



**Diak**

**Katrina Villarente-Forssell & Eduardo Ungaretti de Campos Velho**  
Diaconia University of Applied Sciences  
Bachelor's Degree Program in Social Services  
Bachelor's of Social Services  
Thesis, 2023

# **SLEEPING ROUGH IN THE HAPPIEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD**

**Through the Eyes of the Homeless Migrants in Helsinki**

**Photography Exhibition**

---

## ABSTRACT

Katrina Villarente-Forssell & Eduardo Ungaretti de Campos Velho  
Sleeping Rough in the Happiest Country in the World: Through the Eyes of the Homeless Migrants in Helsinki. Photography Exhibition.

43 Pages and 24 Appendices

December 2023

Diaconia University of Applied Sciences

Bachelor's Degree Program in Social Services

Bachelor of Social Services

The purpose of this project-oriented thesis is to provide in detail all the elements of a photography project and exhibition carried out involving service users of the work-life partner, Vailla Vakinaista Asuntoa ry. The purpose of the project was to promote awareness about the homelessness phenomena in Helsinki and to provide the experience of inclusion and empowerment to the participants living through homelessness.

Photovoice method, a form of participatory action research, was used to enable the participants to convey their stories and perspectives to society through photographs. As the core of the participatory action research, participants had an active role and were able to influence how the project was executed. The photography exhibition commenced in July 2023 and concluded in October 2023. A total of 73 photos were featured together with statements from the participants.

This thesis describes the process of planning and implementing the project. In addition, evaluation and reflections on the outcome, improvements that could occur, and recommendations to social services professionals when carrying out projects involving vulnerable groups are explained. Furthermore, the interest of an international organization in developing a similar project demonstrated the positive influence of the project. Additionally, ethical perspectives and professional development acquired throughout the bachelor's studies at Diaconia University of Applied Sciences are outlined.

**Keywords:** Homelessness, Migrants, Stigma, Social Awareness, Photovoice

“What do you expect about a country? Do you really feel that the country wants you there?”

“Lifetime is only one. In the end, we cannot give back money, apartments, or power.”

- Mr. E., Latvia/Germany

## CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 1 INTRODUCTION.....  | 3  |
| 2 BACKGROUND.....  | 4  |
| 2.1 Homelessness.....  | 4  |
| 2.2 Migrant .....  | 5  |
| 2.3 Stigma .....   | 6  |
| 2.4 Social Awareness.....                                      | 7  |
| 2.5 Happiest country in the world .....                        | 8  |
| 2.6 Photovoice.....  | 10 |
| 3 PROJECTS INVOLVING HOMELESSNESS .....                        | 11 |
| 4 STAKEHOLDER AND TARGET GROUP .....                           | 12 |
| 5 NEED OF THE PROJECT .....                                    | 13 |
| 6 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES.....                                  | 15 |
| 7 PROCESS DESCRIPTION .....                                    | 18 |
| 7.1 Planning a zero-budget project.....                        | 18 |
| 7.2 Social media awareness .....                               | 21 |
| 7.3 Polaroid raffle campaign and gift vouchers .....           | 21 |
| 7.4 Recruitment of participants.....                           | 22 |
| 7.5 Participatory photography sessions.....                    | 24 |
| 7.6 Photography exhibition .....                               | 25 |
| 7.7 Fundraising campaign .....                                 | 26 |
| 7.8 Risks .....  | 27 |
| 8 EVALUATION .....   | 31 |
| 8.1 Evaluation of the participatory photography sessions ..... | 31 |
| 8.2 Evaluation of the photography exhibition.....              | 32 |
| 8.3 SWOT Analysis .....  | 34 |
| 9 ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES.....                                    | 37 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 10 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT .....                       | 39 |
| 11 CONCLUSION .....                                     | 41 |
| APPENDIX 1. Photography project flyer .....             | 49 |
| APPENDIX 2. Exhibition flyer .....                      | 50 |
| APPENDIX 3. Exhibition at the Mall of Tripla .....      | 52 |
| APPENDIX 4. Photovoice samples session 1 .....          | 53 |
| APPENDIX 4. Photovoice samples session 2 .....          | 56 |
| APPENDIX 4. Photovoice samples session 3 .....          | 60 |
| APPENDIX 4. Photovoice samples session 4 .....          | 62 |
| APPENDIX 5. Description of the photography project..... | 70 |
| APPENDIX 6. Fundraising campaign for VVA ry.....        | 72 |

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the concern of understanding the issue of homelessness and its underlying causes, as well as destigmatizing the phenomena, creating awareness seems essential (Sannino, 2018). The idea of developing a zero-budget photography project involving people in vulnerable situations emerged from our experiences working at Vailla Vakinaista Asuntoa ry. We felt the need for us, students, and future social services professionals to create something that provides opportunities for the participants and raises awareness about the homelessness phenomena in Helsinki.

The mission beyond this bachelor-level project-oriented thesis was to empower our participants to be the main stars of the project, take their hands on cameras, and convey their message to all of us exactly as they want to. To increase social involvement, feelings of belongingness, and decision-making, we suggested that their only task was to choose meaningful places for them in Helsinki, bring us, and show their perspectives by taking photos as they wish. We visited several spots in individual sessions with the participants and listened to stories, points of view, and thoughts about living in the happiest country in the world. Besides that, in an exhibition form, this project offers the possibility to the public of acknowledging the homelessness phenomena as a social problem. Perhaps, sharing the message that homelessness can happen to anyone can dynamically impact society and possibly reduce the stigma against those experiencing homelessness.

This bachelor-level thesis paper provides in detail all necessary elements for its development. We aim to familiarize the reader with the extended educational process that guided us through the challenge of delivering a photography project and exhibition.

## 2 BACKGROUND

The summarized key concepts provide a broader understanding of fundamental information beyond the process of implementing the photography project and exhibition.

### 2.1 Homelessness

According to The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA), there were 621 homeless immigrants in 2022. It has decreased by 99 people when there were 720 homeless immigrants in 2021. (ARA, 2023.) Although the number has decreased, the statistics mentioned only a part of immigrant homelessness in Finland. The data collected does not include those who are not receiving services. Furthermore, as Puurunen (2022) mentioned, it excludes those who are not considered permanent residents.

The challenge of a global definition of homelessness contributes to its complex problem. Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.” (United Nations, 1948). It is a basic human right to have adequate shelter for individuals, relationships, and communities to thrive. However, the lack of a global definition lies in who is considered and defined as homeless. Springer (2000) suggests that homelessness can be referred to as houselessness. People who are houseless are referred to as sleeping rough out in the open or using public or private shelters. Thus, their environment may be classified as inadequate shelter.

According to Katisko (2015, p. 3), a homeless person may live outdoors, in an emergency shelter, in temporary accommodation, in a safe house for women, or with friends and relatives. Furthermore, Nozka (2020) defines homelessness as the lack of an existing home or the inability to live in one. The Canadian Definition

of Homelessness defines it as “the situation of an individual, family, or community without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect means and ability of acquiring it.” (COH, n.d.). Therefore, homelessness may be experienced by people in unsheltered or sheltered households (Sullivan, 2022.)

For this thesis, we understand that homelessness can be houselessness, wherein an individual is either living unsheltered outdoors in public areas or indoors through different temporary accommodation forms such as emergency shelters or living with friends. Although some individuals may have accommodation, this is considered homelessness and houselessness due to the lack of ownership and calling the place their own home.

## 2.2 Migrant

There is no universal definition of a migrant. Definitions vary from the reason for migration, residency, or length of stay in a country. The United Nations (UN) refers to a migrant as "any person who changes his/her country of usual residence." For the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), migrants are defined in a narrower context as people who choose to move voluntarily, wherein a direct threat of death or persecution does not cause the move. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), "the term migrant was usually understood to cover all cases where the decision to migrate was taken freely by the individual concerned for reasons of 'personal convenience' and without the intervention of an external compelling factor." (Hannigan et al., 2016.)

Other definitions exist, such as The Migration Observatory, which defines migrant "by foreign birth, by foreign citizenship, or by their movement into a new country to stay temporarily or to settle for the long-term. (Anderson and Blinder 2015, p. 3). The European Migration Network (EMN) understands a migrant as someone who settles for 12 months in an EU Member state from a non-EU country or another Member State. (Hannigan et al., 2016).

The Nationality Act of Finland, which took effect in 2011, states that citizenship can be obtained through birth, the citizenship of the parents, application, or declaration. (Finnish Immigration Service, 2019). In addition, the official languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish (Ministry of Justice).

For this thesis, we refer to a migrant who is not a Finnish citizen. Moreover, an individual who came to Finland from abroad has a different identity, culture, and background. The participants of this project are migrants who do not have prior knowledge of one or both official languages of Finland.

### 2.3 Stigma

Society tends to blame homeless people for their situation (Phelan et al., 1997.) To get a better understanding, it is essential to gain knowledge that circumstances arise which can result in homelessness. Furthermore, by familiarizing ourselves with the issue, we understand that homelessness can happen to anyone at any time.

According to Keene et al. (2018), formerly incarcerated individuals in the United States face discrimination in the job market and housing accessibility. The lack of employment affects access to the housing market. Due to their histories, employers and landlords often deny opportunities to support them towards a positive development.

People associate homeless people with endangerment to society. Hence, they are labeled as incapable or dangerous members of the community. (Belcher and DeForge, 2012). Attitudes associated with being previously locked up limit access to resources and affect the well-being of the stigmatized groups. Therefore, the past is used to discriminate the present lives of the formerly incarcerated. (Keene et al., 2018.) Consequently, these individuals face homelessness when society is fixed on the person instead of focusing on prominent issues such as poverty, unemployment, or the lack of a network.

Homeless women in Finland increased due to substance abuse and domestic violence. (Y-Foundation, 2017). In Canada, homeless single mothers have risen due to poverty, intimate partner violence, and lack of affordable housing. (Benbow et al., 2019). Homeless women encounter several challenges. However, they face more adversity when they have children involved.

