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Challenges Facing Finnish Youth: A Rural Perspective

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Abstract <p>Finland's youth face new challenges in their lives which are dramatically increasing their mental burden. Issues such as bullying, exhaustion and difficulties in adapting to new situations are present in the everyday life of many young people in Finland, and these issues are sometimes difficult to solve. In 2016 the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture sent out a call for action, <i>Meaningful in Finland</i>, to help address the challenges.</p> <p>Students from the Degree Programme in International Business at JAMK University of Applied Sciences were eager to take part in solving the issues by developing a game, Young New Horizons, based on the original version of New Horizons that would help the youth of Finland discuss in a safe environment the issues and concerns they are facing. This research contributed to the creation of the game by identifying some of the challenges and concerns of the youth in the rural setting of Finland. The study was implemented utilizing a qualitative research approach to gain deep perspectives through a small group session with the second-year students of Pihtipudas high school, located in a rural area of Finland. The students provided their insights on the issues the youth are dealing with by developing new card ideas for the emerging Young New Horizons game aimed at the youth from fourteen to twenty-five years old.</p> <p>The findings provide an insight into some of the challenges the youth in the rural setting of Finland are facing. The results provide valuable content for the Young New Horizons game and thus broadened the themes covered in the new deck. Along with the new content for the game, recommendations for future research and suggestions for further exploration and identification of the challenges of the youth living in the rural areas of Finland are provided.</p>		
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<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Suomen nuoret kohtaavat jatkuvasti uusia haasteita, mikä kasvattaa heidän henkistä taakkaansa. Ongelmat, kuten kiusaaminen, uupumus sekä haasteet sopeutua uusiin tilanteisiin ovat läsnä monen Suomessa asuvan nuoren elämässä, ja näiden ongelmien ratkaiseminen on joskus haasteellista. Vuonna 2016 Suomen opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö julkaisi Merkityksellinen Suomessa -toimintaohjelman auttaakseen haasteisiin vastaamista.</p> <p>Osa Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulun kansainvälisen liiketoiminnan opiskelijoista päätti osallistua nuorten ongelmien ratkaisemiseen kehittämällä pelin, joka pohjautuu New Horizons -pelin alkuperäiseen versioon ja joka auttaisi nuoria keskustelemaan heidän huolistaan ja kohtaamistaan ongelmista turvallisessa ympäristössä. Tämän tutkimuksen päämäärä oli tuoda kehitettävään peliin lisää sisältöä, joka käsittelisi maaseudulla asuvien nuorten kohtaamia huolia ja haasteita. Tutkimus toteutettiin käyttäen kvalitatiivista tutkimusmenetelmää fokusryhmätyöskentelyn kautta syvien näkökulmien saavuttamiseksi. Fokusryhmänä toimi maaseudulla sijaitsevan Pihtiputaan lukion toisen vuoden opiskelijoista muodostettu ryhmä. Opiskelijat antoivat heidän oman näkökulmansa nuorten kohtaamista ongelmista kehittämällä uusia kortti-ideoita Young New Horizons -peliin, joka on suunnattu 14–25-vuotiaille nuorille.</p> <p>Tuloksista löytyy oivalluksia ja erilaisia näkökulmia osaan maaseudulla asuvien nuorten kohtaamiin ongelmiin. Tutkimustulokset tarjoavat arvokasta sisältöä Young New Horizons -peliin, mikä laajensi kyseisen pelin teemojen kirjoa entisestään. Tutkimuksen tarjoaman uuden pelisisällön lisäksi tutkimus tarjoaa suosituksia sekä mahdolliselle tulevalle tutkimustyölle että ehdotuksia maaseudulla asuvien nuorten kohtaamien ongelmien laajempaa tutkimista varten.</p>		
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1 Introduction

The anti-bullying program KiVa, *Kiusaamisen Vastainen koulu* [School against bullying] was founded in 2007 and it covers preschool and grades 1-9, and the uptake of the program is 90% of all the Finnish comprehensive schools (Salmivalli & Poskiparta 2012, 294). However, unfortunately also high school students and vocational school students face bullying and discrimination but there is no such program at that level of school. In spring 2016, the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture sent a call for action concerning bullying, discrimination and other problems of the youth in Finnish schools. The call for action, *Merkityksellinen Suomessa* [Meaningful in Finland] is a program against hate speech and racism.

Furthermore, in 2017 the Ministry of Education and Culture published a report about the situation of the Finnish high school system. According to the answers to the school health queries of 2014 and 2016, the exhaustion of the Finnish high school students has increased. Around 17-18 percent of the girls and a bit less than 10 percent of the boys feel exhausted. In addition, only 44 percent of the high school students feel joy and no exhaust. The rest of the students are mildly stressed, cynical or extremely exhausted. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017a, 37-38.) Moreover, the Finnish universities' application system has changed: universities and universities of applied sciences are now taking in more students based on their matriculation examination results and the intake of applicants taking entrance exams is reduced (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017b). The mental burden during high school is extremely large for many students and after the reform of the universities' application system, the high school students have to make concrete decisions about their future already when starting high school, which again brings them even more pressure and stress and it increases the possibility to exhaustion.

In JAMK University of Applied Sciences, the students of the Degree Programme in International Business must choose an academic track for their second study year. The students of Cross-Cultural Management academic track, which helps students understand culture as a potential resource for managers in international business management, decided to take part in solving the problem by creating a card game for the youth, especially for high school and vocational school students to help them discuss

in a safe environment the issues the youth might face. The researcher decided to continue her thesis within the same topic after the academic track ended.

1.1 Research background and motivation

The researcher grew up in the small town of Pihtipudas in Central-Finland which was the main reason for her to focus on her thesis to identify some of the issues the youth of Finland are facing with the help of the second-year students of Pihtipudas high school. Pihtipudas is a town of approximately 4,000 inhabitants; to understand better the issues of the youth, the views of young people living both in the rural and urban areas of Finland are needed. Even though the culture is the same to a large extent, there is a surprisingly big difference in the scheme of concerns and the issues of the youth of big cities and small towns. Furthermore, the researcher's mother has been working in the field of social studies for over twenty years; ergo the researcher has had the privilege of being exposed to various forms of social work, and would like to work in the field of social work in the future.

The researcher's motivation for the study has been forming since the beginning of her studies at JAMK University of Applied Sciences. The desire to help other people has always been close to her heart. Studying in JAMK University of Applied Sciences, at the end of the first year, the International Business students have the privilege of choosing an academic track on which their theses will be based on. The researcher ended up choosing Cross-Cultural Management, since it covers topics such as conflict management, e.g. NVC (nonviolent communication), that are major issues, for example, in the field of social work. The range of the projects offered in the track were numerous, and the researcher was eager to contribute to the project's response to the call for action sent by the Ministry of Education and Culture to help find solutions to the issues the youth in Finnish schools are facing.

After graduating, the researcher is planning to study social services, thus the chosen research topic will most likely further her knowledge and skillset related to social services.

1.2 Structure of the research

The research report consists of six chapters which support the suggested structure by the JAMK reporting instructions for bachelor's theses.

Chapter one (1), being the Introduction, initializes the topic to engage the reader. It justifies the selection of the research topic by familiarizing the reader with the anti-bullying program KiVa and giving basic information about the call for action of the Finnish Ministry of Education. The chapter also describes the researcher's background and motivation to conduct this study. Chapter two (2), Theoretical Framework covers the key concepts essential to the research through secondary data and further explains the concept of the study. Methodology, being the third (3) chapter of the research paper will familiarize the reader with the research questions and will describe the research objectives and the practice of how the research will be implemented.

In the Results chapter (4) the findings of the session in Pihtipudas high school will be discussed. It will describe how the existing New Horizons Youth deck cards worked in a rural high school and introduce the new content created during the session with the second-year high school students. Chapter five (5), Discussion, will summarize the findings and prove the research questions are answered adequately. The focus will be on the main findings of the research. Conclusion (6) will summarize the research and describe its reliability. Furthermore, it will outline the limitations of the research and provide further researchers with recommendations.

