties in dispute will keep the conflict going

on. When someone is bent on keeping a conflict going on this means, even the most obvious solutions are likely not to work. (Beer & Packard 2012,1.)

### **Youngster**

In this thesis, the word youngster is used to describe and refer to minors who are less than 18 years old. Basically, minors who are still living under the guardian of their parents. (Aseman Lapset ry 2018.)

### **Restorative Justice**

Restorative justice is a victim-centered response to crime. This is a form of justice that is intended and seeks to replace our existing systems of punitive justice. It's a system of justice which focuses on the rehabilitation of offenders through reconciliation with victims. Restorative justice is a method to justice in which the response to a crime is dealt by a mediation between the victim and the offender. Usually, not necessarily by the court, the goal of restorative justice is aimed to satisfy all participants. (Johnstone & Van Ness 2007,1-3.)

### **Conflict**

Conflict is when there are serious disagreement and argument about important matters between two parties. When there are dispute and the presence of incompatibility. If two people or groups are in conflict, they have grave disagreement or argument and have not yet reached an agreement. Being in a conflict can be confusing but in reality, those parties in conflict do have some control over their conflict. (Beer & Packard 2012,81-83.)

### **Dialogue**

Dialogue is one of the principal tool within the larger definition of peacebuilding. The goal of Dialogue is to develop joint methods to conflict resolution, as well as

recover relations. To create understanding and build trust between individuals or groups in conflict. (Umbreit 2001.)

### 1.5 Thesis Research Questions

The research questions are focused on the key issues and elements around the pilot project of Aseman Lapset ry and Helsinki mediation office. Five main research questions were formulated to target all aspect of the street mediation model.

The research questions were as follows:

1. What are the strengths and weakness of street mediation?
2. What are the impacts of this type of street mediation?
3. What are the benefits and who benefit from this street mediation?
4. What type of skills are required in mediation?
5. What benefit does the street mediators bring in the mediation process?

## 2 THEORITICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter covers the history of mediation in Finland. It is important to look at the history of mediation in Finland to get a clear picture of how it has been developing over the years. This chapter also includes some mediation types and forms that are usually connected with children and youngsters. Describing these mediation types and settings in this chapter is intended to give more background information about the practice in Finland. Especially to show the interconnected nature within these types and setting of mediation.

### 2.1 Mediation history in Finland

According to Juhani Iivari, (2000), the concept and idea of mediation came to Finland during the 1970s and 1980s. When the criminal justice system was reformed. This was because some social work professionals and researchers started to question the punishment-based systems that were used, to maintain the norms in society and to control crimes. During this period people in Finland became aware of the interpretation of criminal offenses as conflict owned by the victim and offender as explained by Nils Christie (Iivari, 2000).

This sparked the search for alternative ideas and approach to deal with crimes focused on conflict resolution. Hence the practice of mediation experimented in Finland during the early 1980s. By the mid-1990s the practice of mediation has expanded in Finland to many cities and municipalities. At first, the mediation practiced in Finland was done solely by community supervision, with the little role played by criminal justice institutions. (Iivari 2000.)

Later, mediation in Finland was done through the Church's criminal work. Vantaa city started mediation as a research project, in the Academy of Finland in 1983 and established itself to Vantaa's social work in 1986.

In Finland, mediation was later applied to the community work to settle disputes, between schoolchildren, neighbors' disputes and family matters. (Flinck 2013,15.)

Today, mediation of crimes and disputes are legally regulated, supervised and based on volunteering. It's a structured procedure that relies on human rights and fundamental rights and the restorative or in other words corrective justice values and principles. The Act on the Mediation of Criminal Matters and Certain Disputes (The Mediation Act) came into effect in 2006. (Flinck 2013,15-16.)

## 2.2 Mediation process

The procedure of mediation usually involves three phases each of which are very important to the overall results and achievements. Each of the phases has its purpose, its component mission or activities and their dos and don'ts all these is designed to prevent difficulties and drawbacks during the mediation course. (Umbreit 2000,35.)

During mediation, the process usually starts with the intake phase when the case is obtained from either the police, security, other institution or also by the parties involved in the argument or conflict. This phase determines the case selection. After this phase, the process moves to the preparation phase. During this phase, the mediators get in contact with both parties by phone and later arrange two separate private meetings with both parties. This phase is to discuss or follow up regarding the mediation case letter received by the mediators. This is also the decision phase if both parties are willing to go on with mediation. (Umbreit 2000,40-46.)

When phase two is completed and after all the background preparation work is concluded, the mediators then initiate the final phase. The actual mediation meeting bringing together both parties to meet face to face on a safe platform to talk

about what happened. How it has affected their lives and to get answers to their questions and express their feelings. By the end of this phase, most mediation cases usually arrived an ending decision agreement. At this point, the idea of follow up meeting is also introduced to the parties in case they may need to follow up. (Umbreit 2000,47-57.)

The Mediation process is never about finding the guilty nor finding out the absolute truth. Or who is right and who is wrong, the mediation process allows for room to consider the parties' different cultural backgrounds and how it affects the process. On occasion, the mediator can use the help of an expert-assistant and the parties involved can get the help of a legal advisor. The parties can always have a supporting person present. (Finnish forum for mediation 2017.)

According to the assistant mediation officer of Helsinki city, it is important to get all those involved in the conflict present during the mediation. This will allow for all parties to also work through the larger social effects of their conflict. This fully gets the parties active in the process of finding the solution for their problem. The mediator is just a facilitator and not the one finding the solution but just guiding and supporting those involved find a way to resolve their problem.

Mediation is a learning process, it is an effective instrument for the entire conflict cycle, starting from the prevention of a conflict to its control and resolution. Permanent solutions to conflicts can only be achieved by addressing the underlying political, economic and social problems. (foreign ministry of Finland 2017.)

The mediator tries during the mediation to create dialogue and trust between all parties involved. The mediator also establishes peaceful communication and build a bridge between all parties. During the mediation, the mediator listens and allow both parties in the situation to give their narratives without any interruption. As the mediation process progresses, new confidential separate meetings can later be arranged. (Helsinki city mediation office 2018.)

This can be important when there has been too much feeling during the common meeting and the mediation process is affected by feelings of those involved. During the mediation process, the parties can decide to stop when a solution has been reached. The parties can further agree and sign for follow up of the process. (Finnish forum for mediation 2017.)

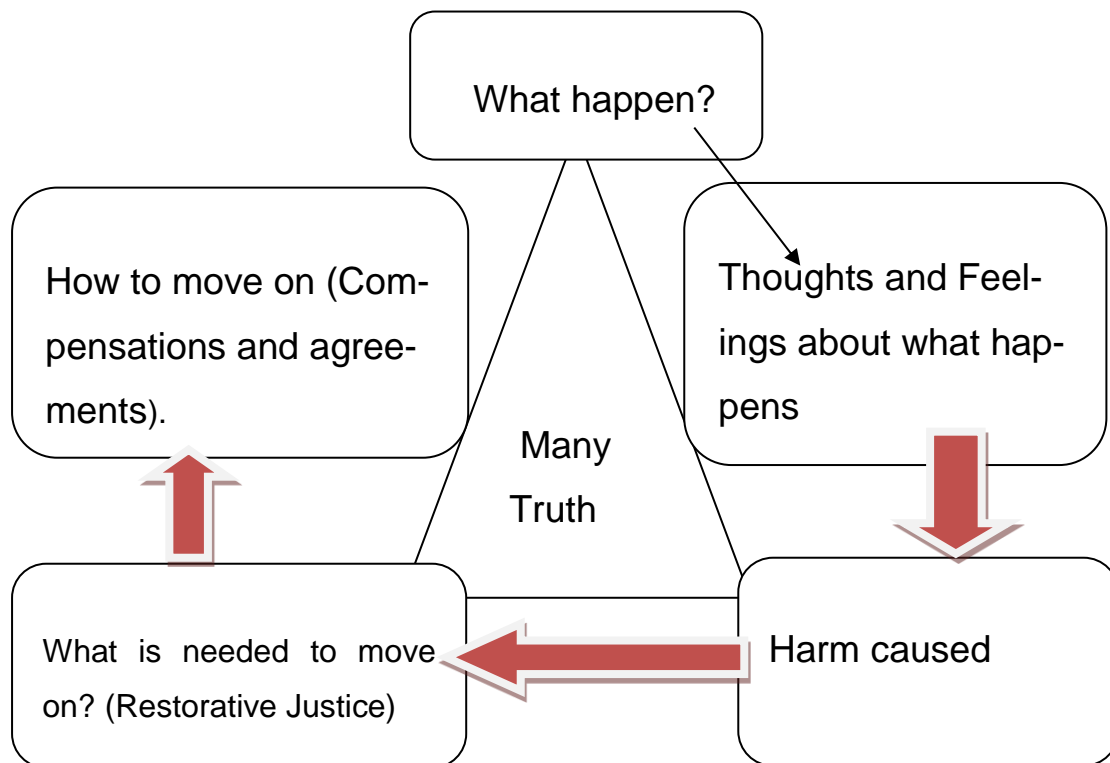


Figure F1 Mediation Process (Aseman Lapset ry 2018).