Homeless single mothers often experience a lack of empathy and are stereotyped by shelter workers. Some stereotypes are that they feed off the system, lack parental skills, are uneducated, or are promiscuous if they are young mothers. Moreover, they worry that child protection services will be involved if every move is scrutinized. Thus, their ability to be a parent further complicates the issue of homelessness. (Benbow et al., 2019). Homeless mothers' inequalities are complex when society labels this group as bad mothers. Therefore, it is crucial to establish policies that address the challenges homeless women encounter, whether they have children or not. (Savage, 2016).

The stigma on homeless people is that they are "deficits" and "infest" communities with the lack of economic contribution to society. (Sannino, 2018). Therefore, it is essential to have conversations about the root causes of homelessness for society to avoid labeling and judging individuals. If we identify, see beyond the issue, and understand the sources, we could conclude that circumstances cause homelessness.

## 2.4 Social Awareness

Homelessness is a global issue and a worldwide challenge (Hugh and Fox, 2019). It is essential to become knowledgeable that homelessness can happen to anyone. Furthermore, society has different opinions about who is classified as homeless. Hence, it is a complex and sensitive topic because of who is considered, defined, and interpreted as homeless. (Springer, 2000.)

Catastrophic events, personal tragedies, and bad luck can make anyone homeless. Rudd (2008) states that a broader understanding of the problem is needed

so that everyone, including governments, churches, charities, and the homeless, can work together to solve the problem. Social justice is achieved when structural obstacles are overcome through compassionate awareness. Compassion is built when different forms of suffering are recognized and evaluated. (Horsell, 2017.)

It is important to remember that we, as human beings, and societal individuals, are responsible for helping the community thrive. This includes educating ourselves and others about the phenomena through seminars, projects, cooperation, and collaboration with other agencies not only within the social sector field. Individuals at risk of falling into homelessness can be supported and assisted when society is informed and inclined to tackle the issue from the grassroots level. This may be resolved if everyone empathizes with the idea and works with the public and private sectors towards the common goal.

## 2.5 Happiest country in the world

Finland has been voted the happiest country in the world for six years. Happiness is measured based on life satisfaction and the meaning of life. The World Happiness Report (WHR) used these and six other factors, such as gross domestic product (GDP), life expectancy, generosity, social support, freedom, and corruption, to explain the ranking of different countries worldwide. (De Paola and Pirttilä-Backman, 2023.)

Finland is considered to have a high-quality standard of living. In 2018, Statistics Finland collected a list of comparisons wherein it ranked the best in the world in various categories such as the most stable and safest country in the world, highest protection for human rights, lowest level of organized crime, most independent judicial system, and third lowest level of corruption. Satisfaction and trust in the government are connected to equality. In addition, the nature of Finland is rich and diverse. Quality education and a sound healthcare system are also reasons why Finns are considered the happiest. (Dorling and Koljonen, 2020.)

Finland aims to eradicate homelessness by 2027. National programs have been established since 2008 to tackle long-term homelessness, prevention, and its reduction. (Kaakinen and Turunen, 2021). After that, the number of homeless people has been consistently reduced. Thus, Finland is a model to other countries in addressing the issue. The Finnish approach to the Housing First principle guarantees supported living to homeless people with complex mental health or substance abuse problems, irrespective of readiness for abstinence and recovery. Apart from tenant rights, they also have obligations tied to their rental contracts. (Sannino, 2018).

Furthermore, housing advice proved beneficial in preventing evictions for low-income populations at risk of homelessness due to rising living costs. More attention is given to immigrants and young people to assist with financial responsibilities. (Finnish Government, 2022). Collaboration amongst several actors on both national and local levels, regardless of political ties, meant that cooperation exists towards a common goal of ending homelessness. (Kaakinen and Turunen, 2021). However, undocumented migrants are in Finland illegally. Therefore, they are not entitled to formal housing support. (Y-Foundation, 2017). Global issues such as poverty, war, inequality, and regional conflicts are some of the reasons for migrating to Finland. (Jauhiainen and Tedeschi, 2021). Providing that global problems are continuous, migration is constant. Hence, ending homelessness will be challenging if these vulnerable groups cannot access permanent housing.

Despite numerous categories wherein Finland ranks on top, it is worth mentioning that societal problems such as high mental health-related issues among the youth, high suicide rates, and burnout amongst teachers exist in the happiest country in the world (De Paola and Pirttilä-Backman, 2023). Furthermore, there is high prejudice towards the migrant population in Finland. Victim Support Finland (2019) states that over 80 percent of offenses reported to the Finnish police were racist crimes. Additionally, domestic violence is widespread. There were 10,900 adult and minor victims of domestic violence cases directed to authorities in 2021. Of these, 75 percent of adult victims were women. (Statistics Finland, 2022).

It cannot be denied that Finland is a developed country consistent with high-quality living. Nevertheless, the country still has many challenges to tackle as a society. Although it has been voted multiple times as the happiest country in the world, societal problems such as mental health issues, substance abuse, violent past, involvement in criminal activities, and poverty are some of the underlying causes of why people fall into homelessness in Finland (Sannino, 2020).

## 2.6 Photovoice

Photovoice is a form of participatory action research that allows society to see the perspectives of the most vulnerable population and let the community experience its needs. (Wang and Burris 1997, pp. 16-17.) In addition, Photovoice is used by researchers to acquire a deeper understanding of the lives of the disadvantaged, empowers its participants, and promotes positive social change (O'Malley and Munsell 2020, p. 1).

Photovoice has been used with homeless people to take photos, tell stories, and represent the group. In the United States, the photographic approach engaged participants to document their daily struggles. (Wang et al., 2000). Photovoice expressed narratives from the participants themselves through photographs. The participants' desire for proper sleep was recognized as the main challenge in Taiwan. (Cheng, 2021). Furthermore, it provides a broader reach to the general population and encourages a deeper understanding of issues of concern. (Wang et al., 2000).

Through participatory methods as a form of data collection, we emphasized the participants' lived experiences. More importantly, we empowered them to be the main stars of the project. The participants shared that they felt included and had a sense of belonging and autonomy, which will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

### 3 PROJECTS INVOLVING HOMELESSNESS

In this chapter, we familiarize the reader with two projects in Finland that motivated us on developing our bachelor level thesis in a project-oriented form.

Studies have been done previously with homeless immigrants in Finland. An example is the documentary film "On the Streets of Helsinki" by Borislav Borisov. Although the documentary focused on Bulgarian immigrants, the film explained their reasons for being in Helsinki and showed the participants' sleeping conditions outdoors. The purpose of the documentary is to be familiar with the Bulgarians in Helsinki and understand the diverse reasons. Knowing the source created awareness and helped in identifying potential solutions. (Borisov 2013, p. 6.)

The Support Foundation for Probation Services and Moniheli Ry organized another project. The exhibition project featured participants who were released from jail. (Support Foundation for Probation Services, 2022.) The target group was people experiencing homelessness who came out of jail and kept facing discrimination in housing rental. The stigma experienced by the minority group affected their everyday lives and their chances of having better opportunities and developing positively.

These projects inspired us to create another project by showing society the perspectives of people experiencing homelessness in Helsinki. A combination of several aspects from both projects was established in developing our own. Furthermore, a project that empowered the participants provided a sense of belonging and inclusion while informing society about the phenomena.

#### 4 STAKEHOLDER AND TARGET GROUP

Vailla Vakinaista Asuntoa ry (VVA ry) is a non-governmental organization founded in 1986 by homeless people themselves. 30% out of almost forty employees of VVA ry have experienced homelessness. They aim to enhance the services of homeless people and diminish the number affected by the phenomena. (VVA, n.d.)

Collaboration with professionals from different departments of VVA ry highly contributed to making the photography project and exhibition possible. To name a few, the Immigration Specialist supervised this development-based thesis and assisted us dynamically on several aspects. For instance, support was given to reach possible migrant participants, and guidance was offered throughout the process. The Communications Manager supported us by actively spreading the word through their social media channels. Clarifications were also provided regarding marketing and project development. The Organizational Planner assisted us with different aspects of the project. Experiences from previous projects were shared, which helped us tremendously with directions. Lastly, the VEPA day center staff served as our bridge to communicate with the service users if anyone showed interest in participating in the project.

The target group of the project was the service users of VEPA day center. VEPA or Vertais- ja vapaaehtoistoiminnan keskus, is the low-threshold day center of VVA ry. VEPA offers a place where homeless individuals are welcome to participate in activities, wash clothes, and have warm meals, coffee, counseling, and advice. They include both Finnish nationals and people from different migrant backgrounds. However, for the project, due to language barriers, the focus was on getting participants with migrant backgrounds who could speak either English, Portuguese, Tagalog, or Spanish.

## 5 NEED OF THE PROJECT

During our studies at Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, we did our practical placements and worked with people experiencing homelessness in Helsinki between 2021 and 2022. At the organization, we have worked with people experiencing discrimination and exclusion due to the fact of not having permanent housing. The recognition of the overall need of this current project started to be evident. For the first time, we encountered the reality of people who sleep rough in the happiest country in the world, as well as the challenges of Finnish organizations to overcome the issue of labor shortage in the social field.

Moreover, homeless people are often excluded from several activities, which makes them more isolated. Providing them with access to resources allows them to feel included and dynamically assists their development. (Rutenfrans-Stupar et al., 2019). On the one hand, when we started discussing this project, we shared the belief that this idea could be particularly beneficial to our participants, who would have an opportunity to access resources and positively increase their freedom of choice. Besides expressing themselves as they are, increasing social involvement and feelings of belongingness were elements that motivated us enthusiastically to develop this project. On the other hand, raising awareness about homelessness is crucial and could help our society reduce the stigma in the long term. Reaching emphatically different groups of individuals can gather more support for the social cause.

According to Martin et al. (2010), an organization's values dynamically influence its performance in achieving goals or defining its purpose. As stated, "Values are deep-seated beliefs about what is right or wrong, and what is important and unimportant. An organization's values are influenced by values held in the wider world within which it functions and by values held by the people who work in it and use it." (Martin et al., 2010, p. 71.) In the same line, we consider that the need for the project is correlated with our own values and visions. For instance, we both share the same values that everyone in a society should be treated equally and have the same opportunities regardless of their life challenges. Our

vision of an ideal society consists of individuals being aware of social issues to help others with less privilege overcome their hardships emphatically.

