



Sociocultural animation in youth work

Survey of sociocultural animation in the work of the youth coordinators in districts of Finnish Red Cross

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<p>ABSTRACT</p> <p>Organisational changes have lead to re-thinking of youth activities on the national level within Finnish Red Cross. Its headquarters aims at having more possibilities on supporting the youth co-ordinators in the 12 districts across the country. This final project is one of the studies creating a basis for this development of the future.</p> <p>This study is of qualitative nature and conducted with a questionnaire sent directly to the youth co-ordinators. The seven elements of sociocultural animation are the background for the questions and the theoretical framework of the study. Leena Kurki's writings on the subject have been strongly present during the whole process.</p> <p>Districts of Finnish Red Cross are juridically independent from the headquarters. This means twelve individual units which act according to their needs and resources. This study gives a picture of some of the challenges the youth and the employees working with them in districts face. It also highlights a few success stories.</p> <p>Sociocultural animation as such is not one of the objects of youth activities of Finnish Red Cross. However, through this study it can be seen there is an underlining sociocultural idea behind them. Each element of sociocultural animation is discussed through the findings it links with. This way it is also possible to see which of the elements of sociocultural animation are visible in the work of youth co-ordinators.</p>			
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<p>Muutokset järjestössä ovat johtaneet nuorisotoiminnan ajattelemiseen uudella tavalla Suomen Punaisen Ristin kansallisella tasolla. Sen keskustoimisto etsii uusia tapoja kahdentoista piirin nuorisotoiminnan suunnittelijoiden tukemiseen. Tämä opinnäytetyö on mukana luomassa pohjaa tälle tulevaisuuden kehittämiskohteelle.</p> <p>Tämä tutkimus on luonnoltaan kvalitatiivinen ja on suoritettu kyselyn avulla. Kysely lähetettiin suoraan vastaajille. Sosiokulttuurisen innostamisen elementit toimivat taustana kysymyksille ja teoreettisena viitekehyksenä tutkimukselle. Leena Kurjen kirjoitukset aiheesta ovat olleet vahvasti esillä koko prosessin ajan.</p> <p>Suomen Punaisen Ristin piirit ovat juridisesti itsenäisiä yksiköitä. Tämä tarkoittaa kahtatoista erilaista tapaa tehdä asioita tarpeiden ja resurssien mukaisesti. Tämä tutkimus antaa kuvan joistakin vaikeuksista piirien nuoret toimijat ja heidän kanssaan työskentelevät toimihenkilöt kohtaavat. Se kuitenkin myös tuo esille joitakin menestystarinoita.</p> <p>Sosiokulttuurinen innostaminen ei sinällään ole Suomen Punaisen Ristin tavoitteissa, mutta tämän tutkimuksen kautta sen asema toiminnan takana tulee näkyviin. Jokainen sosiokulttuurisen innostamisen elementti linkitetään tutkimuksen tulosten kanssa. Tätä kautta on myös mahdollista nähdä ne sosiokulttuurisen innostamisen osa-alueet, joita nuorisotoiminnan suunnittelijat työssään käyttävät.</p>			
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1 INTRODUCTION

During the past decade various voluntary organisations have struggled with their decreasing number of youth volunteers. This has also been the problem of Finnish Red Cross, as its amount of youth members has decreased from nearly 20,000 in 1980s to a mere 8,000 in 2009. Even though it is the volunteers who play a quintessential part in these organisations, there are usually employees who support these volunteers and guide and support them in their voluntary work.

My experience of volunteering for the Red Cross started in 2002. During these years I have taken part and organised activities as a volunteer on local, national and international level. I have had positions of trust in Kehä-Espoo branch and in the youth committee of Helsinki and Uusimaa district. In 2008 I worked in a bilateral project of Finnish and Kosovar Red Cross in Kosovo for seven months. However, even after all these years the role of youth co-ordinators in districts remains somewhat unclear to me. It has become evident that it varies a lot between districts.

Very recently big changes have taken place within the organisation. Due to the current financial situation some re-organising of staff was made at the headquarters. As a result of this Youth Team has emerged with Organisational Team. During the process two posts in Youth Team disappeared. Districts of Finnish Red Cross are independent units which function in their own ways. They all have set individual limits and goals according to the needs and resources they have. As the changes at the headquarters are rather new it remains unclear how they will affect youth activities in the districts. However, it will become more important to know what kind of support is needed in order to use the smaller resources more efficiently.

The topic of my thesis was initially discussed with the head of Youth Team but he was one of the employees who were re-positioned. After him another employee became my link to working life and we made a mutual agreement on how to proceed.

In my thesis I want to find out what kind of a role the youth co-ordinators themselves think they have. I would then look at their answers from the point of view of sociocultural animation. I also want to hear of the kind of support they give for their youth volunteers as well as of the support the youth provide to one another. To gather

this information a questionnaire was created and sent out to youth co-ordinators in districts.

A baseline survey of group activities as a method of working with youth was conducted in 2008. Sanna Naukkarinen, a student of HUMAK University of Applied Sciences made it as her final project. In addition to these group activities Finnish Red Cross youth volunteers organise and manage a variety of activities. My survey is another baseline survey which follows the line directed by the first one, even though they do not have a lot in common in the theoretical nor the practical sense. These two surveys are part of long-term development on the national level of Finnish Red Cross which aims at having a stronger organisational structure.

As theoretical background I have chosen sociocultural animation as in my opinion it is the method of working youth co-ordinators need when working with young volunteers and other partners. The most important material I use in this survey is the information I receive from the youth co-ordinators in the districts.

