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# Reasons for Hiring a Foreign Intern, CASE: AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA

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**Laurea University of Applied Sciences**  
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**Reasons for Hiring a Foreign Intern,  
CASE: AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA**

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**Reasons for Hiring a Foreign Intern, CASE: AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA**

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This Bachelor's thesis is an assignment from AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA registered association. The purpose of this thesis was to find out about reasons and advantages for companies to have a foreign intern and how would AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA learn from this information. AIESEC is the world's largest student-run organization that promotes internationalization and international mobility. Five companies that were either old clients or had had an interest in employing a foreign intern were interviewed for the purpose of this thesis.

The thesis is a qualitative study of which theoretical framework consists of introduction to internationalization and recruitment. The research is based on qualitative research and the empirical part was executed as theme interviews for five companies. The results of the interviews were analyzed by content. Theme interview was chosen to be the method of research in order to get more specific understanding of the phenomenon.

The results show that internationalization, cultural and language proficiency were usually the main reason for a company to have a foreign intern. Although finding a foreign intern can be difficult, the intern can also bring diversity and new perspectives for the company.

Interviewing companies to find out points to improve is a continuing process for AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA. A Similar study can be performed again or in a larger scale to find out better more ways to improve AIESEC's operations.

KEYWORDS: AIESEC, internationalization, recruitment, international mobility

Lauri Lehmusvirta

### Syyt ulkomaisen harjoittelijan palkkaamisessa, AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA

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Opinnäytetyön tarkoitus oli löytää syitä ja hyötyjä yritykselle ottaa ulkomainen harjoittelija sekä miten AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA ry voisi hyötyä tästä tiedosta. Tämän opinnäytetyön toimeksiantajana toimi AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA ry. AIESEC on maailman suurin opiskelijavetoinen järjestö joka edistää kansainvälistymistä ja kansainvälistä liikkuvuutta. Viittä yritystä, jotka ovat olleet vanhoja asiakkaita tai kiinnostuneita ulkomaisen harjoittelijan ottamisesta, haastatettiin tätä työtä varten.

Opinnäytetyö toteutettiin laadullisena tutkimuksena, jonka teoreettisen viitekehyksen muodostaa kansainvälistyminen ja rekrytointi. Tutkimus pohjautuu laadulliseen tutkimukseen ja sen empiirinen puoli on toteutettu teemahaastatteluin viidelle yritykselle. Haastatteluiden tulokset käsiteltiin sisältöanalyysillä. Teemahaastattelu valittiin tutkimusmetodiksi jotta saataisiin tarkempi ymmärrys tutkittavasta ilmiöstä.

Tulokset osoittivat, että kansainvälistyminen, kulttuurin ja kielen tuntemus olivat pääsyyt ulkomaisen harjoittelijan ottamiseen. Vaikka ulkomaisen harjoittelijan ottaminen voi olla vaikeaa, harjoittelija voi kuitenkin tuoda diversiteettiä sekä uusia näkökulmia ja mielipiteitä yritykseen.

Yritysten haastatteleminen sitä varten, että löydettäisiin toiminnalle parannuskohtia, on jatkuva prosessi AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA:ssa. Samankaltainen tutkimus tai sitä laajempi voidaan suorittaa jotta saataisiin parempi ymmärrys tavoista parantaa toimintaa.

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## 1 Introduction

The world is getting more international all the time and possibilities for young people to get international experience are getting broader. For a modern young, there are several ways of getting international experience if one so desires. AIESEC is the world's largest student run youth-organization that provides young talents possibilities to get international experience in their home country or participating in various exchange programs.

The purpose of this thesis has been to study the past experiences of AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA's incoming Global Internship Program and what kind of impact it has had on the companies it was working with.

The idea and need for this research came up when the researcher was participating in a team that was organizing AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA's Global Internship Program during spring 2015. It seemed that there hadn't been a proper research for satisfaction or research concerning customer relations with companies that AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA had contacted for participating in Global Internship Program.

The idea behind Global Internship Program is to find companies where young talents from abroad could come to do internship. The need for this study was discussed within the local committee to understand better the process of finding companies for incoming Global Internship Program.

## 2 Background and objectives

AIESEC is one of the oldest and biggest youth-run organizations that promotes youth mobility globally. One of the ways to promote youth mobility globally is to offer internship possibilities world-wide. Global Internship Program is one of the programs that promote youth mobility by providing paid internships for the youth of less than 30 years old. AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA was running Global Internship Program with varying results until the summer of 2015. Currently the program is on hold and its continuation is pending. In order to understand better why companies would be interested in a foreign intern, this research was thought up to understand the situation better. The research tends to try to find an answer to the following questions:

- Why would a company choose a foreign intern rather than local intern?
- What are the benefits and advantages of having a foreign intern? How about challenges and disadvantages?

- How does the process differ from taking a foreign intern rather than a local intern?

The objective of the study is to examine the past actions of AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA's Incoming Exchange unit with special emphasis of the operations of Incoming Global Internship Program for the past few years. . The study has been commissioned by AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA, a not-for-profit organization which provides international mobility for students and youth under 30.

This research tries to clarify reasons for companies to take a foreign intern instead of a local intern. Five companies that AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA has approached in the past are interviewed for their experiences. Two of these companies had an intern through AIESEC and three companies were interested in having a foreign intern but AIESEC couldn't provide them one. All the five companies were small or medium sized with an interest for internationalization or already being international. The objective of this research is to understand more deeply why these companies were interested in dealing with AIESEC in order to get a foreign intern and what could be the benefits for having a foreign intern.

The theory part will be gathered from different literature sources and the empirical part of the study will be qualitative study on companies which AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA has had cooperation within the past years. The qualitative study will try to find out reasons for companies would be interested in taking a foreign intern and what could be the benefits for them. This information should be enough to draw some conclusions and suggestions for improvement.