Motivated by our experiences with the target group and the constant need for more people to work with the minority group, we decided to apply together for our third practical placement at Vailla Vakinaista Asuntoa ry. As stated in Chapter 4, VVA ry has experts by experience working for the benefit of people in a homeless situation. This concept intrigued us to learn from people who have had the same challenge and overcame the issue. From September 2022, when we started our internship, until these days, we have been volunteers at the NGO. We listened to diverse cases of homelessness, of which the causes were completely different from each other. Due to the language barrier, photos and videos were an efficient way of communication. Hence, we agreed that photography is a powerful communication tool we could benefit from in this project.

Therefore, we perceived the crucial need to provide an opportunity for these individuals to express themselves as they are. Including the target group as part of our team, empowering them to be the decision-makers and have an important role in this project could increase their sense of belonging and social involvement. Through participatory photography, we understood that we could engage participants to share their perspectives holistically. Additionally, Martin et al. (2010) suggests that assessing the needs primarily is necessary to identify an existing problem that the project aims to answer. Moreover, clarification of the need assists projects dynamically towards achieving the best possible outcomes.

## 6 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

In this chapter, we provide the reader with a possibility of understanding the purpose and objectives of this project. Additionally, the objectives analysis will be provided with the guidance of SMART criteria.

Based on the needs described in Chapter 5, our purpose was clear and defined from the early stages of this bachelor-level project-oriented thesis. The main purpose of this project is to create awareness about the homelessness phenomena that affects several lives in Helsinki and to provide experience of inclusion and empowerment for participants via project. The purpose of the "Sleeping Rough in the Happiest Country in the World" project is defined and listed below.

TABLE 1. Purpose of the photography project and exhibition

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| Purpose | <p>a) Promote awareness about the homelessness phenomena in Helsinki.</p> <p>b) Provide experience of inclusion and empowerment for participants via project.</p> |
|---------|---|

Since "Eyes of Homeless," further explained in Chapter 7, is a small-scale project, we understand that our purpose is not expected to be attained entirely during the implementation. Martin et al. (2010) state that "identifying your aims is not enough. The aim 'to give accurate information about the service' describes what you want to achieve in relation to a particular need – it sets out your direction – but it does not indicate how you are going to achieve it, when you are going to do it, or how you will know that you have been successful in doing it. So, you need to convert the aims into objectives. Objectives need to be as precise as possible if they are going to help you to become more effective. This means that they

should have some particular characteristics.” An easy way to remember these characteristics is to think of them as ‘SMART’.” (Martin 2010, p. 28.)

Following the SMART technique, S stands for specific, M is for measurable, A means achievable, R is realistic, and T is for timebound. Additionally, students who use Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely objectives in their projects are expected to be more organized and effective. (Lawlor and Hornyak, 2012.) The objectives defined and set during the planning stage are listed in the table below.

TABLE 2. Objectives of the photography project

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Objective 1 | To implement individual photography participatory method sessions and have a minimum of 3 participants with migrant backgrounds who are service users of VVA ry. |
| Objective 2 | Involve the participants by empowering them to decide the session’s location, length, and scenarios they are most comfortable with.                              |
| Objective 3 | Create a photography exhibition to share through visuals and captions the perspectives of the participants to the visitors.                                      |
| Objective 4 | Promote a fundraising campaign to support Vailla Vakinaista Asuntoa ry during the entire process of the project.   |
| Objective 5 | Collect and learn from participants, stakeholders, and exhibition visitors’ feedback.  |

Following Table 2, we provide the analysis of the defined objectives using the SMART criteria. The specific (S) objective was to create a photography exhibition to share through visuals and captions messages from people experiencing homelessness with the visitors. The second specific (S) objective stands for the

involvement of the participants in the decision-making of important tasks such as deciding where to go, what to share, for how long, and what to take photos of. The third specific (S) objective was to collect feedback from all the parties involved and learn from it. As another specific (S) objective, the fundraising campaign started as planned and will end as intended.

The measurable (M) objective was aimed at implementing individual photography participatory sessions and having a minimum of 3 participants with migrant backgrounds living rough in Helsinki. We considered that having less than 3 participants would not present the variety we aimed for.

The achievable (A) objectives were set to follow the project plan precisely. We understood that we could achieve the desired outcomes in this project by following the thesis schedule, which the University teachers and stakeholders previously approved.

The realistic (R) objectives were set and planned to occur as estimated. Following the period agreed and regarding the zero-budget status of the project.

Last but not least, the timely (T) objectives followed the small-scale project peculiarities. Events such as tasks, sessions, deadlines, exhibition, and project final report would take place from September 2022 until October 2023.

## 7 PROCESS DESCRIPTION

A detailed description of the planning and implementation of the photography project and exhibition shall be provided in order to understand how the project process evolved. Below is the timeline for the different stages of the project, with each task introduced and further defined in the next subchapters.

TABLE 3. Timeline for the different stages of the project

| TASK                                       | INITIATED       |
|--|-----------------|
| Planning a zero-budget project             | January 2023    |
| Eyes of Homeless Instagram account         | March 2023      |
| Polaroid raffle campaign and gift vouchers | May 2023        |
| Recruitment of participants                | May 2023        |
| Implementation of photography sessions     | May – June 2023 |
| Implementation of exhibition               | July 2023       |

### 7.1 Planning a zero-budget project

A budget is the amount available for a particular cause (Fowler 2017, p. 44). Although the photography project and exhibition were initially planned as zero-budget projects, obtaining sponsors was necessary. Therefore, several companies and groups were contacted by email, phone, and face-to-face to check their interest in sponsoring the project. We offered a detailed description of the project

as well as an opportunity to be mentioned as sponsors in our social media account, public exhibition, and in this report.

Fotoyks donated a package that included ten disposable cameras, films, and printing services. Verkkokauppa.com offered a donation, which included two Polaroid cameras and delivery to the address of our preference.

VVA ry has single-use public transportation tickets that can be given to their service users. Twelve tickets were provided to be used during the implementation phase of the photography sessions. In addition, printing the flyers for the photography project and promoting the exhibition were also provided free of charge. (See Appendix 2).

Several venues, such as libraries, malls, and other public spaces, were contacted as early as January 2023 to reserve a space for the exhibition. Among the several venues reached out across Helsinki, The Mall of Tripla showed interest in sponsoring our project. The month of July was offered free of charge and has been extended until October.

The design of the large posters used in the exhibition was provided free of charge by a friend. Below are tables of the timeline for acquiring the sponsors and the budget for the photography project and exhibition with its estimate and actual costs.

TABLE 4. Timeline for acquiring the sponsors

| SPONSORS                  | CONTACTED    | ACQUIRED   |
|---------------------------|--------------|--|
| Venue -<br>Mall of Tripla | January 2023 | May - confirmed for the July slot.<br>August – extended until October. |

|   |                      |                             |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Fotoyks -<br>Disposable cameras,<br>films, and printing<br>services | February 2023        | March 2023                  |
| Verkkokauppa.com -<br>Polaroid cameras                              | February 2023        | March 2023                  |
| VVA ry -<br>Printing services<br>Transport tickets                  | May 2023<br>May 2023 | May - June 2023<br>May 2023 |
| Exhibition posters<br>by a friend                                   | June 2023            | July 2023                   |

TABLE 5. Budget of the photography project and exhibition

| ITEM                                       | ESTIMATE PRICE<br>IN EUROS | COST IN EUROS |
|--|----------------------------|---------------|
| Cameras and<br>printing services           | 600                        | Free          |
| Venue                                      | Free                       | Free          |
| Transportation                             | 110                        | Free          |
| Printing services:                         |                            |               |
| Flyers                                     | 25                         | Free          |
| Exhibition posters                         | 50                         | Free          |
| Others                                     | 20                         | Free          |
| Materials (tapes)                          | 50                         | Free          |
| Human resources<br>(2 student staff wages) | 3900                       | Free          |

## 7.2 Social media awareness

An Instagram account named Eyes of Homeless was created in March 2023 for the purpose of creating awareness about the homelessness phenomena in Helsinki. As of October 2023, there were 112 followers from Finland and different parts of the world. Different topics surrounding homelessness were posted actively, such as articles, news, events, and fundraising campaigns for VVA ry.

The Eyes of Homeless account was used to promote the photography project. In addition, the account was used to implement our raffle campaign to benefit homeless people, which will be further explained in the next chapter. Furthermore, the account was used to advertise the photography exhibition.

## 7.3 Polaroid raffle campaign and gift vouchers

The photography project and exhibition were planned as zero-budget projects, as mentioned previously. Yet, we relied on the sponsors to cover the expenses for the projects to thrive. We contacted several places to check sponsorship for the vouchers to be used by the participants. Since we have yet to receive a positive answer in obtaining sponsors from supermarket chains and retail shops, a raffle campaign was created to overcome the issue.

The raffle campaign commenced on April 20, 2023, and ended on May 5, 2023. The raffle prize was one of the two Polaroid cameras in which Verkkokauppa.com donated. We contacted our sponsor, Verkkokauppa.com to ask for their agreement about our idea of a raffle campaign. We were informed that they supported the idea and stated that the most important was the outcome still benefited the homeless people. The raffle was closely coordinated with VVA ry. Advertisements have been posted on the Eyes of Homeless Instagram account and social media accounts of VVA ry for the public to participate.

The raffle campaign garnered a total of €255. The proceeds were used to purchase six gift vouchers from Lidl supermarket worth €25 each. These were given

to each participant after the photography session finished as a surprise. Additionally, part of the proceeds was used to purchase materials for the exhibition and other printing services. The excess amount from the proceeds amounted to €50, and one unused gift voucher was donated to VVA ry. It is worth mentioning that 5 camera packages from Fotoyks and 6 bus tickets were unutilized after the project concluded. Therefore, these were donated and given back to VVA ry. For transparency, the table below shows how the raffle proceeds were utilized.

