

Plan for facilitating a transformative event in asylum seeker context

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<p>The author of this thesis was faced with some of the challenges of asylum seekers while volunteering with free-time activities in the reception centre of Punavuori in Helsinki. Already from these experiences arose the basic target of the thesis and the basic idea for the event for which a plan is made during the thesis process. It is clear that by choosing this thesis topic the author is also seeking personal transformation through the meaningful cause of improving the wellbeing of others and their capacities for self-improving it.</p> <p>The aim of this thesis is to improve the wellbeing of asylum seekers with the means of designing an event with transformational potential. The objectives are to gain more understanding in the context and daily challenges of asylums seekers, to discover which parts of their wellbeing could be influenced with the means of organizing an event, and to collect insights from previous literature on how to design engaging events with transformational potential. The final objective is to apply the insights gained through fulfilling the previous objectives into planning an actual event for the asylum seekers in Punavuori reception centre.</p> <p>These objectives are approached from the perspective of a volunteer and a student of hospitality management, not from the perspective of a professional in event organizing or social work. The author's personal input to this topic is valuable from the perspective of personal experience of organizing activities in this specific context, her interested familiarization with the event and experience literature from this perspective, as well as good intentions of truly wanting to responsibly help the participants of the event to make a difference in their own lives.</p> <p>The thesis comprises of a literature review that is divided into two main chapters covering the context of the asylum seekers as well as event, experience and transformation design. The framework of the Event Canvas is utilized for guiding the event design process which is documented in the thesis. The final product is the event presented with the Event Canvas coupled with a brief practical event program.</p> <p>Based on the insights of the literature review and the design tools utilized in the process, a plan for an event was created with the goal of increasing the asylum seekers' sense of self-efficacy, sense of contributing to others and sense of opportunity of shaping their own lives. The basic idea behind the design concept is to facilitate the asylum seekers in planning and, in the future, realizing their own ideas for free-time activities.</p> <p>The objects of the thesis were met, and the resulting event plan is evaluated to have some transformational potential. The event design is a good attempt at shifting the viewpoint from a 'passive aid-receiver' to an 'active contributor'. Yet, the event must be seen as an element of a longer project for fulfilling its true potential. The schedule of the thesis was tight, and therefore the author has decided to still add a few additional steps before realizing the actual event to ensure its success. The thesis project was conducted between April and June in 2017.</p>	
Keywords Event Canvas, asylum seeker, wellbeing, transformation, Empathy Map	

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1 Introduction

Asylum seekers have become a major topic of public debate in the recent years. The global increase in the number of displaced persons suggests that the arrival of asylum seekers to Finland might increase in the future as well. Finland needs to decide whether to enable the increase of arrivals to become an opportunity that is beneficial for the whole society including the arrivals, or if the arrivals are placed in the role of threats for the society by lack of integration and lack of possibilities to contribute. Contributing to others is one of the key needs of any human being. Yet, in the case of asylum seekers we are failing at this on both sides: we are both failing to contribute to their wellbeing and failing in letting them contribute to ours.

Personal transformations towards wellbeing might be the main underlying motivation under all human activity. In this thesis, the focus is on how to support these desirable transformations. Events might be an excellent way of supporting transformations, but they must be supplemented with aspects that not only help to create personal transformations but also help to sustain them in time. This thesis explores whether an event initiated for asylum seekers by a volunteer could have any transformational potential.

Many of the volunteer-activities organized for asylum seekers are well-intended but might fail to consider the holistic impacts they have in the context that they are organized in. In this thesis, the author takes a more holistic design approach thoroughly reflecting on the context and the risks involved in designing for a vulnerable group. In this introduction chapter, the background, aim and objectives of the thesis are presented. The thesis project is introduced together with the structure of the thesis report. Finally, some key definitions are presented and the specificities of working with vulnerable groups are given consideration to.

1.1 Background of the thesis

The author has been volunteering with asylum seeker free-time activities for approximately 5 years now, and has been intrigued by the challenge of helping people to gain a sense of capability, meaningfulness, and purposefulness in their often extremely challenging life circumstances. There are many people volunteering to help with their situations and many activities are offered, but still the author has had a feeling that there is space for development in the basic approach of these free-time activities, and not only in the quantity or variety of the activities offered. For practical reasons, this thesis must be limited into

the area of free-time activities – but the author does believe that gaining empowering experiences in this area of life might very likely have a transformative spill-over or even snowball effect on other areas as well.

The context to which this thesis focuses on is definitely rather extraordinary in the Degree Program of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management in which the author studies. Yet, the author sees the ‘experience and transformation paradigms’ as one of those resources in the hospitality industry that give an opportunity for interdisciplinary utilization now and even more so in the future. The author would like to see the ‘experience and transformation approach’ being more capitalized on in many fields, and not only when it comes to external customers but also in organizational transformations and in serving internal customers.

1.2 Objectives

The aim of this thesis is to improve the wellbeing of asylum seekers with the means of designing an event with transformational potential. This thesis aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. to familiarize the author and the reader with the asylum seekers’ context and their daily challenges
2. to discover what are the major causes that currently bring down their wellbeing and to discover which of them could potentially be influenced with an event which is organized with the resources the author has available to oneself within the limitations that are posed by the situation of the asylum seekers
3. to find out which factors are essential for designing an event and especially which ones increase the likelihood of guiding a desired transformation
4. to apply the insights gained from fulfilling the previous objectives to create an event plan for the asylum seekers.

During the implementation of the planned event, as a side product research insight will be gained on the wishes and priorities of asylum seekers related to their free-time activities, but this falls beyond the scope of this thesis. The author believes that this thesis topic is highly relevant in the current Finnish society where immigration policies are tightened and public attitudes polarized, as well as in a world which is moving towards the experience and transformation economies. The findings of this thesis are a contribution to the wider application of the Event Canvas, and experience and transformation frameworks. It can be useful for volunteers who work with asylum seekers and practitioners in other fields that

are not very familiar with the ideas of event design and experience staging or transformation guiding. According to the knowledge of the author, the Event Canvas framework has not been previously applied to planning activities for guiding transformations among vulnerable groups.

In order to put the objectives of this thesis into a bigger picture, one has to address the kind of a world one wants to create, and the kind of strategies one wishes to adopt to make it happen. The author wants to promote a more egalitarian and inclusive society in Finland and globally. The author believes that material development only has value if it positively affects the wellbeing of people. The author believes that small changes can build up into big changes. And from personal experience the author knows that small increases in one's sense of self-efficacy can have great effects on one's wellbeing and day-to-day life.

The author's personal learning and outcome goals are presented in the appendix 3, which is the Event Canvas of 'Project Initiator'. It comprises of the author's perspective on the whole thesis process and not only on the event that is the product of this thesis. Even if Event Canvas is a tool primarily for designing events, it seemed to serve quite well also in planning and motivating a longer project like that of the thesis. Based on the 'Project Initiator' Event Canvas there clearly have been four main goals for the author: to complete this thesis project to free valuable mental resources for other projects, to become better at completing such projects, to gain a sense of contributing to others by truly trying to design an event that can improve wellbeing – considering the participant perspective – and to learn more about how to facilitate improvements in wellbeing.

1.3 Brief project info and methodology

Based on the objectives presented above, the author conducts a literature review and uses the insights gained in it to create an event plan for asylum seekers. Creating this event plan – which is the topic of this thesis – is only a part of the whole project for improving asylum seeker wellbeing. As is later discussed in this thesis, creating significant changes can hardly be realized through the means of a single event.

The original plan for the timetable of the thesis project was, due to a change in the deadline, changed so dramatically that it is not presented here. The implemented timetable of the thesis project is presented in appendix 1. In appendix 2, one can see the thesis project as a part of the whole project from idea to implementation of the initiation event and to continuation of the project. The thesis project started when the author decided to put this

idea of hers in the format of a thesis. The thesis project is only focused on planning a single event, which during the process was decided to be the initiation event for a new process of creating ideas for and organizing asylum seeker free-time activities. The whole project already started when the author for the first time got the idea that she would be interested in trying to facilitate an improvement in asylum seeker free-time activities. After the thesis, the project continues with implementing the initiation event and the follow-up events. The final decisions on the form and number of the follow-up events are only done when seeing the results of the initiation event, and they are only discussed very briefly in this thesis. The whole project aims at facilitating the asylum seekers to take control of the organization of and resource acquisition for their free-time activities, as well as strengthening the transformations in wellbeing initiated by the event planned in this thesis.

In this product-oriented thesis, the author utilizes multiple methods to arrive at the final event design. Secondary research was conducted to utilize the knowledge and experience of previous authors with more experience in their fields and to create the theoretical basis for the practical part of this thesis. In addition to secondary research, the author utilized two design tools: the Event Canvas and the Empathy Map, which enabled the author to combine the insight gained through secondary research with her personal observations, the narratives she had previously heard from asylum seekers, and her individual brainstorming as well as the results of the group design session. In the group design session brainstorming was used to gain a bigger quantity of more varied ideas. After the idea creation, the ideas were also analysed and developed together, so that the author had access to a larger variety of perspectives in addition to her own when making decisions on the final design.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

After the introduction to the thesis process, chapter 2 continues with familiarizing the reader with the context and characteristics relevant to asylum seekers globally and in Finland. The focus is especially on the challenges that the asylum seekers face in their everyday lives. After this context introduction, the literature review continues in chapter 3 with the description and analysis of the Event Canvas framework (Frissen et al. 2016). This chapter is complemented with some insights from the Experience Economy (Pine and Gilmore 1999) and Gamification in Tourism (Bulencea and Egger 2015) approaches.

The fourth chapter introduces the end product of this product-oriented thesis. The whole process of designing the potentially transformative experience is documented. The author reflects on the applicability of the Event Canvas framework for the context of the thesis

and for designing for this type of a purpose. The event plan itself is presented in the appendices in the template of the Event Canvas (appendix 8) coupled with an additional practical Event program (appendix 9). In the end of chapter 4, conclusions are drawn and recommendations made for further use of the applied tools and for research on the design of transformative events. In the fifth chapter, the author evaluates the thesis project and one's own learning. The thesis concludes with the list of references and the appendices.

1.5 Scope of the thesis

With planning an event for the asylum seekers, there were several approaches to choose from. The final approach was based on the author's background reading and previous experience with asylum seekers and especially on their accounts on the challenges of their daily life. Based on these accounts and research on the context of asylum seekers, a purpose arose as the guiding principle of this thesis: to increase wellbeing by creating certain impressions and encouraging certain transformations within the participants of the event.

Limitations:

- The scope of the literature review is limited according to the relevance to the thesis objectives, by the time available for the process and the scope of a usual Bachelor's Thesis.
- The author has chosen based on relevancy one main approach to designing events to be applied in this thesis. This does not mean that there would not be any alternatives that might also have been useful.
- The product is developed mainly on the basis of the Event Canvas framework due to its seeming relevance to designing transformations, evaluations are given on the applicability during the process of the thesis and modifications are made if necessary.
- Some dimensions of event design are dealt with in more detail and some are addressed in a more general manner. These emphasises are based on the focus on the transformational potential of the event.
- The product was developed based on the literature review, the author's knowledge and experience, and a brief group design session. It might not be suitable for application in other contexts or individual cases.

1.6 Key definitions

In this chapter, some of the key terms of this thesis are defined. Additionally, some terms are explained which might not be very familiar in the field of hospitality management.

1.6.1 Asylum seeker

Asylum seeker is one of the key concepts of this thesis. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution” (Article 14.1 n.d.). Followed from this right, the UNHCR defines an asylum seeker as a person who has applied for international protection, but on whose status as a refugee the decision is yet to be made (UNHCR n.d., p.37).

In this thesis, the term refugee is used to refer to people who have received a positive asylum decision – in the case of this thesis often receiving the decision in Finland or arriving in Finland as a quota refugee. The term asylum seeker is referring to the individuals who have submitted their asylum applications and are waiting for decisions or the processing of their complaints. However, in much of the literature this distinction is not made so clearly, and ‘refugee’ is often used as an umbrella term. Additionally, many of the same concerns apply to both refugees and asylum seekers. And for these reasons, for applicable parts also literature on refugees is included in the theory of this thesis.

1.6.2 Transformation

Transformation is one of the central concepts of this thesis. A transformation is the purpose and the goal of the final event design. Pine and Gilmore describe transformation as an intended, lasting and fundamental change in attitude, performance or characteristics. They suggest that transformation will in the future become the main economic offering, where the actual product is the transformed individual themselves. They believe that transformations cannot be produced as such but can only be guided. (Pine and Gilmore 1999, pp.170-172.)

Following the footsteps of Pine and Gilmore, in this thesis the focus is purely on transformations that are intentional. The author acknowledges that almost any experience in a person’s life can potentially be transformative, but it is believed that the likelihood of a desired transformation can be enhanced by a purposeful design process. In this thesis, wellbeing is seen by nature as a fundamental matter, and thus any intended and lasting change in personal wellbeing is regarded a transformation.

1.6.3 Transformative Event

Events are described by Frissen et al. very broadly as any occasions where two or more people come together, incur some kind of a cost due to participation, and still choose to do it (Frissen et al. 2016, p.18). The author of this thesis would see this definition as meaning that every time that two or more people come together voluntarily – since every

time there is an opportunity cost – it can be defined as an event. In this thesis, events are considered more narrowly as gatherings which have been to some degree planned beforehand. Meeting someone on the street and deciding to participate in a conversation by not leaving is not considered an event for the purposes of this thesis.

The goal of this thesis is to plan a transformative event. As seen from the definition of the previous subchapter, transformations cannot be created but only guided, which means that when the author of this thesis refers to a transformative event the meaning is always more specifically an event with transformational potential. By the design of the event the author attempts to increase the likelihood of the desired transformations to take place, but the transformations can never be guaranteed, since they are a question of the interplay between the individual and the experiences that the event provides.

By combining these definitions of a transformation and an event the author arrived at defining 'transformative event' as people gathering together into a situation that has been purposefully designed to increase the likelihood of a fundamental and lasting change to take place within the participants. The success of the event can be measured in the extent to which and frequency in which the desired transformations take place.

1.6.4 Global South and Global North

Sometimes the terms used for certain phenomena can have a vital impact on people's perceptions. There are many ways to refer to the division of countries according to, for example, GDP, the type of economic structure, education level and life expectancy. Many of these terms are criticized for maintaining hierarchical power relations among countries by creating a clear value hierarchy and disempowering the nations lower in the hierarchy.

The terms 'Global South' and 'Global North' are seen as less hierarchical than the earlier terms of 'Third World' and 'Developing World' (Rigg, South and Lamech 2015) and their counterparts 'First World' and 'Developed World'. For this reason, 'Global South' and 'Global North' are the terms chosen to be used in this thesis to refer to the countries where people on average have less income, education and shorter life expectancy. Despite of the names, the division is not geographical: some Global North countries are located in the Southern Hemisphere and vice versa. The division is of course very arbitrary and there is no universally agreed list of countries that are seen as a part of either the Global South or the Global North. The term 'Global South' is seen as empowering (Rigg, South and Lamech 2015), and thus as potentially transformative.

1.7 Working with vulnerable groups

Ethics play an especially important role when conducting research or working with vulnerable groups. Even if this project does not attempt to step in the field of social work or participative research, these fields have a lot to offer when it comes to considerations about working with vulnerable groups. The author pinpoints some of the most relevant considerations and shows how they are taken into account in her own work.

