

Simona Vitalini

Empowering Intercultural Dialogue in Child Protection

Co-designing Information Material with Professionals and Immigrants

Metropolia Ammattikorkeakoulu

Bachelor of Social Services

Degree Program in Social Services

Thesis

Autumn 2013

Author(s) Title Number of Pages Date	Simona Vitalini Empowering Intercultural Dialogue in Child Protection. Co-designing Information Material with Professionals and Immigrants. 51 pages + 6 appendixes Autumn 2013
Degree	Bachelor of Social Services
Degree program	Degree Program in Social Services
Specialisation option	Degree Program in Social Services
Instructor(s)	Tiitta, R. (Lecturer) Törnroös, J (Lecturer)
<p>Immigrant child protection clients have equal rights to learn about the services offered, regardless of their country of origin. Well informed clients respond more positively to the services and greater benefit of the common funds is achieved. Social workers in the Finnish child protection have a responsibility to educate clients about the Finnish welfare system, as well as to guide them in getting to know the culture, laws and practices. Immigrant clients need concrete help, information and support in coping with everyday issues such as support services. The current available written information is not effective for immigrant clients.</p> <p>In this functional thesis, with co-design as a method, information material about the best interest of the child was produced. Social workers, their clients and immigrants were interviewed. Workshops with different stakeholders were held, in order to draft and test a new way of implementing social services information material.</p> <p>As a result a thoroughly drafted information material for the use of the East Helsinki child protection unit was created. A new method of creating information and knowledge was piloted successfully.</p> <p>As a method, co-design is highly useful in the realm of social services, promoting clients' empowerment and the dialogue between different stakeholders and organizations.</p>	
Keywords	Immigrants, social work, cross-cultural social work, multicultural social work, child protection, child welfare, participation, interaction, dialogue, communication, co-design.

<p>Tekijä(t) Otsikko</p> <p>Sivumäärä Aika</p>	<p>Simona Vitalini Voimaannuttava monikulttuurinen dialogi lastensuojelussa. Tiedotusmateriaalin yhteissuunnittelu sosiaalityöntekijöiden ja maahanmuuttajien kanssa. 51 sivua + 6 liitettä 13.09.2013</p>
<p>Tutkinto</p>	<p>Sosionomi AMK</p>
<p>Koulutusohjelma</p>	<p>Sosiaaliala</p>
<p>Suuntautumisvaihtoehto</p>	<p>Degree Program in Social Services</p>
<p>Ohjaaja(t)</p>	<p>Tiitta,R. (Lehtori) Törnroös, J (Lehtori)</p>
<p>Lastensuojelun maahanmuuttaja-asiakkailla on taustastaan riippumatta yhdenvertaiset oikeudet saada tietoa tarjottavista palveluista. Asiakkaat, joilla on tarvittavat taustatiedot, hyötyvät enemmän palveluista ja näin yhteiskunnan varoille saadaan enemmän vastinetta. Suomessa lastensuojelun sosiaalityöntekijät vastaavat asiakkaiden kouluttamisesta suomalaisen hyvinvointijärjestelmän toiminnasta sekä asiakkaiden ohjaamisesta tutustumaan kulttuuriin, lakeihin ja käytäntöihin. Maahanmuuttaja-asiakkaat tarvitsevat käytännöllistä apua, tietoa ja tukea selvitäkseen jokapäiväisistä asioista kuten asiointista tukipalveluissa. Nykyisiä informaatiomateriaaleja ei ole suunniteltu maahanmuuttaja-asiakkaiden erityistarpeita huomioon ottaen.</p> <p>Päättötyön puitteissa tuotettiin yhteissuunnittelun avulla lapsen etua koskeva tiedotusmateriaali. Sosiaalityöntekijät, heidän asiakkaansa ja muut maahanmuuttajat osallistuivat projektiin. Projektissa kehitettiin ja testattiin uutta tapaa sosiaalipalveluiden tiedotusmateriaalin luomiseksi järjestämällä työpajoja eri sidosryhmien kanssa.</p> <p>Tuloksena syntyi perusteellisesti suunniteltu tiedotusmateriaali Itä-Helsingin lastensuojeluyksikön käyttöön. Uutta tapaa luoda tiedotusmateriaalia ja tietoa sovellettiin menestyksekkäästi ensimmäistä kertaa.</p> <p>Metodina yhteissuunnittelu on erittäin käyttökelpoinen sosiaalipalveluiden alalla, sillä se edistää asiakkaiden voimaantumista ja dialogia eri sidosryhmien ja organisaatioiden välillä.</p>	
<p>Avainsanat</p>	<p>Maahanmuuttajat, sosiaalityö, kulttuurienvälinen sosiaalityö, monikulttuurinen sosiaalityö, lastensuojelu, lasten ja nuorten hyvinvointia, osallisuus, vuorovaikutus, dialogi, viestintä, yhteissuunnittelu.</p>

Content

1	Introduction	3
2	Immigrant clients of Child Protection and Intercultural Work	5
2.1	Immigrants in Finland and intercultural work within child protection	5
2.2	Intercultural dialogue in child protection	10
3	Empowerment through Dialogue	12
4	Aims of the Project	16
4.1	Information designed material for social workers	16
4.2	Main content of the material: the best interests of the child	18
4.3	Existing written information for immigrant clients in child protection	19
5	Co-design and Co-production in Welfare Services	20
5.1	What is co-design	20
5.2	Co-design as empowerment through dialogue in child protection	22
5.3	Participation and democracy	23
5.4	The stakeholders	25
5.4.1	East Helsinki child protection social workers	26
5.4.2	Immigrant clients of child protection	26
5.4.3	NGO La Familia Club	27
5.5	Project's costs for the stakeholders	27
6	The Process of the Project	29
6.1	Plan	29
6.2	Co-design	29
6.3	Production	35
6.4	Distribution	35
6.5	Evaluation of the co-design process	36
6.5.1	Co-design as a process	36
6.5.2	Learning outcomes for the author	38
7	Discussion	39
7.1	Ethical considerations	39
7.2	Limitations	40
8	Conclusions	42

9 Acknowledgements	45
References	46
Bibliography	51

Appendixes

Appendix 1 The process

Appendix 2 Clients' consent form

Appendix 3. Questionnaire for the social workers

Appendix 4. Social workers' workshops

Appendix 5. Interview with the clients

Appendix 6. Clients' workshops

“Monikulttuurinen Suomi on haasteita ja mahdollisuuksia täynnä”
 “Multicultural Finland is full of challenges and possibilities” (transl.)
 Minttu Rätty (2002: 42).

“If the structure does not permit dialogue, the structure must be changed”
 Paulo Freire (1972: 65).

1 Introduction

The main purpose of this final thesis was to co-design information designed written material ⁽¹⁾ with child protection clients of immigrant background, immigrants and social workers. It's based on co-production, recognizing both clients and social workers as valuable assets to the process. The author's role as a researcher was on one hand to assist social workers by conveying results from workshops carried out with immigrant clients of the services (therefore the functional thesis can be defined a co-design process); and on the other hand to design written and illustrated material which can support social workers and immigrant clients in their complex dialogue, interpreting and clarifying the large amount of information related to child protection issues and processes. As a facilitator the author got the chance and challenge to break down barriers (dissolving borders between professionals and recipients) by reconfiguring the way services are communicated, enabling the public service agency to become a catalyst of change, rather than being a sole provider; and the client to become part of the information structuring.

The thesis is a joint collaboration of Socca, the Centre of Excellence on Social Welfare in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area (Socca 2012) and the Eastern child protection Centre of Helsinki (City Social Services Department). Socca's task is to develop new methods of working, produce information pertaining to social welfare and conduct research “for the benefit of practical application” (Socca 2012; Lovio & Muurinen 2013). Socca as a partner is essential in providing a network and a budget for the project (eventually to print the produced material and possibly translate the texts in Somali, Russian and Estonian languages).

From the author's personal viewpoint, this final thesis has been a vivid experience in trying to answer to cultural identity questions.

Note 1: In this thesis, the author refers to information designed material as written material in which the ideas and concepts are presented in a planned visual, graphic and typographic style. A designed visual message accompanying text has a greater power to inform and educate. (Baer & Vacarra 2008: 23-30.)

The final product of the project consists of communication material to be used with immigrant clients in child protection. Its format and its content were designed in collaboration with immigrants and social workers. Their role was to give directions about simplicity of Finnish language in explaining specific contents, processes and legislation regarding matters such as social worker, child protection, parents' responsibilities, and help illustrating and choosing images to represent the concepts. Since the field is wide, a restricted amount of concepts related to the best interest of the child was presented, in order to find an innovative model to be extended to the field, rather than a complete functional set of communication material.

The idea for the development project arose from the needs for understanding in child protection (specifically in the East Helsinki area). Clients from immigrant background in child protection are entitled to equal services. Although the quota of immigrant is still relatively small in comparison to the overall population, their proportion continues to grow, and the number of immigrant children in welfare services will rise accordingly, especially in the capital area. (Sosiaaliportti 2007; Hammar-Suutari 2009: 146; Rätty 2002:219.)

This final thesis aspired to have dialogue at its center, as perceived in Paulo Freire's philosophy (1972: 65): a tool to develop structures, visions and thoughts.

Helsinki is the ideal place for this co-design process, as fourteen percent of its families have a multicultural background. There are over 150 different mother tongues amongst the inhabitants of Helsinki, with the biggest group amongst immigrants being Russian. Following language groups are Estonian, Somali and English. (Helsinki henkilöstökeskus maahanmuutto 2011.)

Regarding the thesis content, in the beginning the relevance of the project is demonstrated, introducing relevant theoretical material on child protection with immigrant clients and intercultural dialogue. Afterwards, the aims of the final work, as well as relevant theories about co-design are explained. The final part presents the results of the workshops, as well as the output and the evaluation of the co-design process. Since the scope of this thesis was broad, the different related topics are presented with limited depth and insight.

2 Immigrant clients of Child Protection and Intercultural Work

2.1 Immigrants in Finland and intercultural work within child protection

A big amount of multicultural individuals and families moving from other countries or other regions in Finland live in Helsinki. In one out of ten Finnish families, one or both of the parents are coming from other cultures. (Katisko 2012: 7.)

Immigration in Finland has steadily increased, changing its shape in the 2000s. The number of refugees has decreased, even though family reunifications and immigration for work opportunities have increased. While entering the 2010s, gaining knowledge and solutions about the challenges of interculturality in the capital region is of great significance. (Katisko 2012: 7-50.)

Individuals moving from a country to another often take with them a family, a home and ways to deal in the everyday life. Families can shape themselves in the new country safely, feeling part of the community, if the society does not conflict with the expectations and ways of living. On the other hand, after migrating to Finland, the social roles of the family members, as well as the interaction relationships might not work in the same way as in the country of origin. (Katisko 2012: 15.)

For many immigrant families, the immigration experience denotes a significant life crisis. The stress associated with the initial stage of immigration can result in depression and anxiety, while individuals who experience significant trauma during immigration may develop symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. (Katisko 2013: 33-45.)

According to the data collected through the project Kotipuu, developed by Väestöliitto, immigrant parents often end up upbringing children in a situation and in a context in which their original assumptions, previous experiences and cultures do not necessarily support their roles. Immigrant parents often feel that the impact they can have on their own life and the one of their children has diminished. As a result, they experience that their own children are “slipping away” from the family dimension, moving towards a society which is unfamiliar to them. (Alitolppa-Niitamo et al. 2006.)

Children in immigrant families are often considered more vulnerable due to the stress and the pressure experienced by the family resulting from immigration and acculturation (Earner 2007: 63-91).

Fear, loss, isolation, stress and uncertainty about the future are often factors experienced as a result of immigration. Additional pressures resulting from acculturation can lead to a variety of strains and difficulties on family systems, as parents and children experience changing cultural contexts along with the loss of previously established support systems. (Finno et al. 2006: 22-35.) Combined with cultural differences in parenting styles and expectations, as well as child discipline, these factors can affect the safety and wellbeing of children in immigrant families, and as a result, lead to involvement with child welfare agencies (Katisko 2012: 25-26).

Differences in acculturation levels often form the basis for significant tension between parents who adhere to traditional cultural values and children who are more rapidly exposed to the social norms of the majority culture. Tensions may occur as children experience conflict between these parental expectations and the values of the majority culture, which emphasizes autonomy and independence. Research indicates that increased parenting stress is common among immigrant parents, who feel they are no longer able to control their children and preserve the closeness of the parent-child relationship. As parents struggle to maintain discipline, they may become more rigid in an attempt to regain the control they had prior to the influence of the new culture. (Alitolppa-Niitamo et al. 2006; Katisko 2012:17.)

As a result, within the child welfare system, the number of immigrant children has steadily risen over the past several years, especially in certain areas of Helsinki, where this trend has seen even larger increases (Alitolppa-Niitamo et al. 2006; Katisko 2012: 14-15).

Despite the relevance of the topic, the theoretical background on this specific field is scarce. As child protection is highly dependent from welfare services and legislations, the reference literature and research related to the topic are in Finnish language and focus on the clients in the Finnish context.

According to Katisko's findings (2013: 50) families' problems are strongly related to this status as immigrants or asylum seekers. Families have faced, after moving to Finland, unemployment, work related stress, lack of language skills, deficiency of social net-

works, as well as economic instability. Once in the new country, families continue to experience stress resulting from language barriers, unfamiliar customs, and the loss of previously established support systems (Hancock 2005: 695-700). While many of the challenges new immigrants face are tangible (finding employment, shopping, paying bills, navigating school and medical systems), each of these challenges can result in further anxiety and stress (Segal & Mayadas 2005: 563-571). Further compounding these difficulties is the possibility of preexisting psychological concerns that may worsen as a result of the immigration experience. Also experiences of war or violence can influence the everyday life of asylum seekers. (Finno et al. 2006: 22-35.)

Merja Anis at Väestöliitto has given a relevant contribution to the topic with her doctoral thesis on child protection with immigrant clients (2008) and two articles (2006a, 2006b). In her work, which is based on Payne's theoretical framework on cultural minorities, she focuses on the clients' integration into the society, even if differences in individual and family life situations explain the immigrants' different time of integration into a certain set of rules, value, and family images (Anis 2006a: 115).

The more recent research of Katisko (2012: 7-50) "Sosiaalityöntekijöiden näkemyksiä maahanmuuttajataustaiden perheiden asiakkudesta lastensuojelussa" ("Views of social workers on immigrants as clients in child protection" transl.) explores the ways in which immigrants become clients of child protection, its process, the integration into Finnish society and the perceptions about child protection services in the different phases, whether the worker is culturally sensitive or not. Moreover, Katisko (2012: 11) analyzes the network of people (the family, the extended family and the other relationships); which provide a valid support to the parents, whether the economic and social situations are challenging.

Katisko's findings are in line with the research regarding Somalis (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004); Russians and Estonians (Liebkin et al. 2004: 181-185). Moving to Finland means also a shift in social and financial resources, as well as an adaptation to the model of a nuclear family, abandoning the idea of the resourceful traditional extended family to help in upbringing children (Liebkin et al. 2004: 181).

In Russia and Estonia grandmothers and other relatives often contribute significantly to the child development and care (Liebkin et al. 2004: 181; Rotkirch 2000: 214-223).

When children grow up in Estonian families, they are encouraged to gain independence, spending time also alone at home. However, minors' independence does not mean parental neglect. (Poussaner 2013.)