2 ORGANISATIONAL YOUTH WORK

In 2006 a renewed law on youth work was passed. The law is of and for those under 29 years of age. Its purpose is to support growth, independence and active participation of young people. The law aims at creating respect for life and environment, healthy habits, multiculturalism and internationality, equality, social responsibility and socialisation. Services given by state, municipalities, private companies and voluntary organisations are all bound by it. The law's goal is to strengthen young people's position in the society, active citizenship and social empowerment. (Nuorisolaki 2006)

Red Cross is the biggest humanitarian organisation in the world and its national society in Finland is one of the biggest voluntary organisations in the country. In Finland the organisation was first established in 1877 and it now has approximately 90 000 members and 45 000 volunteers. The Red Cross Movement was originally founded because of a need to assist neutrally all sides of war casualties but nowadays it also assists during peace time. Its activities answers to the needs of the local people. (Vuosien varrelta. Suomen Punainen Risti.)

Free-time activities and the pedagogical points of view around them are often understood as how to teach what kinds of possibilities free-time offers. As often it is considered as something to do with children and youth. It is important to support growth which gives room to meeting values and growing up both personally and socially. It should reach many groups and cover many fields. People having their free-time and people providing services for this time are in the centre of it. (Kurki 2008: 39-40)

Most of the activities of Finnish Red Cross are carried out by volunteers and organised by the approximately 500 branches. (Osastot, 2009) The branches are located in villages, towns, cities and even in some companies. In the twelve districts (eight Finnish, three Swedish and one bilingual) there are employees with different titles who support and manage branches in their areas. (Piirit 2009)

When looking at the theoretical aspects, early childhood education and adult education have been studied a lot in their fields. Youth education is seen as more of a varying field and its focus is mainly on the school world and formal education. However, school is not the only place where work for and with youth is done. It is more widely stretched into the work of organisations, municipal youth work, upbringing at home and in general all those aspects of society which also youth are linked with. (Nivala & Saastamoinen 2007: 8)

Civic upbringing could be defined as upbringing which aims at preparing members of the society to meet its needs. In 21st century Finland is often asked what has happened to active participation. When compared with the other Nordic countries, Finland has fallen behind in people's interested and activity in voting and organisational or political participation. Traditionally schools have shared the responsibility of supporting youth in active citizenship as organisations have succeeded in involving small numbers of young people. However, civic organisations are considered as the best places to learn of active participation in society. (Niemi 2007: 64-65)

Any activity organised by the Red Cross is bound by state laws and based on seven fundamental principles. These principles are humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. Also the Finnish Red Cross youth activities apply these principles. (Tämä on Punainen Risti 2005)

Humanity Impartiality	Define the results of action
Neutrality Independence	Back up the possibilities of humanitarian work
Voluntary Service Unity Universality	Create the basis of the organisation

TABLE 1. Seven fundamental principles of Red Cross Movement

Youth activities organised by Finnish Red Cross started in 1953. Health education, social responsibility, international activities and disaster aid were the topics with which youth activities were begun with. In 1976 a secretary for youth issues was employed at the headquarters and in the beginning of 1980s activities for children began. A national youth committee was established in 1993. (Punaisen Ristin nuorisotoiminta – Röda Kors ungdomsverksamhet 2009)

In 2009 “Dare to Care” is the slogan of the youth in Finnish Red Cross. The slogan strengthens the picture of youth as a strong power, not only in the future but already at this time. Under this theme youth activities exist in order to organise and strengthen the primary tasks of the organisation. These are first aid and preparedness, health and safety, international activities and humanitarian values while building a tolerant, multicultural and open society. (Reddie Kids Handledarens Guide 2009)

P R O G R A M M E S		ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE			
		Youth work	Supporting volunteers	Capacity building	Other tasks
	Principles and values				
	Humanitarian assistance				
	Disaster preparedness				
	Health and community care				

TABLE 2. Youth work of Finnish Red Cross within the organisational structure.

The four core duties of Red Cross Movement activated through a variety of activities. Traditionally group activities organised by and for youth over the age of 13 have been the biggest activity in branches. Groups for children between the ages of 7 and 12 are carried by trained volunteers, most of whom are youth themselves. Camps are organised annually by branches and districts under different topics, mainly during the summer time. (Suomen Punaisen Ristin nuorisotoiminnan infokoulutus 2007)

All sorts of campaigns, projects and theme days are organised through-out the year. Co-operation with local schools is an important part of the work of Finnish Red Cross. In addition to these national activities the young volunteers have a possibility to take part in international activities which are mainly co-ordinated by the youth co-ordinators at the headquarters. (Suomen Punaisen Ristin nuorisotoiminnan infokoulutus 2007)

3 SOCIOCULTURAL ANIMATION

3.1 Animation

Looking to the world from a creative point of view is what animation is all about. Various strong ideologies and thinkers have had their part in the creation of it. Thus it is rather loosely defined and widely used. However it is an easy theory to grasp as animators have always existed even if they have not been labelled as such. Animation is a movement of pedagogical thinking, creativity and participation. (Kurki 2000: 11-12)

Scientifically sociocultural animation bases on social pedagogy. It is action which is aimed at all areas of life as well of all ages and societal groups through a variety of actions. Creating equality among people through education and cultural activities is one of its visible objects. With them comes the ability of an individual to self-determination and better every-day life. Sociocultural animation is also important in preserving traditional values of societies and communities. Action is always voluntary and it underlines the free will, activeness and participation of a person. (Leimio-Reijonen 2002: 21-22)

