



Benefits of an Intensive Study Period in an International Project

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This thesis was made for an ERASMUS+ project: "NEEDS-based education and studies in societal security". Main goal of the project was to create a common societal security culture in the Baltic Sea States by bringing together high education institutes, practitioners, and experts. Object of this thesis was to find out what were the benefits of an intensive study period arranged in Finland, towards the goals of the whole project.

Societal security is a new field of science and there is not one specific definition that is agreed upon. There are differences around the Baltic Sea States on how to approach the issue. Everyone agrees that risk management, crisis management, and resilience are part of the whole concept of societal security. Qualitative research was conducted by interviewing teachers, practitioners, and experts, and via a survey for all the students who attended the intensive study week.

Everyone involved thought the project was important and the study week in Finland was a success. Intensive study period was a good method to bring together all the project partners, and it started creating a community from different countries around the Baltic Sea. Results of this thesis was used to plan the next intensive study week in Latvia and helped the project to achieve its goals.

Keywords: Crisis management, resilience, risk management, societal security

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1 Introduction

This thesis is made for NEEDS-based education and studies in societal security -project. It is a multinational ERASMUS+ project that tries to bring together higher education institutes, experts, and practitioners in their respective fields. The goal is to identify main areas related to societal security, and specifically resilience, where there is a need for more knowledge. By accomplishing this, the higher education institutes would be better equipped to educate the future generation of experts and they would be prepared for their tasks straight from the beginning of their careers.

The main goal of this thesis was to find out how the intensive study period (ISP) in Finland helped to gain the overall goals of the project. There was a weeklong ISP in Porkkalanniemi, in Kirkkonummi, and approximately 35 people attended. There were 19 students from at least 4 countries and the rest of the attendees were teachers, experts, and practitioners.

The beneficiaries of the thesis was the whole NEEDS-project, and especially the organizers of the next intensive study period. Results of this thesis helped in focusing the objects of the next ISP, which took place in Latvia, in fall 2022.

The research was conducted by interviewing the practitioners and teachers, and via survey for the students.

2 NEEDS-based education and studies in societal security

It was recognized that there is a need for better and stronger connection between Higher Education Institutes, experts, and practitioners in the field for societal security in the Baltic Sea Region. For this reason, a proposal was initiated in a seed-funded project. A preliminary mapping and survey were launched to find out what was the current situation. A need and desire for more emphasis on education related to 'resilience' in the Baltic Sea Region was identified. Project partners realized that it is important to prioritize to enhance the current learning materials so the focus would be more on societal security as well as to increase transnational exchanges by creating an online community (NEEDS Leaflet 2021).

Project leader is the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Secretariat. Other partners are Hamburg Fire and Rescue Service (Germany), Laurea University of Applied Sciences (Finland), Main School of Fire Services (Poland), Riga Technical University (Latvia), Swedish Defence University, UiT The Arctic University Norway, and Union of the Baltic Cities; Safe Cities Commission (represented by the Liepaja Municipal Police - Latvia) (NEEDS Leaflet 2021).

Strengthening societal security for the long run was one of the main goals of the project. The way to accomplish this is by preparing future leaders with proper information and decision-making tools to cope with the future challenges, and this can be done with the help of experts and practitioners in the field of safety and security. Societal security is interdisciplinary, multi-level and transnational in nature. That's why it is important to look at events that are happening from a broader perspective than just one's own field of expertise or geographical location. By looking at events that has disrupted the functioning of society, one can be better prepared and more resilient towards that kind of events in the future (NEEDS Leaflet 2021).

Crises do not respect state borders and it is an important part of future skills-set to be able to work internationally. This skills-set needs to be developed; it doesn't appear without practice. Baltic Sea Region has several societal security challenges that countries share, and cooperation must be practiced, and proper channels developed before crisis happen. NEEDS project brings together people from many different countries during the intensive study periods and an online community is created where transnational exchanges continue after the project ends (NEEDS Leaflet 2021).

NEEDS project started at 1st of September 2020 and ended at 31st of August 2023. During the project there was transnational project meetings (TPM) twice a year and all the partners took part in these meetings. Four intensive study periods (ISP) were planned to take place in Norway, Finland, Latvia, and Poland, but Covid Pandemic effected these plans. Norway's ISP was held online, and Poland was cancelled (NEEDS Project application for Erasmus+ 2020).

3 Societal security

During the Cold War, International Relations -studies focused mainly on the security of states. The threats towards states' sovereignty are mainly of a military nature, and when the Cold War ended, these threats decreased, and this opened room for the emergence of non-military conceptions of security (Roe 2005, 42).

The concept, societal security, was first introduced by Barry Buzan in *People, States and Fear* in 1991. There were others before Buzan, who had written about expanding the conception of security to include the likes of resources, environment, and demographic issues, but Buzan was the one who came up with the term 'societal security' (Roe 2005, 42).

According to Roe (2005, 42), Buzan (1991) introduced a five-dimensional approach towards security, and societal security was just one of the sectors that also included: military, political, economic, and environmental concerns. Societal security referred, in this context,

to the sustainable development of traditional patterns of language, culture, religious and national identities, and customs of states (Buzan 1991, according to Roe 2005, 42).

It was recognized, that Buzan ‘widened’ the international security thinking, but he did still consider military sector to be the most important, and the threats in the military sector were primary. Some scholars argued that it was not enough simply to introduce more sectors of state security, but there was a need to move away from state-centric focus. There was a need for other referent objects of security (Roe 2005, 42).

Wæver et al. argue that societal securities’ importance towards states sovereignty has increased. Wæver claims that Buzan’s five-dimensional approach had become untenable in post-Cold War Europe and proposed a reconceptualization: a duality of state and societal security. Societal security is still a sector of state security, but it is also a referent object of security in its own right (Wæver, Buzan, Kelstrup & Lemaitre 1993, according to Roe 2005, 43).

In this reconceptualization survival is a key element in both, state security and societal security. If a state loses its sovereignty the state will not survive, and if a society loses its identity, it will not survive as a society. Therefore, the threats to society’s identity are what societal security is all about (Roe 2005, 43).