In Somali culture, family is a value and an institution, in which the mother is a central figure. Conflict management strategies require arbitration by elders within the community, and spiritual and psychological unit is essential in family strength (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004: 66).

As needs, resources, family values, background and language skills are variable, civil servants and social workers in child protection should be able to encounter any client they perceive as culturally different and unique (Anis 2008; Heikkilä-Daskalopoulos 2008; Rätty 2002).

Child protection creates a source of misunderstanding and prejudice for immigrants, who often experience stress, misinterpretation and lack of dialogue when dealing with social workers regarding the destiny of their children. Many clients feel fear or doubtfulness towards Finnish officers (Salmela 2013; Heikkilä-Daskalopoulos 2008:8; Anis 2008; Poussaner 2013). Moreover, the existence or the different nature of the service in the country of origin increases the lack of trust in child protection authorities (Heikkilä-Daskalopoulos 2008:8).

The child protection pre-assumption for immigrant is restricted to the idea of custody (Poussaner 2013) and the placement of the minor outside home (in another family or within child welfare institutions). Non-Finnish clients often ignore the existence of preventive measures and least invasive means such as open care and voluntary family actions (Lastensuojelulaki 13.4.2007/417; Anis 2008).

Within child protection, children from a multicultural background are disproportionately represented, a situation that raises questions about the equity of the system (Katisko 2012: 31). According to people's rights advocates, child welfare officials in the Greater Helsinki region lack understanding of immigrant's culture (Salmela 2013; Syväälä 2012) and take at times an excessively hard line with families of foreign origins (Salmela 2013; Heikkilä-Daskalopoulos 2008:8; Anis 2008). "The entire attitude that prevails in the system is a cause for concern" (Ikonen, lawyer specialized in child welfare disputes cited in Syväälä 2012).

According to Anis (2008: 90) “understanding similarities” could support the social workers in understanding multicultural clients in child protection. In order to be able to do that, it would be important to ask what equality means, whether it is the similarity when compared to the majority of people or the possibility and right of being different from them (Anis 2008: 33).

One of the child protection law principles (Lastensuojelulaki 13.4.2007/417) includes the basic premise of taking into account the children’s culture, language, and religion. This implies in practice a wider range of challenges, which are not univocal. The law underlines the principle of equality, without explaining in practice what does it imply and how does it translate into real life. (Katisko 2012: 32.)

Nevertheless, according to Hammar-Suutari (2009: 204-230), trials carried out in work communities indicate that by long-term participation, development can be achieved in all components of intercultural competence (attitudes, cognition, skills and action). Striving towards equal customer service in both individual and communal or organizational levels still requires going through a learning process. In addition, readiness to change is needed, and the participation of the East Helsinki child protection unit is a vivid demonstration of the professionals’ readiness to start purposeful actions and pilot projects.

The dilemma in focusing on immigrants lies in how much the project might increase understanding and build an unprejudiced environment, rather than strengthening already existing stereotypes. Choosing this topic, the author took a risk in dealing with a hard matter, not starting from the assumption that an immigrant background would mean different or more challenging problems than those faced with the other part of the population.

The challenges before the intercultural child protection interventions are numerous. However, the author believes in promising practices aimed at strengthening families and improving the dialogue between providers and clients, supporting case workers and infusing cultural competences throughout the co-design process, moving the child welfare system a step forward.

2.2 Intercultural dialogue in child protection

"Voimaantumien kasvaa vuorovaikutusprosessissa"
"Empowerment grows with dialogue." (transl.)
Katisko, M. (2013: 26).

In order to build a culturally sensitive and empowering environment, engagement in dialogue is needed. Dialogue is therefore the underpinning theoretical socio-pedagogical framework of the thesis. It is a tool to emphasize the clients' cultural values and resources, as well as a mean to progress with the process in child protection. Social workers are naturally cultural interpreters when engaged in customer-oriented work. As the ethnographic research of Hammar-Suutari (2009) suggests, each client (regardless of her background), shall be seen as somewhat different, as a culturally representative entity and as an individual. Diversity appears to be natural and a cultural resource for the customer (Anis 2006b: 113-116). With dialogue professionals have the chance to access to the clients' world (Freire 1972).

Freire's dialogue (1972), intentionally aimed at socio-cultural and political contexts that have obvious unbalances, is an inspiration and a vision for this project. Professionals in social services aim to reach their clients, those that Freire defines as "oppressed". Dialogue is a part of the dialogical and dialectic pedagogy, renewing and modernizing social work practices, education and progress (Gadotti, 1994: 56).

As Anis' (2008) and Katisko's research (2012) disclose, parents' mental health issues, as well as their possible state as refugees, might instill in the family members traumatic disorders and questionable relationships' dynamics and capabilities to dialogue. Moreover, the differences in adjusting to the new environment, as well as the lack of Finnish language skills and the exclusion from the education system and the working life are issues, to which the professionals in child protection shall answer. (Katisko 2012: 3.)

As the constructionist theory implies (Anis 2008: 69), information is always historically and culturally determined. The way things are understood, depends on where and when people live, their personal history and what kind of experiences they have in the society (Burr 1995).

Complexity is strongly related to culture differences and values perceptions. As an example, when it comes to work with immigrants in child protection, it is important to take

into account whether individuals belong to individualistic cultures rather than collectivist cultures. In fact, according to Rätty (2002: 56-60), the perception of family, child upbringing and money use vary.

	INDIVIDUALISTIC CULTURES	COLLECTIVIST CULTURES
FAMILY	The nuclear family is smaller, it emphasizes individualism. Independence is expected and valued.	Family identifies more than one generation and the extended family. Uncles, aunts, grandmothers and grandfathers, as well as cousins, belong to the family.
CHILD UPBRINGING	Children independency and their responsibility over their actions are objectives in upbringing. Children and youngsters are protected and respected. Children do not need to participate in daily works.	Collective mothering can be common. The extended family is responsible for the upbringing and for teaching communal sensitivity and cooperation, advising the child on important matters.
USE OF MONEY	Adult people have access to their own personal money. Everyone is responsible as a self-provider. Social security ensures that those who cannot earn money, will get the necessary means. Independence is expected and valued.	Money is shared in the closer community. The wealth of the group is primary. People in the extended family are honored to borrow money, when needed.

Table 1. Differences between individualistic and collective cultures, concerning related-family matters (adaptation from Rätty 2002: 59-60).

When it comes to child protection legislation, the importance of the community and individuality is relevant especially in open care, as the available social resources to support the child upbringing need to be considered (Katisko 2012: 31).

3 Empowerment through Dialogue

Dialogue in child protection often generates an ethical dilemma. The social worker stands on the middle ground between the children needs and rights and the parents' rights and duties. A central role is assigned to the child, as an active agent in relation to the parents. When talking about child protection, often the dilemma is whether the child, rather than the parents' needs, shall be taken into account in the first instance. (Katisko 2012: 31.)

If the children' needs are considered in the first instance, the client is most likely the child. On the contrary, when the parents' needs are of primary importance, the clients are adults. (Ojaniemi et al. 2010: 231.)

Understanding the needs for child welfare services in multicultural families means bigger challenges, when doing social work in child protection. Cultural competence includes both knowledge (content) and skill (process) dimensions. Knowledge includes groups' values, beliefs and practices, but also the dynamics of a cultural group currently living in a certain location. (Katisko 2012.)

While working with immigrant clients in child protection, social workers engage in situations, in which they have a duty to interpret different cultural ways of upbringing children. The adjustment to the new country, a process that happens within different time frames in children, youngsters and adults, needs to be considered as well. Moreover, different understandings of concepts such as family, children's rights and needs, in relations to the parents' rights and duties, can be a source of misunderstanding. (Katisko 2012: 31.)

It would be unrealistic to expect that professionals would learn and know about every client's culture background, as the variety is infinite. Anyhow, it is important to identify factors defining cultures, and acquire critical tools to communicate effectively and collaborate with clients from different origins. (Hammar-Suutari 2009; Rätty 2002: 54.)

Child protection can be also evaluated as an empowering or disempowering process. Empowerment for an immigrant client means, in the child welfare context, being listened and feeling part of the society as equal members. (Katisko 2013: 3.)

In the recent work "Maahanmuuttajataustaiset perheet lastensuojelun asiakkaina" ("Immigrant families as child protection clients" transl.) Katisko (2013) has answered,

through interviews of clients and social workers, how the social service has supported in the open care the parents and the children.

Despite the fact that empowerment is an individual process; also other individuals, relationships and social structures have an influence on it (Siitonen 1999: 117-118).

Katisko (2013) proved in a comparative study that empowering workers have a major influence in the processes within child welfare. On the contrary, dis-empowering professionals impose rules and limitations, often forgetting or ignoring the clients' own culture and language. With dialogue, empowering social workers develop long lasting alliances with the parents and the children or youngsters in the research. Trust and a balanced interaction with the clients were proven to be a sustainable and solid basis for a fruitful collaboration, influencing the destiny of the children.

Muukkonen (2008: 43) noted, in a research done with Finnish clients, that a well-written plan ("kirjallinen suunnitelma") has been the most relevant tool in supporting the understanding of both children and parents. From a case-management perspective, the written plan is also a supportive tool for the responsible social worker. In the best cases, as Muukkonen specified (2008: 52), the plan gave motivation to the clients to commit to their objectives and goals. On the contrary, when it comes to immigrant clients, social work and case-management is perceived just as meetings and evaluations of the parents' abilities (Katisko 2013: 21). Moreover, as many of the immigrant parents involved in Katisko's research admitted, they could not remember about the plan's existence. This is significant, as clients in child welfare have the right to be proactive in developing their own case-management, read the written plans and express disagreements. (Katisko 2013: 23-28.)

It is relevant to note, while aiming at developing the dialogue in child protection, that mutual understanding is a wide concept, also based on non-verbal communication and cultural habits and behaviors, as well as communication codes. Finnish communication is generally straight forward, aiming at a specific goal. In different cultures, such as the African and Middle East, it is important to start asking about the family wellbeing, before being able to handle any kind of other conversations. When it comes to verbal culture, people from many Asian, Middle East, African and Latin American countries use often stories or metaphors when needing to explain complex processes. (Räty 2002: 62-67.)

It is not social workers' role to lecture about their own view of the world, or to attempt to impose that view on others, but rather to dialogue with the clients about their views. To enter into dialogue presupposes equality amongst participants: each one must trust the other. Mutual respect, care and commitment are prerequisites. Each one shall question what she knows, realizing that through dialogue existing thoughts will change and new knowledge will be created. (Freire 1972: 146-150.) On the contrary, when the relationships between professionals and clients in the social field are oppressive, knowledge is "a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (Freire 1972: 58).

If workers skills are employed through a dialogue process (Freire 1972: 45-59) potentially they have the skills to promote the gaining of power and, concurrently, within the process, to transform the nature of power relationship. The co-production process -object of this final thesis- is aiming at challenging mainstream thinking in social issues, trying to improve cultural understanding, creating a hopefully long-lasting debate between professionals and clients.

Dialogue is not just a way to achieve better results; it is a part of human nature. Human beings, as they are essentially communicative, are constructed through dialogue. There is no human progress without dialogue. (Freire 1972.)

The moment of the dialogue is the moment when men meet to transform reality and progress (Freire 1972: 60-96). As discovery is a social process, dialogue is the cement of this process and we need each other to create. Therefore dialogue was chosen as a tool to get information from the clients, co-designing new communication material, which aims to increase mutual understanding.

"Word is not the privilege of some few persons, but the right of everyone" (Freire 1972: 61).

Participation occurs as people have the right to get information and disagree about decisions, plans and solutions of which they are the main subjects (Katisko 2013: 24). Reciprocally, people cannot affect the decisions that regard them if they do not receive enough information about the legislation, processes, institutions and services. According to Rostila (2001: 8) collaboration with the client is one of the main goals in social work. Cooperation builds itself throughout the process.

Siitonen (1999: 7) proves that the intrinsic need for empowerment becomes acute when empowerment is denied; denying communication and mutual understanding is therefore a dis-empowering practice.

To improve empowerment of immigrant clients in child protection, both parents and children or youngsters shall be included; the support of a translator shall be available, if the language skills shall be a barrier and the goals of child protection as well as the best interest of the child shall be clearly explained (Katisko 2013: 54).

4 Aims of the Project

“What we need is not more information but the ability to present the right information to the right people at the right time, in the most effective and efficient way” (Horn cited in Baer et al. 2008: 20.)

4.1 Information designed material for social workers

The output of this functional thesis’ co-design process is information designed material for social workers, as presented in the table below. It is a set of communication tools developed in collaboration with the clients and the social workers of the East Helsinki area, as well as some intercultural associations. The stakeholders collaborated in producing the material during four workshops, four interviews and a questionnaire. The outcome presents relevant information about child protection connected to the best interest of the child.

Information design makes people understand information in a meaningful way. The aim is effective communication. (Baer et al. 2008: 13.)

<p>Purpose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of informative cards written in simplified language; • Representation of concepts related to child protection. The collection can be widened, should the project be continued; • Possibility to use each cardboard independently, primarily during the meeting with the client; The collection can also be displayed in the waiting areas at the East Helsinki child protection unit and a printable version translated in various languages can be given to the clients, so that they could benefit from processing the information once the meeting with the social worker is over; • Focus on the audience needs (immigrant clients). The main goal of the information design material is to be understood, so that the essential message is communicated (Baer et al. 2008: 23). 	
<p>Elements</p>	<p>Text</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain language principles: short sentences, active voice, headings to create structure and readability, omission of unnecessary words (Baer et al. 2008:15). <i>“Writing plain language is not about reformatting and making shorter sentences. You have to rethink the whole document. What is it you want to say, who are you saying it to, for what reason?”</i> (Lutz cited in Baer et al. 2008:40.); • Orderly and clear presentation of complex information; • Economic use of words (Virtanen 2002: 27); • Simple structures in grammar, verbs in active tense (Virtanen 2002: 48); • Typographic composition based on readability: lower case, dark text on a light background, font size between 11 and 16 points, familiar fonts (Virtanen 2002: 58).

Elements	Images	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplified pictures to support people in speaking, reading or thinking; • Logically equivalent pictures and words; • Clarity conveyed by outlines and color contrasts, illustrations lacking relevant details (Virtanen 2002: 51.).
Principles	Design principles	Effectiveness, clarity, content-focus, simplicity, user-centric approach (users express what they need during the project development).
	Visual principles	Hierarchy, information flow, composition and structure, weighting, grouping and rhythm, typography and type styling, use of color, imagery and negative space.
Methods	Co-design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and understanding of what the audience of the piece wants and needs; • Involvement of the end user during the project development; • Engagement in dialogue and co-production with the stakeholders.
	Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation based on the audience comprehension, not on any personal aesthetic or artistic preferences. (Frascara 2004: 68.); • Informal testing of the texts during the workshops and in different settings, with Finnish and non-Finnish speakers; • Evaluation of the co-design process done by the author.

Table 2. The information designed material, output of the functional thesis (purpose, elements, principles and methods).

Anis (2008: 59) underlines that immigrant clients need concrete help, information and support in coping with everyday issues such as school clarifications, support services available and other practical things that can simplify life.