Traditional thinking of professionalism has actually been a major obstacle to empowerment and thus to animation as well. Recently a transformation from the old habits has begun and more positive methods have come into the picture. However, the old ways of professionalism should not be forgotten but used whenever suitable. (Thompson 2007: 53)

People using sociocultural animation in their work have to guide the service users into right direction. Their role varies between that of a spokesperson, guide, leader and protector. They have the ability to bring people together, create new relationships and mediate dialogue between different worlds. The roots of sociocultural animation lie in voluntary work. Today it is quite a universal method of working. The process of animation is completed in a long period of time and it always is linked with practical work. (Kurki 2000)

The traditional model of professionalism concentrates around people who 'know it best', creating an elite who are above others. This is especially visible in cases where there are

people who require assistance. Professional work is not an equal partnership with a client or service user but instead the differences in hierarchy are made very clear. Passivity or even dependency can be end results of this kind of professionalism. In the new forms of professionalism knowledge is still important, if not essential, but it derives from partnership and co-operation instead of single persons. Democratic sense does not involve a top-down relationship but makes the partners working together towards a common goal. (Thompson 2007: 53-55)

3.2 Hot and cold worlds of sociocultural animation

In sociocultural animation there are two central lines of thinking; animation as an emancipatory social movement and animation as a tool of keeping up the society. The first central line is clearly based on humanistic thinking. This way animation should create activities with which all people should receive an equal right and possibility to follow their personal life duties in their communities, societies and in the world. The latter line of thinking bases on deterministic thinking in which people are seen as victims of situations and animators as idealistic service providers. (Kurki 2000: 66-67)

These two points of views can be translated into metaphors of hot and cold worlds of sociocultural animation. They are strongly opposites yet complete one another. Both of them have their own place and time. Whereas the other creates movement and militant participation the other controls and institutionalises the new forces. (Kurki 2000: 67)

The cold world of sociocultural animation trusts in rational order and gives priority to consumptions and economical point of view. Consequences of oppression are taken care of instead of its reasons. Illusions and humanistic and idealistic discussions rule this world while social forces and structures are only a mask. Animation is believed in but often it is only an instrument of social cohesion and empty verbalism. Hierarchy begins at the top of the pyramid and not of the people themselves. Professional animators have good intentions but are blind to their own restrictions. (Kurki 2000: 67-68)

The hot world of sociocultural animation is a reaction against dominant and suffocating systems. Animation is a social resistance movement which acts to create participation in people. They are encouraged to understand their place in this time and place and to find their goal in the collective history of mankind. Everyday life of people is important in the hot world of sociocultural animation. (Kurki 2000: 69)

3.3 Elements of sociocultural animation

All sociocultural animation includes seven elements which are present in all situations. Even though these elements can be found in all actions, they differ in cold and hot worlds. (Kurki 2000: 73)

ELEMENTS OF SOCIOCULTURAL ANIMATION		
Constant elements	Cold world	Hot world
Activity	“Doing a bit of this and that”	Holistic activities
Participant	Agents	Independent actors
Time	Short time programme	Towards a project
Institution	Restricted, solid	Flexible, constructive
Social relationship	Socialisation	Social
Strategy	Consensus	Conflict
Philosophy	Technological practice	Theory – practice spiral

TABLE 3. Elements of sociocultural animation. (Kurki 2000: 77)

The constant element of activity tells how a group of people is organised. The action that takes place in the cold world of sociocultural animation is governed by the personal interests of the participants. In cases of organising activities for excluded youth this is important as it could awaken their interest and activate them. Holistic activities of the hot world have a deeper direction. The motive of activities is the solidarity towards the group and that leads to the spirit of research, services and co-operation. Raising awareness and making a change drive these actions. (Kurki 2000: 74)

When thinking of participants as an element of sociocultural animation it is those who create actions, including both the animators and the animated. In the cold world they act solely as agents and organisers. They are not in an autonomous place but take and give orders according to hierarchy, often through teaching. Hot world gives participants a responsibility in creation of action. (Kurki 2000: 74-75)

In cold world time is thought through a programme and how it can be best completed. In the hot world of sociocultural animation concept of time is directed in to the future. Institution as an element refers to the juridical-political background of sociocultural animation. Internal and external social relationships refer to integration. (Kurki 2000: 75-76)

Strategic thinking in cold world is based on passiveness and consensus. It is always built upon already existing, stiff basis. Conflicts in hot world create critical awareness of society. Of these conflicts, it is believed, comes a chance to changing. Deterministic philosophy of cold world sees practice as concrete and materialistic. Realities are seen utilitarianistically, functionally and individualistically. In hot world philosophy comes from a totally different direction; action is not only activities but it includes a continuous dialogue between theory and practice. (Kurki 2000: 76)

4 REALISATION OF RESEARCH

4.1 Research question

Sanna Naukkarinen conducted the first baseline survey for Finnish Red Cross in 2008. She made it as her final project for the programme of Bachelor of Civic Activities and Youth Work. The survey looked into the group activities which have been thought to be a great part of Finnish Red Cross' youth activities. However, as a surprise to a majority of employees and volunteers of the organisation, the number of youth groups is a lot smaller than thought to be. As a continuation to this Finnish Red Cross' Youth Team wanted to find out what other activities are actually done by the youth. The research question evolved into:

What kind of role the youth co-ordinators themselves see they have? How could their role be linked with sociocultural animation?