TABLE 6. Utilization of the raffle proceeds

| ITEM                              | RECEIVED<br>IN EUROS | COST<br>IN EUROS | EXCESS<br>IN EUROS |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Raffle campaign                   | 255                  |                  |                    |
| Gift vouchers                     |                      | 150              | 25                 |
| Materials –<br>poster strip tapes |                      | 40               |                    |
| printing services                 |                      | 15               |                    |
| Unused                            |                      |                  | 50                 |
| Donated to VVA RY                 |                      |                  | 75                 |

#### 7.4 Recruitment of participants

Flyers were designed to advertise the photography project. (See Appendix 1). The flyers were posted in both the reception and information board of the VEPA day center. These served as an invitation to service users with migrant backgrounds who would be interested in participating and becoming a photographer during the session. In addition, flyers were handed out personally to service users with migrant backgrounds. Several people showed interest in participating in the project.

During the recruitment stage, we followed the ethical principles of research with human participants as guided by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity. To avoid miscommunication and misinterpretation, we ensured that potential participants spoke a common language with us as stated in Chapter 4. This is to prevent the language barrier, which poses a risk and will be further explained in this chapter. Thus, English and Spanish languages were used to give a clear explanation of what the project entails. Furthermore, we personally approached the service users to clarify any questions they had, what was expected in the project, how the photography sessions and exhibition would be conducted, and what their participation would mean in the research. (TENK 2019, pp. 10-12.)

The age range of the service users who agreed to participate varied from 27 years old and above. The participants are migrants from different countries who were born outside of Finland and did not possess Finnish citizenship at that time. They are from Morocco, Latvia, Gambia, and Sierra Leone. Some have either residency rights or speak another language from other European countries such as Italy and Germany. Therefore, they identified themselves as part of the mentioned countries. The period of residence in Finland varied from three months to several years. The participants have no access to the Finnish welfare system. Additionally, participants have stated that they have no family in Finland and are unemployed.

The participants have a roof over their heads through an emergency shelter or living with friends. However, they are still experiencing homelessness without having their own home. Moreover, participants who are staying in the emergency shelter described their living conditions as uncomfortable. As one participant stated, there is a lack of privacy when a room is shared with six other homeless people. As another participant shared, one has faced racism at emergency shelters.

## 7.5 Participatory photography sessions

The Photovoice method, a form of participatory action research, as explained in Chapter 2 was used in the photography project. Each participant received a disposable camera donated by Fotoyks before the individual photography session commenced. In addition, they were handed the Polaroid camera donated by Verkkokauppa.com during the session. To increase decision-making and social involvement, we proposed that they choose a place in Helsinki, go to the destination with us either way they prefer, and present their angles by taking photos as one think best. It is worth mentioning that we visited several public spaces. For instance, the participant from Gambia visited an African market, had a conversation with people from the same background, and shared with us that it was his first time at the shop. Through means of an unstructured interview, they conveyed their message exactly as they wanted to. We deem it necessary that the participants have a safe space, are at ease, and do the talking when they feel the need to.

The photography sessions commenced on May 26 until June 1, 2023. The session times and dates were agreed according to the participants' preferences. Our starting point was at the VEPA day center in Pasila, Helsinki. The language of communication used was English and Spanish. As explained by O'Malley and Munsell (2020), when using Photovoice in research, it is vital to clarify what is expected of the photo contents. Instructions were given to the participants to avoid taking photos of people who would be recognizable, particularly children.

Moreover, it is suggested to limit the length of the interview process. (O'Malley and Munsell, 2020.) However, each photography session we implemented varied in length. The sessions were customized according to the participants' wishes. During the photography sessions, participants were reminded about their right to privacy which will be further explained in Chapter 9.

A total of five participants joined the photography project. Three individual sessions and one group session that included two participants were implemented. One participant joined two times due to high interest and positive outcome from

the first session. Therefore, the participant was counted as double. Below is the timeline and length of the photography sessions.

TABLE 7. Timeline for the participatory photography sessions

| PHOTOGRAPHY SESSIONS | NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS AND ORIGIN | LENGTH OF PHOTOGRAPHY SESSIONS |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| May 26, 2023         | 1 - Morocco                       | 2 hours                        |
| May 30, 2023         | 1 - Sierra Leone                  | 1.5 hours                      |
| May 31, 2023         | 1 - Latvia                        | 30 minutes                     |
| June 1, 2023         | 2 - Gambia and Sierra Leone       | 4 hours                        |

## 7.6 Photography exhibition

The photography exhibition commenced on July 5-31, 2023, at the Mall of Tripla in Pasila, Helsinki. (See Appendix 3). However, we were permitted to extend it until October 2023. Advertisements were done mainly through the Eyes of Homeless Instagram account and the social media accounts of VVA ry. In addition, the Mall of Tripla posted about the exhibition on their social media account. Furthermore, our personal social media accounts were used to promote the exhibition to different groups of people.

During the exhibition, a total of 69 photos from disposable cameras of Fotoyks were displayed. It is worth mentioning that not all the photos taken by the participants were featured. There are various reasons for not displaying all the photos, namely, space constraints, print quality, double shots, and content that included the participants, which we were not allowed to display. Additionally, 4 photos were displayed in the exhibition from the Polaroid camera donated by Verkko-kauppa.com.

Photos were arranged by us according to each participant's data. We had five different envelopes with photos and captions that corresponded to each participant's work. The themes were selected according to the contents present in the visuals. For example, one participant took photos of bridges and parks from different parts of Helsinki, while another took several photos of birds and nature. These were grouped together since the contents were similar. (See Appendix 4).

It is worth mentioning that when the photos were printed, we visited VVA ry multiple times but were unsuccessful in encountering the participants. It is good to note that the summer has started, which can be a reason for service users spending less time in the VEPA day center and more outdoors. Additionally, VVA ry was closed for the whole month of July on summer break. Due to this fact, our idea to include the participants and involve them by asking which of their visuals they would like to display at the exhibition was not possible. Ethical factors when arranging the exhibition were taken into consideration. For instance, we consulted our supervisor in VVA ry and received approval about displaying photo contents from a participant who orally agreed to be shown in the picture.

The exhibition featured the photos taken by the participants. The photos had captions using statements, feedback, and conversations exchanged during the photography sessions. Furthermore, a description of the photography project was displayed to describe the process in more detail. (See Appendix 5).

## 7.7 Fundraising campaign

The homelessness work of VVA ry has a fundamental role in creating awareness in Finland and worldwide. The photography exhibition featured their donation account. Visitors who attended the exhibition were offered the possibility to donate an amount of their choice voluntarily, either through text message, Mobile Pay, or direct transfer to the account. (See Appendix 6).

We advertised the account information of VVA ry in the Eyes of Homeless social media account, our personal social media channels, and other networks. We

deemed it fundamental to assist our work-life partner in continuing their activities with the minority group. Besides that, one brand contacted us with interest in supporting the non-governmental organization by donating a percentage of their proceeds.

## 7.8 Risks

All projects have risks. It is vital to identify potential risks that are associated with any project. Risks are unknown events that may happen or not. When risk occurs, it becomes a problem that has negative or positive consequences on the quality, cost, and outcome of the project. (Dobson 2015, pp. 74, 96-97).

Furthermore, risk assessment is crucial for a successful project. "In social work, risk management is commonplace. Working with vulnerable people requires keen surveillance of risk to health and well-being, so we have an understanding of the complexity and significance of risk assessment." (Spolander & Martin 2012, p. 123.)

Lock (2013, pp. 73-74) explained that when managing a project, it is essential to list possible risks, rank the probability and effect, and take actions to avoid or reduce the effects should they occur. Below is the table of the risks associated with the project, together with its probability and impact. Additionally, actions we have taken to prevent the identified risks from happening.

TABLE 8. Risks associated with the project

| PROBABILITY | IMPACT |         |      |
|-------------|--------|---------|------|
|             | Low    | Medium  | High |
| Low         | 3, 4   |         |      |
| Medium      |        | 1, 5, 6 |      |

|      |  |  |   |
|------|--|--|---|
| High |  |  | 2 |
|------|--|--|---|

The risks are marked in numbers. 1- Language barrier; 2 – Impairment (physical, psychological); 3 – No participants; 4 – Cultural differences; 5 – Quality of photos; 6 – Budget

The high risk identified was the challenge some service users have, which may be physical, psychological impairment, or both. Service users of the VEPA day center are experiencing homelessness varying from months to years, which has an impact on their well-being.

The idea of the photography session is for participants to guide us to their meaningful places in Helsinki. Some of the service users have physical impairments, such as visual or mobility challenges. Therefore, moving around Helsinki by walking or public transportation posed the biggest challenge. Others have been through personal challenges that they are unwilling to be approached or get involved with us. To be more inclusive, service users, irrespective of background and history, were invited to participate and briefed about the project. To give space, service users who were hesitant to listen to our proposal were only handed out flyers of the photography project.

One of the medium risks identified was the language barrier. As mentioned in Chapter 4, service users of the VEPA day center come from diverse backgrounds. Therefore, different languages can be heard. To ensure clear communication, we discussed with our supervisor in VVA ry who among the service users with migrant backgrounds communicates in English. As mentioned previously, it is essential to explain the project to human participants in a language they understand, as stated by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity. (TENK 2019, pp. 10-12.)

The quality of photos was identified as a medium risk. To ensure we have photos to display for the exhibition, we encouraged the participants during the photography sessions to do a repetition of shots. This was done should the print quality

be compromised. This allowed us to have options to choose from photos with similar content.

The budget was another medium risk identified. The lack of funds will compromise the project in moving forward. Therefore, contacting companies ahead of time to sponsor our project was essential during the planning phase. As a zero-budget project, we had backup plans should we be unsuccessful in obtaining sponsors for the cameras such as using donated phones to VVA ry or participants' personal phones. Additionally, sending inquiries to several venues that rent spaces free of charge was done in the early stages of the project. Moreover, the challenge of not getting sponsors for the gift vouchers was resolved through the Polaroid raffle campaign using the extra Polaroid camera donated by Verkkokauppa.com. It was previously mentioned that Verkkokauppa.com has been informed of this change of plan. Due to effective planning, assessment of challenges, and clear communication, we managed to avoid this risk.

The low risk identified in the project was not having any participants. Chapter 5 mentioned that in 2022, we have previously done our placement in VVA ry. After the placement finished, we returned in March 2023 with a different purpose, which was to implement a project as part of another course. Therefore, several service users have been familiar with us. We approached new clients and counted on the guidance of our supervisor in contacting other possible participants. This allowed us to reduce the risk of not getting any participants and get to know more service users. The participants of the photography project were both newer and older service users of the VEPA day center.