It is essential for the success of this project that the author reflects on her own role in working with a vulnerable group. Working with vulnerable groups that do not possess full citizenship or are not proficient in the languages being used, one needs to be especially careful to fulfil ethical standards. The author puts in her best effort to be ethical while conducting this project and aims at the very least not to cause more harm for the already disadvantaged group. These concerns are very valid, since often the experience among vulnerable groups is that people who might come with good intentions end up causing more harm than good due to a lack of understanding of the context. One of the main reasons the author decided to conduct a product-based thesis instead of a research-based one were the ethical concerns related to the research – the challenge of making sure that the participants receive something valuable in return for the data collected and the risk of placing the participants in the role of passive, research subjects.

In participative research, some of the ethical issues considered include power imbalances, questions of community representation, ownership of the information gained, and confidentiality. Some additional ethical challenges involved in conducting research with vulnerable groups noted in this field are the lack of possibility to voice concerns about the research process, misperceptions of the role of the researcher, the difficulty of making consent truly informed, the risks involved in participating, and differing values in the cross-cultural context. In the worst case, research can exploit, disempower and cause material and emotional harm to the participants, as well as create distrust and cause the rejection of potential solutions. Yet, participants find it valuable if their skills, knowledge and experience are acknowledged. The feeling that they are listened to and that their ideas are appreciated is important, as well as the researchers' contribution in documenting the results. Ideally, research can empower, increase resilience, improve skills, provide access to resources and contacts, and make the participants' voices heard. (Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman 2010.)

To transfer these ethical considerations into the context of this specific thesis project, it is not enough for the author to follow the principle of “do no harm”, but she must also actively seek to add value for participants. The focus must always be on the intended value creation for the participants and not on the needs of the author. She must do her best to treat the participants as active agents and have them presented as such. Power imbalances between the initiator and the participants should be addressed. While being in the middle of the asylum process the participants might not be able to honestly voice their concerns. The author might be confused with as having some power over the asylum decision. Some participants might participate due to the belief that it might improve their chances of a positive decision. If the results of the initiation event or any further meetings are to be used in another context without the initiative of the participants themselves, consent should be asked for and the participants should gain the credit that they deserve and a sense of contributing to others. The impacts on the participants should be considered if the results are to be published. One should create procedures to enable everyone to be heard and not only the “spokespeople” of the ethnic or language groups. All the activities involved are strictly voluntary for the participants and this should be emphasized to leave no space for misinterpretations.

From the field of social work, the author of this thesis gained some bigger picture perspective for her work. In this field, the primary mission is to improve personal wellbeing of all people, and especially empowering the vulnerable and disadvantaged. Social workers are to promote social and economic values that are conducive to social justice, and work to increase opportunities and freedom of choice for all people. (Reamer 2013, p.160.) This thesis places as its purpose the empowerment of the vulnerable, increasing their wellbeing, opportunities and choice, and places this in the broader picture of helping to promote a more egalitarian and just world.

2 Context of asylum seekers

Asylum seekers and immigration have recently been a major issue in the Finnish society both in political debate, mass media and in the conversations of the general public. This and many other factors influence the daily lives of asylum seekers in Finland. Every asylum seeker is of course an individual, which is to say that these individuals come from a great variety of backgrounds and all have their personal challenges as well as strengths. However, understanding the general context of asylum seekers and the shared challenges that they commonly face increases our understanding of the group that is in the focus of this thesis.

This chapter lays out the background for the rest of the thesis by presenting the asylum seekers' life context and their main challenges. The chapter discovers which are the main causes that currently decrease the wellbeing of asylum seekers. Understanding the context of the target group is vitally important for the design of any event. A short general introduction of the context for which the product is developed is given and the factors considered especially relevant for the topic discovered in more detail. The chapter begins by introducing the refugee and asylum seeker situation globally and in Finland. It continues with presenting the specific reception centre for whose residents the event is targeted including an introduction to the everyday life and living conditions in this reception centre. In the end of this chapter, previous literature is utilized for more deeply understanding the life circumstances and challenges of asylum seekers.

2.1 Current global situation

The global displaced person and asylum seeker situation influences the asylum seekers that arrive in Finland both by affecting the nature of their trip here and the attitudes of the host society. In recent years, the number of forcibly displaced persons has been on the rise and is at the moment at its highest since the aftermath of the Second World War (UNHCR n.d.).

According to the most recent complete statistics of the UN Refugee Agency from 2015, there are currently over 65 million people globally that are displaced due to reasons ranging from conflict to persecution and war. Of this number, over 40 million are internally displaced persons who have not moved beyond national borders to seek for protection, over 21 million are refugees and 3.2 million are asylum seekers. Currently over half of the refugees in the world come from the three main originating countries of Syria, Afghanistan, and Somalia. A clear majority of the world's refugees are hosted in Global South coun-

tries. Yet, most of the asylum applications are submitted in the Global North. Germany receives the most asylum applications globally followed by the USA, Sweden, and Russia. Positive asylum decisions were given to approximately 57 % of the applications in the year of 2015. However, differences between asylum seekers from different originating countries were immense: from some originating countries, the applications were approved with an over 85 % probability and from some countries almost never. (UNHCR n.d., pp.2-5,43.) Even if most of the refugees in the world are hosted in Global South countries and Finland only receives a minor portion of the total amount of asylum applications submitted in the Global North, the global increase in people seeking for protection has also been noticeable in Finland.

2.2 Current situation in Finland

A lot has happened in Finland during the past two years in relation to the asylum-seeking conditions. In the second half of 2015, there was a sharp increase in asylum applications submitted to the Finnish Immigration Service. According to the statistics of the Finnish Immigration Service, during the past year (5/2016 - 4/2017) approximately 25,000 applications were processed. From these applications, almost 60 % received a negative decision and less than 30 % a positive one, while the rest of the applications were dismissed or expired. (Finnish Immigration Service 2017b.) This build-up of applications influenced the average processing time of 160 days, sometimes causing waits of several months even before the asylum interview taking place. (Finnish Immigration Service 2016.)

During the past year, the amount of applications has decreased back to its previous level with 4,600 applications between May 2016 and April 2015. The majority of the applicants are between 18 and 34 years of age and male. The five biggest originating countries in order starting from the biggest are Iraq, Syria, Eritrea, Afghanistan, and Somalia. (Finnish Immigration Service, 2017b; Finnish Immigration Service 2017a.)

From May 2016 onwards, Finland has tightened its asylum seeker policy by removing the possibility of granting humanitarian protection for asylum seekers for whom the requirements of asylum or subsidiary protection are not met (Finnish Immigration Service 2017c). In 2016, Finland also clearly tightened its policy towards certain originating countries. For example, in the beginning of the year 80 % of the decisions for Iraqi asylum seekers were positive, whereas in August only 15 % were positive (Hannula 2016). There has been a lot of public debate and questioning of if this change can be justified by a change in the security environment of the originating countries, or if it was purely a political decision.

During this recent spike in the arrival of asylum seekers, the attitudes of Finnish nationals towards asylum seekers have polarized, which is seen as increasing the risk of violent confrontations between asylum seekers and Finnish nationals (Sisäministeriö 2017, pp.45-47). One very visible example of the polarized opinions are the Right to Live and Finland First demonstrations in the proximity of the Helsinki railway station that have been going on already for multiple months. According to one survey which looked more closely at the polarized opinions, people working in management positions and students had the most positive attitudes towards immigration, whereas farmers and the unemployed had the most negative attitudes. In addition, higher education was seen as having a clear positive effect on immigration attitudes. (Penttilä 2015.)

The short-lived increase in arriving asylum seekers in Finland during the second half of 2015 changed the situation for asylum seekers in many ways. The attitudes of the general public have polarized, the policy has gotten stricter, and the duration of the application process has been prolonged, but simultaneously Finland has also grown more used to increasing numbers of visible minorities. Due to the global situation, there is reason to believe that the average number of arrivals will continue to increase in the future. The Finnish society is at a crossroads of deciding whether to treat these newcomers as a resource for aiding with the aging population and lack of working-age population or to see them as an obstacle and a threat to our society. If it is decided to be taken as an opportunity, Finland should not only think about how this decision can be transferred into the attitudinal and policy levels, but also on how it should be visible in the everyday living conditions of the asylum seekers.

2.3 Context of Punavuori reception centre

The characteristics of the asylum process and the everyday living conditions have a very significant impact on the wellbeing of the asylum seekers. In the application process after turning in one's application at the Finnish Immigration Service, the asylum seekers are most commonly placed at a reception centre while waiting for the asylum interview, the decision on the application and the possible processing of a complaint. Asylum seekers can also choose to arrange private accommodation for themselves instead. Children under 16 years of age are placed in group homes, if they arrive without guardians, and children between 16-17 years of age are placed in supported housing units. The asylum seekers whose identity or travel route is unclear can be placed at a detention unit in Metsälä or Joutseno. (Finnish Immigration Service 2017d.)

The specific asylum seekers with whom the activities designed in this thesis will be realized will live in the Punavuori unit of the Helsinki reception centre. The unit has space for

200 asylum seekers, including adults and families with children. The services that the registered residents of the reception unit receive include: accommodation, reception and spending allowances, social and health care services, interpretation services as well as guidance and instructions. The unit also takes care of the services of the asylum seekers living in the capital region in private accommodations. (Helsingin kaupunki 2017.)

According to the thesis author's previous experience in the reception centre, the author can give some further descriptions of the living conditions in the reception centre. In Puna- vuori reception centre, the asylum seekers are accommodated in dorm-style rooms of multiple people and their meals are served by the on-site catering service. The inhabitants of the reception centre come from diverse geographical locations, cultural backgrounds and religions, and have varying needs and preferences in daily practices like cleanliness and schedules. Many NGOs, including for example the Finnish Red Cross, organize activities specifically targeted for asylum seekers. However, besides these targeted activities the opportunities to participate in social activities are not abundant due to limited language skills as well as financial and social resources. The employees of the reception centre give advice on the available activities but the time they can spend with an individual client is limited and fulfilling the legal obligations and providing for the basic needs are inevitably their first priority.

Punavuori unit as part of the Helsinki reception centre is a transit centre (Sipponen and Lohman 2016) in which asylum seekers are first accommodated when they arrive in Finland before usually being transferred to another reception centre to wait for the processing of their applications. As opposed to the waiting-time centres, transit centres do not have a legal obligation to organize Finnish language teaching for their residents, but some teaching is still organized in all the centres. The amount of Finnish teaching normally varies between 3-6 hours a week (Finnish Red Cross n.d.), and the typical course duration is only three months (Jompero 2015). Language-wise the situation is the most difficult for the asylum seekers who speak neither Finnish nor English.

Asylum seekers are allowed to start working three or six months after submitting the application. The longer waiting period is for the ones who did not have valid travel documents when they submitted their application. The right to work is valid until the final decision on the application has been made. (Finnish Immigration Service 2017e.)

A reception centre as a living environment can be quite a challenge. One lives with a wide variety of people in very tight corners, everyone having been through highly stressful experiences. The activities and opportunities to participate provided are rather limited. Yet,

the basic needs are provided for and some activities in the form of language courses and volunteer activities are available as well as the legal possibility to work after a waiting period.

2.4 Challenges of asylum seeker life

The daily challenges of asylum seekers stem partly from their individual backgrounds and the events that preceded their arrival in the current host country, but largely also from the general characteristics of the asylum system. Some of the challenges that asylum seekers and refugees have are shared between the two groups, but there are also distinct dimensions for both groups. When an asylum seeker receives the refugee status the priorities shift more strongly towards integration, handling complex benefit systems and seeking for employment (Fell and Fell 2014, p.1323) which for many might have been secondary problems while waiting for the processing of the application. Yet, in this thesis the focus is in the status of being an asylum seeker with its characteristic uncertainty. There are of course also special groups within the whole asylum-seeking population with very distinct challenges, including for example the asylum seekers in the closed detention centres and minors who have arrived without guardians. Due to the target group for the activities of this thesis, in this chapter the focus is on the challenges of asylum-seeking adults and families with children who are accommodated in open facilities.

One of the main potential contributing factors to the asylum seekers' decreased wellbeing is their difficult past. Asylum can be applied for based on one being persecuted in one's home country, which means that the asylum seekers have likely been residing in very stressful and risky conditions. They may have been exposed to even torture and many other types of refugee's trauma, and by leaving they have had to let go of their old social roles and social networks (Morville et al. 2014, p.857). The trip to the host country might be dangerous in itself, often including paying human smugglers to move beyond national borders (Robinson 2014, p.1603).

From the literature, one can find many aspects in the asylum seekers' current living condition that emphasize the past trauma and create new challenges in themselves. Asylum seekers often suffer from loneliness, boredom and physical pain. Their wellbeing and ability to plan and perform daily activities is decreased due staying for long periods in asylum centres. (Morville et al. 2014.)

Many asylum seekers suffer from inactivity and have described their activities as mainly serving the purpose of passing time. They are deprived of opportunities to participate in meaningful occupations, which are important for building one's identity and fulfilling both

individual and cultural values. They are feeling powerless and are simultaneously deprived of the feelings of self-respect, independence, accomplishment and contributing to others that are derived from meaningful occupations. (Ingvarsson, Egilson and Skaptadottir 2016.) One of the challenging aspects of asylum seekers' lives related to inactivity is time. According to one research, people's lives can be made chaotic not only by too many changes happening too fast but also by a lack of change (Griffiths 2014, p.2001), and asylum seekers often get to experience both of these. All the conditions described above in addition to the challenging living conditions that have already been described in chapter 2.3 result in high stress levels and decreased mental and physical health. Asylum seekers are at an increased risk of both depression and anxiety (Kalt et al. 2013, p.e30).

Most asylum seekers are deprived of opportunities for employment. Dependency on social services and lacking a sense of contributing to others result in feelings of shame, worthlessness, lack of control and not belonging. (Ingvarsson, Egilson and Skaptadottir 2016.) Many asylum seekers may also not have experience of the comprehensive services of a welfare nation (Fell and Fell 2014, p.1324) which might increase the confusion and shame when encountering these systems. Asylum seekers often describe a sense of not belonging among the population of the host country. They might not consider the reception centre as a community at all (Ingvarsson, Egilson and Skaptadottir 2016, p.5), which might be due to the challenging life circumstances of every individual or even due to seeing each other as indirect competitors for the same scarce resources – including the asylums themselves. The lack of belonging during the asylum application process can also have long-term effects on integration (Ingvarsson, Egilson and Skaptadottir 2016, p.7), and it is likely that the other challenges of the asylum-seeking phase will also influence the wellbeing and integration of accepted asylum seekers long term.

On the other hand, research has shown that living in a bigger city with a more significant immigrant population can promote a stronger feeling of control, more opportunities to enact one's own choices and easier integration and participation in the society, less visibility as the 'other' and a stronger sense of belonging (Ingvarsson, Egilson and Skaptadottir 2016, p.4). This suggests that the asylum seekers in Helsinki might not be in as difficult of a situation as their peers in other parts of Finland. Yet, compared to major migrant cities in European or global scale, Helsinki is still a small city for asylum seekers.

In the host country, asylum seekers might encounter hostile policy environments. Many countries have adopted strategies to decrease the pull factors of their country including, for example, restricted access to health care, employment, prolonged detention periods

and the threat of deportation. (Kalt et al. 2013, p.e30.) In the earlier subchapter, it was already noticed that Finland among many other European countries has changed its immigration policy to reduce the pull factors for asylum seekers.