### 2.3 Mediation Forms and Context

This thesis briefly covers some few forms and context of mediation work, not all the forms and context of mediation.

#### **School mediation**

Since Finnish law on basic education says that a child has the right to a safe studying environment, Schools are compelled with the duty to stop violence and bullying. As a result, the Finnish Red Cross started a peer mediation project in 2000 to make sure that the study environments are very conducive for students. But still every day in school premises the children sometimes are caught up in an argument or a fight with other kids. In some case, the situation can just be a verbal exchange of words that are very abusive. It's always very central that all those studying in schools should feel safe and relaxed. Unfortunately, this reality cannot be achieved when there is a fight occurring among the school children with no mediators to restore peace. So, it is very important that there is mediation done in schools to support within the school. (Finnish mediation forum 2018.)

### **Mediation in crime and civil cases**

The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs lead, directs and monitors nationally criminal and civil mediations in Finland (1015 / 2005.5§). According to the Rules of procedure of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, the department for well-being and health promotion is responsible for the tasks of mediation. The state pays service providers compensation for the costs. (National Institute of health and welfare 2018.)

The Advisory Board for the mediation of Criminal Matters set up by the cabinet for three years at a time. They work under the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs for guidance and monitoring. The duties of the Advisory Board are set out in the Decree (267/2006). (National Institute of health and welfare 2018.)

According to the Mediation Act (1015/2005), the Regional Administrative Agencies are obliged to arrange mediation activities. So that the service is available and with proper implementation in all parts of the region. They also provide for the organization of supplementary training for people involved in mediation activities nationwide and regionally. (National Institute of health and welfare 2018.)

This type of mediation only takes place by the free will of two voluntary parties. Mediation in criminal cases brings the victim and the offender together in a safe confidential platform with a facilitator who is impartial to discuss the psychological and material harm inflicted on the victim by the offence and to guide both parties find a mutual solution.

These cases are usually referred to the mediation office by either the police, the victim, or the offender. If at the end both parties conclude on an agreement, the mediator drafts the agreement document for the cases with lesser crimes. The mediation agreement may result in discontinuance of criminal proceedings. The agreement can also at a later stage lead to non-prosecution, waiving of a sentence or to a more lenient punishment if the case went through criminal prosecution. (Finnish Ministry of Justice 2018.)

### **Court Mediation**

Court mediation is very confidential; this means that the mediator cannot disclose any information about the mediation. The mediation takes place in a district court but is also possible to conduct mediation on cases that have been taken to the court of appeal involving civil and petitionary cases. This mediation is an alternative to a trial in which the mediator is like a judge of the court. The goal of the mediator is to support the parties in resolving their dispute in a way that pleases both the parties. This type of mediation is intended to serve the needs of the parties as the settlement is not thus directly based on the application of the law. (Finnish Ministry of Justice 2018.)

### **International or Peace Mediation**

International or Peace mediation is conceptualized generally as a set of activities of a third party helping two or more disputants prevent, manage and resolve or transform conflicts with the consent of the parties. This is in line with the United Nations (2012) definition of mediation. The United Nations charter recognizes

mediation as a significant way for peaceful settlement of clashes and wars. International mediation has demonstrated to be an effective apparatus to address both inter-State and intra-State conflicts. The United Nations Handbook on the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes between States (1992), further established knowledge of mediation of disputes between States and stays a valuable means. (United Nations 2012.)

With the growing threat in world peace and growing conflicts around the world, international mediation has become more often a way out to seek lasting solutions to those arising international disputes that may escalate into wars. International mediation is not completely different from other types of mediation just that it is often usually used in international settings. (Finnish Foreign Ministry 2018.)

Looking at the world today with growing conflicts and political tensions between countries and within political leaders in Countries. Most time the peace process is found by mediators who act as facilitators. They get both parties be it countries or opposition leaders within a country to talk. This type of mediation is very vital in our today world. Mediation and dialogue are now recognized as the most effective ways of preventing, managing and resolving violent conflicts. Peace is a question of will all conflicts can be settled, and there are no excuses for allowing them to become eternal. (CMI Finland 2017.)

### **Street Mediation**

As Helsinki is fast becoming dense with youngsters. So, there is an increase in activities and hanging around of youngsters around the city center of Helsinki. This young population of Helsinki city has very high mobility rate today more than those ten years ago. So, their movement from one community to another is more and easy. They interact with their friends and youngsters of different communities as they move around and sometimes there is a problem among these youngsters that can result in a crime as they get involved in an argument or fight. (Aseman Lapset ry 2018.)

Also, during their time in school during the day these youngsters get into trouble with other kids in school which sometimes end up as a crime. Due to the easy mobility nature of these kids playing in public parks and filling up space in shopping malls within Kamppi and other areas of the city, they occasionally cause problems with the shop owners. When a youngster is caught up or involved in such a situation and a police crime reported or sometimes they are reported to the local security guards and in most case, the problems end up at mediation. (Aseman Lapset ry 2018.)

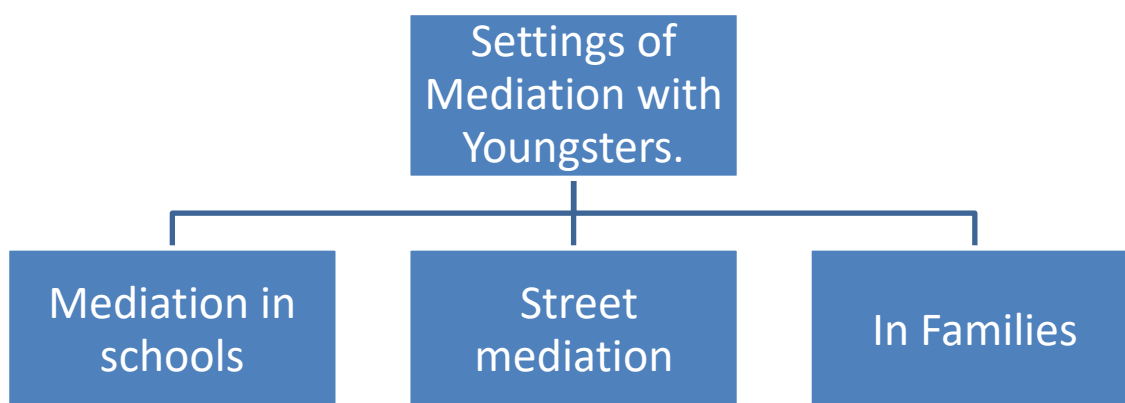


Figure F2 Settings of mediation with children and youngsters.

### 3 ASEMAN LAPSET RY AND STREET MEDIATION

#### 3.1 History of Aseman Lapset ry

This organization was founded in 1990. because many youths started rooming around the central station in Helsinki. this spark the initiative and the beginning of outreach work at the Helsinki railway station. later jeep cafe was open in 1992. then comes the first walkers' café established in 1994 and deployed nationwide. other activities like friends' program started in 2006. then walkers bus later started as a project in 2008 and got permanent funding in 2014. (Aseman lapset ry 2018.)

Outreach Youth work project started in 2013, the project on Street Violence started in 2014. Aseman Lapset is politically and religiously uncommitted Nationwide Non- Profit. Mostly sponsored by STEA, Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organizations. Their idea and the key value is, to create a personal and living interaction between the adults and the Young. (Aseman Lapset ry 2018.)

The primary target group is children and Youngsters under 18. Also, families and other networks. Aseman Lapset ry has 30 hired employees and a Budget of approx. 2M€/year. (Aseman Lapset ry 2018.)

The provision of the services of youth work for youngsters in European Union differs dependent on the Member State. But youth work is not a new concept in the EU and the scenery of youth work continues to advance. Even though youth work has more credit and prominence today in contrast to previous years, there is still much to be done. As there is a growing need for more new model youth work and to recognize youth work for the massive contribution and value it has in the lives of young people around the world. (Allison et al. 2014.)