There are many states that have more than one society within their state’s borders, and many societies that can’t fit within the borders of a current state. For example, the Palestinians don’t have a state of their own, and the Kurds don’t fit within a state’s borders. If a society’s identity is threatened it can affect the security of a state or many states, depending on the society (Roe 2005, 43).

These first publications on societal security -studies came from the Copenhagen School of security studies, and they brought some debate from other scholars in the field of international relations -studies. There were questions asked about how to define a society and its identity. How does a society differ from social groups? Wæver in the beginning defined society as a community that has a collective identity as simply as ‘what enables the word we to be used’ (Roe 2005, 44).

A “we” identity leaved a lot of room for debate, even when it didn’t include social groups. There was debate on what kind of communities are considered society, in the sense of societal security. Are all ethnic groups considered a society, or do they have to be ‘politicized’? What about religious groups? A cohesion of sorts arose after some debate (Roe 2005, 44-45). Wæver concluded, that “the main units for analysis for societal security are politically significant ethno-national and religious entities” (Wæver, according to Roe 2005, 45).

A second version of societal security was introduced in Nordic functionalist security studies in the late 1990s and early 2000s. This version was not concentrated on preserving identity, instead, it focused on the transnational protection of interdependent infrastructure. It was all about preserving functions that are vital for a society to keep operating the way it should be, even under duress. This way of thinking became popular in the Nordic countries amongst scholars, practitioners, and policy makers (Larsson & Rhinard 2021, 10).

There were differences between the Nordic countries on the adaptation of societal security. All the countries started using same terms such as crisis management, emergency preparedness, war preparedness, and resilience in relation with societal security, at least to some extent. After a while, Finland started talking about ‘comprehensive security’, instead of societal security. Some countries, for example Sweden, started talking about ‘total defense’ (Larsson & Rhinard 2021, 14-15).

There are some issues with translation from the Scandinavian languages to English. All the Scandinavian languages have just one word for safety/security, and some words that are used consistently within a country, i.e., *samfunnssikkerhet* in Norway, gets a different meaning when translated to English, depending on the context it is used in. This brings challenges of its own to the conversation (Larsson & Rhinard 2021, 15-16).

As shown before, there are different approaches to societal security, varying between countries and academics. It was important for the NEEDS-project to define the meaning of societal security within this project:

- “to secure and maintain **critical societal values, functions and services** (including trust, communication, critical infrastructure, health and medical, financial and economic, governance and civic services, law and order, education, democracy and human rights, national sovereignty, and environment)
- by focusing efforts to **identify, eliminate and reduce risks, threats, and vulnerabilities** and by promoting meaningful and **resilient processes, decisions, strategies, structures, policies and measures (comprehensive, systematic and institutionalized approach)**
- the responsibility of the individual, community and civic groups, local/national/regional governing organizations and authorities, as well as businesses and companies (**whole-of-society**)
- not national in origin, scope or breadth and thus demands a **transnational and cross-sectoral approach and cooperation** despite differences (**cross-boundary**)”

(NEEDS-project definition of societal security, Canvas platform, 2022).

3.1 Risk Management

Risk is an effect of uncertainty on a desired outcome. It causes deviation from the expected results. The deviation can be positive, negative, or both (SFS-ISO 31000:2018, 6).

Usually, risk is considered as something that has a negative outcome on the function that is observed. It can also be looked like as an uncertainty on objectives. The later way of looking at risks is highlighted in the case of new risks when you don't have enough information to evaluate the size of the risk correctly (Heikkilä & Lanne 2016, 5).

Risk management is supposed to create and protect value. It should be integrated in the daily functions of an organization. To get consistent and comparable results, it needs to be structured and comprehensive. Risk management process must be dynamic, inclusive and it needs to be done with the best available information. Human and cultural factors must be considered, and the process should be iterative (SFS-ISO 31000:2018, 8-9).

Risk management has its roots in process industry and many of its methods have evolved to work in that environment. Work itself, working environment and the whole world has changed in the last decades and all the professions are changing all the time. On top of the known risks there are new risks emerging from the constant change, the global phenomenon, world economic situation and threats from outside (Heikkilä & Lanne 2016, 8).

The known risks are events that has happened before, and they happen somewhat frequently and there is information about the reasons behind these events. Depending on the quality and amount of the information behind the reasons these events occur you can calculate the probability of these events. Most often there is not enough information to be sure of the probability statistically speaking so there are different amounts of uncertainty to be considered in risk evaluation (Heikkilä & Lanne 2016, 8).

The quality and amount of the information on risks may depend on the whole risk evaluation process and tools, or there might be human reasons behind it. The right information might not reach the evaluator, some matters are not considered important, the information the risk specialist has is old and not valid anymore, or there are psychological reasons behind the distortion of the information. People tend to think, that events that one doesn't have knowledge of doesn't happen at all or they just don't see matters or accept matters outside of their expertise (Heikkilä & Lanne 2016, 8-9).

These are the reasons why risk evaluation is usually done in a group. This way it is more probable that there is enough versatile information. Group work does bring its own challenges: communication issues, building trust within the group and possible equality

problems. Group work -based risk assessment has proved to be effective when evaluating known risks. The challenges must be considered when assessing the certainty of risk evaluations' results (Heikkilä & Lanne 2016, 9).

The usual risk assessment processes have its limitations when new and emerging risks are considered. There just isn't enough information on developing new technologies, for example, to conduct a proper risk assessment by using the methods developed for process industry (Heikkilä & Lanne 2016, 9).

New methods and new ways of thinking must be developed to manage the changing environment where risk management is conducted now a days. Different risks should be evaluated more together, what kind of effects they have combined and how they interact with each other. Information gathering needs to be expanded and it must be versatile. Layman information can support expert information, when its gathered and used correctly. The circle of people who take part in risk assessment must be widened. Especially when identifying and assessing new and emerging risks new methods, creativity, imagination, and intuition must be used to get the best results (Heikkilä & Lanne 2016, 9).

When conducting risk management, an organization must acknowledge that it is impossible to identify every possible risk and event that may cause risks. One must know the limitations of information at hand and the ability to assess every possible scenario that may happen in the future. This is why preparing for the unknown and crisis management as part of the preparation are vital (Heikkilä & Lanne 2016, 9).

