



Home Far from Homeland: Developing an Operating Model for Finnish-Speaking Assisted Living Services in Torrevieja

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2024 Laurea

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Laurea University of Applied Sciences

**Home Far from Homeland: Developing an Operating Model for Finnish-
Speaking Assisted Living Services in Torrevieja**

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Bachelor of Social Services
Thesis
November, 2024

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Year	2024	Number of pages	56
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This thesis presents a preliminary operational model for Finnish-speaking assisted living services designed to meet the unique needs of the Finnish expatriate community in Torrevieja, Spain. As the population of Finnish retirees in the region grows, there is an increasing demand for culturally and linguistically tailored services. The focus of this thesis is on creating a framework addressing essential aspects such as service design, cultural integration, and legislative alignment, without delving into full implementation details.

The project was conducted in collaboration with Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca, an organization supporting the Finnish community in the Costa Blanca region. Their input provided valuable insights into the challenges and preferences of Finnish seniors, grounding the proposed model in practical, real-world experiences. Instead of collecting new data, the thesis draws its main background from observations and insights gained from a 2023 internship in Torrevieja.

The theoretical framework of this thesis lays the groundwork for the proposed operational model, focusing on four main areas: previous studies related to Finnish expatriates, an analysis of their linguistic needs and cultural challenges while navigating aging abroad, the factors that make Torrevieja an attractive retirement destination, and the legislative framework governing expatriate services in Spain. The Service Gap Model is then applied to bridge the divide between the existing service landscape and the expectations of Finnish retirees. Additionally, a SWOT analysis highlights the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing such services in the region, providing a comprehensive overview of the feasibility and potential impact of the proposed model.

This thesis aims to guide future entrepreneurs and service providers interested in establishing elderly care services in Torrevieja. By addressing service gaps, the proposed model outlines the essential elements required to improve the quality of life for Finnish retirees in the area.

Keywords: Finnish expatriates, assisted living, elderly care services, operational model, aging population, cultural integration, service gap analysis.

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1 Introduction

This thesis develops a preliminary operational model for establishing Finnish-speaking assisted living services in Torrevieja. It focuses on creating a high-level framework that addresses the unique needs of the local Finnish community, emphasizing service design and cultural integration. The aim is to provide future entrepreneurs with a comprehensive understanding of essential components and existing service gaps, helping them establish effective and culturally aligned services.

The Finnish expatriate community in Torrevieja, Spain, includes approximately 551 registered Finnish residents out of a total population of 91,731 (Ayuntamiento de Torrevieja 2023). Additionally, a seasonal Finnish population spends winters in the area. As this community ages, there is an increasing need for services that are culturally and linguistically aligned with their expectations.

The project was conducted in collaboration with Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca, an organization that supports the Finnish community in the Costa Blanca region. Their involvement provided valuable insights into the specific needs of Finnish expatriates, ensuring that the proposed model is rooted in real-world experiences.

The thesis employs the Service Gap Model as its primary methodology to identify discrepancies between the existing services and the linguistic and cultural needs of Finnish retirees in Torrevieja. The theoretical framework addresses the unique needs of Finnish expatriates, the factors that draw them to Torrevieja despite the challenges, and the legislative context for expatriate services. Previous studies on Finnish expatriates, presented as the first topic in the theoretical framework, provide valuable insights into the broader trends faced by this population, enriching the development of the operational model. Additionally, a brief SWOT analysis highlights the challenges and opportunities involved in creating tailored assisted living services for the Finnish community.

This thesis aims to offer a practical, actionable model that future entrepreneurs can use to build effective and sustainable elderly care services in Torrevieja. The proposed framework is designed to meet the current needs of the Finnish community and lay the groundwork for further service development in the future.

In this thesis, ChatGPT-4 has been utilized to refine the language, enhancing the clarity and academic quality of the text.

2 Background of the Thesis

The decision to develop an operational model for Finnish-speaking assisted living services in Torrevieja stems from the challenges faced by the growing Finnish expatriate community. Torrevieja, known for its favorable climate and lifestyle, attracts many Finnish retirees. However, the region's care infrastructure does not adequately address the needs of Finnish seniors. Many struggle to access care that aligns with their expectations, leading to isolation and difficulties in managing daily life.

The existing care facilities in Torrevieja are designed for Spanish residents, lacking the cultural and linguistic accommodations necessary for Finnish seniors. This often leaves Finnish expatriates with limited options, resulting in inadequate care experiences that fail to support their overall well-being. The language barrier, in particular, poses significant challenges, with many seniors unable to fully communicate their needs or engage in meaningful social interactions (Syrjäläinen 2012). This disconnect not only affects the quality of care but also impacts their sense of belonging and security.

Close collaboration with Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca, a key organization supporting the Finnish community, highlighted the extent of these challenges. Direct engagement with the community revealed that many seniors feel disconnected from available services and face significant barriers in accessing care that feels familiar and supportive. These insights underscored the urgency of developing a service model that specifically addresses the needs of Finnish-speaking seniors, providing them with a sense of home and cultural comfort.

Choosing this topic also responds to the broader trend of aging expatriate populations worldwide, highlighting the need for culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate care services. Finnish seniors in Torrevieja represent a microcosm of this global challenge, offering a valuable case study for developing localized solutions that respect and integrate the unique needs of expatriate seniors.

In essence, this thesis was inspired by the need to bridge the gap between the existing service landscape and the expectations of Finnish-speaking seniors. It represents a proactive effort to design a care environment that not only meets practical needs but also fosters a sense of belonging and comfort for Finnish expatriates, enabling them to live their later years with dignity and support.

2.1 Development Based Thesis

A development-based thesis (toiminnallinen opinnäytetyö) is a practice-oriented approach used in universities of applied sciences to showcase professional expertise through both a practical output and an accompanying report. The aim is to demonstrate the development of professional competence by creating a product or service based on background information and development activities. This method does not focus solely on academic research but integrates research and methodological practices to serve professional development. (Kostamo, Airaksinen, & Vilkkä 2022). This approach is particularly suited for projects where the primary goal is to develop functional outcomes that can directly impact practice, such as designing new service models, improving existing processes, or creating innovative solutions tailored to specific needs.

The primary purpose of a development-based thesis is to bridge the gap between theory and practice. By focusing on the development of a tangible solution, it enables a chance to apply theoretical knowledge to solve practical challenges, thereby making a direct contribution to the field (Vilkkä 2021). By applying this approach, the thesis aims to develop an operating model that not only functions effectively but also enriches the lives of its users, offering a supportive and culturally relevant environment far from their homeland.

Structuring a development-based thesis typically involves presenting the problem, reviewing relevant literature, outlining the methodology, and detailing the stages of development and evaluation. This format ensures that the thesis not only documents the practical work done but also critically analyzes the results, balancing the practical and academic components of the project (Vilkkä & Airaksinen 2003). The iterative nature of the work allows to adjust the development-based thesis on ongoing feedback, testing the effectiveness of the solution in real-time and making necessary refinements. (Kostamo, Airaksinen, & Vilkkä, 2022)

This thesis does not rely on new data collection but builds on the insights gained during the thesis author's work with Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca. Through this collaborative effort, the author of this thesis gathered relevant information that shaped the operational model, ensuring that it addresses real needs within the community. The Service Gap Model was applied to analyze the services that Finnish-speaking seniors currently have in Torre Vieja and what they wish they would have. This model provides a structured approach to identifying discrepancies between existing service offerings and the unmet needs of the seniors, highlighting areas where the proposed operational model can make a significant impact.

The development process in this thesis integrates both the thesis author's personal learning objectives and the goals of the working life partner, ensuring that the output meets practical needs identified through our collaboration. It not only delivers a framework for future services but also contributes to a broader understanding of establishing Finnish-speaking assisted living services in Spain. By documenting the process and reflecting on my own professional growth, the thesis demonstrates how practice-based development can address real-world challenges while enhancing expertise. The insights gained from this approach extend beyond the final product, informing future research and innovation and deepening our understanding of the issues at hand.

2.2 Working life partner

In this thesis, the working life partner is Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca, an organization dedicated to supporting the Finnish community living in the Costa Blanca region of Spain. Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca plays an essential role in enhancing the well-being of Finnish expatriates by providing social, cultural, and practical assistance. The organization's mission is to help Finnish residents navigate the challenges of living abroad, fostering a sense of belonging and community among its members. (Costa Blanca Suomi-Seura n.d.)

Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca offers a wide range of services aimed at supporting Finnish expatriates in their day-to-day lives. These services include organizing cultural events and social gatherings that allow the community to maintain and celebrate their Finnish heritage while integrating into the local Spanish environment. In addition to cultural and social activities, the organization provides small-scale guidance on accessing local services, assisting members with healthcare, legal matters, and other practical issues that arise when living in a foreign country. (Costa Blanca Suomi-Seura n.d.). This support is vital for many Finnish seniors who face language barriers and unfamiliar administrative systems in Spain.

Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca is a self-funded organization, collecting yearly membership fees to support its operations. In 2024, the membership rates are as follows: an individual membership costs 40 €/year, a family membership (which includes two spouses or a single parent and their minor children) is 70 €/year, and a lifetime membership is available for 400 €. These membership fees enable the organization to sustain its wide range of services and continue its support for the Finnish community in the region. (Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca n.d.)

The target population of Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca primarily consists of Finnish expatriates, including retirees, families, and professionals who have chosen to reside in the Costa Blanca region. For retirees, in particular, the organization plays a crucial role in providing a familiar network and support system that helps mitigate the challenges of aging in a foreign country. (Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca n.d.)

By partnering with Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca, this development-based thesis aims to assess and improve the social and healthcare services available to Finnish residents in Torrevieja. The involvement of Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca ensures that the proposed operational model is not only theoretically sound but also deeply connected to the specific needs of the community it seeks to serve.

2.3 Aim & Objective

The aim of this thesis is to develop an operational model for establishing Finnish-speaking assisted living services in Torrevieja, Spain, tailored to the cultural, linguistic, and care needs of Finnish seniors. This model aims to bridge the gap between existing services and the specific needs of the Finnish expatriate community, enhancing their quality of life and fostering a sense of belonging.