According to Allison et al (2014), when the facts are taking into consideration, that youth work and Youth workers are currently scarce in relation to the massive

continues need of the service of Youth work in European Union. So, therefore, associations like Aseman Lapset ry fits in the right place at the right time. As there are many demands and fast-growing need for youth work in Helsinki which is more populated by youths.

The combination of an increasing demand for youth work activities and the growing expectations of youth work to deliver successful outcomes. Evidence of that success means that organizations providing youth work need to find a balance between meeting the priorities set out in policies and funding mechanisms. With an ever-increasing trend for youth work practice which is more target-group based, addressing specific issues and to be intervention based. That is responding to the individual, community needs and interests of youngsters. This type of work was started by Aseman Lapset ry in Helsinki 28 years ago. Today they are still on the vision to reach youths in different areas and settings in Helsinki and now even nationwide. (Aseman Lapset ry 2018.)

### 3.2 Aseman Lapset ry Street mediation model

The need to intervene in the conflicts and crimes involving youngsters was noticed during the first phase of Walkers Bus-project. During the Walkers bus activities, the youth workers of Aseman Lapset ry get exposed to many conflicts and crimes involving minors within Helsinki. The Street Mediation model was benchmarked from Norwegian Red Cross. In 2012 some staffs of Aseman Lapset accompanied by the Head of the preventive unit of the Helsinki Police and a Security Expert from Kamppi shopping Centre visited Oslo to learn about the model. (Nikula, 2014.)

Later, the Norwegian model of street mediation was adapted to the Finnish context and experimented. In close cooperation with Kamppi shopping Centre, security officials and Police as a part of other activities of Aseman Lapset. After which the funding for developing Street Mediation was applied and granted for 2015-

2017. Further funding to expand the model nationwide and making it part of the services of the Mediation offices was granted for 2018-2019. (Nikula 2014.)

With the mediation model of Aseman Lapset ry Minor offense or crimes are mediated with the youngster playing an active role. This makes the Youngster a responsible actor after having committed a crime a chance to face the person who suffered the harm. The offense is dealt rapidly after the act. Helps the families to deal with the situation. The relevant participants are taken into the process and/or informed about the case. (Aseman Lapset ry 2018.)

The voice and the viewpoint of the Youngster are heard and emphasized. The Youngsters are made active and aware of their own neighbourhood. The guardian is also part of the street mediation they are usually contacted before the start of the process. Children should not be alone in some big decisions such as decisions regarding schooling and career opportunities (Puroila, 2011, 43-45).

These guardians end up learning something new about the behaviour and problematic issues concerning the youngster. This model of street mediation work brings different professional to work together increasing efficiency and reduce redundant work. (Aseman Lapset ry 2018.)

Typical life crises affect numerous families and there is a noticeable need to offer more scale backing to the parents to improve the wellbeing and growing up the children and young adults. (Vanhanen & Arjovuo, 2014.)

Also, according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that a child's development is best achieved in a family environment and that the family has the right to receive the necessary protection and assistance in the performance of its responsibilities in society. According to the Convention, parents have the primary responsibility for the child, and the best interests of the child will be their basic concern. (UN 1989, Article 18.)

### 3.3 Aseman Lapset ry street mediation process

Figure F3 below illustrate this mediation model clearly. The street mediation model practice by Aseman Lapset ry has evolved over the years from older practice as shown also by figure F2. In most of the case, in the beginning, the initiatives come mostly straight from the Shop-owners, Shopping Centre / Security officials and Police. The mediation is then carried out mostly by Street mediators and Mediators from mediation Office. Social welfare officials are later informed about the process and the outcome. But nowadays most of the initiatives come from the Mediation Office, Usually the Helsinki city mediation office receive the mediation cases and search for mediators.

Depending on the nature of the case, if the case is involving youngsters and children they refer the case to the pilot project street mediation with Aseman Lapset. some of the cases come from the Police and Schools. The Mediation is carried out just as any Mediation. It is usually carried out by a pair consisting of a Street mediator and a voluntary mediator. Sometimes two Street mediators can act as a pair If that is seen beneficial for the process. (Nikula,2014.)

### 3.4 After the mediation request initiative

Both participants and their guardians are contacted for the process they are meet separately. According to Hartikaine & Hännikäinen (2014), often the 15 years old adolescent could need support from the adult to make a responsible decision (Hartikaine & Hännikäinen 2014,30-32) this is why it is important the parents and other guardians are invited during the mediation. If there are needs arising from youngsters, guardians or if there is some concern related to the people involved.

The Mediation meeting(s) is done according to the same restorative process as on any other Mediation. After the mediation process is concluded there can be follow up If needed. Meeting the participants, example arranging conflict work-

shops for the Youngsters. Arranging other services that may help the youngsters deal with some other issues and challenges they are having in their life. Arrangements of compensation are made, and officials are informed about the resolutions and agreements of the mediation. (Nikula, 2014.)

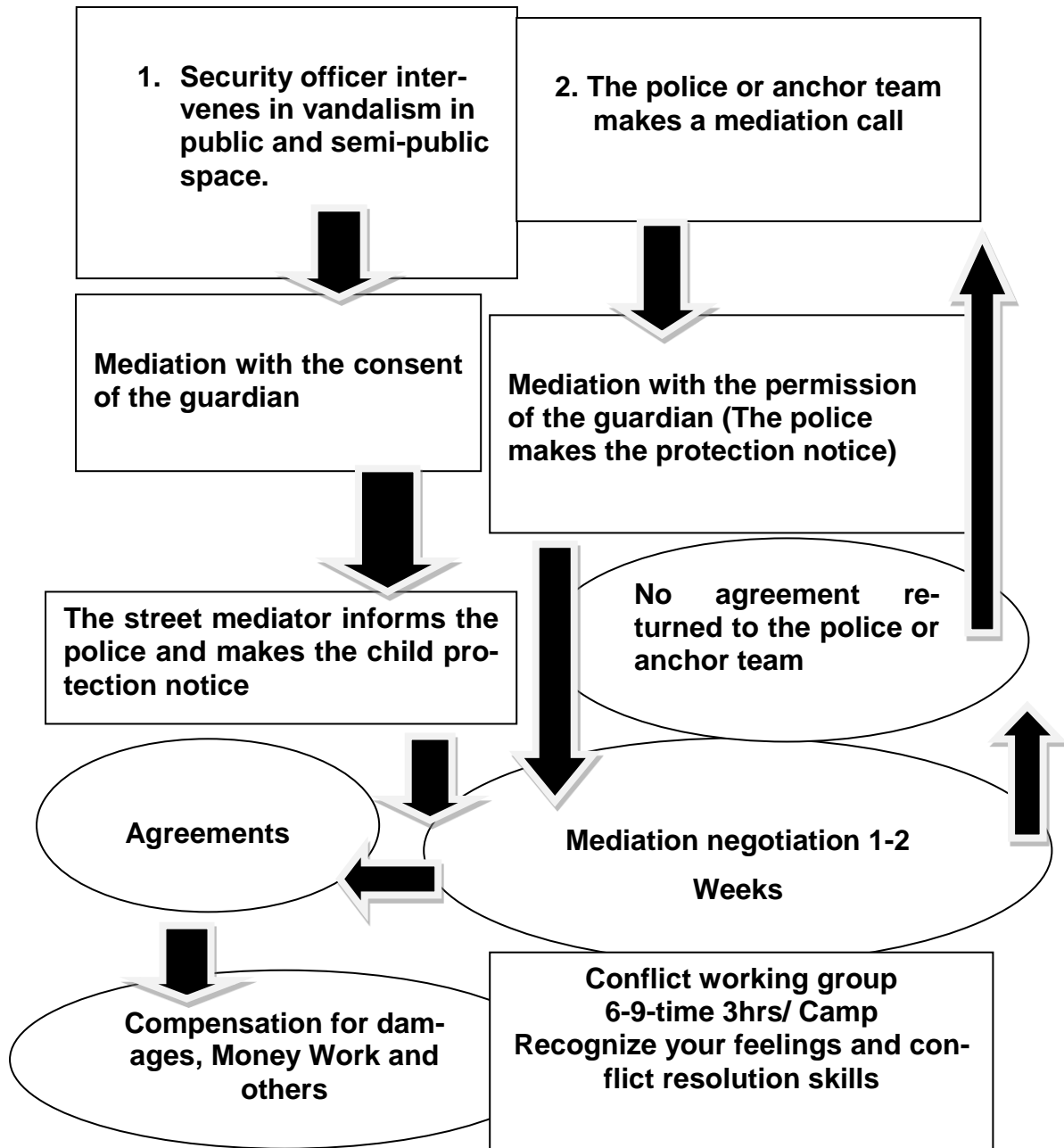


Figure F3 Old street mediation process as started in 2013. (Helsinki mediation office 2018.)