3.2 Crisis Management

Crisis has a strong connection to risk and there are many ways to define risk. Many crises are simply risks that come true. But that is too simple a definition. Many risks don't cause crisis even if they come true and many crises develop without an identified risk (Pursiainen 2020, 51).

Crisis is something negative that happens to a person, group, organization, culture, society, or the whole world. It is a phase of disorder in the normal development of a system. Action must be taken so the threat doesn't materialize, and normal development can continue (Boin, Hart, Stern & Sundelius 2005, 2).

There are different kinds of crises. Natural disasters, conflicts, man-made accidents, international terrorism, economic and political crises, just to name a few. Crisis can threaten peoples' health and safety. It can shake the fundamentals of a society and its core values and functions (Boin etc. 2005, 2-3).

There is typically an urgency related to crises. For example, a hurricane or an earthquake evokes a deep sense of crisis. A serious threat that has a horizon way in the future doesn't induce a widespread sense of crisis. Climate change is a good example of this. Political leaders don't put too much thought on crisis that has a horizon so far that it exceeds their political life expectancy (Boin etc. 2005, 3).

In a crisis, uncertainty is always present. It is in the nature and the potential consequences of the threat. What is happening? How bad will it be? And the crucial question: What can we do? What happens when we select one option? Is it the right choice? Uncertainty is also present in other factors of a crisis. How will people react? Will they follow instructions or are there going to be panic and irrational behavior (Boin etc. 2005, 3-4).

The ways to manage crisis relates closely to risk management. Crisis management cycle is a practical way to look at the essential factors and phases. Although a crisis is a period that differs from normal developments of a system, crisis management extends in normal situation. That's why the cycle constructs from at least three different phases: time before, during, and after crisis. These are usually divided to risk assessment, prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and learning (Pursiainen 2020, 55).

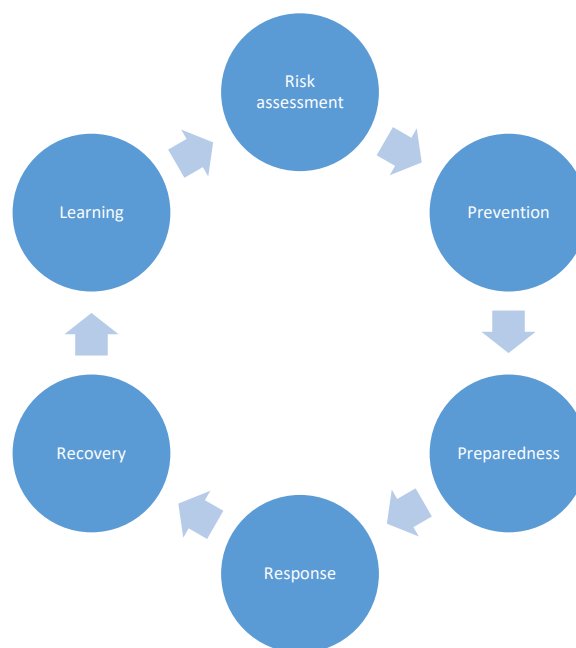


Figure 1. Crisis management cycle (Pursiainen 2020, 55).

3.2.1 Risk assessment

Crisis management cycle is a simplified model. It might appear that crisis management is straightforward and is structured by consecutive events and actions that comes after another,

but it is dynamic, interdependent actions and phenoms that are strongly related to another and often happens at the same time (Pursiainen 2020, 55).

Risk assessment can be seen as a foundation for crisis management cycle's next phases and especially prevention and preparedness lean on it heavily. Different organizations conduct risk assessment differently and there is a strong scientific base for this field of expertise, and it is heavily standardized. The most known is the International Organization for Standardization's ISO 31000 - risk management standard (Pursiainen 2020, 56).

3.2.2 Prevention

Risk assessment should end in a list of risks that needs to be prevented. Not all risks can be prevented, and that's why prevention, in this context, also includes mitigation. There are many different strategies on how to mitigate risks. One is to decrease the probability of the risk, and other is to effect on the outcome of the risk. You can also divide the risk with multiple partners, for example with insurances (Pursiainen 2020, 57).

3.2.3 Preparedness

If a serious risk can't be prevented it has to be prepared for. Preparedness is about assuming that crisis happen, and you get ready for it. It is about how to maintain the ability to perform in crisis. This usually includes some kind of preparedness planning, getting the proper skills and equipment, and testing how everything works by stress testing or drills. Literature acknowledges different areas of preparedness planning, for example decision making, coordination, and crisis communication. It also cautions on preparedness delusion: it is impossible to draft a plan that covers every possible scenario. The focus must be on preparing instructions on how to improvise under crisis. Planning can't be too detailed or strict (Pursiainen 2020, 58-59).

3.2.4 Response

In the beginning of a crisis, the crisis needs to be "framed". It is important, and sometimes difficult, to realize that a crisis is happening. Different belief systems and uncertainty can cause that even an obvious crisis isn't recognized as a crisis. This leads to delays on responding to the crisis, and even a small delay may be critical. The first signals of a crisis should be recognized from the overall noise, because there are always signals (Pursiainen 2020, 59-60).

Crisis decision making requires a crisis organization. In theory, this should be pre-planned, but reality shows that when a crisis erupts the plans go down the toilet. This is why it is more important to establish a core group that operates in crisis and use experts of specific fields that supplement the group. Before, it was considered a good practice, that during crisis

decision making was focused to a very few individuals. Now a days, it is considered better, that decision making is open and the unit that makes decisions includes various point of views that contradict each other, and the best option is chosen (Pursiainen 2020, 60).

Crisis communication is a big part of crisis management. It is multidimensional and includes many different layers and operatives. The most visible part of crisis communication is between the decisionmakers and the media. The media will distribute the message to the public, but they also take part on defining the crisis by making their own interpretations and threat assessment. Media also creates time pressure and the feel of uncertainty. If crisis communication fails, it can create a communications crisis besides the real crisis. There are a lot of studies on what kind of a crisis communications strategy is best suited for a specific type of a crisis, but the main rule is: 'Tell everything, tell it quickly and tell the truth' (Pursiainen 2020, 60-61).

3.2.5 Recovery

Recovery, in crisis literature, is not studied very much. It is often referred to in the context of planning rebuilding, and that is part of preparedness. But this might be a good thing. Many researchers (McEntire 2015, Watters 2014, Varghese 2002, Runyan 2006) say, that planning recovery ahead of a crisis is vital for succeeding in recovery (Pursiainen 2020, 61).