Objectives:

- To identify and analyze service gaps in assisted living and support services for Finnish-speaking seniors in Torrevieja using the Service Gap Model.
- To propose an operational model with practical recommendations for service design, staffing, and cultural integration, customized to the needs of Finnish expatriates.
- To offer actionable insights for stakeholders, such as community organizations and potential service providers, to facilitate the development of Finnish-speaking assisted living services and other small-scale elderly care services.

By achieving these objectives, this thesis seeks to establish a foundation for creating sustainable and culturally aligned services that support the well-being of Finnish seniors in Torrevieja.

3 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis delves into the various factors shaping the development of assisted living services for Finnish-speaking expatriates in Spain. It begins by analyzing previous studies related to Finnish expatriates. Followed by an analysis of the linguistic needs and cultural challenges faced by Finnish retirees while navigating aging abroad. Exploration of the reasons why they still remain drawn to Spain, with a focus on the environmental, social, and health-related factors influencing their decision is conducted. Lastly, the framework examines the legislative context governing expatriate services, offering an overview of the laws and regulations that impact the provision of social and healthcare services.

3.1 Previous Studies Related to Finnish Expatriates

In 2015, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in Finland published a report exploring the future prospects of the care services sector. Establishing care homes abroad was identified as a potential internationalization opportunity for Finnish social and healthcare companies. Despite recognizing this need, Finland has not actively promoted such initiatives (Peltonen 2019). Efforts, however, have been made to promote supported housing services, such as care homes, in Fuengirola, Spain. Providing care services in Spain could prove more cost-effective than in Finland due to lower living and labor costs, which would reduce overall unit costs for the Finnish government, if decided to implement via public sector (Peltonen 2019).

During a 2018 workshop hosted by the National Institute for Health and Welfare, professionals working with elderly services in Finland discussed the housing needs of older adults. A significant takeaway was the strong preference among seniors for communal living arrangements. The professionals emphasized the need for spaces that facilitate social interaction and group activities while being easy to access (Peltonen 2019). This aligns with the aspirations of Finnish-speaking seniors in Spain, who often express a desire for culturally familiar care emphasizing individualized care planning, privacy, and a homelike environment. These principles are critical for the well-being of elderly individuals in a foreign setting, ensuring they feel comfortable and supported. Culturally tailored care should reflect Finnish values while maintaining a focus on adapting care plans to residents' changing needs (Peltonen 2019).

The importance of such culturally tailored care was further highlighted during a placement at Costa Blanca Suomi-Seura in Torre Vieja, where the author of this thesis conducted a survey to

assess the social and healthcare needs of the Finnish expatriate population. The primary objective was to identify gaps in service provision and explore the feasibility of introducing Finnish-speaking care solutions. Additionally, the survey sought actionable data to support the development of future initiatives, including potential EU funding opportunities.

Findings from the survey conducted by Lindeman and Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca mirrored results from similar studies in the Costa del Sol and the Canary Islands (Peltonen 2019; Vaalikivi-Lindholm 2008). Nearly half of respondents indicated a need for supported housing and Finnish-language healthcare services. Peltonen (2019) cited Karisto (2008) that while some retirees manage well in Spain with minimal assistance, others would likely require extensive support if they were living in Finland.

The survey conducted in Torrevieja was designed collaboratively by the author of this thesis and a member of the Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca board, Anja Uhlgren, and further qualified by a healthcare professional to ensure its relevance and appropriateness. It consisted of a combination of closed and open-ended questions and was developed using Google Forms for its simplicity and accessibility. The survey format can be found in the Appendix 1. The digital format allowed for easy distribution through Membook, an online platform for Suomi-Seura members, and two Facebook groups, “Torrevieja.fi” and “Torreviejan ja lähiympäristön suomalaiset.” To ensure inclusivity, paper copies were also distributed at key community locations, including the Finnish Church, Suomi-Kauppa, Scandic Center, and Suomi-Seura’s café in Torrevieja. Responses were collected over a three-week period from March 10 to March 31, 2023. (Lindeman 2023)

Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca has 778 active members, but not all reside permanently in Torrevieja or use Membook’s digital services. Additionally, many members born in the 1940s and 1950s may not use smartphones or other technology required for online surveys. As a result, some of the oldest community members, who are often the most in need of care services, may have been underrepresented in the survey responses. To mitigate this, paper copies were made available, but only five paper responses were received (Lindeman 2023). Lindeman (2023) personally registered the responses from the five paper copies into Google Forms so they would be part of the digitally saved responses.

The survey included 20 questions addressing key topics, such as current living situations, support networks, experiences of loneliness or depression, access to healthcare and daily assistance, and interest in Finnish-speaking supported living services. Reminders to

participate were sent via Membook and shared again on Facebook groups on March 28, 2023, to increase engagement. In total, 213 responses were collected before the closing date of March 31. All responses were anonymous, ensuring no personal data could be linked to individual participants. (Lindeman 2023)

One of the key issue identified was the lack of Finnish-speaking healthcare professionals and reliable interpreter services, which respondents highlighted as barriers to accessing medical care effectively. Many participants reported difficulties navigating healthcare systems due to linguistic and cultural challenges, resulting in delays and frustrations during medical appointments. Additionally, assistance with doctor visits was requested, primarily in the form of interpretation services. Similar support was also needed for interactions with authorities. (Lindeman 2023)

Social integration was another area of concern, with a portion of elderly respondents reporting experiences of loneliness and a lack of culturally tailored companionship services or community activities. These residents expressed the need for more social programs that cater specifically to their linguistic and cultural preferences, highlighting the importance of Finnish-language social support. (Lindeman 2023)

In terms of in-home support services, while only few respondents reported an immediate need for daily assistance with tasks such as dressing, bathing, meal preparation, grocery shopping and cleaning, the absence of Finnish-language domestic services was noted as a limitation. Respondents stressed the importance of culturally adapted in-home care to support future needs in the terms of maintaining independence. (Lindeman 2023)

Also, communication barriers emerged as a recurring issue. Respondents frequently cited difficulties in accessing clear and reliable information about healthcare, social benefits, and administrative processes in Finnish. This lack of accessible information was reported to cause confusion, delays, and a sense of exclusion among Finnish-speaking residents. (Lindeman 2023)

As a main point revealed was the need for supported living services. A notable 40.8% of respondents indicated a need for Finnish-language assisted living services, either for themselves or their family members. However, the accuracy of responses to this question

should be evaluated with caution. In conversations some respondents, they found the question about the need for supported living services offensive and, as a result, did not see its relevance for the future. This could have led to more negative responses regarding the need for supported living. (Lindeman 2023)

Koetko yleisesti tarvetta suomenkieliselle tuetulle asumispalvelulle Torreviejassa?
213 responses

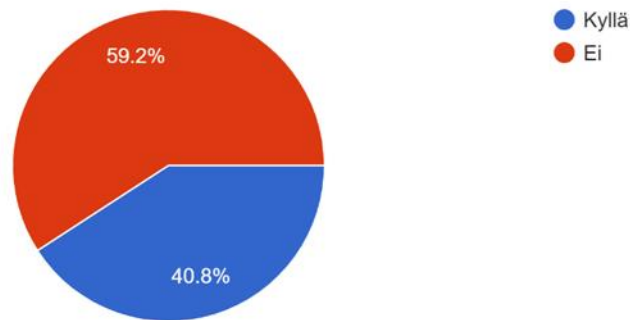


Figure 1: Excerpt from the Survey Results: The Need for Assisted Living Services in Torrevieja

The survey responses reveal varying perspectives on the need for living assistance among Finnish expatriates in Torrevieja, with many respondents emphasizing their current independence while acknowledging the uncertainty of the future. A common theme in the responses is the unpredictability of aging and the potential for sudden changes in health or mobility. Statements such as “We are in good health now, but the future is unpredictable” and “It is clear that, at this age, the situation can change very quickly, and the need for help could become urgent” underscore the respondents’ awareness of how quickly their circumstances might shift. (Lindeman 2023)

Several respondents expressed a desire for long-term planning and accessible services, even if they currently do not require assistance. One individual mentioned at the open-end questions the need for “a small room, around 15 square meters, where one could go if necessary, with access to meals and help,” while others voiced an appreciation for efforts to assess future needs, stating that “even though my situation is currently good, I appreciate that a needs assessment is being conducted.” These comments reflect the value placed on having reliable support systems in place to ensure they can maintain a good quality of life as their needs evolve. (Lindeman 2023)

The importance of retaining independence and autonomy was evident in many responses. Respondents expressed their preference to remain in their own homes for as long as possible their health allows it. Others highlighted the necessity of ensuring culturally adapted services, such as Finnish-speaking staff or assistance, to feel supported and connected in a foreign environment. (Lindeman 2023)

Health-related concerns were also prominent in the responses. While some respondents mentioned their current ability to manage daily activities, others highlighted their apprehension about acute health issues or mobility limitations that could arise unexpectedly. One respondent specifically stated “My wife requires my help daily for everyday tasks, not to mention larger matters. If something were to happen to me, she wouldn’t manage without assistance”. Also, a wish was voiced for visitors who could provide companionship and bring elements of normal life, such as current events or music, should they become unable to go out themselves. (Lindeman 2023)

In discussions with my working life partner, Suomi-Seura, they mentioned that many people have expressed a preference to remain in supported living in Torrevieja rather than return to Finland. They also shared that some individuals fear their health could deteriorate due to Finland’s cold winters if they were required to return when their health declines. It also became apparent that some Finnish expatriates have lived in Spain for so long that they no longer maintain significant ties to Finland.

3.2 Navigating Aging Abroad: Addressing Linguistic Needs and Cultural Challenges of Finnish Expatriates

Aging in a foreign environment presents unique challenges and opportunities for individuals who relocate later in life. Cultural differences, language barriers, and unfamiliar systems can create obstacles, while the potential for enriching experiences and tailored solutions offers ways to enhance well-being and quality of life.

Despite the growing demand of service needs, many winter residents refrain from changing their permanent residency to Spain. This decision complicates access to local healthcare services, as Spanish municipalities are not obligated to, for example, provide home care services to seasonal residents (Peltonen 2019). One key factor influencing this reluctance is the limited availability of Finnish-speaking support networks in Spain, which hinders retirees' ability to fully integrate and access necessary care (Peltonen 2019).