If the informative designed material, output of the functional project, will be translated in different languages, it might be more accessible to the clients also without the intervention of an interpreter during the meetings with the clients (if clients are literate). It is a tool, together with cultural awareness, dialogue and attitudes, to increase mutual understanding between social workers and clients, as well as a product to empower clients to find independently the needed services or information.

According to Vuori (2007: 128) social workers in child protection have a responsibility to educate clients about the Finnish welfare system, as well as guiding them in getting to know the culture, laws and practices.

Social workers have noted that collaboration and mutual understanding improved the clients' life situations, empowered them in being proactive in taking care of things related to children's upbringing and decreased the life-management problems in clients' lives (Anis 2008:59). Ultimately the functional project aimed at developing the current situation, within the time and resources available.

4.2 Main content of the material: the best interests of the child

“[...] the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 1989: article 3).

The main content in the material produced communicates specifically the best interest of the child. When it comes to parents' misunderstandings within child protection, they are often related to this principle, basis of the practices in Finland (Anis 2008:69; Laki-lastensuojelusta 2007/; Lastensuojelun Keskusliitto n.d.; Sosiaaliportti 2007). A child's best interests do not necessarily mean that decisions and solutions are always what a child or his or her parents would like (Lastensuojelun Keskusliitto n.d.). According to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 1989) the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration in all actions concerning children undertaken by the authorities. The child shall also be provided with the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting him or her, either directly or through a representative. The child's opinion is not necessarily the same thing as the child's best interests. A worker evaluates a child's best interests in accordance with the Child Protection Act (Lastensuojelulaki 13.4.2007/407), therefore child welfare workers at times make decisions in conflict with the parents' or child's perspective (Lastensuojelun Keskusliitto n.d.).

Increased immigration in the 1990s brought to Finland new experiences and visions, but at the same time the need for information about diversity and integration. Also, understanding of childhood has changed over time. Only in the last century, the children came to be seen as in need for adults' special protection. (Pulma 1987 cited in Anis 2008:70.) In recent times children's rights, centrality and opinions are highlighted. Children's point of views should be considered equal to adult perspective. (Alanen 2001: 176.)

There are many different cultural ways of understanding reality and its phenomena, such as the differences between adulthood or childhood (Burr 1995) and the best interest of the child. According to the workshops with the social workers and the interviews or workshops with the immigrants, often clients do not understand immediately the

weight that the child wellbeing has as a principle. Moreover, it may be difficult to define the best interests of the child because people may have very different ideas about what would be beneficial. (Lastensuojelun Keskusliitto n.d.)

4.3 Existing written information for immigrant clients in child protection

While processing and analyzing already existing information for immigrants related to child protection, it was noticed how often the written material available does not make effective use of summaries, vertical lists, examples, tables, charts and modern techniques for document design. Information, in its effort to be precise and exhaustive, becomes often excessively detailed and sinks into redundancy and ambiguity.

One example of effective communication for immigrants is the online project www.lastensuojelu.info (Lastensuojelun Keskusliitto n.d.), which provides an overview of the child welfare system in Finland. The website contains compiled information on what child welfare is, what it is based on and how it works.

At the Helsinki child protection units, some brochures reproduced in the images below (Helsinki Social Services Department 2008a; Helsinki Social Services Department 2008b) convey information to parents. The information presented is very generic. The images used, part of the Minna Savolainen's empowering photographic project "Maailman ihanin tyttö" conveys warmth to the message, even if the visual content and the written content, seems not to be matching.

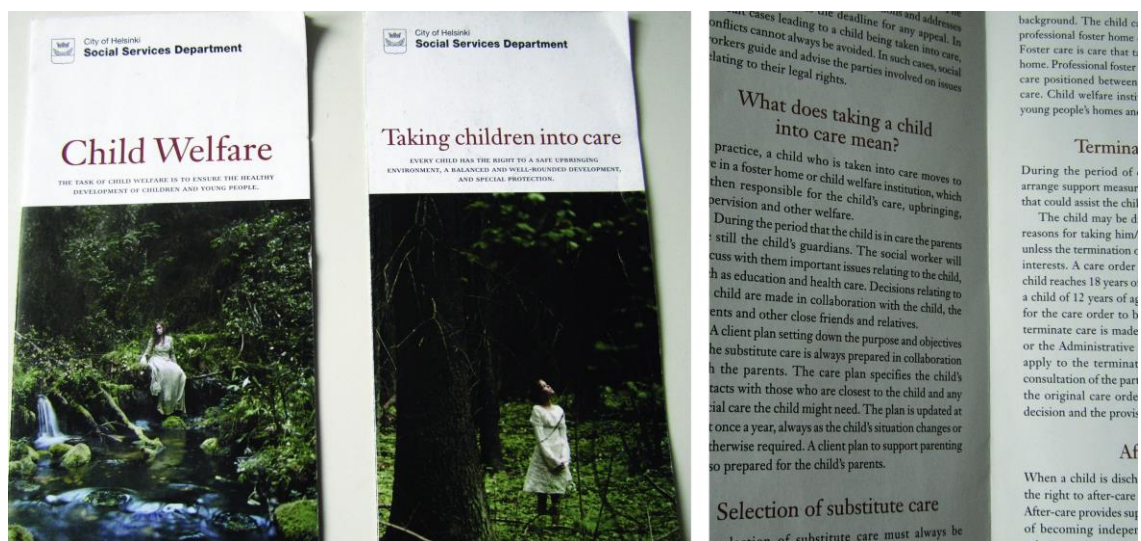


Figure 1. Information material about Child Welfare and Taking children into care. (Helsinki Social Services Department 2008a; Helsinki Social Services Department 2008b).

5 Co-design and Co-production in Welfare Services

“Service design brings a useful set of tools, techniques and methods that enable public services to fully understand the way their service is experienced and make changes based on this understanding. Often in the public sector, services have grown organically over long periods of time: they have not necessarily been “designed” as this way until someone questions why or attempts to innovate.” (Thurston 2009: 21.)

The designed material about child protection information was produced through a co-design process with the social workers and some immigrants living in Helsinki, partly clients of the child welfare services.

5.1 What is co-design

According to Slay and Robinson (2011:4) co-production means: to transform the perception of people from passive recipients of services and burdens on the system into “one where they are equal partners in designing and delivering services”. The functional project is underpinned by a series of principles, such as working with people who use services and ensuring their participation in designing visual communication material for a service of whom they are themselves clients (the child protection Social Office in East Helsinki), challenging the service culture by acknowledging that it is no longer the exclusive role of public sector workers to identify problems, provide solutions and materials (Slay and Robinson 2011:3).

According to Porter (1985), the value chain was flowing, in the traditional model of service design, from upstream providers to end customers. In this system an organization is the innovator, perhaps in dialogue with customers and supported by stakeholders. As illustrated in the image below, in nowadays welfare services, however, this model is slowly but increasingly giving way to co-production and network models, especially in the UK (Design Council n.d).

Service design value chain

Traditional model



Increasing tendency in welfare services

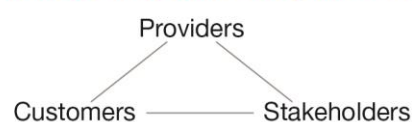


Figure 2. The shift in the creation model of services.

Nobody knows better than service users how public services should be designed. Co-design is about seeing the experience of public services from the point of view of users and their communities, triggering public innovation.

The image below represents the design process. The front end describes the many activities that take place in order to inform and inspire the exploration of open-ended questions such as, in this case, “What are the desired outcomes for clients of child protection in East Helsinki area when it comes to dialogue with social workers?”. The front end is characterized by its chaotic nature and it is often not known what the deliverable of the design process will be. Considerations of many natures come together in this increasingly critical phase, for example understanding of users and contexts of use, exploration and selection of technological opportunities such as new materials and information technologies. The goal of the explorations in the front end is to determine what is to be designed and sometimes what should not be designed and manufactured. Subsequently follows the traditional design process, where the resulting ideas are developed first into concepts, and then into prototypes that are refined on the basis of the feedback of future clients. (Stappers 2006: 96.)

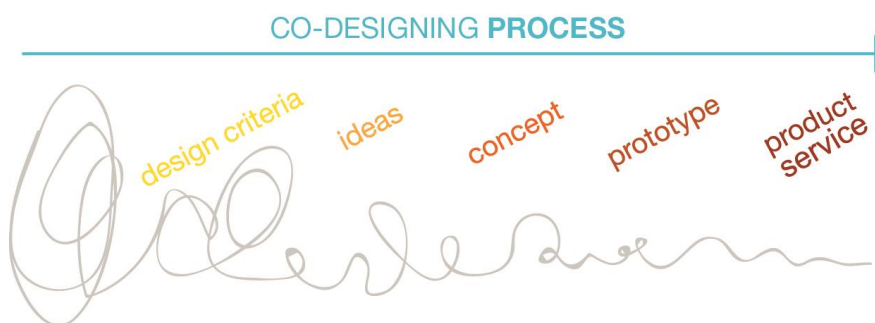


Figure 3. The co-design process from a broad idea to a defined product or a service.

Even though the terms co-creation and co-design are currently widely discussed in academic design circles, the phenomenon is not so recent. The practice of collective creativity in design has been around from the nineteen-seventies, going under the name participatory design, especially in Scandinavia.

In Norway, Sweden and Denmark the Collective Resource Approach was established to increase the value of production by engaging workers in the development of new systems for the workplace. (Standers et al. 2008:11.)

The approach put together the expertise of the systems designers and researchers with the situated expertise of the people, whose work was to be impacted by the change. The approach, thus, built on the workers' own experiences, provided them with the resources to be able to act in their current situation. (Bødker 1996: 217-220.)

5.2 Co-design as empowerment through dialogue in child protection

With workshops amongst the stakeholders (intercultural clients and professionals), the plan and its implementation were facilitated (see the image below). People's proposals and opinions were democratically considered, improving the cohesion between immigrants and social workers.

The project plan met Bohm's three conditions for dialogue: assumptions were suspended, each one was considered as a colleague in the process and a facilitator (the author) built the context of dialogue (Sharp 1999). The most innovative ideas are born on grassroots of very different disciplines and capacities. Social field professionals' aim shall be to enhance facilitation on a multidisciplinary and multilevel dialogue.

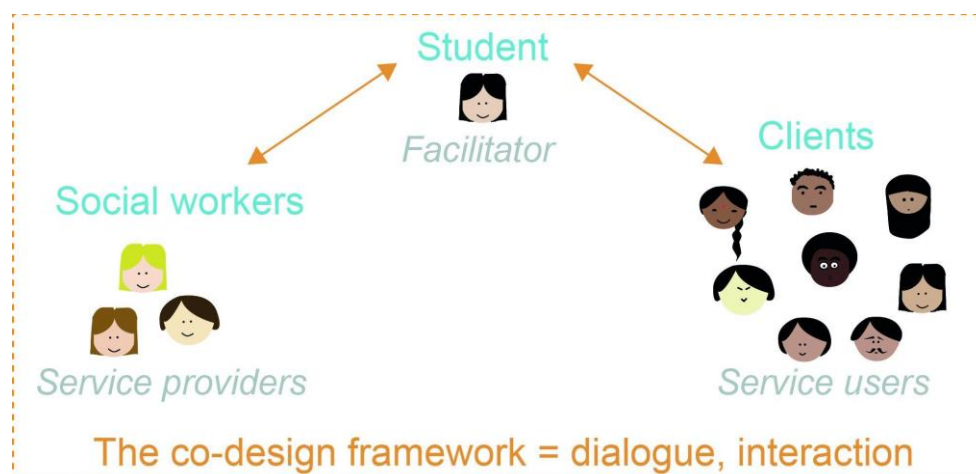


Figure 4. The co-design framework, in which dialogue between social workers and clients was facilitated.

The significance of the project lies in the clients and professionals conscientization⁽²⁾ and what this implied.

Social capital was created; people were referred to as creators, requiring active and willing engagement within a participative community.

Note 2: Conscientization, or conscientização in Portuguese, is a social concept developed by Brazilian pedagogue and educational theorist Paulo Freire, meaning critical consciousness. It focuses on achieving an in-depth understanding of the world, allowing the perception and exposure of social and political contradictions. The concept includes taking action, through understanding, against the oppressive elements in one's life. (Mustakova-Possardt 2003.)

The key and the strength of the approach, which is the basis of the functional product, is that the socially constructed world was respected by the researcher, and not manipulated. As human actions are based upon different interpretations or social meanings, and because these interpretations are constantly constructed and reconstructed, “the social world cannot be explained by simple causal relationships, but needs to be described in more complex and dynamic terms” (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004: 70).

5.3 Participation and democracy

In the Closing Comments for Design Participation, a conference held in 1971, Robert Jungk, a futurist and social inventor, advocated: “we could talk not only about participation at the moment of decision but about participation at the moment of idea generation” (cited in Cross 1972: 122). Even though the change in design practices took some time before happening, the wide range of activities happening around pioneering studios, such as the London based leading think tank Demos (Demos n.d.), inspiration for the Finnish one Demos Helsinki (Demos Helsinki n.d.), are significant.

At its heart collaborative design seeks to make public services match the wants and needs of their beneficiaries. Policy makers and practitioners have increasingly embraced closer collaborations between users and designers, hoping to reinvigorate public services under the pressures from a more demanding public, increasing social complexity and overstretched resources. The returns from this engagement are more responsive, fit-for-purpose, efficient public services. (Skidmore & Bound 2008.)

More broadly, co-design provides an avenue for addressing a disengagement from politics and democracy, and building social capital. Co-design is, by its democratic nature, a community centered methodology that facilitators use to enable people who will be served by a designed outcome to participate in designing solutions to their problems (Design Council n.d.).

The aim of co-design is to develop democracy to suit the needs and capabilities of the people. Many of the central social issues of our time demand a deeper engagement than our structures allow today. (Demos n.d..)

The vision, foundation of co-design, is essentially human-centric. All changes start from the individual experience and scale up. The project is working on ways for people to

express their values in meaningful, democratic and productive ways. Most of the time invested in this final thesis was spent in brainstorming, discussing, experimenting and networking. Human centric action and systemic research were combined. Views, prototypes, concepts, experiments, pilots and recommendations were hopefully produced for a more authentic and realistic result.

Co-design places the involvement of users at the very heart of the design of a public service, implying something fundamental. It is “upstream”, meaning that it helps to identify the kinds of problems to which a service responds, rather than just giving people a say in the answers to pre-defined problems. It means that the voices of users are heard and given a position of influence over the development and application of the service. In its purest sense, co-design implies that no viewpoint is afforded greater legitimacy than another. (Demos n.d..)

Co-production and co-design evoke a spectrum of participation, from the minimal user input involved in answering a questionnaire, to significant investment in, and part ownership of a project. In a ladder of citizen participation (see the image below), Arnstein (1969) made an explicit link between participation and power: “citizen participation is citizen power”. She described an eight-rung ladder running from non-participation (and zero empowerment) to full participation (and citizen control). The ladder determines also the level of participation in social services. (Knorth et al. 2002:95.)