In addition to a hostile policy environment, the asylum seekers might also face a hostile social environment. The perceptions of the majority population directly influence the situation of the refugees. These perceptions can be presented by the two key representations of refugees – one is the role of the ‘passive victim’ that denies the refugee’s independence and agency and the other is representation as the ‘threat’ which places locals in conflict and in direct competition with the new arrivals. The perception of refugees either as one or the other is directly influencing their access to safety, services and support. (Robinson 2014, p.1604.) Even if this specific research refers to the representations of refugees, the same ones almost certainly apply also to asylum seekers.

One of the most common shared challenge among asylum seekers is the uncertainty of their futures. One of the main reasons for anxiety during the application phase is the potential of receiving a negative decision and potentially being subjected to deportation (Fell and Fell 2014, p.1323). The asylum seekers do not know how long they are going to have to wait for a decision and thus “struggle to imagine a future or invest in themselves” (Griffiths 2014, p.2002). This both prevents asylum seekers from planning the future and deprives them the certainty of knowing that this waiting phase is only going to be of short duration. In the extreme case of deportable migrants, this extreme temporal uncertainty is seen as a “technique of power” that keeps the “deportable migrants in a passive and desperate state of continual transience and uncertainty”. (Griffiths 2014, p.2005.) To a smaller extent this might work in the same way with asylum seekers in open facilities – independent from whether this use of power is intentional or not.

Despite these challenges, or due to them, asylum seekers have also developed amounts of resilience that we could all learn from (Fell and Fell 2014, p.1325), and some of them have managed to place the waiting as just one aspect of their lives among others. For these individuals, the waiting phase can be a time of liberation and transformation without the normal life obligations. These people have managed to transform the oppressive time into a time of productivity, embracing the present moment and their unprecedented freedom. (Griffiths 2014, p.2003.)

2.5 Summary of the challenges in the asylum seeker context

The challenges of asylum seekers can be briefly summarized as having a difficult past, challenging current living conditions, and an uncertain future. The asylum seekers in

Punavuori reception centre live in conditions where their basic needs are provided for but which are rather challenging considering for example questions of privacy and independence. Their difficult pasts and the stressful current situations filled with uncertainty make it even more challenging to find meaning in their daily lives and daily activities. Yet, it is not a simple question to think about what could be done to create a change in this challenging situation. There are many aspects in this situation that are difficult to influence, and that are clearly outside the scope of this thesis.

It has been suggested that social work – and the author suggests that also volunteering - with asylum seekers can be a “form of hospitality” that can work to balance out the hostile policies of the state (Fell and Fell 2014, p.1336) and the partly hostile social environment. According to one description, hospitality is about reciprocal relationships breaking down divisions between the provider and the customer, about reciprocal relationships “emphasizing solidarity and mutuality” in the face of challenges of the environment (Fell and Fell 2014, p.1336). How could one assist in improving this challenging situation of asylum seekers? Could a volunteer-initiated event have any positive impact? It is clear that by the means of volunteering and organizing an event one cannot directly influence all the challenges faced by the asylum seekers. First, one needs to explore how events can be utilized as a means for eliciting change, how this purpose should influence the planning process, and then, to reflect on which of the challenges could be influenced by this means.

3 Guiding transformations with Event Canvas

This second chapter of the literature review concentrates on event design. The Event Canvas approach (Frissen et al. 2016) provides the framework of the design process presented. Additionally, elements of experience and transformation economy by Pine and Gilmore (1999) as well as gamified experience design from Bulencea and Egger (2015) is added into this framework. The three phases of the Event Canvas event design process – ‘change’, ‘frame’ and ‘design’ - are dealt with step-by-step, with each phase having its own subchapter.

This chapter discovers which factors should in general be considered when designing events, but mainly focuses on the elements of event design which are considered to support the transformational potential of events. This chapter first briefly introduces some approaches to event planning, and then goes into detail on the selected approach of the Event Canvas. The three phases of the Event Canvas design process are presented and supplemented with ideas from experience and transformation design.

3.1 Selecting the event planning approach

There are multiple very resource- and project-oriented approaches to event planning. For example, according to Wolf, one should first think of the five W's of event planning: who, what, when, where and why. And these answers should guide the rest of the planning process (Wolf 2005, pp.1-7). The approach is very different from the Event Canvas approach which has at its basis the questions of who and why, and sees the rest of the matters purely as having a secondary supporting or limiting role in the core design process. These five W's are of course very good practical questions that should be answered during any planning process, but the author does not see the order and the basic ideas as suitable for her purposes. The author is able to alter the time, place and all of the content of the event based on the purpose, the ‘why’ of the design. The ‘what’ is only decided on as the outcome of the planning process, and the author wants to keep as many options open as possible until that, not to unnecessarily limit one's creativity. The approach of Wolf might be beneficial for event planning project management, but for the author of this thesis it does not seem to give support in the actual designing of a new kind of an event with a transformational goal. To put it in other words, the author feels like the approach of Wolf is not encouraging out-of-the-box thinking. Another approach by Raj, Walters and Rashid (2013) is similar to many others in that it very comprehensibly takes into account the many practical matters related to event management, but provides surprisingly little support in the creative phase of designing the event.

The Event Canvas was chosen as the basis of the event design process in this thesis, because it is a practical approach that guides one through the whole design process. It supports the event designer in the creative process, instead of just giving a list of things that should be considered in order to organize an event. Even more important of a reason than this was the fact that the Event Canvas already has at its basis the principle of events as creating change (Frissen et al. 2016, p.28).

3.2 Introducing the Event Canvas

Event Canvas is a tool created in 2014 for purposefully designing any kind of events, and more specifically for designing change in behaviour that is the outcome of a successful event. It claims to be the “first ever tool to design, prototype and document events”. It is available for free under Creative Commons 4.0 license for non-commercial use. The Event Canvas template (Event design collective n.d.) can be found in appendix 4. The Event Canvas template consists of 14 sections that are divided into the three phases of design in the following manner: ‘change’ contains the sections of ‘entering behaviour’, ‘pains’, ‘expectations’, ‘exiting behaviour’, ‘gains’, and ‘satisfaction’, whereas ‘frame’ contains the sections of ‘commitment’, ‘return’, ‘cost’, ‘revenue’, ‘jobs to be done’, and ‘promise’, and finally the ‘design’ phase contains the sections of ‘experience journey’ and ‘instructional design’. The sections of the first two phases are to be taken as linear steps on the planning process, and the final phase as a creative, iterative process where the event designer continuously switches between the perspectives of the two sections.

Two underlying principles behind the Event Canvas approach are described by the authors. Firstly, they believe that the value of an event lies in accomplishing behavioural change of stakeholders. And secondly, they believe that events should be designed keeping in mind each stakeholder’s perspective. (Frissen et al. 2016, p.28.) The benefits of the Event Canvas as described by the authors are that it’s visual, cuts the process in to manageable pieces while simultaneously working as a tool for unifying and holistic design. Another added benefit is that it aids the event designer in articulating the essential qualities of an event that are difficult to quantify. (Frissen et al. 2016, p.24.)

3.3 Change

Every experience we go through, everything that happens to us, intentional or not, undoubtedly changes us. However, what makes the difference is the intensity, quality, and duration of the impact of the change – is it a big change or barely noticeable, desirable or unasked for, permanent or momentary? In this thesis, the focus is on changes that are

purposeful – which is to say that the likelihood of them occurring can be increased by purposefully designing appropriate conditions – and have the potential of being transformative towards our general goal of wellbeing. In the second subchapter, the transformative changes are discussed, and in the third subchapter the changes towards wellbeing. Before getting deeper into the specifics, in the first subchapter, the approach of Event Canvas to designing change is presented. For the creators of the Event Canvas, designing change is a lot about an in-depth stakeholder analysis, and one tool for this, the Empathy Map, is also discussed.

3.3.1 Event Canvas process and the Empathy map

For the authors of Event Canvas, the design process starts with creating a long-list of the stakeholders of the event. After creating and prioritizing this long-list, they suggest using the Empathy Map for gaining more insight into the main stakeholders. (Frissen et al. 2016.) Empathy Map is a tool for aiding stepping into the stakeholders' shoes in one's imagination, for brainstorming on what the stakeholder might see, hear, think, feel, say and do. There is also a separate section for creating insight on what are the potential 'pains', fears and frustrations as well as 'gains', wants and needs of the specific stakeholder. (Frissen et al. 2016, pp.84-85.) The authors encourage using a process in which a pre-event empathy map is used to gain more understanding of the stakeholders' current situation and a post-event empathy map to imagine the desired behaviours after participating in the event. They recommend focusing mainly on the 'say and do' section of the Empathy Map for the purposes of the Event Canvas. (Frissen et al. 2016.) The Empathy Map template (Event design collective n.d.) is available on appendix 5.

From the empathy maps, one can transfer the insights into the first four sections of the Event Canvas: 'entering behaviour', 'pains', 'gains', and 'exiting behaviour'. After this only two sections remain of the 'change' phase of the design process. In the section 'expectations', one needs to gain understanding of where the stakeholder gets information from the event, and what kind of expectations this information creates together with previous experiences. Expectations define if the stakeholder will be satisfied or positively surprised with an event, and to describe these aspects there is its own section 'satisfaction', which estimates how the stakeholder will react after the event (Frissen et al. 2016, p.46,53).

3.3.2 Change as a transformation

Event Canvas works very well in accommodating the idea of 'transformation', since it is already focused on creating value by creating behavioural change. Yet, it does not provide

any theory on how to create these changes, and especially on how to make them transformative – which is to say fundamental and long-lasting. Event Canvas is a framework for applying previously gained knowledge and skills into practice, and seemingly believes that it is enough to guide the focus and the perspective of the designer to successfully create change. Since, the author of this thesis is not a professional event or transformation designer, she conducted research on some previous literature of designing transformations.

Pine and Gilmore describe 'transformation economy' as the next phase in economic development after the service and experience economies. Seeking self-improvement is not a new thing, but what they believe to be new is these personal transformations becoming the main economic offering. (Pine and Gilmore 1999, p.163.) In this thesis, the objective is not to design an economic offering. Although, the author of this thesis finds it an extremely useful idea from the book that what would be done differently if one was to charge money based on achieving the goal transformation. Pine and Gilmore suggest that at least customer selection would be done a lot more carefully, and already the diagnosis phase where customers can realize their aspirations would be created as an experience or a transformation. In addition, one would put a lot more effort into ensuring compliance, and thus into actually reaching the goal. (Pine and Gilmore 1999, p.192.) Pine and Gilmore tell that in the transformation economy companies can create value in four ways: by defining new goals, providing guidance for the individual, adding decisiveness, and assisting the individual in persevering. (Pine and Gilmore 1999, p.201.)

It is emphasized by Pine and Gilmore that transformations cannot be made, they can only be guided, since the transformation happens within the individual being transformed, and in the end, they are the product. Transformation is described by Pine and Gilmore as an intended, lasting and fundamental change in attitude, performance or characteristics. This is unlike the Event Canvas framework which focuses solely on behaviour change. Pine and Gilmore say that people want something more lasting than memories of their experience, they say that people want permanent transformation. (Pine and Gilmore 1999, pp.164-177.) The author of this thesis would like to add that when it comes to transformations in wellbeing – that is discussed in the following chapter – one of the things that people really want is a perception of progress and self-improvement. Wellbeing is largely a subjective matter, and once the basic needs are met – or even before that – and what really counts is how people perceive their own situations.

3.3.3 Change towards wellbeing

Already from the first idea rounds related to this thesis, the general goal of the planned event has been to improve the wellbeing of the asylum seekers. The author of this thesis

believes that wellbeing might be the ultimate goal and motivation for all human action. This is why necessarily it must be defined what is meant by wellbeing, which dimensions of it are in the focus of this specific event, and how can they be influenced by the means of an event.

The PERMA wellbeing model as presented in the book 'Gamification in Tourism' is utilized as a definition of wellbeing in this thesis. The model consists of five pillars that are the elements that contribute to personal wellbeing. These pillars are 'positive emotions' (P), 'engagement' (E), 'relationships' (R), 'meaning' (M), and 'accomplishment' (A). (Bulencea and Egger 2015.)

One of properties that the PERMA pillars are seen as having is that they are pursued by people for their own sake (Bulencea and Egger 2015, p.45; Khaw and Kern 2015, p.4), which is to say that they have intrinsic value to people and thus drive motivation. With this the author justifies choosing PERMA model as the guideline for deciding on the target outcomes of the event – to put it in the words of Pine and Gilmore, people are naturally 'aspiring' towards these pillars of wellbeing.

The PERMA model has demonstrated good reliability and has been applied broadly. Yet, its cross-cultural validity has not been researched enough, and the model, like many others, has been criticized for putting too much emphasis on Western ideas. (Khaw and Kern 2015, pp.11-12; Lambert D'raven and Pasha-Zaidi 2016.) The author of this thesis acknowledges that the model might not be completely applicable in all cultural contexts, but still sees it as a valuable basis for her design, in lack of a perfect, universal model for wellbeing. Similar to the focus of this thesis, the PERMA model only incorporates psychological wellbeing and does not focus on physical wellbeing. The PERMA model also supports well the author's subjective understanding of the contributing elements of wellbeing. In the later subchapter 3.5.3, the focus is on the suggestions Bulencea and Egger make for designing for each pillar of personal wellbeing.

3.4 Frame

Defining the 'frame' is the second phase in the design process of the Event Canvas. In this phase one needs to define the boundaries within which the creative last phase of the 'design' should take place. (Frissen et al. 2016, p.55.) The first section of 'commitment' contains the non-monetary resources and opportunity costs that the stakeholders sacrifice for this event, and the second section 'return' contains the short-term, non-monetary gains that the stakeholders receive from participating in the event. These are as opposed to the sections of the long-term 'pains' and 'gains' that were presented in the first phase of the

design process. The next sections of 'cost' and 'revenue' are the "profit-and-loss-statement" of the specific stakeholder related to this event. These include the financial – or other resources closely relate to financial opportunities – used and gained through the event. 'Jobs to be done' describes the things that the stakeholders are trying to accomplish in their ordinary lives. These include the emotional, social and functional tasks as well as the tasks done for meeting basic needs. 'Promise' to stakeholders articulates how the event relates to the stakeholders' pains, gains and jobs to be done. Ideally the promise would be articulated in a way that it can directly be used in marketing for all of the different stakeholders. (Frissen et al. 2016, pp.55-67.)

3.5 Design

Unlike the first two linear phases of the Event Canvas process, the last phase of 'design' is a creative, iterative process that continuously shifts between two focuses. In the first focus of 'experience journey', the focus is on optimizing all the touchpoints in which the stakeholder interacts with the event in a way as to bring one closer to creating the desired change in behaviour. The feelings created in the stakeholder during these touchpoints make the success of an event by making event and the instructional content memorable. In the second focus of 'instructional design', one focuses specifically on the learning of the stakeholder – what kind of learning should occur to create the desired change – and in what way is it realized most effectively. To aid the design process, the authors have presented the four types of learning: skills learning, knowledge learning, attitude learning, and people learning. The type of learning defines the core elements of the event. (Frissen et al. 2016.)

