Sanna Sinervo

Creating a framework for an international exchange program for
the city of Rauma employees

Degree Programme in International Business and
Marketing Logistics
2013

Creating a framework for an international employee exchange program for the city of Rauma

_____

The purpose of this thesis was to create a functional framework for an international employee exchange program for the city of Rauma. No financial plan was included, but the framework was described to a point where it could be launched after a funding plan has been created.

This thesis had two outcomes. One was the described employee exchange program and the second was an analysis of the employee's point of view and interest towards the exchange program. These two combined made the thesis valuable for launching the exchange program in practice.

The theoretical part of this thesis helped to understand the backgrounds of culture from an individual point of view and from organizational point of view. It also brought insight to what is the difference between expatriates and employee exchange programs. Finally the theoretical part presented other international employee exchange programs already existing and the good example international networking of churches and parishes in Finland.

The empirical part of this study was done with a qualitative approach and the chosen method was questionnaire. The questionnaire with open questions was sent to 6 recipients in the Rauma organization in order to find out their opinion and interest towards the exchange program. As a result, a framework of a functional employee exchange program was described in the end of this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Globalisation and internationality are trendy words these days. They are seen in use daily in newspapers, not to mention the news cast. Globalisation is not only a trend in economy; it changes cultures and society as well. The lives of ordinary people are affected by events that take place far away from where they live and work as well as culture, economies and politics merge across the globe through the rapid exchange of information, ideas and new knowledge. (Cochrane & Pain 2004, 6)

This is what the city of Rauma is preparing for when launching an internationalisation program for years 2012-2014. This program defines the vision and mission for improving the services and atmosphere to fit the global requirements. The internationalisation program has been crafted using the Balance Score Card which defines the goals from following points of view: society and customer influence, processes and structures, human resources and finance. (Kansainvälistymisohjelma 2012, 2) In this thesis we will look more closely to the aspect of human resources. Globalisation sets new requirements and challenges for work environments, and that is the case in Rauma also. As the world gets smaller, clientele gets bigger. Being able to serve all customers requires employees the knowledge of languages and cultures. The goal is to create a more competent and motivated staff accustomed to work in a multicultural work environment.

To reach this goal, one of the proposed methods is to create an employee exchange program to gain experience and ideas to apply on home ground (Kansainvälistymisohjelma 2012, 13). As a result, innovations for everyday actions and procedures could be discovered, working environment turn to more friendly towards multicultural customers and associates and visibility of the city become wider. Also, the connections to exchange communities can be deepened and international cooperation improved.

The idea of involving twin towns in this project came from the administrator of the city of Rauma, who is also the coordinator of international operations within the municipality organisation. Rauma has developed close relationships to its Scandinavian twin towns over the years, and therefore contacting and communicating is easier and

more productive than starting from scratch to find new partners. The twin town concept has been existing since the aftermath of the Second World War, due to the initiative of a handful of Mayors convinced that friendship between the citizens of Europe was the necessary first step to rebuilding a stable and peaceful Europe. Fifteen years later, the number of twinnings has grown considerably. A study carried out in 2006 with CEMR's member associations in 35 countries found that there were over 17 000 twinnings in Europe, each involving at least two local authorities. (Council of European Municipalities and Regions 2007. 2-3)

2 DEFINITION OF THE PROJECT

2.1 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of this thesis is to find out whether there are similar programs already in operation in other cities, and could some aspects of those programs work in Rauma as well. Benchmarking the systems in other cities in Finland will be used as an example to creating a concrete employee exchange program between Rauma and selected twin towns in Scandinavia. These twin towns consist of Gävle (Sweden), Gjøvik (Norway) and Næstved (Denmark). As an end product this thesis will present a plan to implement and international employee exchange program for the city of Rauma that can possibly be duplicated and modified to the needs of the cooperating exchange city to create a functional exchange program that works both ways.

This thesis will aim to answer the following questions:
- What is needed to create a framework for functional employee exchange program?
- Are there similar programs already in use in other cities in Finland?
- Mapping the similarity of job positions in exchange communities in order to find out which positions could be submitted to the exchange program.

Research for the empirical part will be done with a qualitative approach. The empirical part of the thesis will be done with carefully crafted questionnaires to specific

people who have agreed to take part in the questionnaire in advance. The purpose of the questionnaires will aim to acquire detailed opinions the interviewees have on the topic.

With answering these questions, the final product of this thesis will be a implementable employee exchange program plan.
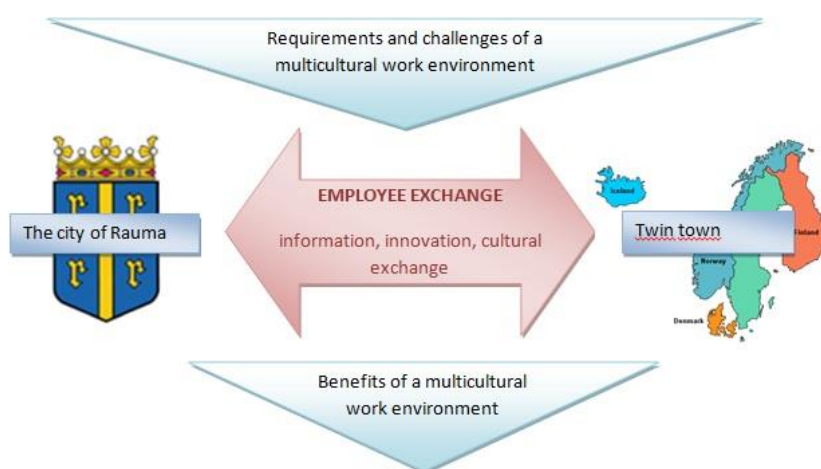
2.2 Conceptual framework

Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

In this conceptual framework we can see the challenges and requirements globalization and multicultural work environment set for working communities, to which the city of Rauma and a twin towns can adapt and find solutions by working together. IN an ideal situation, international employee exchange program allows both parties to experience working in a different culture and gain innovation and information, and learn new things while this period of time. This will enhance the sense of multicultural work environment and create better ability to adapt to it.

2.3 Delimitation of the project

Though the finance of this kind of program is very important, this thesis will not go in detail about financing this kind of employee exchange program. That project will be conducted after the completion of this thesis by another party.