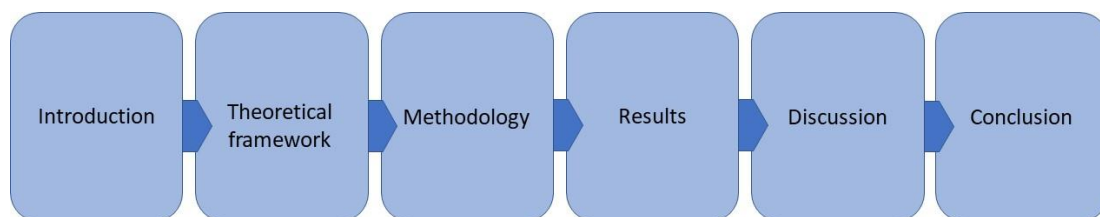


Figure 1. Structure of the research

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Gamification and game-based learning

Kapp defines gamification as the following: “*gamification is using game-based mechanics, aesthetics and game thinking to engage people, motivate action, promote learning, and solve problems*” (Kapp 2012, 10). Nowadays gamification has a major role in the world. Gamification, when done correctly, is a fairly simple way to engage people in learning. Adding elements of games into normal actions, like teaching, makes it fun and engaging to the participants.

The reason for the growing popularity of gamification is the growth of the amount of video game players in the world. The average time a video game player has been playing is twelve years and playing is not only the youth’s activity anymore. (ibid., 18.) Video games are becoming more popular globally every year; hence it is easier to engage people by making using game-based teaching methods.

According to Kapp, many mistake badges, points and rewards for gamification. He states that those game elements are the least useful ones that people label as gamification. When the focus is on engagement, storytelling and problem solving, gamification is built on the foundations it needs. (ibid., 12-13.)

The definitions of gamification and game-based learning differ from each other. Game-based learning is the use of video games to support teaching and learning (Perrotta, Featherstone, Aston & Houghton 2013, 1), whereas gamification is taking qualities typical to games and using them, for example, to engage people and raise their motivation.

A quiz-based website Kahoot! is an example of a game-based learning tool. Kahoot! itself states that “Kahoot! is a game-based learning and trivia platform used in classrooms, offices and social settings.” The core idea of Kahoot! is that everyone can create their own quizzes and surveys that suit for the teaching/learning situation. The participants sign in to the game with their mobile devices and follow the game from a bigger screen, answering the questions via their mobile devices. The one who answers the questions correct the fastest, gets most points and wins the game. The major factor that makes Kahoot! a game-based learning tool is the way it is built: it increases competitiveness by showing the progress after each question. By showing the participants how they are doing is very important since they will make their next move based on their results at that point, which again raises competitiveness and engagement amongst the participants. (Kiryakova, Angelova & Yordanova 2013, 2.)

Gamification has a major role in the research since the New Horizons youth deck is using game elements to engage and get the youth discussing the issues and difficult situations they are facing. Adding such a simple element as cards into the situation might help the youth to think about the discussion as a game rather than sharing their own sensitive experiences and thoughts about the topics. When playing the game, they get to hear about others’ experiences which might help them think and handle their own issues.

2.2 New Horizons history overview

In 2015 Europe faced a major migrant crisis. The amounts of refugees coming to European countries were multiple compared to, for example, 2014. There were many refugees arriving also in Finland in the hope of a better life: at the end of 2015, there were almost 32,500 asylum seekers whereas the same number in 2014 was 3,600, nearly ten times smaller. At the beginning of 2015, Finland had only less than 20 reception centres. Due to the rising amount of the asylum seekers, there was a need for more reception centres and the amount of them, at the end of 2015, was around 140 and there were living approximately 27,000 asylum seekers in the reception centres. (Rautio & Juutilainen 2016.)

As a response to the refugee crisis, the students of Cross-Cultural Management course organized the JAMK United of Refugees, JUfR, in September 2015 together with staff at JAMK University of Applied Sciences. It was a campaign that aimed at raising the awareness of the ongoing refugee crisis amongst the community. The first phase of the JUfR program, started in autumn 2015, culminated in a public event held on November 19th 2018 where were e.g. featured NGOs and various speakers. (New Horizons 2016, 1.)

The second phase of JUfR was a nation-wide response to the refugee crisis in Finland. Together with Dr. George Simons, the creator of the diversophy intercultural games, the participants of the project invented a card-based game which helps the players to understand the culture and practices of Finland and the immigrant communities in Finland. The participants playing games were asked to create new content for the game, and all the facts were checked by JAMK's project members. The game content is at least both in Finnish and English to increase the accessibility in a multicultural community. (ibid., 3.)

The third phase of the JUfR project focused on the first release, "Bridge Building Game" on Finnish culture and a demographic sample of migrant cultures in Finland, and raising the awareness of it across the nation and disseminating it to end users. During the fall 2016 the students helped to facilitate the game in the field. To create new content for the New Horizons deck focusing on youth culture, employability and

entrepreneurship, the students cooperated with local NGOs, and various municipal and educational organizations. (New Horizons 2017b, 1.) Furthermore, one of the significant outcomes of the project was that nine asylum seekers completed the course in Spring 2016. The asylum seekers were provided with financial help to pay for the Open University tuition fees, transportation to the university and lunches. They were awarded 5 ECTS for completing the course and they gained important skills and opportunities related to intellectual stimulation, academically oriented activities and social networking. Two of the students of the course enrolled in Open University Master's studies which started in fall 2016. (New Horizons 2017a.)

At first, the cards were published in PDF format which are free to be printed and are ready for use, for example, by teachers and trainers. After a while the demand for a durable deck started to rise; thus a printed and boxed deck was created (New Horizons 2017b, 1).

Phase 4 of the project included further content development, R&D activities and promoting the game across Finland (New Horizons 2017a). The user base of New Horizons has grown steadily and by the end of year 2017, there were registered users in 25 other nations. During the year 2017, New Horizons went to a teacher workshop road show to raise the awareness of the game amongst teachers across nations. The tour included SIETAR Europa in Dublin, Ireland; the European Association for International Education in Seville, Spain; in addition, the Nordic Intercultural Communication conference in Jyväskylä, Finland. In the year 2018, New Horizons was facilitated in teacher workshops at SIETAR India and also in Philadelphia for NAFSA: Association of International Educators. (ibid., 1.)

After the release of the first complete deck, there was created another one, Cultural Competence Development pack. It complements the Bridge-Building Game by fifty "beginner" and fifty "advanced" level cards. The deck helps the player to understand the attitudes and approaches needed to live and work with people representing other cultures. (ibid., 1-2.)

The New Horizons project profile (2017a) states the core idea of the games as following:

The games celebrate the present human diversity across Finland by creating empathetic relationships, forming common grounds to adapt to the new composition of our local populations.

The game provides a chance to establish empathetic human connections and to discuss the cultural differences as well as similarities, and issues such as negative stereotypes, racism and hate speech in a non-threatening environment. (New Horizons 2017a.) Currently the product development of diversophy® is developing an online version of the game to allow people all over the world to play the game together as a group while maintaining the interactive gaming experience. (diversophy® n.d.)

2.3 diversophy®

Diversophy® was developed in 1972 by George Simons, the founder of George Simons International. It was first used as a tool to train student assistants in universities to handle conflicts and to help students face the issues they were facing in multicultural living situations. (diversophy® n.d.)

Currently diversophy® has about 60 games that work as efficient business training tools used by global corporations, public agencies, social service agencies, NGOs, immigration services and many others all over the world. Gamification works as a core idea of the games for teaching, learning and training.

The purpose of diversophy® interactive learning games is to help people understand different cultures and deal with others who have different backgrounds by furthering the factual knowledge and understanding of other cultures. Majority of the diversophy® games are related to cultural competence and cultural diversity in business context, however, there are games to enhance the knowledge of the cultural characteristics of a specific country, and some diversophy® games also aim at helping to discuss social issues, such as sexual identity and healthcare. One of these decks is the New Horizons Bridge-Building Game for acculturation between the locals and migrants, developed in cooperation between Dr. George Simons and the JAMK United for Refugees project implemented by JAMK University of Applied Sciences. (ibid.)

2.3.1 Card types

Typically, the diversophy® card games have cards across five categories. All the different type of cards help players to get from “ethnocentricity”, focusing mainly on their own culture, to “diversophy”, maintaining higher cultural sensitivity and skill (New Horizons 2017a). The card types are the following:

diversiSMARTS: Challenge players’ factual knowledge about specific cultural topics.

