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## **FOR YOU AU PAIR**

**Information booklet for Finnish au pairs in Belgium**

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## ABSTRACT

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For you au pair: The information booklet for Finnish au pairs in Belgium

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The purpose of making a product-based thesis is to promote the wellbeing of Finnish au pairs in Belgium. The information booklet was created together with Finnish au pairs to give them information, knowledge and tools during their au pair year. This product was created in cooperation with Finnish Seamen's Mission in Belgium. The focus group of this thesis is Finnish au pairs.

Finnish Seamen's Mission enables a platform for au pairs to talk freely about their experiences. In social Service work with au pairs, they facilitate monthly meetings give free guidance and counselling if needed. Au pairs can take part in volunteer work in the church if they wish and get to know other Finnish people living abroad. These activities can be empowering for au pairs and easing homesickness.

Au pairs in Belgium have been dropped in the middle of European Union legislation. Au pair agreement has not been ratified by Belgium parliament, however, municipalities in Belgium recognize the au pair agreement. These legislations make au pairing difficult because there is no legal background.

Data for the booklet was collected during a workshop in the Seamen's Missions premises. The data was collected by using mind mapping because it gives participants the freedom to choose their ways of expressing their thoughts and helps to arrange them. The workshop was empowering experience for the au pairs and they felt that this was the first time their voice has been heard.

In the workshop was established four main topics: the au pair contract, host family, childcare and wellbeing of an au pair. The booklet was handed to first Finnish au pairs in September 2019 in Brussels Belgium. The booklet will be published in Theseus with the thesis.

**Keywords:** au pair, au pair placement, host family, childcare, the wellbeing of au pair, domestic work, booklet, human rights

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

“It came to our notice that some of Finnish au pairs are feeling unwell during the stay in their host families”, stated the head welfare officer of Benelux countries in Finnish Seamen’s mission. Improving the wellbeing of Finnish au pairs is Finnish Seamen’s Missions goal.

Au pairing has increased in recent years because of the complexity of legislation for domestic workers in the European Union. Immigration through au pairing has increased the abuse au pairs are dealing with. Abuse varieties from exceeding working hours, limiting the mobility, taking passports and suppressing an au pair (Stenum 2011).

European Union Member State can choose whether to implement the European Commission's guidelines of au pairing in their country. The only existing binding contract is au pair agreement for au pair and host family. This contract has been ratified by only a few Member States of the European Union.

The lack of legal background enables au pairs vulnerable position. Au pair is typically 19 to 21 years old (Ahtinen 2016), are vulnerable to influence and living-in with the host family. Reasons for the au pairs vulnerability can be poor connections and poor access to reach information. In severe cases, au pairs have left the country before the case reaches the court. This makes it harder to convict the host family. (Stenum 2011).

Au pairs and host families are having trouble when it comes to finding common grounds. The cultural differences, language barriers and age differences might make it difficult to understand other perspectives. The demand of working-life and goal-oriented society in Belgium increases the need for domestic workers. Pressure towards children’s might have increased behavioural problems. This has opened markets for au pairs being an inexpensive option as a domestic worker. On the other hand, the au pair has an opportunity to live safely, learn about a new culture and improve language

skills abroad. (Stenum 2011, Social welfare officer of Finnish Seamen's Mission 2019).

The goal of this product is to lower the barrier for au pairs to reach information. In the booklet is the information of au pair agreement, communication, the upbringing of a child and au pairs wellbeing. To achieve the needed information booklet will be done in cooperation with Finnish Seamen's Mission and Finnish au pairs in Belgium. Au pairs are in contact with the cooperation organization. Au pairs have monthly meetings, a possibility for social work and Finnish goodies to ease the homesickness.

The product would support Finnish Seamen's missions to work with au pairs in an ongoing matter. The product will be available in the autumn of 2019 in Finnish Seamen's Mission in Belgium. Product is made in Finnish for Finnish au pairs. Finnish Seamen's Mission is hoping to give some pressure towards the host families thought the product. This would hopefully decrease the abuse au pairs are experiencing during their stay.

## 2 BACKGROUND

In this chapter, will be explained the background of the product. Why there is a need for this product and what has been done before. What kind of legislation there is, recommendations by the European Commission and what is au pair contract? How au pairs are connected to Finnish Seamen's Mission and how they are involved with au pairs during their stay?

### 2.1 Au pair standards, legislations and regulations in European union

According to European Union legislation, au pairs who originate from the European Union are mobile workers. Au pairs should have the protection and entitlements granted to EU citizens while au pairing in other European Union Member states. European Union Member states have the right to choose whether to implement this law.

Au pairs have not been separated from the mobile workers in statistics and therefore there is no knowledge of how many au pairs live in the Member States. The Member States can implement the legislation and acknowledge au pairs existence, but only a few countries have done this. The lack of interest in changing the policies and legislations impair au pairs from the European Union's rights. (Stenum 2011).

European Committee for Au Pair Standards (ECAPS) states their mission is to influence the European Member States to recognize au pairing as a cultural exchange program and establish minimum regulations of the au pair program. All member states of the European Union have one seat in ECAPS meetings. ECAPS has created au pair standards and recommendations for host- families and au pairs in European union. (ECAPS, 2015).

### 2.2 Belgium model

Belgian Parliament has not ratified au pair placement and for this reason, there is no legal framework for au pairs living in Belgium. Au pair placement has been recognized

by Belgium municipalities. Recognition of municipalities au pairs can claim residence permit in Belgium. Au pairing is not considered as work, there is no need to apply for a work permit. Because the au pair is not seen as a worker, host family do not need to pay for au pair's social security. (Commissioners. Brussels 2019).

Au pairs are from 18 to 26 years; the length of the stay is three months to a year. Au pair is expected to work up to 25 hours a week and pocket money is fixed to a minimum of 450€ a month. The host family should include au pair to their insurance and be prepared for paying for extra costs. Au pair should also take a language course to learn the basics of one of the official languages in Belgium. (Commissioners. Brussels 2019).

### 2.3 Household booklet

Connect au pair is an agency which helps au pairs and host families finding each other online. They have published an au pair or household booklet in multiple languages. This booklet is a practical guide for the au pair understanding host family's needs, rules and how they are used to run the household. In the booklet is a list from daily life to au pairs free time. This book would be filled by the host family in advance and given to au pair in their arrival. (Connect Au Pair 2020).