This thesis will neither go in deeper of finding out the readiness of the twin towns to contribute in this exchange program. It will find out the organizational structure and interest in participating, but as wide empirical research as for the employees of Rauma will not be carried out in any of the twin towns. However, after the completion of this thesis, it can work as an example and basis of modifying a similar kind of structure for the cooperating twin towns.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research aims to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons for such behaviour. (Glenn 2010, 104) This type of research focuses on smaller samples of answers, but more detailed than large random samples. It aims to answer also to questions why and how, than just what, where and when. (Glenn 2010, 104) The main difference to quantitative research is that when quantitative research is often random, in order to get statistics, qualitative research is purposive. (Glenn 2010, 105)

The term qualitative research is most often used in the social sciences in contrast to quantitative research. It differs from quantitative research in many ways. First, sampling is typically not random but is purposive. That is, cases are chosen based on the way that they typify or do not typify certain characteristics or participate in a certain class. Secondly, the role of the researcher is important. Researchers must reflect on their role in the research process and make this clear in the analysis. Thirdly, data

analysis differs considerably. Researchers must carefully code data and discern themes in a consistent and reliable way. (Glenn 2010, 105)

3.2 Quantitative research

Quantitative research is always trying to measure something. (Mujis 2004, 64) It is often seen to have structure in which theories determine the problem, and the focus is upon patterns, regularities, causes and consequences in which there is an application of the principles of positivism, that the patterns of the social world have their own existence. (Scott 2005, 185)

Quantitative research is also interested in causality, making frequent use of variable measurement, associated variously with cross-sectional and longitudinal surveys, and mathematical modeling. It is also important to break down the research problem into smaller parts that can be then observed and measured. (Scott 2005, 186)

While quantitative researchers accept that research can never be entirely value-free, they are specifically interested in whether the research can be replicated. In quantitative research the emphasis is upon both the individual as the object of the research and the aggregation of individualized data to provide overall measures. (Scott 2005, 186)

3.3 Questionnaires and surveys

Probably the most common data collection method is the questionnaire. Ranging from short reaction forms to detailed follow-up tools, questionnaires can be used both to obtain subjective information about participants and to document objective measurable results. Because of this versatility, the questionnaire is the preferred method for capturing data. (Phillips 2008, 1.)

Questionnaires should be formed in a simple and straightforward way, to avoid confusing the participants or leading them toward a desired response. Each question should address only one issue. If multiple issues need to be addressed, divide ques-

tions into multiple parts or develop separate questions for each issue. It is wise to avoid terms or expressions that might be unfamiliar to participants. (Phillips 2008, 3.)

A questionnaire may contain any or all of these types of questions:
- Open-ended questions allow unlimited answers. Questions are followed by ample blank space for the responses.
- Checklists provide a list of items, and the participant is asked to check those that apply in the situation.
- Two-way questions limit answers to a pair of alternative responses, such as yes and no.
- Multiple-choice questions provide several possible answers, and the participant is asked to select the one that is most applicable.
- Ranking scales require the participant to rank a list of items.

(Phillips 2008, 2.)

A survey is a specific type of questionnaire with several applications in measuring program success. Surveys are used in situations in which only attitudes, beliefs, and opinions are captured; questionnaires are much more flexible, capturing a wide range of data from attitudes to specific improvement statistics. The principles of survey construction and design are similar to those of questionnaire design. (Phillips 2008, 1.)

In addition to the types of data sought, the types of questions distinguish surveys from questionnaires. Surveys may contain "yes-or-no" responses, if absolute agreement or disagreement is required, or they may solicit a range of responses, often on a five-point scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." (Phillips 2008, 2.)

3.4 Chosen method of data collection

The empirical part of this thesis was implemented by questionnaires, because the author was not in the position to make interviews because of employment. The ques-

tionnaires were done in a qualitative manner, and had open questions in order to find out the respondents own opinions in their own words. This approach has its benefits and its weaknesses. For the research, it would have been better to do interviews, but when it was not possible, the questionnaires proved to be almost as efficient. The risk of some details missing exists, but in the author's point of view the results support the expected outcome. The questionnaires were provided to recipients in Finnish in order to avoid misunderstandings because of language barrier.

4 CITY OF RAUMA AND SCANDINAVIAN TWIN TOWNS

4.1 Short description of Rauma and the twin towns and their organizational structure

The first circle of twinning towns in the Nordic countries was established in 1939, with towns in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. After a while Finland and Iceland also joined the program, and later the independent regions of Åland, Greenland and the Faeroe Islands. (Website of Rauma 2013)

4.1.1   Rauma, Finland

Rauma has been founded in year 1442, and is the third oldest city of Finland. It covers an area of 248 square kilometers. (Website of Rauma 2013) Rauma has 39 842 inhabitants. (Rauman kokonaisväkiluku ja väestömuutokset 1980-2012, 1)
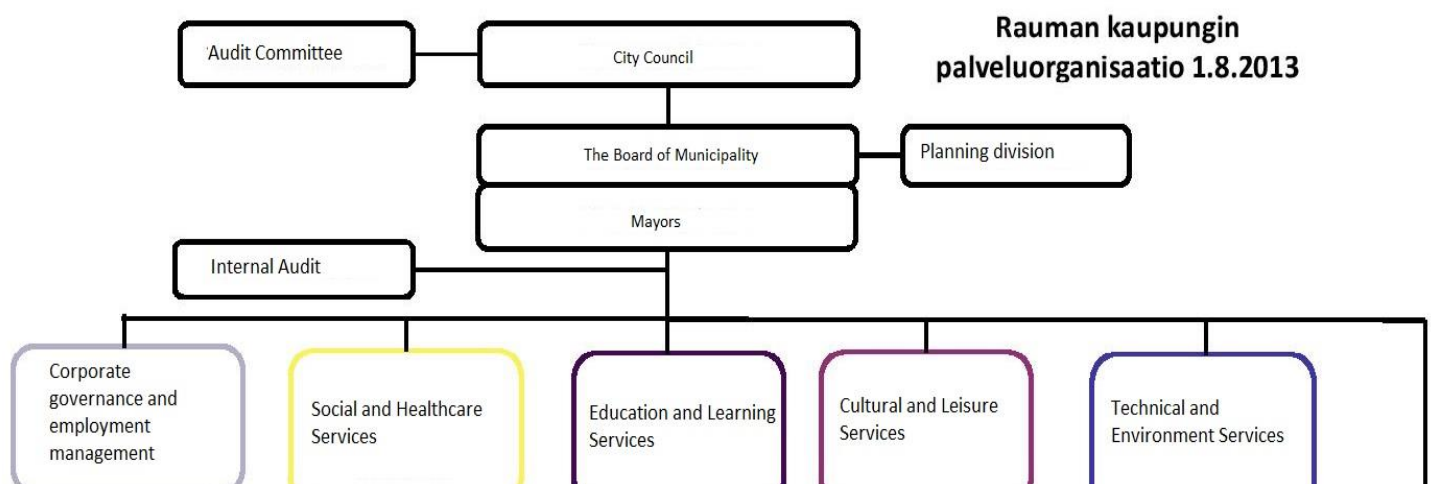
Figure 2. Organizational chart of Rauma. 2013.

