Case Project ANTURA: Co-creation of Better Immigrant Integration and Greater Social Responsibility

Harri Ruoslahti, *Laurea University of Applied Sciences and University of Jyväskylä, Finland*

Tarja Meristö, *Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Finland*

Abstract

Immigration in Europe has been a hot topic. In both 2015 and 2016, Europe received twice as many annual asylum applicants than during the previous peak year. The practical effects of immigration have been many. There have been many positive examples of inclusion and cooperation, but also unfortunately many negative examples of adversity, and even violence.
A voluntarily citizen participation group, the Greater Leppävaara Citizen Forum (GLCF) receives it funding from the city of Espoo, Finland. GLCF has arranged immigration themed open discussion events, and project ANTURA, by Laurea University of Applied Sciences, studied and evaluated these immigration themed discussions.
This paper builds on two separate, mutually co-creative layers of study: 1) co-creation together with active stakeholders and 2) student integration.
This paper notes that there is a need to develop positive co-creative working models to facilitate mutual understanding in order to soften the effects of immigration, and promote positive integration. Open communication and active citizen participation are needed to build trust and understanding to reach greater social responsibility. Factors and activities that facilitate immigration challenges are promoted in the guide book, published by the project: Many Cultures, One Home Town (Ruoslahti, et al., 2017).

Keywords: Immigrant integration, Social responsibility, Citizens' forum, Knowledge transfers

1. Introduction and purpose

Immigration in Europe became a very hot topic in 2015, when Europe faced an unprecedented flood of asylum seekers. The 1.3 million asylum applicants in both 2015 and 2016, were twice as many annual applicants than what had been during the previous peak year. Germany took by far most of these asylum seekers, and this caused their relative share, among the total of the 28 Member States, to rise from 35 % in 2015 to 60 % in 2016 (Eurostat, 2017).

The practical effects of immigration have been many. Many examples are of inclusion and cooperation, but unfortunately there are also those of adversity, and even open violence. The toll of these effects has been uneven on European countries (Davidov, et al., 2014).

The Greater Leppävaara Citizen Forum (GLCF) is a voluntarily coordinated arena for citizen participation and activity, which receives its funding from the city of Espoo, Finland to serve as an arena for open discussion on issues important and timely to the municipality and its citizens. The Forum is a part of the official citizen participation program

of Espoo. GLCF has, thus arranged a variety of open discussion events for citizens, some of, which have been on immigration themed issues. Laurea University of Applied Sciences received funding from the Ministry of the Interior for Project Antura to evaluate and elaborate the effects of these immigration themed citizen forums.

The work methods of Antura included 1) network partner representatives and students co-creating ideas and solutions for smoother immigration integration through open interaction, and 2) active student integration through which many of the project actions were completed. The main focus was that all actors were encouraged to work together, being on the same side to collaborate solutions to be used both today and in the future.

Citizen participation, which in today's democratic society is seen as increasingly important and desired has been the sole focus of GLCF. There is a clear trend in Finland, for example, where more and more Finnish municipalities such as Helsinki, Espoo, Rovaniemi, Tuusula, and Mäntsälä, are implementing new ways to involve their citizens in direct participatory decision making, even direct participation based budgeting (Kurikka, 2018).

This paper argues that developing and duplicating positive working models, for collaborative and inclusive activities can facilitate mutual understanding and soften the effects of immigration of all causes; to promote positive integration in receiving societies. All actors, including individual citizens, are responsible for the conditions in, which immigrants and host society members meet and together create something new and better for all.

The research question of this paper is: What positive working models can be co-created for activities that facilitate mutual understanding and soften the effects of immigration?

2. Literature review

2.1 Immigration

"*Policies and institutions play an extremely important role in providing the necessary solutions to integration process of the immigrants*" (Vrânceanu, 2015). The author continues to note that pro-immigration groups have a strategic orientation towards participation; individual values are important in explaining attitudes toward immigration (Davidov et al., 2014). Mostowska (2014) finds that migrant policies and services should be inclusive and personalized, and also taking into account the views of social workers.