The other low risk was cultural differences. Since the service users are from multicultural backgrounds, it is crucial to be mindful and respectful of everyone's identity. Coming from different backgrounds, we ensured that we communicated with the service users appropriately and professionally. Furthermore, it was vital that they were treated equally, irrespective of origin. This was to guarantee that everyone was of equal bearing. Studies conducted by Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. (2006) indicated that host countries have preferential treatment among different groups of migrants. Thus, the daily experience of discrimination and racism further

impacts the migrants' well-being. Having lived overseas ourselves with diverse communities before moving to Finland, our own experiences allowed us to be aware of diversity and respect everyone's differences.

## 8 EVALUATION

According to Spolander and Martin (2012), it is essential to acknowledge the skills and lessons gained, as well as mark the success when a project ends. Furthermore, it is crucial to recognize the efforts made by everyone involved in it, not only the team behind the project but also the participants and stakeholders.

### 8.1 Evaluation of the participatory photography sessions

It is important to recognize who the clients are and their needs in order to provide support, according to Martin et al. (2010, p. 93). As creators of this project, we understood that everybody in society needed to be seen, be included, and feel that they are a part of our society.

Photographs taken by the participants who are experiencing homelessness are the result of the photography sessions which we implemented as stated in Objective 1. The sessions resulted in several verbal positive feedback. Some of the feedback given to us by the participants was, "When you give people time, you give people hope. This project you guys have is giving people hope." In addition, it was mentioned in Chapter 7 that one participant joined the photography session twice. This was due to the positive impact the project had on him. The participant shared, "I loved the experience. I love taking pictures, walking, and talking. If I am walking alone, maybe I will not enjoy it as much." Another participant stated, "I loved the experience because I am doing something instead of nothing."

The feedback received from the participants helped us to understand how valuable these sessions and projects are. According to Wallace and Pichler (2009), participation provides benefits such as personal fulfillment (Rutenfrans-Stupar et al., 2019). Furthermore, as stated in Objective 2 of the project, the involvement of the participants by letting them influence how the project is executed empowered them.

We consider the photography sessions to have a positive impact on us. Hearing firsthand the participants' personal experiences was an incessant reminder of our desire to be in the social work field. Furthermore, each session had different participants, which allowed us to make it more personalized. Spending time individually with each participant made us appreciate the sessions we were having. We also heard from the participants how special the sessions were, which made us proud of our project development. Hence, we felt strongly motivated to share with society the participants' perspectives by implementing the exhibition.

## 8.2 Evaluation of the photography exhibition

The exhibition was the result of a photography project. As stated in Objective 3, the photos and statements collected during the photography sessions were featured to share the perspectives of the participants with the public. Additionally, the exhibition provided a guest book wherein the visitors may write their thoughts and feelings. As of October 2023, 321 guests from different parts of Finland and the world signed the guestbook and visited the exhibition. Several positive feedback written by the guests included, "Love the pictures. Tells something the eyes cannot see.", "It is a really meaningful project looking from the perspective of homeless people", "Thank you for the eye-opening pictures and little stories", "This really got me thinking", "Absolutely touching exhibition", "Often, we talk about problems in Finland that do not feel like they are real. This was real though.", and "I have never been homeless but in rough times of my life I lived with some of these people. All they need is a bit of support from the community to put their lives together once again."

Lecturers also visited the exhibition, and the feedback received included, "You have captured participants' viewpoint well with pictures and stories. The comments by the visitors were also interesting to read.", "Thank you for this exhibition. Very thought provoking.", and "Amazing and beautifully conducted work. I am very proud of your work."

It is worth mentioning that different staff members of VVA ry visited the exhibition. We received feedback from them such as "It looks great. It really touches.", "Thanks for your project. Great photos." and "I was delighted to see how many good comments it has received, that is impressive! You and the participants have really done good work." As stated in Objective 5, we wanted to collect feedback and learn from it not only from the visitors but also from both participants and stakeholders, which was successfully achieved.

Although the feedback was mostly positive, it is essential to mention that we also received discriminatory feedback. For instance, comments such as "Go home" and "Homelessness in Finland is not a thing" were received. Thus, it is vital to analyze the impact of both negative and positive feedback. Through the mentioned feedback we understand that the need to raise awareness about homelessness to reduce societal stigma is still current.

The photography project and exhibition were highly appreciated not only for spreading the homelessness phenomena in Finland but also for assisting VVA ry in their homelessness work. Furthermore, as stated in Objective 4, the exhibition advertised a fundraising campaign during the entire process. Additionally, the project inspired other organizations abroad. We received an interview request from the Salvation Army EU Centre in Stockholm, Sweden. The online interview commenced on August 10, 2023, via Teams with the Community Informant and Administrative Assistant of the day center. The staff shared about their homelessness work with migrants and motivation to implement a similar project at the organization. As project creators, we shared in detail our expertise regarding the project. The meeting gave the staff insights on how to proceed in the future and implement a project for the homeless migrants in Stockholm.

Sleeping rough in the happiest country in the world: Through the eyes of the homeless migrants in Helsinki, a project that was designed with the purpose of giving an opportunity to the service users of VVA ry. In addition, we wanted to make the participants feel included and empowered by being the main stars of this project. The exhibition, as the product of the photography project, resulted in the spread of public awareness about the homelessness phenomena in Helsinki.

Although awareness cannot be measured, it has been written multiple times in the guestbook that the exhibition made the visitors think, reflect, and realize that homelessness can happen to anyone at any time.

Although we perceive that the project was a success, we deem it necessary to acknowledge improvements that could take place. As mentioned in Chapter 7, since the summer started, we were unable to encounter the participants when the photos were printed. We wanted to maximize their involvement by participating in the arrangement of photos at the exhibition venue. It would have been optimal if we had more time with the participants to involve them in this task as well. Unfortunately, due to the small-scale project time frame, we could not have the participants with us. As discussed with our supervisor, for future projects, this can be planned beforehand.

### 8.3 SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is a tool used to identify both positive and negative aspects of a project. (Spolander and Martin, 2012). By identifying the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, we analyzed the possibilities of the project. We deem it necessary to conduct an evaluation to understand the process made throughout the timeline of the project. Furthermore, we reflected on the challenges of evaluating experiences and mistakes made, if any, for future reference. Below is the table of the identified SWOT analysis associated with the project.

TABLE 9. SWOT analysis of the project.

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Strengths | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High interest with the homelessness phenomena.</li> <li>• Previous studies and experience in project management course.</li> </ul> |
|-----------|---|

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
|               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second time to implement a project with the work-life partner.</li> <li>• Service users are already familiar with us.</li> <li>• Common language spoken with the participants.</li> <li>• Two students are implementing the project.</li> <li>• Project timing coincided with the ideal weather to do photography outdoors.</li> </ul>   |
| Weaknesses    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time-consuming when doing multiple projects.</li> <li>• Multiple tasks for a bachelor's level thesis.</li> <li>• Exhibition schedule coincided when the work-life partner is on holiday.</li> </ul>  |
| Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility for the work-life partner to continue the project.</li> <li>• The photography project and exhibition may inspire other students and organizations to create similar projects.</li> <li>• The photography project encourages physical activity in the form of walking exercise.</li> <li>• The publication of the thesis will increase awareness of the homelessness phenomena.</li> <li>• Acquire additional skills in project management to enhance our professional development.</li> <li>• Organize fundraising campaigns for the work-life partner.</li> </ul> |
| Threats       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photography sessions may trigger the participants when reminiscing about personal experiences.</li> </ul>  |

It can be concluded that by outlining the positive and negative aspects associated with the project, we were able to implement it with minimal challenges. It was evident that the project had various potential, which outweighed the negative factors. Furthermore, the challenges identified gave us the convenience, both individually and as a team, to develop and apply the learned experiences for future projects.

## 9 ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES

Ethical codes of conduct and ethical morals should always be considered when working with people in any context in society (Hardina, 2013). Throughout the process of developing and implementing the project, ethical concerns were identified. Thus, clarifications and reflections on how ethics were considered and taken into account are explained.

The right to life, personal liberty and integrity, freedom of movement, freedom of religion and conscience, freedom of expression, and protection of property were respected. These were observed as written in the Finnish Constitution (1999/731, Sections 6–23). Obtaining consent was made verbally with the participants as agreed with the stakeholder. To protect their privacy, it was ensured that any personal information to be used for the exhibition had been agreed with the participants orally with their consent as part of the ethical recommendations. (Arene, 2020, p. 14.)

Participants of the photography sessions come from various origins. As explained by Green and Carey (2013, pp. 64-66), it is essential to be inclusive of people from different cultures and backgrounds as part of social work. As researchers with migrant backgrounds, we deem it important to offer support to the vulnerable and oppressed, irrespective of ethnicity. In addition, for social issues to be addressed, we see it essential that openness to everybody, regardless of nationality, should be practiced at all times.

According to Costley and Gibbs (2006), caring is essential when participants present their vulnerability and authentic selves. It is vital in the form of trust that goes beyond the positions in the research process. Therefore, the best approach to this, in principle, is to have an open mind free of judgment and empathy. As creators of the project, it is optimal to provide a safe space when dealing with different cases. Furthermore, sensitivity is crucial to ending further social injustice and discrimination when service users come from diverse backgrounds.

Careful considerations must be adhered to when dealing with vulnerable groups. As the core of the action research, participants played an active role. The opportunity to be socially involved was provided to influence how the project was executed. In addition, conducting participatory sessions reduced further social exclusion. Moreover, decisions on handling personal information were respected to protect the anonymity of the participants. (Arene, 2020). Therefore, responsible practices were observed to keep the integrity and transparency of the research process.

The ability to recognize that human experience varies from one person to another is essential. The core values, as stated by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), were followed. The NASW's guide outlines the principles that serve as the foundation of the social work profession, such as respect for the dignity of the person, acknowledgment of the importance of human relationships, and responsible behavior in a trustworthy manner. (NASW, 2023.)