Because of the concepts resilience and crisis resilience becoming so popular has recovery become an important phase of the crisis. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction defines resilience as an ability to resist hazards, adapt to, and recover and restore essential functions. This is why proper crisis management and resilience goes hand in hand. Both have functions in times before, during, and after crisis (Pursiainen 2020, 61).

Figure 3 paints a picture of 5 different system's (ex. EU, sovereign state, a city, a company, a group, a person) crisis strategies. It is an application of a so-called resilience triangle, that has been used by many researchers before (Bruneau et al. 2003, Chang & Shinozuka 2004, McDaniels et al. 2007, Wang & Blackmore 2009, Dessavre et al. 2016, Hosseini et al. 2016, Pantelli et al. 2017) (Pursiainen 2020, 61-62).

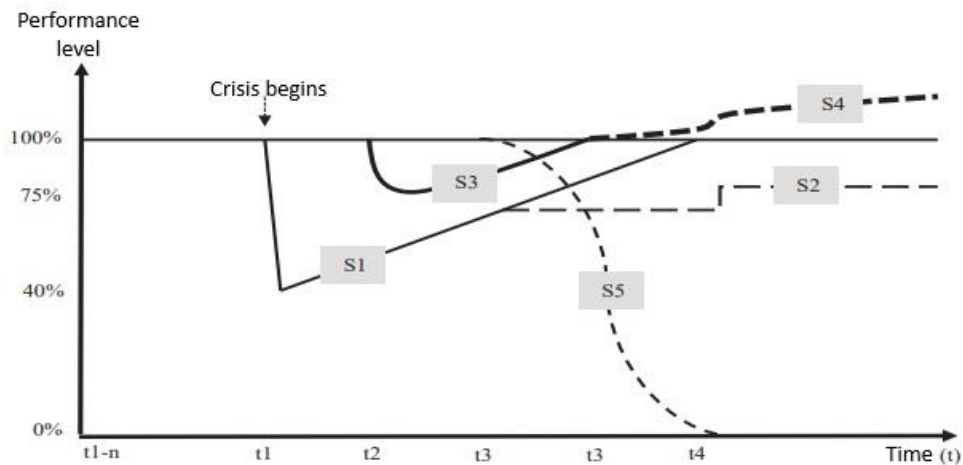


Figure 2. Resilience triangle and 5 strategies (Pursiainen 2020, 62).

5 systems are facing the same threat, and all have different strategies. The horizontal axis is time, and the vertical axis is performance level. The smaller the triangle, the better the crisis resilience. Strategy 1 (S1) crumbles first under crisis and performance level collapses to under 50%, and it takes a long time to recover to the same level where it was before crisis. S2 is an even worse strategy, and it never fully recovers from the crisis. S3 is a better strategy, and it has invested in preventing a crisis, responding to it, and recovering quickly. The best version is S4, it does the same as S3, but recovers to an even better performance level than it was before the crisis. S5 can handle the crisis the longest, but when the system's resilience breaks, it will never recover from it (Pursiainen 2020, 62).

3.2.6 Learning

Learning takes place on every phase of the crisis cycle, but learning after the crisis can be thought of as a phase of its own. Learning is either fast and simple or slow and profound. The first is basically learning from mistakes and adjusting procedures, as the latter represents learning at the level of goals and values (Pursiainen 2020, 62).

Learning from crisis is usually seen as a three-phase process. The experiences must be identified first, then learn from them, and then the lessons learnt must be institutionalized. An individual's learning can develop into collective learning, and this leads to organizational learning, and then it's not dependent on possible changes in personnel (Pursiainen 2020, 62-63).

Sometimes learning after crisis doesn't take place. In complex organizations, the friction within the system can prevent change from happening. Sometimes the lessons learnt doesn't

fit in a larger political concept, or within the values and views of the decision makers (Pursiainen 2020, 63).

3.3 Resilience

The English word resilience has its roots in the 17th century, and it comes from a Latin word *resiliens*, that means recovering or recuperating. The term resilience was used primarily in the field of materials, specifically textiles and metal, to describe the flexibility and elasticity of a material. Theoretical ecologist Crawford Holling (1973) is the one who made the term popular outside of material sciences. Holling used the term to describe how a system adapts to change coming from outside (Pursiainen 2023, 30).

Eventually, the concept of resilience was used in every field of life where something, usually unwanted, can happen. Resilience is the product of researchers and the political field realizing and accepting a new paradigm. Unlike conventional risk management, resilience acknowledges the inevitability of negative events happening in more and more complex systems (Pursiainen 2023, 31).

Resilience is used now-a-days on every field of study. There are financial, technological, ecological, psychological, organizational, and societal resilience, just to name a few. Resilience is multidimensional and different fields overlap each other (Pursiainen 2023, 31).

In the field of societal resilience, there is no consensus, and probably can never be, on what sudden threats and slowly creeping change one should be resilient against. Societal resilience and community resilience are also sometimes used as alternative concepts, and sometimes they are only different levels of the analysis. Often there is overlapping within the discussion and the terms that are used. Regional resilience and urban resilience, for example, have a lot in common with organizational resilience and economical resilience (Pursiainen 2023, 31).

Researchers look at the same topic from different perspectives. Administration and organization researchers look at resilience to be a matter of politics and local government's ability to increase society's preparedness against unwanted events. Sociologists see community's socio-economic qualities, like education; employment; and age structure of the population, as the factors that make communities resilient. Urban planners see resilience as sustainable community planning, that emphasizes on preventative building against the consequences of a catastrophe (Pursiainen 2023, 31-32).

Resilient organization can adapt to challenging circumstances as well as recognize possible risks and prevent them from happening. It is not only actions that take place during or after crisis. Resilience is a potential that is built before the unexpected happens. It is an ability to anticipate and adapt to the environment (Pursiainen 2023, 34).

In organizational studies there are two main terms that are used: reactive and anticipatory resilience. Reactive resilience prepares for the future by making the current system more resilient against change, as an organization that builds anticipatory resilience accepts the inevitability of change and tries to create a system that can adapt when necessary. These two different approaches don't exclude each other, instead both should be implemented in resilience strategy (Pursiainen 2023, 34-35).