Participation in sports and arts build self-awareness and social connectedness (Bower & Carroll, 2015). Knowledge transfers are induced in collaborative co-creative settings, and they are best achieved when stakeholders are included in the co-creation process (Ruoslahti, Tiainen, Kortelainen, & Vesterinen, 2011), end-user participation becomes facilitated, responsibilities distributed between stakeholders, and decisions decentralized (Pirinen 2015).

According to Eurostat (2017) total of 4.7 million people of, which an estimated 2.4 million were citizens of non-member countries, immigrated to one of the EU-28 Member States during 2015. The largest number of immigrants in 2015 were to Germany. Other countries receiving large numbers of immigrants were United Kingdom (631.000), France (363.000), Spain (342.000), and Italy (280.000). Social responsibility prepares long-term conditions for success in the market place, and as continents and countries are in different development phases, and all can learn from each other in business and in everyday life.

2.2 Co-creation

Ruoslahti (2018) identifies that co-creation networks have cyclical connections in value. Networks require active facilitation and cooperation tools or platforms to actively and efficiently share co-creative innovation and

knowledge. Active stakeholder participation can be motivated and guided through having common aims that promise benefits for all individual collaborators, and can result in an active drive to co-create of knowledge and change.

Sankowska (2013) notes that there are simultaneous relationships between trust, knowledge creation and transfer, and innovativeness. These strong links between them explain differences in competitiveness and innovativeness of organizations. Organizational trust must be built first, for it to foster innovativeness through knowledge transfers (Pirinen, 2015), and trust fosters, what Sankowska (2013) calls virtuous circles of knowledge transfer, creation and innovativeness.

Co-creation of knowledge can offer significant opportunities for innovation. By exploring current insights in academic literature on co-creation, Ruoslahti (2018) finds that multi-stakeholder networks can be structured to benefit all collaborating innovation network stakeholders, and that network cooperation may evolve between levels of complexity.

Learning, knowing, and becoming are the basis of a dynamic and iterative process of "continuous experiencing, learning and sense making" (Jakubik, 2011, p. 392). Multiple-stakeholder co-creation projects, which benefit innovation network stakeholders are highest in complexity, as roles between stakeholders are constantly changing. Common aims and issues to solve motivates stakeholders to collaborate. Open innovation environments facilitate communication and interaction, as co-creation of knowledge requires intensive collaboration (Ruoslahti, 2018). Identifying what the main challenges to address are, can help co-creation collaboration networks function better. Active stakeholder participation stems from common aims, and they should promise benefits for every stakeholder. When all these are place, it can result in an active drive for co-creation of knowledge, innovation, and change. Human-oriented factors (culture, people, and leadership), can be critical for successful knowledge management, as are organization-oriented (processes and structures), technology-oriented (infrastructure and applications), and management-process-oriented (strategy, goals, and measurement) factors (Jakubik, 2011).

Figure 1: Elements of co-creation of knowledge for innovation identified from sample literature (Ruoslahti, 2018).
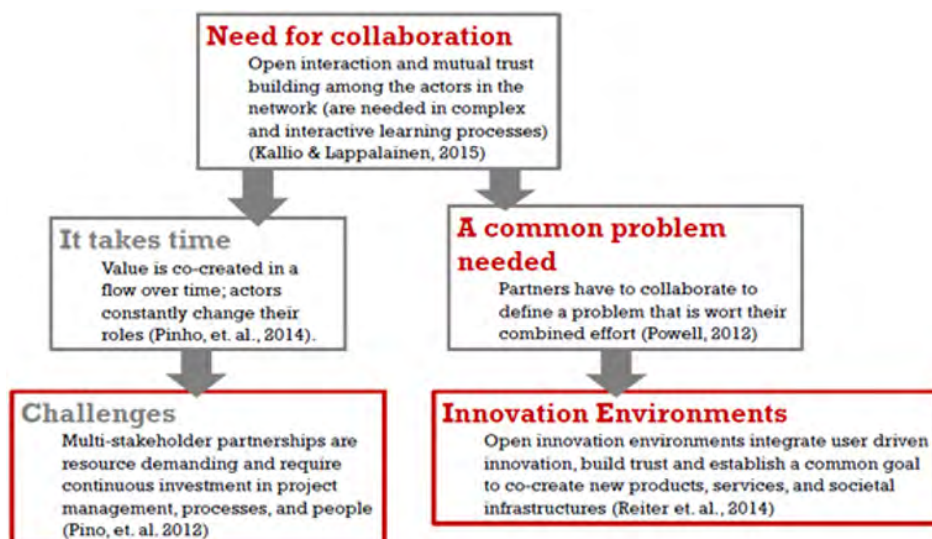
2.3 Co-creation in Higher Education