It is worth mentioning that aside from these core values being observed, we recognize that measures should be applied to care for ourselves both professionally and personally. Awareness that as future professionals in the social work field, we carry huge responsibilities not only for the clients but also to ourselves. To apply this, constant communication was practiced between us and amongst the staff of VVA ry if there were concerns professionally related to the project and other issues that may arise that may have an impact on a personal level.

## 10 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Katrina – My interest in homelessness was realized upon reading a research article in Finland wherein it stated the high risk of LGBTIQ+ youth falling into homelessness due to domestic violence. Thereafter, several research studies have been read surrounding the phenomena. In addition, an extensive week of exchange studies in Norway was pursued to learn more about the issue. It was evident that there was a desire to broaden my knowledge surrounding this topic.

Other target groups that became of personal interest during the studies were immigrants, the disabled, LGBTIQ+, and the elderly. Project work has been added to the list after the skills gained from our project management course and the development of our photography project and exhibition as a thesis subject. Moreover, research work is another aspect of the studies which became valuable in my professional and personal development.

Several skills were attained from the beginning until the end of this bachelor's studies. These skills have already been in practice during placements and seasonal employment carried out in the social services field. Needless to say, these shall be applied when I venture into the field as a licensed professional. Learning shall not end and shall be a continuous process personally as there are numerous societal issues that need to be grasped and addressed. As one lecturer mentioned, you cannot save everyone. This may be perceived as accurate yet, if we give the marginalized people our time, we aid them in a different manner. Genuine time given no matter how short will have an impact on the disadvantaged. This was one of the key learning outcomes gained throughout the studies and firsthand experiences with different vulnerable groups. Irrespective of the target group I will be working with in the future, I am certain to convey all the knowledge acquired during my time at Diaconia University of Applied Sciences.

Eduardo - I could start by stating that this project contributed positively to many aspects of my professional development. I consider that the learning acquired through the social services courses had a crucial role in my growth as a future social services professional. If I think back in time, the Eduardo who started the University of Applied Sciences and the one who is finishing it are quite different. Perhaps the one finishing the studies has gained more experience and professional knowledge by facing and overcoming several challenges to endure at this current stage.

Throughout this project, my professional identity developed dynamically from the very beginning, when challenges arose until the current phase. For instance, all the theories and methods analyzed through the last years in class made sense when I applied them in practice with individuals in vulnerable situations. I also believe that openness and rapport were vital to implementing projects with service users of different cultures and achieving positive outcomes. The research, long but didactic, assisted me in understanding how important it is to be familiar with peculiar circumstances when implementing activities. Moreover, I believe that this professional learning process is ongoing, which motivates me and inspires me for future challenges in the social field.

## 11 CONCLUSION

Sleeping rough in the happiest country in the world through the eyes of the homeless migrants in Helsinki small-scale project had an ambition. The ambition of its creators also means a more inclusive society for all. The word that might sound out of context goes beyond our purpose of becoming social service workers and assisting people with fewer opportunities to overcome struggles and life challenges. The ambition we have is related to our determination and hard work to achieve what we aimed at. We once heard in a lecture that we, students, should believe in our ideas when implementing a project as much as we believe in ourselves. At this point, we can finally say that we have certainly done that.

The project described in this report aimed at answering a crucial need to provide an opportunity for people experiencing homelessness to express themselves as they are. Through that, we also intended to positively impact society with the message that homelessness can happen to anyone. Creating such awareness was indeed our purpose. We understand that this project created the awareness targeted far beyond our expectations. Being contacted by an international organization to share our expertise regarding the project is overwhelming.

Organizing a project in which the result was shown in an exhibition format was also challenging and felt demanding. The sessions implemented with our participants required us to have all the knowledge and skills acquired during the Bachelor of Social Services studies at Diaconia University of Applied Sciences. To assist us, applying the Photovoice method was clearly a good choice while working with vulnerable individuals. In addition, the implementation sessions were experiences that we both will remember positively.

This bachelor-level project-oriented thesis helped us dynamically develop several professional competencies and achieve our objectives. Our first and second objectives were to implement individual photography sessions, have a minimum of three participants with migrant backgrounds who are service users of Vailla Vakinaista Asuntoa ry and involve the participants by empowering them to decide

how the sessions were executed. We have implemented individual sessions, and due to our rapport with the service users, we succeeded in having more participants than we had expected. Moreover, sessions appeared to be constructive and beneficial, as one participant stated, "When you give people time, you give people hope. This project you guys have is giving people hope."

Our third objective was to create a photography exhibition to share with the visitors the perspectives of the participants through visuals and captions. We managed to accomplish this by contacting different venues and having a well-known shopping mall to hold the outcome of our project. The fourth objective was to promote a fundraising campaign to support VVA ry during the entire process of the project, and indeed, we succeeded. Their donation account was advertised on our Eyes of Homeless social media channel as well as displayed in the exhibition. The last objective was to collect and learn from the feedback of participants, stakeholders, and exhibition visitors. As previously mentioned, we have received over 300 visitors, most of whom gave feedback on the guestbook.

On a different note, our project could be improved if we had the time and opportunity to include our participants in the specific task of arranging the photos at the exhibition venue. This essential and meaningful part could be our suggestion for future development projects. We also suggest to students and professionals in the social field more involvement of service users in the entire process, not only when the activity is planned and ready to be implemented. Another recommendation for organizations is to take on the challenge of implementing activities with participatory methods. It could assist further projects in gathering participants and encouraging social interactions.

The fact that both of us have been working together since the beginning of our studies and share a mutual trust contributes to the overall achievement of this project. To conclude, we shared with the public perspectives of people who often do not have the choice or opportunity to access resources and share it themselves. It is unfair. Although the outcomes of this small-scale project achieved everything and more than what we aimed at, there is more work to do. As future

social services workers, we feel ready for the upcoming challenges and are motivated to empower people to advocate for themselves.

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, B., & Blinder, S. (2015, August 25). *Who Counts as a Migrant? Definitions and their Consequences*. Migration Observatory Briefing, COMPAS, University of Oxford, UK. Briefing-Who\_Counts\_as\_a\_Migrant.pdf (ox.ac.uk)
- Belcher, J. R. & DeForge, B. R. (2012). *Social Stigma and Homelessness: The Limits of Social Change*. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 22:8, 929-946, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2012.707941>
- Benbow, S., Forchuk, C., Berman, H., Gorlick, C., & Ward-Griffin, C. (2019). *Spaces of Exclusion: Safety, Stigma, and Surveillance of Mothers Experiencing Homelessness*. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research*. 2019;51(3):202-213. doi:10.1177/0844562119859138
- Borisov, B. (2013). *The Bulgarian Roma in Helsinki. The Diverse sub-groups amongst the Bulgarian Roma and their Reasons for Being in Helsinki. A Documentary Film*. (Thesis, Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Degree Program in Social Services). Retrieved from <https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:amk-2013112518138>.
- Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH). (n.d.). *What is Homelessness*. What is Homelessness | The Homeless Hub
- Cheng, Y.-W. (2021). *Sleepless in Taipei: The Application of Photovoice Method to Explore the Major Challenges Perceived by Homeless People Facing Multifaceted Social Exclusion*. *Critical Social Policy*, 41(4), 606–627. <https://doi-org.anna.diak.fi/10.1177/0261018320981849>
- Costley, C., & Gibbs, P. (2006, February). *Researching Others: Care as An Ethic for Practitioner Researchers*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070500392375>
- De Paola, J., & Pirttilä-Backman, A.-M. (2023). *Are We Bad Winners? Public Understandings of the United Nations' World Happiness Report Among Finnish Digital Media and their Readers*. *Public Understanding of Science*, 32(1), 20–39. <https://doiorg.anna.diak.fi/10.1177/09636625221132380>

- Dobson, M. S. (2015). *Successful Project Management: How to Complete Projects on Time, on Budget, and on Target: 4th ed.* AMA Self-Study.
- Dorling, D. & Koljonen, A. (2020). *Finntopia: What We Can Learn from the World's Happiest Country.* Agenda Publishing.
- Finnish Government. (2022, October 13). *Homelessness has Decreased but not Enough – Study to Explore Means to Tackle This.* Ministry of the Environment. [Press Release]. Homelessness has decreased but not enough – study to explore means to tackle this (valtioneuvosto.fi)
- Finnish Immigration Service. (2019, July 16). *Finland's Nationality Act.* Finland's Nationality Act (migri.fi)
- Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK). (2019). *The Ethical Principles of Research with Human Participants and Ethical Review in the Human Sciences in Finland.* The ethical principles of research with human participants and ethical review in the human sciences in Finland (tenk.fi)
- Fowler, T. (2017). *Project Management: Processes and Methodologies.* New York: Library Press
- Green, L., & Carey, M. (2013). *Practical Social Work Ethics: Complex Dilemmas Within Applied Social Care.* Routledge.
- Hannigan, A., O'Donnell, P., O'Keeffe, M., & MacFarlane, A. (2016). *How do Variations in Definitions of "migrant" and their Application Influence the Access of Migrants to Health Care Services?* Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; (Health Evidence Network (HEN) synthesis report 46). HEN Synthesis Report 46: How do variations in definitions of "migrant" and their application influence the access of migrants to health care services? (who.int)
- Hardina, D. (2013). *Interpersonal Social Work Skills for Community Practice.* Springer Publishing Company.
- Horsell, C. (2017). *A Politics of Compassion: Informing a New Social Policy for Homelessness?* *International Social Work*, 60(4), 966–975. <https://doi-org.anna.diak.fi/10.1177/0020872815594228>
- Hugh, S., & Fox, M.S. (2019, September 27). *Homelessness and Open City Data: Addressing a Global Challenge.* Springer Link. [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-13-6605-5\\_2](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-13-6605-5_2)