Stephanie Ducheck introduced her model in 2019, that combines three commonly mentioned parts of organizational resilience: anticipation, coping and adaptation. Anticipation is about risk identification and preparedness. Coping is all about crisis management, trying to find the best solutions for surviving the crisis with minimal damage. Adaptation is about learning from the crisis and making necessary changes. All these phases include tasks that need to be executed and it is important to budget resources for every task (Pursiainen 2023, 35).

There are many different definitions of resilience. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (2024) defines it like this: "The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management."

4 Research

The main goal of this thesis was to find out how the intensive study period (ISP) in Finland helped to gain the overall goals of the project. To accomplish the goals, the ISP should produce useful results from all the participants, and this thesis is a way to collect the results so the project partners can make modifications if necessary.

The research question of this thesis is: How does the intensive week in Finland contribute towards the overall goals of the NEEDS-based education and studies in societal security project? To answer this question, I conducted qualitative research.

The intensive study period in Finland was held in 1.5.2022-7.5.2022 at Porkkalanniemi, Kirkkonummi. I attended the ISP on Thursday and Friday, the 5th and 6th of May. I used semi-structured interviews and a survey as methods to gather information. These two methods were the best way to gather as much information as possible during the time I was at the ISP. There was no time to interview everyone, I wasn't at the ISP long enough to conduct an observational research, focus group interviews, or any other method (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 72-73).

8 teachers and practitioners were interviewed during the ISP and two project workers online afterwards. Survey was conducted for the students and all 19 answered. There were themes in both, the questionnaire, and the interviews. These themes were teaching methods, personal gains from the ISP, and the importance of the whole project. The interview questions are appendix 1 and the questionnaire is appendix 2.

4.1 Semi-structured interviews

The interviews were conducted by using the guidelines of a semi-structured interviews. There was a set of questions for the teachers and a bit different set of questions for the practitioners. The order of the questions was not the same in all interviews. The idea was to let the person who was interviewed speak freely on the topics that came to mind and the role of the interviewer was to make sure that all the questions was covered at some point (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2022, 46-47).

There were aspects of ‘theme interviews’, Finnish term *teemahaastattelu*, that doesn’t exist in other languages. It is based on Merton’s, Fisk’s, and Kendall’s method of focused interview, that was introduced in 1956. The interviews usually followed themes (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2022, 47-48). I used the questions as a baseline and expanded the conversation further, depending on the interviewee’s experiences and knowledge.

Focus on the interviews was, to gather information on how the issues that are taught in the ISP relate to the experiences of the experts and practitioners from the field. The teachers were asked about their teaching methods they use in the ISP, and how those methods work in an online environment. Teachers and practitioners were also asked for their personal gains from the ISP and the whole project.

All 7 interviews in the ISP were conducted the same way. The room where the interview was held was the same and all the interviews was recorded with an audio recorder and a camera. All but one was an individual interview. In one interview there was two persons interviewed at the same time. Two interviews were done online in Teams after the ISP and recorder.

4.2 Survey

The survey’s main object was to collect opinions about the teaching methods that was used in the ISP and methods that were used in the online environment before coming to the ISP, and what the students had gained from taking part on the ISP. One of the objects of the whole project was to establish an online learning environment and I wanted to know what kind of teaching methods the students of this ISP thought were the best for online studying.

There were eleven questions in the questionnaire and one of them was depending on the answer to the previous question, if one answered yes, they got to explain their choice. Two of

the questions had multiple choices and they were about teaching methods. In these two questions I used a 5-point Likert scale (Valli 2018, 92). Answering options were very useful, useful, ok, not so useful, and not useful. One could choose to answer the same for multiple methods, and the idea was to gather information on what teaching methods were considered best suited in their opinion. Rest of the questions were open.

1. How useful was this method for your learning? *

	not useful	not so useful	ok	useful	very useful
Individual reflections (portfolio, online course)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workshops (i.e. mindmaps, SWOT, recommendations)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Practical exercises (youth and security scenario, tabletop exercise)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expert lectures/panels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Study buddy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 3. First question of the questionnaire.

Open questions were related to the questions of the interviews, and the survey was the best way to gather the information from the participants, because of time limitations. The survey was done in the ISP, and there were about an hour scheduled for it and the teachers of the ISP monitored it. It was done in Microsoft Forms, and the participants were able to answer it with either a smartphone or a laptop (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 72-73).

5 Results

Results from the interviews were in line with the results of the survey. All the participants had a unified understanding of societal security, and everyone involved thought they gained personally from the ISP. Two of the interviewees said, that the ISP was like the whole project in a lot smaller scale, and the results showed that the project was going to the right direction.

5.1 Interviews

All the interviewees shared the same values and thinking of societal security. Societal security wasn't that familiar a concept before the project for many. Only a few teachers were aware of societal security and none of the practitioners before the project. They knew of the topics that are included in societal security, but not as a whole.

All the practitioners gained knowledge from the ISP. They said that they realized they were using some of the methods in their work already but didn't know the theory behind them. They considered that they learned new valuable methods for evaluating different situations in real life and thought that they helped the students with insight from their experiences of real-life situations. They said that the ISP broadened their perspective and considered it a very useful learning experience for them, and it would be a great experience for every practitioner.

The teachers considered the ISP to have been a particularly good experience for them and a validation that the project was going to the right direction. As an experience, the ISP in Porkkalanniemi was a very wholesome and intense, and impossible to replicate online as such. The teaching goals can be achieved online, but the experience would not be the same. In an online environment the group dynamics are very different and the bonding that happens during an ISP in location, doesn't happen online.

All the teachers considered what teaching method would be ideal for this group and this environment and the topic they were teaching. During the week, they learned from each other and maybe adjusted their methods to serve the purpose better. Some teachers thought that the methods they used in the ISP would work the same way online, but others would have to change a method for online environment.

Teachers have different ways to make sure their teachings are valid. One works in the field she teaches, and at least two teaches courses for experts of their fields of knowledge and stays in touch with the practitioners that way. One teacher uses expert lecturers for the substance of the topic.