City of Rauma's highest decision power lies with the City Council that is formed by election. From these representatives a board of municipality is formed, which then works closely with the elected mayors. These organs then work closely with the 5 main boards that handle different areas of the organization, seen above.

4.1.2   Gävle, Sweden

The city of Gävle is located on the east coast of Sweden just north of Stockholm. It has 96 300 inhabitants, and is one of Sweden's oldest trading cities, like Rauma in Finland, with getting the town rights in year 1446.

The organization of Gävle employs approximately 7000 people. 81 percent of employees are women and 19 percent are men. The average age of employees is 46 years.
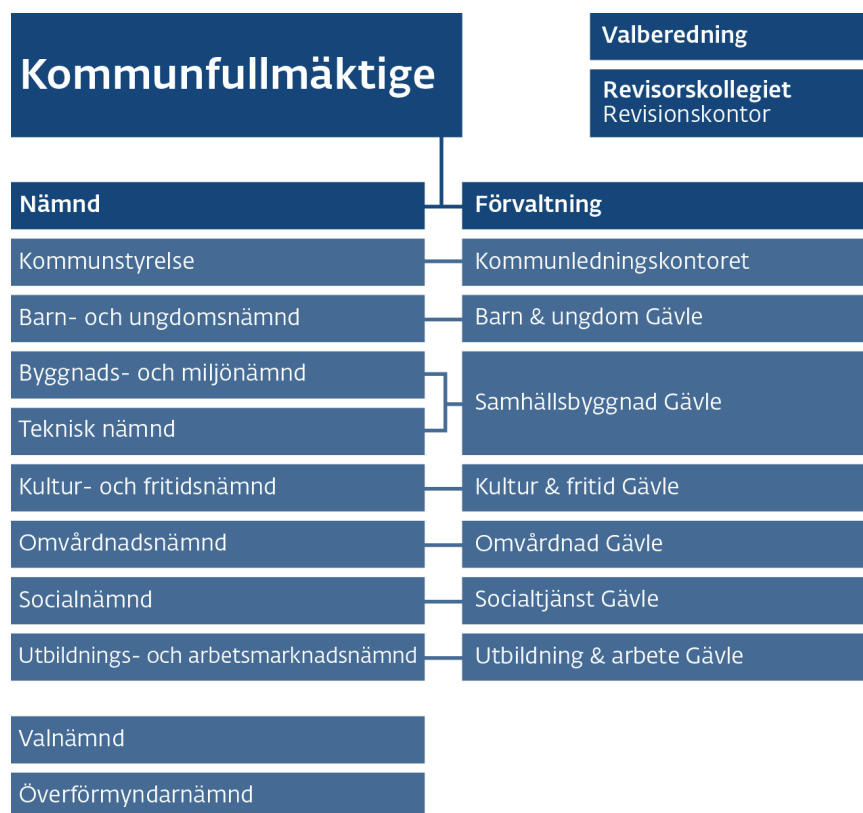
Figure 3. Organization chart of Gävle. (Website of Gävle 2013)

Above we see the organizational chart of Gävle. The organization is divided under the City Council to 9 boards each handling a field. Under the City Council (Kommunfullmäktige) we have following boards:

- Central Committee (Kommunstyrelse) that handles City Management (Kommunledningskontoret).
- Children and Youth Committee (Barn- och ungdomsnämnd)
- Building and Environment Committee (Byggnads- och miljönämnd)
- Technical committee (Teknisk nämnd)
- Culture and Leisure Committee (Kultur- och fritidsnämnd)
- Healthcare Committee (Omvårdnadsnämnd)
- Social Services Committee (Socialnämnd)
- Election Committee (Valnämnd)
- Trustees (Överförmyndarnämnd)

(Website of Gävle 2013)

4.1.3   Næstved, Denmark

Næstved is a city of 80 000 inhabitants and also the largest municipality in terms of area, covering 683 square kilometres. (Website of Næstved 2013). Around half of the municipality's 81,012 inhabitants live in Næstved City, while the other half are equally distributed throughout the region's many provincial towns and smaller rural districts. (Statistics for Næstved municipality and budget 2013-2016, 3)
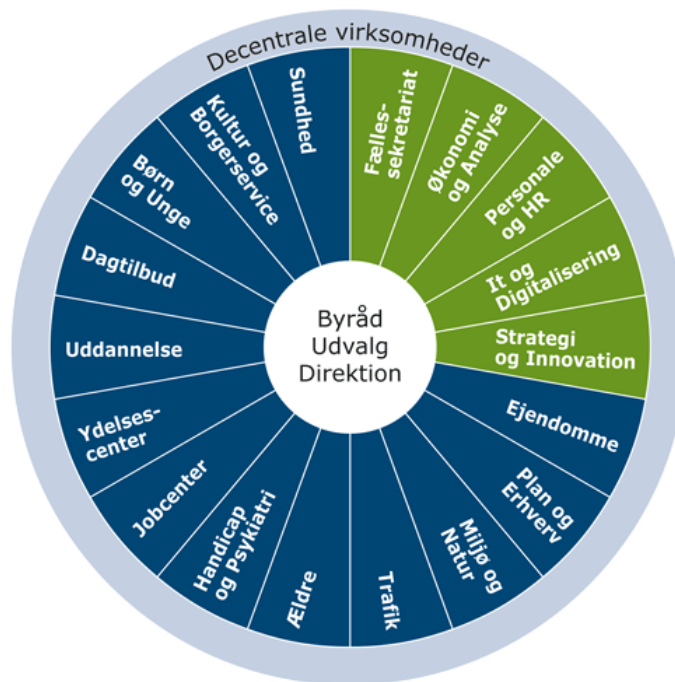
Figure 4. Organization chart of Næstved.