Collaboration is the key to successful co-creation. In literature innovation environments and collaboration technology are discussed as ways to facilitate active and open collaboration (Ruoslahti, 2018). Co-creation, where all collaborators feel that they will benefit from its outcomes, is needed. The collaboration should be jointly constructed and facilitated (Figure 1), and no one organization alone can be in charge. Common problems and goals guide the co-creation process. Also identifying these common problems are a co-creative process, which take time and have their challenges.

These principles can also be applied to co-creative processes in higher education. Highly interactive, cost effective higher education level learning can be achieved, with partners collaborating, first to define problems that are worth their combined efforts, then 2develop dialogues with strategic partners in order to improve knowledge sharing and further develop collaborative processes, tools, platforms, and forms of facilitation. Searching for opportunities for mutual benefit, for all partners, serves in itself to unlock the talents of the diverse groups working together in co-creation (Powell, 2012).

When universities engage with their regional surroundings, awareness is needed to clarify meanings between partners, finds Doyle (2010). Complex and pervasive cooperation may promote economic and social inclusion, and community development, but this development of mutual understanding also needs active facilitation, mutual expectations and a common language. In this way universities can drive of creative change.

"Collaboration is an important and widely used practice in interdisciplinary practice-led research projects" (Marley, 2012, p. 4). When research is practice-led it is characterized as exploration of issues through producing artefacts, yet today's a society is knowledge based and the ability to create knowledge can be seen as a competitive advantage. Ruoslahti &

Hyttinen (2017) note that flexible approaches to learning may enable students across collaborative networks to choose a learning assignment or even a curriculum, which content matches to one's individual interests. Marley (2012) finds that knowledge management in multi-practitioner, practice-led research projects may facilitate better understanding of knowledge management and may lead to more effective knowledge creation.

According to Raij (2014) research and development projects that are directly based on actual work life, form learning environments, which motivate the participating students to develop new ways of action, or new competences. The ability and preparedness for students and teachers to engage and interact with a continuously changing surrounding society becomes a crucial factor in creating new knowledge and competences. Students can serve as researchers, developers, active facilitators and participants through participation (Hyttinen, Ruoslahti & Jokela, 2017).

"Recognizing the impact of the changes on the character of learning in projects, steered research work and led to the recognition of the characteristics and stages of the Learning by Developing action model" (Raij, 2014, p. 13). Learners may question tasks and problems and make a conscious effort to change the context that posed the problem (Jakubik, 2011), and building useful knowledge and innovation processes should be co-created, trust-based, complex, and multidisciplinary (Pirinen, 2015). Interactions are trust based, a common information sharing environment is used, and responsibility is collective.

3. Methodology

This paper describes two separate, but mutually co-creative layers of execution of this study: 1) co-creation together with active GLCF members and other interested stakeholders, and 2) student integration within a research methods a study unit.

Project Antura was completed in the spirit of co-creation involving area actors, neighborhood and immigrant associations, teachers, researchers, and students an immigration and community representatives.

Student integration is a common way of learning at Laurea UAS. Guided by both the learning goals of a Laurea UAS class in Research and development methods, and the project aims of Antura, much of the practical project work was completed as student integration. This is based on the learning method Learning by Developing – LbD at Laurea UAS (Raij, 2014).

First observation of an immigration themed forum event was completed by the student team. A total of 8 students observed the discussion each at an individual table. Observers participated in the discussion, but did not guide it. Second student team members also conducted interviews (n = 17) with the participants of the immigration themed forum event. The interviews were conducted immediately after the closing of the event. Interviewees had the choice of being interviewed alone or with a friend or as part of a group.