The booklet is a great tool for families to reflect on their needs and rules. This way it will be easier for au pair to start their stay with the family. It is recommended to go through the booklet with au pair to ensure understanding of the rules and practices of the host family is mutual. (Connect Au Pair 2020).

Difference between au pair booklet to the booklet for Finnish au pairs is the perspective. Au pair booklet is made for the host family to inform au pair about their needs. The booklet For you au pair for Finnish au pairs is made to answer the questions au pairs have. The booklet for Finnish au pairs aims to promote au pairs wellbeing and increase their knowledge of their rights.



## 2.4 Finnish Seamen's Mission

This thesis will be done in cooperation with a non-profit organization, Finnish Seamen's Mission of Benelux countries, the finished product will be distributed in Belgium.

The Finnish Seamen's Mission operates in eight cities across Finland and in six countries across Europe. Seamen's Missions in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxemburg are called Finnish Seamen's mission of Benelux countries. The organization is over 100 years old and has long traditions on promoting the wellbeing of Finnish seafarers and other travellers (Finnish Seamen's mission 2019).

Nowadays one of their missions is to reach out for Finns outside of Finland. It has become an important meeting point for many Finns living abroad. One of the biggest fundraising events for the year is Christmas and Easter markets. During that time the church is filled with Finnish goodies and hosts a warm place to gather together Finnish people living abroad.

Seamen's Mission has established its place in Finnish people's hearts and connects them through different events, meetups and over a cup of coffee. Social welfare officer and volunteers have the main responsibility for arranging meetups for different groups. The purpose of weekly and monthly meetups in the church is to connect Finns, support on creating networks, ease the homesickness and support individuals through crises. They facilitate groups for example for parents and children, sauna evenings for women and men, a choir rehearsal, au pairs, and youth. (Finnish Seamen's mission 2019).

Finnish Seamen's Mission facilitates meetings once a month for Finnish au pairs. They help au pairs to connect through meetups, offering the possibility for professional counselling and support. These meetups have allowed au pairs to share their experiences and find friends from other Finnish au pairs.

Au pairs are encouraged to take part in different activities and events arranged by Finnish Seamen's Mission. There is a Facebook and WhatsApp group for Finnish au

pairs hosted by Finnish Seamen's Missions. In the group's social welfare officer and volunteer communicate and inform au pairs with upcoming events and meetups.

### 3 LITERATURE REVIEW AND KEY CONCEPTS

In this chapter, the literature review of the thesis and key concepts are presented. Two studies present the wellbeing of au pairs and how the situation can be improved. The key concepts of this thesis are au pair, host-family, childcare, youth work, well-being, human rights, domestic work and booklet.

#### 3.1 Abused domestic workers in Europe: the case of au pairs.

In the study of domestic abuse of au pairs made by Helle Stenum in cooperation with Hanne Marlene Dahl (2011). The study analysed au pairs situations in six European Union member states; Denmark, Germany, Ireland, The Netherlands, Poland and Spain. In the study is been investigated the legislations and practices of au pairing in the European Union. (Stenum 2011)

According to the study, au pairs are an inexpensive solution for childcare. The reasons for this are expensive domestic workers which families cannot afford, increased pressure at work-life and unequal domestic work between women and men. In welfare states, au pairing has increased regardless of extensive coverage of pre-school and after school care. (Stenum 2011)

In many European Union, Member States exclude the legal labour immigration for domestic and care workers. The complexity of legislation has made au pairing one of the few legal options for domestic workers legally immigrate. Their immigration status is linked to the host-family and is obligated to live-in with the family. This scheme predisposes to abuse of au pair. (Stenum 2011)

#### 3.2 What are the biggest challenges for au pairs in France?

This study has been made recently and it enhances the difficulties all au pairs face during their year as an au pair. How the host family treats au pairs does not seem to

look over the cultural differences nor ethnic background. But as a study made by Dr Stenum immigration status does predispose exploitation.

In a qualitative and quantitative research thesis made by Niina Ahtinen (2016, *Mil-laisia ovat au pairien kokemat suurimmat haasteet Ranskassa?*). Ahtinen had a questionnaire that was sent to 100 au pairs from different countries in France, 61 au pairs answered this questionnaire. Major respondents were women (97%) and 2% of the respondents were from Finland. The average age of respondents by 79% was 18 to 21 years. Major of the respondents had stayed over 6 months in the country. (Ahtinen 2016)

From the respondents, 85% had stayed in the same family but 15% had changed the family. The main reasons for changing the family were according to the results of the study, au pairs did not come along with the family, some of the au pairs felt host family had abused them and they worked all the time having neither connections nor free time outside of the host family's house. 16% of the respondents had left the host family earlier than originally planned. Reasons for this were told by au pairs could not cope with the host family, also children of the host family behaved "impossible ways" and did not listen or obeyed au pair. (Ahtinen 2016)

### 3.3 Key concepts

*Au pair*, in the definition by European Commission, states "The term "au pair" is used for a young person who is temporarily hosted in a family where he/she is lodged and fed in return for light everyday family tasks. This experience should enable the young foreign national to improve his/her language skills and increase his/her general knowledge through a better understanding of the country." (Commissioners. Brussels 2019).

*Au pair placement* is a contract made between the au pair and the host family. The purpose of this contract is to create mutual agreement on the duration of stay, duties of the host and au pair and miscellaneous provisions. (Au pair placement 1972).

*The host family* is a family whose home au pair moves for his/her stay. The family must have at least two members and the host family's members must have residency in the host country (ECAPS, 2015). Host-family agrees to give au pair accommodation, pocket money and treat au pair as an equal family member for return childcare.

*Childcare*, an au pair provides 20 hours of childcare a week for the family, according to Belgium legislation. Childcare can be for example preparing meals for the children, school runs, tutoring or other supportive measurements of a child's development. Au pair supports the child's development and growth together with the host parents. (Commissioners. Brussels 2019).

*The wellbeing of au pair*, a worry of au pair's wellbeing has risen due to complicated problems families have. Au pairs are in the middle of a family's different life situations. This demand of the families has created au pairs feeling anxiety in their host family's home. (Stenum 2011)

*The workshop* is held together with au pairs to create the product. Au pairs have professional experience about the need for au pairs and what is needed into the product. Their information is valuable for the information booklet.