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

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

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

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

2.4 The New Horizons Youth Project

The fifth phase of the JUfR project involved developing a game aimed at youth between fourteen and twenty-five years of age. In May 2016, the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture released the *Meaningful in Finland Action Plan*, which aims to prevent hate speech and racism and to enhance social inclusion (Ministry of Education and Culture 2016, 1). The Cross-Cultural Management academic track students in fall 2017 were provided with the opportunity to develop a new game for New Horizons within the aims of the Meaningful in Finland Action Plan (see 2.6) to help the youth to discuss their issues in a safe environment. The new game covering content related to the youth aims to decrease the amount of racism, bullying, hate speech

and social inequality amongst youth and the community of Finland through discussions within the game. The youth game will help enhance youth's interpersonal and intercultural communication skills to gain empathetic relationships amongst the youth. The game will be a helpful tool for teachers and others working with young people to raise discussions about some of the major issues and important topics. (New Horizons 2017a, 2.)

In fall 2017, the New Horizons project started working with local high schools to develop content for the youth deck. The first collaboration with the high school students took place on 23rd of October 2017, when the JAMK students of Cross-Cultural Management track went to Jyväskylän Lyseon lukio [Lyseo high school] to organize a play session. JAMK students introduced the game to the high school students and held a warm-up activity, after which the New Horizons game was played in groups of approximately five people including at least one JAMK student in every group. After playing, JAMK students held a short debriefing discussion for the high school students to talk about the experience, ask questions and tell their possible concerns and how the game made them feel.

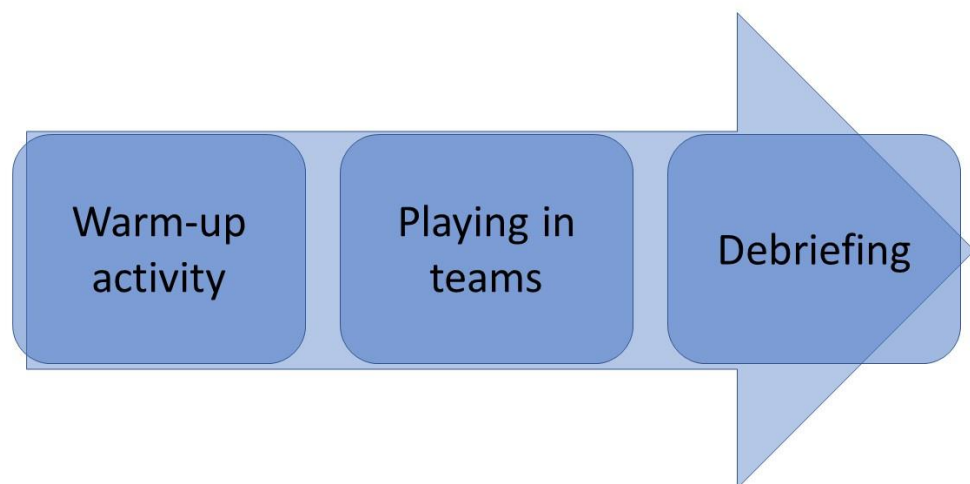


Figure 2. Process of playing

The researcher worked as one of the facilitators in the session. The researcher noticed it was essential to have at least one JAMK student in the groups to get the conversation flowing. Once the playing started, the high school students became actively

engaged to the game, which created a good starting point for the collaboration to create content for the game. In further card development, the JAMK students worked together with high school students from Lyseo high school and Schildt high school. The high school students were mixed together to create small groups for the JAMK students to work with. The process included brainstorming sessions and card creation sessions in the groups and also some individual work in order to create more content for the youth deck. The JAMK students were provided with a “Themes and Topics Related to Youth Culture Content” list as a support for the sessions with the high school students; if they had difficulties coming up with new content, the JAMK students could use the list to give them some topics to think about.

The collaborations resulted in approximately fifty (50) drafts. They were tested during playing sessions with high school students.

The new edition of New Horizons, Young New Horizons was published in January 1st, 2020. The game is aimed at teenagers and young adults from fourteen to twenty-five years old. When playing Young New Horizons, the youth can increase their understanding amongst them in Finland. (New Horizons n.d.) Young New Horizons has cards in all categories (see 2.3.1). There are 13 diversiCHOICE cards, 20 diversiGUIDE cards, 28 diversiRISK cards, 49 diversiSHARE cards and 12 diversiSMARTS cards; in addition, there are also wild cards which allow the person drawing one to ask another player about their culture or their opinions about a certain topic. The game is available for download and it can also be bought as a ready-printed stack. Due to the situation caused by COVID-19, once a new registrant opens the link to find the content, the game is delivered to the registrant in PowerPoint format, meaning the game is now optimized for online play. Furthermore, the card design in PPT format is optimized for Zoom, which is an online platform for video conferencing and meetings; hence it is possible to play the game online in small groups or even in online classes.

2.5 Sustainable business management education

Most businesses aim for corporate sustainability. In order to reach it, businesses need stronger and more skilful leaders in the future. Business and management schools and institutions are the ones where future leaders’ mindsets and skills can be

shaped; thus those institutions need to develop themselves to become the places for sustainable business management education. (PRME Steering Committee 2007, 2.)

According to Weybrecht (2016, 2), when sustainability is discussed, business graduates are often seen as a part of the problem. However, business graduates are, in fact, the ones who can affect in the future of the business world and make it more sustainable, thus they should rather be seen as a part of the solution. This should be considered when planning the study programmes and developing business schools. Weybrecht developed 100 ideas to support the process of making business education sustainable. Weybrecht (ibid.) has divided the ideas into nine main categories. The first category is the student, where, for example, personal development and reflection are emphasized. In the second main category, the skills, there are tips for preparing the students for the working life after graduation, such as balancing life and work, sharing skills and going from competition to collaboration. The third category, being the curriculum, helps to develop efficient timetables for the programmes. In the fourth category, the classroom, Weybrecht (2016, 49) puts more emphasis on how the information is being taught to the students rather than what is being taught, in order for each student to reach the best possible outcome. Sections five and six, the programme and the school states how school's own programmes and operations can help maintain and engage in the sustainability agenda. Section seven, the system, focuses on shaping a more accessible and responsive management education system. Sections eight and nine, the community and the bigger picture, has ideas for how to affect in the local and international community. (ibid., 13.)

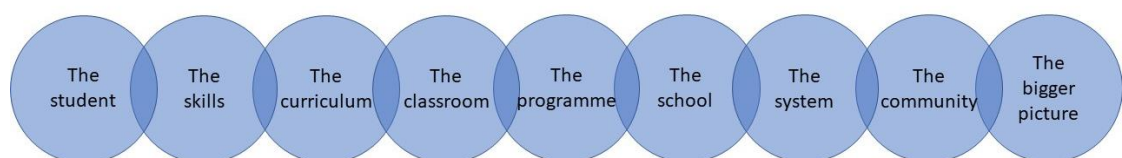


Figure 3. The main categories of sustainable business management education

The core in sustainable business management education is the student themselves. It is important to recognize the needs of every individual in order to help them reach their full potential. New Horizons Youth deck helps the youth to understand themselves and others better and aims to decrease the amount of any conflicts amongst the youth.

2.6 Service learning

According to the Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement, service learning is *“a teaching method that combines academic coursework with the application of institutional resources (e.g., knowledge and expertise of students, faculty and staff, political position, buildings and land) to address challenges facing communities through collaboration with these communities”* (2015, 1). It is ideal for developing the academic skills, commitment to the community and civic responsibility of students through critical and reflective thinking (ibid.).

Service learning includes academic study, community engagement and reflection. Service learning is connected to a course’s goals and objectives which students are expected to meet through applying their academic knowledge and skills to so called real-life situations through community engagement. In community engagement, students reply to the issues and challenges set by the community itself. Community partners act as co-educators during the learning process. Reflection is essential to the learning process. Students reflect their learning, for example, through class discussions or reflection journals to understand the meaning of their experience and conclude the connections between the learning goals and community engagement. (ibid., 2.)