3.5.1 Realms of experience

In Experience Economy, the focus is on staging engaging experiences – which is also the basis of guiding transformations as has been expressed earlier. Pine and Gilmore believe that staging a series of engaging experiences is the basis of designing for a transformation. They give many tips on how to create engagement of the customers which is the basis of any experience. One of the ideas is that experiences come in four basic types, which they call the 'experience realms' (figure 1). On the horizontal axis, there is the dimension of the level of participation and on the vertical axis, the connection the customer has with the experience: whether it is mental 'absorption', or physical or virtual 'immersion'. Pine and Gilmore believe that even if experiences can be found in any of the realms, they are the most engaging when all the four realms are combined. This would mean combining the realms of 'entertainment', 'educational', 'esthetic' and 'escapist' in the

same experience, or at least the maximum number of these realms. (Pine and Gilmore 1999, pp.30-31.)

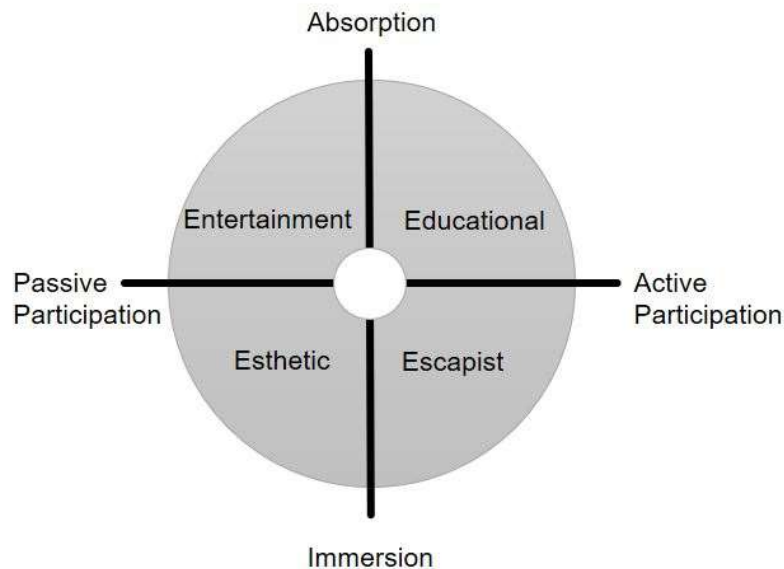


Figure 1. The experience realms (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, p.30)

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the richest and often most engaging experiences contain aspects of all the four realms. This is what Pine and Gilmore call the 'sweet spot'. One wants to design a holistic experience drawing inspiration from all of the realms. (Pine and Gilmore 1999, p.39.) When a transformative experience is designed, as in the case of this thesis, it almost inevitably involves at least the educational or escapist realm. A transformation is a lot more likely to happen within an individual if they are mentally or physically actively participating in the event, instead of just passively taking part in it. Also in the Event design handbook, it is stated that for change to happen there must be learning taking place. This is so much emphasized that half of the 'design' phase is concentrated on the 'instructional design' which is concerned with designing the learning goals and techniques for achieving them. (Frissen et al. 2016.) For this reason that the learning of the 'educational' realm is already emphasised in other parts of the design process, the author concentrates on the suggestions Pine and Gilmore make for emphasizing the other realms. For the esthetic realm, it is suggested that one thinks about "what you can do to make the environment more inviting, interesting, or comfortable". For the escapist realm, it is about thinking "what you should encourage guests 'to do' if they are to become active participants in the experience". For the entertainment realm, one needs to consider how to make the experience more enjoyable and fun (Pine and Gilmore 1999, pp.39-40) without the guests needing to really do anything.

3.5.2 Designing a transformation

One important facet in experience, and thus in transformation, design is defining a theme that sows all the impressions and different touchpoints together to create an overall experience. This theme should somehow encompass an alternative reality as opposed to the everyday reality of the participants. A theme works to create meaning and order into the multiple impressions of an experience, and serves a mnemonic purpose by making the experience more memorable. The theme guides the design towards a unified story that completely engages the customers. (Pine and Gilmore 1999, p.46,52.)

A theme can guide design and provide meaning to the experience, but impressions are the interaction that the customer has with the experience, the medium through which the overall theme is delivered into the customer. So, the theme should be communicated with cues that affect the customers through creating impressions. Cues can be from human sources or inanimate sources, and they encompass everything that the customers perceive with their five senses of sight, smell, taste, hearing and feel. The more senses the experience involves the more potential it has to engage people. Additionally, experience designer should aim to eliminate cues that do not support the overall design or are distracting attention from it. (Pine and Gilmore 1999, pp.53-59.)

For creating transformations based on experiences Pine and Gilmore provide two tools. Firstly, one needs to customize the experience – by providing what the individual truly needs right now, one inevitably creates a change in him or her. And secondly, one needs to design a series of experiences to repeat the same theme in new ways to increase the possibility of creating a long-term effect. (Pine and Gilmore 1999, p.165.) The authors also suggest the customers to be provided with emblems to commemorate – and thus strengthen – the transformation they have experienced (Pine and Gilmore 1999, p.176).

In addition, the authors set some conditions that must be met to create a suitable context for transformations. These include the elicitor and aspirant having an ongoing relationship, the elicitors operating according to stable principles that the series of experiences are based on, the elicitors truly caring for the aspirants, and finally, having a shared worldview with the aspirants. This also means that businesses will have to become more explicit about their worldviews. Only under these conditions the aspirants can trust the elicitors enough to guide the transformations that will form their futures. (Pine and Gilmore 1999, pp.182-183.) More recommendations include creating opportunities for rehearsing new behaviours, creating a community of the like-minded, and taking care of the fine line be-

tween assisting and interfering. Sometimes one must guide more forcefully, but the guidance only has the desired effect if it's in the end perceived as desirable. (Pine and Gilmore 1999, pp.196-197.)

The process of transformation creation is described by Pine and Gilmore in the following way. Firstly, one must diagnose the aspirations of the target individuals. This is not an easy task since aspirations are about what the customers "truly need to become". They might often not be able to articulate these goals and the goals they articulate might also very often be unattainable. It is also important to acknowledge that both sides, the customer and the transformation elicitor, are biased interpreters of the "true needs" of the aspirants. Pine and Gilmore also declare that it is the ethical responsibility of the guides of transformation to prevent the aspirants of achieving "immoral" transformations. They acknowledge that the evaluation is dependent on the world view of the guides. (Pine and Gilmore 1999, p.178.) For the author of this thesis this brings forth another interesting ethical question: Is it ethical to guide an individual towards a transformation that according to one's worldview is beneficial to them, but might in reality be in contradiction with their own worldview and values?

Transformations are built on the basis of experiences, and the second phase of transformation design is concerned with 'staging transformative experiences'. Designing experiences that are close to the 'sweet spot' is recommended, because experiences that have dimensions of all the four realms of experience are thought to be the most engaging. And this engagement will create a focus that enables the transformative nature of the event to have an effect. The last and what is often considered the most difficult phase is the follow-through. In designing this phase one must find ways to sustain the change – since without a lasting effect there is no transformation. (Pine and Gilmore 1999, pp.176-180.)

The three-phase process for guiding transformations by Pine and Gilmore contains the phases of 'diagnosing aspirations', 'staging experience(s)' and 'following through' (Pine and Gilmore 1999, pp.176-180). In the design process adopted in this thesis, the aspirations are diagnosed in the first phase of 'change', the experience staging is planned in 'experiential journey' section of the 'design' phase. The third part of follow-through is a vital part of guiding transformations, but due to time constraints, it is mainly outside of the scope of this thesis and the plan for it is discussed only briefly.

3.5.3 Designing for wellbeing

The gamification in tourism approach to designing experiences is important for this thesis, because it not only places wellbeing in the centre of the model but also gives practical design elements for relating to all the pillars of wellbeing. The different elements are not dealt with too much detail here, but some examples are given to create a better understanding of the model and to be able to take advantage of these ideas in the actual design process. The complete framework of the Gamification in tourism approach is presented in figure 2 below, but this thesis only concentrates on the design ideas which in the framework are spreading away from the PERMA wellbeing core.

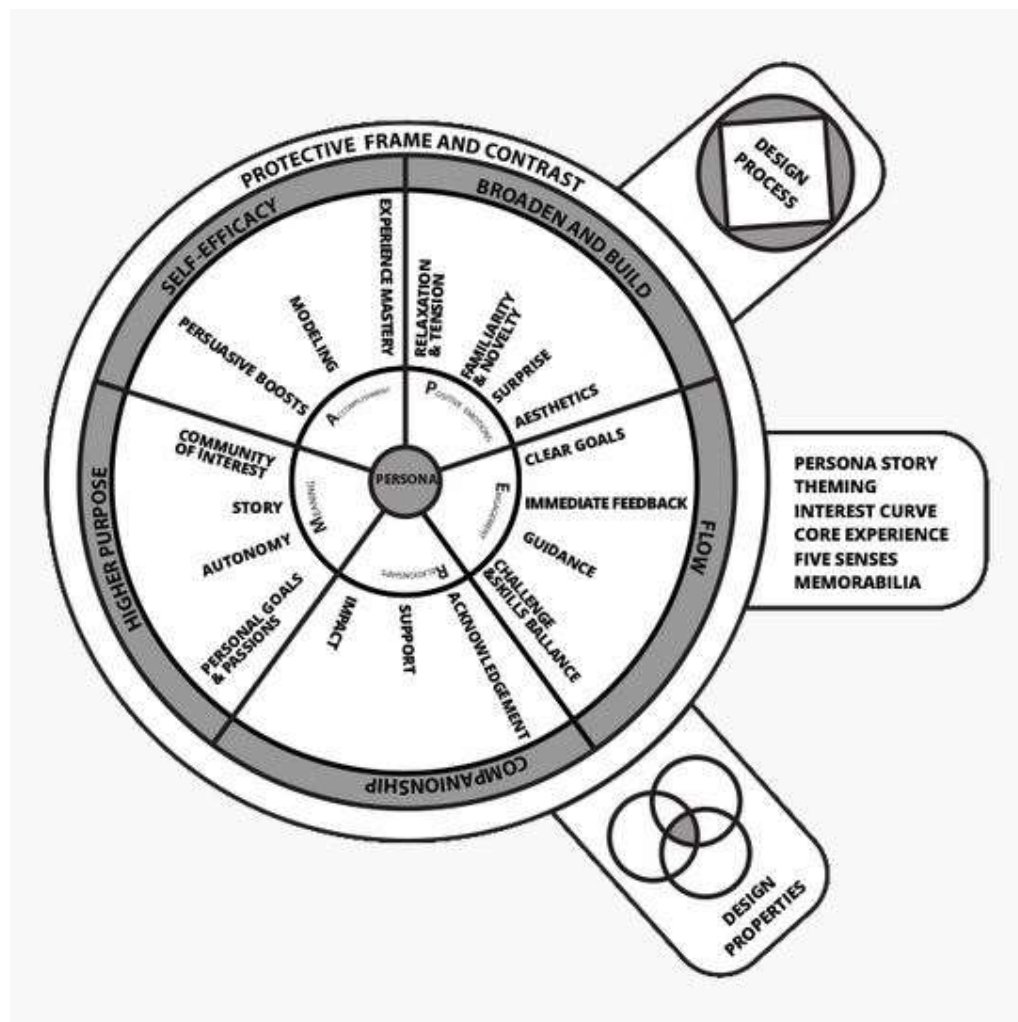


Figure 2. Gamification in tourism design framework (Bulencea and Egger, 2015)

The Gamification in tourism approach for designing events has at its core the PERMA wellbeing model with its the five pillars of ‘positive emotions’, ‘engagement’, ‘relationships’, ‘meaning’, and ‘accomplishment’. Design elements are suggested for each of the five pillars. For creating positive emotions, the authors suggest designing alternating relaxation

and tension, familiarity and novelty, elements of surprise and appealing aesthetics. For engagement, they encourage designing clear goals, immediate feedback, a balance of skills and challenges, and guidance to enhance the flow. Relationships are connected to all of the basic pillars of PERMA, but also provide design considerations of their own. To enable fulfilling the relationship needs of wellbeing one should design acknowledgement, support, and visible impact on others. For the meaning dimension, one should design with the following elements in mind: autonomy, personal goals and passions, access to a community of interest, and employing stories to convey and create meaning. The final dimension of accomplishment should be designed for by considering the elements of experiencing mastery, utilizing role models, and persuasive boosts. (Bulencea and Egger 2015.)

Even if “the book’s emphasis is not on how to deliver experiences that will guide individual transformation” (Bulencea and Egger 2015, p.164), the author of this thesis considers it to be the best comprehensive framework available for this purpose. The idea of designing transformations as an economic offering is still new, so it is likely that more suitable design frameworks will be developed in the future specifically for this purpose.

3.6 Summary of transformative event design

There are many approaches to designing events. However, the author finds the approach of the Event Canvas especially suitable for designing events with transformational potential. It enables incorporating participant-orientation deep into the design process and places change as the core of an event. The approach this thesis has taken to event design emphasises two main elements: aiming at deeply understanding the participants’ context and needs, and incorporating elements that increase the likelihood of a permanent transformation happening. In the following chapter, these insights are taken into practice and a potentially transformative event plan is created.

4 Planning process of a transformative event for asylum seekers

The purpose of this thesis is to plan for the asylum seekers in Punavuori reception centre an event that improves their wellbeing and empowers them to take initiative to improve it further. Due to practical limitations and the limitations of the thesis author's expertise, the improvements are focused on matters that can be influenced through asylum seeker free-time activities.

In this practical part of the thesis, the author reflects on which of the challenges for asylum seeker wellbeing described in chapter 2 could potentially be influenced through an event initiated by volunteers, and apply the insights gained in chapters 2 and 3 to create a plan for a potentially transformative event. First, the background of the project is briefly presented and the design process introduced before the author goes on to give a detailed description of the implementation of the design process. In subchapters 4.3 and 4.4, an evaluation of the design process is made including the limitations that apply to the final design and the application of the design tools. The author presents an opinion on the applicability and usability of the tools and theories of the previous chapters.

4.1 Project plan and methods

The author has volunteered with asylum seekers in Helsinki region for several years. She has grown familiar with many of their challenges through descriptions of first-person experiences. A vague idea of the type of the event and the impressions that she would see as beneficial has been created some time ago already, but now she wanted to put the ideas into a concrete plan, check if they would be completely altered during a proper design process, and to find ideas to increase the chances of creating the imagined transformation.

In chapters 2 and 3, the author utilized secondary research to gain valuable insights onto the thesis topic from previous literature. After conducting the secondary research, the author continues to the practical part of the thesis project. This practical part includes utilizing some of the design tools presented in chapter 3, of which the main ones were the Event Canvas and the Empathy Map. Utilizing the Event Canvas enabled the author to combine insights gained from the secondary research together with the insights gained from the author's own experiences and her creativity. In this practical part, also a group design session was added. It included brainstorming on ideas as well as analysing and developing them. The author considered it valuable to receive more perspectives on the final creative design phase of the planning. Yet, due to time restrictions, the extent that the

group participated in the design process was rather limited and, for the same reason, target group participation was unfortunately completely excluded from the planning process presented in this thesis.