- Jasinskaja-Lahti, I., Liebkind, K., & Perhoniemi, R. (2006, June 29). *Perceived Discrimination and Well-being: A Victim Study of Different Immigrant Groups*. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 16(4), 267-284. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.865>
- Jauhiainen, J., & Tedeschi, M. (2021). *Undocumented Migrants' Everyday Lives in Finland*. Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-68414-3\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-68414-3_4)
- Kaakinen, J. & Turunen, S. (2021). *Finnish but not yet Finished - Successes and Challenges of Housing First in Finland*. Y-Foundation, Finland. European Observatory on Homelessness. EJM\_15-3\_A5\_v02.pdf (feantsaresearch.org)
- Katisko, M. (2015, June 1). *Homelessness Among Immigrant Youth: Transitions Between Inclusion and Exclusion*. European Observatory on Homelessness. [article-3-61299829772282130320.pdf](https://www.feantsaresearch.org/article-3-61299829772282130320.pdf) (feantsaresearch.org)
- Keene, D. E., Smoyer, A. B., & Blankenship, K. M. (2018). *Stigma, Housing and Identity After Prison*. *The Sociological Review*, 66(4), 799–815. <https://doi-org.anna.diak.fi/10.1177/0038026118777447>
- Lawlor, K.B., & Hornyak, M.J. (2012). *Smart Goals: How the Application of Smart Goals can Contribute to Achievement of Student Learning Outcomes*. *Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning*. Volume 39.
- Lock, D. (2013). *Naked Project Management: The Bare Facts*. United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Martin, V., Charlesworth, J., Henderson, E. (2010). *Managing in Health and Social Care*. Taylor & Francis.
- Ministry of Justice Finland. (n.d.). *Linguistic Rights*. (Linguistic rights - Ministry of Justice (oikeusministerio.fi))
- National Association of Social Workers (NASW). (2023). *Code of Ethics*. Retrieved from Code of Ethics: English (socialworkers.org)
- Nozka, M. (2020, September). *Rethinking Homelessness. Residence and the Sense of Home in the Experience of Homeless People*. *Rethinking Homelessness. Residence and the Sense of Home in the Experience ...*: EBSCOhost

- O'Malley, L. J., & Munsell, S. E. (2020). *PhotoVoice: An Innovative Qualitative Method in Research and Classroom Teaching*. *Educational Research: Theory and Practice*, 31(1), 26-32.
- Phelan, J., Link, B.G., Moore, R.E., & Stueve, A. (1997, December). *The Stigma of Homelessness: The Impact of the Label "Homeless" on Attitudes Toward Poor Persona*. *The Stigma of Homelessness: The Impact of the Label "Homeless" on Attitudes Toward Poor Persons* on JSTOR
- Puurunen, H. (2022, October 17). *People Excluded from Housing Services – Special Measures or Extension of Rights?* [Speech Transcript]. Asunnottomien yön Helsingin 20-vuotistapahtuma.
- Rutenfrans-Stupar, M., Van Der Plas, B., Den Haan, R., Van Regenmortel, T., & Schalk, R. (2019, January 2). *How is Participation Related to Well-being of Homeless people? An Explorative Qualitative Study in a Dutch Homeless Shelter Facility*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10530789.2018.1563267>
- Sannino, A. (2018, October 31). *Counteracting the Stigma of Homelessness: The Finnish Housing First Strategy as Educational Work*. *Counteracting the stigma of homelessness: The Finnish Housing First strategy as educational work* (redalyc.org)
- Sannino, A. (2020). *Enacting the Utopia of Eradicating Homelessness: Toward a New Generation of Activity-Theoretical Studies of Learning*. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 42:2, 163179, DOI: 10.1080/0158037X.2020.1725459
- Savage, M. (2016). *Gendering Women's Homelessness*. *Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies: 16 (2)*, Article 4. doi:10.21427/D7KB0X. <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ijass/vol16/iss2/4>
- Spolander, G., & Martin, L. (2012). *Successful Project Management in Social Work and Social Care: Managing Resources, Assessing Risks and Measuring Outcomes*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Springer, S. (2000, December). *Homelessness: A Proposal for a Global Definition and Classification*. *Habitat International*, 24 (4), 475-484. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0197-3975\(00\)00010-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0197-3975(00)00010-2)
- Statistics Finland. (2022). *Cases of Domestic Violence Against Minors Reported to the Authorities Increased by 6.7 Percent*. Cases of domestic

violence against minors reported to the authorities increased by 6.7 per cent - Statistics Finland

Sullivan, A. A. (2022). *What Does it Mean to be Homeless? How Definitions Affect Homelessness Policy*. *Urban Affairs Review*, 59(3), 728–758. <https://doi-org.anna.diak.fi/10.1177/10780874221095185>

Support Foundation for Probation Services. (2022, November 4). *Towards Home. Photo Exhibition in Stoa, Itäkeskus*. Kohti kotia -valokuvanäyttely Itäkeskuksen Stoassa – Kriminaalihuollon tukisäätiö (kriks.fi)

The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA). (2023, February 10). *Report 2/2023. Homeless People 2022*. Ara > Homelessness in Finland 2022

The Rector's Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (Arene). (2020). *Ethical Recommendations for Thesis Writing at Universities of Applied Sciences*. Ammattikorkeakoulujen maisterikoulutus osaamisen uudistajana ja kansallisena koulutusinnovaationa (arene.fi)

United Nations (UN). (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Universal Declaration of Human Rights | United Nations

Vailla Vakinaista Asuntoa Ry. (n.d.). *No Fixed Abode NGO – Vailla Vakinaista Asuntoa Ry*. In English – Vva ry

Victim Support Finland. (2019). *Hate Crime*. Hate crime - Rikosuhripäivystys (riku.fi)

Wang, C., & Burris, M.A. (1997, June). *Photovoice: Concept, Methodology, and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment*. 10.1177\_109019819702400309.pdf (umich.edu)

Wang, C., Cash, J., & Powers, L. (2000, January). *Who Knows the Street as Well as the Homeless? Promoting Personal and Community Action through Photovoice*. <https://doi-org.anna.diak.fi/10.1177/152483990000100113>

Y-Foundation. (2017). *A Home of Your Own. Housing First and Ending Homelessness in Finland*. a\_home\_of\_your\_own\_low-res\_spreads6069661816957790483.pdf (feantsaresearch.org)

## APPENDIX 1. Photography project flyer



**SURPRISE  
FOR THE  
PARTICIPANTS  
AWAITS**

If you moved to Finland from abroad,  
we would like to invite you to the

# **PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT**

May 22 - June 22, 2023

- You will be the photographer
- You choose where to go in Helsinki
- Take photos of places or things that mean to you
- Transportation ticket is provided (AB zones)
- We will go with you during the photo session
- Your photos will be featured in an exhibition
- You decide if you want your name published
- You decide if you want to be in the photo or not

\*SLEEPING ROUGH IN THE HAPPIEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD: THROUGH THE EYES OF THE HOMELESS MIGRANTS IN HELSINKI IS A PROJECT BY KATRINA & EDUARDO, SOCIAL SERVICES STUDENTS OF DIAK, IN COLLABORATION WITH VVA RY.

## APPENDIX 2. Exhibition flyer

In collaboration with  
**Vailla Vakinaista Asuntoa Ry**

**SLEEPING ROUGH IN THE HAPPIEST COUNTRY  
IN THE WORLD: THROUGH THE EYES OF THE  
HOMELESS MIGRANTS IN HELSINKI**

**PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION**





**5 JULY · 31 JULY 2023  
MALL OF TRIPLA**

**FREE ENTRANCE. OPEN 24/7. 3RD FLOOR,  
NEXT TO TLB BURGERS**

**KATRINA VILLARENTE-FORSSELL &  
EDUARDO UNGARETTI DE CAMPOS VELHO  
DIACONIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES**

**Sponsored by  
Fotoyks, Verkkokauppa & Mall of Tripla**



**SLEEPING ROUGH IN THE HAPPIEST COUNTRY IN THE  
WORLD: THROUGH THE EYES OF THE HOMELESS  
MIGRANTS IN HELSINKI WILL BE SHOWN AT THE MALL OF  
TRIPLA, FREDIKANTERASSI 1 00520 HELSINKI, FINLAND,  
FROM JULY 5TH THROUGH JULY 31, 2023.**


**OUR IDEA OF DEVELOPING THIS PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT  
EMERGED FROM OUR EXPERIENCES OF WORKING WITH THE  
HOMELESS COMMUNITY AT VVA RY. WE FELT THE NEED  
FOR US AS FUTURE SOCIAL SERVICES WORKERS TO  
PROVIDE OUR SOCIETY A POSSIBILITY TO ACKNOWLEDGE  
THE HOMELESSNESS ISSUE AND THE REALITY OF PEOPLE  
THAT ARE OFTEN NOT HEARD OR SEEN IN HELSINKI.**

**THROUGH PARTICIPATORY METHODS, EYES OF HOMELESS  
AIMED TO EMPOWER ITS PARTICIPANTS TO TAKE THEIR  
HANDS ON CAMERAS, BE THE EXHIBITION  
PHOTOGRAPHERS, GUIDE US TO THEIR MEANINGFUL  
PLACES, AND CONVEY THEIR MESSAGE TO ALL OF US  
EXACTLY AS THEY WANT.**


**WE ARE DELIGHTED TO INVITE EVERYBODY, AS YOU ARE,  
TO VISIT OUR PHOTO EXHIBITION, SEE "THROUGH THE  
EYES OF THE HOMELESS PARTICIPANTS" THEIR  
PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES.**