Administrative support in Finnish would be essential to help seniors navigate healthcare and legal systems, which often present barriers due to language differences (Peltonen 2019). Expatriate seniors who encounter such barriers are at greater risk of exclusion and isolation (Ogrin et al. 2021). Research shows that elderly individuals in foreign environments face unique challenges in accessing culturally and linguistically appropriate healthcare. Interpreter services often fall short especially in addressing complex medical needs effectively, especially in sensitive areas like mental health care (Miller 2011).

Addressing mental health concerns is critical, as social isolation significantly contributes to depression and mental decline in older adults (Ogrin et al. 2021). As Miller (2011) notes, elderly individuals needing intensive mental health or addiction services might find it more beneficial to return to Finland for treatment, where they can access comprehensive therapy and rehabilitative care. Relying solely on interpreter services in such cases is insufficient, as it does not address the need for nuanced, culturally informed mental health support. However, providing mental health services in Finnish, even through online platforms, combined with non-pharmacological approaches such as social activities and companionship programs, can profoundly improve the well-being of seniors (Same Foroughi 2013).

Loneliness is a major factor contributing to the decline in both physical and mental health among older adults (Ogrin et al. 2021). Previous studies highlight the significant influence of strong social connections on both health and longevity. Holt-Lunstad et al. (2015) found that individuals with strong social ties have a 50% higher likelihood of survival compared to those who are socially isolated. Seniors require opportunities for social clubs, cultural events, and exercise programs in their native language to maintain their well-being. Social integration through cultural festivals, social clubs, or group excursions strengthens community ties and improves mental health (Putnam 2000).

Kehusmaa et al. (2012) explain that seniors who need a lot of help with daily tasks like bathing, dressing, and cooking, as well as medical care, are the biggest users of health and social services. For this reason it would be important to have care that brings all the needed services together in a coordinated way. Holt-Lunstad et al. (2015) add that care should be tailored to each person's specific needs, such as their culture, language, and personal situation, instead of using a one-size-fits-all approach.

Digital advancements, such as telehealth services, could offer practical alternatives, particularly in regions with a shortage of Finnish-speaking professionals. These services provide continuity of care and ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate support (Peltonen 2019). The Käkäte project on the other hand highlights the value of user-centered technology, including remote monitoring devices and communication aids, in maintaining independence and well-being for elderly individuals (Peltonen 2019).

In Torrevieja, the Mediterranean climate provides an ideal environment for elderly individuals, reducing risks associated with icy conditions and promoting outdoor activities year-round (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö 2024). Outdoor spaces designed for relaxation and socialization can further promote physical and mental health.

The physical environment plays a significant role in residents' well-being. When it comes to assisted living, facilities designed with single-occupancy rooms, privacy, and mobility accommodations align with the principles of the service users (Zimmerman 2001). Incorporating elements of Finnish culture—such as familiar decor, communal saunas, and Finnish-language libraries—can foster a sense of belonging and ease the transition for residents (Peltonen 2019). Finnish-speaking seniors express a strong preference for culturally familiar care that emphasizes individualized care planning, privacy, and a homelike environment (Peltonen 2019).

The Finnish quality recommendation emphasizes the importance of cost-effective service provision (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö 2024). The lower cost of living and operational expenses in Torrevieja perhaps provide an opportunity to offer care services at a more competitive and affordable price compared to Finland (Eurostat 2022).

3.3 What Makes Torrevieja an Ideal Destination for Retirement

Historically, the reasons behind migration to Spain have shifted from economic and work-related motives to environmental preferences. Today, Finnish retirees are primarily drawn to Spain to escape the harsh northern winters and enjoy a more temperate climate (Tammenmaa 2014). Unlike earlier waves of migration, the current movers are older individuals who have left the workforce and seek to spend their retirement years in a sunnier, more fulfilling environment. Many live seasonally between Finland and Spain, taking advantage of the lifestyle benefits offered by both countries (Tammenmaa 2014).

The Costa Blanca, particularly Torrevieja, provides a unique climate that is beneficial for individuals with chronic health conditions. The region's salt lakes, mild temperatures, and Mediterranean air are known to alleviate symptoms of respiratory, skin, and joint issues (Surugue 2019; Baquero Larriva & Higuera García 2023). Activities such as swimming in salt water are reported to improve conditions like psoriasis and eczema without the need for intensive medical treatments (Surugue 2019). During the thesis author's internship in Torrevieja in 2023, many Finnish seniors shared that they experienced fewer symptoms and found it easier to breathe in the warm, mild air compared to the harsh winters of Finland.

The psychological benefits of Spain's climate also play a role. Seasonal depression (kaamosmasennus), is common among Finnish seniors during the dark winter months (Duodecim 2009). The year-round sunlight in Torrevieja helps alleviate symptoms of depression and boosts mood, partly due to increased Vitamin D levels, which are essential for mental health (Kaviani et al. 2022).

Safety is another crucial factor influencing migration, stated by the working life partner of this thesis. Finnish winters pose significant risks for elderly individuals, particularly those using mobility aids, due to icy conditions that increase the likelihood of falls (Sisäasiainministeriö 2011). Cold climates have also been shown to raise blood pressure and exacerbate chronic illnesses, such as cardiovascular and respiratory conditions. In Peltonen's thesis, Karisto (2008) was cited to find that Finnish winter residents with chronic illnesses reported feeling significantly better in Spain compared to their peers in Finland. The warm climate, coupled with the therapeutic benefits of saltwater and sunlight, provides an environment that supports better health and overall well-being (Peltonen 2019).

The Finnish quality recommendation for active ageing emphasizes the importance of creating environments that support physical and mental well-being (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö 2024). In regions with climates more favorable to year-round outdoor activities, such as Torrevieja, natural environmental conditions inherently mitigate many of these risks. However, Finland faces challenges in fully implementing these principles, particularly during the winter months, when inadequate road maintenance and harsh weather conditions discourage seniors from leaving their homes. This increases the risk of social isolation and contributes to physical decline (Sisäasiainministeriö 2011). The proactive approach of seniors in Spain to staying active highlights the importance of physical activity in maintaining health, as insufficient exercise among elderly populations is linked to substantial healthcare costs and social challenges (Liikuntaneuvosto 2022).

Universal healthcare coverage ensures that legal residents, including Finnish retirees, can access public healthcare services. For medically necessary care during short-term stays, the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) provides access under the same conditions as Spanish residents (European Commission, n.d.). For those relocating permanently, Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 guarantees the retention of social security rights across EU countries, including healthcare benefits (EUR-lex, 2004). Finnish retirees can utilize the S1 form, managed by the Finnish Social Insurance Institution (Kela), to register for Spain's public healthcare system, effectively transferring healthcare costs to Finland while granting access equivalent to that of local residents (Kela, 2024b).

Residents in Torrevieja can also utilize the Torrevieja Service Map (Kytönen 2024) which is a comprehensive resource detailing over 85 Finnish-speaking services and businesses in Torrevieja. It serves as a vital tool for Finnish expatriates, facilitating access to linguistically appropriate services, thereby enhancing their integration and quality of life in the area.

In summary, Finnish retirees are drawn to Spain by a combination of factors: a climate that supports physical and mental health, year-round safety and mobility, opportunities for increased physical activity, and a healthcare system that ensures accessible and affordable care.

3.4 Legislative Framework for Finnish Expatriate Services in Spain

Finnish companies expanding abroad must decide whether to establish a subsidiary or a branch in the host country (Suomi.fi 2021). A subsidiary is a separate legal entity incorporated under Spanish law, whereas a branch is an extension of the parent company and operates under its legal personality. In Spain, a subsidiary requires incorporation through the Spanish Commercial Registry (Registro Mercantil) and adherence to Spanish corporate laws. In contrast, a branch ("sucursal") does not have a legal representative but instead designates a fiscal representative who is responsible for managing tax obligations and ensuring compliance with Spanish tax laws (Bridge In 2024).

The Double Taxation Agreement (DTA) between Finland and Spain is a crucial framework for Finnish companies operating in Spain, as it defines their tax obligations in both countries. This agreement ensures that businesses are not taxed twice on the same income, providing clarity

on how income, profits, and other financial transactions are treated under the tax laws of both nations. (Ministerio de Hacienda 2018)

Operating a business abroad often results in a Permanent Establishment (PE), which creates tax obligations in the host country. According to the Finnish Tax Administration, a PE exists if a Finnish company maintains a fixed place of business in another country, where business activities are conducted regularly (Finnish Tax Administration 2015). In Spain, the concept of PE is consistent with international tax standards, and profits attributable to the PE are subject to Spanish corporate income tax (OECD 2023). Therefore, the assisted living facility must comply with local tax regulations, including filing corporate income tax returns and paying applicable taxes in Spain (Finnish Tax Administration 2015).

The foreign businesses must also adhere to Spanish labor laws, which regulate employment contracts, working conditions, and employee rights (Suomi.fi 2021). This includes compliance with regulations on minimum wage, working hours, social security contributions, and occupational health and safety standards. Finnish employers must also consider the implications of Finnish labor laws for employees posted abroad, such as social security coverage and employee benefits (Finnish Tax Administration 2015).

When diving into the aim of this thesis, operating an assisted living facility requires specific licenses and permits regulated at the regional level. In Spain, social services management is decentralized, with each Autonomous Community, including the Valencian Community, having its own set of regulations governing the licensing of facilities like assisted living centers (OECD 2022). Compliance with these local regulations is essential and covers aspects such as facility standards, staffing requirements, safety protocols, and the scope of services offered.

Local authorities play a vital role in issuing permits and conducting regular inspections to ensure compliance with regional standards. The quality assurance framework includes periodic evaluations to assess adherence to service guidelines and user satisfaction. Failure to meet these standards can result in penalties, fines, or even the revocation of operational licenses, highlighting the importance of maintaining high service quality and regulatory compliance (OECD 2022).

When it comes to data protection handling sensitive personal data of residents and staff necessitates strict compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), applicable across the EU, including both Finland and Spain (European Commission 2018). The facility must implement robust data protection measures, ensure secure data handling, and uphold the privacy rights of individuals under GDPR guidelines (European Commission 2018).