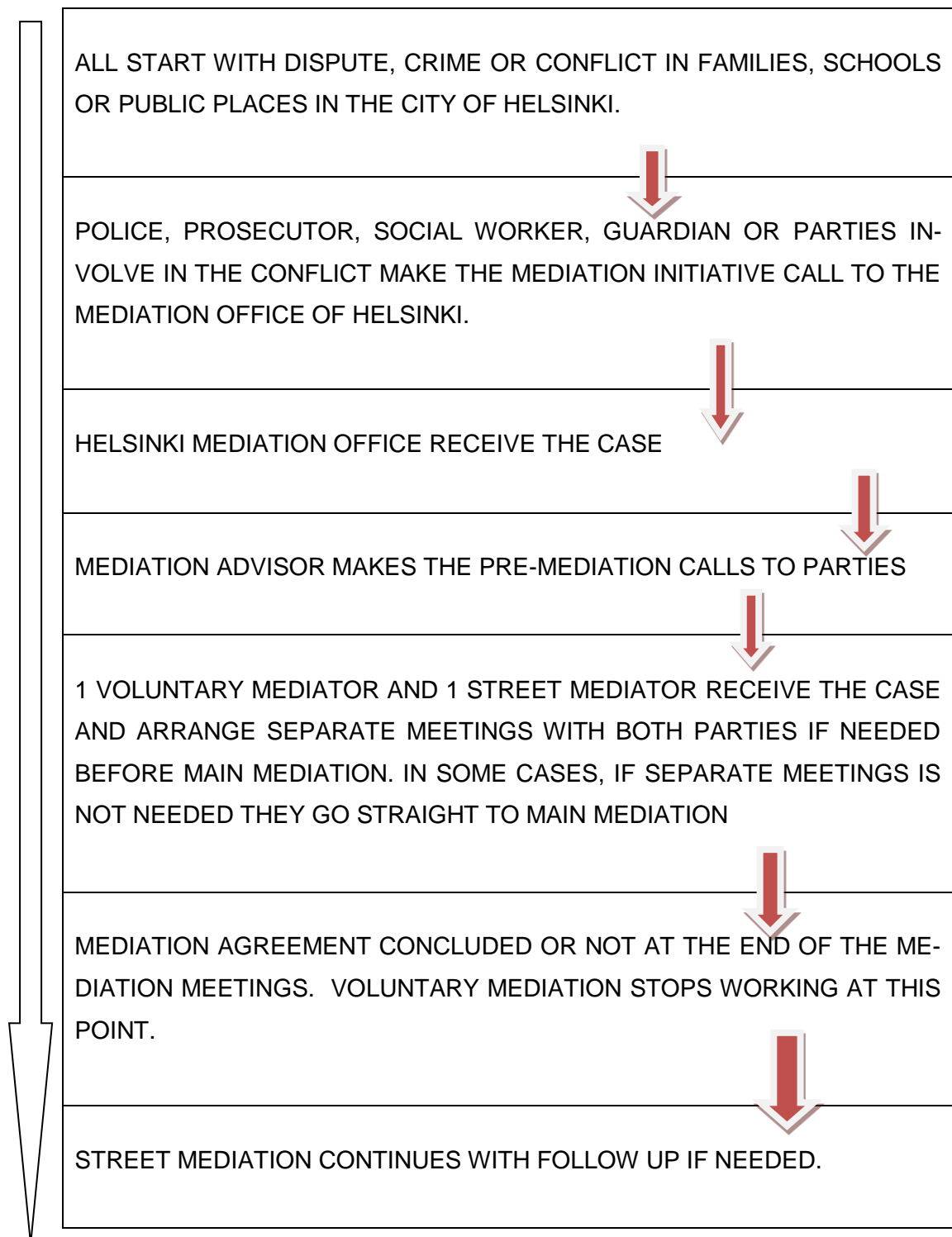


Figure F4 New pilot project street mediation process step by step.

## 4 THESIS PROCESS AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Research environment

This thesis is intended to seek and investigate a cooperative work in mediation carried out by the Helsinki city mediation office and Aseman Lapset ry. For this reason, it was mandatory to interview mediation workers from both institutions to get the holistic view of their street mediation pilot project. A research permit was acquired from the City of Helsinki before their mediation workers were interviewed.

An email request of the interview containing an official letter of consent, attached with the research permit from the City of Helsinki was sent to all the mediation workers of the Helsinki City mediation office. The Helsinki mediation workers agreed to voluntarily participate in the interview. Most of the interviews of the Helsinki city mediation workers were done at their office premises including all the three mediation workers of Aseman Lapset ry.

The Interview environment was peaceful and very appropriate for the interview without any distractions. Likewise, there was enough time available for the interviews nothing was done in a rush or in any manner that could have affected the outcome in a negative way. The interview participants were all interested in the thesis and their motivation for the interview was also a driving force that pushes the data collection faster. The research interviews were all concluded by the end of December 2017.

Table 1. Research Process

Autumn 2017 (01.11.2017-31.12.2017)	Spring 2018 (01.01.2018-31.03.2018)
Consultative meeting with Aseman Lapset ry, Recognise the need for the research	Interview transcript produced from audio interview.
Research permit application process from Helsinki City	Transcripts sent to interview participants for cross-checking and approval
Consultative meeting with Aseman Lapset ry formulating the research questions	Data analysis using the re-search questions
Request for research interview participants from Helsinki city mediation office	Arriving conclusions and assessing the research process
Official letter of consent sent to voluntary interview participants from Helsinki city mediation office	Briefing session with working life partner Aseman Laspset regarding the research outcome
Research interviews conducted and completed December 2017	Write the Final Thesis

## 4.2 Research Methodology

Qualitative data collection was used which is the “systematic, rigorous investigation of a situation or problem to generate new knowledge or validate existing knowledge” (Kumar 2014,14). Qualitative research method includes observation and interviews, open-ended surveys. Focus groups, content analysis of visual and textual materials, and oral history. Qualitative research is aiming to explore diversity, it explores description and narration of feelings, perception, and experiences. (Kumar 2014,14.)

The Qualitative research method was applied also due to the thesis intended purpose. To explain, gain insight and understanding of the pilot project cooperation of Aseman Lapset ry and Helsinki City mediation office. Through an intensive collection of narrative data to generate hypothesis and themes.

All the elements of qualitative research method were clearly visible in the approach for the thesis data collection. From the very start of this thesis idea, it was very clear and justified that the data collection will include recorded interviews and open-ended questionnaire. And since the thesis was going to involve the making of interviews with individuals, not groups all these are the nature and elements of a qualitative research method.

The fact that the number of persons that will be involved in the thesis research interview was relatively small and less than ten in number. it was relatively clear that qualitative research method will be the best research method. To be used in collecting the data not quantitative that is based on numbers and mathematical calculation. According to Kumar (2014), A Qualitative method is recommended to be used when the data collection was also going to involve unstructured questionnaire to create qualitative data using open-ended questions intended to get in-depth information. (Kumar 2014,176-177.)

### 4.3 Data Analysis

The thesis data was collected through a qualitative method using a questionnaire. Seven participants opted to participate in the thesis interview. This selection was solely based on their willingness and availability. So, the interview participant selection process was free and open to any of the mediation workers not controlled by any system or policy it was based on availability.

The respondents had a very different educational background, work background, and life background. The respondents were composed of a heterogenous group five female and two males. Retired people and people who are still in active service including persons who have some affiliation to church and practice some religion. This somehow was visible in their perception and understanding of the importance of mediation.

The respondents also had different years of experience in mediation between 1-15 years of experience. Their educational background and qualification were also heterogenous six of the respondents have completed a bachelor's degree in a university. The respondent also had different life status and different experience with youngsters and children before their they started working in mediation.

After the interviews were concluded, written transcripts were later produced from the interview materials collected. The raw data was later edited to check to the spelling making sure the content was exactly what the respondent has said during the interview. The raw data was then also checked and edited by the respondent to make sure they are facts with clean meaning content. After having clean data, the next step was coding which was the first step to identify and make distinction to select useful data.