The executive board holds the highest decision power over the other boards that hold power over their field.

The administrative organization of Næstved consists of 18 centers.
- The Executive Board (Direktionen)
- Centre for the Elderly (Center for Ældre)
- Center for Children and Youth (Center for Børn og Unge)
- Center for Day Care (Center for Dagtilbud)
- Center for Real Estate (Center for Ejendomme)
- Center for Disability and Mental Health (Center for Handicap og Psykiatri)
- Centre for IT and Digitization (Center for IT og Digitalisering)
- Centre for Culture and Citizens (Center for Kultur og Borgerservice)
- Centre for Environment and Nature (Center for Miljø og Natur)
- Centre for Economics and Analysis (Center for Økonomi og Analyse)
- Centre for Personnel and HR (Center for Personale og HR)
- Center Plan and Business (Center for Plan og Erhverv)
- Center for Strategy and Innovation (Center for Strategi og Innovation)
- Centre for Health (Center for Sundhed)
- Centre for Traffic (Center for Trafik)
- Centre for Education (Center for Uddannelse)

- Joint Secretariat (Fællessekretariatet)
- Job Centre (Jobcenter)
- Performance Center (Ydelsescenter)

4.1.4   Gjøvik, Norway

Gjøvik has been founded 1861. It is located north of Oslo, and covers 681 square kilometers. The city has 28 807 inhabitants. (Fakta om Gjovik 2010, 1) Gjovik's city council as the highest decision maker, followed by planning and strategy, and 8 sub boards that handle their own field.
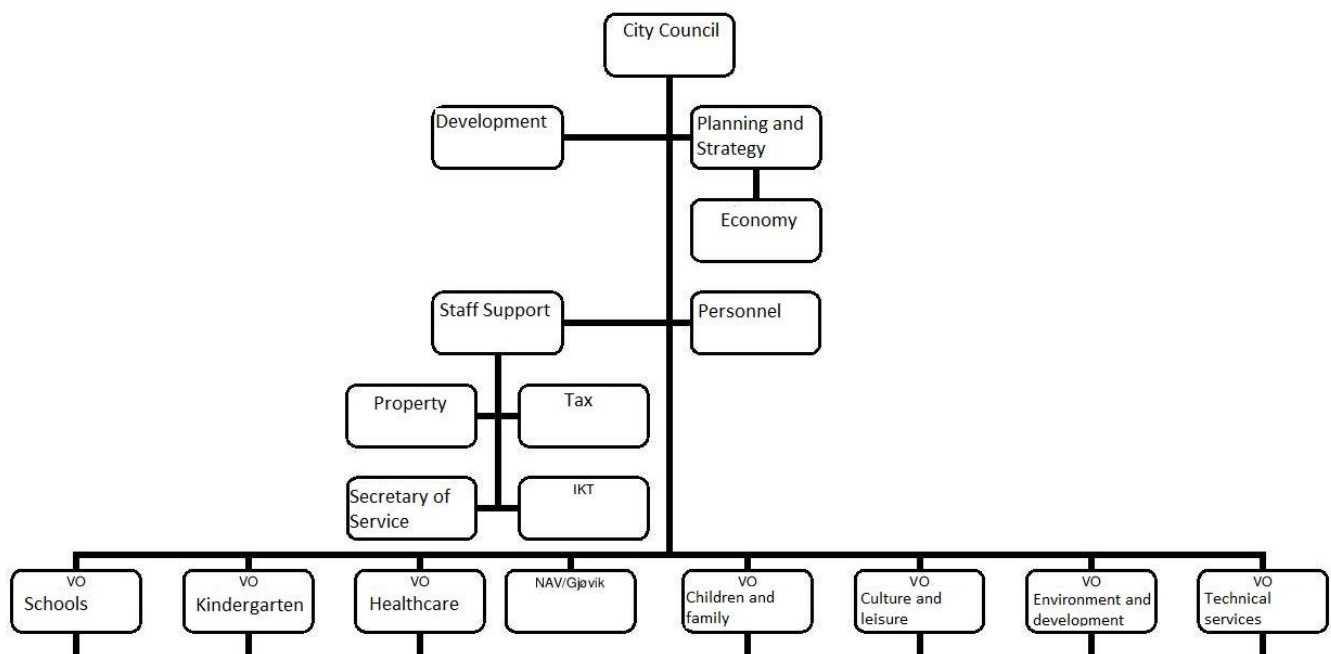
Figure 5. Organizational chart of Gjøvik (Website of Gjøvik 2013). .

4.1.5   Comparison of structures

As seen above, all the municipalities involved in this study have similar kind of structure, with city council holding the highest decision making and political power and boards for each area, for example social and healthcare services or culture and leisure services. This kind of similarity makes it easy to find a position close to one's

own occupation when considering an exchange period. It is also easy to choose contact persons within each board that would take care of the exchange issues concerning their scope.

4.2 International operations in the city of Rauma

Multinational operations are common in both private and public sector. The city of Rauma has been internationally active for many years, as amount of tourism is very high, and the meaning of internationality is well understood in the organizational structures of the municipality as well. As Rauma are hosts two Unesco World Heritage sites, the tourism and related formal structures have been present for many years. (Kansainvälistymisohjelma, 2012, 2)

The relationships to all Rauma's Scandinavian twin towns are close, which makes contacting and cooperating easier than starting from square one. Naestved (Denmark), Gjovik (Norway), Gävle (Sweden) and Rauma hold an formal twin town conference about their cooperation every other year, with arrangements circling between all the participating countries. In these meetings the topics concern common interests relating to economy, social healthcare, environment or organizational issues. (The official website of the city of Rauma 2013)

5 CULTURES AS PART OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

5.1 The meaning of culture to an individual in working life

Internationality is a vital essence in all communication to all fields in private and in public sectors. National and regional economies are now and are becoming dominated by a new global system of economic co-ordination and control, in which competition and strategic choices are organized at the global level. (Edwards & Rees 2011, 12) This means that the pull of economic trends and competition is set in larger

scales than national and regional circles, to which they still have to adapt to. As multinational companies expand their operations to various countries, it is inevitable that many forms of economic organization and managerial practices change and adapt as the working culture changes, converging to the most efficient ones as multinational operations shape the business culture as a result of global competition. (Edwards & Rees 2011, 13) National and regional economies in private and public sector have to respond to the challenge in order to maintain and form relationships and keep operating.