In Spain, elder care services are regulated by the Law on the Promotion of Personal Autonomy and Care for Dependent Persons (Ley 39/2006), which provides a framework for delivering care to individuals in situations of dependency. This law emphasizes personal autonomy and comprehensive care, outlining the rights of dependent persons, the responsibilities of care providers, and the standards for service provision. Oversight of elder care services is managed by the Institute for the Elderly and Social Services (IMSERSO), which develops quality standards, conducts evaluations, and ensures compliance with national regulations (IMSERSO 2021).

In Finland, elder care services are governed by the Social Welfare Act (Sosiaalihuoltolaki 1301/2014). This Act highlights individualized care plans, active resident participation in decision-making, and the promotion of well-being and functional capacity. Regular assessments are mandated to adapt services to the changing needs of the elderly. The Act defines assisted living as both housing (via rental agreements) and related care services, with two distinct categories: regular assisted living, where staff are present only during the day, and intensive assisted living, which provides 24/7 staff availability. The National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (Valvira) oversees compliance with these standards through inspections and guidelines to maintain quality care across facilities (Valvira 2024).

The Finnish model aligns closely with Spanish regulations, particularly Article 25 of Ley 39/2006, which mandates that residential services for elderly individuals in dependency must integrate both housing and personalized care. This alignment ensures that the proposed assisted living facility in Torrevieja can meet the expectations of Finnish residents while adhering to Spanish standards.

Resource allocation is a critical component of implementing a successful assisted living model. Public elder care in Spain typically depends on funding from public administrations and beneficiary contributions. However, a privately funded facility, such as the one proposed, must explore alternative funding sources, including private investments, partnerships, and resident contributions. Article 29 of Ley 39/2006 outlines a tiered strategy for allocating

resources based on the level of care required, while also mandating emergency care systems like teleassistance services (Article 22, Ley 39/2006) to ensure rapid response in urgent situations.

The dynamic and evolving needs of elderly individuals require adaptability in care models. Article 30 of Ley 39/2006 highlights the importance of periodic assessments to adjust care levels. Regular health and functional status evaluations, flexible care options ranging from part-time assistance to full-time residential care.

Staffing also plays a vital role in delivering quality care. Article 36 of Ley 39/2006 mandates ongoing training in dependency care for professionals and caregivers working with the elderly. Continuous training programs are necessary to ensure staff maintain the skills and knowledge required to provide compassionate, high-quality care.

Furthermore, continuous quality improvement is critical for adapting to the evolving needs of elderly residents. Article 37 of Ley 39/2006 stipulates that elder care information systems must facilitate a constant flow of data to support informed decision-making and service enhancements. Regular community feedback should also be incorporated into the facility's evaluation processes to identify areas for improvement and maintain a high standard of care.

By integrating these elements, Finnish elderly care businesses operating abroad, such as assisted living facility in Torrevieja, could effectively meet the expectations of their target demographic while adhering to local Spanish regulations.

4 Implementation

This section explores the existing services available to Finnish-speaking expatriates in Torrevieja through the lens of the Service Gap Model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry 1985). The analysis draws on the March 2023 survey, completed by 213 respondents, which identified significant gaps in healthcare, mental health, in-home assistance, and social integration. These findings revealed that current services often fail to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of this population, creating noticeable discrepancies between expectations and service delivery. Complementing the survey data, tacit knowledge of Suomi-Seura board members enriched the analysis with practical, experience-based insights. Tacit knowledge is recognized as a legitimate data collection method, particularly for understanding complex, context-

specific needs that structured survey data alone cannot fully capture (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995; Eraut 2000). By integrating this tacit expertise with the Service Gap Model, the analysis provides a deeper understanding of the barriers faced by Finnish-speaking seniors in Torrevieja, helping to identify gaps in existing services and guide the development of recommendations for their improvement and expansion.

4.1 Service Gap Model

The Service Gap Model, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, is a widely recognized framework for evaluating and enhancing service quality. Its significance lies in its ability to identify discrepancies—referred to as gaps—between customer expectations and the actual services delivered. According a peer review by Mauri, Minazzi, and Muccio (2013), the model remains one of the most utilized tools for assessing service quality, particularly in guiding organizations toward addressing unmet needs and improving service delivery.

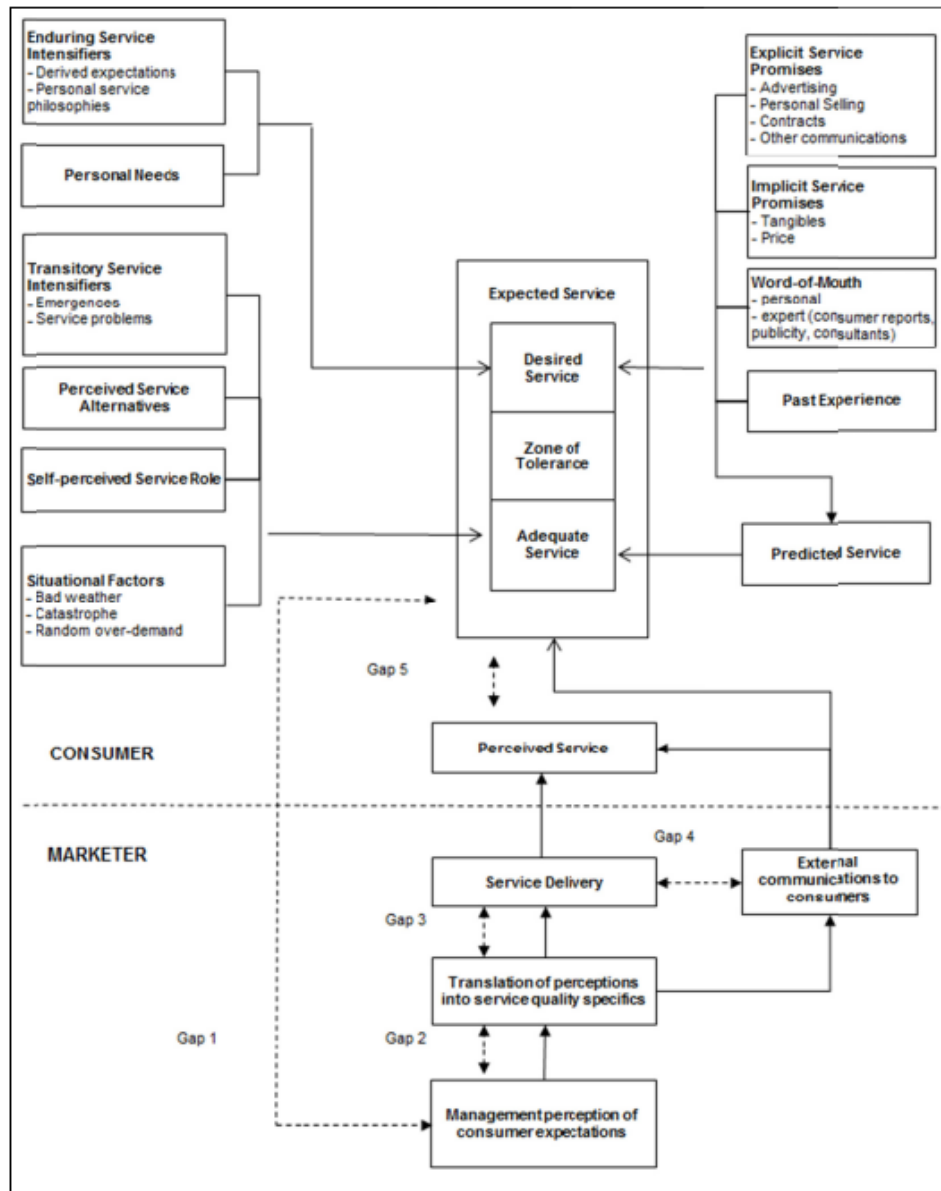


Figure 2: The Gaps Model, adapted from Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) and Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1993) (Mauri et al. 2013)

To operationalize the Service Gap Model, Parasuraman et al. developed the SERVQUAL scale as a practical tool for measuring service quality. While the overarching model focuses on identifying gaps in service delivery, the SERVQUAL scale provides a detailed method to assess specific dimensions of these gaps. This tool is integral to applying the Service Gap Model because it bridges the theoretical framework with measurable, real-world applications. By quantifying the differences between customer expectations and their perceptions of service received, the SERVQUAL scale offers actionable insights into how and where services can be improved (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

The SERVQUAL scale evaluates service quality through five key dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Mauri et al. 2013). Tangibles refer to the physical aspects of service delivery, such as facilities, equipment, and the appearance of staff or materials associated with the service. For example, in an assisted living context, tangibles could for example include the cleanliness and accessibility of the facility, the comfort of shared spaces, or the availability of well-maintained medical equipment. These physical elements create the foundation for how clients perceive the service and often set the tone for their overall experience.

Intangible components are less visible but equally important. These include reliability, which assesses whether services are delivered consistently and accurately, and responsiveness, which evaluates the willingness and speed of staff in addressing customer needs. Assurance measures the level of trust and confidence clients have in service providers, reflecting their competence and professionalism. Empathy emphasizes personalized care, showing how well services accommodate individual preferences and cultural or emotional needs. In an assisted living facility, intangible elements could include staff interactions, language accommodations, and how well staff understand and respond to residents' concerns.

The strength of the Service Gap Model, enhanced by the SERVQUAL scale, lies in its ability to systematically uncover discrepancies between what customers expect and what they actually experience (Mauri et al. 2013). These insights enable service providers to bridge gaps by addressing specific weaknesses in service design and delivery. By analyzing both tangible and intangible aspects of service quality, the model ensures a comprehensive understanding of how services align—or fail to align—with user needs.

The analysis in this thesis relies heavily on the comprehensive review by Mauri, Minazzi, and Muccio (2013), as their work synthesizes and contextualizes the original concepts developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry. Peer-reviewed articles like this one are particularly valuable in academic context as they often provide a critical appraisal of foundational models, placing them within a contemporary framework. Mauri et al. (2013) not only confirm the ongoing relevance of the Service Gap Model but also highlight its adaptability across diverse service settings, making it particularly suited for application in this study.