This practical part of the thesis took place during the 'Writing' phase of the thesis project during May and the beginning of June in 2017, which can be seen as a part of the whole thesis process in appendix 1. During the practical part of the thesis, the initiation event plan was created, which is the product of this thesis. In appendix 2, one can see a plan for the continuation of the whole project after the completion of the thesis. The project will continue with the preparation and marketing of the event, the implementation of the initiation event, and follow-up meetings. During the thesis project, the author has decided to implement the presented plan and to go on with the whole project to facilitate the improvement of asylum seeker wellbeing in Punavuori reception centre.

The aim is to create an event plan that has potential in facilitating a transformation in asylum seeker wellbeing. The specific objectives of the event design are defined in subchapter 4.2.1. The final product of this thesis, which is the event plan containing the 'Event Canvas of Event Participant' (appendix 8) and the 'Event Program' (appendix 9), is assessed based on achievability, suitability for the target group and transformative potential. The extent to which the plan achieves the specific wellbeing objectives set for the design are assessed individually.

4.2 Introduction to the design process

As presented in chapter 3, Event Canvas is a tool for articulating and designing event plans. The documentation of the actual design process, which is the product of this thesis, is presented divided into the three phases of the Event Canvas – change, frame and design. Additional tools and insight, which have also been presented in chapter 3, are used when applicable.

The aim is to plan an initiation event that most efficiently promotes the transformations that are chosen as the goals in the first phase of the design process, within the firm boundaries that are defined in the second phase of the process. In the third subchapter, the creative process of the actual design is described.

4.2.1 Change - Transformational Change

The first step in designing with the Event Canvas is the stakeholder analysis. The process was begun by creating a long-list of the potential stakeholders. The main stakeholders are quite self-explanatorily the asylum seekers in Punavuori reception centre who are the target group of the event, and the event initiator that is the author of this thesis. Other relatively important stakeholders are the employees of the reception centre. Yet, due to previous experience the author trusts that the employees will be more than happy to accept new activities for the residents of the centre. For this reason that the employees are very unlikely to require any additional convincing for welcoming the event, they are not considered a high-priority, which would require their own Event Canvas.

During the planning process, another rather important stakeholder group arose. This group consists of the one or more interpreters which makes the event more inclusive also for the asylum seekers with limited language skills in Finnish or English. The author might not be able to organize an interpreter for all the potential languages, but at the very least for Arabic, which is one of the most common languages in the Punavuori reception centre. The interpreters should also be able to convey the theme of the event and to encourage everyone to participate. A similarly important group that arose from the design process itself are the 'promoters' who are a special group of the participants who are already before the actual event showing interest in helping to organize the event. They are discussed more later. If more time was available for the planning process, both of these groups might have deserved their own Event Canvases.

Other potential stakeholders are other volunteers that might join to help the author in facilitating the event, and the Finnish Red Cross, which might be interested in acting as the background organization of this event. The Finnish Red Cross might not only be valuable in practical matters like insuring all the volunteers and providing small financial support for snacks or similar small things, but they might also be interested in replicating this event in other reception centres. Yet, due to the tight schedule of this thesis and due to the fact that the last-mentioned stakeholders are not critical for the organization of the event, they are not further discussed in this thesis.

After prioritizing the stakeholders, the author came to the conclusion that with the resources currently available to her the Event Canvases would be limited to the participants and the event initiator. Since for the event initiator the event is so closely linked to this whole thesis project, the 'Project Initiator Event Canvas' has been presented in the introduction chapter of this thesis. It is available in appendix 3, and is only discussed in this

practical part if it poses limitations on the actual event. The event aims at being participant-centric and thus the needs of the project initiator are not the focus of this practical part of the thesis.

The Participant Event Canvas process was started with the Pre-event Empathy Map of Event Participant, which can be seen in appendix 6. Empathy Map is great at bringing together many kinds of insight on the stakeholder. In this specific case, the Empathy Map was based on the author's own perceptions and experiences in the asylum seeker context, the narratives of asylum seekers that the author has become familiar with and on the research insights of the previous literature presented in chapter 2. The Event Canvas framework recommends concentrating on the sections of 'say and do', 'pain' and 'gain' of the empathy map for the purposes of the Event Canvas. However, the author of this thesis believes that everything we experience and especially what we think and feel not only influences our behaviour but also has a direct influence on asylum seeker wellbeing - which is of vital importance to our design. And for this reason, full advantage was taken also of these other sections of the Pre-event Empathy Map. The recommended approach of the author of this thesis is to utilize all the sections of the Empathy Map as inspiration for more accurately imagining the potential behaviours. Some of the main insights gained by creating a Pre-event Empathy Map for the participant were the 'primacy of waiting', 'lack of meaningful occupations', 'lack of belonging', 'lack of a sense of contributing', 'depleted mental resources' and a 'sense of powerlessness'.

As the next step, the content of the Pre-event Empathy Map section 'say and do' was transferred to the Event Canvas section of 'entering behaviour' and the 'pain(s)' and 'gain(s)' sections to the corresponding sections in the Event Canvas. The filled Event Canvas of Event Participant can be seen in appendix 8.

To imagine the ideal outcome of the event a post-event Empathy Map was created. The event plan is deemed to be unable to influence the uncertainty of the futures of the participants including the fear of deportation, or change this phase of their life into "normal life", so these are limited outside of the goals of the event design. Also limiting the design to the dimension of the free-time activities and the means of organizing an event, where acknowledged when creating the goal for the event. The 'think and feel' and 'say and do' sections of the Post-event Empathy Map of Event Participant (appendix 7) were utilized to describe and further explore the potential manifestations of the PERMA model wellbeing pillars in the asylum seeker context together with the insights gained from the literature of the asylum seeker context and the 'gains' section of the Event Canvas filled earlier. The summarized findings were 'increased sense of self-efficacy', 'cares for and feels cared for

by the reception centre community', 'actively looks for opportunities' and 'contributes to others'. These ideal outcomes of the event were converted to 'exiting behaviour' in the Event Canvas. From these findings, a few "signposts" were taken to guide the rest of the design process. The goal of the design is a transformative change in wellbeing related to 'opportunities', 'choice', 'self-efficacy', 'meaning', 'contributing' and 'community'.

All of the PERMA wellbeing pillars are touched upon on the ideal outcome of this event. It is about creating meaning, opportunities for accomplishment, a sense of belonging and contributing to others. If the design manages to do even slight improvements in these wellbeing pillars of meaning, achievement and relationships it will almost inevitably create positive emotions. And finally, the experiential design as the basis focuses on the engagement pillar.

It was quite clear early on in the project that the kind of transformation the author was aiming for could not be facilitated by a regular volunteer-led activity with some new content and focus, but that there should be a more fundamental change in the way activities are organized. The focus should be different from the beginning – all the way from creating ideas for and planning the activities. This is where the author's first idea of creating an initiation event for a project in which asylum seekers are facilitated in and empowered to organize their own activities came to the focus. This initial idea was later confirmed in the group design session.

Next the author moved on to filling the sections for 'expectations' and 'satisfaction'. It was realized that with a completely new event, all the information the stakeholders receive is initiated by the event initiator. This is both a threat and an opportunity. The event initiator is better able to control the information that the stakeholders receive, but she also needs to put a lot of effort into spreading the information. It is vital to design all the pre-event touchpoints in a way that supports the theme and already starts to build up the potential for a transformation. The participants previous experiences of events organized by volunteers undoubtedly also influence their expectations of this event. They have probably not countered a similar event previously which might make it a bit confusing, and this should be taken note of when planning the marketing of the event. Previous events by volunteers have according to the authors own experiences been either only a nice change in the normal routine but with no long-lasting effects or focused on teaching something and lacking engagement capacities for all but the most eager students. This means that one should build the trust of the participants in the possibility of actual change and already the marketing should be able to portray the event as engaging – so that people will not decide not

to come, because of being bored in the previous activities. Usually these previous activities have been completely organized by the volunteers and have not provided much opportunity for the asylum seekers to influence the event.

In the 'satisfaction' section, the author imagined what kind of feelings should the participants have of the event after the event to consider the event having exceeded expectations. There were not many expectations to begin with, so the event should mainly fulfil the expectations created by its own marketing. Hopefully, the participant will consider the event to be a fresh idea, and seeing that there is potential for more thorough change in their lives if they follow on with the process. This thesis is limited to planning the initiation event but besides already creating a small transformation of its own, it should provide the participants motivation to actually start initiating their own free-time activities with the help of volunteers. It would be desirable that he or she tells their friends, who did not take part in the event, of this opportunity, and that as many as possible would take initiative to take control of their own free-time activities, creating meaning that is meaningful for them as individuals.

So, once more to summarize the results of the stakeholder analysis of the participants: the goal of the event design is to promote personal wellbeing of the asylum seekers. Special focus is the sense of meaning, self-efficacy and contributing. The improvement of these elements is seen in the post-event feelings and thoughts of the participants in the way that they feel more in control of their time and feel the potential of using their time more meaningfully and simultaneously contribute to others. They start speaking about new activities that are meaningful for themselves and for others in the same situation, and they start designing these activities with or without the help of volunteers. This helps them open their eyes also to other opportunities for meaningful action in their lives, starting to conceptualize their time in the reception centre as a time for productivity instead of a time for idleness and despair.

By combining the stakeholder analysis of Event Canvas and the PERMA model that is concerned with the fundamental wellbeing of an individual, a transformation has been defined that is the purpose of all the other phases in the design process. It is clear that the defined goal of creating the desired transformation is a challenge. It is acknowledged that it is not possible to create a transformation, only to create a situation where the transformation is more likely to occur and to guide it. Yet, it is clear that anything short of a fundamental transformation in the very being of the individual concerned is not going to create the change that has been defined in this chapter.

4.2.2 Frame - Firm Frames

In the second phase of the design process the boundaries of the design were defined. Some of the boundaries were extremely narrow, such as the 'cost', but some were more flexible than in the average commercial event design. The perspective of the event initiator is only included when relevant for the design.

The 'cost' section of the Participant Event Canvas was relatively easy to fulfil. It was obvious from the beginning that the event should be free of charge considering that it is organized for a vulnerable group in the role of a volunteer. This was the one of the starting points of the whole design. Most of the participants are not likely to suffer direct or indirect financial costs due to participation in this event. For the event initiator, the opportunity costs related to the event and to the whole thesis project are slightly higher, but since she has already committed to volunteering in this project, these opportunity costs do not have a significant effect on the event. In the 'revenue' section, it can be stated that there are unlikely to be any direct revenues from the event for the participants, but the event could initiate the planning of activities that increase their chances of getting employed, or creating revenues as entrepreneurs, and open their eyes for existing opportunities.

The 'commitment' of the participants includes the time and effort resources that they spend on participating in this event. They likely spend about a quarter of an hour reading or hearing about the event in order to make the decision to participate, and an additional two hours to actually take part. After the initiation event presented in this thesis, the process continues with the ones who want to invest more time and effort into planning and realizing the desired activities. It is very obvious from the research that on the average the asylum seekers are not lacking time, so it is not a question of the actual hours and minutes that they spend on this. One crucial variable is the weather – from previous experience the author knows that if the event takes place on a beautiful summer day the sacrifice of the asylum seekers is a lot greater. The event organized inside the reception centre has to compete with outdoor activities which for many are the most pleasurable part of their everyday lives. Yet, the location is considered both convenient and the best alternative for both creating the focus necessary of creating engagement and keeping the event as inclusive as possible. Care should be taken when deciding on the time of the event – it should not conflict with the regular organized activities of the asylum seekers, where they might have already built social commitments. A date should be chosen when no regular activities are organized, and the reception centre employees should be asked to confirm if there might be any other events on that same day that many of the residents might be interested in participating. There are clearly not too many interesting activities available for

the asylum seekers so standing in direct competition with them would be against the purpose of the event itself.

The immediate 'return' of the participants is a renewed sense of possibility, agency, capability, excitement and positive feelings from creating ideas together and having a sense that one's ideas matter. The participants are also provided with emblems that both remind them of the experience they had and strengthen their transformation by encouraging continuing to use the idea and excitement resources that they gained. The emblems are the activity plans the participants have created during the event and empty template for further activity plan ideas.

The 'jobs to be done' section seems relatively empty. From the literature of chapter 2, it seems like mostly the asylum seekers are trying to pass their time while waiting for the decision. They are struggling to create a structure and a sense of meaning in their lives. The ones with family are likely quite occupied with trying to keep their family members in shape and their own heads together. The functional tasks are mainly limited to the official obligations that they have related to the asylum process and to staying in Helsinki as an asylum seeker. The basic needs should be provided for them.

The 'promise to the stakeholders' can be summarized as relieving pains, providing gains and achieving jobs to be done (Frissen et al. 2016, p. 67). The event relieves pains by providing support in planning, showing an alternative for inactivity, and facilitating access to social resources. It provides gains by relating directly to the activities that the asylum seekers themselves find meaningful, and by showing them an example on how they can contribute to others. Additionally, the event aims at creating more of a sense of community in the reception centre by co-planning and co-creating activities that are seen as beneficial to oneself and others, by guiding towards a shared goal and using also each other as social resources. The event does not relate to the asylum seekers basic or functional 'jobs to be done'. Prior to the event they are not aware of how it might relate to their social 'jobs to be done' by creating more of a sense of belonging. Related to the 'jobs to be done', the event most significantly gives the asylum seekers an engaging way of passing time, some variety to their ordinary days and provides them with support in the struggle to create meaning into their current life phase.

4.2.3 Design - Holistic design for facilitation of transformations

This chapter is concerned with the last phase of event planning: the creative process of design. After this phase, all that is left is the implementation and possible last-minute changes and corrections in the design. Guided by the mission, strategy and boundaries

defined in the previous chapters a final design for a potentially transformative event is created.

The design process included a group design session (the results are presented in appendix 11). Due to the time limits the group session was put up almost without warning, but in this case the author really caught a lucky break. Even with the short warning the author managed to gather a group of people who seemed to have a lot to give to this topic. Altogether there were six people participating in addition to the author. These people combinedly had several years of experience in developmental projects in the Global South, a lot of experience in facilitating different kinds of idea and planning session, experience with working in a project with asylum seekers, and experience of the feeling of 'otherness', of not belonging. According to the author's evaluation a group for this purpose does not get much better without adding in people from the target group. For time restrictions, the actual target group was not involved in these early stages of planning. The group design session was started with the author presenting the background of the project and the problem for which solution ideas were created for in the session. The problem was formulated as "How could we guide asylum seekers towards an increased sense of 'self-efficacy', 'community', 'meaning', 'contributing', 'opportunities' and 'choices' by the means of an event?". The key words were written on a sheet of paper to keep them in mind throughout the session. After this it was already time for the first brainstorming round. The participants created ideas for an event that could support the previously-mentioned goals. These ideas were mainly emphasizing the need to design an event that would "do something real", not just pass the time but be directly related to for example employment opportunities. Only after this first round the initiator presented her own initial idea for the event. After analysing the ideas and revisiting the goal, there was a decision to further elaborate on the idea of the author. This is of course not a level playing field for all of the ideas, when one has been prepared beforehand and the others are improvised on the spot, but yet the author felt that the discussions gave enough confirmation on the initial idea to proceed with it. In the main round of brainstorming, the participants created ideas for the aspects and details of an event design that would support the desired transformations. The first ideas were collected, and only after the participants seemed to start to slow down the author added in some additional inspiration. These inspirations were parts of the theory discussed in chapter 3. It was explored for example how to incorporate all the five senses in the event so that it would support the goals, what kind of touchpoints should and would be included and what kind of ideas people had for each touchpoint, what kind of risks for negative or distracting cues there were, how to incorporate the four realms which were explained to the participants, what kind of learning should occur and how to facilitate it best, and just in general how to maximize the impact of the event and what were the main

things to consider for the success of the event. After a few rounds of focusing purely on creating ideas, a process was started to analyse and develop them further. In the attachment 11, the ideas in blue post-its are sorted out followed by the benefits of the ideas in purple post-its and the potential risks in green post-its. From these ideas some were selected to play a part in the final design – they are presented in the ‘instructional design’ and ‘experience journey’ sections of the Event Canvas in appendix 8. And all of these aspects are visible in the Event Program found in appendix 9.