Everyone thought that the project was important, and the ISP was basically testing the concept of the project in miniature scale. The project's product will be an online course and community, and at the ISP everyone got validation that the concept works. Bringing together high education institutes, teachers, practitioners, and students, everyone learned, and a common societal security culture was created.

5.2 Survey

All the students thought that societal security is important, and the ISP was a good experience for them. There were a few clear favorites amongst the teaching methods that was used.

1. How useful was this method for your learning? (0 piste)

[Lisätietoja](#)

■ not useful ■ not so useful ■ ok ■ useful ■ very useful

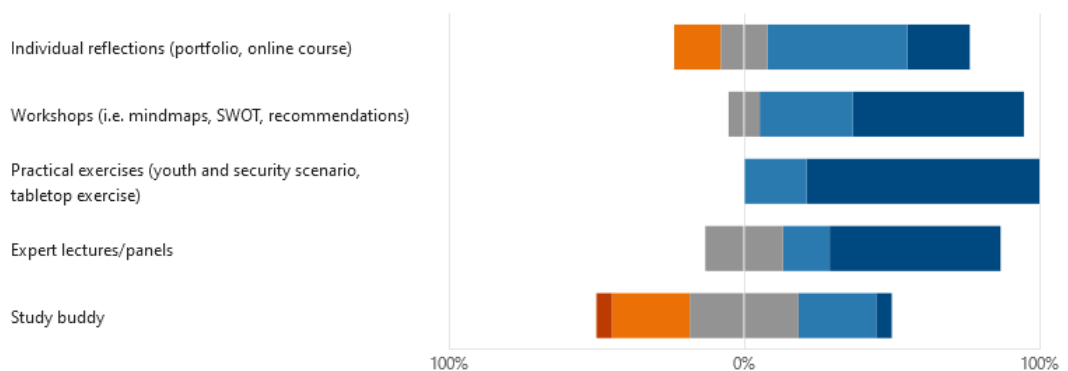


Figure 4. Results of the first question

The first question was about teaching methods and how useful the students found the methods used in the ISP. The most useful were practical exercises, and the next two were workshops and expert lectures/panels. Study buddy divided opinion the most.

The second question (Figure 5) was an open one, and it was a follow up for the first, asking to explain the reasons why some methods were better than the others. Feedback was mainly positive, and most of the teaching methods worked well for this group.

I think by putting to life the things we have had lectures about, read or written down was very useful because it feels meaningful and is easier to understand.
I think the workshops were great practical ways to do the work, but study buddy and portfolios in my opinion were unnecessary
Portfoliomaking was not so useful because we really didn't have time to do it well.
I felt that the practical oriented methods was of more interest than explicitly theoretical concepts.
Studybuddy stuff was awkward for me. Mindmaps are boring and over used.
Scenario training and expert lectures provide more insight how crisis are managed in real life and also compliment knowledge you can learn from literature sources.
The practical methods were interesting and gave a perspective look of how it really happens in real life

Figure 5. Few quotes from the answers from Forms.

Questions 3 and 4 were misunderstood and they didn't give anything valuable as a result. I was trying to find out, if the students thought that there was a method that would've worked well in the ISP and wasn't used there at all, but no one understood the questions like that.

Question 5 (Figure 6) was to find out what the students thought of about different teaching methods. Real life case studies were the clear winner. 78,9% of the students thought that it is a very useful teaching method. Practical exercises and games were the next two. Online workshops/discussion forums were considered least useful.

5. How useful do you find these methods for your learning? (0 piste)

[Lisätietoja](#)

not useful not so useful ok useful very useful

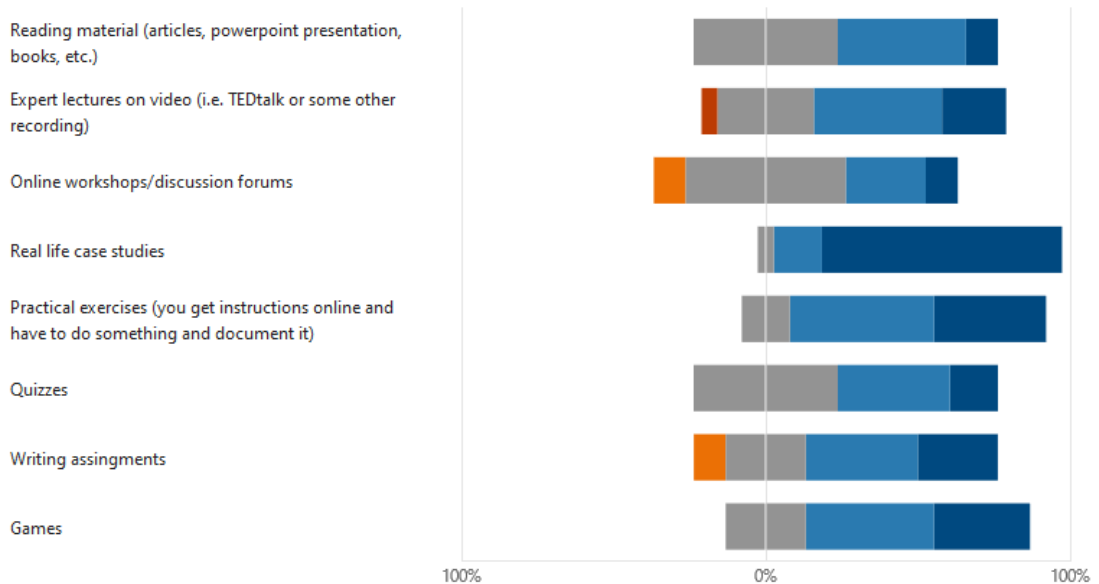


Figure 6. Results of the question 5.

Question 6 was: “What does societal security mean to you?”. Answers show that one of the goals of the ISP is achieved. The students have a unified understanding of societal security and most of the answers show that the students have realized the importance of societal security.

From my understanding the concept of societal security is a broad one. It covers a lot of topics related to partly the individual level, partly the national and international levels. For me societal security is a measurement of how a society establish and maintains the ability to function in accordance with its material and immaterial core values.

Figure 7. One of the answers for question #6.

Question 7 was: “How has this ISP affected your views on societal security?”. Below (Figure 8) is a screenshot from my PowerPoint presentation to the project on the results of the survey. Everyone answered, that their view on societal security have widened, and the ISP has been a very useful experience for them.