During this process of coding, it was clear to make the distinction that the data was qualitative as they were descriptive in nature. The raw data collected was analysed using thematic content analysis by identifying the main themes that

emerge from the descriptions given by the respondent in their answer to the interview questions. After identifying the main themes that came across from the responses from the respondents, the data was later examined to get verbatim responses integrated in a descriptive way into the text reporting the findings. Figure 4 below gives details illustration of the steps used in analysing the data collected.

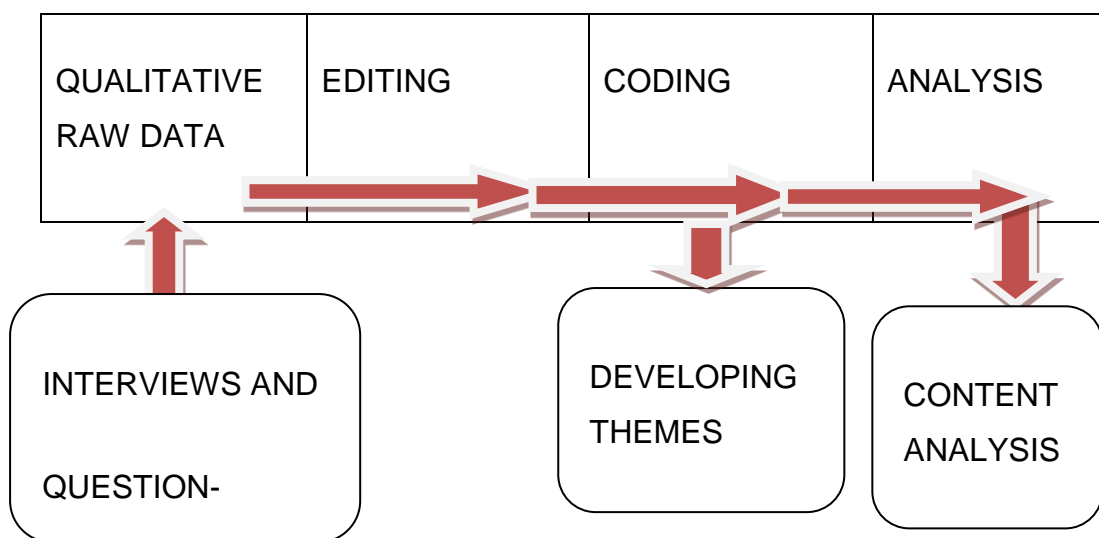


Figure 5. Steps in qualitative Data processing (Kumar 2014)

#### 4.4 Reasons for using the Qualitative research method

Since qualitative research is primarily exploratory research, it is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research. Qualitative Research also used to uncover trends in thought and opinions and dig deeper into the problem. (Seale et al 2002,15.)

Qualitative data collection methods vary using unstructured or semi-structured techniques. Some common methods include focus groups (group discussions), individual interviews, and participation/observations. The regular size is typically small, and respondents are selected to fulfil a given quota. (Seale et al 2002,15.)

All the above description and attributes of a qualitative research method by Seale et al (2002) comply with the thesis concept this is one reasons why qualitative method is applied in the data collection process since it's the best and right method that will give more depth in terms of reaching the goals and objectives of the thesis.

#### 4.5 Ethics and Reliability of Research

Ethics was highly applied in all aspects and phases during this thesis process, it is vital to any research. Research ethics involves the application of fundamental ethical principles to a variety of issues involving research, including scientific research. These include the design and implementation of research involving human experimentation, animal experimentation, various aspects of academic scandal, including scientific misconduct (such as fraud, fabrication of data and plagiarism. And other several key issues of ethical protections that are meant to protect the rights of the research participants were considered.

The principle of voluntary participation was kept and respected during the entire research data collection process. There was no force or pressure on participants to forcefully get involved and to be a participant. Only adults were involved during the data collection process with their full consent and approval signed on paper.

The research participants were formally informed about the thesis interviews in details and to get their full consent. Ethical standards in this thesis data collection also require that researchers do not put participants in a situation where they might be at risk of harm because of their participation.

It was taken into consideration seriously that harms can be both physical and psychological. There are two standards approach that was applied to help protect the privacy of research participants. The research guarantees the participants confidentiality. All data collection from participants will be assured that identifying

information will not be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study.

The participant's anonymity will be kept if they wish, which essentially means that the participant will remain anonymous throughout the study even to the researchers. The anonymity and confidentiality standard are two stronger guarantees of privacy that this thesis fully incorporated. All these ethical issues kept in account during the entire process of data collection, analysis and in the publication of the thesis findings.

#### 4.6 Research permit and contract

Research permit application was made to the Helsinki city social and health office to get the permission to interview their mediation workers. The permission was granted from Helsinki city for a specified length of time 01.11.2017-31.03.2018 for the interviews and the entire data collection process.

Note that no permit was required to interview mediation workers from Aseman Lapset Ry as the NGO is the working life partner of the thesis. The thesis process was also solidified by a contract agreement between the work life partner organization Aseman Lapset ry and Diakonia University of applied sciences.

## 5 FINDINGS

### 5.1 Strength of the street mediation model

In this chapter the respondents will be mentioned by using the letter (R) when quoting the respondents. There are seven respondents mentioned as R1-R7. When street mediators go to the streets and witness the actions as it happened, this adds value to this model.

The fact that mediation goes to the street is a plus. (R7)

Because with all this extra information from the field the mediators are better equipped to deliver a better successful mediation. To have mediators present at the places where the conflicts occur.

*Witnessing the action gives strength in the mediation process. (R1)*

The strongest additional value and strength of this street mediation model comes from the combination of volunteerism and professionalism.

*The fact that mediators do mediation voluntarily is a strength to have this type of motivation. (R1)*

When people volunteer to do something, they have a different motivation, which is different from those who are doing it as their job. Combining these types of mediators gives a check and balance with the issue of motivation.

*Additional value comes from the combination of volunteerism and professionalism. (R1)*

This combination creates the possibility of mediators depending on also the skills and knowledge and expertise of the other mediator in the case. The street medi-

ators bring lots of different resources and services to offer the children and youngsters during the mediation and after mediation. They also have contacts with their parents and guardians of the children this gives plus strength in the process.

*Street mediators are not limited by time as the voluntary mediators. (R2)*

Street mediators can start the mediation work even before the mediation and they can also continue the follow up after the mediation.

*The pilot project mediation is more hands-on they have longer contact and influence on the youngsters. (R4)*

According to a respondent street mediation is a very practical solution oriented which is a strength. Preventive approach mediation that is very close to the parties involved. Their intervention is rapid and their effects and contact with the children are lasting. The model is preventive youngsters can get help before the mediation meeting not only during the mediation.

*The street mediators have more field to walk on this is brings additional value. (R2)*

Going to places like schools and facilities for child protection units that voluntary mediator can't go all these are strength in street mediation that is not with any other type of mediation.

*The street mediators do not only give information about supporting services. They do not only point the children toward the right direction they can walk along the distance with the adolescents. (R2)*

This is a strength that makes the mediation process unique and more efficient. The cooperation gives strength as it brings more possibilities in solving the issue in the conflict as different kinds of information is shared. The process also produces some information about the things going on in the life of the youngsters.

To conclude about the strengths of this street mediation model from the responses of the respondent a couple of points came across all their answers. The point that the street mediation model is more hands-on and have longer contact or relationship with the children and youngsters. The issue of the relationship with the youngsters and the relationship with the families of the children is portrayed to have a huge strength to this street mediation practice.

It plays a significant role and positive influence of this mediation process and outcome with children and youngsters. Another frequently mentioned strength of this practice was the issue of cooperation. This cooperation between the voluntary mediators and the street mediators creates the possibility to share different kind of knowledge, learn new ways of doing things. This makes this practice more efficient and gives more possibilities to solve issues with the youngsters and gives the big picture.

## 5.2 The Weakness of street mediation

The major weakness and challenges of the street mediation process that came across all the response from the respondents were the element of too much workload and lack of mediators. Also, there is not enough time to travel nationwide to train more mediators both voluntary and street mediators.

*Sometimes during mediation, it can be a weakness when there is a power shift. In a situation that the street mediator takes their role into the mediation meeting. (R1)*

During the mediation process, all staffs should be equally and projected as equals if that power shift occurs the process is hampered.