4.2 Data collection

Qualitative research aims at understanding and analysing the subject which is researched through finding its meaning. As a starting point is the projection of real-life circumstances. Qualitative research gives room for points of view and experiences of

the answeres. Generally it is considered as a tool of finding and exposing facts instead of repeating already existing information. (Hirsijärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2004: 152) In the beginning of the survey process twelve youth co-ordinators were expected to answer to the questionnaire in order to obtain as wide a picture as possible.

When making a research using qualitative methods it might be challenging to maintain objectivity especially in the social field. People create the social world and are the subjects of its research. Objective research is one which is based on rationality, knowledge, truth, reality, goodness and rightness, not on the own beliefs, values or attitudes of the researcher. (May 2001) I tried to put aside my own beliefs, values and attitudes. As I was already familiar with the organisation and some of the people who work there, I had to be very careful when approaching the subject. To me this became visible especially when analysing the answers and writing about them. Even when I knew from my personal background that some information was missing from the answers, I could not add them into this final project as it would have endangered the credibility and objectivity of this research.

The process of my final project began already in the autumn of 2007 when I started to plan the project. The plan was already accepted by all three parties when I was asked to take up a project leader's position in Kosovo for a period of six months. At the beginning of my mission it was still thought that the data collection and other phases of research could be completed while I was abroad but it proved to be an impossibility. At this point the initial research project was transferred to another student who then completed it successfully.

When I returned from Kosovo I contacted the headquarters of Finnish Red Cross to find out if there was another topic for my final project. After discussions the current topic was agreed upon. The initial plan could not be used as such but it worked as a good basis for the new plan. Unfortunately resources at the headquarters are quite limited so I feel I have received very limited support from the organisation even at this point.

Due to organisational changes which occurred just before I was to create and send out the questionnaire there was a break in communication. This is probably one of the issues which lead to a smaller number of answers than was hoped for. Also some background information could not be included in this research because of the change.

I created a questionnaire (appendices 1 & 2) with which I asked the youth co-ordinators to give me their honest opinion. The questionnaire was initially created in English but translated into Finnish and Swedish in order to give the youth co-ordinators a possibility to answer in their native language.

Operationalisation is a process in which a general and abstract idea is transformed into a concrete and measurable form. After defining the concept which is researched its dimensions are looked at and defined. Each dimension is the given possible indicators which can be tested. When these indicators are set it is possible to create a way to find answers to them. (Livesey) I wanted to know what kind of a sociocultural role the youth co-ordinators in Finnish Red Cross have, so I chose to look at sociocultural animation through its seven elements.

When making a survey with self-completed questionnaires, the respondents fill in the answers by themselves. (Robson 2002) A written questionnaire was chosen after discussing with my working life link as it was believed that the youth co-ordinators would give a more honest opinion when they would have some time to think about the questions. Also time-wise it was better to do it that way as not all youth co-ordinators have time during the day for a telephone interview. Open questions gave the youth co-ordinators time and space for giving their opinion on the topics. No examples were given as the situation in districts is quite varying and they might have lead to certain types of answers, which is not desired.

Length and complexity of the questionnaire should be kept to minimum. Otherwise control over the answers might be lost. (Robson 2002) Before sending the questionnaire I discussed the questions with my working life supervisor and two other Finnish Red Cross employees at the headquarters. The questionnaire was changed according to their advice. With the questionnaires a letter of information was sent to youth co-ordinators. Again the letter was created initially in English but then translated into Finnish and Swedish to avoid possible lingual misunderstandings. I asked the youth co-ordinators to send the answers to me personally in order to avoid anybody else from seeing them.

4.3 Analysis of data

The data I collected consists of the questionnaires the youth co-ordinators filled in. Of twelve youth co-ordinators seven replied and gave their answers. This gives a reply percentage of 60.

When making an analysis, the data is broken into pieces and then collected together and transformed into conclusions. Firstly it is necessary for the researcher to understand the subject of study which comes from knowing the data throughout. After this a thinking process takes place and the data is thoroughly understood. Then the data is labelled by finding the central themes and their frequency and variety. Through this process theory and data can be compared. (Metsämuuroinen 2006: 241-246)

For a research reliability is essential. Reliability can be reached through true knowledge and repeatability. For a general picture the sample characteristics should be the same as those of the population which is researched. (May 2004) As the youth co-ordinators gave their personal answers, they gave their true knowledge for the survey. The questionnaire in itself is repeatable as it could be given as such to either new employees or those who did not reply. In this study the sampling was quite straightforward. As this research aims at finding out the feelings of youth co-ordinators in districts of Finnish Red Cross questionnaire was sent to them.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Youth activities

“Reilu 100 henkilötyöpäivää menee ns. lyhentämättömänä nuorisotoimintaan.”

Being a co-ordinator of youth activities in Finnish Red Cross does not mean only working with youth. Besides having the title of co-ordinator of youth activities, some of these employees mentioned being responsible for organisational development or social activities in their districts. Even if their title suggests full concentration on youth issues, tasks such as updating Internet pages, co-ordination of activities on international humanitarian law and education and co-ordination of promo leaders.

Knowing the educational background of employees could help with understanding their actions from a sociocultural point of view. If one was educated in an area which is closely linked with sociocultural animation, would one use it more actively at work? I

received only seven of the possible twelve questionnaires, but among those who answered there is a variety of educations. Three have the educational background of civic activities (yhteisöpedagogi) but there is also a nurse, Master of Arts, Master of Developmental Psychology and a Master of Social Services.