Although the Service Gap Model was originally designed for evaluating existing services, its principles can also be adapted to assess potential service frameworks. In this thesis, the model is used to review the existing services mapped in the Torrevieja Service Map (Kytönen

2024) while simultaneously offering recommendations for service improvement and expansion based on the survey results gained from Torrevieja in 2023. This dual application leverages the model's ability to evaluate current offerings and identify gaps between service availability and community needs. By combining the structured insights from the service map with the survey findings, the analysis ensures that recommendations are grounded in real-world data.

By utilizing the established dimensions of the Service Gap Model, this thesis aims to provide a structured framework for evaluating and addressing the needs of the elderly Finnish population in Torrevieja. This approach not only guides the identification of service quality gaps but also offers a pathway for designing culturally tailored and effective solutions that meet the unique requirements of this expatriate community.

4.1.1 Identified Service Gaps

Based on the survey conducted in Torrevieja (Lindeman 2023) and the Torrevieja's Service Map (Kytönen 2024), the analysis of services for Finnish-speaking expatriates in Torrevieja uses the Service Gap Model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985) and its associated SERVQUAL scale to evaluate the quality of existing services. The SERVQUAL scale examines five dimensions—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—which provide a structured framework to assess both tangible and intangible aspects of service provision. These dimensions are applied throughout the analysis to deepen the understanding of the gaps and their root causes.

A prominent issue lies in healthcare services, where the lack of Finnish-speaking professionals and reliable interpreter services significantly hinders access. This reflects deficiencies across several SERVQUAL dimensions. Tangibles, such as the presence of interpreter services or culturally adapted materials, are insufficiently available, leaving residents to navigate healthcare systems unaided. Reliability, which measures the consistency and dependability of services, is undermined by the inconsistency in communication and support during healthcare interactions. Furthermore, assurance, referring to the competence and trust conveyed by service providers, is limited when linguistic and cultural barriers prevent effective communication. The absence of these critical dimensions aligns with the Service Performance Gap in the Service Gap Model, as healthcare delivery does not meet the expectations of Finnish-speaking residents. (Mauri et al. 2013; Parasuraman et al. 1988)

The absence of Finnish-language assisted living facilities highlights further gaps in service design and delivery. 40.8% of respondents indicated a need for Finnish-language assisted living services, either for themselves or their family members. The lack of culturally adapted assisted living options is a clear shortcoming in the tangibles dimension, as there are no physical facilities tailored to the needs of Finnish-speaking seniors. Additionally, empathy—the ability of services to address individual and cultural needs—is entirely lacking, as existing facilities fail to consider the linguistic and cultural needs of the Finnish expatriate population. This misalignment reflects the Service Design Gap, where known expectations are not translated into effective service structures. The gap also impacts the Customer Gap, as residents perceive a significant disparity between what is needed and what is provided. (Mauri et al. 2013; Parasuraman et al. 1988). The absence of suitable assisted living options forces families to consider relocating their elderly relatives back to Finland, disrupting their social ties and negatively impacting their mental and physical well-being (Lindeman 2023).

Social integration challenges reflect deficiencies in both responsiveness and empathy. Elderly residents experiencing loneliness often find that existing services fail to provide timely and culturally appropriate companionship or community activities. Responsiveness, or the willingness and speed of providers to address these needs, is inadequate, leaving vulnerable residents without meaningful support. Respondents expressed a need for services that provide companionship, including friend visits and opportunities for casual social interactions. Similarly, empathy, which emphasizes understanding and addressing individual needs, is missing from current service offerings. These deficiencies align with the Customer Gap, as services fail to meet expectations for culturally familiar and accessible social support systems (Mauri et al. 2013; Parasuraman et al. 1988). The lack of social contacts contributes to mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, and diminishes the overall quality of life for elderly residents.

In-home support services present another example of misalignment with SERVQUAL dimensions. While the immediate demand for daily assistance appears low, the lack of culturally and linguistically adapted options reflects gaps in both tangibles (specialized service availability) and assurance (confidence that these services meet specific cultural needs). While companies like Clean It and AJM Services (Kytönen 2024) provide general cleaning services, they do not cater specifically to the needs of elderly individuals requiring more comprehensive in-home support, particularly in Finnish. This highlights a Service Design Gap, as the current offerings fail to anticipate or cater to the unique needs of the elderly Finnish-speaking community (Mauri et al. 2013; Parasuraman et al. 1988). The absence of these tailored services diminishes the perceived quality and reliability of in-home care options. It also reduces the elderly residents' ability to maintain independent living, increasing the likelihood of premature relocation to assisted living facilities or, under current

circumstances, compelling them to face the difficult choice of returning to Finland to access services they might not yet otherwise require.

Communication barriers further exacerbate these service gaps, aligning directly with the Communication Gap in the Service Gap Model (Mauri et al. 2013; Parasuraman et al. 1988). The inability to access clear and accurate information in Finnish reflects shortcomings in reliability, as residents cannot depend on consistent and transparent communication channels. Additionally, the lack of proactive outreach undermines responsiveness, as service providers fail to address the linguistic and informational needs of the community in a timely manner. These issues leave residents feeling excluded and disempowered, reducing their ability to navigate and benefit from existing services. There is a strong demand for regular communication and updates from local authorities and community organizations in Finnish, particularly regarding healthcare changes, legal requirements, and city decisions. (Lindeman 2023)

By incorporating the SERVQUAL dimensions into this analysis (Mauri et al. 2013; Parasuraman et al. 1988), the gaps in both tangible elements (e.g., facilities, physical resources) and intangible elements (e.g., trust, cultural understanding) become more apparent. The deficiencies in tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy directly contribute to the gaps identified in the Service Gap Model, particularly in service design, performance, and communication. Addressing these shortcomings requires a comprehensive approach that integrates improved service design, enhanced communication strategies, and a commitment to culturally adapted solutions. This alignment would bridge the divide between expectations and delivery, ensuring that the unique needs of Finnish-speaking expatriates in Torrevieja are met effectively.

4.1.2 Recommended Actions

To address the challenges and opportunities of aging in a foreign environment, several targeted recommendations are proposed to enhance the well-being and quality of life of Finnish-speaking seniors in Torrevieja. These actions build on the survey findings and focus on bridging service gaps through culturally and linguistically adapted solutions.

The establishment of Finnish-language assisted living facilities is envisioned as a cornerstone of the operational model, addressing the unique cultural and practical needs of Finnish seniors in Torrevieja. These facilities would serve not just as residences, but as holistic

environments fostering both physical care and emotional well-being, tailored to align with the values and preferences of the community.

To reflect Finnish culture, design elements should include communal spaces for social gatherings, such as saunas and shared dining areas, which are deeply rooted in Finnish traditions. Libraries stocked with Finnish books and media, along with craft rooms for traditional activities like weaving or knitting, would further enhance the sense of familiarity and belonging. Outdoor spaces, such as gardens or terraces, designed for relaxation and light exercise, would complement Torrevieja's favourable Mediterranean climate while offering residents opportunities for both individual reflection and social interaction.

Privacy and autonomy are fundamental principles for these facilities, with single-occupancy apartments providing a balance of independence and support. Each unit could be equipped with accessible kitchens and bathrooms, enabling residents to manage their own routines as much as possible, while still having immediate access to assistance when needed. This design philosophy aligns with Zimmerman's (2001) emphasis on creating environments that promote dignity and personal choice.

Operationally, the facilities should prioritize a well-trained, bilingual staff fluent in Finnish and Spanish, bridging linguistic and cultural gaps while ensuring residents feel understood and respected. Staff training programs should emphasize empathy, cultural competence, and patient-centered care, as outlined by Linschi (2019). Regular evaluations of residents' physical, emotional, and cognitive needs by law (Article 30 of Ley 39/2006) would enable care to adapt dynamically, ensuring services remain relevant and effective as individuals age.

To foster community, the facilities could host regular events, such as Finnish holiday celebrations, group meals with traditional dishes, and interactive workshops. These initiatives would strengthen bonds among residents while creating opportunities for local Finnish-speaking expatriates to engage with the facility as volunteers or visitors.

By addressing these aspects, the proposed assisted living facilities would go beyond merely meeting basic needs, providing a safe, familiar, and nurturing environment that supports independence, enhances quality of life, and preserves the cultural identity of Finnish-speaking seniors in Torrevieja.

However, starting with following steps could be a practical way to begin before building a full-scale assisted living center:

Expanding Finnish-language social activities is essential to combat social isolation and foster community connections. Social clubs, cultural festivals, and group excursions tailored to Finnish-speaking seniors would provide opportunities for meaningful interaction while maintaining cultural continuity. These activities align with research showing that strong social connections significantly improve health outcomes (Holt-Lunstad et al. 2015). Unlike the earlier discussions of social integration, this recommendation emphasizes the implementation of structured, regular programs that cater directly to seniors' preferences.

Providing administrative support in Finnish to assist with paperwork, scheduling, and legal processes would significantly reduce stress and confusion for seniors (Peltonen 2019). When Finnish-speaking staff are unavailable, having enough translation service providers available is essential. More interpreters are needed to meet the high demand and ensure seniors can communicate clearly during medical visits or other important situations. This would help avoid misunderstandings and make sure their needs are met.

Effective communication is essential for empowering seniors to navigate available services. Regular updates and accessible information in Finnish, delivered through newsletters, digital platforms, and local hubs, would ensure that residents remain informed and engaged. This recommendation emphasizes the operational aspects of information dissemination, building on earlier discussions of communication barriers.

Enhancing home-based services is another critical step. Tailored in-home care, including meal delivery, cleaning, and personal assistance provided in Finnish, would support seniors in maintaining their independence. Drawing on the benefits of home-based care identified by Kehusmaa et al. (2012), this approach emphasizes personalized support that enables seniors to remain in their own homes rather than moving to institutional care while receiving the help they need.

Incorporating modern technology into home-based care adds could also add an innovative layer of support. Remote monitoring devices, health management tools, and communication

aids, inspired by the Käkäte project (Peltonen 2019), could enhance safety and convenience for seniors. These technologies offer solutions that extend beyond basic in-home care, allowing for more effective monitoring and communication with family members and caregivers.