The theory part of the research will be composed of internationalization, recruitment and non-profit organization. The theory part will explain basics of recruitment and how it differs in international situation. Non-profit organization will be introduced in general and organizations that promote global or youth mobility will be mentioned. Organizations that provide similar kind of mobility services will be introduced as comparison to AIESEC's services.

### 3 AIESEC

AIESEC is the world's largest student run organization which operates in 126 countries and territories and in over 2400 universities. AIESEC was founded in 1948 and its seven founding countries consist of Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. AIESEC is independent and non-political not-for-profit organization. Since the founding of AIESEC, it has been run by students and recent graduates of higher education under the age of 30. (AIESEC FINLAND 2015a)

AIESEC's vision is "Peace and the fulfillment of humankind's potential." The goal is by personal development and shared global experiences to create positive impact on the youth. By letting young people to experience and see the world by making a difference, they will discover what truly matters to them. (AIESEC FINLAND 2015b)

On practical level AIESEC offers possibility to join one of their local committees where one can polish their leadership skills in an international environment. AIESEC offers national and international seminars where members can develop and discover their potential. AIESEC members have a possibility for leadership opportunities, international internships' and participation in a global learning environment. (AIESEC Canada 2013)

### 3.1 AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA

There are eight AIESEC local committees in Finland and AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA is so far the youngest full member of AIESEC Suomi registered association. It was founded in April 2011 and operates at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Pasila, Helsinki. The metropolitan area alone has three local committees, the two other being in Helsinki University and Aalto University. (AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA 2014, 3.)

AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA provides its members with international network and a possibility for gaining personal and professional growth. The goal is to provide the members with new possibilities for high-level experience by creating an environment for developing proactivity and change. In long-term plan, AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA's goal is to have operations grow safely and to respond the challenges that come with the growth of operations. AIESEC's mission is to develop leadership potential in youths through professional internships, volunteer experiences and experimental learning. (AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA 2014, 3.)

AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA provides the youth with possibilities for incoming and outgoing exchange. The incoming exchange provides possibilities for young talents from outside Finland to come to Finland for internship or volunteer work. The outgoing exchange has been mainly concentrating in finding youth to take part in international volunteer work. (AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA 2014, 5-9)

### 3.2 AIESEC internship programs

As mentioned earlier, AIESEC local committees two of the main functions are to provide incoming exchanges and outgoing exchanges. In this chapter will be provided information about how the two function and what are programs called GCDP and GIP.



Incoming exchange simply refers to exchange that happens from abroad to Finland. People who work for incoming exchange find companies or organizations that would cooperate with AIESEC in order to give young talents from abroad to come to Finland to work as an intern in a company or as a volunteer in a volunteer program. In this research the emphasis has been put into incoming exchange since the process in question that is being researched is part of incoming exchange.

Outgoing exchange refers to a process of sending youth from Finland to abroad for internship or volunteer work. People who work for outgoing exchange are marketing the programs and try to find people to take part in outgoing exchange programs. Outgoing programs are also divided into internship exchange and volunteer work exchange.

### 3.3 GCDP, Global Community Development Program

GCDP, which stands for Global Community Development Program, is volunteer work based program. For example, incoming GCDP has a HERO-project where young volunteers come to Finland and work at primary schools to improve the awareness of bullying. HERO-project has been AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA's idea and has been going on since 2013.

On the outgoing side, every year there are four to five countries that are selected as partner-countries. These countries will be promoted and young exchange participants can go to experience world and work at educational or environmental programs.

### 3.4 GIP, Global Internship Program

GIP stands for Global Internship Program. The main focus of this research is going to be in incoming GIP process. GIP provides youth with possibility to experience international internships through AIESEC. Outgoing GIP is in charge of sending the local youth to other countries to gain experience on their field by doing internship abroad. AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA isn't currently providing outgoing GIP possibilities.

Incoming GIP is in charge of finding companies that would take an intern from abroad. The process of incoming GIP will be explained thoroughly in this research.

### 3.5 Incoming GIP Process

In this chapter, the process of the incoming Global Internship Program will be explained. The incoming Global Internship Program process follows six steps before an internship will be real-

ized and one step for follow-up. The sales team of GIP is in charge of contacting companies and they are performing the steps.

### Prospecting

Research of companies will be done. The main focus is on Marketing and IT-companies. Companies that want to internationalize or are internationalizing already are good targets. Companies are searched from the internet in various ways, for example, LinkedIn, Facebook, Kauppalehti's company search. After finding a suitable company and a person to contact, the company information will be added in to system called Podio. In Podio, all the companies that have been contacted will be listed so contacting into same company many times won't happen. After checking that the company is not already in Podio, the company will be added with basic information of the company and whom to contact.

### Contacting

Contacting has mainly happened by cold calling. It is also possible to contact the company in other ways, for example by LinkedIn. After a company has been added to Podio, the company will be contacted. The sales team has received a proper training for cold calling and contacting companies from older and more experienced members. The goal of contacting is to give brief information about whom and what AIESEC is and what the program can offer to the company.

### Meeting

Meeting is the time to introduce the program more thoroughly to the company and start negotiating about possible contract with AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA and the company. Few examples of possible intern candidates will be introduced during the meeting period.

### Contract

There will be a contract between AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA and the company. The company will pay a certain amount as a raising fee. AIESEC as a service provider will start the process of finding and bringing an intern for the company.

### Matching

After finding possible candidates, AIESEC will present the candidates to the company. If the first set of candidates doesn't provide suitable intern, a new set of candidates will be looked

up. If AIESEC can't find a suitable candidate, the contract will be cancelled and the matching fee will be returned to the company.