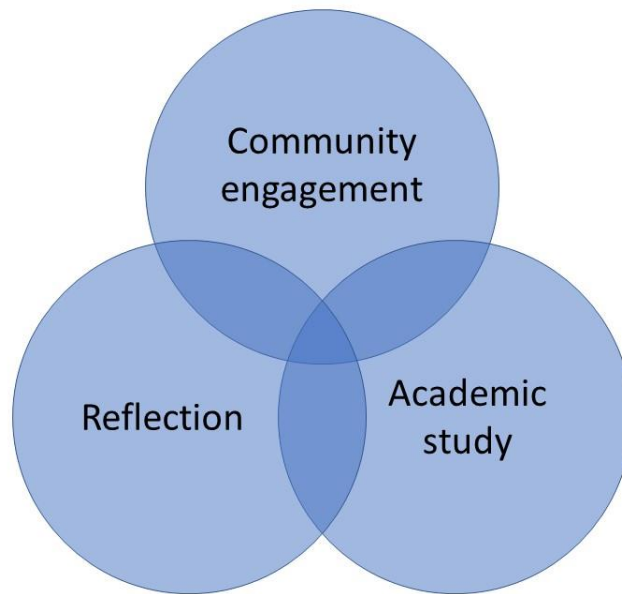


Figure 4. What is service learning? (adapted from Service-Learning Toolkit: A Guide for MSU Faculty & Instructors 2015, 1)

Service-learning benefits both the students and the community. The students can be given a mission, for example, to plan and execute an event to further the wellbeing of the community, or to plan a new park to improve the face of a town. The students taking part in the project are expected to apply their theoretical and academic knowledge and critical thinking skills. The students will get academic credits not only for the completed volunteering hours but their learning as well. The goal of service-learning is to increase students' community engagement through collaborating with the community and reflecting their learning in their course learning goals while increasing their expertise in the fields of, for example, critical thinking, leadership and multicultural understanding. (Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement 2015, 2.)

The Service-Learning Toolkit provides a list of the benefits service learning has for the Michigan State University MSU students, of which the most significant one is building connections with the representatives of the community which help them in the future when looking for an internship or even a job (Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement 2015, 6). Several other studies show that service learning is beneficial to students: a longitudinal study, published in 2000, conducted by four students

of the University of California in Los Angeles introduces the positive effects of service learning on students. There were 22,236 college undergraduates from who the data were collected. The results of the four-year study were extremely positive in every 11 measures; service learning affected in the students' academic performance, self-efficacy, leadership skills, choice of service career and the decision to participate in service after graduating very positively. The results also showed that the majority of the participant felt like they were helpful and succeeded in making a difference, which is important in service learning. (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda & Yee 2000.)

The youth of Finland is going through a very fragile point in their lives when studying in high school or vocational school, thus the feeling of being useful and important is crucial. Students of Pihtipudas high school were taking part in community service learning when creating cards for the New Horizons youth deck since the upcoming deck is helping the youth to discuss their issues which again is helpful in furthering their wellbeing.

2.7 Sociological perspectives

There are various perspectives provided by sociological theories from which to view the social world (Mooney, Knox & Schacht 2007, 1). There are various explanations to help understand the social world and human behaviour, which are under three main sociological perspectives (ibid., 1). The three perspectives are

- The symbolic interactionist perspective,
- The functionalist perspective, and
- The conflict perspective.

Sociologists study both the micro level, small social patterns, and the macro level, large social patterns (CliffsNotes n.d.) Symbolic interactionist perspective, also known as the interactionist perspective, focuses on the micro sociology level analysis. It looks at the social psychological dynamics of individuals interacting in smaller groups. The influence of the work of early sociologist and philosophers, such as George Herbert Mead and Erving Goffman, can be seen in the symbolic interactionist perspective. The perspective emphasizes the influence of definitions and meanings,

such as the use of symbols, in human behaviour. Face-to-face interaction is crucial in this perspective. (Mooney et al. 2007, 1.)

While the symbolic interactionist perspective focuses on the micro level of analysis, the functionalist perspective focuses on the macro level, the bigger picture. The foundations of the perspective is strongly based on the works of Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parson and Robert Merton. According to the functionalist perspective, interconnected parts working together in harmony in order to maintain balance and social equilibrium form a system which is called the society. (ibid.) Every social institution, starting from as small part as a family, contributes as a crucial function in society. Mooney, Knox and Schacht (2007, 1) use families as examples of how interconnectedness work. The number of children who are failing in school has been proven to correlate with the increase in single-parent and dual-earner families, since parents have less time for supervising their children's homework. Another example they used was how the increasing amount of women in the workforce has affected in the increased amount of policies, such as non-discrimination and equal employment opportunity policies. The terms functional and dysfunctional are used to describe how the social elements affect in society. There are also two types of functions, which are manifest and latent. Manifest functions are commonly recognized consequences, such as education's purpose to transfer skills and knowledge to the youth, whereas latent functions are unintended, like colleges offering a place for mate-selection. (ibid., 1.)

In the functional perspective, the different parts of society work together in harmony. The conflict perspective is the opposite, where groups compete for power and resources. The basis of this perspective is strongly in the work of Karl Marx. It focuses on different groups, emphasizing the power and benefits they have gained from particular social arrangements, being on the macro level of analysis. (ibid., 2.)

Learning is strictly tied into sociology since it is a social and cultural phenomenon (Jarvis 2007, 8). The learning process is life-long and is different to each individual even within a particular culture because individuals can be affected by a variety of cultures and groups they are a part of. Individuals also learn from their socially constructed experiences including the ones of others with whom they interact (ibid., 10). Even though learning is influenced by the relationships individuals have which again

are affected by power, learning is not predetermined since individuals have creative and critical thinking (ibid., 20).

Furthermore, sub-cultures affect in an individual's learning. All groups and organisations have their own sub-cultures, and people usually adjust their behaviour to fit into the sub-culture in question. (ibid., 22.) Even schools have their own sub-cultures, thus the youth normally feel the need to adapt to the sub-culture to feel being part of something. This might cause a variety of negative feelings in an individual since the feeling of belonging is highly important at that age. Furthermore, there are ten different models of the learning society, of which social learning is one (ibid., 104). New Horizons youth deck aims to bring up discussion between people and ideally create new friendships by bringing people together, which also epitomizes social learning.

2.8 Meaningful in Finland -action plan

In 2016, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland launched a program against racism and hate speech. The aim of the program, by the end of 2025, is to make Finland open and international, rich by its languages and culture and a good country of which positive attitude toward each other and the surrounding world makes Finland unique. The funding of the program is EUR 6 million. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2016, 2.)

The current economic situation, uncertainties created by fast changes and the refugee crisis affects the whole nation, thus the foundations of trust and safety are unstable. The very situation is a prompt breeding ground for aggressive speech and a basis for segmentation. The hate speech is aimed at people who are considered different; one does not even have to be a foreigner to be a victim of hate speech. People are reacting negatively towards immigrants and everyone observed slightly different because of hate speech and the feeling of threat. In order to maintain the wellbeing of Finland, the key factors trust and mutual respect between people and other communities need to be taken care of by every individual. (ibid., 3.)

There are ten actions in the action plan which are

1. Administrative mechanisms. We focus on tackling hate speech and racism and strengthening multiculturalism, inclusion and equality in the Ministry of Education and Culture, its agencies, bodies and other organisations,
2. Money to fight racism. We supplement the selection criteria for the Ministry of Education and Culture's discretionary government-subsidised projects and European Social Fund (ESF) measure packages,
3. The library as a meeting point. We help enable public libraries to encourage active citizenship and democracy,
4. ABCs for adults. We develop the education of teaching staff and other professionals who work with children and young people,
5. Power from peer networks. We challenge youth, student, pre-teen organisations and other youth-oriented organisations to create opportunities for multicultural, communal and equal participation,
6. The future lies in young people. We support experts in the youth sector to promote human rights and equality to tackle hate speech,
7. No more hate speech. A special government grant application process for municipal youth services serves to curb hate speech and strengthen equality,
8. Show Racism the Red Card! We help disseminate the project in football and other team sports and promote equality work in the field of physical activity,
9. Let's talk. A government grant for the promotion of dialogue between religions is available, and
10. Let's campaign. We have launched the "Meaningful in Finland" challenge.

The Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland (2016, 3) states that the feelings of exclusion, social injustice, irrelevance and even the experience of bullying can lead to hate speech and racist behaviour. The New Horizons youth deck is a response to the Ministry call for action, aiming to help decrease the amount of racism, discrimination

and bullying and increase the understanding towards others by raising discussion about the issues of the youth.

3 Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology is being thoroughly explained. The theoretical background helped form the following research questions which informed the chosen research methods:

How do students in a rural setting of Finland react to the Young New Horizons cards and game play?

What ideas and topics for Young New Horizons come to mind from rural Finnish youth?

How do the produced new cards complement and contribute to the new Young New Horizons game?