*Human rights*, every human is born free and equal in dignity and rights. No one shall be facing discrimination, degrading treatment or violence. Everyone has freedom of thoughts and expressing them. Have the rights to take part in the community and cultural life. (UN, 2020).

*Domestic work* term means performing work for household (Stenum 2011)

*Booklet* is a small book with limited pages which gives information about a specific topic. (Cambridge dictionary, 2020)

## 4 PRODUCT DESIGN

In this section will be the overall look of the product and how it would be achievable in this thesis. Steps of the product design will be explained as detailed as it is possible. Explaining in detail the process of design has cleared the objectives and goals of the thesis.

### 4.1 Needs assessment

Finnish Seamen's Mission interest is to promote Finnish au pairs wellbeing. Some of the au pairs have been raising issues with their host families. Au pair seemed to need guidance of host families and au pairs duties, challenging child behaviour, au pair agreement and communication with the host family.

### 4.2 Goals and objectives

The meaning of goals in this thesis is long term achievement (Martin 2012, 54) of the product. Using SMART to establish the goals and objectives of this thesis. Meaning of SMART comes from Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound.

The specific goal is to promote the au pair's knowledge of rights, duties, childcare, wellbeing and host-family' rights. Measuring the success of this product is based on the interest raised by the topic and motivation of au pairs to take part in making the product. Attainable by planning and documenting the steps of the process. Realistic, what is achievable in the time frame and giving the highest value. Time-bound in which goals are achieved in a specific time-bound.

The product's goal is to promote Finnish au pairs wellbeing and increase host-families knowledge about au pair agreement. Long term goal is to help au pairs to understand the meaning of au pair agreement, support on the communicating with host-family, helping to resolve difficult situations with children, maintaining the wellbeing of au

pair and the product being a working tool for social welfare officer in Finnish Seamen's Mission.

Objectives of this thesis are to reaching Finnish au pairs in Belgium in spring 2019, holding a workshop with the Finnish au pairs in the Finnish Seamen's Mission and produce a product based on the findings of the workshop.

Being able to create the product for Finnish au pairs minimum information needed to form it is to gain knowledge about European Union legislations, European Commission guidelines for au pairs, immigration inside the European Union and basics of domestic work. These sources would promote the basic knowledge of being an au pair in Belgium. This booklet can be modified to be suitable and be used in different countries when translated in other languages.

The stakeholder Finnish Seamen's Mission is interested in gaining knowledge of Finnish au pair's needs. According to the social welfare officer in Finnish Seamen's Mission au pairs tend to have similar problems. The similarity of the problems that au pairs have in the successful workshop should be a minimum of three to four participants. A variety of Finnish au pairs give wider perspectives and a better understanding of what au pairs need and what should be included in the booklet. Understanding different experiences, needs and perspectives of individuals are important.

#### 4.3 Target Group and stakeholders

The definition of a stakeholder is that anyone who is involved or being affected by the organization's objectives of the product is a stakeholder (Martin 2012, 102). The target group are the individuals who will benefit from the product.

Stakeholders for this thesis are Finnish Seamen's Mission of Benelux countries. They are the cooperation organization of this thesis and benefits from the product. Cooperation with Finnish au pairs is a key to making the product and beneficial of the product. Au pairs from other countries with connection to Finnish au pairs can benefit from the product. As well the host families of Finnish au pairs might be affected by this product, host family includes parent or parents and children of the family. Individuals who have the interest of reading the product in Seamen's Mission or other platforms. Diaconia

University of Applied Sciences which is overlooking the whole process of this thesis and product.

Finnish au pairs are included heavily in creating this product, which is an information booklet for Finnish au pairs in Belgium. Workshop with Finnish Au pairs is used to collect data for assessing the need and form the product. This workshop will help to create the framework of the product. After the workshop au pairs can be part of screening the product, in this case, au pairs consent will be asked. Being part of screening au pairs can have a greater impact on the finished product.

Finnish au pairs in Belgium are the target group of this thesis. Au pairs motivation to use the knowledge learned from the product have an impact on the host family. Anyone who finds this product to be useful and implement the information from the product in practice can benefit from it.

#### 4.4 Workplan

Creating a timetable for the project helps to realise (human) costs and demonstrating control of the process when making a product. Workplan can be made as a list, to help to complete all the tasks on time and perceiving assignments in the process of making a product. In a list can be written down all the future objectives and deadlines of the process. Managing timetable's timeline through a list assists to outline the assignments. Using a list to manage your timetable can increase productivity. (Martin 2012, 95).

The work plan for this process has been a list, to assist and manage schedules during the process. It has helped to perceive upcoming assignments and realizing the time needed to complete the tasks on time. The list has clarified and assisted to prioritize the needs and how to achieve objectives. It is good to notice that schedules may change during the process, it is good to have room for flexibility. A detailed timetable of the thesis process can be found below in table 1.



TABLE 1. A timetable of the thesis

06.05.2019 Survey for participation and information about the workshop been sent for Finnish au pairs in Belgium, through WhatsApp and Facebook groups
12.- 22. 05.2019 Message for groups to gain participation for an upcoming workshop
22.05. 2019 Planning timetable for workshop
22-24.05.2019 Agreeing on details of the workshop with Seamen's mission
23.05.2019 Sending timetables of the upcoming workshop to participants
25.05.2019 WORKSHOP
01.-19.08.2019 Data organizing, forming key concepts of the booklet, narrowing down subjects, researching topics and forming the booklet
19-24.08.2019 Making the layout of the booklet
11.09.2019 The booklet was given to Finnish Seamen's mission
13.09.2019 Booklet distributed to first Finnish au pairs
13.02.2020 Finnish Seamen's Mission has permitted to publish the booklet
16.03.2020 Thesis and booklet published in Theseus

#### 4.5 Resources

Resources in this thesis mean human resources, this means individuals who are directly or indirectly part of making the product. Equipment's which have been used during the process of making the product. All the materials used during the process of this product. (Martin 2012 60).

To make the product stakeholder have been involved, they are the human resources of this product. Finnish Seamen's Mission of Benelux countries head of Social welfare officer is the main contact with working life partner and has invested time to overlook the process of making the product. Finnish au pairs have been a valuable resource for the process and shaping the product to its form. Au pairs' motivation to share their experiences and interest to help other au pairs have been the key to enable creating a product. Au pairs host-families have been indirectly a resource for this product, au pairs experiences come from the host family's family life and have impacts on au pair's wellbeing.