Improving transportation services would address a significant barrier to independence. Dedicated shuttles or ride-sharing services with Finnish-speaking drivers could facilitate access to healthcare, social activities, and everyday errands. This recommendation emphasizes practical implementation by integrating transport solutions into the broader operational model. For example, transportation could be coordinated with in-home care schedules, ensuring that seniors have reliable transport to medical visits or community events. Shuttles or ride-sharing services could be designed to operate on fixed routes or on-demand, with Finnish-speaking drivers or assistants who understand the residents' cultural and linguistic needs. This integration allows the transportation system to complement other services, reducing logistical challenges and making it easier for seniors to remain engaged in the community while maintaining their independence.

Expanding telehealth services in Finnish offers an immediate solution to address mental and physical health needs (to an extent), especially in regions with limited access to Finnish-speaking professionals. Unlike previous mentions of telehealth, this recommendation focuses on its integration into a comprehensive care model, ensuring continuity and accessibility. This integration involves ensuring that telehealth is seamlessly connected to other aspects of care, such as in-person medical services, mental health support, and daily assistance. The focus on "continuity and accessibility" highlights the importance of maintaining consistent care over time and making telehealth easy for all residents to use, regardless of their technical skills or resources.

Mental health support requires a multi-faceted approach. In addition to telehealth services, peer support groups and companionship programs could be introduced to provide emotional support and alleviate loneliness (Same Foroughi 2013). These interventions extend beyond the theoretical discussion by incorporating non-pharmacological treatments and structured peer engagement programs tailored to Finnish-speaking seniors.

Lastly, feedback mechanisms should be embedded into the operational model to ensure continuous improvement. Establishing a Finnish community advisory board would create a platform for residents to share their experiences and influence service design. Transparent

processes for implementing feedback would build trust and ensure that services remain aligned with residents' needs over time.

Tammenmaa (2014) emphasizes the importance of involving residents and their families in regular reviews of care services to ensure they remain personalized and effective. Family members often provide valuable insights into the specific needs and preferences of their elderly relatives, offering a perspective that can enhance the quality of care.

Even without the establishment of a wider assisted living facility, feedback mechanisms could be effectively implemented on a smaller scale to address specific challenges faced by Finnish-speaking expatriates. For instance, Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca could adopt simple yet impactful methods to gather input from residents about their everyday experiences and unmet needs. This could include the placement of suggestion boxes at Suomi-Seura's premises, allowing individuals to anonymously submit concerns or recommendations. Periodic surveys conducted in Finnish, either physically or digitally, could further capture residents' perspectives on particular issues, such as access to services, the availability of social activities, or challenges related to healthcare.

In addition to written feedback, hosting regular focus groups or discussion sessions would provide an opportunity for residents to voice their thoughts in a collaborative setting. These informal gatherings, moderated by Suomi-Seura staff or volunteers, could foster an open dialogue between the community and service providers, ensuring that the residents feel heard and valued. Furthermore, establishing a dedicated contact person to receive and address feedback would create a direct and accessible channel for raising concerns.

Such mechanisms would ensure that residents' voices are consistently included in decision-making processes, even on a smaller scale. Regularly reviewing the feedback collected and transparently communicating any resulting actions or changes to the community would build trust and engagement. These smaller-scale initiatives not only address immediate challenges but also establish a foundation for more formalized advisory systems in the future, demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement and community involvement.

By implementing these actions, both the proposed operational model and smaller-scale adjustments would address the identified gaps while offering innovative solutions to enhance

the independence, well-being, and cultural identity of Finnish-speaking seniors in Torrevieja. This approach transforms the challenges of aging abroad into opportunities for fostering a more supportive, inclusive, and adaptable community.

4.1.3 Brief SWOT Analysis for Future Considerations

SWOT analysis is a widely used strategic planning method that evaluates an organization's internal strengths and weaknesses alongside external opportunities and threats. This method provides a structured approach for identifying factors that can impact organizational success and supports informed decision-making (Helms and Nixon, 2010).

The following SWOT analysis synthesizes findings from existing literature and survey data to outline key areas for future development and address the needs of Finnish seniors living in Torrevieja.

Strengths:

- **Cultural Familiarity:**
 - The model integrates Finnish care standards, offering culturally familiar services that prioritize privacy, autonomy, and a homelike atmosphere, highly valued by Finnish seniors.
- **Individualized Care Planning:**
 - Emphasis on personalized care plans tailored to residents' evolving needs, supported by patient-centered care (PCC) practices and continuous staff training.
- **Strong Social Support Networks:**
 - Incorporating Finnish-speaking community groups and culturally relevant activities helps reduce social isolation and build a strong sense of belonging.
- **Advanced Technological Integration:**
 - Use of the Käkäte project and other assistive technologies enhances residents' autonomy through remote monitoring, telehealth, and communication tools.
- **Favorable Mediterranean Climate:**

- The warmer climate promotes active aging, minimizes weather-related risks (e.g., falls on ice), and enables year-round outdoor activities, contributing to residents' physical and mental well-being.
- **Proven Demand and Reputation:**
 - Strong demand from the Finnish-speaking expatriate community, backed by positive feedback from similar projects, provides a reliable foundation for occupancy and expansion.

Weaknesses:

- **Limited Local Integration of Finnish Services:**
 - The availability of Finnish-speaking external services (healthcare, legal aid) is limited, complicating residents' access to necessary support outside the possible facility.
- **Recruitment and Staffing Challenges:**
 - Difficulty in finding qualified, bilingual (Finnish-Spanish) staff may affect service quality, particularly in specialized care areas like dementia or mental health support.
- **Financial Dependence on Private Funding:**
 - Reliance on private investments and resident contributions creates financial vulnerability, especially during economic downturns or unexpected cost increases.
- **Overreliance on Telehealth:**
 - While telehealth offers a solution for specialist shortages, excessive dependence may not meet the personalized needs of all residents, particularly those with severe cognitive impairments.
- **Visibility Challenges:**
 - Although the facility offers a unique and culturally adapted service, it may initially struggle to attract residents due to limited awareness among the broader Finnish-speaking community in Spain, especially at the beginning of its operation.

Opportunities:

- **Growing Expatriate Market:**
 - An increasing number of Finnish retirees seeking warmer climates provides a significant growth opportunity for culturally specific assisted living services.
- **Cost Efficiency and Competitive Advantage:**
 - Lower operational costs in Spain compared to Finland enable competitive pricing while maintaining high-quality service, appealing to price-sensitive retirees.
- **Expansion of Telehealth and Digital Services:**
 - Scaling up telehealth services and implementing more digital tools can address the gaps in local specialist availability, offering a robust, flexible care solution.
- **Strategic Alliances with Finnish and Spanish Healthcare Providers:**
 - Collaborations with local Spanish healthcare facilities and Finnish businesses could boost service offerings and secure additional funding or resources.
- **Diversification of Services:**
 - Expanding beyond residential care to offer day services, respite care, or wellness programs for the broader Finnish-speaking community can increase revenue streams.

Threats:

- **Regulatory and Cross-Border Legal Complexities:**
 - Differences in Finnish and Spanish regulations may create compliance challenges, leading to potential delays or increased administrative burdens.
- **Economic Volatility in the Eurozone:**
 - Financial instability in Spain or Finland may impact residents' ability to afford services, affect funding, or increase operational costs, risking the facility's financial health.
- **Cultural and Language Barriers Over Time:**

- As residents age, language proficiency may decline, exacerbating communication difficulties in a Spanish-speaking environment, potentially affecting their independence and satisfaction.
- **Increased Competition from Local Spanish Providers:**
 - Local Spanish care facilities might offer similar services at lower prices, especially if Finnish residents become more integrated into the local culture and language over time. Alternatively, these facilities could cater to Finnish residents by hiring Finnish-speaking staff members, providing a culturally familiar experience without the need for entirely new Finnish-run establishments.
- **Public Health Risks and Unforeseen Crises:**
 - Future health crises (e.g., pandemics) could disrupt operations, affect staff availability, or lead to changes in regulatory requirements, impacting service delivery and resident safety.

In summary, the SWOT analysis is an effective tool for identifying strategic directions and guiding decision-making. Over the past decade, research has demonstrated its value in analyzing organizations and recommending actionable strategies (Helms and Nixon, 2010). This analysis highlights the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with the proposed operational model, offering a clear framework for entrepreneurs interested in taking on this challenge. By leveraging its strengths, addressing key weaknesses, capitalizing on opportunities, and preparing for potential threats, this model presents a promising opportunity for those aiming to meet the needs of Finnish seniors seeking culturally tailored care abroad.

4.2 Ethical Considerations & Reliability

This thesis follows a clear ethical framework based on the guidelines provided by the Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (TENK 2023) and Rector's Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (Arene n.d). While the thesis did not include primary research, it made use of insights gathered during an internship with Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca along with utilizing Service Gap model to analyze the results gained. These insights were added to support the development of the operational model and make sure it reflects the real needs of Finnish seniors living in Torrevieja.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical framework for this thesis prioritized protecting participant privacy and maintaining data integrity, in line with TENK's emphasis on confidentiality and responsible data management (TENK 2023). Although the primary background data for this thesis, derived from the thesis author's survey (Lindeman 2023), did not require formal research permits, anonymity and privacy were safeguarded by collecting and storing responses without any personal identifiers. Participants were informed of the survey's purpose and the potential for the data to contribute to this thesis, meeting the standard of implied informed consent as outlined in the guidelines (TENK 2023).

Efforts to ensure voluntary participation were also significant. The survey reached respondents through online platforms like Membook and Facebook, as well as physical copies distributed locally. No incentives were offered to avoid coercion, aligning with ethical principles that prioritize the autonomy of participants (TENK 2023). However, the underrepresentation of older respondents highlights a challenge in achieving comprehensive inclusion, particularly in digitally dependent data collection methods.

In terms of data handling, this thesis followed the principles of transparency and security recommended by Arene (n.d.). Digital survey responses were stored in password-protected systems, and paper responses were manually digitized to ensure consistency and shredded afterwards. While all data were anonymized to safeguard participant identities, the absence of a formalized data management plan limited the ability to systematically evaluate risks associated with data storage and handling, a practice strongly advocated by Arene (n.d.).

In this thesis, data were retained from the existing background information for the duration of the analysis process and will be responsibly destroyed upon the completion of the thesis. However, the lack of a formalized retention policy meant that decisions about data handling were made reactively rather than proactively, creating potential risks in ensuring compliance with ethical standards. While this thesis successfully adhered to certain principles of ethical data handling, such as anonymization and secure storage, but it did not fully meet the standards outlined by Arene for a structured data management plan (Arene n.d.).