Third there were educational Language Café events, which were observed by the student team. There were an average of 30 participants in these events, aged between 20 and 70 years. For analysis the observation material was consolidated into one material to identify similarities, differences, and phenomenon.

Co-creation activities were guided by the cyclical model (Figure 2) of co-creation by Ruoslahti (2018). The Antura value network, which aimed at co-creation, had cooperation tools and facilitation, and common aims brought the stakeholders together, engaging them in active participation. The project co-created, as outcomes, new knowledge on immigration and a publication serving as an easy guide to collaboration between immigrants and the host population.
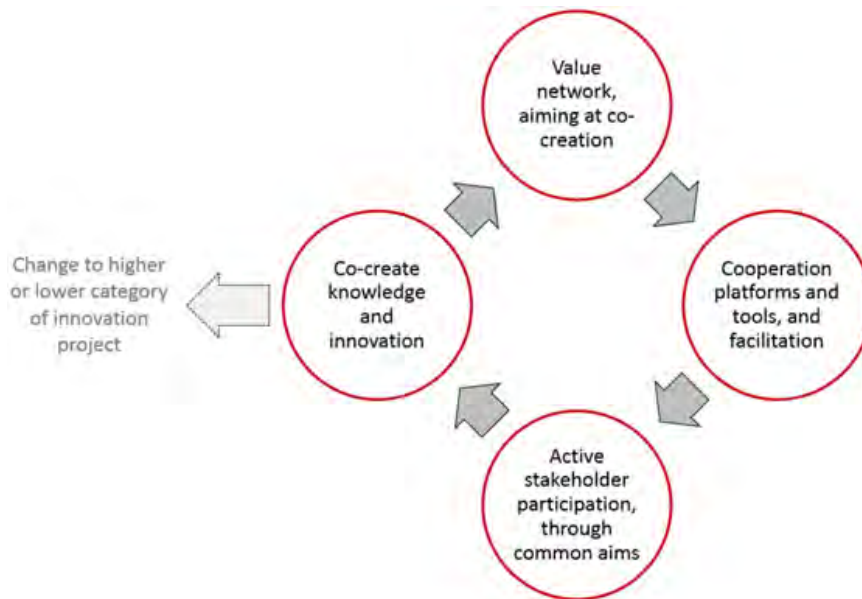
3.1 Project Antura

Project Antura was a highly co-creative project, funded by the Finnish ministry of justice. The project spanned from May 2016 to May 2017. It was firstly built around very active cooperation between area actors, neighborhood and immigrant associations, researchers, and students of both higher education and secundary level institutions; and secondly on active student integration of a bachelor level study unit in research and development methods, which included the co-creative input of active memebrs of an independent citizen forum and area neighborhood associations.

Project Antura studied and evaluated the effects of immigration themed citizen discussion events, which were coordinated by GLCF, and identifyied very practical, grass-root-level best practices, and shared visions towards and development suggestions for greater social responsibility and better fu-

Table 1: Methods used in project Antura

#	Phase	Data Collection Methods
1	Co-creation between multiple actors	Interviews by Laurea researchers Participatory co-creation between multiple actors facilitated Laurea researchers
2	Student integration in the spirit of LbD	Interviews and observation by Laurea students; guidance by Laurea researchers Forum discussion event observation (n = 8 / 40 participants) Forum discussion interviews (n = 17) Language Café event observation (avg. 30 participants) Association representative interviews (n = 6)

Figure 2: Cyclical connections in co-creation projects (Ruoslahti, 2018).

tures of integration between people, be they immigrants or have ancestry in Finland. The network partners in project Antura looked for ways to smoothen the integration of immigrants by more open interaction, where all actors are encouraged to 'be on the same side'" (Ruoslahti et al., 2017).

On a very practical level the activities of project Antura (Table2) promoted understanding of the factors that facilitate immigration challenges, and identified examples of positive co-existence and social responsibility, and at the same time promoted higher education level learning.