Equipment of this thesis is a personal laptop to write a thesis, making the booklet, helping to transform collected data from papers to electronic format, personal phone to record the discussion during the workshop and external hard drive to store all the electronic forms in safe. Materials to be planned to be used in the workshop are papers and pens provided by Finnish Seamen's Mission. The workshop will be held in exclusive space to provide safe space for Finnish au pairs to talk about their experiences. Finnish Seamen's Mission provides snacks and drinks during the workshops.

#### 4.6 Budget

Contingencies as a reserved budget for the product and the process. The budget defines the recourses which are available for making the product. The budget can have an impact on the quality of the product, schedules, and stakeholders. (Martin 2012).

Finnish Seamen's mission has agreed to provide space for the workshop, during the workshop using materials used during the workshop and small snacks and drinks for the participants. Travelling cost is provided by Brussels Seamen's Mission. Table 2 of costs can be found below.

TABLE 2. A budget of the booklet

<i>Material</i>	<i>Costs</i>
Train tickets	69€
Materials: papers, pens	2€
Snacks and Beveridge's	10€
Space	0€
Human resources (social welfare officer)	13,21€/ hour (5 hours)
Printing of the booklet (1)	2€
<i>Costs together:</i>	<i>149,05€</i>

## 4.7 Risks

Analysing the risks of this thesis is used SWOT-template to demonstrate possible risks and possibilities of the thesis. The risks of the thesis have been valued by internal and external factors. Internal risk factors are measured through the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis. Assessing the external factors of this thesis what kind of opportunities and threats making this thesis. Helpful factors of this thesis are strengths and possibilities, and harmful factors are weaknesses and threats. (Martin 2012)

Internal strengths of this thesis are the contact between Finnish au pairs and Finnish Seamen's mission, through WhatsApp and Facebook. It is easier to approach and motivate au pairs when the link between them and working life partner organization has been established in advance. Finnish au pairs need for support has been evaluated by the social welfare officer and the volunteers of Finnish Seamen's Mission in Belgium. Social welfare officer's educational background, 11 years' experience working with au pairs and personal experience as being au pair. The volunteer's education as a youth worker and organization has established trust between au pairs. My own experience as an au pair, my educational background as a practical nurse, specialized in children and youth and now studying a bachelor's degree in Social Services.

The internal weaknesses of the product are relying heavily on the workshop to create the product. The promotion of the workshop does not reach the Finnish au pairs or Workshop is lacking participants. Au pairs feel unmotivated to be part of making the product. Difficulties to find secured and free space to a held workshop, while working on a short time frame. Thigh schedule to arrange and plan the workshop, having enough time to study collected data from workshops and finish the booklet on the timeframe is challenging.

The external opportunities for the product are promoting wellbeing over borders, to have extensive information under one product which is easy to access for Finnish au pairs. Through the workshop is possible to learn au pairs' needs and creating a product for the need. Possibilities of this thesis are to gain a wider audience, for example, host-families, readers in Theseus or visitors in the Finnish Seamen's Mission in Belgium. The product can support au pairs and their host-families in multiple ways.

The external threats of this thesis are the difficulties to reach out Finnish au pairs in Belgium. During the spring 2019 Finnish au pairs have decreased their participation in the events and meetings in Finnish Seamen's Mission in Belgium. The contact with the au pairs has been challenging and difficulties to motivate au pairs taking part in the arranged activities by Finnish Seamen's Mission. Low participant rate of au pairs in the meetings during the spring, increases the risk of low attendance of participants in the first meeting in autumn. Reaching out new Finnish au pairs can be difficult if the organization is unable to reach out towards them and organize the meeting in autumn. The needs of au pairs are not met during the workshop due to a lack of participants in the workshop.

Below in table 3 can be seen the SWOT-analysis chart of this thesis, in the chart, can be seen internal and external factors of the product.

TABLE 3. SWOT-analysis

	HELPFUL	HARMFUL
INTERNAL	<b>STRENGTHS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In contact with au pairs</li> <li>• Ongoing social work</li> <li>• Need been detected</li> <li>• Mutual agreement of need</li> <li>• Knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> </ul>	<b>WEAKNESSES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relying on workshop</li> <li>• No space for workshop</li> <li>• No participants in workshop</li> <li>• Not enough time making booklet</li> </ul>
EXTERNAL	<b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting wellbeing</li> <li>• Reaching towards wider audience</li> <li>• Understanding the needs of au pairs in Belgium</li> <li>• Developing new services</li> </ul>	<b>THREATS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information does not reach Finnish au pairs/host families</li> <li>• Distribution unsuccessful</li> <li>• Need and final product does not meet the needs of au pairs</li> </ul>

#### 4.8 Ethics

The reason to have ethics is to prevent improperly and promote good practices. It extends to legislations, the relationship between writer of the thesis and participants, data

collection and the way data is stored. The detailed explanation of the process of the thesis supports the good practices and ethical approach during the process. (Gothoni 2019).

The topic of this thesis is sensitive. The experiences of au pairs are personal and involve au pair's host families. Each story and experience are valuable, and the au pair is seen as an expert by experience. Au pairs are playing the key role to understand the need of Finnish au pairs.

The identity of everyone involved in the making of this thesis is important to protect (Gothoni 2019). Products aim is to promote the wellbeing of au pairs, promote knowledge of au pair agreement, host family, childcare, and wellbeing of au pair. To gain expert experiences participants will share in workshop personal experiences, feelings and life of the host family. This places them in a vulnerable position if data collection has not been made well.

Participants of the workshop are requested to fill out a consent form to permit to collect data and use it in the product. (Gothoni 2019). Participants will be informed of where and how the collected data will be used before the workshop begins. It is important to ensure the anonymity of the participants and everyone who might be involved indirectly in this thesis.

Participants of the workshop can continue to be part of the process after the workshop is done. When a participant shows the interest of being part of the process mutual agreement will be made with the participants. In the agreement, participants can be involved in the workshop or the process as they see it fits for them. Participants have the right to end the process when they wish, and their data can be erased by request.

Stakeholder organization Finnish Seamen's Mission does not demand a research permit (Gothoni 2019). This has made the starting of this process faster. Organization's wishes are to know the services, needs and events au pairs would like to have in Seamen's Missions future services. These wishes will be talked through during the workshop.

#### 4.9 Documentation

The process of the product has been documented as detailed and truthfully as it is possible with the equipment is available. The anonymity of participants in the workshop or anyone who has been involved indirectly by this product will be protected. (Gothoni 2019).