The purpose of this research is to broaden the New Horizons youth deck with the content that students of a rural Finnish school develop; to take under consideration the differences between the issues they are facing and the problems and concerns students living in a bigger city are coping with. The data provided by the students in Pihtipudas high school offer a basis for the new content to be created for the New Horizons youth deck.

3.1 Research approach

A research approach is a combination of three main elements that are the worldviews, the designs, and specific research methods for conducting a study. The three main elements define the research approach to be used in a research. (Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J. D. 2018, 3.)

Worldviews are the general philosophical orientations about the world and the character of a research that a researcher decides to study. When making a research proposal or plan, bringing out the researcher's own philosophical worldviews help understand the choice of the research approach. (ibid., 5.)

The philosophical worldviews are divided into four subcategories which are the post-positivist, the constructivist, the transformative and the pragmatic worldviews. The worldview guiding the methodology of this study is the constructivist worldview. It is typically seen as an approach to qualitative research and its goal is to rely on the participants' views of the studied situation as much as possible, thus the questions used in the research are usually kept as open-ended as possible. According to Creswell, when the constructivist worldview is guiding the methodology of the study, it is important for the researcher to understand that their own background is shaping their interpretation. (Creswell 2006, 21.)

The qualitative research approach is implemented in this research in order to answer the research questions. There are multiple statements Creswell (2014) has written that are in favour for choosing a qualitative research approach for the research in question. Qualitative research approach should be implemented if the important variables to be examined are not known, like in the research in question (ibid., 20). Creswell states that *"qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem"* (ibid., 4). The natural setting of the qualitative research approach emphasises the importance of face-to-face interaction, as well as the importance of focusing on how the participants see the issue (ibid., 186-187).

3.2 Methods of data collection

To answer the research questions, both secondary and primary data is used in the research. The data that has already been collected for other purposes but is reanalysed in another research is known as secondary data. There has already been created a total of 55 cards for the Youth deck in collaboration with the students of Schildt high school and Lyseo high school in Jyväskylä, which work as the secondary data basis for the research. By going through the existing cards, it is possible to see which topics are covered well and which topics do not have enough content. The ministry call for action defines and narrows down the research area. The aim is to go through the existing cards with the students to see which cards work and which ones do not and to suggest improvements.

Primary data is defined as the new data collected for the use of the research in question. The primary data for this research was collected during a session at Pihtipudas high school, where the existing cards were played through and they were given improvement ideas. In addition, the students created new cards for the youth deck themselves, which represent the primary data in this research.

3.3 Population and sampling

The definition of a research population is “a full set of cases from which a sample is taken” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009, 212). The research in question aims to get new content for the New Horizons youth deck from students of Pihtipudas high school, thus the population of the study is “all high school students residing the rural areas of Finland.”

However, population is usually too broad a concept for such a research since only a minor number of the representatives of the population is accessible. One reason to use sampling is if would be impractical to survey the entire population, also known as census (ibid.). That is why sampling, i.e. selecting participants for the study, is used in this research.

The sampling techniques can be divided into two main types, which are

- Probability or representative sampling, and
- Non-probability or judgmental sampling.

The type suitable for the research in question is non-probability sampling, also known as judgmental sampling. This type offers a range of sample selecting techniques where the researcher’s own subjective judgement can be used. (ibid., 233.)

There are five different sampling techniques within non-probability sampling, being quota sampling, purposive sampling, snowball sampling, self-selection sampling and convenience sampling. The sampling technique the researcher used in this study is the purposive sampling technique. This sampling technique is useful when working with small samples. It allows the researcher to use their own judgement in selecting

the sample to best answer the research questions and to meet the objectives. (ibid., 237.)

The research questions and objectives are the guidelines for choosing a sampling technique within the purposive sampling method. The sampling technique applied in this research is homogeneous sampling. When applying this sampling technique, the focus is on one particular sub-group having similar members. (ibid., 239-240.) In this research, the main group is Finnish high school students living in the rural areas, and the sub-group where the research focuses on is students of Pihtipudas high school.

Non-probability sampling is more biased than probability sampling, but it can still provide reliable data (Tongco 2007, 153). The sample size in this research is kept fairly small in order to achieve the aims of the research and maintain the efficiency of the project.

3.4 Implementation and analysis

The researcher worked with the second-year students of Pihtipudas high school. Because of the limited time frame, there was one session with the high school students during which the already existing cards were tested and developed to expand the card deck with new content. The research is qualitative since the researcher worked with a small group of students and discussed the content together with them.

During the visit, the students were divided into smaller groups and they went through some of the existing cards by playing the game. The purpose of the meeting was to make notes about the existing cards: what works and what does not work. After the students had played the game, they supposedly had a better understanding about the concept, and they were able to start developing new content. The topics that had not been covered earlier at all or had been covered very lightly were shown to the students after starting the content creation. However, the topics were not limited to ensure it did not affect in the students' ideas. This was almost the same method that was used in fall 2017 to create cards with the high school students in Jyväskylä and it was found effective, therefore it was used also in this research. There

were 12 students of Pihtipudas high school who worked on the new content during the session. The aim was to create around one new card per each participant.

The cards created by the students of Pihtipudas high school are only drafts. After the visit to the high school, the cards will be gone through and modified by senior lecturer Steven Crawford and the founder of diversophy® George Simons, who will modify the draft cards into finalised cards for the New Horizons youth deck.

3.5 Timeline of the research

The schedule of the research is presented in the table below (Table 1). It demonstrates the different stages of the research from research proposal to the thesis submission. It also shows the participants involved in the different stages of the research process.

Table 1. Timeline of the research

Time period	Research implementation matter	People involved
April 2018	Research proposal, accepted	Steven Crawford (Thesis supervisor)
April - May 2018	Visit to the Pihtipudas high school - facilitation and developing new content (primary data collection)	The second-year students of Pihtipudas high school
September 2018	Beginning of the writing of the literature review	
August 2019	Finishing the literature review Methodology section	
April 2020	Development of the results, conclusion and discussion sections	
May 2020	Finalizing the thesis Thesis submission	Steven Crawford; Thesis committee

4 Results

This chapter provides the reader with the findings derived from the session in Pihtipudas high school in April 2018; the improvement suggestions for the cards created in cooperation with the students of Lyseo high school and Schildt high school, and the New Horizons youth deck draft cards the students of Pihtipudas high school developed.

In addition, the following chapter indicates the answers to the research questions presented in the methodology chapter. The main purpose of the results chapter is only to provide the reader with the findings of the study, no opinions or interpretations are presented.

4.1 Demographics summarized

The characteristics of the research sample are referred as demographics.

The table below describes the characteristics of the sample of the study. There are two variables to define the sample of the study, which are gender and the study year.

Table 2. Demographics summarized

Distribution factor	Number of participants	Total % (N=12)
Gender		
Male participants	4	33.33%
Female participants	8	66.66%
Age		
17-20	12	100%
Study year		
2 nd	12	100%

Out of 12 participants, there were eight female and four male participants. Each participant was aged 17-20 years as the group involved only second year high school students.

4.2 Topic and themes that emerged from client work

There were several topics that emerged from the client work. The topics, which were derived from the 18 cards the students of Pihtipudas high school created, can be divided into three main themes; the themes and topics are presented in the following table.

Table 3. Themes and topics emerged from client work

Core themes	Topics
Self-awareness	Parents' expectations
	Forming one's own opinions
	Stress and handling it
Issues the youth are facing	Sexual harassment
	Racism and discrimination
	Bullying
	Depression and suicidal thoughts
Social life	Sports
	Loneliness and difficulties in adapting to new situations
	Societal matters such as media and war

The participants developed card entries in small groups or by themselves which could then be put under various topics. There are in total 10 topics that could be defined from the 18 draft cards the participants invented, which were then put under three core themes being

- self-awareness,
- issues the youth are facing, and
- social life.

Most of the card entries revolve around the topics under issues the youth are facing. Clearly topics such as bullying as well as racism and discrimination are issues that raise discussion and concern amongst the youth. In addition, as the youth are in a fragile point in their lives, self-awareness might be put to a test as the youth are trying to determine and develop their own identities. This could also be seen when the participants developed new card ideas, as topics related to self-awareness were discussed quite a lot.

Coming to the theme “social life,” loneliness and difficulties adapting to new situations was a topic that the participants seemed to be wondering about a lot. The topic in question was linked with sports in the small group discussions, as based on the participants’ experiences, people doing sports seem to form a strong group.