The first practical activity (Table 2) was a background study (A). The Laurea team conducted interviews with key people, who were identified by GLCF. This study served as a basis for both the Laurea team planning the research design (B), and the GLCF team planning the fall 2016 immigration discussion event (C).

Laurea students conducted the fall 2017 immigrant forum event study (D), which included observation (n = 8) and interviews (n = 17). The student team proceeded to conduct an observation study of the weekly Finnish discussion classes, called *Language Café*, which were held at the local library (E). Then the stu-

dent research team also conducted theme interviews with local community association representatives (n = 6) (F).

The Laurea research team conducted multi-participatory Futures Workshop (G). The workshop produced a shared vision of the desired future in the eyes of five different personas, steps towards these visions and future news headlines of the desired case scenario according to the future-driven approach developed by Meristö (see e.g. Meristö 1989). Throughout the project, it has noted that it is important to have open dialogue; the practical guide *Many Cultures, One Home Town* was a co-created as the main outcome of project Antura (H)*.* This guide book promotes open communication and gives practical advice on how to activate citizen participation and build greater social responsibility. The hand book has been disseminated through the channels of Laurea UAS, the Ministry of Justice, GLCF, the Finnish Local Heritage Federation. The Antura project final seminar (J) served also as the publication event for the guide book *Many Cultures, One Home Town*, and was held at the city of Espoo main library in May 2017.

Viherlaakso secondary school 8th grade art student art work (I) were used to illustrate the

Table 2: The activities of project Antura

#	Activity	Content	Responsibility
A	Background study	Key people involved in GLCF were interviewed. The study served as a basis for tasks B and C.	Laurea reserachers
B	Research design	Research design and its practical implementation were planned	Laurea reserachers
C	Planning of immigration discussion event	The next immigration discussion event (fall 2016) was planned	GLCF team
D	Immigration forum event study	Data was collected through observations (n = 8) of the of the fall 2017 immigrant forum event of approximately 40 participants, half of whom were immigrants and half Finns, and (n = 17) interviews (12 with immigrants and five with Finns)	Laurea students
E	Language Café study	Observation of the weekly Finnish discussion classes Language Café organized by the local Leppävaara Library.	Laurea students
F	Community association interviews	Local community association representatives (n = 6) were intervied	Laurea students
G	Futures Workshop	A multi-participatory Futures Workshop produced the shared vision of the desired future, and steps towards this vision. / Viherlaakso school art work (I) were displayed in the futures work shop and final seminar event.	Laurea researchers
H	Many Cultures, One Home Town (Finnish: Monta kultuuria, yksi kotikaupunki)	The co-created practical guide Monta kultuuria, yksi kotikaupunki was published to promote open communication and it gives practical advice on how to activate citizen participation for greater social responsibility.	Laurea researchers and GLCF team
I	Artwork by an art class at Viherlaakso school	Artwork by the 8th grade art class of Viherlaakso secondary school were commisioned to illustrate the project publication Many Cultures, One Home Town. Students used the Antura related artwork project to discuss and deepen their understanding of immigration issues.	8th grade art class / Viherlaakso school
J	Antura final seminar	Antura project final seminar, which also served as the publication event for the guide book Many Cultures, One Home Town / Viherlaakso school art work (I) were displayed in final seminar event.	

Outside of the official scope of the Antura project			
K	Bachelor's thesis	Two bachelor level student thesis work were based on project Antura	Laurea students
L	Immigration related survey	Project Antura sparked an immigration related survey by Finnish Local Heritage Federation that was performed outside the project.	Finnish Local Heritage Federation

project publication *Many Cultures, One Home Town.* These art works were displayed at the futures work shop at Laurea University of Applied Sciences and at the final seminar event of the project at the Leppävaara library.

Outside of the official scope of the project, Antura sparked two bachelor level student thesis which served to deepen the subject (K) and an immigration related survey by *Finnish Local Heritage Federation* to its member organizations. This study serves in both gathering information on this topic from across Finland, but also to raise awareness of these issues (L). Results of one the thesis were presented athe the Futures Workshop.