*In the mediation process the kids can get the wrong influence from their parents present if the parents have not behaved well. (R4)*

Since these children may be looking at their parents as role models and believe that what they say, and think is best for them,

*in cases that such a person is not fully understanding the purpose of mediation the mediation can fail. (R4)*

This raises the question of how much contribution should be expected from the adults during the mediation and when is their involvement best needed. This issue of relationship that has been pointed out in this mediation model can be a strength and weakness. Bringing together the parents and guidance of the children and youngsters in mediation is also something that must be dealt with properly as it has the potential also to destroy the entire mediation.

*Sometimes feelings and personality of the mediators can surface during the mediation as a weakness during the process. It should not be seen but it can outburst and surface out of control as we are humans. (R6)*

*Since most of the voluntary mediators have specified period agreement contract, that means that mediators came and go, and this creates a lack of consistency. Also, the loss of resources and knowledge. Solving this problem or to reduce its effect possibilities should be made to have more permanent mediators. (R2)*

According to another respondent the absence of the possibility for the mediators to recommend follow up after the mediation meeting even for a good enough reason.

*Sometimes follow up is required but if the parties do not choose the option in the contract agreement form, then the mediators can't recommend follow up. Even if it will benefit the process this can also be a strength as it gives the full responsibility to the parties and not the mediators. (R7)*

### 5.3 The impacts of street mediation

Before looking at the impacts of this street mediation practice one must also take into consideration the general impact of mediation. According to Juhani Iivari, mediation came to Finland because of criticism of the existing criminal justice system in the 1980s. This was because social workers and other professionals understood mediation has a better impact and its better way to deal with crimes and conflicts. Getting the victims involved in their own conflict acting responsibly to find their own solutions not using the punishment-based system. (Iivari 2000.)

*the parties involved are active in their own cause this help in growing up for the youngsters they become active citizens and part of the society. (R1)*

The street mediation helps the youngsters deal with other issues in their life and get their own identity. This comes with the fact that the street mediation process usually exposes and discover other issues in the life of the youngsters. These issues will be attended to sometime even before or after the mediation.

*Ending up in mediation is not an entirely bad thing. (R1)*

Mediation should empower these youngsters, it is a good stopping point in their life that they get another chance to grow up better. Street mediation help shaping the youngsters into becoming a better person.

*The youngsters learn the limit of the society when they end up in mediation process. (R4)*

The youngsters can forgive themselves and start to believe that they are not always criminals and judged. The entire mediation process is an educational process the parties learn how to communicate better and gain better communication skills. The youngsters learn in mediation that there are always consequences to all actions and there is a limit in the society. This goes a long way to shape their thinking and understanding of society and improve their behaviour.

*Street Mediation is an extra to their upbringing that they don't get from their parents. (R4)*

Sometimes the youngsters participating in street mediation maybe having even serious problems at home that is affecting them wrongly. Poor parental skills of some parents and guardians can cause some crises in the homes in such situation, street mediation can support the youngsters. Street Mediation also gives the opportunity for people to meet others from a different culture which is not something they can get from their everyday life. This help to improve their intercultural skills equipping the youngsters with knowledge about the society and mutual respect of other people and cultures.

Street Mediation with children is a preventive work that helps to impact many changes into the life of the youngsters. When people are young they have an open mind and a better chance to learn and change which may be much difficult if they already adults. Therefor street mediation goes a long way to impact the entire society since mediation is part of community development producing happy people making the world a better place.

#### 5.4 The benefits and benefactors of street mediation

Generally, all parties involved benefit in street mediation or any other form of mediation. The main objective of any good mediators is to make sure the result of mediation is a win/win for all parties involved. This including also the city of Helsinki and the state of Finland. Street mediation helps the police and the justice system with their long queues and it is expensive to go to court.

The face to face talk in mediation helps both parties to understand the others and understand their own action better. To understand why the other person did what they did during mediation is a relief and an educative process to both parties. As already mention in the impacts there are benefits of gaining communication skills which benefit in relationships.

*Mediation teaches the youngsters the responsibility to sign and keep their promises as they sign the agreement contract. (R2).*

Sometimes people never forgive even themselves, but mediation process foster forgiveness and reconciliation. Mediation also gives good feelings to the voluntary mediators at the end as they are part of something good.

*Street mediation should bring forgiveness even to oneself (R3)*

Street mediation brings mental relief because the parties can be in anguished or depression. Mediation takes away that feeling especially for the youngsters they can move forward with their life. And do not have to wait for a long time if the case was dealt with court proceedings. Street mediation helps the society save some money and other resources. If these youngsters are handled in this early stage before they grow up to become problematic in society. It's easy for young children to learn in mediation they see that they must be responsible for what they do.

*It can be difficult for them to learn this principle when they older above 17 years old. This is a common trend to see in the field. (R4)*

### 5.5 The skills required in street mediation

All the respondents pointed out that mediators need to have good listening skills not to speak too much and should not steal the conflict. Mediators should stay in the background. Good negotiation skills and skills relating to group work as the connection between the mediators is very important. Mediators should be skilled and know how to keep that connection during mediation.

Mediators should be skilled in looking beyond the surface. Mediators should acquire professional skills in mediation during the training. Street Mediators should have the skills to make sure both parties in the mediation are been taken care of not to be partial. Mediators need skills to point the discussion to the right direction during mediation. Good sense of humour, relaxed, calm and be trustful.

## 5.6 The extra benefits brought by the street mediator

From the responses of all the respondent, it was clear that the contributions of the street mediators are the main benchmark of this mediation model. The additional value and efficiency come from these benefits brought by this combination of the street mediators and voluntary mediators in the mediation process of children and youngsters. The street mediator brings their skills and professional knowledge about young people.

During the mediation process, it is good that someone does not have limited time to arrange meetings and even to places like schools. These are all the extra benefits and value the street mediator brings into the street mediation. It was said that the street mediator has better skills in paired work and they face the adolescents more professionally with mutual respect.

*In mediation, the street mediator can tell directly what they can do and how they can help the youngsters, about available resources and support for the youngsters. (R5)*

The voluntary mediators can't do these things since it not included in their task said a respondent. The street mediators make the mediation process a safer place for the youngsters. This is best model of mediation involving children and youngsters.

*The street mediator has a bigger field to move on they can go to place such as schools and child protection facilities. (R2)*

The mediation usually continues in schools, they go further with the youngsters more than the voluntary mediators. The Street mediator can arrange some crises support for the youngsters before the mediation in those case the mediation would not have been possible or successful without the crises support first. The street mediators are very restorative they do not take any space from the parties.

## 6. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, EVALUATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION

### 6.1 Discussion

This chapter will cover discussion of the findings of this thesis, the literature, and other research key concepts. This chapter also compares the findings of this thesis with other similar research on street mediation models and the role of voluntary mediators in mediation. Going back to the history of mediation experiment in Finland during the 1980s according to Juhani Iivari (2000). This was because the criminal justice system was facing criticism from some social professionals and scholars who believed the system of punishment that was used to control crime and social norms was not the best approach.

From these reasons mediation was perceived as a better approach because it is focused on restorative justice. This means that crime is considered as a conflict between the victim and the offender. And the offender is seen as capable of making amends and take responsibility for his/her actions (Iivari 2000). This is the same as the case of street mediation it is focused on restorative justice. Which creates a platform for the offender and victim to find a solution to their conflict.

Giving the voice for those in conflict to resolve their dispute with the mediators as facilitators. It can be concluded that street mediation just as other forms of mediation are based and focused on restorative justice. Without this central value of restorative justice then it's something else and it will lose its meaning and value.

The dialogue was also portrayed as one of the core value and foundation of street mediation. All the respondents said that the practice is all about bringing those in conflict at a table to have a conversation freely about what has happened. This dialogue phase creates the opportunity for both parties to understand the reasons

behind the actions of the other party. This type of dialogue is absent in the criminal justice systems during court cases feelings never discussed and the process is on court facts. This is also why mediation was considered in the early 1980s to be a better approach to crime because it gives voice to those in the conflict and empowers them. Their needs are the focus of mediation, not that of the society as in court proceedings.

According to the findings, all the respondent explained that the relationship between the street mediators and the families of the children and with the children is important in the mediation process. This finding is like the finding of Irma Nikula (2014). Which indicated that the parents of youngsters in mediation have said they felt their responsibility and role was important in mediation.

Also, that after mediation, the parent`s attitude towards their children has changed more positively and the parents got relief feelings. This contribution of the parents according to the respondents is a huge benefit to the mediation process. Thus, the respondents all said this is the best type of mediation that involves youngsters and children.