4.3 Draft cards for the New Horizons youth deck developed based on the research findings

This subchapter provides the answers to two research questions presented in the methodology section, which are:

How do students in a rural setting of Finland react to the Young New Horizons cards and game play?

What ideas and topics for Young New Horizons come to mind from rural Finnish youth?

There were four stages in the process of developing new cards for the New Horizons youth deck with the 12 students of Pihtipudas high school (see figure 5). The session at Pihtipudas high school lasted two hours; the first hour included the first two stages and the second hour included the third stage of the process. First, the students played the game with the existing cards in groups of four to understand what the game is about. While playing, they rated the existing cards and gave them ideas for further development. Most of the cards worked well in the situation and they were given good ratings; however, there were few cards which would have had to be

slightly modified for them to work in a rural Finnish school and community. The situations in those cards were only remotely familiar to the students in the classroom since the situations are not usual in such a small town, thus those cards were not as useful as most of the cards. The ratings and comments for the cards were given to the card development team for further processing.

After playing, the idea of the game was discussed to ensure the participants understood the core idea and to give them a better starting point for card development. During the second hour, the students worked in groups to brainstorm new card ideas and to write them down on the forms they were handed.

The participants created in total 18 new draft cards for the New Horizons youth deck. Like stated in the methodology section, the aim was to create at least one card per participant, thus the aim was reached. The fourth stage of the development process was translating the draft cards into English, which was done by the researcher.

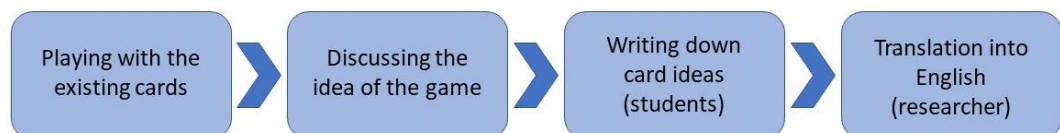


Figure 5. Card ideas development process

The five card types of the game (see chapter 2.3.1) were not emphasized to the participants in order to keep the card creation process casual and to make sure their ideas were not restricted by the card types. However, after working on the new drafts for a while, the topics that hadn't been covered earlier were shown to the students in the group to give them more ideas on possible topics for their drafts. This was not done at the beginning of the drafting session because the researcher did not want to guide the students' mindset from the very beginning.

The card types were shown to the students only when playing the game with the already existing draft cards because the researcher did not want to draw their attention to the different categories. Not explaining the categories, the students were able to come up with ideas without them being restricted. The topics the students covered are presented in the chapter 4.2. The most covered topics were the topics under the core themes self-awareness and issues the youth are facing. For example, bullying, racism and various pressures were the most discussed issues amongst the participants during the session.

5 Discussion

Primarily, this chapter aims to prove that the answers to the research questions are sufficient. The chapter also provides the reader with the details of the data processing that need to be considered when evaluating the findings of the research.

Furthermore, since there are limitations to every study and it is important to acknowledge them for any further research on the topic, the limitations of this study are presented in this chapter as well.

The researcher designed the structure of the session at Pihtipudas high school within the aim of getting new diverse content for the youth deck. The structure was kept flexible in order to reach the aim. The students did not know about the session beforehand which caused minor confusion at the beginning of the session; yet they were eager to participate.

The topics discussed during the session were not limited but the students were given some themes that were not covered in the previous cards for them to use in case they did not have ideas of their own. The topics the students covered in the cards they created were quite similar to each other. The ones that came up in the cards the most were loneliness and difficulties in adapting to new situations, racism and discrimination, bullying, and parents' expectations. During the first half of the session, the students got to choose their groups; but during the second half, the groups were mixed. The researcher noticed the conversation was not as fluent during the second

half as it was during the first, thus the students mostly wrote their cards based on their own thinking.

The session was held completely in Finnish because the students were all native Finnish speakers. The choice of the language was made beforehand: even if their English skills were commendable, it has been proven that the use of English as a foreign language in oral communication is the most difficult skill to master when learning the language (Al Hosni 2014, 23). According to Al Hosni (*ibid.*), Ur (1996) has identified various reasons for these difficulties in their research: the plausible factor from those, which marked off using English during the session with the students of Pihtipudas high school, is that as each of the participants were native English speakers, they likely found it easier to use their mother tongue to communicate; in addition, it is common to feel exposed if people having the same mother tongue have to have a conversation in a foreign language. Considering this factor, foreign language can limit the capability to discuss and answer the questions, thus the language choice for the session was Finnish. The draft card forms had a section for the card entries in English, yet it was not mandatory for the students to write the card text in English. Hence, the researcher translated the Finnish texts into English afterwards.

5.1 Discussion of the findings

The aim of this study was to develop new content for the New Horizons youth deck created by the youth living in a rural area of Finland. The twelve students of Pihtipudas high school aged 17-20 years represented the sample used in this research.

During the first half of the session the existing cards were played and evaluated by the students who took part in the session. The cards were rated in the scale of 1-5 and they were given possible ideas how the cards could be improved. After the students had gone through the cards they were given, a short debriefing was held to hear their thoughts about the game. According to the students, most of the cards worked fine for them, but some of them were harder to relate to because they seemed to be aimed more at the youth living in bigger towns or cities. The rated

cards were then given to the team taking care of the card development so that the improvements could be made.

During the second half of the session, when new cards were created, the students had short discussions and wrote their ideas on the card creation templates given to them. One of the students wrote down that “tolerance and the importance of diversity should be discussed more with the youth”. In most bullying cases, the reason for someone being bullied is the divergence of the victim, which might also be generated divergence, caused by images and stories (The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare 2019). Since a major part of the cards created by the students of Pihtipudas high school were related to bullying and issues handling diversity, it is obvious some actions need to be taken by schools to solve these issues. KiVa Koulu program [school against bullying] is aimed only at the pupils of compulsory education (Salmivalli & Poskiparta 2012, 294), yet it would possibly be needed even in high schools and vocational schools.

Furthermore, some cards focused on online bullying and sexual harassment. According to the Ministry of the Interior (2019, 48), the School Health Promotion Study carried out in 2017 shows that approximately 19-29% of all bullying takes place in online platforms; and a survey conducted by Save the Children Finland proves that around 30% of all respondents have witnessed sexual harassment by other young people on social media platforms.

A friend of yours has been receiving mean anonymous comments online and has been feeling down for a while because of them. What would you do to help your friend?

Kaverisi saa ilkeitä anonyymejä kommentteja netissä ja hän on ollut pitkään alakuloinen niiden takia. Miten toimit auttaaksesi kaveriasi?

Figure 6. A draft card about online bullying

Some of the cards handled issues related to loneliness. A questionnaire about the health of the 8th and 9th graders and the first and second year students in high schools and in vocational schools prove that, for example, in 2015, approximately 8% of the first and second year high school students don't have any close friends (Finnish

institute for health and welfare 2017). A study proves that loneliness affects in how the youth see their future; the people who view their future in a pessimistic way, experience more feelings of loneliness than the ones who have an optimistic view of their future (Aalto 2003, 64). When having no friends and being excluded from social circles, one is being exposed to social exclusion. Social exclusion is defined as individuals, families or whole communities being left out of the normal appropriate lifestyle, resource management or standard of living. Furthermore, social exclusion is linked to criminal behaviour (Rikksentorjuntaneuvosto n.d.). Primary prevention of these issues is extremely crucial. Corporate sustainability is being chased by many companies, and to reach such thing, the companies need to put their effort in finding stronger and skilful leaders that can help striving towards the aim (PRME Steering Committee 2007, 2). By putting the focus on the youth and helping them grow, the society will gain better future leaders.

There's a new student in your school and you notice they are having a hard time adapting since no one talks to them. The new student also seems so shy they might not have the courage to ask for help. How do you react?

Kouluusi on tullut uusi oppilas ja huomaat, että hänellä on ongelmia sopeutua, sillä kukaan ei puhu hänelle. Uusi oppilas vaikuttaa myös niin ujolta, ettei hän välttämättä uskalla pyytää apua. Kuinka toimit?

Figure 7. A draft card about loneliness

The Finnish Council of State, parliament, and single ministries have ordered statements that map children, youth and families' poverty in both social and economical meaning and the actions affecting them and the majority of the statements highlight the importance of prevention (Finnish institute for health and welfare 2019). It is crucial to discuss loneliness, diversity and issues related to them also in high schools and vocational schools to prevent such issues and start fixing them before it is late to do so. In May 2014, one of the committees of the Finnish parliament published a report about social exclusion of the youth, which require moving the prevention of the issues to as early state as possible when the social and health service system is being developed (Finnish institute for health and welfare 2019).