#### Realization

After finding a suitable candidate for the company, the internship will be realized. Procedures for bringing the person to Finland will start. Visa procedures and pre-arrival procedures will start until the intern has arrived. AIESEC will also provide help with immigration procedures and housing.

#### Follow up

In follow up phase there will be regular contacting with the company and the intern about their experience. In case there are problems, AIESEC will provide help in finding a solution.

## 4 Internationalization and international mobility

According to a Finnish business magazine, *Taloussanomat*, internationalization can be explained such as: "A company's or country's adaptation to international work labor. Business' transmission to international trade, manufacture, finance and labor" (*Taloussanomat* 2015). Internationalization will be briefly covered in this research since companies that were interviewed, have been interested in internationalization by being interested in taking a foreign intern.

Internationalization can be explained when a company expands its research and development (R&D), production, selling and other business activities into international markets. Internationalization can happen in relatively continuous fashion, especially in larger firms, by taking various international stages in increasing steps over a period of time. But as for small and medium-sized enterprises, internationalization can be relatively discrete process. Each internationalization venture can be regarded as distinct and individual. (Hollensen, 2014, 53.)

Usually something or someone triggers from inside or outside the internationalization to take place. In order to succeed in global marketing, a company has to overcome export barriers. Some barriers affect only in initiation stage where as other can be encountered in the process stage. (Hollensen 2014, 69.)

#### 4.1 Internationalization Motives

The fundamental motive for exporting in a company can be considered to be making profit. Usually it's not just one factor that gives results in a company, but rather a mixture of factors that take steps into a given direction. Internationalization motives can be divided into proactive and reactive motives. (Hollensen 2014, 53.)

Proactive motives are based on company's interests in market possibilities and exploiting unique competences. A stimuli to attempt strategy change comes from inside the company. Typical proactive motives can be such as: Profit and growth goals, foreign market opportunities or market information, tax benefits. For example, knowledge about foreign customers and specialized markets can distinguish a company from its competitors on foreign markets. (Hollensen 2014, 53-57.)

Reactive motives are based on outside force. It can be pressure or threat from its home market or from foreign markets. For this reason company has to passively adjust itself by changing its activities over time. Examples for reactive motives can be such as: Competitive pressures, small and saturated domestic market and proximity to international customers or psychological distance. For example, small home markets might not be sufficient enough for a company to do business so it has to start exporting or expand to international markets. (Hollensen 2014, 53-58.)

#### 4.2 Internationalization barriers

In initiative stage of internationalization, barriers can simply be something such as: Insufficient knowledge, lack of foreign market connections or insufficient finances. Insufficient information on foreign customers, competition and foreign business practices can be considered as a key barrier for prospective and active exporters. (Hollensen 2014, 66.)

The process stage of internationalization can be divided into three groups: General market risk, commercial risks and political risks. General market risks consist of such as language and cultural differences and comparative market distance. Commercial risks include such as exchange rate fluctuations or difficulties in obtaining export financing. Political risks can include foreign government restrictions or lack of governmental assistance in overcoming export barriers. (Hollensen 2014, 66-69.)

### 4.3 International Mobility

International mobility can have many variations. One exact definition was hard to find but generally international mobility happens when people cross borders to other countries for a purpose such as study or working. Maunimo.eu has defined mobility (Maunimo 2015)

International mobility is promoted by many organizations. Few of these organizations will be presented as a comparison to the work that AIESEC does:

#### *Cimo*

"CIMO is an expert organisation providing services on international mobility and co-operation" (Cimo 2015). Cimo is an agency of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, which promotes internationalization in different ways. One way of doing this is to coordinate exchange programs, trainee opportunities and scholarship schemes. Cimo also works together with EU by implementing and informing about EU programs and supports teaching of Finnish language and culture. (Cimo 2015)

Cimo provides concrete possibilities on information about internationalization. The work and information they provide is to enrich public debate regarding internationalization. A cornerstone for Cimo's work is cooperation. Cimo helps to provide new perspective and to analyze phenomenon and issues. Goals for people to connect and achieve their goals are provided by offering exchange, trainee and scholarship programs that support international activities. (Cimo 2015)

#### *Erasmus*

Erasmus is EU run program that includes youth mobility services such as study exchanges and internship possibilities. Erasmus is mainly run in EU-area and already 90% of universities are participating in it. Erasmus offers mobility possibilities for university students, teachers and other staff. (Erasmus 2015)

The Erasmus program promotes European cooperation and mobility. Objectives for Erasmus are such as:

- Increasing quality and quantity of mobility in Europe
- Connecting cooperation with universities and work life
- Promoting innovation

(Erasmus 2015)

### *Kilroy*

Comparing to Erasmus and Cimo, Kilroy is a company providing internationalization and mobility services. Technically Kilroy is a travel agency, which also offers study exchange and internship possibilities and counseling services for overseas study and internship possibilities. (Kilroy 2015a, 15.)

Kilroy mainly provides internship possibilities in its partner countries. Currently according to their website, they are USA, Australia and China. Kilroy has its own networks in the target country from which they can provide internships for young talents. (Kilroy 2015b)

### *Allianssi*

Allianssi is a Finnish association for youth work, but they are also running a service called Nuorisovaihto, Youth Exchange. Nuorisovaihto provides volunteer works and paid internships over the world. Nuorisovaihto has several projects that offer international working experience. (Allianssi 2015)

What is similar with Allianssi, is that it's an association like AIESEC is. It's not government funded like Cimo, or working for profit like Kilroy.