The findings of this thesis point to the fact that street mediation shape up the children and youngster. Also, that it helps to teach them about taking responsibilities of their actions. This is the same with finding according to Irma Nikula (2014) parents and child protection workers said it is important for children to face and assume responsibilities.

Parents felt mediation helps the child to better understand their deeds as they learn to understand the consequences of their actions. In the same line as reported by Irma Nikula (2014) this thesis findings highlight the great value in mediation and restorative justice. And it portrays mediation to be better in contrast to the mere punishment based criminal justice system.

This thesis also reveals that Mediation is an educative process which teaches the child to understand the meaning of wrong acts. This same view was shared by child protection workers, parents and by the children in mediation in the research of Irma Nikula (2014). This view and perception of mediation in 2018 still point to the same reasons why mediation was experimented and introduced in Finland in the early 1980s as stated by Juhani Iivari (2000).

Regarding the role of the voluntary mediator in the mediation process, the street mediator has more responsibility and more to offer in the process. But, there is no power structure shown during the mediation meetings. If the street mediator takes their role into the mediation meeting, it will affect the mediation negatively.

As the parties will only listen and pay attention to the street mediator and not to the voluntary mediator. The roles played by both the mediators are similar the only difference is that the street mediator has access to other institutions and resources which are not available to the voluntary mediators.

The comparison between mediation and the criminal justice system was repeated occurrence during the interview. All the respondents did point out the differences between both practices. It was clear according to their experiences, that street mediation is very important and it's the only method of dealing with crime that will yield restorative justice.

The question of using more mediation instead of the criminal justice systems in dealing with crimes was clearly objected by all respondents. Like one of the informants formulated: *"Mediation will always have its place in the society, but the criminal justice system is still needed to be there to serve its purpose"*.

From the response of the respondents, it was clear to see the influence and impact of religion in the views and perception of mediation. Those respondents with a religious Christian background mention a lot about forgiveness and mercy as

benefits and impacts of mediation. The background of all the research participants got an influencing role on their views and experience in mediation. Their specialty in mediation also affected their experience and shape some of their general views of the practice. Those participants with background from the criminal justice system spoke more about justice and that it is important that mediation produce some justice. The variation in the views shared by the respondents was influenced by their own life experiences and background.

## 6.2 Conclusion

In this thesis, the research questions were seeking to look at the holistic practice of street mediation cooperation of the Helsinki city mediation office and Aseman Lapset ry. The research was intended to investigate and define this model of street mediation of children and youngsters practice in Helsinki. With the combination of a street mediator and a voluntary mediator. The research questionnaire was designed to cover the five research questions. The research questions were around the most important issues and aspects of this street mediation model.

The findings indicated that this street mediation model is a better form of mediation involving children and youngsters. Due to the inclusion of a street mediator and the parents in the mediation process. The findings also show that the pilot project is a more efficient form of mediation with children and youngsters. Because of the combination of youth work professionalism in mediation work. This creates the added value and strength of the model, it's always good when you are talking about youths and there is a trained professional.

The Findings reveals that there is a need for this type of mediation work. These are the things that make this model of mediation peculiar and unique combination of volunteers and street mediators in the mediation process of children.

The findings also prove that this mediation model has strength due to excess time availability in the hands of the street mediator. As mediation meetings and follow up usually takes lots of which the street mediators bring in to the process. This aspect gives more substance to the mediation process and increases the impact and benefits.

The Findings shared light on the impact of this practice in the city of Helsinki, the state of Finland also to the parties involved in mediation. The findings show that mediation helps the state of Finland and the city Helsinki in producing happy responsible citizens. Citizens who will be active in their society and contribute to paying taxes and not being excluded.

The findings reveal that the practice is beneficial to the city and the state since it is community development work resolving conflict and reducing crimes and offenders. More to that, the findings indicated that street mediation is shaping the lives of the children and youngsters who end up in mediation. As they learn in mediation to take up responsibility for their actions and understanding the society.

From the data collected, it can be concluded that street mediation also has positive impacts on the youngster's lives. It is contributing positively to the betterment, improvement of well-being and quality of life the youngsters.

Further conclusions from the findings show that street mediation has a huge positive tendency to improve the communications skills of both parties. As during mediation, the parties take an active role in their own cause this helps them improve their communication skills. The findings also indicate that the youngsters also improve their social skills, understands the limits of the society after ending up in mediation. *The mediation is something extra of their upbringing that they can't get from their parents*

It was also revealed in the findings that the most challenging aspect and weakness of this mediation model was the lack of human resources. Also, occasionally heavy workload, lack of permanent mediators challenges the consistency.

Some recommendations were given to address the weakness and challenges in the practice. The need for more recruitment of mediation workers to reduce the workload. Also, recommendations to keep mediation workers for a long time or permanent work. Recommendations were also given on more better regular training of mediators to improve their skills and competence in their job and task.

The findings of this thesis are both research-based and evidence-based. The findings are research-based as it is founded on an accumulation of facts that have been obtained by research interview. It is also evidence-based as the findings validate existing evidence and findings about mediation. Evidence-based research is a research process in which the researcher finds a way to use existing theories and ideas to support their findings. Evidence-based research describes a type of research where the researcher is aware of certain existing evidence before exploring the subject.

The scholar does not enter the project unbiased he or she is aware of the theory and some other research evidence. Looking at chapter 5.2 and 5.3 it is clear the response from the respondents match the information in the theory and background literature making this research to be also evidence-based research. (The glossary of education reform 2016.)

Conclusively according to the findings, mediation should be the first option to resolve conflicts and arguments. It should be given more space in society as it is focused on the needs of the people not that of society. This gives mediation it value and places in the society beside the court and the criminal justice system. As stated by Juhani livari (2000) mediation was first experimented in Finland because mediation focused on restorative justice.

From the perception of conflict as an issue between the victim and the offender but the offender is deemed capable of making amends and take responsibility for his/her actions. This is still important and valid today in all mediation process and it is the core value of street mediation. This outstanding value of restorative justice in mediation generated the call for mediation in the early 1980s is still very valid in our society today beside the criminal justice system.

### 6.3 Evaluation

The results and conclusions of this research are evidence-based, reliable and credible. The conclusions are driven from the data and responses from the research questions. The responses from the respondents directly give answers to what the thesis was seeking and intended to find and investigate. The credibility and reliability also come from the consistency of the research process and validity. Implying that researcher studied and focused on the relevant issues of the subject matter.

Other Issues on reliability and validity were considered initially in the planning stage. And a short risk evaluation was done regarding what can go wrong and how to prepare for risks. The basis for credible a work is documentation about what was done, why was it done and how it was done. (Kananen 2013, 176–178.)

In this research data collection process, the Finnish language was used by some of the respondents. The translation and interpretation into English could have some deformation on the exact words the respondent used. This was only the case of one respondent. Also, since most of the respondent are not native English speakers even though with very fluent English language skill sometimes it was difficult for some of them to understand the research questions. This is a factor that was seen during the research process. In the research process, the respondents received clarification and explanations of the research questions in case of

any difficulty or misunderstanding. But all this factor according to the Finland statistic center can affect a research reliability especially issues of understanding research questions and questionnaires. (Tilastokeskus 2015, 41.)

#### 6.4 Recommendations for further research

This thesis process was very strict with every aspect of the ethical procedure considered with care. Throughout the thesis, process some challenges and risks that were not intended and expected did surface. This has taught the researcher some lessons to make the following recommendations and suggestions based on the matters that arise in the process of this thesis.

This thesis was focused on its main objectives to study and investigate the viewpoints and experiences of the mediators. This was a broad subject to cover was challenging and important to focus on specific selected goals and objectives. Due to this broad scope of the subject as a researcher, I will recommend that if further studies are to be conducted the scope of the research can be reduced. Other studies can have focused maybe on only the contexts and forms of the street mediation in Helsinki. This approach will give more inside information about the practice with detail types of challenges that exist in the different forms and context of the pilot project.

Lastly, it was noticed during the thesis process that some of the voluntary mediators have little experience of mediation cases done with the Aseman Lapset mediation workers. So, if a further study or similar study is to be done, it is recommended to have mediators with sufficient experience of the pilot project mediation. The focus should be to target only voluntary mediators with enough experience of more than one case of the pilot project mediation involving both voluntary mediator and street mediator.