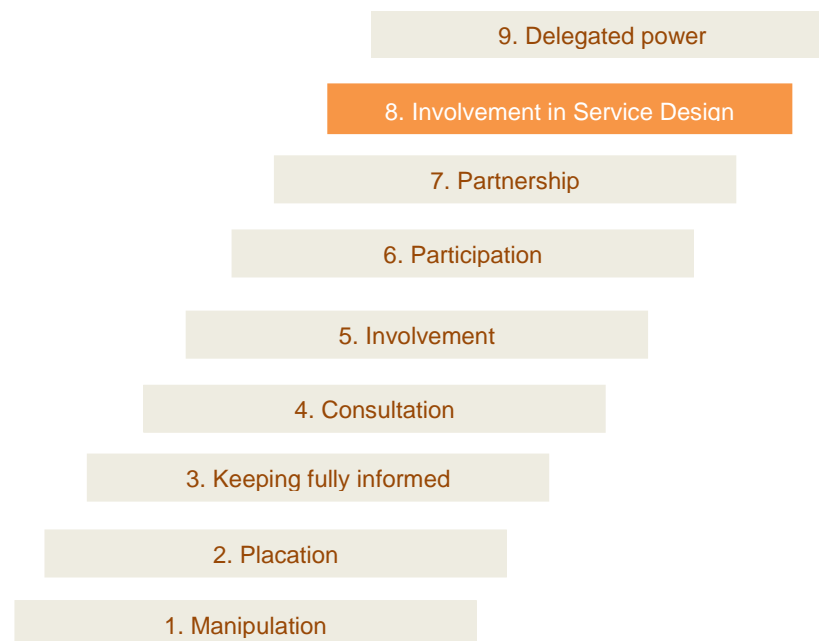


Figure 5. Participation ladder, adapted by Thorburn et al. (1995) (cited in Knorth et al. 2002:95). Immigrants involved in the co-design process are almost at the top of the scale.

The lowest level of participation that Shier (cited in Knorth et al. 2002:95) suggests in child protection is “children are listened to” (consultation). In her opinion, listening to client is a basic hallmark and condition sine qua non for all higher forms of participation to take place. Within Finnish child protection laws, children’s opinions are taken into account.

The child has a right to express his or her opinion, but he or she also has the right not to express it (Lastensuojelulaki 5.8.1983/683; Lastensuojelulaki 13.4.2007/417). Even if the spectrum of co-design is a more nuanced construction, lacking some of the linearity suggested by the ladder of Arnstein, the project in East Helsinki child protection, through involvement in service design, aspired to allow the users to participate as actively as possible. People’s proposals and opinions were democratically considered, improving the cohesion of the clients (and in this sense empowering them).

5.4 The stakeholders

The co-design participants were the facilitator (author of this thesis), the social workers of the East Helsinki child protection unit, some child protection clients, and some immigrants without prior knowledge about child protection practices. Additionally, Socca, the City of Helsinki and the intercultural NGO *la Familia Club* can be defined as projects’ stakeholders, as they affected to the project’s idea, progress and outcomes.

Organizing co-production workshops requires the inclusion of all the members. As a facilitator, the author faced the challenge and the risk that the process would not work, dealing with the eventuality that someone would have been reluctant to participate and that especially certain clients might have found certain topics hard to discuss (because of language, cultural or personal barriers).

Moreover, when certain concepts were too similar to the personal experience in welfare services, conflicts would arise. The pedagogy of dialogue does not exclude the notion of conflict (Freire 1972: 21 cited in Gadotti 1994: 84). On the contrary, the philosophy of dialogue values conflict and works to overcome it. It considers conflict legitimate and relies on it as a means of fully realizing authentic dialogue (Gadotti 1994: 91-99).

5.4.1 East Helsinki child protection social workers

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW 2004) code of ethics states that social workers have an obligation to "challenge unjust policies and practices" and "to work towards an inclusive society". An application of these principles would require the engagement in dialoguing about the practices of agencies, challenging the national policies. As a future professional in the social field, the author is in the right position, with the right amount of time, for taking action to challenge the current status quo. Its political nature situates social field professionals either as agents of the state or as agents of transformative change, either perpetuating old practices or creating the context to question these.

All the social workers participating in the co-design project have a long experience in child protection work. The professionals were purposively selected because of their extensive work experience with immigrants (about forty percent of their clients are immigrants); assuming a role in interpreting the needs and content for written material to be produced. Discussions were facilitated. The author played a neutral part, by questioning the speakers, to draw out or help develop the main points of the argument, but without participating directly in the debate.

Two focused workshops were conducted at which the author's views were not interposed. The results were combined with the output from the clients' interviews and the immigrants' workshops.

5.4.2 Immigrant clients of child protection

During spring 2013 participants' contacts were collected by the social workers in East Helsinki.

The East Helsinki child protection services provided a contact to a woman from Ethiopia. Three clients' experiences regarding communication in child protection were collected through the author's work as a counselor at the Finnish Association for Mental Health. The clients interviewed are from African countries (Angola, Ghana) and South America (Colombia). Their experience as child protection clients, anyhow, is not from the East Helsinki child protection unit.

Even though initially the idea was to organize three workshops or group discussions with the clients, during the process the plan was modified, as the clients' participation was vital but could be organized in different ways, as there were not enough child protection clients interested.

5.4.3 NGO La Familia Club

In June 2013, as soon as it was clear that the participation of client from the East Helsinki area was limited, the author got in touch with few NGOs in the Helsinki area, trying to identify which ones of them could benefit from some co-design processes, as well as contribute effectively to the project.

Monika Naiset, Suomen Somaliliitto, as well as la Familia Club were contacted, even though they did not all show immediate interest.

A fruitful collaboration was anyhow initiated at la Familia Club. The NGO is promoting the integration of immigrants to the Finnish society and helps immigrants in the fulfillment of their rights. The workers recognized how the project could be a chance for influencing the society by aiming to increase the equality and non-discrimination of people also within the child protection setting.

Moreover, the involvement of the NGOs was also a fruitful chance to promote the material and the functional thesis.

5.5 Project's costs for the stakeholders

As innovation and creation imply some risks and costs (Schmidt et al. 2009), the successful development of the project and early involvement of the stakeholders is a critical factor in the survival and marketing of the communication material produced. The persistently high rate of innovation failures forces organizations to continually search for the most effective ways to develop innovations (Astebro & Michela 2005: 330-335).

In the project, costs and risks were taken from all the people involved in the co-creation process (the East Helsinki child protection social workers, the intercultural NGO la Familia Club, the child protection clients, the facilitator); or affecting to the project (Socca and the City of Helsinki), as illustrated in the image below.

All the stakeholders have project costs



Figure 6. The stakeholders involved in the project and their costs.

Gans (cited in Foner et al. 2000: 77) claims that “...the hole in immigration research is, ironically enough, knowledge about immigrants themselves”. His statement is unfortunately quite true also in Finland (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004: 16). The author’s aim was to focus on immigrants themselves and use data collected amongst them, with little obstruction and through dialogue.

In this functional project (coherently with Standers et al. 2008:8) co-design indicates in a broader sense the creativity of designers and people not trained in design working together in the design development process.

6 The Process of the Project

6.1 Plan

The idea shaped itself during an initial brainstorming session at Socca and a first meeting at the East Helsinki child protection department. As time passed by, the concepts to be included in the project, as well as the methodology and the outputs got defined more clearly and more realistic outcomes were settled (see the process outline in the appendix 1). A research authorization, based on the idea plan, was requested from Helsinki City in January 2013, and the bureaucratic process lasted four months. A client participation interest and consent form was collected from the social workers (see the consent form in appendix 2). As there was not enough interest in the project from the East Helsinki child protection clients, during the summer 2013 different intercultural associations were contacted, in order to gain more views on clarity and information visualization.

The material for the co-production and co-design process was collected by August 2013, through a complex, long but rather rewarding process: a questionnaire and two workshops for the workers, some interviews with the clients of the child protection services and two workshops within two multicultural associations La Familia Club (see the appendices 3, 4, 5 and 6).

The production, based on the collected information, took place between June and August 2013. During the month of September the material was finalized, prototyped and shared with the stakeholders.

6.2 Co-design

Before moving into the words and sentences of the communication material, the facilitator made sure that she knew the content to be communicated. A first workshop in January 2013 was organized with the workers (see appendix 4), in which the most important concepts were chosen (see the image in the following page).

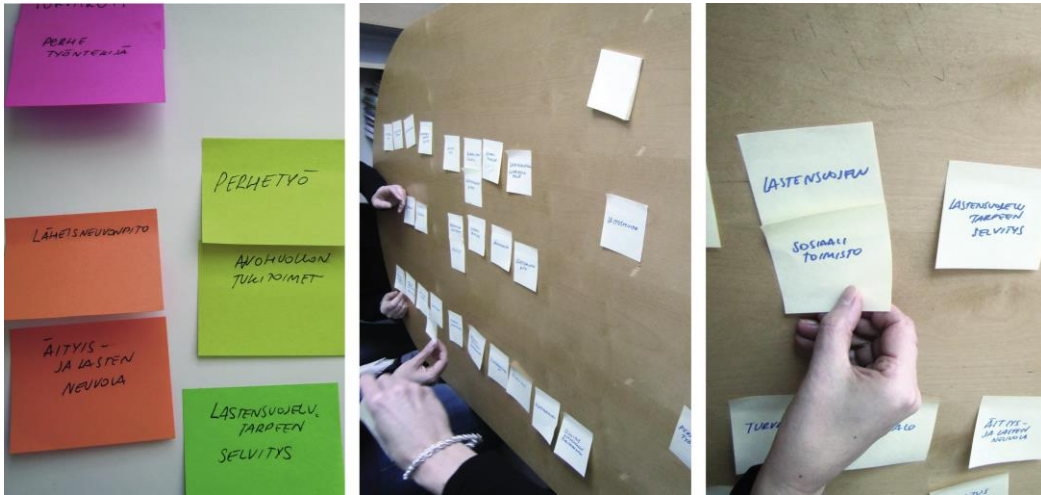


Figure 7. The first workshop was an occasion for the social workers to get acquainted with the aims and to choose the topics to be represented.

An outline of the most important terminology, thinking logically and placing the information into a recognizable order with the support of professionals was made. The most important information was placed first, filtering the main topics to be presented in the functional thesis. The written concepts' explanations were reviewed, getting continuous improvements and feedback from different people, aiming at clarity of language and simple explanations.

According to the workers' questionnaire and discussions, simple representations about the child protection processes and roles or the basic concepts of legislations could help when dealing with immigrant clients.

"Yksinkertaisia kuvia esimerkiksi lastensuojelun prosessista tai lain peruspykäläistä voisi auttaa."

"Simple images for example about the child protection process or law principles could help." (transl.)

Moreover, the responsibilities of different institutions and professionals shall be specified. For example, one social worker expressed that to clients it is very hard to understand:

"[...]eri viranomaisten tehtävät ja työnjaot."

"[...]different roles of officers and responsibilities." (transl.)

Also the parents involved in the co-design process expressed the need for a clear overview on terms, concepts, scenarios and practical advices (for example related to available services).

During the second workshop in May 2013 (see appendix 4), the social workers discussed in smaller groups about the terminology used in plain language, as well as the explanations of processes and contents. The initial version of the text was continuously reviewed and information was hierarchically organized (see the image below).

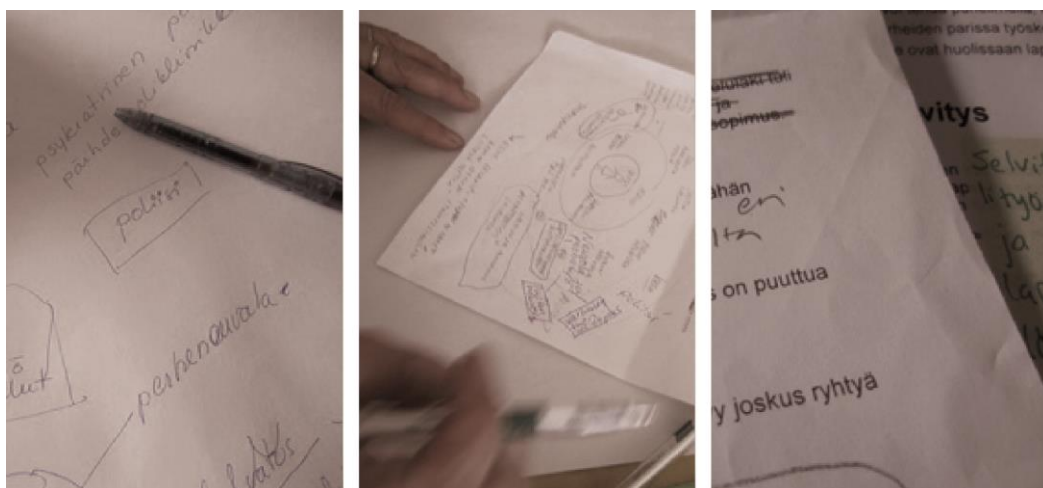


Figure 8. The second workshop was an occasion for the social workers to give feedback about the concepts presented and their clarity.

A collection of images, examples of potential effective representations was showed to the social workers, who tried to identify which ones could support the client in understanding more effectively the content presented. Moreover, important observations about the sensitive nature of images within different cultures were made.

Each worker was invited to express which images could be adequate and compelling (see the image in the following page) and which ones would have not been advisable. Participants were invited to express deliberately comments about which direction would have been appropriate in the illustrative style.

According to the social workers, the workshops' experience, even if challenging, was empowering. People got the opportunity to take time to process problems and received support from the team. Moreover, the social workers learned about co-design possibilities and got an opportunity to exercise various skills, such as writing in plain Finnish and plan the visual outcomes for the material.



Figure 9. During the second workshop appropriate images were chosen with the social workers.

During June 2013 four child protection immigrant clients (from Colombia, Angola, Ghana and Ethiopia) were interviewed regarding their experience in child protection and their verbal and non-verbal communication with the social worker (see the topics of the interview in appendix 5).

Findings confirmed the theoretical assumptions about the difficulties in understanding and expressing ideas in formal settings, within social services and child welfare. Nevertheless, two of the three people interviewed expressed complete satisfaction about the service received. They felt cooperation with the social worker about the decisions regarding the destiny of their children. When it came to formulate proposals, the clients could not verbalize or express potential developments to improve interaction and mutual understanding. Anyhow, each client expressed gratitude about the empowering possibility of dialoguing about their experience as clients and wished that their contribution could be valuable for the outcome. Each interview lasted around twenty minutes.

At the beginning of August 2013 a total of fifteen immigrants (from Somalia, Russia, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Algeria, Morocco, Sri Lanka, Iran and Ghana) participated in two workshops (see appendix 6) at la Familia Club. It was important to arrange the co-design process within an already existing group, in order to obtain the members' commitment and gain the help of another facilitator who is usually organizing the activities, as already trustable and familiar to the group of people. The Finnish language course was chosen as the most appropriate, even though during the workshop immigrants communicated at times in English, if complex concepts needed to be explained.

The first workshop with immigrants (see the image below) aimed to take a bigger picture and longer term view of child protection, services and communication tools. The concepts to be illustrated, already chosen by the social workers, were proved to be important, even though the immigrant participants were not necessarily aware of child protection issues and the topic itself proved to be complex to explain.



Figure 10. During the first workshop intercultural clients discussed about effective communication in social services and within Finnish institutions.

While discussing about developing a more effective dialogue with social workers within social services, many clients expressed as an example, how interaction with policemen has been effective and clear in their experiences.

”They have always short and clear explanations for immigrants. They go straight to the point, without getting lost into details. They also use more interpreters and usually have very good language skills. At the end of the conversation they leave you with a paper where you can read what you need to do. The written explanation can be read again at home, with a friend or with your family.”