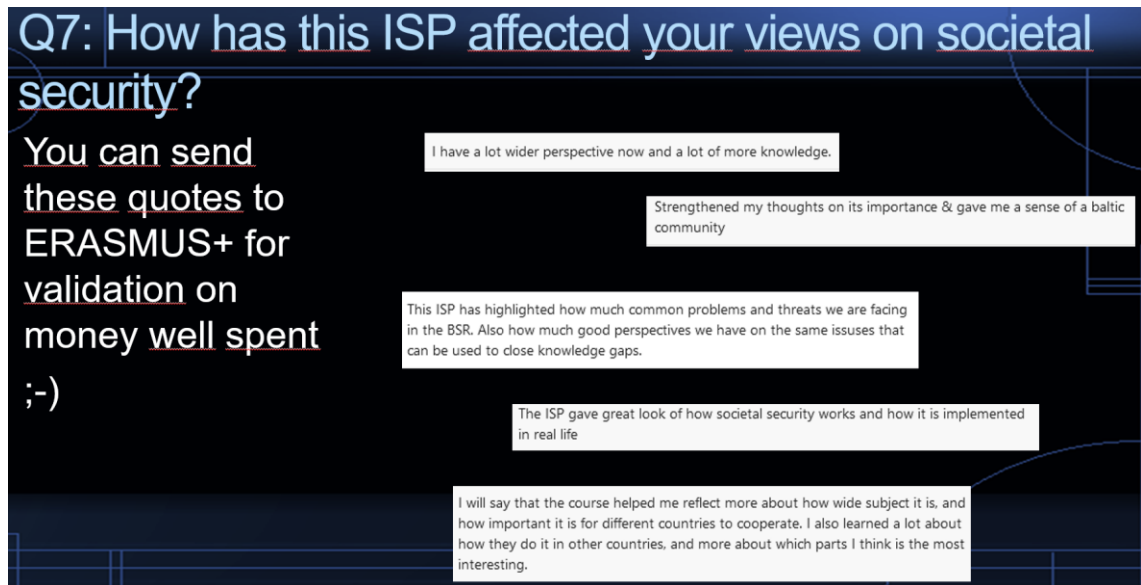


Figure 8. Screenshot from my PowerPoint presentation for the project

Question 8 was: “How will all the things you learned during this study unit affect your day-to-day life? Give an example.”. Most of the students think (Figure 9) that they learned new things during the ISP and gained perspective via interacting with people from different countries. Many of the answers show that the students are going to study this topic even more and educate people around them.

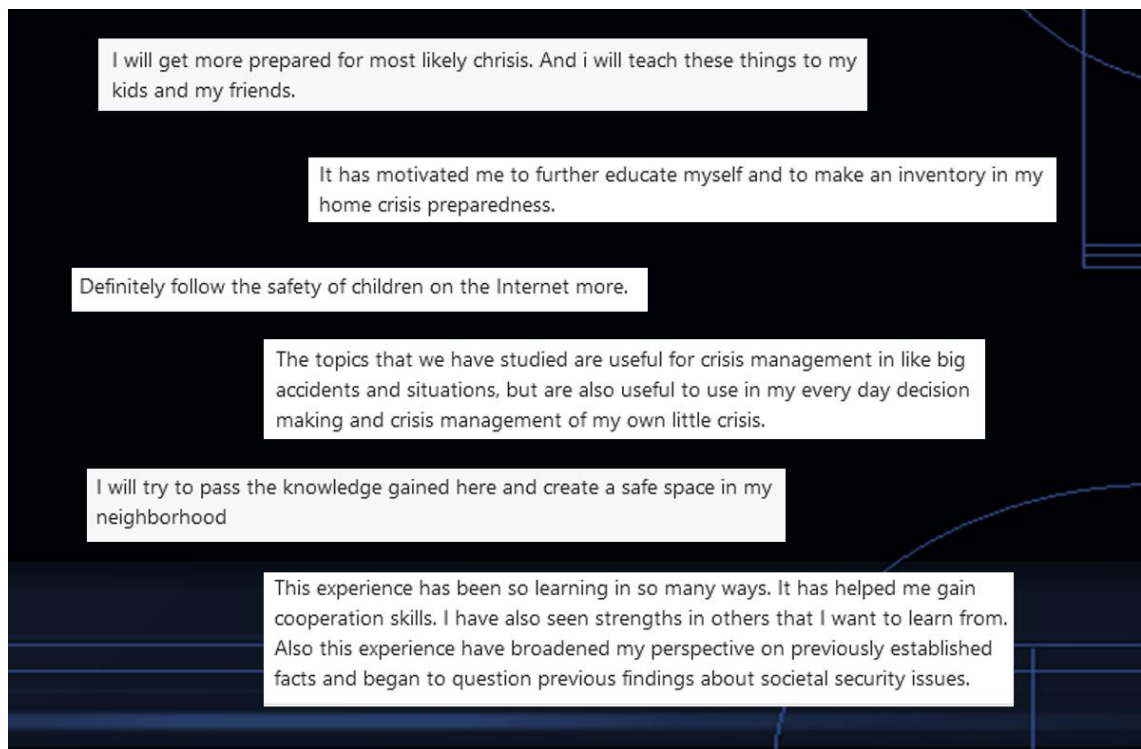


Figure 9. Screenshot from my PowerPoint presentation for the project

Question 9 was: “Do you think NEEDS -project is making a difference? Please explain.”. All the students think that the project is making a difference. Many of the answers reflect the goals of the project and everyone thinks the project is making a difference. Below (Figure 10) is a good example of the answers the students wrote. Many wrote that the project is bringing people from different countries together, broadening perspective of the participants, and help creating security culture.

I believe the NEEDS project has already made, and will continue to make, a huge difference in creating a common societal security culture in the BSR. By being able to work on societal security and different crises with students and practitioners from different BSR countries, I feel like everyone who took part this week will be able to appreciate the different cultures and perspectives of people from different countries now, and will have similar understandings of societal security.

Figure 10. One answer from Forms.

Question 10 was: “Do you think societal security studies should be integrated into other fields of studies as well? Please explain.”. Every student think that societal security studies would give valuable perspective to other fields of studies as well. One of the answers is in figure 11.