4. Results

This section is divided into two sub-sections of results, which are all discussed separately. Sub-section 4.1 discusses the results of the co-creation process for social responsibility, and 4.2 the results of the student integration.

4.1 Co-creating Greater Social Responsibility

The co-creative approach (Ruoslahti, 2018) of project Antura involved students, teachers, citizens, and outside experts to collaborate to create shared commitment. This facilitated reaching shared goals and in developing the main outcome of project ANTURA, the co-created knowledge was presented as a practical guide *Many Cultures, One Home Town* (H). This publication serves to promote open communication and active participation for co-existence, integration, and greater social responsibility. The study revealed ways to facilitate challenges caused by immigration by promoting active citizen participation.

4.1.1 Discussion Event Participant Interviews

Interview results at the immigrant themed event (D) show that the event was seen very useful. Respondents, with both immigrant and host society backgrounds, noted that similar events should be arranged in all parts of the country to bring immigrants and Finns together. Host society respondents said that they actually have very little contacts with immigrants in their normal daily lives. Most experiences of encounters with immigrants were told to be only positive. It was suggested that solutions are needed to ease encounters between immigrants and host society members, and to make them more common. Some alternatives mentioned were sports, cooking events and movie nights.

Immigrants saw that Finns as quiet, shy. Finns were even called unsociable, and difficult to approach. Yet, at the same time, immigrants had noticed, and hence suggested that it is best to just boldly approach the host society members, while respecting these habits of theirs. Results show that the most important elements for integration were finding work (for minors, school), learning the host country language, and learning the host country culture. Immigrants hope that people of the host society approach immigrants with open minds and considering them fellow humans.

4.1.2 Observation of event and Language Café

The immigration themed discussion (D) and Language Café (E) events were observed to be warm, relaxed, and open in spirit. Some of

the facilitators had immigrant backgrounds, which was helpful when something needed translating. The Language Café concept was seen to be a good way to learn the host language. Besides the language, facilitators were also able to tell a lot about host society habits and culture. The Language Café events were educational in nature. It was clear that people were there to learn, and not just to hang out.

Both immigrants and host society members see that opportunities to meet and having things to do together, such as spare time activities, will be needed to better integrate immigrants into the host society. These were seen as important as learning the language. Besides learning the language, immigrants also stressed the importance of getting to know the host society culture and finding employment.

4.1.3 Association interviews

Community association interviews (F) showed that the activities showed that the GLCF activities were not very well known by the community associations of the area. Thus, their answers contain a lot of personal opinion and speculation, and the interviewers adapted their approach accordingly.

One respondent noted that they had an activity where immigrants were learning the host language, Finnish. It was received very well, but unfortunately the association had too few volunteer resources. The activity had to be terminated. This respondent said that there associations have the will to develop activities, but lack the tools and resources needed.

The importance of integration, was stressed by the respondents. Thus, immigrants can join society on an equal level, instead of remaining as visitors. Respondents stressed that participation in association activities are open to all, also immigrants. It was also noted that participation in association activities and events is voluntary; it is key that a person is active and wants to joins on an individual level.

Some respondents noted that certain areas of the city of Espoo have had confrontational attitudes demonstrated in Facebook, for example. Respondents were worried that good ideas may be left un-realized in fear of cultural confrontations. The associations require more tools and knowledge about possible activities. These views were strengthened with the results of the immigration related survey, by Finnish Local Heritage Federation, which was also analyzed as Laurea UAS student integration (L), fall 2017.

4.1.4 Futures work shop

Practical solutions were sought for in a future visions work shop (G). The results open practical steps for five persona groups, in detail and for various actors: how to meet, engage, integrate people from both sides, and see matters on the same side.

Participants suggest to work toward a humane common vision, where there is little threshold for encounters. All people deserve to be treated well, and have the opportunity to find friends and be a part of the host culture and society. Studying or having a proper job makes this much easier.

To reach this vision focus should be put on strengths and remove barriers. Cutting down on bureaucracy, making it easier to find employment. Portraying positive success stories of collaboration, co-habitation, and participation are needed.