During the workshop the discussions of different topics will be recorded, to ensure the discussions will be understood correctly while making the product. Collecting written parts on the sheet during the workshop are written anonymously. This ensures the anonymous of opinions and experiences participants have been experienced. All the collected data will be transformed into digital form and stored to an extended hard drive. When the product and thesis have been submitted to Theseus all the stored data regarding this thesis and product will be deleted and destroyed.

## 5 PROCESS DESCRIPTION

This thesis will be product-based and in this section has been explained in detail the process of making this product and how it became a finished product. What was the goal of stakeholders, what was my personal goal while making the product?

The goal of this thesis is to understand au pairs needs and make an information booklet for Finnish au pairs in Belgium together with Finnish au pairs by using their expertise of au pairing.

### 5.1 Starting the process

Starting the process was to open a discussion while my Erasmus+ in the Seamen's Mission in Rotterdam. During discussions with the manager, social welfare officers and the priest we came across with two different issues; Finnish students' mental health in the Netherlands and wellbeing of au pairs in Belgium. Reasons to choose the topic as Finnish au pairs were the importance of continuity and able to give supportive tools for social work in Seamen's Mission in concrete ways.

Making the decision of project or product as a thesis was difficult. Need for a continuing project or product was the key to making the decision. Every year new Finnish au pairs come to Belgium and are in a need of guidance. A product would be a sustainable choice; hence it can be used multiple times. Sustainability of the product and ways to use it in social welfare officer's work was important. The organization can benefit from it for many years to come.

### 5.2 Information booklet for Finnish au pairs

The social welfare officer of Finnish Seamen's mission in Belgium had detected a problem through the years working with au pairs. In the recent year's issues with host families have grown and is shown as au pairs feeling unwell in the monthly au pair meetings at Finnish Seamen's mission.

There have been made booklets of au pair stay and one of them was Au pair booklet; a practical guide for your au pair by Connect Au Pair. This booklet suggests the host family would fill the pages and give essential information about the family's rules and manners. Au pairs do need clear bits of advice from the host family, but they also seem to need support and encouragement during their stay.

Averagely au pair stays with the host-family eight to twelve months, during this time au pairs are adjusting the host family's life. Au pairs may struggle with the new rules or ways of living, for this new phase of life guidance is needed. For this reason, the decision was made to make an information booklet for Finnish au pairs in Finnish. This product would be used to be part of preventive work of abuse towards au pairs and used as a tool to support social welfare officer's work.

### 5.3 Contacting Finnish au pairs

Finnish Seamen's Mission had established groups for au pairs in WhatsApp and Facebook. Through the existence groups' au pairs were approached, informed of the project and asked to be part of making an information booklet. Au pairs were sent a private message with information about the workshop. The message was sent to 30 Finnish au pairs listed in the servers, but many of the members had left the country or was unable to take part in the workshop.

An online questionnaire was created to set up a date for the workshop. In the questionnaire had listed dates when was possible to have a space in Finnish Seamen's Mission and before my flight back to Finland. Au pairs could choose from the dates and inform the reason why dates would not suite for them. Four au pairs answered on the survey and all of them were positive answers of joining the workshop. All au pairs had chosen the same date to have the workshop. Based on the given information for us, we decided on the date to hold the workshop.



## 5.4 Planning workshop

Planning the workshop started with the need for gaining knowledge about au pairs' needs. The facilitator of the workshop can create a space for participants to influence on the topic which is important for them (Kantojärvi 2017).

Planning the timetable for the workshop and using open-ended questions to help participants to tell about their experiences during the workshop (Fink 2017). The workshop is used as a platform for au pairs to express themselves, allow them to tell their story and pinpoint important topics for the product.

Using group discussions to learn key topics of au pair's needs. The core of this product is listening to au pairs, giving them space and a voice. Discussions of the needs of au pairs will be modified and turned into an information booklet.

Mapping is a way to engage participants and helps to visualize the focus, there can be different categories, subcategories and more. Using mapping gives participants the freedom to make the map their way. There are no strict guidelines on how the map must look like. Using mapping as a tool giving participants space to think about themselves, negotiate with others and re-arrange the maps. Participants do not need to write long sentences which may be daunting. When using mapping, participants can use words, lines or drawings in their maps. (DiGessa 2008).

The walk-along method is an interview which is made in familiar surroundings for the participant. During this interview walks, the researcher asks questions and observes the participant's experiences during the walk (Carpiano R.M. 2007). In the workshop, the walk-along method would be used to get the participants to know each other and relaxes the group. According to the head of the welfare officer of Benelux countries, Finnish Seamen's Mission; au pairs go clubbing during the weekends. In this light fresh air before starting mapping inside might be needed. The soft toy will be used to give every participant a space to talk. It is an important exercise to give everyone space to talk without interruptions.

Flexibility is needed when arranging workshops, there can be changing elements. Timetables and plans can change during the workshop, adjusting to changes in a relaxed manner help to create trust and a relaxed atmosphere. In a relaxed and

comfortable environment participant feel safe. The feeling of safeness ease participants to share their experiences and questions of their previous experiences as au pairs. (Roberts, 2005).

### 5.5 Workshop guidance questions

Guidance questions were created to support reaching aims of the workshop. The questions were used to help the participants making their mind maps. Open-ended questions were used in the workshop to help the participant with the thought process (Fink 2017). Open-ended questions are questions where you cannot use yes or no answers. Questions are left open and should not influence the answers (Fink 2017). Using an open-ended question is a common way to interview in social work. Questions can be seen below in table 5.

TABLE 5. Guidance questions for the workshop

If you would have a booklet for au pairs in your hand, what would it contain?
Which four topics would be the most important in the booklet?
If you could rewind one thing from your year as an au pair what would that be?
What kind of privacy do you have?
How do you balance work and free time?

### 5.6 The timetable of the workshop

Scheduling for the workshop help to achieve the goal of the workshop. It gives timebound where to move and helps to move forward with tasks. This can anticipate delays and gives a frame for the workshop. When there is a structure in the workshop it is easier for the facilitator to guide the group to back to the subject. Each participant can have space to speak, everyone will have an equal amount of time to represent themselves (Kantojärvi 2017). Flexibility to change the plan is essential, there are many moving pieces in the plan, it is important to listen to the au pairs' wishes. Below in table 4 is a detailed timetable for the workshop.