One of the cards created during the session stood out from the other cards (see figure 8). Once asked from the student who wrote the card idea, they stated he has faced this very situation before. This, however, did not raise any discussion within the students during the session, yet it is a major concern in Finland. In Finland, approximately 20% of the youth go through self-destructive thoughts, and, for example, in 2010, suicide was the leading cause of death for girls aged 15-19 and the second most common cause of death for boys aged 15-19 (Strandholm, Ranta, Gergov, Tainio, Lindberg, Ehrling & Marttunen 2016, 717). The card entry may be too harsh as it is and by putting such a severe card in the deck it is very likely to set an uncomfortable atmosphere which again might make the players shut down; however, suicidal thoughts and self-destructive behaviour should also be discussed with the youth as that is likely to prevent suicides as it helps people to understand and see the signs of suicidal thoughts and self-destructiveness, and by increasing the awareness on the topic, more people will know how to act if someone they know is having suicidal thoughts (The Finnish Association for Mental Health 2016, 2).

A person you know asks you for the schedule of for the local train so that they could jump under one. They don't want any help. How do you react?

Tuttusi kysyy sinulta junien aikatauluja, jotta voisi hypätä yhden alle. Hän ei halua ollenkaan apua. Miten toimit tilanteessa?

Figure 8. A draft card about suicidal thoughts

When looking at the sociological perspectives and especially the functionalist perspective, it states that even the smaller social institutions, such as families and classes, affect in the society. For example, according to that perspective, if a parent does not have enough time for their child, it might have a negative impact to the child which again might affect in the whole class at school. (Mooney, Knox & Schacht 2007, 1.) That is why it is crucial to take care of each individual, and by discussing and solving issues such as social exclusion and bullying on a bigger scale, the positive impact on the societal level might be seen in the future.

5.2 Limitations of the study

In this section, the different limitations affecting in the study are described. There are a few limitations which affect in the answers of the study, thus it is vital for the researcher to acknowledge them.

When discovering the issues the youth living in the rural areas of Finland are facing, there are two main limitations to the study, which were: 1) limited access to the sample of the study, and 2) the bias factor.

The researcher wanted to broaden the youth deck with the cards developed by the youth living in the rural areas on Finland. However, the sample ended up being fairly small, thus it cannot be considered very reliable. The sample was restricted to only 12 students of Pihtipudas high school, since it would have been very time-consuming to collaborate with youth living in other small towns. As the working sample was only 12 students, the results of this research cannot easily be generalized beyond the rural community the researcher worked in.

The other limitation to the study is the bias factor. The researcher used to study in the same high school where the cards were developed and the researcher also knew the majority of the students beforehand, which very likely affected in the way the session at the high school was held. The researcher knows what kind of issues the youth living in the rural areas might face, which again might have guided the session to a certain extent.

6 Conclusion

For the most part, the youth living in the rural areas of Finland are facing same kinds of issues and concerns the youth living in the urban areas of Finland; yet there are some themes that were clearly bigger concerns amongst the youth living and studying in Pihtipudas. These topics were related to self-awareness and issues the youth are facing: for example, bullying, stress and loneliness were handled in many of the draft cards the participants of this study created. The issues related to loneliness and bullying might be explained by the fact that in small towns people are usually familiar with each other and when a new pupil or students comes to school, there might be

reservedness and precaution towards the new person. When coming to a completely new environment, it might then be hard for the new person to adapt if others have already formed strong connections and groups with each other, thus they might feel loneliness.

Bullying can maybe be explained with intolerance and unawareness of diversity. The urban areas of Finland have already faced, for example, internationalization, and the population is more diverse; yet these things have not reached the rural areas of Finland on the same scale. For that reason, the tolerance of diversity is not on the same level as it is amongst the people residing the urban areas of Finland. As one of the participants of this research expressed, diversity should be discussed more, both in schools and in homes.

Furthermore, stress seems to be a growing issue amongst the youth also in the rural areas of Finland. Even though the surrounding environment may not be as hectic as in the urban areas, there are various factors causing stress within the youth. For example, parents' expectations raised discussion within the participants. What to do if parents expect greater things from their child but the things do not fit into the child's own plans?

6.1 Reliability of the research approach, data collection and conclusions

The findings of this study are not statistically reliable, which is very typical for the majority of the qualitative researches. The main reason for this is the sample size: since the sample size was fairly small, being only twelve, the findings does not likely apply to all the youth living in the rural areas of Finland.

In addition, as the researcher is from the same town where the research was conducted, her own experiences and emotional bond to the topic has very likely shaped the interpretation in this study. However, the researcher has been aware of this factor from the beginning of the study; in addition, according to the constructivist worldview which was guiding this research, it is usual that the researcher's own background shapes the research and conclusions, it is only important to acknowledge it.

The draft cards created by the participants were initially written in Finnish and then translated into English by the researcher. The draft cards were then sent to senior lecturer and thesis supervisor Steven Crawford who modified the cards together with Dr. George Simons: both being native English speakers, they were able to ensure the English is correct, and both having been in the New Horizons project from the beginning, they further edited the drafts into finalized cards to fit better into the deck and to better serve the purpose of the deck.

6.2 Recommendations

The topics emerged from the client work are real issues and concerns the youth are dealing with each day. Issues such as bullying, sexual harassment and racism and discrimination are very harmful to the youth and they can cause severe problems in their lives. As mentioned in the introduction chapter, the anti-bullying program KiVa Koulu [School against bullying] is aimed at the students of 1-9 grades and does not cover vocational schools or high schools. The program might not work for high school and vocational school students as it is, however, it would be recommendable to develop a program or a campaign to cover these issues in high schools and vocational schools as well.

Moreover, as the youth is spending a major part of their spare time on various social media platforms, issues such as cyberbullying are arising. Ivanova (2019) studied cyberbullying and provided solutions to preventing cyberbullying and increasing online safety: according to her findings, people of 13-16 years who face cyberbullying might face more severe consequences due to their unformed psyche. Cyberbullying and its consequences should then be discussed more with the youth in order to raise the awareness and help the youth understand the proper code of conduct of social media.

Furthermore, a part of the youth seems to be struggling with loneliness and difficulties adapting. According to the participants of this study, people doing sports form stronger connections between each other. Especially in the rural areas of Finland, the range of hobbies offered can be very limited, thus the possibilities to find a suitable hobby to oneself might be difficult or even impossible. By increasing the range of

hobbies offered and giving more choices to the youth, they are offered the chance to find their place and a group of friends through a hobby. There is, however, a challenge to make the hobbies affordable to everyone. Even if smaller towns offered a variety of hobbies, the costs of some hobbies is too high for some families which in turn limits the options of some children.

This research as well as the whole Young New Horizons proves that the youth is facing various issues in their everyday life and they have major concerns to handle. The Young New Horizons was created to help the youth discuss these issues and concerns in a safe environment together with their peers; however, in order to help the youth handle and solve these issues better, they should be able to discuss them with, for example, their own parents. The youth need a safe environment at home to be able to talk about their issues and to express their concerns to their parents, thus in order to help their children, parents should try to work for a better relationship to them if the parents suspect their child is going through a tough phase in their life. Developing a better and more trusting relationship before any problems occur can also work as preventive measure.

6.3 Suggestions for further research

The finished Young New Horizons deck covers a great range of topics; however, there are endless possibilities to expand the deck by various topics and to expand the already existing topics. For instance, one of the draft cards created by the students of Pihtipudas high school covered cyber bullying; the publication of the Finnish Ministry of the Interior (2019, 48-49) states that, amongst people playing online games, a substantial amount of them has experienced some kind of bullying when playing: according to a survey conducted in 2018, 94% of the respondents aged between 15 and 29 had heard insults about their gaming skills, over 80% had received insults and name-calling and over 70% had received negative comments that were racist, trans-homophobic or related to their age when playing games online. (ibid.) The persons making the comments might not see the malignancy of their actions; thus this kind of online behaviour should be discussed more with the youth. Furthermore, the general online behaviour should also be discussed and brought up more or differently than

nowadays; ergo this is one of the themes that should be covered more in case there will be an extension deck to the Youth New Horizons.