Despite the informal nature of the main background information source, the survey provided critical insights into the service needs of the Finnish community. These findings have been instrumental in shaping the proposed operational model, emphasizing the urgency of

addressing culturally and linguistically tailored services for Finnish seniors in Torrevieja. The data reflects the unique challenges faced by this aging expatriate community

Reliability

The reliability of this thesis was strengthened through the use of proven methods such as the Service Gap Model. This model provided a systematic way to analyze discrepancies between existing services and the needs of Finnish seniors, ensuring consistent and reliable analysis throughout the thesis. The thesis used a mix of different data sources to support the findings, including tacit insights from the internship, existing laws and previous studies on aging expatriates. This combination helped confirm the results and reduced the risk of bias. Although the insights from the survey were informal, they were used carefully and in a mix with other sources to give a balanced view.

A key challenge in ensuring reliability was the limited availability of academic research on the specific topic of Finnish expatriates in Spain. As Finland is a relatively small country, most information found was from news articles discussing the trend of Finns moving to Spain rather than detailed academic studies. One relevant academic book by Karisto (2008) covered this subject but was inaccessible due to availability issues, highlighting a gap in easily accessible previous academic research. This lack of comprehensive academic sources made it difficult to fully explore the expatriate rights and service needs of this group, requiring a greater reliance on secondary data.

In summary, the ethical and reliability analysis in this thesis demonstrate a commitment to fairness, respect, and transparency.

5 Feedback and Evaluation

Feedback from Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca

The working life partner, Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca, gave positive feedback on the thesis project. The topic of the thesis came up during a development day in 2022, showing that it was relevant to the organization's needs. Anja Uhlgren, the treasurer of the association, stated that the 2023 survey titled "Sosiaali- ja terveystalveluiden kartoituskysely Torreviejan suomalaisvæestolle," conducted during my internship, offered valuable insights into the various service needs of Finnish seniors living in Torrevieja.

Building on these findings, the thesis was praised for its clear explanation of the complex regulatory environment between Finland and Spain, making a strong argument for establishing these services locally. It was emphasized that the proposed services could be cost-effective, benefiting both the users and possible public funding from Finland's side. This economic advantage is often overlooked in Finnish decision-making, where such services are typically viewed as a financial burden rather than an opportunity.

During the process, it became clear that better cooperation between Finland and Spain is needed to create these services. The financial and health benefits could lead to healthier aging and less need for intensive care. Uhlgren noted that while the potential for these services exists, there is still a lot of work to be done before they can be fully implemented.

My collaboration with the organization was described as positive. Uhlgren noted that I handled all assigned topics thoroughly and approached the project just as intended. She also highlighted my hard work and determination, as well as my understanding of the key aspects needed for developing these services. She expressed appreciation for the collaboration and wished me well in my future work.

Self-Evaluation

The project aimed to develop an operational model for Finnish-speaking assisted living services in Torrevieja. Overall, the thesis succeeded in meeting its objectives, providing a high-quality framework that aligns well with the needs of Finnish expatriates in the region. The quality of the final product is strong, as it is grounded in real-world insights gained through collaboration with Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca. Although the time frame was slightly extended due to challenges in evolving legislative changes, the final delivery aligns with the academic schedule. Financially, the project was efficient, leveraging existing resources and partnership insights.

One major challenge was the limited access to academic research on expatriate services, particularly regarding Finnish retirees in Spain. To address this challenge, I focused on integrating practical, community-based knowledge and stayed flexible with ongoing changes, which improved the adaptability of the proposed model.

The actions taken during the thesis process, particularly the collaboration with Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca, were effective in achieving the set goals. The discussion with the organization and the survey responses highlighted the clear service gaps, validating the need for a tailored operational model. The results have practical applications, as the model provides a structured guide for future entrepreneurs and organizations aiming to establish services for Finnish-speaking seniors in Torrevieja. The recommendations are also adaptable to similar expatriate communities, making the findings valuable beyond the immediate context.

Through this project, I gained a deep understanding of the complexities involved in developing culturally sensitive elder care services, especially in a cross-border context. I enhanced my skills in service gap analysis. The thesis process strengthened my ability to apply theoretical knowledge to practical, real-world problems. The experience has been instrumental in shaping my professional identity, providing me with valuable expertise that I can carry forward into future projects in social services.

6 Conclusions

This thesis presents a preliminary operational model tailored specifically for Finnish-speaking assisted living services in Torrevieja, addressing a significant gap in culturally adapted elder care for expatriates. The focus is on practical implementation, presenting a comprehensive framework tailored to address the unique cultural and linguistic needs of Finnish retirees, even when starting with small-scale service provision. Unlike existing services that predominantly cater to Spanish residents, this model prioritizes the quality of life and well-being of Finnish seniors by creating a familiar and supportive environment.

Through the application of the Service Gap Model, this thesis identifies critical discrepancies between existing service offerings and the needs of the Finnish-speaking community in Torrevieja. Unlike generic analyses, this approach integrates qualitative insights from the internship of the author of this thesis in Torrevieja and feedback from the working life partner, Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca. This structured analysis lays a strong foundation for targeted service improvements and innovations.

A core achievement of this thesis is the creation of a comprehensive operational model designed to guide the implementation of culturally sensitive assisted living services. This model includes detailed recommendations on service offerings and strategies for integrating Finnish cultural values and practices. Grounded in survey analysis, theoretical frameworks,

and real-world experience, the model serves as an actionable roadmap for service providers to address the unmet needs.

The thesis provides actionable recommendations for service providers, focusing on key areas such as language support, social integration, and personalized care. These recommendations are deeply rooted in the local context of Torrevieja, ensuring they are not only relevant but also readily implementable. By aligning these recommendations with the preferences of Finnish retirees, the thesis bridges the gap between theoretical planning and practical application.

Recognizing the importance of resident involvement, this thesis also introduces feedback mechanisms that integrates the voices of Finnish expatriates directly into service planning and evaluation. This participatory approach ensures that services remain adaptable to the evolving needs of residents, fostering a sense of ownership and community. This innovation shifts the focus towards a resident-centered care model, emphasizing continuous improvement and responsiveness.

The findings and the operational model presented in this thesis have applications that extend far beyond the immediate context of Torrevieja. This approach can serve as a blueprint for developing similar services in other regions with significant Finnish expatriate populations or even for other expatriate communities requiring culturally tailored elder care.

7 Discussion

The growing trend of retirees choosing to live abroad instead of remaining in their home country reflects a broader shift in lifestyle preferences. However, recent policy changes, such as the possible cessation of national pension payments to retirees residing outside Finland (Kela 2024a), may significantly impact this trend and the viability of the proposed model.

A critical concern is whether these policy changes will lead to fewer Finnish retirees moving to Spain. National pensions have provided financial stability and access to healthcare for many retirees, and their removal could make the prospect of living abroad less feasible, particularly for those with limited savings. While earnings-related pensions remain unaffected, the lack of national pension support and healthcare entitlements like the S1 form may push retirees to reconsider their decisions.

If fewer retirees choose to relocate to Spain, the proposed operational model may face significant challenges. A reduction in the expatriate population would directly impact the demand for culturally tailored services, undermining the financial sustainability of such initiatives. The model's success hinges on a stable and growing community of Finnish retirees requiring specialized services aligned with their cultural and linguistic needs. A shrinking client base could lead to lower occupancy rates and reduced economies of scale, threatening the feasibility of these services.

For those who remain abroad despite financial difficulties, there may be an increased demand for innovative and cost-effective solutions. This could involve integrating digital healthcare tools, forging partnerships with local Spanish providers, or tailoring services to meet the needs of a potentially more vulnerable demographic. These adaptations would be essential to ensure that the model continues to serve its purpose, even in a changing landscape.

The role of climate and community cannot be overlooked in understanding why Finnish retirees choose Spain as their home. For many, Torrevieja offers not just sunshine and a milder climate but also a way to maintain better physical and mental health. The nearly constant sunlight mitigates the effects of seasonal depression, which are often exacerbated during Finland's long, dark winters. Additionally, the social environment in Spain they might have been part of for many years, fosters a sense of belonging and emotional well-being that many seniors feel would be difficult to replicate if they returned to Finland.

Returning to Finland, while financially or medically necessary for some, presents its own set of challenges. The Finnish social and healthcare systems face severe resource constraints, including staff shortages and long waiting times (THL 2023). This reality means that retirees returning home may find themselves in similarly precarious situations, unable to access the services they require in a timely manner. The decision to return, therefore, is not an easy one and highlights the importance of maintaining viable support systems abroad.

The operational model proposed in this thesis not only addresses service delivery but also reflects the broader quality-of-life considerations that drive retirees' decisions. For many Finnish seniors, living in Spain is not about escaping Finland but rather about choosing a lifestyle that enables them to thrive. The government's proposed policy changes, while aimed at addressing budgetary constraints, risk overlooking the benefits that expatriates bring by

reducing strain on Finland's already overburdened healthcare system. Forcing them back to Finland or penalizing them financially ignores the reality that they have made a proactive choice for their well-being.

Future Considerations

Building on this thesis, several avenues for further exploration could help bridge the gap between the proposed operational model and its practical implementation in Torrevieja. While this thesis provides a foundational framework, refining and adapting the model will be essential to address the community's specific needs and ensure feasibility in real-world contexts.

A key next step could involve deeper research into the needs of Finnish expatriates, especially those who are not formally registered but spend significant time in Torrevieja. Seasonal residents, drawn by the favorable climate, may have unique expectations compared to year-round inhabitants. Conducting targeted surveys or interviews could clarify their priorities and inform the development of tailored services.

A pilot project, such as a Finnish-language daycare center, could provide a low-risk way to test the feasibility of the model. This approach would allow real-life feedback from users and caregivers, enabling the refinement of services before scaling up. Collaboration with local stakeholders, including municipal authorities and private healthcare providers, could further enhance this effort by leveraging existing resources and infrastructure. Establishing partnerships with local providers, given Torrevieja's current practice of outsourcing elderly care services, as shared by the working life partner of this thesis, Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca, could streamline implementation and reduce startup costs.