TABLE 4. A timetable of the workshop

<p>1 pm Starting the workshop</p> <p>Offering tea and coffee, going through the plan of the day, objectives of the workshop, explanation of consent form and signing. Explaining reason to use walk-along and mapping methods.</p>
<p>1.30 pm Walk-along, one participant at a time has turn to guide everyone around the district where Brussels Seamen's Mission is, in a time frame of five to ten minutes.</p>
<p>Before walk-along, using icebreakers to ease possible tensions. Icebreaker questions for participants: What to tell when your turn is? Tell name, which part of Finland are you from? Where in Belgium do you live? How long have you been in Belgium? What was your reason to become an au pair? How are you feeling now?</p>
<p>An alternative way to get to know each other we form a ring and throw a soft toy to each other's and everyone has a chance to tell about themselves, for example; have you travelled in the past year? If you have, where? What is your most memorable memory from the past year? What kind of plans you have in the future? The objective of this is to lighten up the atmosphere and have a positive feeling.</p>
<p>2.30 pm Mind mapping, the key question.</p> <p>If you would hold an information booklet for au pairs, what would it contain? Everyone will have their paper where to write answers, at this point, we do not have discussions. They can use as many papers as needed to arrange their thoughts, they can use mapping, lines, drawings or other ways suitable for the participant. They have approximately 10 minutes to write down/work on their mind map. After 10 minutes is time to go through participants' answers and start discussions about the topics. Participants have a maximum of 30 minutes to explain their own experiences, during these discussions everyone can make changes to these papers. In case of time is left before the break, the facilitator will guide participants to ponder the key concepts of the booklet. (investigate guidance questions if needed)</p>
<p>3.45 pm Lunch break 45minutes</p>
<p>4.30 pm Continue working on mind map: concepts and topics</p>
<p>Which ones are important? Anything to add or delete? Questions from Finnish Seamen's mission are What kind of help, support or activities au pairs need from the church?</p>
<p>Around 6 pm END</p>

## 5.7 Workshop

The workshop was held on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> of May in Finnish Seamen's missions church in Brussels. Six au pairs took part in the workshop, head of social welfare officer of Benelux countries and me, facilitator of the workshop and author of this thesis.

Before starting the workshop, the process and reason for the workshop were explained to participants. Consent form and reasons for it was explained in detail to participants. Informing reasons for data collection, how and where it will be used, how the data will be stored and what would happen to data when the process of the product and thesis have ended. All the participants in the workshop agreed to sign the consent form.

The day workshop was due, was raining heavily. In the original plan, we were supposed to start the workshop with a walk-along method. Because of the weather conditions, it was decided mutually to stay inside and change the plan. A new plan was to get to know each other with by tossing the soft toy around. A person who had the soft toy in hand had the turn to speak. We had agreed to tell other participants a few facts of ourselves, duration of stay in Belgium, the best memory of being an au pair and what were plans after au pair year.

After getting known each participant started to make mind maps and was asked a question; If you would have a booklet for au pairs in your hand, what would it contain? Participants had 10 minutes to write down their thoughts without interruptions. After this, they could choose either to give facilitator to read them out loud or to read by themselves. Participants chose to read by themselves.

At first, participants were shy to read their notes, but one by one they got encouraged to share even more and the reasons behind their thoughts. This created a trust inside the group, and they felt safe to share their experiences as an au pair. Every participant shared their au pair year, with good and bad memories. It became clear during

the workshop that what au pairs need is to have space where to speak freely about their experiences during the au pair year.

### 5.8 Findings in the workshop

The workshop was a positive event for au pairs. They found sharing experiences and receiving peer support is empowering. The workshop was extended for two more hours because it seemed that au pairs needed more time to process their au pair year.

The surprising finding was au pairs strong detachment towards host families. Au pairs minimized the misuse with the host family and talked about them highly. Au pairs seem to have a good connection with the host family's children, but they were struggling with the upbringing.

From the collected data from the workshop, it became clear that abuse towards au pairs is existing during their stay in the host family. Abuse showed in different ways during the stay, for example constantly exceeding working hours without payment, au pairs found themselves in the middle of host-parents fights, physical or mental abuse by host-children or host-parents abusing their children. Au pairs themselves felt the biggest negative effect on their mental health was the ungratefulness of the host-family.

Au pairs seem to stay devoted towards the host-family even though they are mistreated. According to the workshop au pairs strongly believed in helping the host-family through their difficult times. Au pairs feeling of guilt and inadequacy grew every time they felt they could not manage to do all the tasks host parents had assigned for them. Most of the time au pair felt powerless to motivate children to eat or do their homework. The feeling of guilt and unappreciation seemed to affect them heavily. Over time this feeling of unappreciated changed form into anxiety. Au pairs biggest wish was to be appreciated by the host family.

Au pairs had many questions regarding the au pair agreement, how to communicate with the host family, the upbringing of a child and their wellbeing. Below in table 6 are listed some of the questions which were asked by participants during the workshop. Answers for these questions and more can be found in the booklet. The booklet will be published online with a thesis.

TABLE 6. Au pairs questions during the workshop

What au pair agreement contains?
How much is the weekly/monthly pocket money?
Does the host family want to spend time with au pair in their free time? And how to bond with the host family
What to do if there are difficult situations with the host family?
How to deal with aggressive behaviour of a child?
How to deal with anxiety?
What to do when feeling homesick?

### 5.9 The frame of the booklet

In the workshop was asked from participants to choose four important topics for them. These four topics formed the core of the booklet; au pair contract, host family, childcare and au pair's wellbeing. These main topics were agreed mutually in the workshop. Subtopics were chosen by questions which have been written down multiple times, discussions and ideas participants had during the workshop.

The head topic of au pair contract contains subtopics of contracts, rights, duties, and agreements with the host family. This section was important for the participants and an important part of the booklet. Creating the booklet was used au pair agencies web pages and European Union Commissions online pages to gain information about au pair agreement.

The head topic of host family contains subtopics of how to create a good relationship with the host family, how to communicate with them and possible problems inside the host family. In the booklet is researched ways of communicating to help au pairs to establish mutual trust between au pair and the host family.

The head topic of childcare was established when au pairs needed help to understand a child's developmental states in different ages. Subtopic also contains

aggressiveness of a child, child sexuality and how to motivate the child. The booklet has guidance of the most common difficulties' au pairs face with children and answers to some of the question's au pairs had.