According to the data clubs for children and youth are one of the most commonly named of the long-term activities that happens in the districts. Also shorter campaigns and events take place throughout the year. In some districts there are planning meetings, recreational weekends and camps for young volunteers. Befriending programme, babysitting, co-operation with local schools, and sexual health campaign are also mentioned. One of the districts also has international co-operation with the Estonian and Carelian Red Cross and another organises multicultural cafe evenings once a month.

“Kaiken nuorisotoiminnan ei tarvitse olla 'vain nuorille suunnattua', vaan harrastustoiminnassa voi olla eri-ikäistä porukkaa. Esim. ikääntyvät vanhukset ja nuoret voisi olla myös aiheena mielenkiintoinen kehittämisen paikka. Nythän on jo monilla järjestöillä 'kylämummo ja -vaari' toimintaa, mutta entä jos Punaisella Ristillä olisikin 'kultainen nuoruus - vanhuus' toimintaa?”

Young volunteers are also involved in activities, which are not specifically youth activities, such as first aiding and disaster preparedness, multicultural activities, positions of trust and as volunteers in various festivals.

Youth co-ordinators tell that the initiative of activities comes often from the young people themselves, people acting together with youth, the district's youth committee or the youth co-ordinator. Often the youth committee steps in to work further with the initiatives, sometimes even with the local youth volunteers and/or the youth co-ordinator.

“Verksamheten planeras inom utskottet där en del av avdelningarna är representerade. Arbetsplanen fastställs sedan av distriktsstyrelsen. Utskottet strävar till att ha idémöten (strategidiskussion) i januari och i augusti.”

The balance between the youth co-ordinator giving ideas and instructions and them giving support to youth is different in the districts according to the answers given in the

study. It seems that in most districts it is the youth co-ordinator who gives initial ideas, even though one of the youth co-ordinators underlined the fact that in Finnish Red Cross it is solely the branches that have activities, not the districts themselves.

Youth co-ordinators tell that the actual planning of activities is done by the youth committee in their regular meetings and weekend meetings. The employee also has some role in the planning process, especially in guiding the young volunteers in branches. However it depends on the activity which is planned. For instance if a young volunteer wants to start a children's club, it is planned together with the branch with the youth co-ordinator providing the written materials, if needed. The responsibility of planning is divided according to the actors.

Implementation of activities on district level is mainly done by the youth co-ordinator together with the youth committee. However one of the youth co-ordinators reminded that the responsibility of organising activities lies on the shoulders of the volunteers in branches. The function of the district is to support the branches in their activities; also the organisers of activities come from there. Especially the materials used in activities can be obtained from the district office.

”Jag tycker att vi trots att min tjänst är så liten får synlighet i medier. Jag har försökt att satsa på några få ungdomskampanjer istället för många små.”

The question of the effect of youth activities was often left without an answer as many of the current youth co-ordinators have started at their position only a short while ago. Those few who did know of the effect said it to be strong on both personal and communal level. The activities of Red Cross are thought to aim at giving a meaningful hobby, information about the Red Cross Movement and to get new volunteers and members involved in the organisation. Social networks, feeling of responsibility, experiences of success and gaining of new skills result in building the young people's self-esteem. In co-operation with local schools tolerance can be seen as a result of some Red Cross activities. With only little time dedicated to youth activities, the youth co-ordinators concentrate on a few good campaigns instead of doing everything.

5.2 Future plans

“Toiveena olisi myös kehittää entisestään nuorten mukana oloa osaston perustoiminnassa ja osana esim. EA ryhmiä jne.”

According to the data plans for youth activities and their support is more or less clear to all youth co-ordinators. There is a work plan, which is approved by the district's government, which is followed. This work plan is written according to the guidelines which are set every three years by the national assembly.

“...intensifiera också det finlandssvenska ungdomssamarbetet aktiva emellan, ha ett aktivt ungdomsutskott, konkretisera den internationella verksamheten i distriktet, systematiskt samarbete med skolor och utbildningar i distriktet; speciellt i humanitär rätt, aids dagen och Hungerdagen genom att ha fler ungdomsutbildare och Promon i distriktet...”

Organising courses, camps and creating them into a continuous habit is an on-going process in the districts. Supporting youth to create new clubs for children and youth, get more members involved and find new members to youth committee are often mentioned. Youth co-ordinators want to support young people by finding places for youth to make an impact within the organisation and development of districts' web pages. One of the youth co-ordinators is looking for an intern to help with these issues.

For the coming two to five years planning follows the guidelines set by the general assembly. This especially includes having more members and volunteers on the youth sector. Having multicultural youth involved in the organisation is a big challenge but an even greater opportunity. Also more branches are wished to be involved in youth activities. Having interesting activities in a greater variety is also mentioned as is the general acknowledgement of Red Cross and its activities. The current new programmes of Reddie Kids clubs and Narikka events are hoped to become steady and continuous during this period. Co-operation with schools is seen to need systematic development.

Long-term plans up until ten years remain unclear to these youth co-ordinators. Those who had thought of it mentioned recruitment of new, active volunteers, increasing the variety in activities and general knowledge of Red Cross. Many had written the plan to be the same or very similar to that of the period of two to five years.

“Lisäksi maahanmuuttajataustaisten nuorten mukaan saaminen järjestön toimintaan on suuri haaste, mutta vielä suurempi mahdollisuus. Tavoitteena on hyödyntää tutkija Leena Suurpään valmistuvaa tutkimusta (hän tekee sitä par aikaa ja se valmistuu ehkä vuonna 2011) nuorten ja etenkin maahanmuuttajataustaisten nuorten kokemuksista ja mahdollisuuksista harrastaa Punaisessa Ristissä.”