Coherently, goals for improvements in social services were identified as the development of clear written material, as well as synthetic effective verbal communication.

The clients enjoyed the discussions, as well as the practical tasks completed during the workshop. The intercultural group showed enthusiasm about the chance and responsibility received. A time frame of one hour was set for the workshop.

The second workshop in the end of August was an occasion to evaluate a collection of images, examples of potential effective representations. The participants were invited to search themselves for examples of effective illustrations, which would have been

institutional, appropriate for people of different skin color and quite neutral. The content of the images was discussed in smaller groups.

Additionally, the facilitator provided a wide collection of images, partly similar to the images that the social workers previously approved. Important observations about the sensitive nature of images within different cultures were made. Each image was related to a list of adjectives, so that the clients could verbally identify what each representation implied and communicated (see the image below).



Figure 11. During the second workshop appropriate images were chosen in the intercultural group.

Even though it was easy, as a facilitator, to understand which images would have not been advisable, it was harder to get a specific and concrete direction.

A draft of the final output was shown to the clients and comments about the appropriateness of Finnish language were made from people who were studying Finnish for at least eight months.

The child's best interest -main topic of the information material- proved to be relevant. In fact, according to the workshops with the social workers and the interviews and workshops with the immigrants and the social workers, often clients do not understand immediately the weight that the child's wellbeing has as a principle in Finland.

As the clients noted and the social workers underlined, explanations about bureaucracy, laws and processes shall not always be priorities in communication, even though they can support the interaction with clients.

Anonymity was assured during the interviews and the workshops. Participants were free to speak, knowing that any comments they made would not be attributed to them in any way that could be traced back to them. The discussions were not tape recorded, as the dialogue would be freer and more honest if it was not recorded. The dialogue was therefore transcribed independently by hand by the author after each workshop and interview.

6.3 Production

The production of the final product was possible because of the author's skills as a graphic designer. A visual style, coherent with the workshops' outcomes, was chosen. The material was reviewed with many stakeholders and professionals few times, gaining feedback and improving the product. A translator reviewed the plain Finnish language.

The information material consists of nine cardboards, held together with a ring. The first card presents the project and contains the instructions about its function for its use and placement. There are still improvements to be done, such as the employment of a company specialized in printing and the potential translation of the material into different languages.

6.4 Distribution

The material produced is to be distributed to all the organizations involved in the co-design process. Socca and its partners, as well as different intercultural associations in the Greater Helsinki area will receive a copy.

Socca will publish the prototype of the information material on their website, in order to gain feedback from social workers in child protection in the Greater Helsinki area. The project will continue and develop further within the social field, even though this functional thesis process ends.

A version of the functional project will be forwarded to all the participants involved.

6.5 Evaluation of the co-design process

Lack of good evaluations of co-design projects is a contributing factor to the method's slow acceptance and use in the social service field (Steen et al. 2011). Evaluation can measure the impact of past projects and advocate for future initiatives, articulating and sharing successful approaches. In addition, being co-production an emerging field of practice, evaluation supports professional development.

The co-design project benefited from adaptive measurement techniques. Since co-production is a process-based approach, it was relevant to evaluate holistically the progress in an early stage, identifying issues and risks affecting its development.

As the East Helsinki child protection clients' scarce involvement would have affected negatively the overall process and its reliability, it was relevant to identify already in the beginning other available resources and potential participants, such as the NGOs contacted and the clients met in other settings, compensating the lack of the service users initially identified as participants.

In perspective, the choice to include also multicultural organizations within the project increased in the short term the visibility of the outcomes and the sensibilization about the challenges when dialoguing in child protection. In the long term, even though it is hard to evaluate in absolute terms, the culture about co-design practices effectiveness within social services might have increased.

Furthermore, the author advocates documenting the findings and the outcome from this co-design experience within the organization involved. Such practices will help organizations to improve their capabilities to conduct co-design effectively, cooperating across disciplines and with clients. The co-design project might be presented in autumn at the Socca's cafe, a seminar to share new innovative practices in social services.

6.5.1 Co-design as a process

The focus of this final thesis is a co-production project, therefore it would not be effective to evaluate the sole outcome of the project, rather than the process itself leading to the material produced. As the project required all the people involved to participate, it is

important to note the committed behavior and the importance of the involved people's actions.

Even though every workshop or interview was well planned and the outcome was clear and explained to the people involved, not always the results were matching with the facilitator's expectations.

The project generated internal outcomes, such as the development of new skills for the participants. Co-design is effective in promoting creativity and innovation, so that the people involved can engage in continuous learning (Burns et al. 2006). Co-design approaches are critical because they allow people to communicate and cooperate across disciplines and between organizations. External outcomes include the opportunity to discuss about the topic of intercultural dialogue within child protection.

All the stakeholders gain benefits through the project

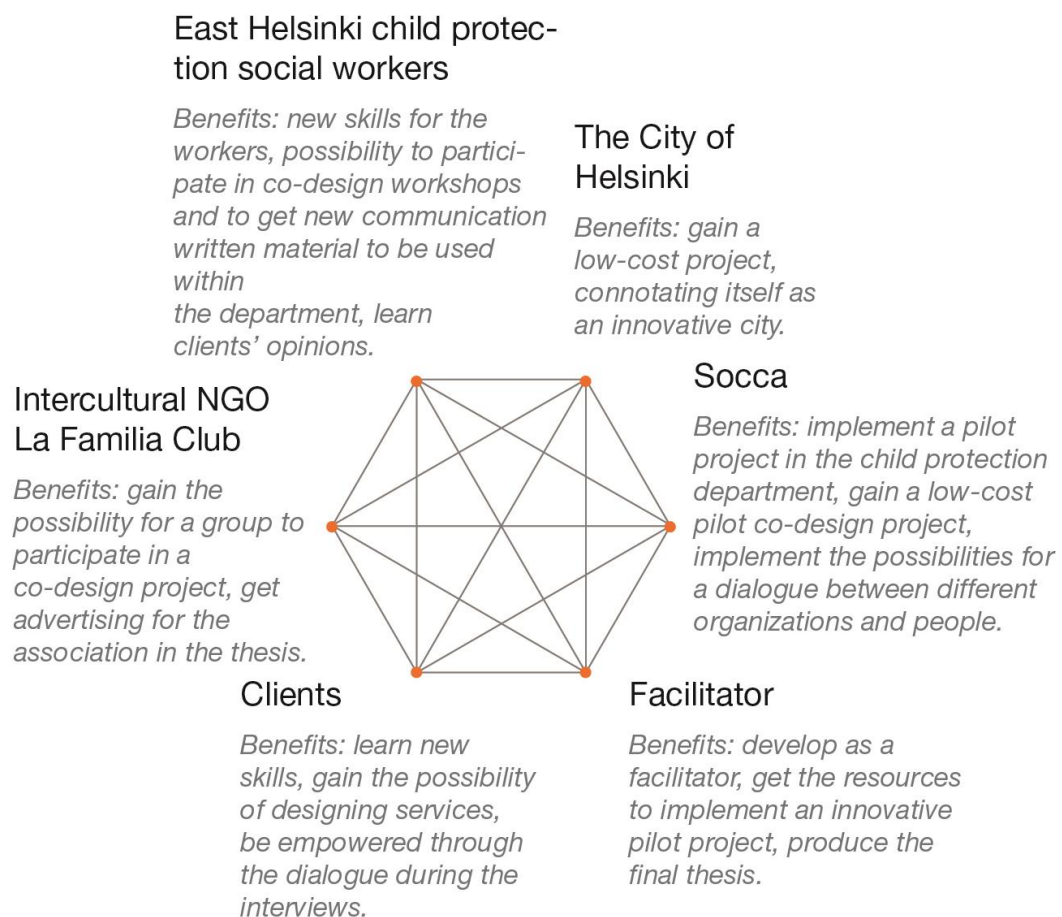


Figure 12. The stakeholders and how they benefited from the project.

Co-design method proved to develop mutual learning and understanding, combine and integrate different people's ideas, enhance communication and cooperation between different people. All the stakeholders involved in the project gained benefits (see the image above).

The methods and ways of working were tailor-made. For co-design efforts to be effective, that is, to deliver the intended benefits, it is important to select appropriate methods and ways of working, and to apply them appropriately. This is a key challenge of co-design, because each choice regarding methods and ways of working can significantly affect the project's process and outcomes. It was critical to identify the appropriate people, involving them in appropriate stages and giving them appropriate roles in the project.

6.5.2 Learning outcomes for the author

The process of planning and implementation of this final thesis were significant in terms of professional growth of the author. Going through different theories and researches, and combining them with the practical implementation contributed to a deep understanding of the connection between theory and practice. While developing the project, the author has gained a valuable experience, networks and resources.

7 Discussion

The project, coherently with its aim, transformed the perception of people from passive recipients into a system in which: "they are equal partners in designing and delivering services" (Slay & Robinson 2011: 4). Anyhow, it was very challenging to find motivated participants, which implies in this case a general indifference towards activism and social services' improvements.

Even though the project was rather wide and stressful due to the amount of stakeholders involved, it was tangible that during each workshop and interview the moment of the dialogue is the moment when people meet to transform reality and progress (Freire 1972: 60-96).

As service design enables to fully understand the way a service is experienced, the opportunity to facilitate the project was for the author a vivid opportunity as a future professional. As co-design implies, diverse experts cooperated. Potential customers and clients who are "experts of their experience" (Stappers 2006) co-created creatively, conversely with the fact that "...the hole in immigration research is, ironically enough, knowledge about immigrants themselves" (Gans cited in Foner et al. 2000: 77). Special attention was addressed to involve immigrants in the design process, putting their experiences as central (Sanders & Stappers 2008).

7.1 Ethical considerations

The obligation of confidentiality was maintained throughout the all process. The participants were assured that any information they would disclose would have not be reported in manner that would identify them.

The principle of autonomy states that the individual is free to decide independently whether or not to participate in a research study (Talbot 1995). Any participant, as a volunteer, had the right to withdraw at any point of the co-design process.

The principle of non-maleficance states that no harm should come to a subject as a result of participation in a research study (Talbot 1995).

The recorded material, the questionnaire and the notes taken during the workshops were destroyed as soon as material was gathered, analyzed and finalized. A finished version of the functional project will be forwarded to all the participants involved.

The principle of human dignity was considered. Polit et al. (2002) stated that humans should be treated as autonomous agents, capable of controlling their own activities.

Rogers underlined an attitude coherent with Freirian theories, standing out in those who are successful in facilitating, as praising feelings, opinions, and people. "It is a form of caring (...), but a non-possessive caring. It is an acceptance of this other individual as a separate person, having worth in her own right. It is a basic trust - a belief that this other person is somehow fundamentally trustworthy." When the facilitator has the ability to understand reactions from the inside, she has a sensitive awareness of the way the process seems to the individual, and again the likelihood of significant progress is increased. Individuals feel deeply appreciative when they are "simply understood – not evaluated, not judged, simply understood from their own point of view". (Rogers 1967: 304-311.) Ultimately, this is the underpinning vision and hope that guided the co-production process.

7.2 Limitations

As the topic of the thesis represents a rather new field of research in social welfare, it was challenging to find development cases, pilot projects and relevant theory. With regard to the workshops, the number of them could have been higher and also the amount of data gathered could be greater if the time frame would have been different. The data gathered could have been recorded more thoroughly. Interviews could have been typed and transcribed, workshop observation videotaped.

Despite the fact that the co-design process attempted to be as accurate as possible, there are several important limitations to address.

First, these findings may not generalize to the larger population of immigrant children involved in the child welfare system, as it only considers families living in the Helsinki area.

Second, while this work sought initially to co-design with immigrant clients, the author was unable to involve a greater numbers of participants from the East Helsinki child protection office, with the exception of an Ethiopian mother. Even though the lack of clients was compensated with the workshops held in the intercultural association La Familia Club and through information gathered while working with three child protection clients as an intercultural counselor at the Finnish Association for Mental Health, the reliability of the outcomes could have been bigger, if more clients would have participated actively, as the initial plan and co-design as a method implies: seeing the experience of public services from the point of view of users.

Third, the reliability and validity of the co-design method used have not been established formally within social services, therefore the evaluation parameters of the co-design process were defined by the author.

Finally, as co-design's nature implies uncertainty, a longer period of time and resources available could have improved the outcomes and reduced the stress. As the successful development of the project and the early involvement of the stakeholders is a critical factor in the survival and use of the material produced, a well-known work setting, as well as a wider network of professionals and clients, could have facilitated the work.

8 Conclusions

The objective of this final thesis was to provide an information tool about the concept of “the best interest of the child” with co-design and dialogue. The aim of the information material produced is to support dialogue in child protection, which in turn would lead to a mutual understanding between social workers and clients, as well as clients’ acculturation about child protection practices, legislation and children’s rights.

The theoretical framework of this final thesis is intercultural dialogue. The production was based on theories of co-design and co-creation, with the support of researches about on social work with immigrants. The work was based on the assumption that co-design is critical to service design because an effective combination of different perspectives is needed in order to understand both a service's demand side (clients' needs) and service providers.

The co-design process, as well as the product of this final thesis proved to be successful. Feedback received from different sources and stakeholders was positive – the workshops and interviews were overall an empowering experience for the participants. The information material is functional and clear, improving understanding in specific situations.

The prototype will be available for download from the Socca website. Additionally, professionals will test the material. Feedback from real life situations will be collected and the outcome of this functional thesis will be modified accordingly, hopefully translated in other languages and formally distributed.

Whether there was more time, the evaluative process participatory in itself could have been participative, involving the participants in the development and implementation of project evaluations, rather than evaluating the outcomes as the author.

During the co-design project implementation, it was clear that there are risks and costs associated with the method applied. Hoyer et al. (2010) presented findings about the diminished control over the project and the increased complexity of the project. Coordination efforts, as well as flexibility to manage and balance the different organizations, departments and people involved were needed. On the other hand, as a reward, effectiveness might have improved, because co-creation helps to develop services that bet-

ter match clients' needs, resulting in more positive attitudes of customers towards services and better relationships between clients and service providers.

Despite the intrinsic existing challenges, the co-design process generated a continuous exchange of information between different parties, at different levels, within different settings and with different connotations. Dialogue increasingly generated innovation and understanding, connecting clients and social services providers. All the people involved, at different levels and with different perspectives, engaged in a wider conversation about social services with intercultural clients. As Bohm (1996: 6) puts it, dialogue creates "a stream of meaning flowing among and through us and between us".

If, coherently with Katisko's observation (2013: 26) "empowerment grows with dialogue", empowerment increased as the co-design process went forward and the dialogue with all the stakeholders became deeper, gaining creating a common knowledge with for all the people involved in the process (see the image below).



Figure 13. Empowerment and dialogue increase through the co-design process.

Insider knowledge was gained, because relevant observations were made, changing some of the implicit assumptions about the ways immigrants experience child protection and social services. For example, it was expected them to have less language skills and less knowledge about child protection.

With co-design, the facilitator engaged in an ongoing dialogue with the stakeholders, enabling the participants to jointly develop, verify and further process ideas and themes. Valuable and validated concepts were generated – more valuable and validated than concepts that would have been developed without interacting with users.

Furthermore, the validation of concepts by clients makes the findings and the outcome more convincing to people outside the project.