## 7.RELATIONS TO DIAKONIA CHURCH WORK AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### 7.1 Relations to Diakonia work and the Church

Mediation practice was originally started by a three-man team consisting of Martti Grönfors, Pekka Viirre and Juhani Iivari. Out of them Pekka Viirre and Juhani Iivari were pastors working in different prisons in Helsinki municipality doing mediation with Christian approach. In the City of Vantaa in 1983 and 1984 in the form of an action-research project, financed by the Academy of Finland and the City of Vantaa. (Iivari 2000.) The practice of mediation was used in Finland through the Church's works with criminals. Then later mediation was applied to community work and resolving disputes within the different communities' schools, neighbours' disputes and in family matters. (Flinck 2013,15.)

Mediation is a long traditional practice in the Christian societies even in the ancient civilization. The dispute among Christians was mediated in the church by the church leaders and chief priest using the commandments of God. (2 Chr.19:8.) Then mediation was also accounted in the Bible of King Solomon resolving disputes among his citizens and foreigners as written in the book of 1 Kings Chapter one to four.

Diakonia work involves building and strengthening the society starting with family home visits. Also, family counselling like family group conference which is a form of mediation done in the family setting. This practice includes family members and other officials such as social workers and police. Regarding the care and protection or criminal offending of a child or adolescent. In the Family Group Conference, the family and extended family members come together to help make decisions about the best way to support the family and take care of their children. (Burns 2014.)

The Bible also refers to God as a mediator in many chapters and verses example in the book of Job *“If only there were a mediator between us someone who could bring us together”* (Job 9:33). The early church society did not have any courts to settle dispute people were appointed to mediate and act as judges. (Deut. 17:18-20.) Couple of the respondents said mediation helps to yield apologies, show forgivingness and mercy which are all key elements and principles in the bible and church Diakonia work. The formal peace mediation is facing challenges and perceived not to be efficient in response to societal conflicts.

Especially those issues which originate and revolve around things that are religious and ethnical affiliated. New methods to address these types of conflicts and threats within the society has increased within the field of mediation. There is the increase of local ownership of the mediation process and the involvement of more non-official diplomatic approach. Bringing in neutral, outsider third parties to act as mediators. These comprise local religious leaders since their mediation dimensions are understood as entrenched in the confidence and reliability they have in their societies. (Lepomäki, 2017.)

Regarding the situation in Finland with the growing worldwide attention on the peace efforts of religious leaders. Finland has started to promote the work of religious peacemakers as part of its mediation policy. Considering this shift, the non-official practitioners, religious leaders, and NGOs such the CMI do peace mediation endeavours. They are supported by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA). Today there are three Finland-based non-official organizations (NGOs) active in the field of mediation namely the Finn Church Aid, the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers and the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission. (Lepomäki, 2017.)

Likewise, a similar pattern of this shift is seen around the world as the Catholic church and other churches have been playing a leading role in peace mediation. In the continent of, Africa and other parts of the world. Recently in Cameroon, the religious leaders and the church have opted to facilitate peace mediation between

the government and the leaders of Southern Cameroons for the ongoing armed conflict that has engulfed the two English regions of the Country. (Dagen 2018.)

## 7.2 Professional Development

As a researcher, this thesis study was the very first research endeavour. The process started with excitement and curiosity. The entire process has been a fresh new experience and a very educative one. This thesis process was a good opportunity to learn and improve on research academic skills and process. The process was not free of challenges and unseen obstacles but all those were educative opportunities.

As a researcher, this process was helped in knowledge gaining and improving on other skills and knowledge acquired before embarking on this thesis. During the thesis, everything was done very planned and organized it was a new experience to plan and organize things depending on the availability of others. This was a new skill to learn to work with different persons and planning meetings based on the time schedules of others.

The entire research has also developed and shaped the views and knowledge the researcher had about mediation before the research was conducted. It was a good study experience to get first-hand information about the street mediation practice in Helsinki. This thesis was like a school that has educated the researcher just by listening to those practitioners talk about their job. The thesis was an eye-opening and revealing experience which has impacted and benefited the researcher positively. The passion and motivation shown by the mediation workers towards their job were inspiring and life-changing also to the researcher. Since this thesis was focused on the viewpoints and experiences of the mediators, further studies can be done to find out the viewpoints and experiences of the youngster and their parents.

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## APPENDIX 1 Research Questionnaire

### 1. Background information

- Who you are? Tell something about yourself
- What is your Professional background?
- What is your story?
- What motivates you in this activity?

### 2. What is your connection with the youth work/youngsters with crime/good or bad experiences?

- Have you been involved with the mediation of youngsters with crime before your time in the Street Mediation?



### 3. If you have experienced on both the pilot project and the model where the volunteers are doing it without the professional, compare your experience

### 4. How do you see the Street Mediation?


- What are the strengths
- What are the weaknesses
- Your experiences/visions/Additional value it brings
- Who are the beneficiaries of this type of work?
- What are the benefits of this kind of work in general?
- What are the skills that the street mediator brings into the process
- Do you see any form of restorative justice in this mediation work?

### 6. What else would you like to tell about your experiences in the Street Mediation?

## APPENDIX 2 Research Permit (P1)

	<b>Helsingin kaupunki</b> Sosiaali- ja terveystoimiala Terveys- ja päihdepalvelut -palvelukokonaisuus Päivystys	<b>Pöytäkirjanote</b>	1 (2)
Päivystystoimintojen johtajalääkäri			
Julia Saarholm Malminkatu 3 F, PL 8631 00099 Helsingin kaupunki			
<b>11 §</b> <b>Päätös tutkimuslupahakemuksesta HEL 2017-011178</b>			
HEL 2017-011178 T 13 02 01			
<b>Päätös</b>			
Päivystystoimintojen johtajalääkäri päätti myöntää tutkimusluvan Eugene Ufokan tutkimukselle "Helsinki mediation office vooluntary mediatie view points" (amk-opinnäytetyö). Tutkimuksen yhteyshenkilönä on sovittelunohjaaja Julia Saarholm. Tutkimuslupapäätös on voimassa 31.3.2018 saakka.			
<b>Päätöksen perustelut ja ehdot</b>			
Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on tutkia Helsingin sovittelutoimiston vapaaehtoisten sovittelijoiden näkemyksiä ja kokemuksia katusovittelutoiminnasta työmenetelmänä. Katusovittelu on erityisesti lasten ja nuorten tarpeisiin kehitetty työmuoto, jossa keskeistä on nopea puuttuminen ja rakentavuus. Opinnäytetyön aineisto koostuu Helsingin sovittelutoimiston vapaaehtoisten sovittelijoiden teemahaastatteluilta. Haastatteluaineisto kerätään ja säilytetään ilman haastateltavien tunnistetietoja sekä hävitetään kokonaisuudessaan keväällä 2018 opinnäytetyön valmistuttua.			
Tutkimuslupa sovelletaan seuraavia ehtoja:			
Tutkimukseen osallistuneiden yksittäisten henkilöiden tunnistetietoja ei saa ilmaista tutkimusraportissa tai muulla tavoin.			
Tutkimuksesta ei tule koitua kustannuksia sosiaali- ja terveystoimialalle.			
Tutkimusraportti tai sen sähköinen osoite toimitetaan sosiaali- ja terveystoimialan käyttöön osoitteella Helsingin kaupunki, Kirjaamo, Sosiaali- ja terveystoimiala, PL 10, 00099 Helsingin kaupunki, sähköposti: helsinki.kirjaamo@hel.fi.			
Lisätiedot			
Elina Vismanen, kehittämissuunnittelija, puhelin: 09 310 72924			
<b>Postiosoite</b> PL 6000 00099 HELSINGIN KAUPUNKI sosiaalijaterveys@hel.fi	<b>Käyntiosoite</b> Toinen linja 4 A Helsinki 53 www.hel.fi/sote	<b>Puhelin</b> +358 9 310 5015 <b>Faksi</b> +358 9 310 42504	<b>Y-tunnus</b> 0201256-6 <b>Tilinro</b> FI1880001200052430 <b>Alv.nro</b> FI02012566
	<b>Helsingin kaupunki</b>	<b>Pöytäkirjanote</b>	2 (2)

## APPENDIX 3 Research Permit (P2)

 <p><b>Helsingin kaupunki</b>          Sosiaali- ja terveystoimiala          Terveys- ja päihdepalvelut -palvelukokonaisuus          Päivystys</p>	<p><b>Pöytäkirjanote</b></p> <p>27.10.2017</p>	<p>2 (2)</p>																								
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