The key points defining culture by Bryan Hopkins in his book Cultural Differences and Improving Performance:

- How an individual behaves is determined by the relationship between their personality, human nature and their culture.
- Culture is a pattern of behaviour shown by a particular group that is manifested by surface behaviour and values and driven by a particular perception of the world.
- Culture is not static and evolves over time.

(Hopkins 2009, 34)

Culture is a learned phenomenon adopted since childhood. Culture is drawn from for example history, art, legal system, literature, religion, media educational system, political system and economic system, but also from experiences and reactions from the people around us. These national level factories tend to produce similarities between some nations in the form of behavioral norms, attitudes, and values. These national similarities are collectively considered to produce a nation's culture. (Caligiuri 2010, 89)

5.2 The meaning of organizational culture for an work assignment abroad

It is necessary to talk little bit about organizational culture, when planning an employee exchange program. Workplace cultures in different companies, even in the same country, vary to a great extent, so they are bound to vary even more in other

countries when they are combined cultural differences. It is important to recognize these cultures and their significance, for this is the single greatest thing that will happen to a person taking part in an employee exchange program – living and working in a culture that is unfamiliar in the workplace, and outside the workplace.

Organizational culture can be defined as the personality of the organization in question. It consists of the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization. (Dawson 2010, 33)

For businesses, it is crucial to be able to create a recognized organizational culture, for that is the primary mover that keeps the business flowing. It has an impact to everything, from the motivation of the employees to the reputation of the business itself. It creates value. However, it can also be the factor that creates a barrier for changes and that particular value creating. At its best, a strong organizational culture is a powerful competitive advantage on the markets, but also holds the operations tighter together, linking the managers and employees to work towards a common goal. (Dawson 2010, 22)

For a person taking part in an employee exchange program, the organizational cultures will be the biggest challenge and source of inspiration. For example, Ms. Leena Kuorikoski, a teacher who took part in the employee exchange program in Jyväskylä, worked for 3 months in Caldas da Rainha, Portugal in a local school. Her observations of the culture were following: school days in general are longer than in Finland, due to the 3 hour lunch break, but also found the atmosphere very, almost too, relaxed and peaceful compared to the Finnish schools. However, despite of this, results were highly expected. She found unpleasant to evaluate her fellow colleagues' performance, but found the tightly formed work community welcoming. She states to have learned a lot and developed in the profession because of the exchange period. (Kuorikoski 2011, 2)

6 EXPATRIATES AND EMPLOYEE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

6.1 Expatriates working abroad

The main difference in expatriate programs and employee exchange programs is the duration of the stay in the other country. Expatriates tend to work abroad for a longer period of time, to work on a project usually, as in employee exchange programs aim to innovations and learning process on a short period of time.

Many organizations have planned their human resource strategies with international operations in mind. Expatriates, who have worked in the home location, are usually more likely to carry out project's goals and objectives in a manner they were intended. (Website of The Journal of Global Business Management 2013)

Working abroad always requires a great deal of planning, training and commitment from both the organization and expatriate. Expatriate assignment in another country is full of uncertainties that might lead to the premature termination of the assignment, for example the expatriate or their family not adapting to the host country culture or the assignment has proven to be too challenging. (Ahokangas & Pihkala 2002, 145) A key to make the abroad assignment successful is preparation. If this is successful, the chances of the expatriate carrying out and reaching the desired outcomes are bigger.

According to a survey by Oddou and Mendenhall (1991) 90 percent of replied expatriates reported an increase in global perspectives, 80 percent felt more fluent in communicating with people from different cultural background and 80 percent found their understanding in global business trends increased. These results indicate great advantage from an overseas assignment. (Website of The Journal of Global Business Management 2013)

This is a valuable asset to any organization. Wider understanding of employee's field is undoubtedly a benefit to the employer. Employees are bound to acquire new skills and knowledge that will be practically useful to them when they return home.

6.2 In public sector

Expatriate careers are not that common in the public sector, and therefore there is not so much literature being written about it. However, public sector expatriates are becoming more common with globalization. Generally, public sector may be characterized with centralization, tight financial control and politically determined access to resources. (Fenner 2007. 2) This means that compared to the private sector, public sector expatriates have far more limited liberties to their work abroad.

Given the hierarchical structure of public sector, being an expatriate in such climate may not be easy.

7 EMPLOYEE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS IN FINLAND

7.1 International employee exchange program: Case city Jyväskylä

The city of Jyväskylä has been operating an international employee exchange program since year 2000. Every year 2-5 employees from all fields of the municipality take part in the exchange program and spend 1-3 months abroad in positions similar to their own in Jyväskylä. The program aims to educate and expand the cultural knowledge of their employees and also gain tangible benefits for the organization of Jyväskylä. (Website of Jyväskylä 2013)

In Jyväskylä, the employee is in charge for most of the planning and applying for the exchange place in another organization, so in theory they can apply anywhere they want. A plan is crafted with their managers before applying and should it be accepted, only then the city of Jyväskylä will provide the funding and support to carry out the exchange period. All the participants are paid normally for their time abroad, as well as the rent and transportation to the exchange country. (Website of Jyväskylä 2013)

The employees taking part in this program spend 1-3 months in their exchange position as interns, depending on the position and how the exchange period has been planned. After the exchange period they write a report about their exchange period stating what they have experienced and what have they learned. These reports are then uploaded to the Jyväskylä website. (Website of Jyväskylä 2013)

7.2 Networking system for employee exchange in churches and parishes

While the assumption of public sector employee exchange programs may be characterized by strict budgeting or tight organizational structures (Fenner 2007. 2), we should not forget that there is a public organization that has succeeded in creating an extensive network for almost unlimited employee movement.