Effective co-design covers many different approaches and ways of working, and not all social service organizations are ready to embark on client-led co-design processes. The East Helsinki child protection experience showed that even social services departments are in a strong position to encourage steps towards co-design as a process, that ensures a long lasting dialogue between clients and providers, even if more effort is required at the beginning, in order to gain commitment from all the stakeholders and clients' participation.

One of the issues hindering the different levels of adoption of co-design may be organizational capability – an organization's ability to define the process, their ability and resources to carry out the process, how the process is actually performed and the ability to management of the process improvements. Different social services organization will have different capabilities and needs.

Given the rapid growth of the immigrant population in child welfare, it is important that agencies and staff recognize the unique characteristics, risks, and service needs of this population. Further research and pilot projects are needed to better understand this rapidly changing population within child protection and to identify practices that are successful in achieving innovative outcomes for immigrant children and families who come to the attention of social services' agencies.

9 Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors and their assistance. A special thanks goes out to the people collaborating in the co-design process: Socca, the East Helsinki social workers, the intercultural clients of child protection, the colorful Familia Club. Without the motivation and encouragement I would not have considered and finish the project. Additionally, Mervi Nymän has truly made a difference providing me with direction in understanding child protection issues. My precious friends Henna and Aurelia have patiently read the work, provided relevant comments and listened to me. In addition, Henna provided punctually her valuable help and competence as a translator in writing in Finnish language. I am grateful to my family for the roots and the wings, without them I would not be the person I am.

I want to acknowledge the support of my beloved friends, thank you for the pleasant moments, the discussions, the adventures, but above all the laughs.

Last but not least, I want to thank Juho for his support, for guiding my steps and holding my hand. It was through his persistence, understanding and encouragement that I have completed my degree and was invited to keep my ambitions, despite the adversities.

References

- Alanen, L. (2001) *Lapsuus yhteiskunnallisena ilmiönä*. In Sankari, A. and Jyrkämä, J. *Lapsuudesta vanhuuteen, iän sosiologiaa*. Tampere: Vastapaino, 161–186.
- Alitolppa-Niitamo, A. (2004) *The icebreakers. Somali-speaking youth in Metropolitan Helsinki with a focus on the context of formal education*. Helsinki: Väestöliitto. Publications of the Population Research Institute, D 42.
- Alitolppa-Niitamo, A. Söderling, I. and Fågel, S. (2006) *Olemme muuttaneet. Näkökulmia maahanmuuttoon, perheiden kotoutumiseen ja ammatillisen työn käytäntöihin*. Helsinki: Väestöliiton Väestöntutkimuslaitos ja Kotipuu.
- Anis, Merja (2006a) Lastensuojelun ammattilaisten tulkintoja maahanmuuttajasosiaalityöstä. *Janus*, 14 (2), 109-126.
- Anis, M. (2006b) *Maahanmuuttajalapsen ja –nuoren lastensuojelun asiakkaina*. In *Lapset ja sosiaalityö. Kohtaamisia, menetelmiä ja tiedon uudelleenarviointia*. Juva: WS Bookwell Oy.
- Anis, M. (2008) Sosiaalityö ja maahanmuuttajat. *Lastensuojelun ammattilaisten ja asiakkaiden vuorovaikutus ja tulkinnat*. Helsinki: Väestöntutkimuslaitoksen julkaisusarja, D 47/ 2008.
- Arnstein, S. (1969) *A ladder of citizen participation*. In LeGates, R.T. and Stout, F. (ed.). *The City Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Astebro, T. and Michela, J.L. (2005) Predictors of the survival of innovations. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*. 22 (4), 322-35.
- Baer, K. Vacarra, J. (2008) *Information Design Workbook: Graphic approaches, solutions, and inspiration plus 20 case studies*. Beverly, MA: Rockport Publishers.
- Bohm, D. (1996) *On Dialogue*. Routledge: New York.
- Bødker, S. (1996) Creating conditions for participation: conflicts and resources in systems design. *Human–computer interaction*, 11 (3), 215–236.
- Burns, C. Cottam, H. Vanstone, C. and Winhall, J. (2006) *Transformation design*. London: Design Council.
- Burr, V. (1995) *An introduction to social constructionism*. London: Routledge.
- Cross, N. (1972) In *Design participation: Proceedings of the design research society's conference 1971*. London: Academy editions.

Demos Helsinki. (n.d.) *Demos Helsinki*. Internet Document. <www.demos.fi/english> . Read 28.04.2013.

Demos. (n.d.) *Powerful ideas*. Internet Document. <www.demos.co.uk>. Read 25.04.2013.

Design Council. (n.d.) *Co-design glossary*. Internet Document. <<http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources-and-events/designers/design-glossary/co-design/>>. Read 25.04.2013

Earner, I. (2007) Immigrant families and public child welfare: Barriers to services and approaches to change. *Child Welfare*, 86(4), 63–91.

Finno, M. de Haymes, V. and M. Mindell, R. (2006) Risk of affective disorders in the migration and acculturation experience of Mexican Americans. *Protecting Children*, 21(2), 22–35.

Foner, N. Rumbaut, R.G. and Gold, S.J. (2000) *Immigration research for a new century: multidisciplinary perspectives*. New York: Russel Sage Foundation.

Frascara, J. (2004) *Communication design: principles, methods, and practice*. New York: Allworth Press.

Freire, P. (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Gadotti, M. (1994) *Reading Paulo Freire. His life and work*. New York: SUNY Press.

Hammar-Suutari, S. (2009) *Asiakkaana erilaisuus. Kulttuurien välisen viranomaistoiminnan etnografia*. Joensuun yliopiston Karjalan tutkimuslaitoksen julkaisuja 147. Joensuu: Joensuun yliopisto.

Hancock, T. U. (2005) Cultural competence in the assessment of poor Mexican families in the rural southeastern United States. *Child Welfare*, 84, 689–711.

Heikkilä-Daskalopoulos, S. (2008) *Maahanmuuttajataustaiset lapset ja perheet palvelujärjestelmässä - asiantuntijoiden näkökulmia*. Helsinki: Lastensuojelun Keskusliitto.

Helsinki henkilöstökeskus maahanmuutto (2011) *Tilastot*. Internet document. <[http://www.hel.fi/hki/Heke/fi/Maahanmuutto/Tilastot 2011](http://www.hel.fi/hki/Heke/fi/Maahanmuutto/Tilastot%202011)>. Updated 19.02.2013. Read 29.02.2013.

Helsinki Social Services Department (2008b) *Taking children into care*. Helsinki: City of Helsinki.

Helsinki Social Services Department (2008a) *Child Welfare*. Helsinki: City of Helsinki.
Hoyer, W. D. Chandy, R. Dorotic, M. Krafft, M. and Singh, S. S. (2010) Consumer co-creation in new product development. *Journal of Service Research*, 13(3), 283-296.

IFSW (2004) *Code of ethics*. Internet document. <<http://ifsw.org/policies/code-of-ethics/>>. Read: 01.12.2012.

Katisko, M. (2012) *Yhteiselo metropolissa – kokemuksia sovittelusta ja näkökulmia lastensuojeluun. B raportteja*. Helsinki: Diakonia ammattikorkeakoulu, 7-50.

Katisko, M. (2013) *Maahanmuuttajataustaiset perheet lastensuojelun asiakkaina*. Helsinki : Diakonia-ammattikorkeakoulu.

Knorth, E. J. Van den Bergh, P. M. and Verheij, F. (2002) *Professionalization and Participation in Child and Youth Care*. Ashgate Publishing Limited: England.

Lastensuojelulaki 5.8.1983/683. Internet document <<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1983/19830683>>. Read 30.05.2013.

Lastensuojelulaki 13.4.2007/417. Internet document. <<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2007/20070417>> . Read 30.05.2013.

Lastensuojelun Keskusliitto. (n.d.) *Lastensuojelu*. Internet document. <www.lastensuojelu.info>. Read 23.04.2013.

Liebkind, K. Mannila, M. Jasinskaja-Lahti, I. Jaakkola, M. Kyntäjä, E. and Reuter, A. (2004) *Venäläinen, virolainen, suomalainen. Kolmen maahanmuuttajaryhmän kotoutuminen Suomeen*. Helsinki: Gaudeamus.

Lovio, I. and Muurinen, H. (2013) *Socca's role in welfare services*. Interview.

Mustakova-Possardt, M. (2003) Is there a roadmap to critical consciousness? Critical Consciousness: A Study of Morality in Global, Historical Context. *One Country*, 15(2).

Muukkonen, T. (2008) *Suunnitelmallinen sosiaalityö lapsen kanssa*. Helsinki: Yliopistopaino, 37-86.

Ojaniemi, P and Rantajärvi, K-M. (2010) *Alkuarvioinnista suunnitelmalliseen lastensuojelutyöhön*. In Laitinen, M. and Pohjola, A. *Estonia: Asiakkuus sosiaalityössä*. Oy Yliopistokustannus, HYY Yhtymä.

Polit, D., Beck, C., Hungler, B. (2002) *Essentials of nursing research: methods, appraisal and utilisation*. Philadelphia: PA Lippincott.

Porter, M. E. (1985) *Competitive advantage: Creating and sustaining superior performance*. New York: Free Press, Collier Macmillan.

Possauner, M. (2013) *Personal experience as the head of child protection services in East Helsinki*. Interview.

Rogers, C. R. (1967) *On Becoming a Person. A therapist's view of psychotherapy*. London: Constable.

- Rostila, I. (2001) *Tavoitelähtöinen sosiaalityö. Voimavarakeskeisen ongelmanratkaisun perusteet*. Jyväskylän yliopisto: Sophi.
- Rotkirch, A. (2000) *The man question. Loves and lives in late 20th century Russia*. Research Reports 1/2000. Helsinki: University of Helsinki Department of Social Policy.
- Räty, Minttu (2002) *Maahanmuuttaja asiakkaana*. Tampere: Tammi.
- Salmela, S. (13.01.2013) Avuntavitsija eksyy ammattikielen viidakossa. *Helsinki Sanomat*. (A), 14.
- Sanders, B. and Jan Stappers, P. (2008) Co-creation and the new landscapes of design. *CoDesign: International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, 4:1, 5-18.
- Schmidt, J.B. Sarangee, K.R. and Montoya, M.M. (2009) Exploring new product development project review practices. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 26, (5), 520-35.
- Segal, U. and Mayadas, N. (2005) Assessment of issues facing immigrant and refugee families. *Child Welfare*, 84, 563–583.
- Sharp, J. (1999) *David Bohm on Dialogue*. Internet Document. <<http://www.soapboxorations.com/ddigest/>>. Read 21.04.2013.
- Siitonen, J. (1999) *Voimaantumisteorian perusteiden hahmottelua*. Oulu: Opettajankoulutuslaitos, Oulun yliopisto.
- Skidmore, P. and Bound, K. (2008) *Everyday Democracy Index*. London: Demos.
- Slay, J. Robinson, B. (2011) *In this together. Building knowledge about co-production*. London: nef (new economics foundation).
- Socca. (05.06.2012) *Socca provides tools and social welfare information for networks*. Internet Document. <http://www.socca.fi/in_english>. Updated 05.06.2012. Read 28.02.2013.
- Sosiaaliportti. (2007) *Lastensuojelun Käsikirja*. Internet Document. <<http://www.sosiaaliportti.fi/fi-fi/lastensuojelunkasikirja/>> Updated 13.12.2012. Read 28.02.2013.
- Stappers, P.J. (2006) Creative connections: user, designer, context, and tools. *Personal and ubiquitous computing*, 10 (2–3), 95–100.
- Steen, M. Manschot, M. and De Koning, N. (2011) Benefits of co-design in service design projects. *International Journal of Design*. 5(2), 53-60.
- Syvälä, M. (19.04.2012) Miten lastensuojelusta tuli käyttämistä? Yksikin väärin perustein puoskaroitu huostaanotto on liikaa. *Suomen kuvalehti*, (Asiat), 41.

- Talbot, L.A. (1995) *Principles and practice of nursing research*. St. Louis, MO: Mosby-Year Book.
- Thurston, P. (2009) *Designing Public Services*. In Miettinen, S. and Koivisto, M. (ed). *Designing Services with Innovative Methods*. Keuruu, Finland: Otava Book Printing Ltd.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. (1989) *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.
- Virtanen, H. (2002) *Selko-opas*. Tampere: Tammer-Paino Oy.
- Vuori, J. (2007) *Perheen nimissä. Maahanmuuttajien opastusta tasa-arvoon. Perhetyön tieto*. Tampere: Vastapaino.

Bibliography

Apffel-Marglin, F. Bowers. C.A. (2005) *Rethinking Freire: Globalization and the Environmental Crisis*. NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Eriksson, E. & Arnkil, T. E. (2012) *Huoli puheeksi. Opas varhaisista dialogeista. Opas 60 Stakes. 8. painos*. Helsinki: Sosiaali- ja terveysalan tutkimus- ja kehittämiskeskus (Stakes).

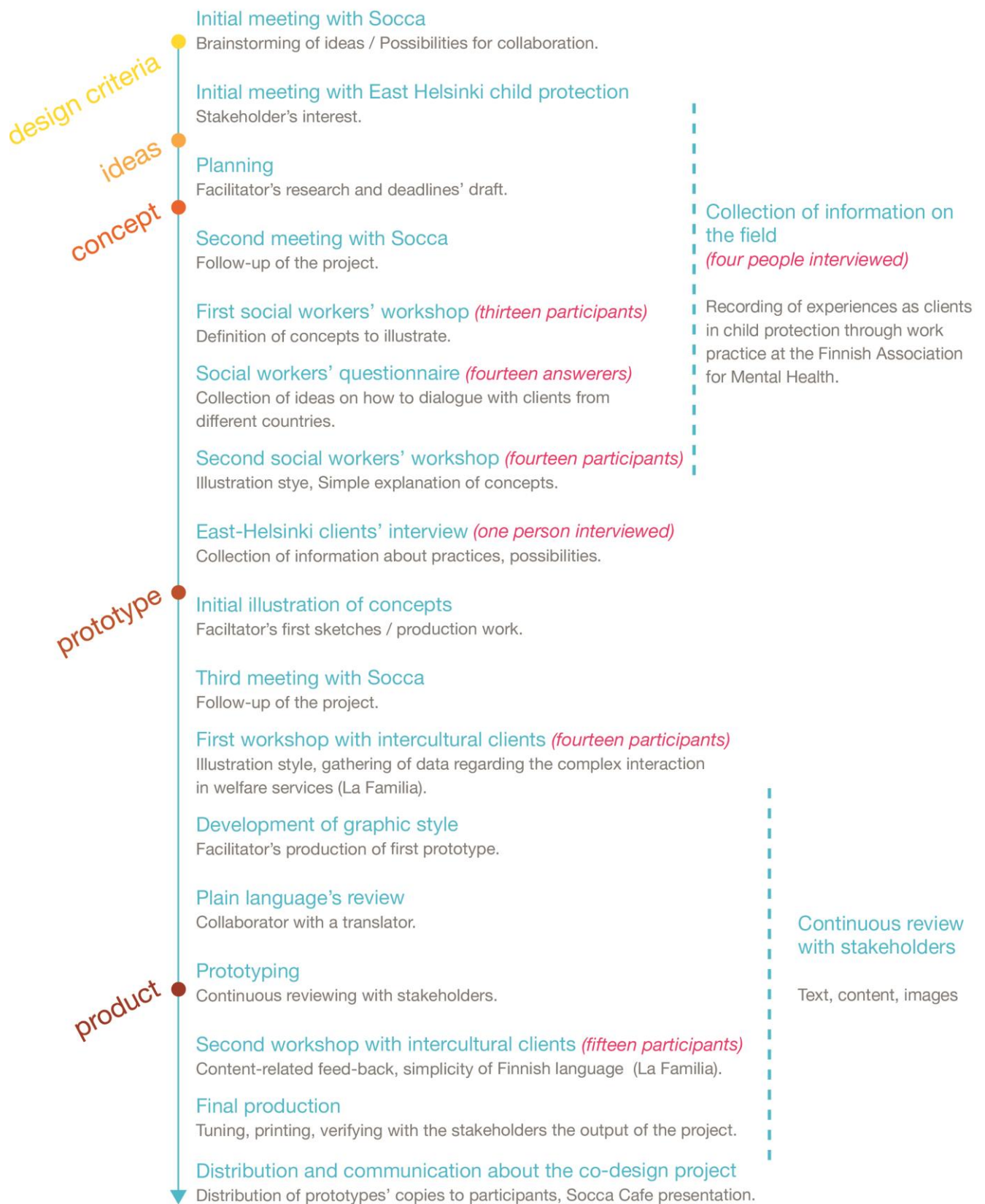
Matthies, A-L., K. Nähri, D. Ward (2001) *The Ecosocial Approach in Social Work*. Jyväskylä: Sopi.