## 4.4 Nonprofit-organizations

"Nonprofit organizations are organizations which main purpose is not financial profit for its owners." In nonprofit-organizations the mission is usually emphasized. What for and to which target group the work is done, is more important in a nonprofit-organization. (Vuokko 2003, 14)

The society has four sectors: Private, public, third and fourth sector. Private sector includes organizations that do business for profit. Public sector has the state and municipalities. The public administration has a planned operation model and decision making factor, but it is not pursuing financial profit. For these two sectors, it is typical for them that their organization consists of hired employees. This is not typical for third and fourth sector. Third sector consists of different sorts of societies and associations. Third sector association might be run by volunteers, which would make it less formal compared to private and public sector. On third sector, societies and associations are not aiming for financial profit. Fourth sector consists of household, families and circle of friends. Fourth sector is not formal procedure. (Vuokko 2003, 15.)

Definition of third sector and associations that are included in third sector can vary depending on country. Nonprofit-organizations classification may also vary on country. In Finland, nonprofit-organizations come in various fields. In this research, AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA's operations will be processed since its purpose is to promote international activity. (Vuokko 2003, 15.)

AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA is active on third sector. AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA promotes internationalization in its operation by producing opportunities for students and youth to develop their leadership and international skills. AIESEC as an organization doesn't aim for financial profit, but collects funds to operate by membership fee or other costs from its partners. (AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA 2015, 2)

## 5 Recruitment

Recruitment is a possibility for a company to bring new workforce and potential to the company. A newcomer comes to the company to develop himself, to bring and improve and create prosperity. A new person is an individual with interesting assets and potential. By finding a right person, you can deploy the assets and potential of the individual. (Vaahtio 2005, 11.)

### 5.1 Recruitment as a project

Recruitment can be seen as a project, like any other project that would start from a need and end in a solution. It includes the preparation phase, execution phase and decision making phase and includes monitoring phase in the early steps of employment. A project is planned carefully and implemented after the whole picture is understood. (Markkanen 2002, 9.)

The investment in recruitment can change the whole culture in the company, which can lead to improved results. A new person can bring more than just the required contribution. He can bring his networks and perhaps even new customers. (Vaahtio 2005, 12.)

Recruitment also has its risks. In worst case, a rushed and inept process can lead to decreased turnout or loss of customers. Recruitment can also have costs, even if you didn't use outsourced services. The contribution that you have put in recruitment has already cost something. (Vaahtio 2005, 12-13.)

## 5.2 Outsourcing recruitment

You can easily waste time and resources in recruitment. There might be tens or hundreds of possible applicants enquiring about the job available. And this is still without mentioning the time you have to spend on interviewing applicants and the selection process. (Vaahtio 2005, 122)

Private recruitment agencies or labor agencies' employer service units can manage the entire recruitment process from the beginning to the end or, alternatively, only a certain part of the recruitment process. The use of reliable consulting firms is safe, because the same standards apply for consultants as employer itself. When using a consultant's recruitment service, it's a good practice to give the consultant some space to get to know the company and the job description of the new recruit. (Vaahtio 2005, 122.)

## 5.3 AIESEC as a recruiting consultant

In AIESEC, the role of the IGIP is to find companies that would cooperate with AIESEC by taking a foreign intern. The process doesn't really differ from normal. Since AIESEC is a nonprofit-organization, its goal is not to gain financial profit with its recruitment services, but to offer a possibility of international experience for young talents. And also because AIESEC is run by volunteers, finding cooperation partners and making contract with them acts as training for members.

## 5.4 Recruiting foreign work force in Finland

The Finnish labor market hasn't internationalized that much yet. Sorainen refers to information from Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy by stating that out of all the establishments in Finland, only 3% of them are taking foreign workers. The amount of foreign employees will likely to expand in the near future and spread out to different fields. (Sorainen 2007, 39.)

Foreign employees are mainly employed by gardening, construction, cleaning, restaurant and transportation fields and usually in tasks that work as a way to enter the Finnish labor market. Including these fields, many foreigners are working especially in big companies that deal with exporting. (Sorainen 2007, 39.)

According to research by Kari Kananen (2006, 28.) about recruiting from abroad, companies generally don't consider finding employees from abroad. An essential criterion for recruitment is to find a competent and suitable person. As long as the employee has required skills and



proficiencies for the job in question and is suitable for the work, it is less relevant for the employer that from which country or cultural background the employee comes from. Nowadays and in the future, a foreign worker is more and more relevant and possible option. (Sorainen 2007, 39.)

Occasionally the work force in Finland is influenced by the fact that the labor force doesn't seem so internationally attractive. The language spoken in Finland is rare, the climate is cold and taxation is high. In addition to this, matters and costs concerning bureaucracy and immigration are often left for the immigrant to deal with. Hiring a foreign employee usually creates additional costs. Recruitment targeted for foreign workers usually has its own challenges. Finding workforce in the target country requires the employer to familiarize with the local recruitment culture and usage of particular proxy services. Getting orientated for job applications in foreign language, getting them translated and any other bureaucracy related permission requires resources. It can also be difficult for the employer to be assured about the foreign employees' work proficiency among other skills. (Sorainen 2007, 39-40.)

Employers can also dislike the idea of hiring a foreigner, because of the foreign workers educational background, work experience, professional competency or frail language proficiency. Quite often when hiring a foreigner or a person with foreign background, these kinds of suspicions towards work competency, language proficiency and other survival in work, turn out to be groundless. (Sorainen 2007, 41.)

For finding foreign workers, business establishments have used various different channels, like:

- Direct contacting between employer and applicants
- Informal channels, "Word of mouth"
- Marketing the available job in the target country
- Public job placement services in Finland / target country
- Private job placement services in Finland / target country

(Sorainen 2007, 41.)