The head topic of the wellbeing of au pair was an important topic for participants, they seemed to ponder how to divide work from free time and where are the boundaries? To include the wide topic for many different people was decided to inform of the overall wellbeing of human's basic needs, diet, sleep, and mindfulness.

#### 5.10 Layout and name of the booklet

The aim of creating the booklet was to make it easy to use for au pairs and being able to fill parts of the booklet by themselves or with the host family. This can clarify confusion between the au pair and the host family also, establish mutual agreements.

The background of the pages in the booklet was used pictures from Pixabay, which is a server that offers copyright-free pictures for non-profitable use. Pictures used on the cover and between pages were photographed by Марина Вельможко. The pictures used in the background have been edited from the original format to create a coherence look throughout the booklet.

Booklet was given the name "Sinulle au pair" which means "For you au pair". This name initiates who is the target group of the booklet and was agreed together with the cooperation organization. Booklet was distributed first time for au pairs in September 2019.

## 6 EVALUATION

In this chapter will be evaluated whether goals and objectives have been reached. Evaluation is to determine achievable, meaningful and transparent goals throughout the process making product. In simpler words, what is the purpose of this product? Who benefits of this product? What is the direction of change? What is the degree of change and time? (Martin 2012, 127). Goals usually do mean long term achievements, which can be broader described in the process. Challenges or learning points during the process of making a product. Swot-analyse is been used assessing risk and possibilities of the product. Ending the process will be explained by using Dobson's five steps, the outcome of the process and challenges which was faced during the process and how they effected to the outcome.

### 6.1 Evaluation of the product

To evaluate this product will be using SMART- goals: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound. The *goal* of this thesis is to promote au pairs rights, duties, childcare, wellbeing and host-family' rights. The goal has been achieved by making an information booklet which consists the information mentioned above for Finnish au pairs in Belgium.

*Objectives* of this thesis are reaching Finnish au pairs in Belgium in spring 2019, holding a workshop with the Finnish au pairs in the Finnish Seamen's Mission and produce a product based on the findings in the workshop. In the first objective reaching Finnish au pairs in Belgium during spring 2019 was difficult. Many au pairs had left the country, but six au pairs did respond positively to take part in the workshop which was held in May 2019. Second objective arranging workshop for Finnish au pairs in The Finnish Seamen's Mission church in May 2019. The workshop was held in the church and au pairs found workshop to be empowering. It was necessary to extend the ending time of the workshop for two hours. The third objective was producing a product based on the findings in the workshop. The booklet was created completely by the results of the workshop and was distributed to new au pairs in September 2019.



The risks of the product have been valued by internal and external factors. Internal risk factors are measured through the strengths and weaknesses of the product. Assessing the external factors, opportunities and threats. Helpful factors as strengths and possibilities and harmful factors are weaknesses and threats. (Martin 2012). Table 7 below shows the possibilities and risks of the product

TABLE 7. SWOT-analysis

	HELPFUL	HARMFUL
INTERNAL	<b>STRENGTHS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Booklet gives wide knowledge for au pairs</li> <li>• Finnish Seamen's Mission has accepted the booklet and are using it</li> <li>• Feedback from au pairs has been positive during the process</li> <li>• Frame of the booklet came from the need of au pairs</li> </ul>	<b>WEAKNESSES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 au pairs was contacted and 6 au pairs came to the workshop</li> <li>• Many au pairs had left the country</li> <li>• It took longer time to make the booklet than anticipated</li> <li>• Editing and layout of the booklet was made by the author</li> <li>• No legal background</li> </ul>
EXTERNAL	<b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Booklet could be translated to other languages</li> <li>• New thesis topics for example, au pairs situation in Finland</li> <li>• Possibility to develop new services for host families and au pairs</li> </ul>	<b>THREATS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host families are not interested of the information</li> <li>• Au pairs does not read the booklet</li> <li>• Unable to measure the successfulness of the booklet</li> </ul>

Internal strengths of this thesis are the wide information booklet contains and information is easily to be found when in doubt. Finnish Seamen's Mission has accepted the booklet and is using it as a tool when working with au pairs. The feedback from au pairs during the process of making the booklet was crucial. All au pairs wanted to continue to be part of the process till the end and have been given comments of the booklet during the process. The frame of the booklet came straight from the au pairs and information in the booklet has been researched from reliable sources.

Internal weaknesses are low participatory in the workshop: hence 30 au pairs were contacted and only 6 were able to take part in the workshop. Only one workshop was arranged, which might have been the reason for low participatory in the workshop. Also, many au pairs had left the country, but many au pairs thought the booklet was a good idea to be made. It took over four months to complete the booklet. The Booklet

was completed two days before it was given to first au pairs. Making the whole process by one person was time-consuming and a lot of work. There is no legal background to support this product, it can only be suggestive and informal for the au pairs.

External opportunities finished booklet could be translated into other languages to benefit au pairs from other countries. Possibilities to continue with thesis topics or do research au pairs situations in Finland. Possibilities to develop services for au pairs and host families which could benefit them. Services could be holding workshops regarding au pairing or what is required from host families.

External threats can be au pairs are unable to transfer the information in the booklet into use, which could be shown as a host family's lack of interest to implement given information in daily life. The possibility that au pairs find booklet to be difficult or too dense to read and they would not have the motivation to read the booklet. Unable to measure the possible impact or successfulness of the booklet. There could have been the possibility to survey to get feedback from new au pairs, but they had left the country or were out of reach when contacting Finnish Seamen's Mission.

## 6.2 Ending the process

When ending a process of the product, it is possible to use five steps to end the process. Steps to end the process are transferring the product, *Contract closure*, *administrative closure*, *celebration and reward*, *lessons learned from the process*. Depending on the scale of the project more measures might take into place when ending a process. (Dobson 2004, 158).

*Transferring the product* means in this thesis to hand over the finished product to cooperation organization; Finnish Seamen's Mission in Belgium. Also, it was required to inform the organization how to print the booklet correctly. (Dobson 2004,158).

*Closure of the contract* means in this thesis of destroying the consent forms, closing the contract with the cooperative organization. Data which have been collected and stored to be handled and destroyed. This step will be enforced when the thesis is approved and published. (Dobson 2004, 158).