While further developing the ideas created during the group design session, one additional tool was created. The ‘Activity Plan’ tool can be found in appendix 10. This A5 size plan template is to be used during the event for the asylum seekers to practice planning their own activities. Yet, designing this tool was not a priority in this thesis and there is plenty of room for further development. The purpose was to have a very simple template which would include thinking about the target group, the resources needed and the next actionable steps to assist in taking the plan to practice.

For the pre-event phase, a plan was created to personally “recruit” participants to the event, and when encountering people especially interested in the idea they would be recruited as ‘promoters’. A marketing flier would only be used as a reminder and a possible tool for transferring the message further on to other people. The promoters would be given a role as recruiting other participants for whom the event would be beneficial and before the actual event they would be consulted on the event design and be encouraged to act as role models by bringing their ideas out courageously and supporting other participants in doing the same. This hopefully brings down the barriers between the “organizers” and the “participants”, which was discussed during the groups design session.

The theme of the event could be described as ‘asylum seekers contributing, volunteers supporting’. Related to the design ideas presented in subchapter 3.5.3, the final event program was checked for alternating relaxation and tension, and the author was satisfied with the alternations. Even if the peaks of the tension were on purpose left relatively low, the event is considered to be exciting enough with its novelty. The participants are given a clear group goal on the quantity of ideas, and throughout the ideation rounds sufficient encouragement and inspiration is given that they are sure to meet this goal. The progression towards the goal is followed visually on the big board that gets filled up with post-its. Especially in the beginning of the event people might need more support and this is why the first groups are divided so that people are mostly with people they are already familiar with – but later on when the participants have gained some courage the groups are mixed. The

participants get acknowledgement from the volunteers and from other participants especially when their ideas are considered as the most interesting ones by someone. Even if in the step for practicing the actual planning people are encouraged to go into groups that are developing an idea they are interested in, for the sake of autonomy and personal passions, also in this situation they have the choice to practice planning independently. The participants are enabled to get a sense of mastery by utilizing the simple tool for planning activities, the ‘promoters’ act as role models especially in the ideation phase by bringing in also “impossible”, out-of-the-box ideas, and this coupled with other encouragement gives the participants a sense of accomplishment when meeting the goal for filling up the board with ideas.

4.3 Continuing the Project

The focus of this thesis, which is creating an event plan, is only a part of the whole project for improving asylum seeker wellbeing through facilitating self-planning of free-time activities. During the planning process, the author has decided to implement the initiation event and continue according to the plan presented in appendix 2.

After the initiation event, the preliminary plan is to organize at least a few follow-up meetings for the asylum seekers to develop these plans created in the event or newly formed plans, and get help in starting to put them into practice. Depending on the experiences gained during this project, the activity of supported planning and implementing of free-time activities might even become a regular activity with weekly or bi-weekly meetings.

4.4 Limitations and risks

The final product of the thesis is an event plan for asylum seekers in the Punavuori reception centre. The event plan can be with very minor modifications utilized also in other reception centres in Finland. The event plan is to a large extent based on the experiences and the worldview of the author, and is therefore biased. Feedback from external sources should be collected and alterations made based on it to better ensure the success of the event. The tight time schedule of the design process made it impossible to include cocreative planning sessions or test sessions with the potential participants within this thesis. For the same reason, also the continuance of the project after the initiation event was limited outside of the scope of this thesis.

The major risks that the author can imagine in realizing the plan are that no one is interested in participating, or that once people arrive at the event they are not willing or com-

comfortable enough to share their ideas, or that they are despite of encouragement be unwilling or unable to invest effort in their insecure futures, are not able to see the benefits in organizing their own events or are not able to see their capacity to do this. A major risk is that the event initiator is seen as a suspicious outsider and for this reason the event is not embraced. Yet, the author believes that these risks are planned for, and especially the idea of having the interpreters and enthusiastic 'promoters' as intermediaries having a significant role in the implementation of the event hopefully alleviates these risks.

4.5 Evaluation of the design and recommendation for further application

Even if the goal of the event is to guide a transformation, it is acknowledged that the chances of a single event creating a significant transformation are small. However, the event designed in this thesis is only the initiation event of a longer project, of which an outline is presented in appendix 2. The hope is that with the careful design of this initiation event a sufficient start-push is given to the asylum seekers to continue in the process of realizing their own ideas with the support of volunteers, and that this whole process is engaging and meaningful enough to create a fundamental change in the wellbeing of asylum seekers. It is acknowledged that the event is not able to attract all residents of the reception centre, engage all the participants of the event and to create a big enough of a change in attitude and feelings of all the participants to empower them in taking control of their own free-time activities. However, the goal is to affect as many as possible, and especially to encourage some courageous ones to act as role models and possibly enabling this asylum seeker-driven activity model to become the norm.

In the end, the author is quite proud with the event idea. The contrast can really only be seen when one thinks of the usual events that are organized for the asylum seekers – it could have been an event to play football, to learn a language, or a so-called "multiculturalism" event where everyone presents the culture and food of their originating countries. These could have easily increased the sense of community, and they could have also been meaningful to some of the residents of the reception centre. However, to create something that would be meaningful for more people one needed to create something more customizable. In the final event plan, one was able to incorporate being meaningful directly to oneself and being meaningful through contributing to others – people are able to choose which of the approaches gives them more meaning. And simultaneously, participants are able to get an increased sense of self-efficacy by being the experts and possibly creating something completely new.

The author thinks that the most valuable thing during the process of planning this event was that from the beginning the author had some ideas of the impressions one wanted to

create and of the changes one wanted to facilitate, and that the author was determined to keep these in mind throughout the process. This also gave the author difficulties in justifying this mostly independent planning phase that she has been conducting in this thesis. Shouldn't it be the asylum seekers themselves thinking about the goals and strategies for fulfilling them? Yet, the author sees encouragement and facilitation as vital in this project, and considers these to need planning in themselves. For these reasons, the author started calling this thesis the preliminary phases of planning, and is aiming at keeping the plan flexible. When the implementation phase begins by recruiting participants and 'promoters', feedback and ideas on the plan will be received and changes made if necessary. And simultaneously as much of the visible organizing roles are given to the 'promoters' as they are willing to take. Yet, even if the author would feel it necessary – in case one is not successful enough in recruiting enthusiastic 'promoters' – to have a more active and visible role in the initiation event, she believes that the basic content of the event as planning activities already enables agency to be transferred significantly towards the asylum seekers themselves.

The final success of the event is measured in the extent and frequency of the desired transformations taking place, but this part related to the implementation of the event is outside the scope of this thesis. At this phase, the event plan can only be assessed according to the seeming potential that it has. The author is naturally quite a biased assessor of the plan that is her own work, but she tries to be as realistic as possible in her assessments. The plan is definitely achievable, based on the author's previous experience one can see no obstacles completely blocking the implementation of the plan. The author did make her best efforts to create a plan that would be suitable for the target group, but especially without target group participation in the planning process the plan is undoubtedly biased towards the worldview and background of the author. Yet, since the purpose of the event is to support asylum seekers in planning their own activities, the design of the event is truly attempting to limit the power and influence of the author in the final activities.

The challenging task of evaluating the transformative potential of the final plan is approached by individually assessing the way that the design supports each of the main aspects of the goal transformation. In addition, the experiential richness of the final plan is evaluated as a prerequisite of transformational potential. The author believes that the goals of an increased sense of opportunities, choice and self-efficacy are promoted through the event. The activity planning focus of the event places the participants in the role of active agents that can make choices and are able to plan meaningful activities. The simplicity of the planning tool used supports the sense of self-efficacy. The participants

are encouraged to see opportunities by giving examples of what could be done or has been done previously.

The sense of community might be somewhat increased by the shared stories and by the shared project of planning activities for each other, but this might be one of the most challenging goals to meet. The main idea of the design is to create a sense of meaning by encouraging the participants to take steps in order to realize meaningful activities and especially by encouraging them to contribute to other people in the reception centre and outside through their activity plans. This focus on planning for others is seen as having relatively significant transformative potential.

When it comes to experiential richness, author was surprised at how difficult it was to create ideas on how to incorporate the five senses in a way that would support the purpose of the event. In the groups design session, an idea came up to use the classic addition of food to incorporate the senses of smell and taste, but this was abandoned due to the recommendations of the group. It was seen as only distracting from the actual purpose, and the author also agrees that there could be a great risk of replacing the intrinsic motivation of participants with these “external rewards”. As a direct quote from one of the participants it can be stated that “people from disadvantaged groups easily see through that kind of stuff”. Yet, the author feels that the incorporation of the sense of touch, in the Step 2 of the Event program (appendix 9) truly plays a role in bringing the focus of the participants into the event, creating concentration and creating anticipation and contrast to the usual. Also pronouncedly incorporating the sense of hearing by using music as a way of interrupting the group discussions seemed to serve an actual purpose in making the interruptions less intrusive and thus decreasing the perceived hierarchy between the volunteers and the participants in the organization of the event. Visual sense was naturally incorporated by creating the ideas on post-it notes, the quantity of which would be emphasized when collecting the post-its together on a big board purposefully drawing attention to the accomplishment and the expertise of the participants.

The educational and escapist realms are in the opinion of the author embraced in the design, since the participants will be both mentally absorbed and physically immersed in the activity of planning. The entertainment realm is engaged in the step 2 of the Event program when the participants are listening to the stories that other participants share about the items that bring them joy. In the author’s opinion, the esthetic realm has the least attention in the plan. The only esthetic aspect during the event is the collection of colourful post-its themselves. The author really wishes that she would have come up with other ways of improving the aesthetics of the event location with it serving a purpose for the

goals of the event and not seeming like some interior design elements are added for no reason.

The theme of the event 'asylum seekers contributing, volunteers supporting' is not maybe great for marketing purposes, but it effectively supports the purpose of the event. The author tries to minimize all the visible signs of the volunteers as the organizers of this event, but the success of the theme is largely dependent on how interested the 'promoters' are in participating in the organization of the initiation event. If there is sufficient enthusiasm, the author is really able to take a background role in the initiation event just providing the 'promoters' with encouragement in their roles and assistance in practical matters, whereas the 'promoters' are the ones actually leading the steps of the program.

The author believes that this initiation event combined with the follow-up meetings has potential in guiding small transformations increasing participants' sense of self-efficacy and openness to opportunities, and that this increase has the potential of guiding people to take the kind of actions that will have a bigger transformative effect in their lives. This thesis project encourages a transformation in asylum seeker free-time activities, since it did not only suggest new content for the activities in the form of an event, but it also proposed to initiate a change in the process of creating asylum seeker free-time activities. It is a step away from the well-intended, volunteer-centric approach towards a more asylum seeker-centric approach.

There were quite many practical limitations posed at the event plan including the time restriction of the thesis process, the financial limitation of a near-zero budget and the limitations posed by the situation of the participants. Yet, the author feels that she did quite a good job with the available resources. Considering that target group participation was not possible in these early phases of planning due to the time constraint, the author managed to relatively well adopt a participant-orientation. The final plan could include more transformative and experiential elements, but the author did a good job at not getting carried away with all the potential ways of increasing the experience-value of the event and instead focused on the selected elements that were truly seen as supporting the desired transformation. The author recommends that, for example, organizations starting up an organizational transformation adopt this approach – it feels like too often the process of transforming is so out of touch with the impressions and changes one in the end wants to create that it inevitably makes them impossible to realize.

The author would recommend this type of holistic design to be taken advantage of in personal and organizational transformations. This thesis was an example of a very specific

type of a target for transformation, but many of the lessons learned seem potentially beneficial to more mainstream commercial and organizational transformations as well. Event Canvas proved to be useful in many ways during the design process – it made it easy to articulate the purpose of the design in mid-process, and it from the beginning conceptualizes the design process in a way that easily places transformation as the purpose of the design. It is a tool that seems very easy to use in a group, even if this full potential was not realized during this process. The sections are somewhat self-explanatory, but sometimes the guiding questions are quite different in the book and the template itself. For the author of this thesis the overall feeling is that the authors have not made any strict guidelines on what kind of an approach each section should contain. This makes it a little bit confusing for a first-time user, but yet again it can be said that for creating inspiration this dimension is not a clear downside. For example, for the jobs to be done section, the advice includes “things that the Stakeholders are trying to accomplish in their regular jobs or everyday lives”, an example which clearly refers to the tasks related to the event (Frissen et al. 2016, p.64), and a question of what jobs “are you helping him/her get done” in the actual Event Canvas (appendix 4).

The Event Canvas book and template are very good, simple tools for planning transformative events. The assisting questions in each section are very useful, but for the author they do not feel to give enough detail – by being such a concise introductory book some detail is sacrificed. In addition to utilizing the event canvas the author suggests using other tools aiding in the design process – for example design elements from Gamification in tourism approach were relatively useful in designing specific aspects of the event itself.

One of the main challenges of the design process was documenting it. In the process, so many aspects were considered and so many ideas used as inspiration that it seemed impossible to summarize these into the most important aspects of the design process that would fit in this thesis. It was a challenging project in general, but created value also beyond the event plan itself. In the following chapter, the author evaluates the thesis project and discuss the personal learning outcomes and other real-life outcomes of this project.

5 Discussion

The aim of this thesis was to create an event plan that would have the potential of initiating a transformation in asylum seeker wellbeing. During the project, the purpose of the event was defined more exactly as improving asylum seeker wellbeing through increasing sense of self-efficacy, sense of community in the reception centre, active agency in looking for opportunities to contribute to others and to one's own future.

There have been many types of days during the project: sometimes it has felt enjoyable and meaningful, and sometimes it has felt overwhelming and challenging. Yet, the author has learnt from both types of days and gained valuable insights on what she would like to develop for the next time with a similar kind of a project. Having a topic related to wellbeing has been very beneficial in supporting the author's attempts at prioritizing personal wellbeing even among personally challenging circumstances. In the following subchapters, the thesis project and the personal learning outcomes are evaluated.

5.1 Evaluation of the thesis project

The thesis process was a personal challenge for the author. The original timetable of the thesis was completely altered when the author received a new deadline for her work. At this point, it was clear that the work would be done under time pressure, which was especially challenging since the author had just started at a new position at her workplace needing a lot of resources for learning new things and building work routines. Yet, the author managed to relatively well make time for the thesis process.

In the end, more of challenge than the time ended up being the fact that the author was so interested in the topic that she did not want to conduct the project very superficially, which would have allowed for less time being invested. The author feels that in the end she arrived – with the help of her thesis instructor – at a reasonably good compromise of resources invested and the results gained related to the thesis project goals and the real-life goals.