## 6 Empirical Research

The preparation for the research started with studying recruitment, internationalization and non-profit organizations. Five companies were interviewed for the purpose of this research. All these companies are Finnish companies and they had been involved in AIESEC Incoming Exchange. Two of these companies had had an intern from AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA. With three other companies, AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA was able to sign a contract of cooperation, but was

not able to provide an intern for the company. The contract was cancelled afterwards. These companies were still chosen for this research because they had had an interest for a foreign intern, even though AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA couldn't provide them an intern.

The definition of an intern was divided into two different categories: Foreign intern and local intern. The definition for foreign intern here refers to an intern that is brought from another country to Finland to work in company for certain project or timeline. Foreign interns live in another country and are specifically brought for an internship in Finland. A local intern is a person who is living in Finland permanently or for a long-term purpose, for example degree studies or family relations. Local intern is not restricted only for a native Finn, but can also be a foreigner living in Finland for long-term purposes. The main difference here would be in global mobility beyond borders to get new kind of experience

The following topics were researched in the interviews in order to grasp an understanding for companies to take a foreign intern instead of a local intern.

- Why would a company choose a foreign intern rather than local intern?
- What are the benefits and advantages of having a foreign intern? How about challenges and disadvantages?
- How does the process differ from taking a foreign intern rather than a local intern?

Interview questions as in whole can be found at the end of this thesis. (Attachment 1)

## 6.1 Research methods and data collection

Qualitative research was decided to be the method of acquiring information in this study. Qualitative research is very common, when you want to gain deeper understanding to the phenomenon in question. In this research, the objective is to gain new information and deeper understanding of the phenomenon that is being studied. (Kananen 2010, 41.)

Qualitative research means any kind of research that aims for discoveries without statistical or other quantitative methods. Qualitative research uses words and phrases, when quantitative research is based on numbers. In qualitative research the goal is not generalization like in quantitative research. The goal is to describe, understand and interpret the phenomenon in question. The aim is deeper understanding. (Kananen 2014, 18.)

For a qualitative research it is typical to collect data in comprehensive way and also material will be collected in natural and realistic situations. A person is favored as a method for collecting information and the researcher trusts more in his instincts and discussions rather than

any methods of measurement. A person is flexible enough to adapt in versatile situations. Starting point is to examine details and not testing a theory or hypothesis. (Hirsjärvi et al 2009. 164)

It's typical for a qualitative research that a target group is selected on purpose and not by chance (Hirsjärvi et al 2009. 164). Companies that have been selected for this research have earlier been in contact with AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA. Because of their experience and understanding of the process, they have been selected to be interviewed for this research.

In this qualitative research, theme interview was used as a method of data collection for research material. Theme interview was chosen so that as much precise information could be gathered from the interviewees. For a qualitative research, there are distinctive three different methods of data collection: Observing, theme interviews and documents. (Kananen, 2010, 48.)

## 6.2 Theme interview

Theme interview is a discussion where two people talk about selected themes one by one. Researcher has prepared themes in advance which he will discuss with the interviewee. A theme can be very general or merely a topic for conversation. (Kananen, 2014, 70.)

An interview can be considered as a unique method for data collection, since in it you are in direct linguistic interaction with the examinee. The greatest advantage of this is usually flexibility when gathering material. (Hirsjärvi et al, 2009, 204.)

A theme interview style is in between a form- and open interview. It's typical for theme interview that interview's subject matter or theme is known, but the exact form or order is missing. Theme interview corresponds well with the basis of qualitative research. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 208.)

Theme interview is the most common data collection method in qualitative research method. It can be conducted individually or in a group. In this research, interviews are performed as individual interviews so that as much and as precise information could be collected from the interviewee. Individual interview is also more exact and more reliable method than group interview. (Kananen 2010, 53)

Before deciding to approach the phenomenon as qualitative research, possibility for quantitative research was also considered. Unfortunately AIESEC's database couldn't provide enough contacts so that the research could have been done as quantitative research.

Companies that took part in the research and people who were interviewed have all been dealing with AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA and its program for bringing foreign interns to Finland. It has been very convenient and useful to ask them about the process in general and also about results of the program. Basically they all have been interested in having a foreign intern so they have been very potential candidates for this research.

For this research, five small or medium sized Finnish companies that work on IT, marketing and energy field were interviewed. These companies were selected from AIESEC's database and from annual reports of past few years. All of the companies reached the state of signing contract with AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA. AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA was offering these companies its services on bringing a foreign intern to work for them.

With two of the companies the service was realized and the companies got an intern through AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA. The three remaining companies had signed the contract, but the contract was cancelled for reasons such as AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA couldn't find a suitable intern for the company.

The people who were interviewed were either the CEO of the company or a person in charge of HR. One interview was conducted over phone, but the rest four were face-to-face interviews that were done at the interviewee's office. Interviews were recorded for later processing and were processed around the time of last interview. Interviews were conducted between September 8th and 25th 2015.

The companies that were interviewed had been contacted by AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA in year 2013 or 2014. All of them remembered the situation quite well and could provide useful information during the interview.

The companies that were interviewed are listed below:

| Time of cooperation | Company    | Field                   |
|---------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| 2014                | Netcontrol | Energy & Environment    |
| 2014                | Usetrace   | Advertising & Marketing |
| 2013                | M-Brain    | Computers & Software    |
| 2013                | Dingle     | Advertising & Marketing |
| XX                  | Company X  | Computers & Software    |

### 6.3 Interview analysis and key results

Processing and analyzing the material should be started as soon as possible after data collection or field work phase (Hirsjärvi et al 2009, 223). Content analysis was chosen to be the method of analyzing the interviews.

In content analysis, the content is examined by categorizing, finding and summarizing similarities and differences. The examined material can be written text or interviews. With content analysis the phenomenon is tried to provide a summarized description of the phenomenon. This description will support the phenomenon's wider context and research results that concern the research results. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002, 105.)