Churches have probably the longest traditions in employee exchange programs and expatriates. Missionary work is a fundamental part of Christianity and people working for the church seem to have less hesitation towards spending time abroad. They have been the first to actively invest on operations abroad that expand in many fields. In addition to their missionary work, they are a vital force in building schools, hospitals, healthcare and development programs and most important tackling poverty in places where they are needed.

The most important thing is that this kind of expatriate or exchange activity is highly valued and recognized within the structures of the church, because it has been mentioned in the Bible. (Website of The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland 2013) Therefore, it is also highly supported not only financially, but also with providing extent training and education before, during and after the assignment. The networks in which these Christian organizations work are large in size and extremely cooperative. A member of for example Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission can apply an exchange period to almost any similar organization in the world. These operations are financially supported by The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and all its supporters' associations. (Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission 2010)

8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

"Validity asks the question: are we measuring what we want to measure?" (Mujis 2004, 65) Most of the concepts we want to measure cannot be measured, like thoughts and feelings – they are considered as latent variables, variables that can't be measured. Therefore we have developed instruments to measure these concepts indirectly, by using data collection methods. In this form, the concept becomes measurable – manifest variable, something we can actually measure. (Mujis 2004, 65)

Content validity refers to whether or not the content of the manifest variables is right to measure the latent concept that we are trying to measure. (Mujis 2004, 65) It is important to use theoretically defined concepts and do an extensive search of the literature in order to achieve content validity. (Mujis 2004, 66) This means that is the theoretical background supporting the objectives and outcome of this thesis. The background information presented this thesis has been collected from various sources and takes into consideration many different points of view. These matters fulfill the criteria of content validity.

"Reliability then refers to the extent to which test scores are free of measurement error." (Mujis 2004, 71) The research was done with a qualitative approach and the results examined with care according to the objectives of the thesis. The questionnaires sent to the recipients were written in Finnish in order to avoid language barrier. The questionnaires were also checked multiple times by different people to ensure there are no mistakes.

9 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

9.1 Processing questionnaires

The questionnaire was sent out to 6 recipients in order to find out the opinions and attitudes towards an employee exchange program, as well as mapping the occurrence

of international situations in every day work, and the knowledge of languages. (Appendix 1) All the respondents were in managerial position in different boards of the organizational structure which provided an insight to the whole organization perspective.

9.2 Knowledge of languages

5/6 of the respondents stated English as their strongest foreign language, and all of them have studied Swedish also. 1/6 limited their knowledge in language only to Finnish. Most of the respondents had studied an additional language like German or French alongside English.

Overall the knowledge in languages in Finland is good. According to the Statistics Finland, English is the most common foreign language known by Finns, with 82% of the Finnish 18-64 year olds having skills in English, and the knowledge in languages has been steadily increasing since 1995. Second most known language is Swedish. (Statistics Finland 2006, 1)
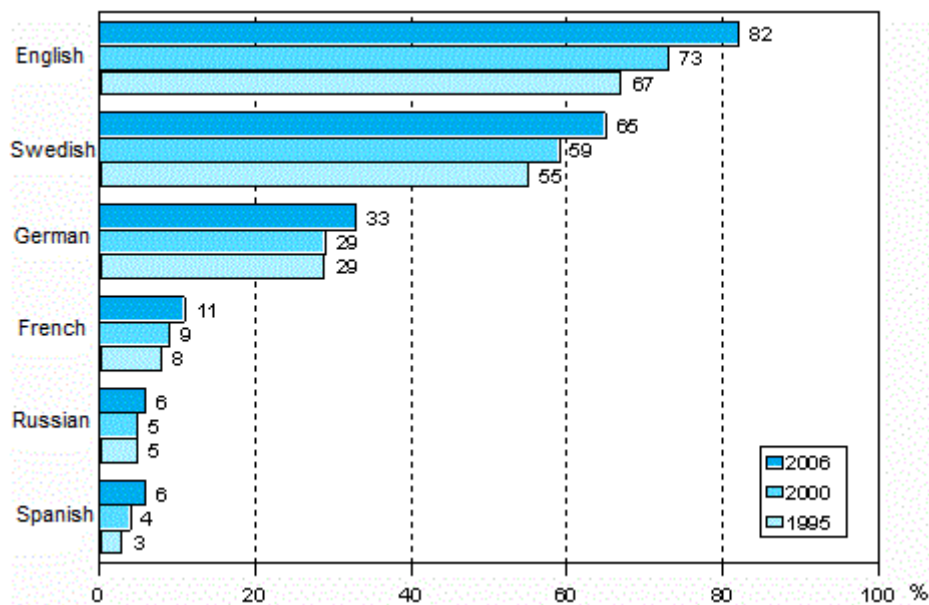

Figure 6. Knowledge of languages in Finland in 1995, 2000 and 2006 (age 18-64). (Statistics Finland 2006, 1)

The findings about the respondents' knowledge of languages support the statistics, and therefore it is safe to assume that the managerial level staff of the city of Rauma would be qualified to participate in the exchange program.

9.3   Internationality in work

The respondents were asked to describe how much internationality their work contains. The results were not consistent, and it seems that most respondents do not encounter international situations in their work daily, or even weekly. According to the results it seems that the more customer service one's work contains the more languages and international skills are required. This correlates to the fact that as clientele expands across borders, also public customer service must keep up with the ever internationalizing demand.

All respondents expressed their interest towards the program, and agreed about the possibilities it would bring. If they would not personally take part in it, because of personal life circumstances or similar, they felt that it should be recommended for the organization. All felt that an employee exchange period would bring daily work the experience to cope with international situations, as well as innovation when seen how similar kind of tasks are handled in another organization. This could benefit the daily operations in departments greatly. The possibilities for improvement start from simply the vocabulary of the formal byrocratic procedures to actual improvement practical procedures. Many saw exchange period primarily as a learning possibility.