Next time with a similar type of a project, which the author knows she will be encountering, she will try to even more pronouncedly proceed with the method that she first defines to herself the “skeleton” of the work – the pure essentials that are the minimum requirements for the project to succeed – and then continues to build “flesh around the bones” according to how much one has time and energy left. This seems to be a very unnatural way of working for the author who is used to first gathering a pile of flesh before on the fi-

nal moments adding in the skeleton. Yet, it seems like for these bigger projects the author's own sense of self-efficacy does not carry all the way to the end, unless she has been able to gather some guarantees on the way that the project will succeed.

5.2 Learning outcomes

During the thesis project, the author gained more understanding of the context of the asylum seekers. She feels that she is now more able to relate to their situation and has gained a broader perspective in addition to her own personal experiences with asylum seekers. She feels that she is now better at seeing the potential underlying causes for some challenges she has met while volunteering. She will be able to utilize this broadened understanding during her future volunteering activities – including the project whose initiation event was planned in this thesis – and potentially even during her future professional activities.

Before this thesis, the author had no experience of designing events with the help of any tools or theoretical frameworks. In this thesis, the author utilized a few tools for event, experience and transformation design, and got familiar with a few others while doing background reading. She can by no means say that she is now an expert of these tools and theories, but at least she has tried them out, and thus might be more likely to see their potential in other future projects.

Even if the schedule for this thesis project was rather rushed, the author feels like she has gotten the event plan into such a stage, where it is almost ready to be realized, and this future phase of realization will provide the author with many new learning opportunities related to facilitation and creating the desired impressions with her own conduct. The thesis process has been a learning process of one's own writing and learning style, of how one handles stress and of combining work and study. The process has not been simple and has contained many challenges that are shared with other thesis writers and many personal challenges, but the author feels like she is now better equipped with facing similar challenges in the future.

Reflecting on the personal outcome goals of the whole thesis project presented in the 'Event Canvas of Project Initiator' in appendix 3, the thesis project can be declared a success. The author has succeeded in completing this thesis project that has been very challenging to her. She has always had difficulties in prioritizing completion over quality, but during this project she has made some significant improvements related to this. She is already extremely excited about implementing this event and getting started with other projects of her life. And the author is confident that once the plan is implemented she will also

gain some sense of contributing to others, and perhaps she already has contributed by bringing this specific topic into the awareness of the readers of this thesis, the audience of the thesis presentation and the participants of the group design session. She believes she has learned some valuable lessons on wellbeing in general and on how one can help to support the wellbeing of others.

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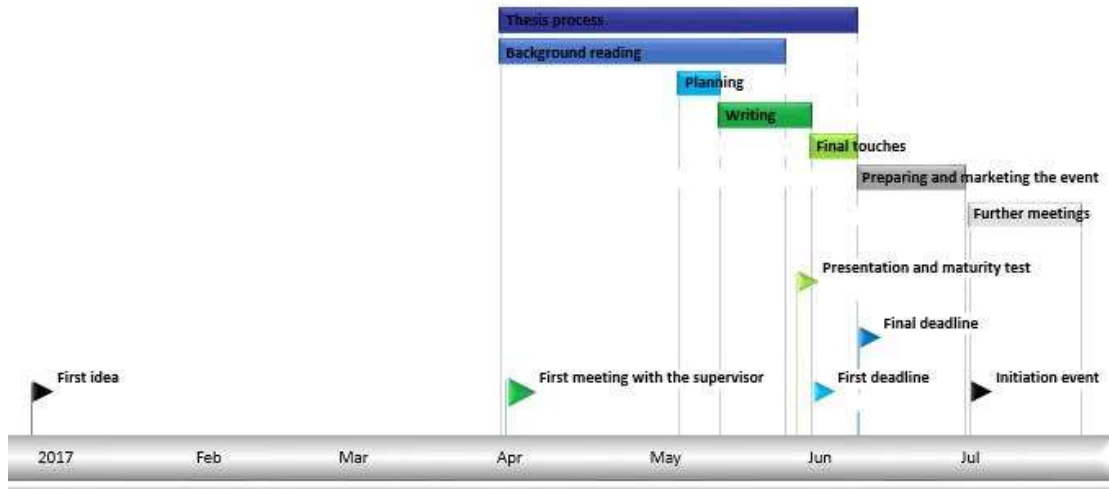
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Appendices

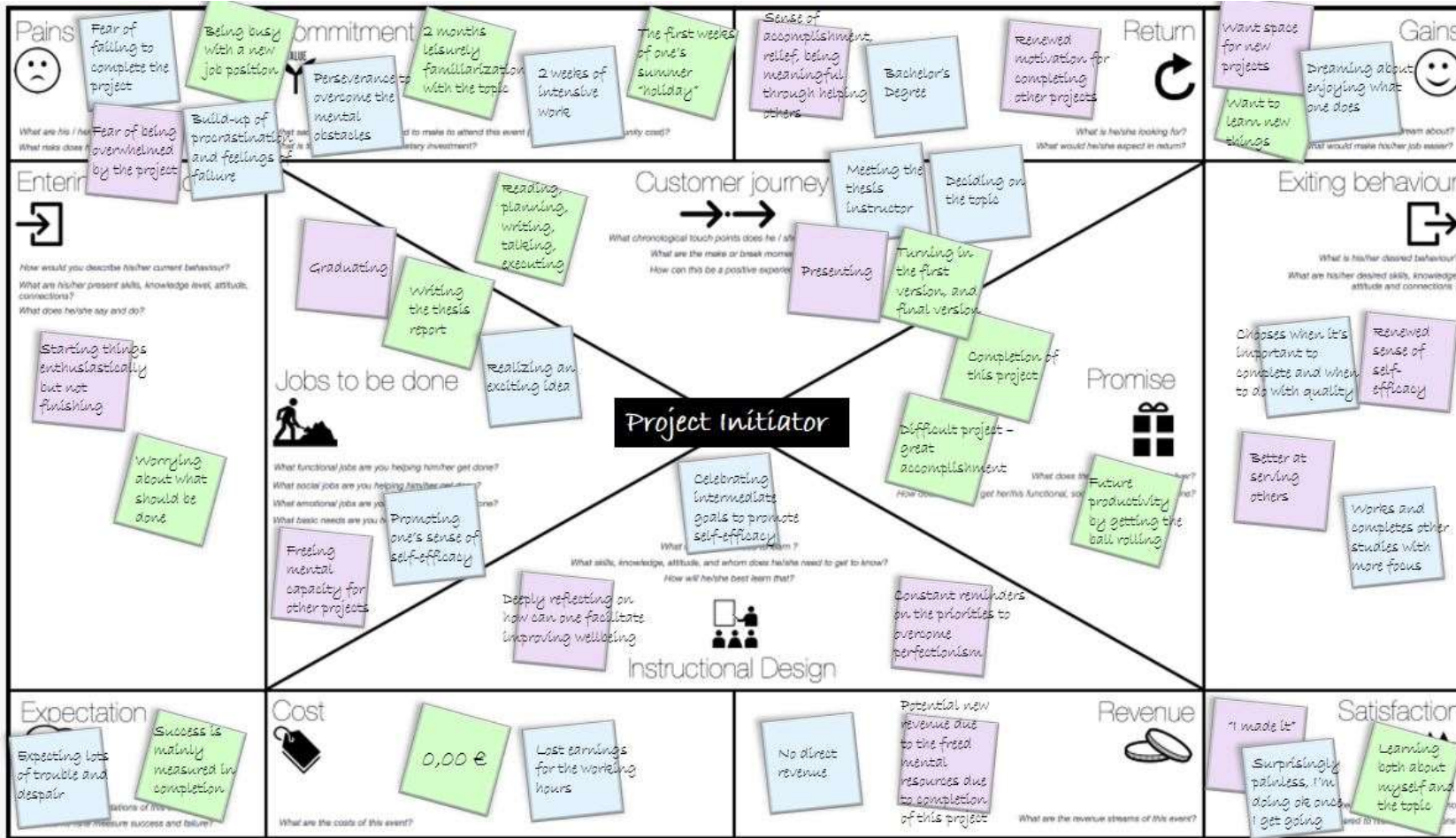
Appendix 1. Thesis Timeline



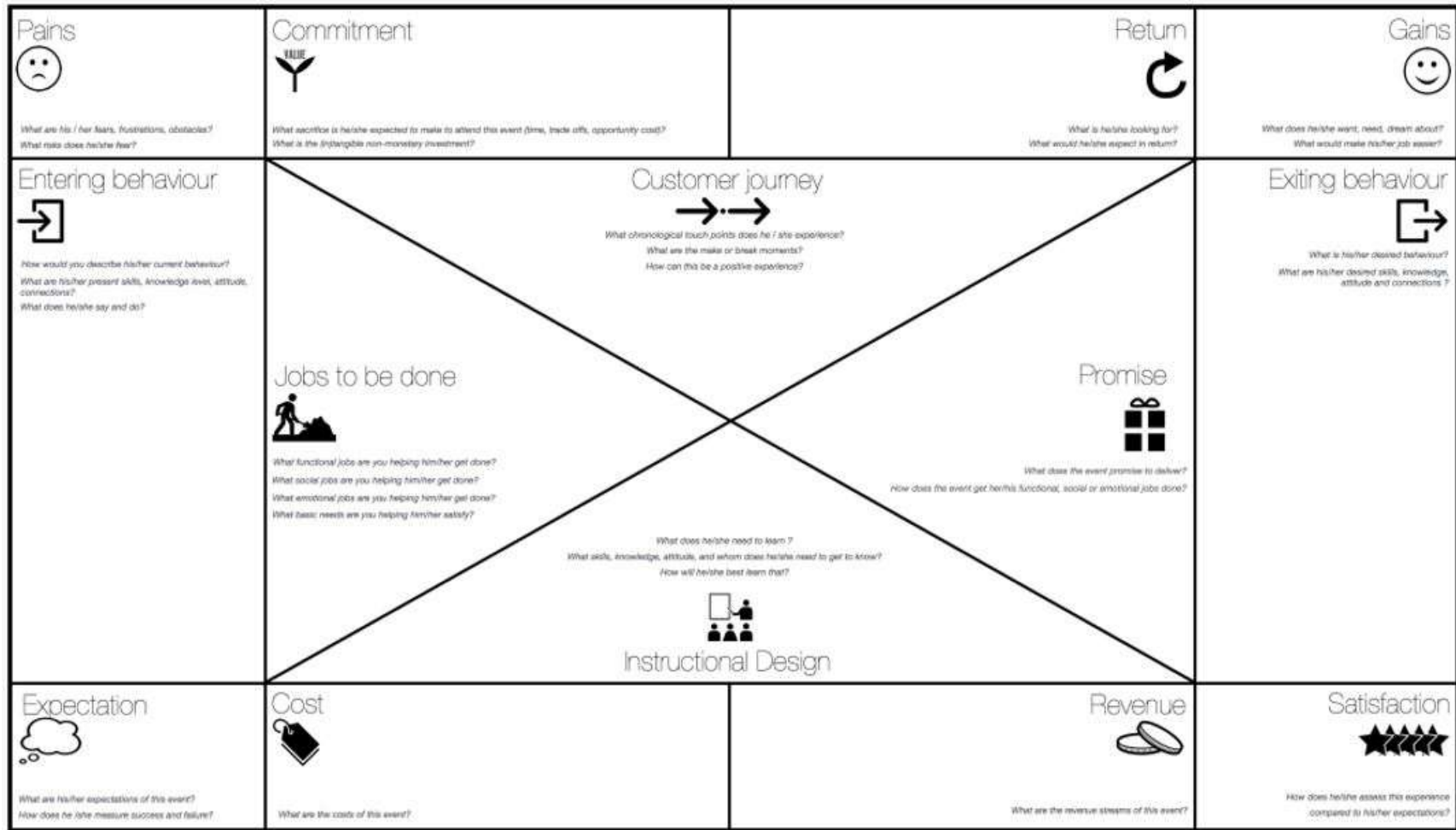
Appendix 2. Whole Project Timeline



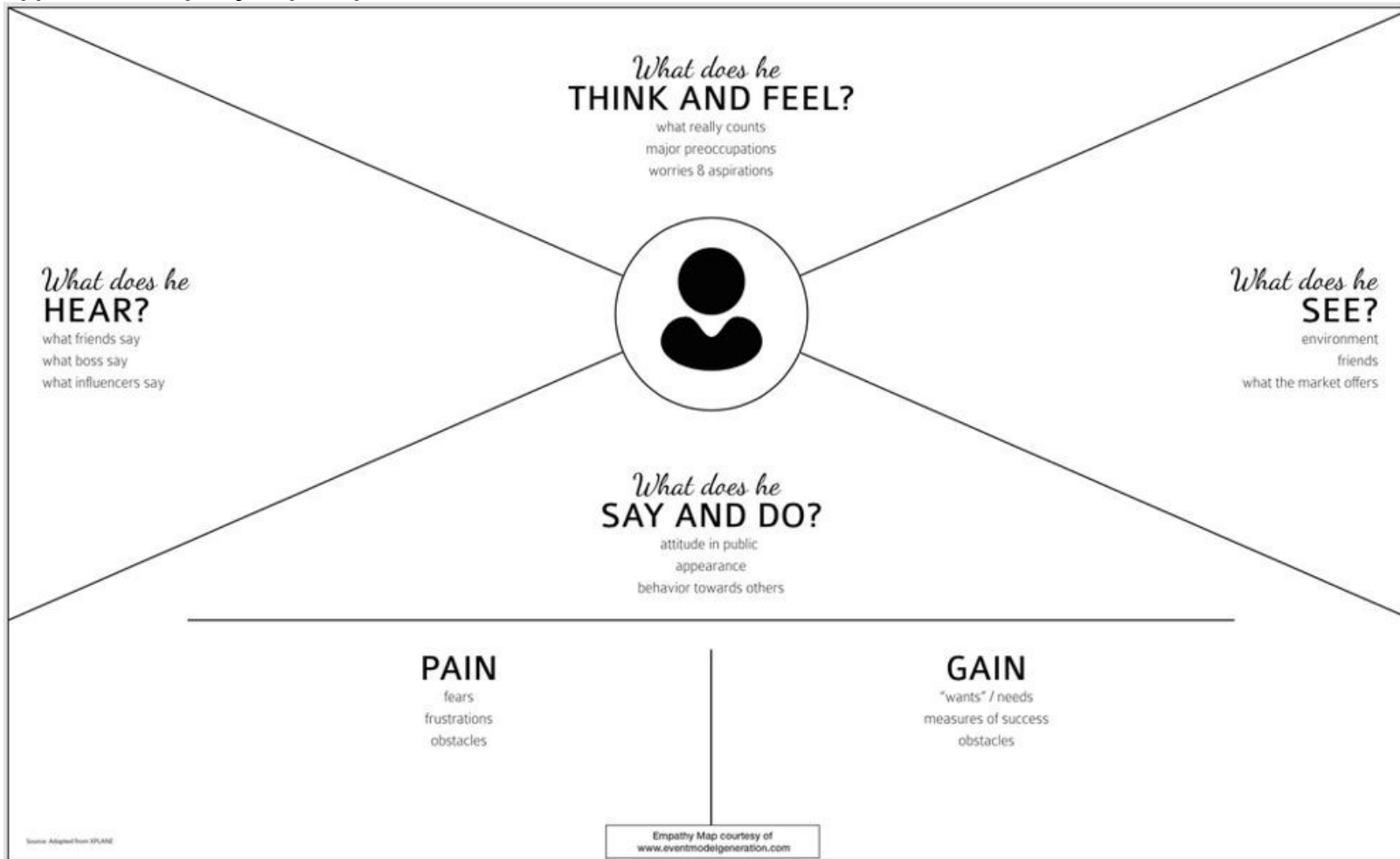
Appendix 3. Event Canvas of Project Initiator