Analyzing the research material, processing and organizing interviews was started before the last interview was done. All the interviews were recorded with either cell phone or iPad, from which the recorded file was transferred to a computer. A word processor was used to type up all the interviews in separate files. The recorded audio files were transcribed while they were listened. Transcribed text was processed repeatedly before the turn out of the interviews was gathered in one single file divided into each question.

After the research material was divided and sorted by each question, it was easier to process the results question by question. By each question, results of the interviews were gathered and processed with pen and paper. This helped to understand better which points were repeating between interviewees opinions, and was there something that would greatly differ from the common opinion or experience of all the interviewees

Writing down the results was rather easy after transcribed interviews had been categorized and summarized. Mainly the interviewees had either positive or negative comments, but there were also times when everybody had a different opinion, which made writing down and summarizing the result difficult.

### 6.4 Research results and interviews

The interview research results are set in two different parts. First the research results will be explained question by question. After this, there will be other notes from matters that were realized during the interviews, but weren't actually asked in any of the questions. Matters that would affect the phenomenon and should also be considered in conclusions.

*Why would a company choose a foreign intern rather than local intern?*

When asked about the difference of taking a foreign intern compared to a local intern, native language skills and cultural background were pointed out by three companies. Two companies mentioned that the process of selecting a person from abroad is longer and requires more planning. You have to put more effort and resources in finding a person from abroad than what you would have to do in your current country. Taking an intern from abroad can be considered as a risk, since you can't get the same amount of information. You can't meet the person face-to-face, do a handshake and look him into eyes, like you would with a local person. In other words, you have to select the foreign intern with worse specimen, than a local intern. Also the bureaucracy of bringing someone to Finland to work has to be considered as well as all the practicalities of living in Finland.

Language and cultural background was mentioned as a main reason for a company to take a foreign intern by three companies. Also internationalization inside the workplace and international atmosphere and perspective were also brought up to be advantages that a foreign intern could bring to the company. Emphasis on hiring a foreign intern has been on getting someone who understands the different markets and how they operate.

For example, CEO of Dingle said that they had a clear need for someone with native language skills and understanding of the target country. CEO of NetControl said that an international atmosphere can be considered as richness in your workplace. But finding a foreign intern can be difficult since you would need a middle-man like AIESEC to help with procuring one.

*What are the benefits and advantages of having a foreign intern? How about challenges and disadvantages?*

When asked about benefits and advantages of a foreign intern, new perspective pointed out from most of the answers. Perspective of other markets, other cultures and other ways of operating can bring you new ways of thinking. The cultural diversity in a company can bring new ways of thinking and new way of understanding the whole picture. The more there are ways of thinking, the more you also have to think about the situation from different angles.

CEO of Dingle pointed out wordless and speechless communication. All those informal gestures and behavior that someone from another culture does but normally you might not notice them. For example, you ask your intern perform a task. He's way of thinking and doing is different compared to what we are used to in Finnish culture. And this leads to a new way of thinking.

As for challenges, daily life practicalities and bureaucracy concerning immigration was mentioned by most of interviewees. Getting a residence permit, finding an apartment and such

practicalities have to be thought and dealt with a foreign intern. The intern has to visit Finnish authorities in order to get working permit or such. The employer also has to prepare documents for the intern's immigration process. For example opening a bank account for a foreigner requires surprisingly much effort. Also the surroundings will be different and the intern has to get used to local environment while working.

Level of language proficiency and cultural differences were also brought up by two interviewees. It can be hard to evaluate the level of working language even if you can interview the person over video call. Cultural sensitivity has to be considered when a person comes from different culture. The person is going to act differently and his understanding of the local environment is limited which might affect if you have to think about content for local market.

Finding a foreign intern can also be a challenge. Where and how to get one? CEO of Dingle gave an example that if he wanted an intern from Spain, he wouldn't know where and how to get one without doing proper research about how it should be done.

HR Manager from M-Brain brought up that a foreign employee has to know at least something of the Finnish labor legislation. She said that it's not that the worker wouldn't work enough, but sometimes they might work too much what is allowed in Finland.

The CEO of NetControl also mentioned that you are always a bit suspicious about the process since the mental and physical distance to the foreign intern is much longer in the process which makes it challenging.

*How does the process differ from taking a foreign intern rather than a local intern?*

Thinking about how the process differs on expectations. Ideas and comments on expectations didn't really have one major outcome. Except that two interviewees said that expectations don't really have to differ when hiring a foreign intern or a local intern. Same quality for working and learning is expected from a foreign intern and a local intern.

One opinion was that new perspectives are expected if there are people from diverse cultural background. And another thought was that it would be great if the foreign intern could continue working for you after he returns back to his country.

The CEO of Usetrace brought up that working with AIESEC was really process-like. He was wondering what kind of applicants can be brought with AIESEC's process-like service compared to normal open recruitment. So the expectation for the outcome, getting a foreign intern, could be different depending on the recruiting process.

CEO of Dingle was bringing up the weaker basis for recruitment when finding a foreign intern. He described the situation as a “black risk factor” when you can’t get proper information about the applicant so you can’t set too high expectation on what you are eventually getting. He also explained that you usually hire a foreign intern for some specific reason, so in that sense the expectations are higher than getting a local intern. The foreign intern is expected to have to bring a special perspective or skills to the workplace; where as a local intern could be used for any normal job in the office. He also pointed out that quite many times a foreign intern is expected to answer for all the questions concerning his origin country. Not that it’s very realistic for an intern to know everything about his origin country, especially when talking about a specific field of study or work.