I think societal security should be integrated into many different fields of study, because it requires a whole of society approach and cross-sectoral cooperation. For example, societal security should be integrated into fields of study such as education, social work, and other fields of study that concern young people.

Figure 11. One answer from Forms.

Last question was about, if something was missing from the ISP, or there was something the student didn't like. Overall, the answers were positive. A few complaints of the intensity of the ISP and some of the teaching methods/exercises didn't go well on everyone.

6 Conclusions

The topic of the project was very interesting, and the timing was spot on. During the project there was the Covid pandemic, Russia attacked Ukraine, and two of the Nordic countries applied to NATO. Societal security at the Baltic Sea region was under distress. Suddenly, societal security and related concepts became part of peoples' everyday life. Preparedness, risk management, crisis management, resilience, were words that were used in the news every day.

The Covid pandemic showed, that most countries and organizations were not prepared for an event like that. Scientists have been warning the mankind, that a pandemic like that will happen, but seemed like no one had listened. Every country must have experts in risk and crisis management, but the problem here is probably a political one as discussed before, on page 13. There was not enough protective gear for professionals who fought against the pandemic and international co-operation went out the window when all nations started competing against each other just to stay on top of things. Protective masks and gear's prices skyrocketed.

The US intelligence published warnings about Russia's attacking plans in December 2021 (Borger & Roth, 2021) and still the day before the attack people in Kyiv were strolling in the parks and streets and didn't believe the imminent attack would happen when interviewed. For some reason, it seemed that most nations didn't consider Russia as a threat. Politicians were corrupted by Russia's cheap gas prices and other resources, and they didn't listen to the warnings. Many Western European nations reduced their military budgets for decades after the Cold War had ended.

Considering all these events, there was a need for this kind of a project. My focus was the ISP in Porkkalanniemi, but to understand that ISP, I had to understand the whole project. The concept was quite simple: Bring together high education institutes, practitioners from the different fields of societal security, and students from different countries, and by doing this get a common culture to the Baltic Sea Region on societal security.

I spent only two days at the ISP, but through the interviews and the survey, I can tell that the goals of the ISP were accomplished. Two of the teachers said, that they had realized that they are lacking in their education on societal security and through this co-operation they can improve it. The students, teachers, and the practitioners all spoke the same 'language' - a common societal security culture in the Baltic Sea Region had started to grow.

All the teachers were very experienced, and they had the ability to change teaching methods 'on the fly', if needed. There was a good rapport between teachers and if someone had a good idea they quickly went on and executed it. The students were active and there was a great spirit between the participants.

Results of the research was positive, and I started to think if it was too positive. I went to the ISP at the latter part of the ISP. Everyone had lived in that bubble and societal security issues were clear in their head. There might have been a different result from the survey if conducted for example a few months later. I also would've liked to have a comparison survey from the students about the same topics before the ISP, so I could've compared the results.

The author interviews all the time, but in Finnish. It was noticed, that during these interviews the author tried to help the interviewee to find a “right” word occasionally, and by doing this might feed the wrong word, and not the one the interviewee was looking for. This might distort or compromise the results a little.

As a follow up research, I think it would be interesting to find out what changed in the lives of the attendants because of the ISP. Many students stated that they will use the skills and knowledge in their everyday lives to be better prepared for crisis. Has this really happened, or did everything fade after getting back home and out of the ISP bubble?

Another topic worth researching would be to find out how many High Education Institutes has taken the online course in their curriculum, and how large has the online community grown, and what have the benefits been of that.

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Appendices

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Appendix 1: Interview questions

Teacher

- What are the greatest benefits for you, as a teacher, of this intensive week?
- What has changed in your views on societal security during this week?
- What teaching methods did you (personally) use during this ISP?
- Why did you end up using those methods?
- Would the same methods work as well in an online environment?
- What methods would you use in the online study unit for NEEDS?
- What methods you think works best in an online environment? In societal security studies.
- How do you stay in touch with the practitioners on your relative field? How can you make sure that the material and methods you teach are valid in the field?
- In your opinion, why is this NEEDS project important and what will it achieve?

Practitioner

- What are the greatest benefits for you, as a practitioner, on taking part to this ISP?
- What has changed in your views on societal security during this week?
- What do you take home from this week? And how will it affect your professional life and day to day life?
- Is there some sector inside societal security that you think is more important than others? And if yes, why? (I.e., preparedness, risk management, crisis management)
- Do you see societal security differently now than before this week?
- Why is this NEEDS project important and what will it achieve in your opinion? Will it increase Baltic Sea Region's security? If not, how do you think it can be increased?

Appendix 2: Survey

Societal Security in the Baltic Sea Region ISP



The purpose of this thesis questionnaire is to develop the NEEDS -project. All the answers will be anonymous. There are 10-11 questions. **In the end, press the LÄHETÄ -button. It means SEND.**

1. How useful was this method for your learning? *

	not useful	not so useful	ok	useful	very useful
Individual reflections (portfolio, online course)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workshops (i.e. mindmaps, SWOT, recommendations)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Practical exercises (youth and security scenario, tabletop exercise)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expert lectures/panels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Study buddy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. What are the reasons why you liked some methods more than others? *

Kirjoita vastaus

3. Was there some method missing, that you liked a lot? *

Yes

No

4. What method was it and why you liked it so much?

Kirjoita vastaus

5. How useful do you find these methods for your learning? *

	not useful	not so useful	ok	useful	very useful
Reading material (articles, powerpoint presentation, books, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expert lectures on video (i.e. TEDtalk or some other recording)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online workshops/discussion forums	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Real life case studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Practical exercises (you get instructions online and have to do something and document it)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quizzes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing assignments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Games	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. What does societal security mean to you? *

Kirjoita vastaus

7. How has this ISP affected your views on societal security? *

Kirjoita vastaus

8. How will all the things you learned during this study unit, affect your day-to-day life? Give an example. *

Kijoita vastaus

9. Do you think NEEDS -project is making a difference? Please explain.

Kijoita vastaus

10. Do you think societal security studies should be integrated into other fields of studies as well? Please explain. *

Kijoita vastaus

11. Was there something missing, in your opinion, from this ISP? Or something that you didn't like? *

Kijoita vastaus