4.1.5 Handbook

A handbook (H) was published based on identified elements and solutions. The aim is to activate and help citizens and communities to organize cooperative actions to bring immigrants and citizens closer together.

The topics that are covered by the handbook include an overview of a changing Finland, creating a positive atmosphere, finding support persons, arranging common parties and events, learning the language, sports bring-

Figure 3: Example pages (cover; p. 7; p. 16) from the co-created handbook publication Many Cultures (Ruoslahti, et al., 2017)

ing people together, clubs and gatherings, the role of community associations, and a list of tips and solutions.

This handbook aims to provide working solutions to challenges caused by immigration. These guidelines help activate and develop activities, by community associations that bring together host society members and immigrants across Finland. The goal is to lessen prejudice based hate talk, aggressiveness, and violent conflict. Preventive, collaborative activity, where people are actors on an equal level, learning from one another, and enriching their respective neighborhoods.

This digitally published handbook was distributed through the channels of Laurea UAS, the Ministry of Justice, the Finnish Local Heritage Federation, and the Greater Leppävaara Citizen Forum. It is openly available to anyone who wants to use it as a guide to locally activate mutual understanding and collaboration.

4.2 Student Integration

Project ANTURA showed in practice that integrating project tasks with studies, in the co-creative spirit of LbD (Raij, 2014), can serve the goals of both the project and the curriculum very well. 17 Laurea University of Applied Sciences Security Management students gained a total of 85 credits as they deepened their competences in research design and methods, in data collection methods and analysis, and writing results reports. The students designed and conducted three separate studies: 1) the fall 2017 immigrant forum event (D), included two modes of data collection: observation and interviews; 2) the students observed weekly Language Café Finnish discussion classes (E); 3) the students interviewed local community association representatives.

Also two students decided to write their bachelor thesis in connection with project Antura. These two thesis were not part of the funded Antura activities, but yet they served to deepen understanding of the issues. Initial findings of one thesis were presented at the Futures Workshop. Activities such as football, swimming, trekking in the forest, volleyball, winter sports were mentioned as needed activities. Language courses are key in learning the host language. Many immigrants reported

that they had been reached by the activities local churches, associations, etc. Restrictions against foreigners, such as communication only in Finnish, or welcoming only certain immigrants, or negative news about foreigners in media, should be avoided (Zekavat, 2017).

5. Conclusions, and Practical and Social Implications

This study promotes open communication and understanding active citizen participation towards a greater social responsibility. Also the study helps understand factors that facilitate immigration challenges, while it identifies examples of positive co-existence and social responsibility. One size does not fit all, i.e. individual hopes, fears and needs have to be studied carefully for example by ethnographic research analysis in towns, cities, villages and suburban areas.

Examples of related to cultural exchange are getting to know the rules, norms of the host society, meet people and make friends with them, being hospitable towards immigrants and all foreigners, hearing about foreign cultures. Create events that show cultural differences and provide an arena to talk about them.

It would be good if events could also include political decision makers and even anti-immigration representatives. This would promote open discussion including various points of view, which could provide a solid base for the future.

> The co-creation paradigm can bring natives and immigrants to the 'same side of the table' in an immigration context

Figure 4: On the benefits of co-creation (presented on slide at the Antura Futures Workshop)

This study, serves two valuable purposes. Firstly, and most importantly, it paves the way for finding best practices, and development suggestions for a better future with shared vision towards greater social responsibility.

Secondly it also shows that of co-creation can be a successful framework for future collaboration processes, which aim to collaborate new knowledge or innovation in the field of immigrant acceptance and integration.

Because one size does not fit all, future research should include careful study of the hopes, fears and needs of individual immigrants, by ethnographic analysis in the areas (towns, cities, villages and suburban areas), where people live and encounter each other, for example. One example of these types of studies was the immigration survey by the *Finnish Local Heritage Federation* that was inspired by, but performed outside the scope of project Antura.

Further activity, information sharing, education, and mutual understanding are needed. Co-creative study and development of sharable best practices should be continued. Good advice on how the host population and immigrants should approach each other, and find practical ways collaborate are needed. The Antura handbook should not be the last of its kind.

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