The recruiting process of AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA was the only question that received quite many negative responses. The process was considered slow and ineffective by two companies. There were communication problems between AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA and the companies in question. Two companies expressed that the process was not considered trustworthy. Frank comments such as “What was supposed to happen, didn’t happen” and “Lots of work with no results” were said. It was also mentioned that the service might not fit for smaller companies and the price is high comparing that you can do recruitment by yourself for free.

On the other side, positive comments were also really supportive. The two companies that had had a foreign intern through AIESEC were really positive with their experience. The process had been fast and without any problems. For a medium sized company, the service AIESEC provides is really convenient. Not just the recruitment process, but AIESEC also deals with the immigration bureaucracy, finding accommodation and integrates the intern to the local culture. Or as the HR Manager from M-Brain said, AIESEC provides the student circles to support with integration to Finnish society. A personal contact is always good. Also the price for the service was also considered cheap comparing to normal recruiting agencies.

The CEO of Dingle said that the three positive points were safety, easiness and service. At least for them it was easier than finding a foreign intern on themselves. AIESEC also gives a guarantee that the intern is international-minded person, by seeking international work experience.

Almost all of the companies mentioned that AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA was the one who contacted first. “AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA’s active marketing and sales” is what CEO of Dingle said. As for M-Brain, AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA contacted them on right timing when they were on process of looking for an intern.



The company X said that they had a clear need for an intern since they were also entering into new market. AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA contacted them and they were interested. The process didn't work out well and they had really bad experience working with AIESEC.

For NetControl, they were interested in internationalization and wanted to expand to other markets. They knew that they need local knowledge, language proficiency and cultural competence. The CEO of NetControl also mentioned that AIESEC gives a good frame to try out a foreign intern by providing such a service. The process and service just didn't work out well with their company and AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA couldn't provide an intern for them.

As for Usetrace, they got interested when AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA contacted them. They discussed it with their team and decided to give a try. They had quite high criteria for the applicant so a foreign intern could not have been provided.

### *Other findings*

The general opinion about working with AIESEC seemed to be divided into good and bad experience. The companies that had been contacted in year 2013 said that they had really good and fast experience. Companies that were contacted in 2014 had lots of bad experience to tell how the process was slow and didn't work. Of course, this can be thought as a point for improvement.

Although interviewees had varying experiences with AIESEC, most of them were still ready to try it again in case they would be promised that the process would work better this time. In optimal conditions the service AIESEC would provide gives a company good possibility to test out a foreign intern without investing lots of resources in recruiting.

There was also talk that in retrospect, companies' requirements might have been too high and in the future they could also lower the rim. If the requirements for a foreign intern are set to be too high, finding a proper intern can also be challenging.

## 6.5 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are methods to observe a research. In all researches, the reliability and validity are tried to evaluate. Also avoiding mistakes is also preferred. The results for reliability and validity can vary. In order to evaluate the reliability various kinds of measurement and research methods can be used. (Hirsjärvi et al 2009, 231.)

Reliability means repetition of measurement results. This refers to an ability to give non-random results. There are many methods to prove the reliability. For example, a result can be considered reliable if two researchers end up in a same conclusion. Or the results can be stated reliable, if the phenomenon is studied many times and the result is always the same. (Hirsjärvi et al 2009, 231.)

Reliability can be considered realized since the interviews have been tried to explain as precisely as possible bringing information for the research. The interviewees in this research have been selected because they have been in contact or done cooperation with AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA before. They have been able answer to interview questions from their personal experience. Since the main goal of this research has been to examine past activities of AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA, the interviews and companies' answers have also produced good and practical answers.

Interview questions were reviewed with thesis supervisor. After some feedback and comments, questions were changed to fit the research better. The interview questions were also presented to an alumnus of AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA, who used to be in charge of the iGIP program. His comments and advises were used to improve the interview questions to its final form. During interviews, confusing situations or question were explained again and examples were given.

At first some tension and stiffness occurred in researcher. After first few interviews the researcher started getting more self-confidence and the interview setting started feeling more pleasant. In most of the interview situation the conversation continued after interview questions.

Validity is the other concept in concerning evaluation. Validity means that phenomenon that is being researched, is properly measured by research and measuring methods. Measuring and research methods do not always correspond to the reality, which the researcher thinks he's researching. The results cannot be taken as reliable and valid, if the researcher treats them according to his own original way of thinking. Methods of measurement can cause errors in to results. (Hirsjärvi et al 2009, 231-232.)

Even if you don't want to use the terms, reliability or validity, some sort of evaluation should always be done to evaluate reliability and validity of the research. Validity in qualitative research can be enhanced by explaining exact process of how the research has been executed. The circumstance for producing the material has to be told clearly and truthfully. (Hirsjärvi et al 2009, 231-232.)

In this research a certain fact, that the researcher is also a member of AIESEC, has to be taken into account. Although the researcher has tried to be critical about AIESEC as an organization, some prejudices and assumptions might affect the research results. The validity of the research could have been improved by also interviewing people from AIESEC who used to run and market the iGIP program. In that case, information about from which basis they have been offering the service for companies could have been gathered. So there could have been comparison of the giving and receiving side of the project.

## 7 Conclusions

From research results it can be stated that the need for cultural competency and language proficiency is usually behind the reason for hiring a foreign intern. A company would want to be more international or wants to enter into a new market in target country. In order to do this smoothly, a foreign intern has been considered as the bridge to connect our working culture to a new market. Having a foreign intern can also bring lots of new ideas and perspectives to a company.

Getting a foreign intern is not that simple and finding a suitable intern can be hard. It would seem that smaller companies prefer more open process for finding an intern, but for medium sized company, an organization such as AIESEC can provide a really good turnkey-solution for having or just trying out a foreign intern.