**JOIN THE MISSION TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.**

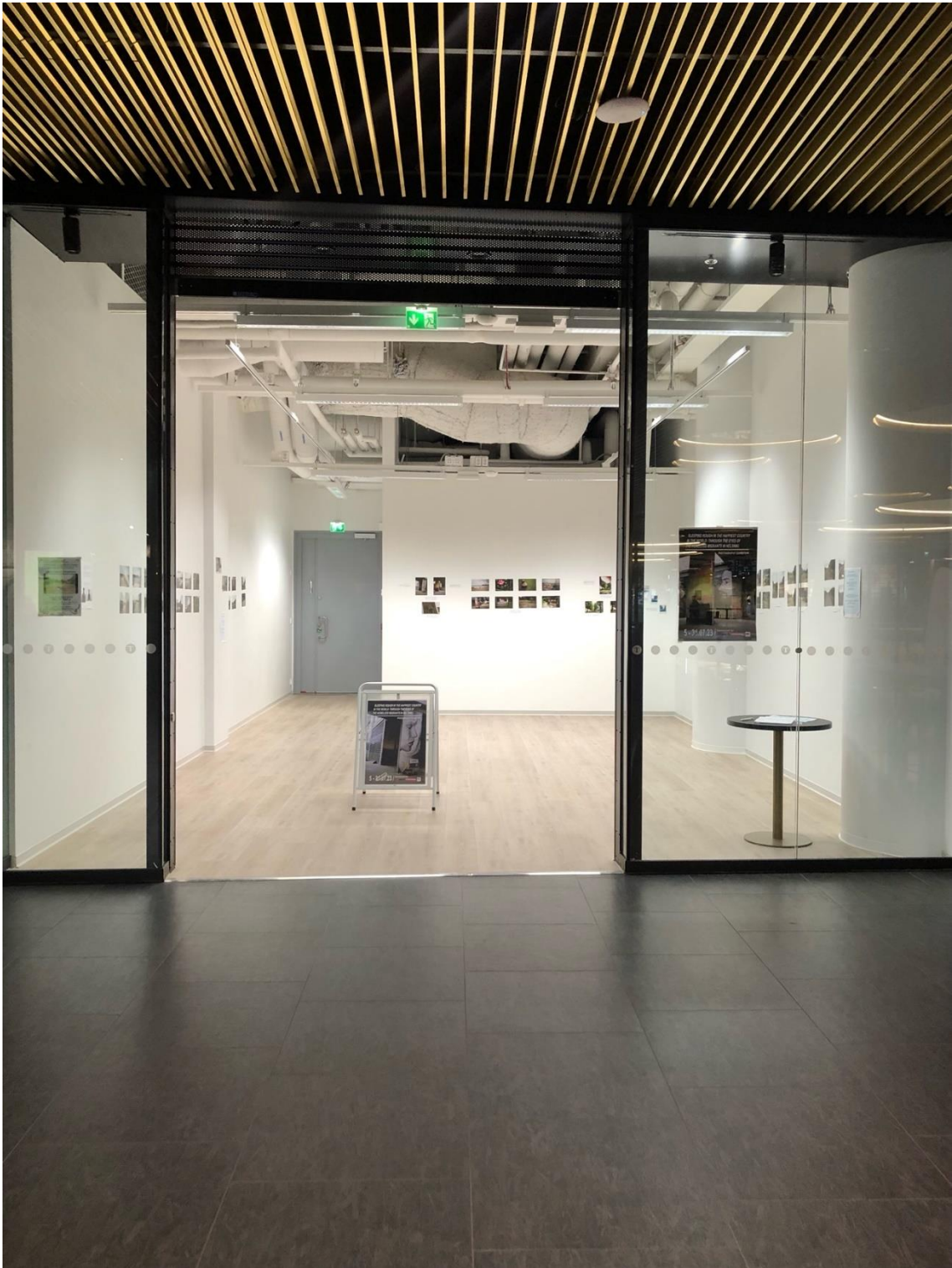
**HOMELESSNESS CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE AT ANY TIME.**



**MUCH LOVE,  
EDUARDO & KATRINA**



APPENDIX 3. Exhibition at the Mall of Tripla



APPENDIX 4. Photovoice samples session 1



About these rocks: Mr. K., shared that this is the place that he used to sleep after have a warm meal at Vailla Vakinaista Asuntoa ry.

That's Vepa, my home. Let's go home.  
MR. K., MOROCCO



I used to Fish in Morocco with my family. MR. K., MOROCCO



## APPENDIX 4. Photovoice samples session 2

First time I went to a Protestant church in Itäkeskus, first time I heard the preach in English, so it was nice, and I saw many Africans.

MR.T., SIERRA LEONE/ITALY



I go to church every Sunday. I go to church to connect my thoughts to God. It's in Finnish but it's ok, it doesn't matter. Doesn't matter what you wear, it's about what's in your heart.

MR.T., SIERRA LEONE/ITALY





Finland is voted the happiest country in the world for 5 years now. I don't think it's true. People are suffering.  
MR.T. SIERRA LEONE/ITALY





About love locks – Do you believe in this? I don't.

MR.T., SIERRA LEONE/ITALY



Even if you apply for jobs, the problem is they never reply.

MR.T., SIERRA LEONE/ITALY



Bridges connects and communicates people, meets unity.  
MR. T. BERRA LEONORITALY



APPENDIX 4. Photovoice samples session 3

You pay lots for restaurant to sit between walls. Who decorates the place? Do you even know? Is it nice? Make your own atmosphere, sit in outside or in a park and see what you want to see.

MR. E., LATVIA/GERMANY



When you give people time you are giving people hope. This project you guys are having are giving people hope.

MR. E., LATVIA/GERMANY

Look it's a straight line to your life, the rest is bullshit.

MR. E., LATVIA/GERMANY



Life is only one way road.

MR. E., LATVIA/GERMANY



From left side life, from right side life, from the middle is pause, no one, peace. Welcome.

MR. E., LATVIA/GERMANY



You work 5 days hating the fact that you need to wait for weekend, or to have a beer after work. But what about these days in the present?  
MR. E., LATVIA/GERMANY

I feel like Vepa's people are in this art. beautiful in one photo but not so beautiful on the other photo, like suffering from inside.  
MR. E., LATVIA/GERMANY



We hope for a better tomorrow but tomorrow might not happen.  
MR. E., LATVIA/GERMANY

## APPENDIX 4. Photovoice samples session 4



There's no end of the world. The world ends when your life ends. If a person tells you that's the end of the world, means that their life is coming to an end but not yours.

MR.T., SIERRA LEONE/ITALY



You see this and it makes you smile.  
MR. S.D., GAMBIA/ITALY

It's a nice statue, he is always smiling. It's giving a smile to people. In africa people smile and greet when see others.  
• MR. S.D., GAMBIA/ITALY





Ok I have clothes and shelter, but I need privacy. Living with 6 other homeless people, I don't sleep properly there. People shouldn't live like this.

MR. S.D., GAMBIA/ITALY



About other homeless in Inaritie – they see our color and they think we are the problem. MR. S.D., GAMBIA/ITALY



I loved the experience. I love taking pictures, walking, and talking. If I'm walking alone maybe I won't enjoy it as much.  
MR.T., SIERRA LEONE/ITALY



Finland is nice if you have a job and an apartment, not when you're homeless.

MR. S.D., GAMBIA/ITALY



10 years from now, I want to have a house. I want to have a vegetable shop in Gambia. You can grow anything there.  
MR. S.D., GAMBIA/ITALY

If I have a house, I would invite you guys and cook African food for you.  
MR.T., SIERRA LEONE/ITALY



About boats & water – I miss Germany so much. I was adopted by a family when I was 16. We would ride a boat and go 10km away.  
MR. S.D., GAMBIA/ITALY



About birds/nature – everyone should love nature.  
MR. S.D., GAMBIA/ITALY



## APPENDIX 5. Description of the photography project

### **SLEEPING ROUGH IN THE HAPPIEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD**

#### **Through the eyes of the homeless migrants in Helsinki An Exhibition**

The idea of developing our bachelor-level thesis as a photography project emerged from our experiences of working with the homeless community at **Vailla Vakinaista Asuntoa ry**. We listened to feelings of exclusion, life challenges and discrimination experienced in Helsinki by several people. Also, we listened to different cases of homelessness which the causes are completely diverse from each other. We felt the need for us students and future social services workers to create something that would provide opportunities for our participants and raise awareness about the homelessness phenomena.

We empowered our participants to be the main stars of the project, take their hands on the cameras donated by **Fotoyks** and **Verkkokauppa** and convey their message to all of us exactly as they want to. To increase social involvement, feelings of belongingness and decision-making, we suggested that their only task was to choose meaningful places for them in Helsinki, bring us with them and show their angles by taking photos as they wish. We visited several spots in individual sessions with participants and listened to untold stories, perspectives, and thoughts about living in the happiest country in the world. Feedbacks were also given, "when you give people time, you give people hope. This project you guys have is giving people hope".

The reality of people that are often not heard or seen in our society is shown at **The Mall of Tripla** from July 5<sup>th</sup> through July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023. **Sleeping rough in the happiest country in the world – through the eyes of the homeless migrants in Helsinki** project aims to deliver the message that homelessness can happen to anyone at any time. We want to thank you all for attending our exhibition, we delighted to have your presence and support towards a more inclusive society.

Feel free to leave your message in our visit book, your feedback is highly appreciated. We hope you have enjoyed the experience of this project as much as we enjoyed developing it. You can also connect with us on the Instagram account [@eyes\\_of\\_homeless](#).

Last but not the least, We would like to thank all the people who supported us during this project. To our Vailla Vakinaista Asuntoa ry family, who welcomed us with open arms and made us always feel at home. To our families for all the love and understanding. To our sponsors, Fotoyks, Verkkokauppa and Mall of Tripla for believing in the project goals. To our friend Fabu Pires for the valuable assistance.

Much love,

Eduardo Ungaretti de Campos Velho & Katrina Villarente-Forsell  
[eduardocamposvelho@yahoo.com.br](mailto:eduardocamposvelho@yahoo.com.br) [k\\_villarente@yahoo.com](mailto:k_villarente@yahoo.com)



BRAZIL

Also migrants.



PHILIPPINES

## APPENDIX 6. Fundraising campaign for VVA ry

**DONATIONS AND SUPPORT**

**YOU CAN HELP THE HOMELESSNESS WORK OF  
VAILLA VAKINAISTA ASUNTOA RY BY DONATING THROUGH:**

- **MOBILEPAY TO: 50144**
- **BY TEXT MESSAGE WITH THE AMOUNT OF CHOICE:  
DONATION AMOUNT (1, 5, 10, 20, 30, OR 40 EUROS)  
AND THE TEXT "HOME"  
(e.g. 5 HOME or 30 HOME) TO NUMBER 16588**
- **VVA DONATION ACCOUNT:  
FI95 8000 1770 5353 01 DABAFIHH**

**Fundraising permit no: RA/2021/964.  
The collection permit is valid until further notice in Finland,  
with the exception of the Åland Islands.**

**For monetary donations, cooperation proposals, and sponsorships,  
please contact:  
tel. 044 773 4700, erja.morottaja@vvary.fi**

**FYI: VVA RY IS CLOSED IN JULY**