Mind Tools. (2011) *Planning a Workshop - Organizing and Running a Successful Event*. Internet document.

<<http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/PlanningAWorkshop.html>>. Read 02.05.2

The process

CO-DESIGNING PROCESS *(November 2012-September 2013)*



Clients' consent form

Asiakas suostumuslomake

Hei!

Olen sosiaali-alan opiskelija Metropolia ammattikorkeakoulusta. **Tutkin maahanmuuttajien kokemuksia lastensuojelusta** ja tavoitteenani on **yhdessä asiakkaiden kanssa** suunnitella uudenlaista kirjallista lastensuojeluun liittyvää materiaalia tämän asiakkailta kerätyn kokemustiedon pohjalta. Mielialpitemme on arvokasta tietoa lastensuojelutyön kehittämisessä. Projekti on ammattikorkeakoulun lopputyöni.

Projektissa järjestetään yhden tunnin mittainen workshop-keskustelu asiakkaille. Tapaamisen loppuksi asiakkaille tarjotaan kahvit.

Voitte jättää suostumuksenne tutkimukseen minulle, sosiaalityöntekijälle tai ohjaajalle. Vastaminen vie vain hetken. Tutkin kaikki vastaukset luottamuksellisesti ja nimettömänä ja ne eivät vaikuta asioidenne käsittelyyn.

Vastaan mielelläni kysymyksiin ja annan lisätietoja: simona.vitalini@metropolia.fi.

Kiitos! Simona Vitalini

Hei!

I am a student of Social Services from Metropolia University of Applied Sciences. I am **re-searching child protection experiences** with clients with a multicultural background and the **aim is to design with clients** new written / communication material based on people's experiences. Your perspectives are precious information in developing child protection practices. The project is my final thesis.

In the project one hour workshops/discussions with clients are organized. At the end of each session coffee will be offered.

You can leave your details for participating in my study to me / the counselor / social worker. It will not require a lot of your time. I treat the data with respect to privacy and anonymously, therefore it will not affect your case management.

If you have questions, concerns or comments, get in touch with simona.vitalini@metropolia.fi.

Thank you! Simona Vitalini

Nimi / Name

Puhelinnumero / Phone

Sähköposti / Email

Kommentit / Comments

Questionnaire for the social workers

Hei!

Olen sosiaalialan opiskelija Metropolia ammattikorkeakoulusta. Tutkin maahanmuuttajien kokemuksia lastensuojelusta. Mielenne on arvokasta tietoa lastensuojelutyön kehittämisessä. Tarkoituksena on saada sekä sosiaalityöntekijöiden että asiakkaiden ääni kuuluviin. Projekti on ammattikorkeakoulun lopputyöni.

Vastaaminen vie vain hetken. Tutkin kaikki vastaukset luottamuksellisesti ja nimettömänä.

Vastaa mielelläni kysymyksiin ja annan lisätietoja: simona.vitalini@metropolia.fi.

Kiitos! Simona Vitalini

1. Missä työyksiköissä työskentelet *(ei pakollinen tieto)*? _____

2. Kuinka kauan olet työskennellyt lastensuojelussa *(ei pakollinen tieto)*?

- 0-5 vuotta
- 6-10 vuotta
- 11-15 vuotta
- 16-20 vuotta
- 21-25 vuotta
- Yli 25 vuotta

2. Maahanmuuttajaperheiden määrä lastensuojelun asiakkaina on noussut viime vuosina. Onko lastensuojelun työntekijöiden valmius kohdata maahanmuuttajataustaisia asiakkaita kehittynyt sen mukaisesti *(ei pakollinen tieto)*?

- Kyllä
- Kyllä, osittain
- En osaa sanoa
- Ei riittävästi
- Ei lainkaan

Miksi

4. Kuinka suuri osuus (%) asiakkaistasi on maahanmuuttajataustaisia perheitä?

- 0-20 %
- 21-40%
- 41-60%
- 61-80%
- Yli 80%

5. Mistä maista sinun asiakkaasi tulevat?

- Viro
- Somalia
- Venäjä

Mistä muualta? _____

Mitkä kansallisuudet ovat suurimpia ryhmiä? _____

6. Miten kommunikoit maahanmuuttaja-asiakkaiden kanssa?

Kirjallinen viestintä (ei koskaan, harvoin, joskus, melko usein, hyvin usein)

Puhelinkontakti (ei koskaan, harvoin, joskus, melko usein, hyvin usein)

Tapaamiset (ei koskaan, harvoin, joskus, melko usein, hyvin usein)

7. Jos käytössäsi olisi nykyistä enemmän selkokielistä, havainnollistavaa (esim. graafista) materiaalia, olisiko vuorovaikutus maahanmuuttaja-asiakkaiden kanssa helpompaa?

(ei koskaan, harvoin, joskus, melko usein, hyvin usein)

Miksi

Missä tällaiselle materiaalille olisi käyttöä?

- Odotushuoneessa
- Ensimmäisellä asiakaskäynnillä
- Asiakaskäynnillä
- Asiakkaille tapaamisen jälkeen
- Internetissä

Muulla, missä?

8. Otetaanko lastensuojelun kirjallisessa materiaalissa huomioon maahanmuuttajataustaisten asiakkaiden haasteet esim. kielitaidon ja järjestelmän toiminnan ymmärtämisen kannalta (ei pakollinen tieto)?

(ei koskaan, harvoin, joskus, melko usein, hyvin usein)

9. Mitä rajoituksia vuorovaikutuksessa maahanmuuttajataustaisen perheen kanssa on?

- Kulttuuri (ei koskaan, harvoin, joskus, melko usein, hyvin usein)
- Kieli (ei koskaan, harvoin, joskus, melko usein, hyvin usein)
- Perheen merkitys asiakkaalle (ei koskaan, harvoin, joskus, melko usein, hyvin usein)
- Yhteisön merkitys asiakkaalle (ei koskaan, harvoin, joskus, melko usein, hyvin usein)
- Arvot (ei koskaan, harvoin, joskus, melko usein, hyvin usein)
- Uskonto (ei koskaan, harvoin, joskus, melko usein, hyvin usein)
- Yhteiskunnan rakenteiden toimintaan liittyvät ymmärtämisvaikeudet (ei koskaan, harvoin, joskus, melko usein, hyvin usein)
- Kokemukset arkipäivän rasismista (ei koskaan, harvoin, joskus, melko usein, hyvin usein)
- Ajan niukkuus (ei koskaan, harvoin, joskus, melko usein, hyvin usein)
- Monimutkainen lastensuojelulaki (ei koskaan, harvoin, joskus, melko usein, hyvin usein)

10. Mitkä ovat vaikeimpia prosesseja selittää maahanmuuttajataustaisille asiakkaille? (Lastensuojelutarpeen selvitys, avohuolto, sijaishuolto, jälkihuolto, huostaanotto, vastaanotto, Kiireellinen sijoitus, Laitoshoidto, sosiaalityöntekijöiden rooli, lapsen etu)?

Muu, mitä?

11. Antaisitko esimerkin vuorovaikutuksen haasteista (ei pakollinen tieto)?

Mitkä ovat yleisimmät syyt kun vuorovaikutus ei onnistuu (ei pakollinen tieto)?

12. Millaisena näet vuorovaikutuksen tulevaisuuden (ei pakollinen tieto)?

13. Lisäkommentteja, ehdotuksia?

Social workers' workshops

The participants have been already contacted and introduced to the project, as well as to the facilitator and her graphic design professional background.

SOCIAL WORKERS First workshop: the concepts to be included *(time: one hour)*

The workshop is organized during the weekly meeting at the East Helsinki Child Protection Centre. It is run by a facilitator and involves discussion / brainstorming. The aim is to take a bigger picture and longer term view of child protection, services and communication tools.

AIM OF THE FIRST WORKSHOP: Plan out how to do the service improvement work (with providers of the service).

- Priority: define concepts to be illustrated (relevant topics / common topics unclear e.g. social worker role, children rights);
- Illustrate the project / outcomes. Plan with providers what could be the support to deliver information;
- Get ownership from everyone early on.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Post-it with concepts to be chosen, pens and papers.

Outline of the session (illustrated with images/ draws / words throughout the workshop)

1. Social workers' outcomes

What improvements would you like to see in communicating with child protection clients? e.g. Could it be a clear communication / interaction / dialogue / written material? *Outcomes are both personal and community based.*

2. Identify the desired communication outputs *A statement needs to be formulated* Are there specific formats / outputs that could be used in improving the dialogue with immigrant clients?

3. Identify the improvement goals What are the priority concepts in child protection? The post-it are used to build a hierarchical representation of the most / less relevant information.

End of the session, short brief about the continuation of the project.

SOCIAL WORKERS' Second workshop: writing in Plain Finnish and making mind maps *(time: one hour)*

The workshop is organized during the weekly meeting at the East Helsinki Child Protection Centre. It is run by a facilitator and involves discussion / brainstorming. The aim is to review some concepts' explanations, child protection processes and to brainstorm about possible visual information styles.

AIM OF THE SECOND WORKSHOP: Review the content to be included in the communication material

- Priority: define in Plain Finnish, based on existing definitions, the centrality of the child in child protection;
- Illustrate the project / outcomes. Mind maps, defined visual style.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Post-it with concepts to be chosen, pens and papers, different illustration styles, camera.

Outline of the session (illustrated with images/ draws / words throughout the workshop)

1. Social workers' small group cooperation

Could you review some concepts in small group? Use plain language rules: short sentences, known words, active tense.

2. Review with the all group the outputs Are there specific contents that need further improvements?

3. Identify the desired visual communication outcomes Brainstorming based on examples.

End of the session, short brief about the continuation of the project.

Interview with the clients

Introduction

Before the clients are interviewed, the aim of the interview is explained, in order to gain participation and mutual understanding. The interviews' goal is to gain information for the bachelor thesis of social services. The objective of the thesis is to develop through written communication material, the dialogue with social workers in child protection. A client's consent form is filled in before the interview starts. The interview is supposed to last twenty minutes.

Themes of the interview

- Origin of the family and short summary of the child protection experience;
- Difficulties in understanding;
- Difficulties in communicating;
- Ideas for development (written material / use of interpreters / importance of written and illustrated material);
- Things that remained unclear as clients in child protection;
- Relationships with social workers / professionals (experiences of prejudice);
- Wishes for the social workers;
- Evaluation of the experience in child protection compared to other services;
- Interview feedback.

Clients' workshops

The participants are part of the language course at la Familia Club. According to their course schedule, the one hour workshop is organized.

CLIENTS' First workshop: co-design vision *(time: max one hour)*

People participating in the workshop and with an interest in the improvement work meet together for a set time to share information and come up with a plan for how the communication with immigrants can develop in intercultural settings. The meeting is run by a facilitator and involves discussion, getting a Finnish language teacher's support. The first workshop aims to take a bigger picture and longer term view of child protection, services and communication tools.

AIM OF THE FIRST WORKSHOP: Plan out how to do the service improvement work (with customers of the service).

- Priority: define concepts to be illustrated (relevant topics / common topics unclear e.g. social worker role, children rights);
- Illustrate the project / outcomes. Plan with customers what could be the support to deliver information and develop a more effective dialogue with social workers (printed materials, posters, cards, brochures?). Examples from previous projects are provided in supporting the clients' choices;
- Get ownership from everyone early on.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Board to write / draw / pens / white papers

Outline of the session (illustrated with images/ draws / words throughout the workshop)

1. Client outcomes

What are the desired outcomes for clients when it comes to dialogue with social workers? Could it be a clear communication / interaction / dialogue / written material? *Outcomes are both personal and community based. Clients' outcomes are expressed as qualitative targets.*

2. Identify the desired communication outputs Based on clients' outcomes, a statement needs to be formulated. What outputs are needed in the future to achieve the clients' outcomes?

3. Identify the improvement goals What goals are needed to achieve the service outputs? What simple improvements in existing services or possible new elements could be included? As many specific goals as possible need to be define, even though then it is necessary to narrow these down to two or three key goals.

End of the session: coffee / tea for the participants

CLIENTS' Second workshop: revision *(time: max one hour)*

During the second workshop a vision is formulated. A vision is a written statement about what communication in social services (visual, info-graphic, illustrative, verbal) aspires to achieve. It includes both what professionals will deliver to clients (the service promise in terms of communication) and what clients can expect as a result (clients' outcomes). Before the second session, clients will be asked to collect, if possible / interested, material from newspapers, magazines etc. that is clearly understandable, as well as potential inspirations for the visual outlook (intercultural communication affects also visual perceptions).

Improvement work can sometimes resolve system issues without improving clients' experiences. Even when considered, clients' experiences may still be overshadowed by other elements. Having a vision helps keep the client in focus.

AIM OF THE SECOND WORKSHOP:

The vision needs to be as tangible, practical and client-oriented as possible.

During the second session the concepts to be illustrated, the supports and the clarity of language needs to be defined (without debating on words and semantics).

MATERIALS NEEDED: Board to write / Pens / White papers / Post-it / Printed photos from various sources e.g. Russian illustration and graphics / Laptop with a wide source of images which could be used to illustrate concepts such as family, social worker, child protection.

Outline of the session (illustrated with images/ draws / words throughout the workshop)

1. Review of the previous session *(update for people not present)*

Is there something to be added / modified / discussed?

2. Brainstorm experiences

- a. How do clients would like written / graphic communication to be? How do they feel when they understand the social worker's communication?
- b. How clients would not like written / graphic communication not to be? How do they don't want to feel while communicating with social workers?
- c. What outcomes do clients want (with concrete examples from image banks available)?
- d. What outcomes clients do not want (with concrete examples from image banks available)?
- e. What kind of feelings certain images give? Are images giving also non-verbal prejudices?

3. Review the content / synthesis

Develop promise and outcome statements in ordinary, simple, clear language. Use synthesis. Discussions about the outcomes of the workshop.