In optimal situation, having a foreign intern can bring cultural diversity to a company. Having many different people from various backgrounds can make you think matters from different angles and point of views. Not just different ways, but also silent and wordless actions will matter. The basis of thinking differs in cultures. The intern can also bring his networks and after the internship is over, he could still continue his work in his home country.

A foreign intern brings also lots of challenges and disadvantages. The selection process in itself is hard because you can't get the same amount of information about a person who you can't meet in person because he resides in another country. Not just the selection, but the finding process also can be difficult without a "broker", a company or organization like AIESEC that provides recruiting or services for international mobility. Also all the immigration matters, bureaucracy, finding an accommodation and such make the process even more difficult. And still, cultural differences and language barrier shouldn't be forgotten. AIESEC doesn't provide just recruiting process, but also handles matters concerning accommodation and immigration. This is also very positive mark for AIESEC.

The process of AIESEC's iGIP program was dealt with negative and positive comments. Those who had enjoyed it said that the process provided them safe and easy service, whereas the opposite opinion was a slow and unreliable. The price for the service was also found very reasonable for a medium sized company, but a smaller company was wondering why to invest money and time in a service that doesn't bring results. The product seems to be good, but the quality of the process has been varying.

There has been a notable difference in performance between years 2013 and 2014. The team was different and the team from 2013 seemed to perform much better than the team of 2014. This can be clearly seen in the fact that the two companies that had a contract realized were from 2013 and the companies from 2014 were the ones with most negative comments.

When comparing the interview results to the theory part of this thesis, there are parts that agree with results and parts that disagree. Although the theory part stated that generally companies wouldn't be interested in foreign labor since it costs more and you can be sure about the result. Some of the interview results agreed on this. Hiring a foreigner can be a risk, since you can't get enough information from the applicant like from someone who you could meet face-to-face.

If we compare AIESEC to other organizations that promote internationalization and youth mobility, AIESEC is actually quite easily approachable. AIESEC also offers its services with rather low price for both parties.

In the end, it can be said that AIESEC's internship program could have lots of potential customers from companies that are looking to become more internationalized or are trying to enter to new market. For the past years the performance of AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA's iGIP team has decreased leaving bad experiences for some companies. Well executed the product can be very good for all the parties, but inadequate performance gives a bad reputation of AIESEC.

## 7.1 Improvement suggestions

From researcher's point of view, the first thing that comes to mind after the whole process is that there are lots of things that haven't been done properly. There is a gap in performance between years 2013 and 2014, and eventually in 2015 the iGIP program was put down. It can't really be said that things were done well. The product is good and as properly executed, it can offer both parties new experiences and possibilities for improvement.

What can we learn from this? After the interview with NetControl's CEO, he reminded that when working with companies, you also have to work professionally. This hadn't happened when AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA was contacting them. But still, the product is good; the method of delivery just needs to be improved. When asked if the companies were ready to try AIESEC's service again, many of them said yes. Only one said that they would get their foreign intern by some other methods.

## 7.2 Further research

This research was done using only contacts from AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA and only five companies were interviewed. It can be said that the research setting was quite narrow. More companies could have been involved and more interviews could have been done. Five interviews were still considered to be enough for a bachelor level thesis.

On local committee level, this kind of research could be done yearly for all contacts on incoming exchange. This research was done in relatively short time scale and interviews were done only once. Interviews could be done in several settings in order to understand the interview process and questions better.

On national level, AIESEC has more partners that could be used to study the phenomenon on much bigger scale. Maybe there have been satisfaction surveys before, but while working on this research the researcher didn't hear about any. There could be a proper satisfaction survey done after any cooperation with a company. This would be done to get better understanding about how the companies feel on working with AIESEC. Also, it could be interesting if similar research could be done around Finland to learn from other parts of the country as well.

All in all, this research can be considered as one step closer to understand the process of iGIP. It could be interesting and profitable for AIESEC if similar research could be continued in order to improve the process.

## 8 Own work and learning process

The process of this research started vaguely in spring of 2015. A possibility of doing a research for AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA was talked among some members during spring. The first idea was to research a process around volunteer programs but after later discussion a need to research the process of Global Internships Program was brought up.

Most of the theory part was written during spring, which also supported the idea of what kind of questions to ask in interviews. The researchers two months trip to abroad during summer stopped the thesis project for a while and writing continued from late August. September was mainly used for contacting companies for interviews, performing interviews and processing them. From very early of October, actual writing was continued.

Working on this research has been a good experience to learn more about the work of AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA and iGIP process. So far the only way to learn about past experience was to ask from older members or Alumni how had the project been. Also, annual reports provided brief information about the results from earlier years. All the information was rather subjective. Interviewing companies face-to-face gave the researcher better understanding on what the companies had thought about AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA's iGIP project.

This research has been done in quite short timeline and with limited resources. This can also be seen in the quality of the thesis. There was lots of confusion around how and what to write, but eventually the thesis started having shape of a bachelor's thesis.

Writing this thesis has given the researcher a possibility to understand AIESEC and its functions from another perspective. Also studying about non-profit organizations, recruitment and internationalization as a whole, has been a very good experience to think about the process of youth mobility. When finding out about other organizations on a field of internationalization and youth mobility, lots of ideas have occurred for the researcher.

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Appendix

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## Attachment 1 Interview questions

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Reasons and motives for a company to take a foreign intern?

- 1) In what way does taking a foreign intern differ from taking a local intern?
- 2) Why would a company choose a foreign intern instead of local intern?
- 3) What advantages or benefits can a foreign intern bring to a company compared to a local intern?
- 4) What challenges can there be in taking a foreign intern instead of local intern?
- 5) How can expectations differ when taking a foreign intern rather than local intern?
- 6) In which way does taking an intern from AIESEC differ from normal recruiting process?
- 7) What made you interested in taking a foreign intern from AIESEC?