5.3 Supporting youth

”Yritän tutustua kaikkien ryhmien ohjaajiin piirin alueella, jota olisi helpompi ottaa yhteyttä jos tulee ongelmia. Olen tehnyt selväksi, että minulle saa aina soittaa ja uusien ryhmien alkaessa pyrin suunnittelemaan toimintaa ainakin seuraavaksi 3ksi kuukaudeksi eteenpäin. Tämä siltä poistuu, jos aletaan käyttää Reddie Kids ohjaajakoulutusta enemmänkin. Tukisin paljon enemmänkin jos vain olisi rahaa (matkat, päivärahat, vlolisät...)”

”Paljon ideoita, mutta en ehdi nyt kirjoittaa kaikkea tähän.”

Youth co-ordinators support youth mainly by staying in contact with them and those branches which have youth activities. Personal connection with volunteers is seen to be important as is giving small gifts and remembering the young volunteers. If they need help with organising activities or events, support is given as much as it is possible with the limited resources. The districts' youth committees are a link between the district and branches in this matter as well. Anyhow support from the employees is different and it is to be made known youth volunteers can contact them if there is anything to be solved. Money is an issue here as more could be done if there was more of it.

”Tukea pitäisi olla ehdottomasti enemmän. Tällä hetkellä tuki on puhelintukea, s-postitukea ja osastovierailuja heidän niitä minulta toivoessa. Nuorisovalioikunta voisi olla myös yksi kanava tukea suunniteltaessa, esim. jo nyt ajatuksen tasolla suunnitteilla nuorisotoimijoiden omia tapaamisia jne. Esim. piirin ystävötoiminnassa järjestetään tapaamisia ystäville, lisäkoulutusta heidän toiveidensa mukaan ja myös virkistysjuhlia, joten sieltä vain vinkkejä matkaan. Toisaalta ehkä pitäisi selvittää jollakin tutkimuksella tai pienellä kartoituksella, että mitä tukea nuoret kaipaavat?”

Youth themselves support one another to a certain extent, but possibly not enough. One of the youth co-ordinators had some ideas for this but not time write them on the

questionnaire. Especially those in the youth committee play an important role in supporting the other volunteers. How they are taken in branches is important as if they do not offer support it is difficult to find it somewhere else. Communication between branches should also be more active.

”Nuoria pitäisi saada kokemaan kuuluvansa johonkin, joka on osa itsetunnonkin rakennusainetta. En itsekään taitaisi kovin kauan jaksaa toimia, jos olisin ihan yksin ja en tapaisi muita samanhenkisiä toimijoita koskaan. Miten olisi leiri? Entä matka? Jolla nuoret tutustuisivat toisiinsa ja sitä kautta ryhmäytyisivät ja verkostoituisivat ja tätä kautta voisivat tukea toinen toisiaan myös jatkossa enemmän.”

Some districts have a system of dedicated members of youth committee having their own branches which they look after. This system is yet finding its right form with difficulties with long distances. Meetings for youth are something that make group spirit stronger and activate youth. If they know someone who is already involved in the activities, it is easier to join in.

6 CONCLUSIONS

In general the youth co-ordinators should be able to use sociocultural animation in their works, even though it is not one of the objects or principles of Finnish Red Cross. The title of youth co-ordinator does not require a certain degree but many of them have in fact a similar education. Civic activities are supposedly very much of sociocultural animation but a nurse and those who have studied a Masters’ degree should have heard of the concept.

To continue with operationalisation I have divided the following part according to the elements of sociocultural animation.

Element of activity: “Doing a bit of this and that” vs. holistic activities

The youth co-ordinators seem to have a staggering amount of work considering the time they are given to accomplish everything they are expected to do. Having only seven of twelve questionnaires answered, it seems they either have too little time or interest for unexpected tasks. Finnish Red Cross does not underline its role as a sociocultural actor

but its youth activities do create movement, sense of responsibility and independent action in all its different forms. The seven fundamental principles guide its work while leaving space for individualism of volunteers.

In cold world of sociocultural animation action is based on the personal interest of participants. Volunteering in itself can be seen as a personal interest, but what kind of voluntary work young people want to do depends even more on the personality. There are as many different ways of volunteering as there are volunteers. Meeting the majority's needs and wants leads to a number of different activities. In a unit the size of the districts in Finnish Red Cross holistic activities are not impossible. However, the activities give an impression of being "a bit of this and that".

Participant: Agents vs. independent actors

At the moment sociocultural animation is about freedom of social communication, which was not clearly asked about in this research. Yet it seems that the youth coordinator has created room for communication in many districts with, for instance, the planning and organisation of youth activities. If regular meetings for youth are organised, this supports not only the taking of initiatives but also independent action and sense of responsibility.

Besides being actual youth volunteers, young people volunteer for a various other activities. There are young people active in the same areas as adults according to their personal interests. Finnish Red Cross is a voluntary organisation which is run by the volunteers without whom the organisation would not exist. They are not only needed as organisers but also as participants.

Many of the districts which I received answers from have a youth committee. In youth committees there are representatives from the branches. This study did not cover them in more detail, but could be expected they represent a variety of ages, gender, ethnic background and locality. They bring out the opinions of youth from the field to the higher stages of the organisation. Often they also organise events, courses and other activities for the youth in the districts.