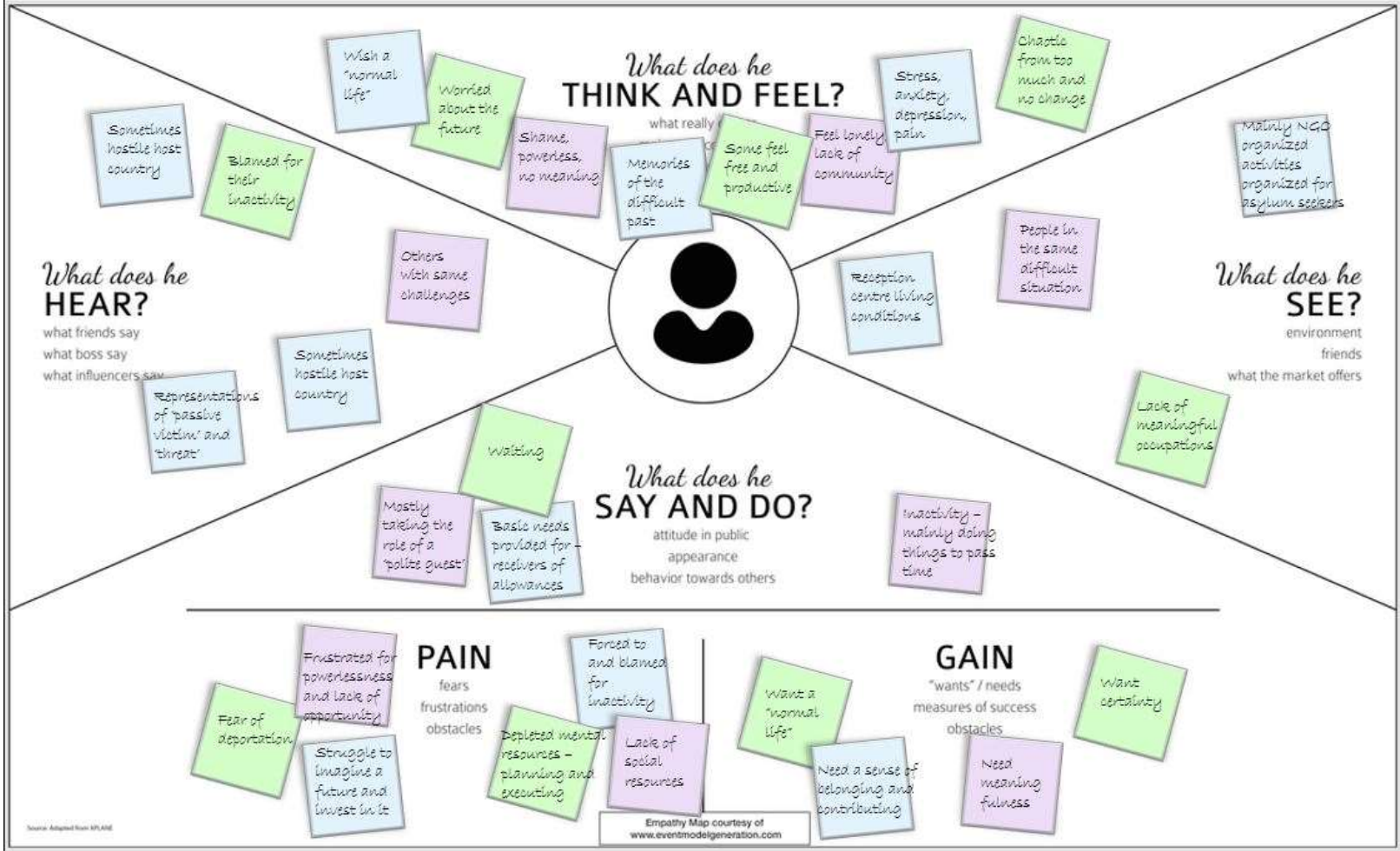
Appendix 4. Event Canvas template



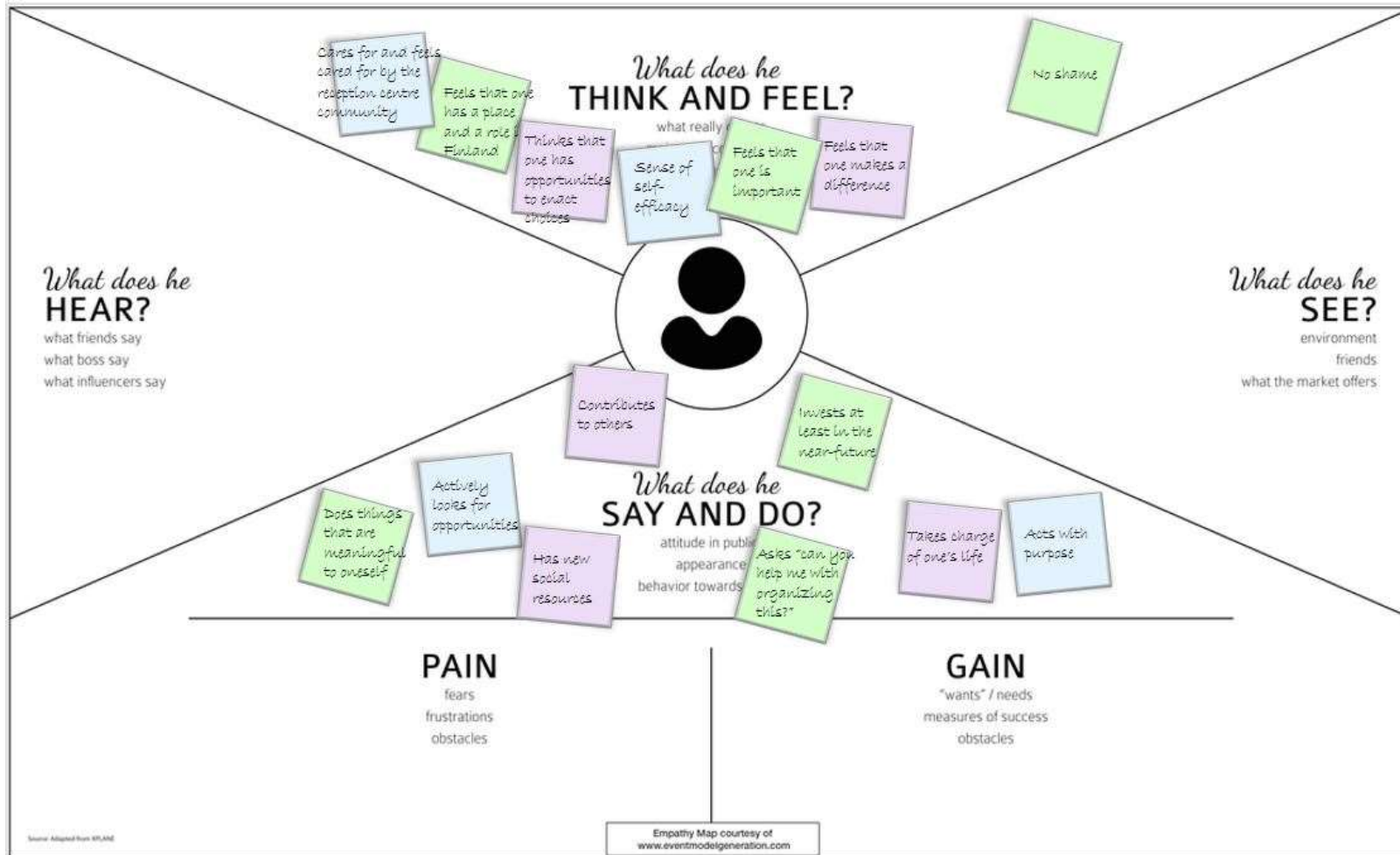
Appendix 5. Empathy Map template



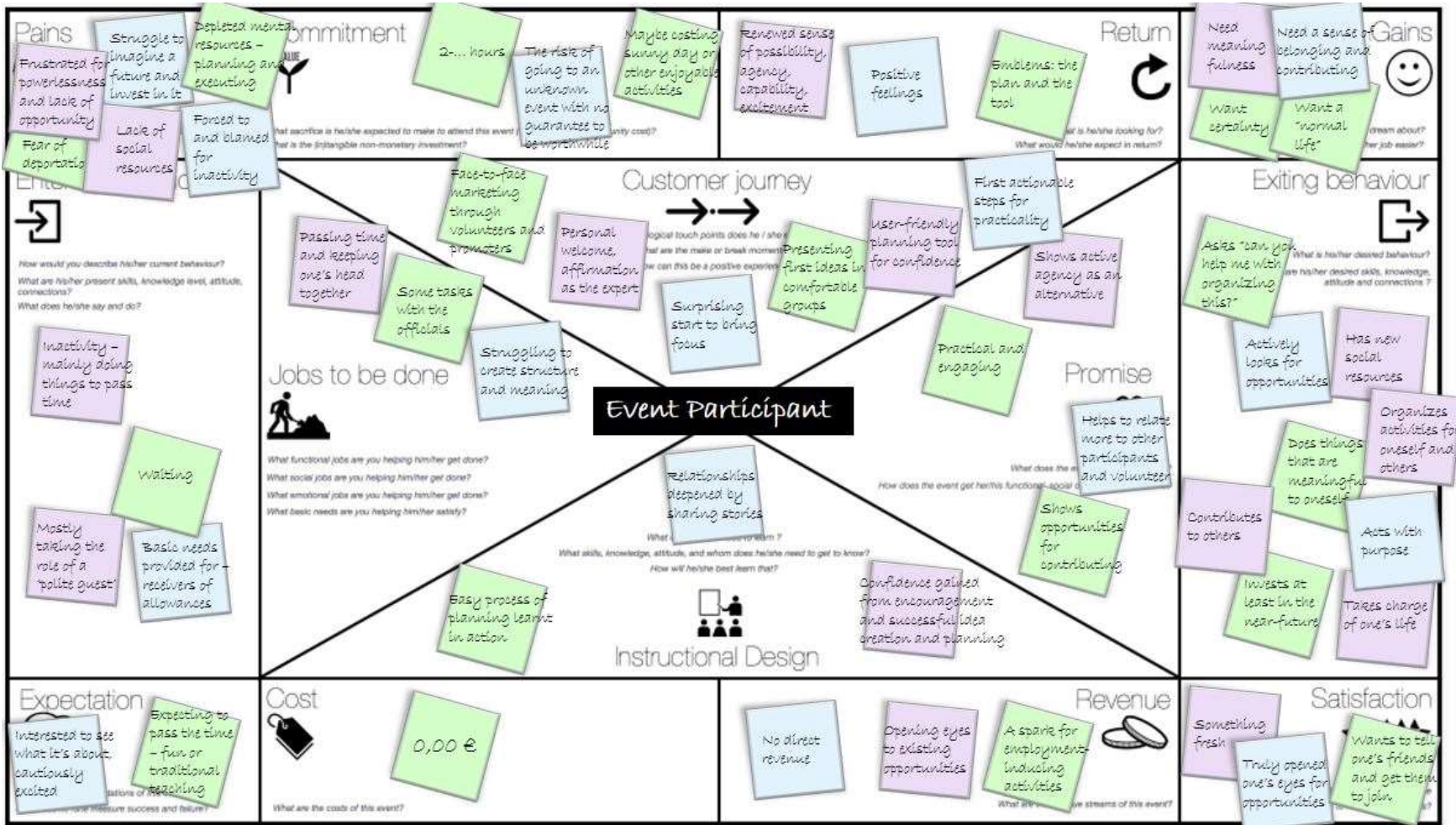
Appendix 6. Pre-event Empathy Map of Event Participant



Appendix 7. Post-event Empathy Map of Event Participant



Appendix 8. Event Canvas of Event Participant



EVENT PROGRAM

Time: Overall duration 2 hours, date not decided on yet

Step 1: Welcome

Personal welcoming to all participants, free mingling with the support of volunteers and promoters.

Step 2: Focus

Focus creation: Going into smaller groups that are freely chosen, taking out the joyous items the participants have been prompted to bring with them, passing these items from hand to hand behind people's backs, closing eyes if it feels comfortable, the participants are instructed to think about how the items feel in their hands, what they could be, how they could have brought joy to the fellow participant, and if they themselves have any similar experiences. Thinking about joyful things and focusing on the others in the room is the introduction into the topic. After the ring activity, the participants are encouraged to share the stories of their items for the rest of the small group.

Step 3: Ideas

The idea creation is started up with individually creating ideas of free-time activities on post-it notes. It is explained to the participants that they can draw, write in English or another language. The participants are encouraged to create at least one "impossible idea" that they couldn't even imagine happening in reality. The participants are also encouraged to create ideas both for themselves and for others. They are validated as the experts of their own life and the situation of other people living in the centre not present in the event. After the first ideation round, the ideas are presented to the small groups. After this one representative of each group will place the idea post-its on a shared notice board and present them with the help of their team if needed. Everyone is encouraged to write down any additional ideas they get after hearing the ideas of others. After this the ideas are processed, by dividing them into different categories: which ones do you do alone and which ones with other people? Which ones do you do outside and which ones inside? Which ones do you need some special equipment for and for which ones not? After this,

the participants are encouraged to freely bring up potential reasons for “why” these activities would be organized. Some of these purposes are collected on a board to act as the basis of the next brainstorming round. The groups are mixed, in a way that everyone is still able to communicate either by themselves or with the help of an interpreter or a fellow participant. Small rounds of creating new ideas are done with each of the purposes – what other activity would serve this purpose? After every round, the ideas are presented in the groups. Finally, one of the small group members is again presenting the ideas for the whole group and collecting them on the notice board. After completing the goal of filling in the notice board with ideas, it is time for the next step.

Step 4: Planning

People are advised to choose one activity that they would want to organize themselves and one activity they would wish someone to organize for them. Then it is time to actually start planning the activity. Everyone is encouraged to join a team with an interesting activity plan, either one of the ones they chose as the most interesting ones or something almost as interesting. However, there is also the option of planning in a single-person team. The activity plan template is presented, and then the participants are encouraged to think about the different aspects of an activity one step at a time. In the end of this step, the participants are to think about what would be the next things that should be done if they were to realize this activity. They are asked if they are interested in putting their plan to practice, and if yes, they are encouraged to assign responsibilities of who does what and when.

Step 5: Next step

Next steps for putting their ideas into practice are decided on, together with agreeing on the next times when there will be organized support available for developing these ideas or some new ideas further. Finally, a little pep talk is given by the volunteers telling how impressed they were with the ideas and the planning, and recollecting some of their own memories related to gaining the necessary resources or to managing to organize activities (for example this one). The participants will be asked for their feelings related to the event and the ideas that came up during it. During Step 5, one of the volunteers printed a copy of the group’s activity plan for each member and these are given for the participants together with an empty template for future use. Also, in the end of the event every participant is greeted individually and thanked for their participation and ideas.

Appendix 10. Simple activity planning tool

ACTIVITY PLAN

WHAT?

Why?
—

When?
Where?

—

For who?
—

What needed?
Who needed?

WHAT NEXT?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- ...

Appendix 11. Organized group design session results

Brainstorm