End of the session: coffee / tea for the participants

Lastensuojelu - Child protection

LASTENSUOJELU
LASTENSUOJELULAKI

LAPSEN ETU

LASTENSUOJELUTARPEEN
SELVITYS

LASTENSUOJELULLINEN
HUOLI;
LASTENSUOJELU ILMOITUS.

LAPSEN OIKEUKSIEN
YLEISSOPIMUS

TURVAVERKKO

VANHEMPIEN OIKEUDET
JA VELVOLLISUUDET

Toivon, että tästä selkokiekisestä esitteestä on sinulle hyötyä perehdyttäessäsi asiakkaitasi lastensuojelun termeihin, prosesseihin, lainsäädäntöön ja käytäntöihin.

Yhteistoimintaan perustuva pilottiprojekti on toteutettu yhteistyössä monikulttuuristen asiakkaiden ja lastensuojelun asiantuntijoiden kanssa, yhteistyötahoina Itä-Helsingin lastensuojeluyksikkö ja Socca. Projekti on osa tutkintooni (Sosionomi, Metropolia AMK) liittyvää päättötöitä.

Selkokiekellinen esite on luotu hyödynnettäväksi monipuolisessa dialogissa asiakkaan kanssa. Se on erityisesti tarkoitettu käytettäväksi tapaamisissa keskustelun tukena.

Esitteen voi myös asettaa saataville lastensuojeluyksiköiden ja lastensuojelulaitosten odotustiloihin.

I hope that this material in plain language about some of the child protection process, terms, legislation and practices would be useful in dealing with your clients.

The pilot co-design project has been developed in collaboration with intercultural clients and professionals of child welfare as a part of my final thesis (Bachelor of Social Services, Metropolia AMK) within the East Helsinki child protection unit and Socca.

It is a tool to support your complex dialogue with the clients, designed to be used during the meetings, but also displayable in the waiting areas of the child protection units, as well as within child protection institutes.

Simona Vitalini

Lapsen oikeuksien yleissopimus



Lapsen oikeuksien yleissopimus on Yhdistyneiden kansakuntien (YK) tekemä **sopimus**.

Siinä luetellaan **oikeudet**, jotka koskevat kaikkia lapsia kaikkialla maailmassa.

Melkein kaikki maailman valtiot ovat hyväksyneet sopimuksen.
Lapsen oikeuksien sopimus koskee kaikkia **alle 18-vuotiaita**.

Sopimuksen mukaan kaikilla lapsilla on

- oikeus hyvään ja turvalliseen lapsuuteen.
- oikeus kasvaa ja käydä koulua.
- oikeus leikkiä ja osallistua.
- oikeus saada suojelua ja huolenpitoa.

Lait tukevat lapsen oikeuksien sopimusta. Lapsen oikeuksien sopimus on yhtä sitova kuin laki.
Valtioiden, kuntien, lasten vanhempien ja muiden aikuisten pitää noudattaa sopimusta.



Sopimuksen lisäksi lasten oikeuksia turvaavat Suomen omat lait.
Suomessa on useita lakeja, joiden mukaan lapsia pitää kohdella tasa-arvoisesti yksilöinä.



Lastensuojelu on yhteiskunnan palvelutehtävä, jonka tavoitteena on turvata **lapsen tasapainoinen kehitys ja hyvinvointi.**



Lastensuojelulaki

Lastensuojelua ohjaa lastensuojelulaki, joka määrittää, mitä lastensuojeluun kuuluu ja miten sitä toteutetaan. Lasten suojelua ja kohtelua määrittävät myös laki lapsen huollosta ja tapaamisoikeudesta sekä lapsen oikeuksien yleis-sopimus.

Tavoitteena on tukea vanhempia heidän kasvatustyössään, sekä suorittaa perhe- ja yksilökohtaista ehkäisevää ja korjaavaa lastensuojelutyötä. Tästä näkökulmasta katsoen kaikki lasten ja nuorten kanssa työskentelevät työntekijät toimivat lastensuojelulain alaisissa tehtävissä.

Laki koskee kaikkia. Se tarkoittaa, että lastensuojelun työntekijän toiminnan ja päätösten pitäisi perustua aina lakiin. Lastensuojelulaki koskee kaikkia Suomessa olevia lapsia tasapuolisesti.

Lastensuojelun toimintaan ei vaikuta se, mistä lapsi tulee, mitä kieltä hän puhuu tai mikä on hänen uskontonsa.

Suomessa lastensuojelun järjestää kunta. Kunnissa lastensuojelusta vastaavat sosiaalityöntekijät.

Lastensuojelu on viimesijainen palvelu, eli ensiksi ongelmia yritetään ratkaista esimerkiksi vanhempien ja koulun kesken.



Lapsen huolenpidosta ja kasvatuksesta ovat vastuussa

lapsen vanhemmat / huoltajat. Tähän tehtävään he voivat saada ja hakea apua ja tukea kunnan eri toimijoilta. Jos vanhemmat eivät pysty huolehtimaan lapsensa hyvinvoinnista, lastensuojelun velvollisuus on puuttua tilanteeseen.

Tällöin lastensuojelun tehtävä on **turvata lapsen hyvinvointi.**

Apu ei siis ole aina vapaaehtoista, vaan laki määrää, että lastensuojelun viranomaisen täytyy joskus ryhtyä toimiin lapsen suojelemiseksi.

Lastensuojelun sosiaalityöntekijä

Kunnan lastensuojelun sosiaalityöntekijä:

- Arvioi lastensuojelun tarvetta;
- Käsittelee lastensuojelun asiakkaan asioita;
- Suunnittelee ja järjestää asiakkaan palvelut;
- Seuraa ja arvioi palveluiden vaikutusta.

Lastensuojelun sosiaalityöntekijällä pitää lain mukaan olla koulutus tehtävänsä.



Lapsen etu

Lain tarkoituksena on turvata lapsen oikeus turvalliseen kasvuympäristöön, tasapainoiseen ja monipuoliseen kehitykseen sekä erityiseen suojeluun.

Lastensuojelun lähtökohta on aina lapsen etu.

Se tarkoittaa, että kaikki päätökset tehdään sen mukaan, mikä on lapsen kannalta paras ratkaisu.

Laissa on lista asioista, joihin lastensuojelun työntekijän pitää kiinnittää huomiota, kun hän arvioi lapsen etua.

Tärkeää on turvata se, että lapsen läheiset ihmissuhteet säilyvät. Lastensuojelun toimenpiteen pitää olla myös sellainen, että se sopii lapsen kieleen, kulttuuriin ja uskontoon.

Lapsen edun määrittely voi olla joskus vaikeaa. Eri ihmisillä voi olla erilaisia käsityksiä siitä, mikä on lapselle hyväksi.

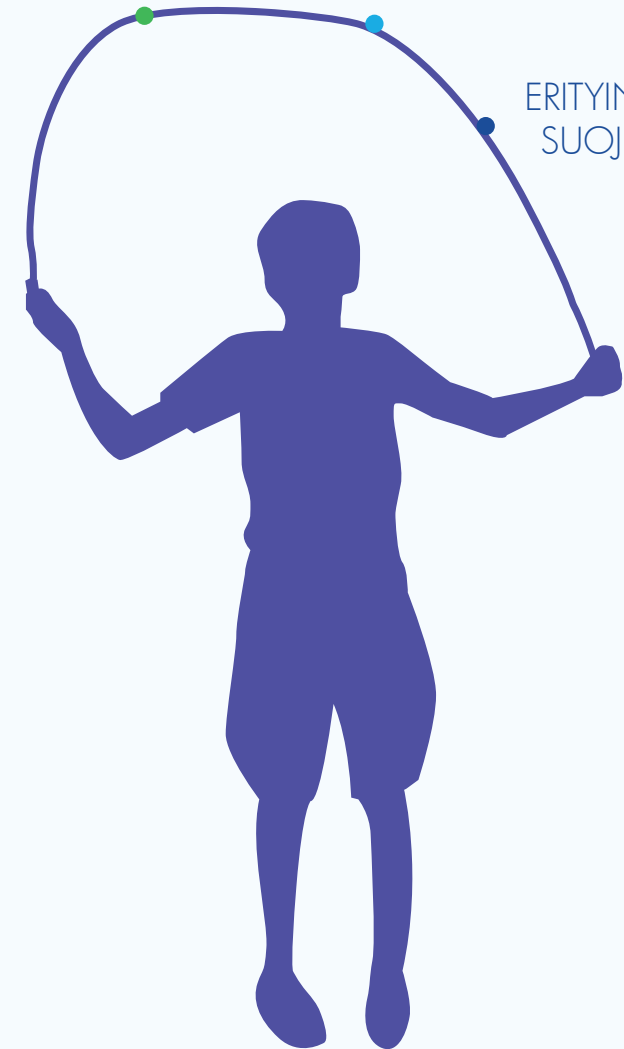
Lapsen etu ei tarkoita sitä, että päätökset ja ratkaisut tehdään aina niin kuin lapsi itse tai hänen vanhempansa haluavat. Lastensuojelun työntekijä arvioi lapsen etua lain mukaan. Joskus työntekijä joutuu tekemään päätöksiä, joista vanhemmat tai lapsi ovat eri mieltä.

Lapsen mielipide on kuitenkin tärkeä tietää. Lapsen mielipide ja lapsen etu eivät silti aina ole sama asia.

TURVALLINEN
KASVUYMPÄRISTÖ

TASAPAINOINEN JA
MONIPUOLINEN KEHITYS

ERITYINEN
SUOJELU



Lastensuojelullinen huoli

Lastensuojelullinen huoli syntyi useimmiten lapsen tai vanhemman tavallisesta poikkeavasta käytöksestä.

Huoli voi syntyä jos lapsi tai nuori näyttää voivan huonosti ja tarvitse ehkä ulkopuolista apua.

Huoli voi syntyä peruspalvelujen, kuten päivähoidon, äitiys- ja lastenneuvolan ja koulun, työntekijöille. Huoli tarkoittaa, että asioiden arvellaan menevän lapsen tai nuoren kannalta huonoon suuntaan, ellei muutosta saada aikaan.

Usein tilanteen muuttamiseen tarvitaan yhteistyötä sekä lapsen tai nuoren itsensä kanssa, että hänen huoltajiensa kanssa.

Ilmoitus tarkoittaa vain lastensuojelutyöntekijän **velvollisuutta tutkia tilanne ja käynnistää tukitoimet.**

Lastensuojeluilmoitus

Lastensuojeluilmoitus tarkoittaa, että lastensuojelun sosiaalityöntekijä saa tiedon lapsesta, joka ehkä tarvitsee apua.

Lastensuojeluilmoituksen voi tehdä kuka tahansa, joka on huolissaan lapsen hyvinvoinnista.

Ilmoitus tehdään kunnan sosiaalitoimistoon.

Lasten ja perheiden parissa työskentelevät viranomaiset ovat velvollisia tekemään lastensuojeluilmoituksen, jos he ovat huolissaan lapsen hyvinvoinnista.



Lastensuojelutarpeen selvitys

Lastensuojelutarpeen selvitys tarkoittaa selvitystä

- lapsen kasvuolosuhteista;
- lapsen hoidosta ja kasvatuksesta;
- mitä lapsi saattaisi tarvita.



Lapsen asioista vastaavan sosiaalityöntekijän on tehtävä lastensuojelutarpeen selvitys kolmen kuukauden kuluessa siitä, kun lastensuojeluasia on alkanut.

Selvityksen aikana sosiaalityöntekijä tapaa lasta ja vanhempia tai muita lapselle tärkeitä henkilöitä.

Mikäli lastensuojellullista huolta ei nouse selvityksen aikana, selvitys päätetään eikä asiakuus jatku.



Vanhempien oikeudet ja velvollisuudet

Suomessa isää ja äitiä koskevat samat oikeudet ja velvollisuudet **tasa-arvoisesti**.

Vanhempien velvollisuuksiin kuuluu

- Huolehtia **lapsen hyvinvoinnista**;
- Hoitaa ja kasvattaa **lasta turallisessa ympäristössä**;
- Pitää huolta, että lapsi saa hänelle sopivan **koulutuksen**.

Lasta tulee kasvattaa siten, että lapsi saa osakseen **turvaa ja hellyyttä**.

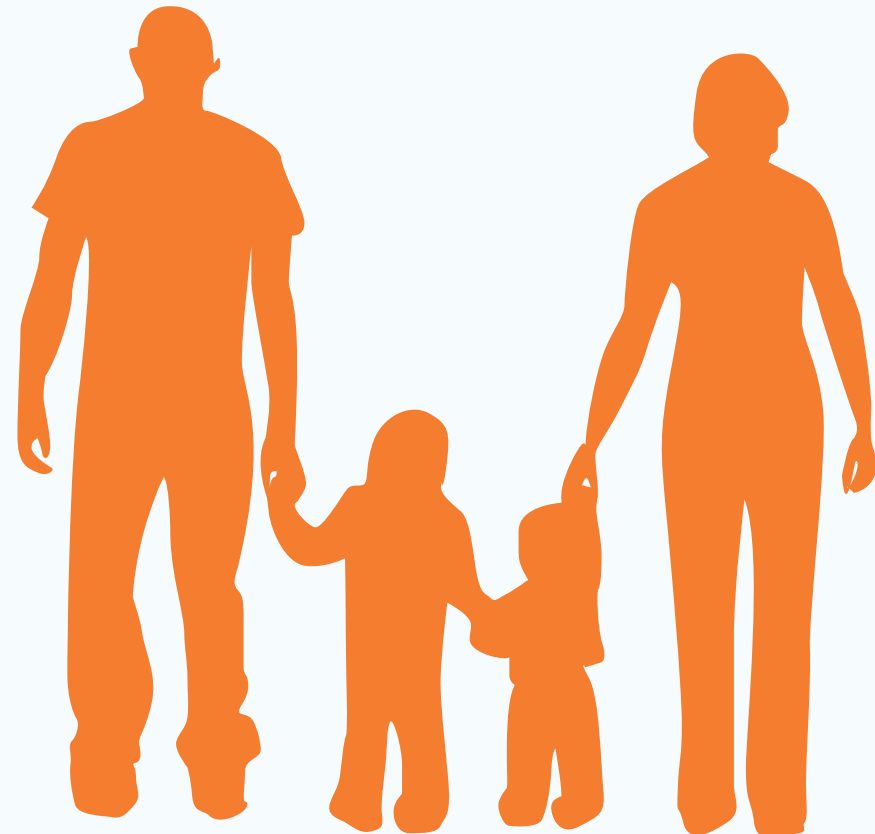
Kasvatuksessa ei saa käyttää ruumiillista kuritusta, eli lain mukaan lasta ei saa esimerkiksi lyödä tai tukistaa.

Yleensä vanhemmat päättävät lapsen hoidosta, kasvatuksesta, asuinpaikasta ja muista lasta koskevista asioista. Vanhemmilla on oikeus päättää myös lapsensa uskonnollisesta kasvatuksesta.

Kun vanhemmat tekevät päätöksiä, heidän pitää ottaa huomioon myös **lapsen mielipide**.

Jos perhe saa lastensuojelun avohuollon tukitoimia, vanhemmilla on silloinkin oikeus päättää kaikista lapsen asioista.

Lain periaate on, että kun lapsen asioihin puututaan, pitää pyrkiä hyvään yhteistyöhön vanhempien kanssa.



Turvaverkko