Youth committees are a way to motivate youth to make changes and support the possible hidden abilities among youth in the very bureaucratic organisation. When young people are put together to work on and for their ideas, it is easier to face the “adults' side” of the organisation. From the point of view of sociocultural animation the youth committees often balance between the role of an agent and independent actor.

Youth co-ordinators use the sociocultural element of participation in both of its forms. Agents of action as well as independent actors are needed in order to have a balanced organisation which acts when needed.

Time: Short-time programme vs. towards a project

Time-wise Finnish Red Cross' districts' youth activities are more hot worldly as there are long-term plans of some sort. These plans do not depend on individual youth co-ordinators but are generally set by the districts' government or by the general assembly of the organisation. However, some elements of cold world exist as then more specific objects can be reached as they are differently concentrated on.

Having long-term activities and shorter campaigns and events is not only important in sociocultural animation but in the survival of the organisation. Having visibility during the short-term activities often wakes up people's interest in long-term volunteering. Youth co-ordinators seem to be able to take advantage of them instead of them competing with one another.

Institution: Restricted, solid vs. flexible, constructive

The juridical and political background of Red Cross is very solid and restricted. There are certain organs which have been given power to do certain tasks. For instance, youth committees cannot do the work of district government and vice versa. However, within the boundaries set by laws and regulations, youth co-ordinators have a possibility to move rather freely. As all twelve districts are individual units, it is always up to various factors what kind of sociocultural institution the youth co-ordinators are to work in.

Social relationship: Socialisation vs. social

Thinking sociocultural animation as an emancipatory social movement is about creating activities which are equally available to all. The youth co-ordinators in districts of Finnish Red Cross do this by organising activities and events, even though with limited resources. The effect of these activities is to be said strong on both personal and communal level, which supports this humanistic thinking of sociocultural animation.

In most of the districts the youth co-ordinators also works with other issues. Even though it means they have less time for youth, it could be an opportunity to create bridges between different groups of people. Developing the organisation, co-ordinating social activities or organising events on International Humanitarian Law can also be seen from the youth volunteers' point of view.

Seeing people as victims of situations and animators as idealistic service providers does not come across from the youth co-ordinators. This implies that they do not see animation as a tool of keeping up the society.

Strategy: Consensus vs. conflict

Working very closely together with the clientèle is a less traditional way of professionalism. As there is no information on how the youth co-ordinators worked before, it is not possible to compare it to the current situation. From the answers it became very clear that the youth committees are an important actor together with the youth co-ordinator in initiating, planning and implementation of activities.

Youth co-ordinators' passiveness would eventually lead to disappearance of youth volunteers on district level. At the moment this does not seem very likely as almost all of the answers included information on the work of the youth committee. Naturally all these committees work in their own individual way but activities organised by them seem to create some kind of critical awareness of society or "conflicts".

Philosophy: Technological practice vs. Theory-practice spiral

When only looking at the data received through this study is difficult if not possible to know whether the youth co-ordinators rely on technological practice or if there is a continuous discussion between theory and practice. However, when considering their

educational backgrounds, there is a great possibility for strong implementation of theory in their work and vice versa.

When asked of supporting youth the co-ordinators told they try to be as closely connected with their volunteers as possible. This suggests the spiral of theory and practice being used more than the concrete and materialistic practice which in this case would most likely mean solely depending on giving out materials.

7 DISCUSSION

Even though I was familiar with the organisation in the beginning of the process I did not have a lot information on this specific subject which made it both interesting and difficult to research. Besides my personal and professional interest Finnish Red Cross' headquarters wanted to have more knowledge on what really happens in the districts. As districts are juridically independent organs the headquarters cannot give them orders but with this information support could be made more specific and fitting to the needs.

Time-wise the process became a great deal longer than was initially expected. This was mainly due to the organisational changes within Finnish Red Cross but also changes in my personal life. However, during the process I learnt a lot about myself as a researcher.

Based on the answers youth co-ordinators gave to my questionnaire I saw the staggering amount of work they have compared to the limited time they are most of the time given. It would be very interesting to see the real difference a full-time youth co-ordinator can make compared to those who are given less time for youth issues. Åland's district has a half-time youth co-ordinator, whereas the youth in the district of Helsinki and Uusimaa get only 30% work load even though there is a lot more of them.

This survey showed the importance of youth committees in districts. I would like to see the difference between youth committees in different parts of Finland. As the good practices could be applied more widely in the country, should the communication between the youth committees be more active, open or exist at all in the first place?

Finnish Red Cross has a lot of activities in all sectors of life. The organisation could offer a number of topics for future projects for students of universities of applied

sciences as well as universities. As a students I would be very interested in the opinion of those students who have conducted a study for Finnish Red Cross to know what kind of benefit they think the organisation has gained through their studies.

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HYVÄ SUOMEN PUNAISEN RISTIN NUORISOTYÖN KOORDINAATOORI!

Teen opinnäytetyötäni Metropolia ammattikorkeakoulun englanninkielisessä sosiaalialan koulutusohjelmassa.

Opinnäytetyöni tarkoituksena on ottaa selvälle, minkälaista nuorisotoimintaa Suomen Punaisen Ristin piirien alueella tehdään. Samalla otan selvää, minkälainen on nuorisokoordinaattorin rooli piireissä.

Toivon, että vastaatte alaoleviin kysymyksiini. Vastaustanne perusteella rakennan mahdollisimman kattavan kuvan Suomen Punaisen Ristin nuorisotoiminnasta. Opinnäytetyöni auttaa järjestöä suunnittelussa ja kehityksessä.