Exploring shared-cost models between Finnish welfare institutions and Spanish providers may also present a viable funding strategy. Such arrangements could make services more affordable for families while ensuring financial sustainability for providers. Additionally, a robust outreach and communication strategy, in collaboration with Finnish networks and community organizations, would help raise awareness and attract users. Highlighting the health benefits of Torrevieja's climate for seniors, particularly those with respiratory or joint issues, could further strengthen the appeal of these services.

Regular monitoring of health outcomes and user satisfaction would be essential to demonstrate the effectiveness of the services and justify continued support. Gathering ongoing feedback would not only ensure the adaptability of the model but also build a strong case for its long-term viability.

Finally, navigating the complex legal and regulatory frameworks in both Finland and Spain will require sustained effort. Engaging with Finnish embassies, local advocacy groups, and municipal representatives early in the process could help address potential legal hurdles and ensure compliance with requirements in both countries.

In conclusion, the favourable climate, opportunities for physical activity, and strong sense of community in Torrevieja continue to attract Finnish retirees, offering an appealing option for aging comfortably and maintaining a fulfilling lifestyle. While this thesis provides a foundational framework, its insights point to numerous opportunities for further development. By conducting targeted research, piloting initiatives, fostering partnerships, and maintaining a focus on feedback and adaptability, the proposed model can be refined and brought closer to successful implementation in the future.

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ChatGPT 4o has been used to edit the language of this Thesis

Figures

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Appendix 1: Sosiaali- ja terveystalvaeluiden tarvekartoitus saatekirje ja kysely

Sosiaalipalveluiden tarpeen kartoitus

Torreveijan suomalaisvæstölle

Kyselyn tarkoituksena on kartoittaa suomalaisvæstön sosiaali- ja terveystalvaeluiden tarvetta Torreveijan alueella. Kyselystæ vastaa Laurean sosionomiopiskelija Juulia Lindeman sekæ Costa Blancan Suomi-Seuran hallituksen jæsen Anja Uhlgren. Saaduista vastauksista tehdæen loppuraportti ja kartoitetaan tarvittavia jatkotoimenpiteitæ palveluiden mahdollistamiseksi. Selvitetään myös EU:n rahoitusta riippuen tarpeiden laajuudesta.

VIIMEINEN VASTAUSPÆIVÆ 31.3.2023

Kartoituksesta saaduista tuloksista pidetään erillinen infotilaisuus, jossa tarvittaessa paikan pæällä myös asiantuntija Brysselistæ. Tæstæ paremmin infoa myøhemmin.

Vastaukset kertyvæt anonymiminæ Google Formsiin eli kenenkæen henkiløtietoja ei tule tietoon. Ålæ myøskæen kirjaa arkaluontoisia henkiløtietoja kyselyyn!

Muista painaa læhetæ / send kyselyn lopussa!

 Not shared



* Indicates required question

Asumistilanne *

- Yksin
- Pariskunta
- Perhe
- Muu



Tahtoisitko Torre viejan kaupungin palveluista tietoa suomen kielellä? *



Kulttuuripalvelut



Liikuntapalvelut



Terveyspalvelut



Hallinnolliset palvelut esim. asukastodistuksen hakeminen, rakennusluvut Sosiaalipalvelut esim. kodinhoitopalvelut



En tarvitse tietoa suomen kielellä

Jostain muista palveluista, mistä?

Your answer

*

Onko sinulla riittävä sosiaalinen / ystävä -verkosto Torre viejan alueella? Esim. saatko apua tarvittaessa



Kyllä



Ei

Oletko joutunut kokemaan yksinäisyyttä tai masennusta? *



Kyllä



Ei

Tarvitsetko apua taloudellisten asioiden hoitamisessa? *



Kyllä



Ei

Onko taloudellinen tilanteesi turvattu? *

- Kyllä
- Ei

Tarvitsetko apua viranomaisten kanssa asiointiin? *

- Kyllä
- Ei

Tarvitsetko apua lääkärin tai muiden terveydenhuollon ammattilaisten tapaamisessa?

- Kyllä
- Ei

Milloin viimeksi lääkityksesi on tarkistettu?

- Viikko sitten
- Kuukausi sitten
- Vuosi sitten
- 2 vuotta sitten
- 3+ vuotta sitten

Onko sinulla vaikeuksia huolehtia lääkityksestäsi? *

- Kyllä
- Ei

4/25/23, 7:48 PM

Sosiaalipalveluiden tarpeen kartoitus Torreviejan suomalaisväestölle

Onko sinulla vaikeuksia muistaa asioita? *

Kyllä

Ei

Oletko viime aikoina kaatunut? *

Kyllä

Ei

Tarvitsetko tietoa yksityisistä terveydenhuollon palveluista Costa Blancan alueella?

Kyllä

Ei

Tarvitsetko apua päivittäisissä toiminnoissa, kuten pukeutumisessa, peseytymisessä tai ruuanlaitossa?

Kyllä

Ei

Tarvitsetko apua päivittäisessä siivouksessa tai kaupassa käynnissä? *

Kyllä

Ei

4/25/23, 7:48 PM

Sosiaalipalveluiden tarpeen kartoitus Torreviejan suomalaisväestölle

Onko kotona oleva ympäristösi turvallinen ja esteetön liikkumiselle? *

Kyllä

Ei

Onko sinulla vaikeuksia kulkea kodin ulkopuolella tai käyttää julkisia kulkuvälineitä?

Kyllä

Ei

Millaisia palveluja toivoisit asumispalvelujen sisältävän? Voit valita useamman



Ruokapalvelut



Siivouspalvelut



Terveyspalvelut



Asiointi-apu



Ystäväpalvelu (ulkoiluun, kahvitteiluun yms.) Jotain muuta?



Kerro alempana

Jotain muuta, mitä?

Your answer

Tuleeko mieleesi jotain muuta, josta haluaisit erikseen mainita tai tarkentaa?

Your answer

Submit

[Clear form](#)

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google. [Report Abuse](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Privacy Policy](#)



Forms

Appendix 2: Työelämän palaute : Suomi-Seura Costa Blanca



Työelämän palaute

8.12.2015/ba

Hyvä työelämän edustaja

Kiitos, että tarjositte Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulun opiskelijalle/opiskelijoille mahdollisuuden tehdä opinnäytetyö yritykseenne/organisaatioonne. Työelämän kehittäminen on tärkeä osa opinnäytetiedemme arvioinnissa. Pyydämmekin näkemystänne.

Yrityksen/organisaation nimi	Costa Blanca Suomi-Seura
Työelämän edustajan/Arvioijan nimi ja tehtävänimike	Anja Uhlgren, seuran rahastonhoitaja
Opinnäytetyön ohjaaja yrityksessä/organisaatiossa	Anja Uhlgren
Opinnäytetyön tekijä/t	Juulia Lindeman
Miten yrityksenne/organisaatioonne hyödyntää tehtyä opinnäytetyötä? Juulian lopputyön aihe nousi esiin seuran kehittämispäivän yhtenä osa-alueena v. 2022. Vuonna -23 Juulian tekemä haastatteluselvytys antoi vahvasti viitteitä erilaisten palvelujen tarpeesta. Tämä jatkotyö on erinomainen, jossa peilataan monitahoisesta Suomen ja Espanjan toimintoja ja niiden toteuttamista palvelujen tuottamisessa. Työ osoittaa eri vaiheissaan ikääntyvien tarpeet, mutta tuo esiin erinomaisella ja perustellulla tavalla miksi palvelujen totuttaminen tulisi toteuttaa alueella. Tämä osoittaa myös kokonaisuutensa näkökulmasta palvelujen tarvisijoiden kuin valtion taloudellisuudenkin osalta. Mitä ei ehkä osata aina riittävästi edes huomioida. – mm suomalaisessa päätöksen teossa tämä tulisi huomioida taloudellisena mahdollisuutena eikä uhkana.	
Mitä uutta ja/tai odottamatonta tuli esille opinnäytetyöprosessin aikana tai tuloksissa? Prosessissa vahvistui se, että olisi suositeltavaa tehdä maiden välistä tiiviimpää yhteistyötä erilaisten palvelujen järjestämisen kannalta. Taloudellisuus, kustannusvaikutus suomalaisessa sosiaali- ja terveydenhuollossa sekä ihmisten kokonaisvaltainen kunnossa pysyminen niin terveydellisten kuin toiminnallistenkin seikkojen puoli huomioiden, ovat mahdollisuus terveenpään vanhuuteen ja lyhyempään ympärivuorokautisen hoivan tarpeeseen. Kaikki voitaisivat. Mahdollisuudet toteutukselle ovat, mutta matkaa palvelujen tuottamiseen on vielä pitkälti.	
Miten kuvailisitte yhteistyötä opinnäytetyöntekijän/-tekijöiden kanssa? Juulia Lindemanin kanssa työskentely on ollut miellyttävää. Hänen on huolehtinut annetuista aihealueista kokonaisvaltaisesti tarkasteluissaan. Juuri niin kuin tavoitteena on ollut. Juulia on ollut ahkera ja erittäin määrätietoinen sisäistäen juuri ne asiat mitkä tehtävässä ovat olleet olennaiset palvelujen kehittämisen kannalta. Iso kiitos Juulialle miellyttävästä yhteisestä matkasta ja hyvää jatkoa tulevaan.	

Haluaisitteko jatkossakin tarjota opiskelijoillemme opinnäytetyön aiheita tai harjoittelupaikkoja?
Miten haluaisitte kehittää yrityksenne/organisaatioonne ja Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulun yhteistyötä?



8.12.2015/ba

Opinnäytetöitä on mahdollista kyllä teettää jatkossakin. Tosin meillä on seurassa nyt juuri hankala vaihe vanhojen ja uusien toimitilojen muutoksessa. Mutta seuran hallitukselle voi jatkossakin olla yhteydessä näissä merkeissä.

Paikka ja päivämäärä	Turussa 17.11.2024
Työelämän edustajan/arvioijan allekirjoitus	
Nimenselvennys	Anja Uhlgren
Voitte palauttaa lomakkeen myös ilman allekirjoitusta sähköpostilla joko suoraan koulun ohjaajalle tai opinnäytetyöntekijälle, joka välittää viestin ohjaajalleen siten, että viestiketjusta näkyy allekirjoittajan sähköpostiosoite.	