*Administrative closure* stakeholders will be notified of the completion of the process. Approvals from the stakeholders, Seamen's Mission and Diaconia University of Applied Sciences will give the final approval of finishing the process. Au pairs will be notified of finishing the process and they will be receiving the final thesis. (Dobson 2004).

*Celebration and rewarding* in this context mean to credit the au pairs, supervisor of Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Finnish Seamen's Missions manager, Social welfare officer, workers and volunteers of helping to arrange the workshop and make this thesis a possibility. Not to forget everyone who has helped during the process. (Dobson 2004).

*Lessons learned from the process* of making the product. Every project/product has a good element which can be useful in the future. In this sense, saving the booklet and the research of it to use it later, if there would be interested to do something similar. (Dobson 2004).

When analyzing the project keep the elements which can be reused in a different project (Dobson 2004). Analyzing this process of making the booklet is hard. There is an element of success and vice versa. Making the whole process from the beginning, it would be important to structure the process in a detailed manner. Planning the workshop earlier and thinking other possible ways to gather more participants in the workshop. Or would there be a better way to gain information about au pair's needs?

In the other hand, the workshop was valuable for the participants, the facilitator and Finnish Seamen's Mission. Participants found the workshop being empowering for them and could speak out their mind first time during in au pair year. Me as a facilitator I could have made the first plan simpler, but my character as being flexible and innovative helped to improve the workshop during the workshop. Data collected from the workshop helped to make the frame of the workshop and Finnish Seamen's Mission got answers for their questions and the final product. They have been happy with the product and its extensive information for au pairs.

Going through all the materials and recordings took time. But this gave a clear understanding of what is needed, it also made it harder to narrow the topics in the booklet. Writing again the booklet narrowing down subtopics would make it simpler to use. In the time frame, it was made, it was too much work for one person.

We do not know what kind of effect this product has or is there any. Time will show if this gave au pairs tools to use with the host family, children or with their wellbeing. One thing is sure using this product au pair agreement will be known by the reader and this protects au pairs rights.

### 6.3 Outcome

The goal of this product is to give information to au pairs of the most asked questions. Finnish Seamen's Mission's distributed this product a booklet on their first au pair meet up with new au pairs in September 2019. New au pairs will immediately have access to basic information for au pair. This lowers the barrier to have access for information, guidance for most asked questions and promote the wellbeing of an au pair.

Finnish Seamen's mission hopes this product to give pressure towards host-families. One hope was to help au pair to open discussion with the host family when an outside source has given the product (booklet) to au pairs.

### 6.4 Challenges

The product was based on the workshop, which would give the lines of how the information booklet would turn out. To contact au pairs and motivate them was a key to have participants for the workshop.

The broad variety of this product made it difficult to research all the information needed or it was difficult to find accurate answers. For example, the interesting scenario of legislations about au pairs in Belgium, it was difficult to make conclusions.

Au pair agreement is one of the most difficult topics on this product. There are regulations and guidance for host families, but regulations are not compulsory, or they are ineffective to decrease abuse. Depending on the host family's location in Belgium, they might have different practices of how to use au pair rules. If Belgium's parliament would recognize au pair agreement these practices across Belgium municipalities might be unified as one practice.

The material and data collected from the workshop gave a lot of information and it came clear that narrowing the subtopics was needed. Narrowing down topics was used analyzing participants' mind maps from the workshop. Topics mentioned multiple times in the mind maps were highlighted and arranged into categories. This gave an understanding of the importance of topics for the participants and what should be included in the product.

Opinions of different individuals and ways of seeing the product varies. This has created many discussions of what should be in and what should be out of the product. This process of discussion has become clearer why these topics were chosen and why others were not in the final product.

## 7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The information booklet for Finnish au pairs in Belgium is meant to give information, guidance, and support for Finnish au pairs who visit Finnish seamen's mission in Brussels. The complexity of different regulations, rules, and laws makes it difficult for au pairs to find relevant information.

Data collection through the workshop gave a similar understanding of what Stenum had found in a study of Abused Domestic Workers in Europe; Case of au pairs. The study founded that many au pairs face abuse at some level during their stay. One reason for this abuse is the complexity of legislation, regulations, and au pair agreement, which has not been ratified by the Belgian Parliament.

Difficulties of legislation come in part when there are no statistics of how many au pairs from other European Union states come to the country as an au pair. Au pairs belong under the mobility act, but at the same time, the au pair is not concerned as a mobility worker. For this reason, au pairs are dropped in the middle of legislations which makes it difficult to ratify universal rules for au pairs and host families.

The booklet and accessibility to a safe space are important for au pairs. This enables au pairs to have a voice and place to support each other. Au pairs found the workshop to be useful for themselves and many of them told about their experiences first time in public.

Collecting data through the workshop gave important knowledge of where au pairs need more information and support. In the workshop was established four topics for the booklet; au pair contract, host-family, child development and wellbeing of au pair. All the main topics have subtopics that came up during the workshop from au pairs. The finished product was handed by Finnish Seamen's mission in Benelux countries in Brussels to Finnish au pairs in September of 2019. The impact of this booklet has not been measured.

## 7.1 Recommendations

As there has been no measure of the impact of the booklet, we do not know whether it is useful for au pairs. Au pairs might need some motivation to go through the booklet and Seamen's Mission could support au pairs to get to know the booklet. It will take time to see any impact of the booklet, but it can be helpful to know au pairs rights, how to communicate with your host family, how to resolve difficult situations in childcare or how to take care of wellbeing.

With the support of Finnish Seamen's Mission in Brussels would be founded new gatherings and events held for au pairs and host families to support them. For host-families and families who are thinking of having au pair information events of au pair contract. During the workshop it came into the notion that many families are struggling with childcare, there is an opportunity to give guidance for parents and support for them. For au pairs to have gatherings in different places, support their social network and personal life.

## 7.2 Professional development

Learning the difficult situation au pairs can have with their host family, have taught me the importance of protecting vulnerable groups from possible exploitation. In the case of au pairs, there is little legal background therefore it is important to know about basic human rights. This will help to acknowledge misuse and pass information forward.

Arranging and planning a workshop has taught me how to organize workshops or events. Understanding my strengths and using them during the workshop was important. Learning to ask advice when needed and being open for learning new. I have learned to live with pressure and learned the importance of having time off. The ability to connect with au pairs in the workshop was crucial to a successful workshop. Making a booklet and most of all I have learned to listen and giving a space for others which will help in my career as a Social Service Worker.

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