Vastauksenne käsitellään huolella ja luottamuksellisesti. Teen listan erilaisista nuorisotoiminnan koordinaattorien nimikkeistä. Käytän myös muita kahden ensimmäisen kysymyksen tietoja, joita on mahdollista yhdistää toisiinsa, mutta sen jälkeen vastauksenne ovat tunnistamattomia.

Valmiin opinnäytetyön toimitan opettajilleni, kouluni kirjastoon, Suomen Punaisen Ristin keskustuomiston nuoriso- ja organisaationtiimiin, sekä piireihin.

Valmiin kyselyn voitte palauttaa joko sähköpostilla taru.wallenius@metropolia.fi .

Arvostaisin, jos voisitte palauttaa vastauksenne keskiviikkoon 18. maaliskuuta mennessä!

Ystävällisin terveisin,

Taru Wallenius

Sosionomiopiskelija
Metropolia ammattikorkeakoulu

Vastaamalla näihin kysymyksiin annat minulle luvan käyttää tietoja opinnäytetyössäni. Muut eivät tule näkemään vastauksiasi ja tulostetut vastaukset tuhoetaan välittömästi käytön jälkeen.

TAUSTATIETOA

Mikä on työnimikkeesi? _____

Entä koulutuksesi? _____

Jos jaat aikasi useamman tehtävän kesken, kuinka suuri osa ajastasi on nuorisotoiminnalle tarkoitettua? _____

TAUSTATIETOA PIIRIN NUORISOSTA

Kuinka monta nuorisojäsentä on piirissäsi? _____

Kuinka monta aktiivista nuorta on toiminnassa mukana? _____

Kuinka monta prosenttia nuorisojäsenistä on multikulttuurisia? _____

Kuinka monta järjestön ulkopuolista nuorta toiminassa tavoitetaan? _____

NUORISOTOIMINTA

Minkälaista nuorisotoimintaa on piirisi alueella?

Kuka tekee aloitteen toiminnasta? Miten sitä ideoidaan?

Kuka suunnittelee toiminnan? Kuinka sitä suunnitellaan?

Kuka toiminnan toteuttaa? Miten toteutus hoidetaan?

Minkälaisen vaikutuksen näet toiminnalla olevan?

Minkälaiset ovat suunnitelmat piirissäsi nuorisotoiminnalle...

Täksi vuodeksi?

Seuraaviksi 2-5 vuodeksi?

Tuleviksi 5-10 vuodeksi?

NUORISON TUKEMINEN

Miten tuet nuoria toiminnassa? Miten tuesta voitaisiin tehdä parempaa?

Tukevatko nuoret mielestäsi toisiaan? Miten tällaisesta tuesta saataisiin parempaa?

KIITOS VASTAUKSISTASI!

BÄSTA SAMORDNARE FÖR UNGDOMSVERKSAMHET I FINLANDS RÖDA KORS!

Jag gör mitt examensarbete vid sociala områdets engelskspråkiga utbildningsprogram i yrkeshögskolan Metropolia.

Syftet med arbetet är att utröna hurdan ungdomsverksamhet som utövas på distriktens område inom Finlands Röda Kors. Samtidigt utreds samordnarens för ungdomsarbete roll är inom distriktet

Jag önskar att ni besvarar frågorna nedan. Med svaren som grund bygger jag upp en så heltäckande bild av Finlands Röda Kors ungdomsverksamhet som möjligt. Mitt arbete hjälper organisationen i planering och utveckling av verksamheten.

Svaren behandlas omsorgsfullt och konfidentiellt. Jag kommer att lista ut alla titlar under vilka samordnare för ungdomsverksamheten arbetar. Information från två första frågor kan möjligtvis associeras med varandra men allt annat som skrivs kan inte identifieras i det färdiga arbete.

Det färdiga examensarbetet distribueras till mina lärare, skolans bibliotek, Organisations- och ungdomsteamet vid Finlands Röda Kors centralbyrå samt distrikten.

Den ifyllda enkäten skickas till taru.wallenius@metropolia.fi .

Jag skulle uppskatta om ni kunde returnera svaren senast den 18 mars!

Med vänliga hälsningar,

Taru Wallenius

Socionomstuderande
Yrkeshögskolan Metropolia

Genom att svara på frågorna ger du mig rätten att använda svaren för mitt examensarbete. Svaren kommer inte att överlåtas åt tredje part och förstörs direkt efter användning.

Bakgrundsinformation

Vad är din titel? _____

Hurdan utbildning har du? _____

Om du innehar flera tjänster, hur stor del är vikt för ungdomsverksamheten?

Bakgrundsinformation om distriktets ungdomar

Hur många ungdomsmedlemmar finns i distriktet? _____

Hur många ungdomar deltar aktivt i verksamheten? _____

Hur stor procent av ungdomarna är multikulturella? _____

Hur många ungdomar utanför organisationen nås av verksamheten? _____

Ungdomsverksamhet

Hurudan ungdomsverksamhet finns på distriktets område?

Vem tar initiativ? Hur kläcks idéer?

Vem planerar verksamheten? Hur planeras den?

Vem genomför verksamheten? Hur sköts genomförandet?

Hurudan inverkan ser du att verksamheten har?

Vad är planerna för distriktets ungdomsverksamhet...

För det här året?

För de 2-5 följande åren?

För de kommande 5-10 åren?

Stödandet av ungdomen

Hur stöder du ungdomarna i verksamheten? Hur kunde stödet förbättras?

Ger ungdomarna, enligt dig, stöd åt varandra? Hur kunde detta stöd förbättras?

Tack för dina svar!