9.4   Approaching the twin towns

All twin towns were contacted during the implementation of this thesis but unfortunately due to schedule issues of the author and thesis, no answers were received in time. However, Mrs. Sari Salo, the administrator and international coordinator of the city of Rauma spoke to all twin town representatives in their Twin Town Convention in Gjøvik 8.-10.8.2013. This is what she passed on to me in our meeting 21.8.2013

Gävle is already working on an exchange program with the city of Jyväskylä, and therefore is not willing to participate in a separate program with Rauma. However, they are willing to investigate whether Rauma could join the EU-supported program currently starting in Jyväskylä. (Personal communication 21.8.2013)

Næstved is interested in participating, but was suspicious about the practical implementation and the knowledge of languages. However, after the completion of this thesis the city of Rauma is able to provide more detailed information to support the project, and perhaps this will convince the organization of Næstved to take part in the project. (Personal communication 21.8.2013)

Gjøvik was interested in the program, and will surely be following the conversation and planning of it. The completion of the thesis will surely bring the conversation forward towards the practical implementation. (Personal communication 21.8.2013)

10 INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYEE EXCHANGE PROGRAM FOR THE CITY OF RAUMA

The exchange process in the case of Rauma will be much similar to the one currently in use in Jyväskylä, with a lot of emphasis on the employees own activity towards the success of the exchange program.

An informative brochure about the exchange program will be created based on this thesis, to be given to all departments. This brochure will contain practical information about the exchange program and the benefits it can bring in short, as an introduction. It will also present the requirements of who can apply for the exchange, to where the exchange is oriented to, when and how long the exchange can be carried out, how will the financing of the exchange program handled and in what bases the applicants are chosen for the program in case of multiple applicants. There will also be instructions how to proceed in applying for the exchange.

11 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The framework for international employee exchange program has been divided into 5 steps:

- Step 1. Kick-off
- Step 2. Contacting
- Step 3. Planning
- Step 4. Exchange period
- Step 5. After exchange / Reporting

Steps 1-3 happen before the exchange period, step 4 describes the actual exchange period and step 5 defines what should happen after the exchange period. (Appendix 2)

Step 1. Kick-off

Should an employee be interested in the program, they will first discuss the possibility of an exchange period with their manager. In this meeting they will discuss the need for development and innovation for the participants work, as well as the benefit it would bring for the department. They will set the objectives for the exchange. Also the knowledge in languages will be clarified, so that the participant is able to work in the exchange location. Level of language, English and/or local, must be adequate enough to successfully be able to handle work related topics.

The participant will also choose the desired location at this point. Scandinavian twin towns should be the primary locations, since the organizational structures and cultures are similar, and therefore received innovations and ideas can be perhaps more easily adjusted to the Finnish work environment. However, this does not exclude other exchange locations. The exchange location can be almost any, but in those cases the employee will have to take care of all the contacts and preparations on their own.

Before applying, it should also be clarified with one's manager if there is a need for substitute while the participant is away from his or her work. An initial plan of the exchange period will be drafted to be presented to the international exchange program contact in the HR department of Rauma.

Step 2. Contacting

After been given green light by the participants manager, the application and initial plan of the exchange will be brought to the HR contact in Rauma that will assess the plan and if the plan is accepted, they proceed to contacting the exchange location.

The HR contact person from Rauma contacts an exchange location HR department and present the initial plan that states the job description of the participant. They will then find a matching job position in that organization and bring them in the process. In this stage, the participant and also the "supervisor" will be introduced to each other. The supervisor is the person in the exchange location who will work with the participant, a person doing a similar job in their organization as the participant in their own. Job descriptions should be compared.

Step 3. Planning

In this step, the schedule for the exchange is determined considering both employees wishes. The duration of the exchange period can be from few weeks visit to few months of deeper learning.

The participant will present his or her exchange objectives and the supervisor will comment on them. They can also establish mutual objectives for the exchange period. In this step it is important for the participant and supervisor to share and describe their daily work, so they can already understand their tasks when they finally meet later on. The target is also to get to know one another. This can be done by email and in social media.

Step 4. Exchange period

By the time the exchange period is finally happening, the participant will have everything settled with the exchange location as well as his or her own job.

In practice, the host country's supervisor for the participant will let the participant of same field to follow their daily work and show them what they do in a similar manner as like teaching an intern their new job. This way the learning experience will be the most efficient. The participant will keep a diary of his or her time in the exchange and bear in mind the learning objectives set for the period as well as writing down experiences and things and situations that have been inspiring.

The financial aid for the exchange period could be that the participant gets his or her normal salary for the exchange period, and also the accommodation and flights to location. Other living costs are paid by the participant. This will be defined in the budget of the exchange program, which is created by the city of Rauma.

Step 5. After exchange / Reporting

After the exchange period the participant will make a written report in English of his or her exchange experience. In this report he or she will analyze the learning outcomes and benefits, from a personal point of view (personal learning) and from organizational point of view (what will his or her department benefit), as well as evaluate their experience. The report should also contain the reasons if some objectives were not answered to and why did that happen. The report will be written according to the diary they have kept during the exchange period.

Also, the supervisor from the exchange country will write a short evaluation from the experience from their point of view, which will then be attached to the final report.

The report is public and will be given to both organizations (in an electronic form) to ensure the benefits and learning outcomes are mutual.

12 FINAL WORDS

After the completion of this this thesis, the city of Rauma should first contact the twin towns to draw them in to the project. Twin towns can either participate in a one-way approach, meaning they would only receive participants from the Rauma organization, or two-way approach where they would also send their own participants to Rauma organization. The exchange program framework is simple and easily adapted to another organization.

Also, in order to launch the employee exchange program, a financial plan should be planned. I recommend to search the possibilities EU could provide to support the program financially. A group of people could also visit the city of Jyväskylä to learn about their exchange program, should Jyväskylä want to share it.

This thesis was completed with a small delay, but that did not diminish the usefulness of the outcome. Due to time limitations, the voice of the twin towns was forced to be heard through second hand information. This is also why the twin towns should be included in the concrete planning of the program as early as possible.

The outcome of the employee exchange framework is simple and useful, and surely beneficial for the client, the city of Rauma, and hopefully for the twin towns also.

REFERENCES

Ahokangas P. Pihkala T. 2002. Kansainvälistyvä yritys. Business Edita. Helsinki.

Caligiuri, P. 2010. Global Dimensions of Business : Managing the Global Work-force. Wiley-Blackwell. Hoboken, NJ, USA.

Dawson C. 2010. Leading Culture Change : What Every CEO Needs to Know. Stanford University Press. Palo Alto, CA, USA

Edwards T. Rees C. 2011. International Human Resource Management 2nd Edition. Pearson Education Limited. Essex, England.