Furthermore, another topic to be covered more in the future is suicides and self-destructive behaviour: more specifically, how to identify suicidal thoughts and how to help a person who is having such thoughts. One of the draft cards created during the session at Pihtipudas high school handled self-destructiveness, however, it did not end up in the finalized Young New Horizons. It is a proven fact that amongst the 15-24 year-olds in Finland, suicide is a central cause of death: the part of suicides amongst the causes of death was over one third; and a bit over every tenth suicide was committed by persons under 25 (Official Statistics of Finland 2017). Over the last ten years the amount of suicides amongst people under 25 has not decreased like it has decreased amongst middle-aged people (ibid.), thus the prevention of suicides within the youth is crucial. By helping the youth to understand how a suicidal person might act and by giving the youth ways to approach a person having suicidal thoughts, there is a possibility to save lives.

Often people fear that discussing suicide encourages someone to commit it; however, that is not true. If someone is self-destructive, the thought of committing suicide already exists. By discussing suicide and bringing up one's concern about another person, no further harm to the other one can be done. A suicidal person needs someone to start the discussion and by doing that, it gives the person a chance to express their suicidal thoughts: they do not have to be alone with such thoughts anymore. It is a proven fact that talking about suicide and suicidal thoughts can prevent suicides. (The Finnish Association for Mental Health n.d., 5.)

In addition, since the sample size in this research was very limited and the sample was from one rural town only, it does not represent all the people living in rural areas of Finland: thus it would bring greater value to the finalized Young New Horizons to create more card entries with the youth living in other rural areas of Finland. Increasing the sample size by conducting similar kind of research in various schools locating in the rural areas will increase the reliability of the cards and help create a better understanding of the issues and concerns of the youth in smaller regions of Finland.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Proposed Young New Horizons game content

1. A friend of yours spends a lot of time doing schoolwork and sports, and she works a lot. They have become very distant and they seem quite exhausted. They have performance pressure in many different things because of their parents' expectations. How do you react and how would you help your friend solve the situation?

Ystäväsi viettää paljon aikaa kouluhommiin, liikunnan sekä töiden parissa ja on muuttanut hyvin etäiseksi sekä uupuneen oloiseksi. Hänellä on suorituspainetta useilla osa-alueilla perheen odotusten vuoksi. Miten reagoit tilanteeseen, ja kuinka koitat lähteä purkamaan tilannetta hänen kanssaan?

2. There are a lot of racist people in your so called inner circle. You would like to be tolerant towards everyone. Do you think people should have the same opinions as the people close to them or should everyone form their own opinions?

Lähipiirissäsi on paljon rasistisia ihmisiä. Itse haluaisit olla suvaitsevainen kaikkia kohtaan. Tuleeko ihmisten noudattaa lähipiirin mielipiteitä vai muodostaa omansa?

3. The parents of a friend of yours want them to study to become a doctor but your friend wants to become an artist and they don't have the courage to tell their parents about it. How do you react?

Ystäväsi vanhemmat haluavat hänen opiskelvan lääkäriksi, mutta hän itse haluaa tulla taiteilijaksi, eikä uskalla kertoa vanhemmilleen. Mitä teet?

4. You have a lot of schoolwork to do, you have to help organising one of your relative's graduation party and things between you and one of your friends are quite difficult at the moment. Stress is building up and you feel like you can't handle all the things. How do you handle stressful things?

Sinulla on koulujuttuja työn alla ja lisäksi läheisen valmistujaisjuhlat, joita pitäisi järjestellä. Kaverinkin kanssa välit hiertävät. Stressi kerääntyy, ja sinusta tuntuu, ettet pysty selviytymään kaikesta. Miten käsittelet stressaavat asiat?

5. If a friend of yours has been experiencing violent bullying for years and the bullies don't react to speech, is it justified to use violence against the bullies?

Jos ystäväsi on kokenut väkivaltaista kiusaamista vuosien ajan ja kiusaajiin ei tehoa puhe, onko väkivalta kiusaajia vastaan torjuntakeinona sallittua?

6. You see one of your classmates touching another classmate inappropriately and you aren't sure if it's just friends fooling around or if it's serious. You just know it's wrong. How do you react?

Näet, että koulukaverisi kourii toista koulukaveriasi. Et tiedä, onko se kaverillista pelleilyä vai totista. Tiedät vain, että se on väärin. Miten toimit?

7. A friend of yours has been receiving mean anonymous comments online and has been feeling down for a while because of them. What would you do to help your friend?

Kaverisi saa ilkeitä anonyymejä kommentteja netissä ja hän on ollut pitkään alakuloinen niiden takia. Miten toimit auttaaksesi kaveriasi?

8. Is a friend really a friend if he/she doesn't want to take a stance on your problems?

Onko ystävä oikeasti ystävä, jos hän ei halua ottaa kantaa sinun ongelmiisi?

9. You notice that one of your friends has started to discriminate against your classmate who has a foreign background and their words seem racist. You think they are acting wrong. How do you react?

Huomaat, että ystäväsi on alkanut syrjiä ulkomaalaistaustaista luokkakaveriasi, ja hänen puheensa vaikuttavat rasistisilta. Sinusta hän toimii väärin. Miten toimit?

10. You are at a football game and you hear some players of the other team calling your dark-skinner teammate a nigger. The game is still on-going and it seems no one else has heard what is happening. How do you react?

Olet jalkapallopelissä ja kuulet, kun tummaihoista joukkuekaveriasi haukutaan neekeriksi vastustajan joukkueen toimesta. Peli on vielä kesken ja muut eivät sitä ole kuulleet. Miten toimit?

11. A few months ago, you started your studies at a vocational school to become a mechanic, and you are the only female student there. You have received vile sexist comments from the male students and male teachers, and they have also touched you inappropriately. This has made you feel so uncomfortable that you have even considered changing schools. If you were, in fact, the person in this situation, what could you do?

Olet pari kuukautta sitten aloittanut opinnot ammattikoulussa autopuolella ja olet ainoa tyttö. Olet saanut koulussa poikapuolisilta opiskelijoilta sekä miesopettajilta ikäviä seksistisiä kommentteja sekä jonkinlaista koskettelua, joka saa olosi niin epämukavaksi, että olet harkinnut jopa koulun vaihtoa. Mitä voisit tehdä?

12. A person you know asks you for the schedule of for the local train so that they could jump under one. They don't want any help. How do you react?

Tuttusi kysyy sinulta junien aikatauluja, jotta voisi hypätä yhden alle. Hän ei halua ollenkaan apua. Miten toimit tilanteessa?

13. A family of someone you know has lost one of their close relatives which has lead some of the family members into using alcohol. You have noticed that the situation has notably affected in the person you know and you are worried about them, but you aren't sure how to help. What could you do?

Tuttusi perhe on kohdannut lähisukulaisen menetyksen, mikä on johtanut alkoholin käyttöön hänen perheensä sisällä. Olet huomannut tilanteen vaikuttavan tuttuusi huomattavasti ja olet huolissasi, mutta et tiedä, kuinka voisit auttaa. Mitä teet?

14. Do you think it's right to benefit from someone else's relationship problems by using them in media, like in television?

Onko mielestäsi oikein käyttää toisten parisuhdeongelmia hyödyksi mediassa, esim. televisiossa?

15. Pohtikaa sotaa, sen syytä ja ja seurauksia sekä vaikutuksia yksilöön, yhteisöön ja yhteiskuntaan.

Think about war, its causes and consequences and its effects in an individual, community and society.

16. You are a part of a group of friends where everyone else except you does sports, and it makes you feel like you aren't as good as the others. Is there any reason to feel that way?

Olet osa kaveriporukkaa, jossa kaikki muut paitsi sinä urheilevat. Tunnet itsesi huonommaksi kuin muut. Onko siihen aihetta?

17. There's a new student in your school and you notice they are having a hard time adapting since no one talks to them. The new student also seems so shy they might not have the courage to ask for help. How do you react?

Kouluusi on tullut uusi oppilas ja huomaat, että hänellä on ongelmia sopeutua, sillä kukaan ei puhu hänelle. Uusi oppilas vaikuttaa myös niin ujoilta, ettei hän välttämättä uskalla pyytää apua. Kuinka toimit?

18. A person who seems to be lonely is always standing alone at school. What would you do or would you do anything?

Yksinäinen nuori seisoo aina itsekseen koulussa seinän vierellä. Miten toimit, vai toimitko mitenkään?