Fakta om Gjovik. 2010. Gjovik. Norway.
http://gjovik.kommune.no/dav/aeb2efc44e.pdf

Fenner C. Selmer J. 2007. Work and Non-Work Adjustments of Public Sector Expatriates.

Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission Strategy 2010-2015.
http://www.suomenlahetysseura.fi/ls_fi/?__EVIA_WYSIWYG_FILE=5112. – Referenced 7.4.2013.

Glenn J. 2010. Handbook of Research Methods. Global Media. Jaipur.

Kuorikoski L. 2011. Loppuraportti. Jyväskylä.
http://jyvaskyla.fi/instancedata/prime_product_julkaisu/jyvaskyla/embeds/jyvaskyla
wwwstructure/55039_Loppuraportti_Leena_Kuorikoski.pdf - Referenced 7.4.2013

Muijs, D. 2004. Doing Quantitative Research in Education with SPSS. SAGE Publications Inc. London.

Kansainvälinen henkilöstövaihto 2013 -esite (pdf). www.jyvaskyla.fi – Referenced 23.3.2013

Rauman kokonaisväkiluku ja väestömuutokset 1980-2012
http://www.rauma.fi/info/tilastoja/Nettitilastot/V%C3%A4est%C3%B6/vakiluku_va
eston_muutokset_1980_2012.pdf

Rauman vertailukaupungit 2013. – Referenced 9.4.2013
http://www.rauma.fi/info/tilastoja/Rauman%20vertailukaupungit%2031.1.2013.pdf

Scott D. 2005. Key Ideas in Educational Research. Continuum International Publishing. London

Statistics for Næstved Municipality and Budget 2013-2016. Næstved. Denmark.
http://www.naestved.dk/OmKommunen/TalFakta/Tal%20om%20Naestved/~/media/39420F4ECB4B494BBEE94EC9FEE0DD93.ashx

Suomen virallinen tilasto (SVT). 2006. Vieraita kieliä osaa entistä useampi suomalainen . Helsinki: Tilastokeskus. www.stat.fi – Referenced 19.8.2013

Twinning for Tomorrow's world - Practical Handbook. 2007. Brussels. Council of European Municipalities and Regions. – Referenced 16.4.2013
http://admin5.geniebuilder.com/users/ccre/bases/T_599_46_3524.pdf

Website The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland www.evl.fi – Referenced 7.4.2013

Website of Gjøvik www.gjovik.kommune.no – Referenced 21.8.2013

Website of Jyväskylä 2013 www.jyvaskyla.fi – Referenced 23.3.2013

Website of Næstved www.naestved.dk – Referenced 21.8.2103

Website of The Journal of Global Business Management. Lee H. Perceptive of Expatriation and Cross-Cultural Adjustment. www.jgbm.org – Referenced 11.03.2013

Rauman kaupungin kansainvälinen henkilöstövaihto-ohjelma
Sanna Sinervo – SAMK 2013

Opinnäytetyön tavoite: Luoda pohja kansainvälisen henkilöstövaihto-ohjelman to-teuttamiseksi Rauman kaupunkiorganisaatiossa. Vaihto-ohjelman tavoitteena on mo-tivoida ja kouluttaa henkilöstöä työskentelemään alati kansainvälistyvässä ympäris-tössä, sekä luoda kattavat kansainväliset suhteet muihin kaupunkeihin. Vaihtojakson kesto saattaa vaihdella muutamasta viikosta muutamaan kuukauteen, kohteina poh-joismaalaiset ystävyyskaupungit.

Nimi:

Ikä:

Työtehtävä:

Työssäoloaika:

Mikä on kielitaitosi?

Kohtaatko työssäsi päivittäin kansainvälisiä tilanteita? Jos et päivittäin, kuinka usein?

Kiinnostaisiko Sinua osallistua kansainväliseen henkilöstövaihto-ohjelmaan?

Uskoisitko ulkomailla tapahtuvan vaihtojakson tuovan päivittäiseen työhösi konk-reettista hyötyä, esimerkiksi valmiutta toimia tilanteessa, joka vaatii kansainvälistä osaamista? Muuta, mitä?

Kerro esimerkki työtilanteesta, jossa kansainvälisestä osaamisesta/kokemuksesta oli-si ollut hyötyä. Ko. tilanne voi tarkoittaa esimerkiksi vieraskielisen henkilön kanssa kommunikointia, tai tilanteeseen tarvittua kulttuurintuntemusta. Millaisen vaihtoko-kemuksen uskoisit kartuttavan valmiutta kyseisiin tilanteisiin?

Minkä verran olisit valmis suunnittelemaan mahdollista omaa vaihtojaksoasi (kesto, kohde)?

International employee exchange program for the city of Rauma

Sanna Sinervo – SAMK 2013

The aim of this thesis: To create a basis for and international employee exchangee program for the organization of the city of Rauma. The purpose of the exchange program is to motivate and educate the staff to work in ever so international work environment, and create rich international relationship to the cities to which the exchange program is located to. The exchange period can last from few weeks to few months, destinations in Scandinavian twin towns.

Name:

Age:

Position:

Years of employment:

What is your knowledge in languages?

Do you encounter international situations in your work daily? If not daily, how often?

Would you be interested in taking part in an international employee exchange program?

Do you believe that an exchange period abroad would bring some tangible benefit in your work, for example readiness to operate in a situation that requires international experience? Something else?

Tell an example of a situation in your work where international experience would have been needed? This situation can mean for example communicating with a foreign person or knowledge of cultures in a customer service situation. What kind of exchange period you think would enhance this kind of experience?

How much you would be interested in planning your possible exchange period (location, duration)?

APPENDIX 2

International employee exchange program

BEFORE

Step 1. Kick-off

- Resoning the need
- Setting objectives
- Practical issues (duration, schedule)
- Acceptance from manager

Step 2. Contacting

- Rauma HR contact
- Twin town HR contact
- "Supervisor"

Step 3. Planning: Participant + Supervisor

- Sharing job descriptions
- Setting mutual objectives
- Getting to know each other

DURING

Step 4. Exchange period

- Participant and supervisor work closely together like in internship
- Documentation of the exchange, diary
  - o Experiences
  - o Learning

AFTER

Step 5. After exchange / Reporting

- Written report of exchange period
- Analysis of learning outcomes and benefits
- Evaluation and feedback