

## **Organizing Events**

### **Case: World Gymnaestrada 2015**

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<p>The objective of the study is to plan, organize and implement a successful Thank you event for the trustees of World Gymnaestrada 2015 in Helsinki. The World Gymnaestrada is a world-wide, non-competitive “FIG Gymnastics for All” event held every four years in different countries and attracting the largest number of active participants of any FIG (Fédération internationale de gymnastique) event. Participation is for everybody, regardless of gender, age, race, religion, culture, ability or social standing.</p> <p>In July 2015 the World Gymnaestrada was held for the first time in Finland, and was in terms of international participants the largest event ever held in the country. It was honored as Finnish Sport Event of the Year. The World Gymnaestrada 2015 Helsinki was a seven days lasting gymnastics festival, where approximately 25 000 participants from 50 different countries took part. There were 27 locals who were working as trustees for the event to make it happen, without getting paid for it. As an acknowledgement for their valuable work they were invited to a Thank you event August 29, 2015 and the researcher of this thesis was the one to plan and organize the event.</p> <p>The event ended up consisting of a brunch session, an activity part, a festive lunch including a high class competitive dance performance. All this needed to be done within the given budget set by the Finnish Gymnastics Federation.</p> <p>The theoretical framework concentrates mainly on Events and Event Management. The researcher goes through operations such as analyses, planning, implementation and evaluation.</p> <p>The study was executed in the form of a case study using a very practical approach. Data were collected through email correspondence and web pages. The researcher studied and looked for different kind of possibilities for restaurants, activities and performances. The following step was to execute the plan and make sure all the practicalities run smoothly. The analytical approach was qualitative.</p> <p>In conclusion, this study leads to successful event planning and the practical outcome of the study was the implementation of the plan which occurred in the form of World Gymnaestrada 2015 Thank you event in August 2015.</p>	
<b>Key words</b> Thank you event, event management, festive meal arrangements, activity planning, event production, trustee work, project implementation, creative working, process management	

## Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Needs and objectives.....	3
1.2	Research questions.....	4
2	Doing a research.....	5
3	Event management and project description.....	9
3.1	Analysis.....	11
3.2	Planning.....	13
3.2.1	Resources.....	14
3.2.2	Financial management.....	14
3.2.3	Time management.....	16
3.2.4	Risk management.....	20
3.2.5	Working with creatives.....	22
3.3	Implementation.....	26
3.3.1	Main characteristics of implementation.....	27
3.3.2	Project outcome.....	29
3.4	Evaluation.....	31
4	Methodology and methods.....	33
4.1	Validity and reliability.....	38
4.2	Role of researcher.....	39
5	Conclusions.....	40
	Bibliography.....	43
	Appendices.....	47
	Appendix 1. Agenda plans for the Thank you event in Finnish.....	47
	Appendix 2. Final agenda for the Thank you event in Finnish.....	48
	Appendix 3. Feedback emails on the Thank you event.....	49

## 1 Introduction

The goal of this work was to plan and arrange a successful and fun Thank you event for the trustees who worked at the world's biggest gymnastics event World Gymnaestrada 2015 in Helsinki in July 2015. The Thank you event took place August 29, 2015, about a month after the week of Gymnaestrada shows. The researcher's intension was to plan an action part for the day to do something fun together and secondly to organize appropriate meals before and after that including some performances and program. This was to thank the 27 trustees who had been the main volunteers.

The World Gymnaestrada is a global festival of gymnastics. It is about getting together with people of all ages, women and men, from different countries and cultures. The World Gymnaestrada is a world-wide, non-competitive "FIG (Fédération internationale de gymnastique) Gymnastics for All" event held every four years in different countries and attracting the largest number of active participants of any FIG event. Participation is meant for everybody, regardless of gender, age, race, religion, culture, ability or social standing. The World Gymnaestrada 2015 Helsinki was a seven days lasting gymnastics festival where some 25 000 participants from 50 different countries took part. The World Gymnaestrada was held for the first time in Finland and is in terms of international participants the largest event ever held in the country. (World Gymnaestrada 2015.)

The three partners organizing World Gymnaestrada 2015 were Finnish Gymnastics Federation, City of Helsinki and the Ministry of Education and Culture. These three partners formed a Coordinating Committee and they had assigned their representatives to the committee. The purpose of the committee was to treasure the partnership in the spirit of the partnership contract and commit people to the project. (World Gymnaestrada 2015.)

There were several institutional and business partners as well as sponsors making the World Gymnaestrada 2015 happen. The ones implementing the event were the volun-

teers; the organizers looked up to 4000 event volunteers for different kinds of tasks. (World Gymnaestrada 2015.)

To learn who the 27 trustees were the researcher was told all of them to be adults, mainly women and all Finns. They had done an amazing job at the World Gymnaestrada 2015, and hosting a major sporting event always requires organizing and coordinating numerous activities. Many major sporting events depend on volunteer labor and are one-shot or annual facilities. Key activities of organizers include promoting the event to sponsors and spectators, solving ancillary needs such as parking and food, and recruiting and supervising volunteers. The volunteer team is a critical part of the overall success of many major sporting competitions as well (Williams, Dossa & Tompkins, 1995). It is vital that organizers understand volunteer motivation and their satisfaction with the volunteering experience in order to respond effectively to management needs in the areas of recruitment, retention and daily operations. (Farrell, Johnston, Twynam 1998, 288-289.)

The special focus of this study was to make research of different kind of possibilities to implement the Thank you event. The framework for the planning were the given budget of about EUR 7 000 from the Gymnaestrada organization, the location which was to be Helsinki or its surroundings, and of course the pre-decided date. Given these facts the researcher could otherwise make her own suggestions to the Gymnaestrada organization after which they decided which package they wanted her to implement in practice.

This thesis consists of telling about the original instructions and plan for the Thank you event, and then getting new instructions and organizing the event according to the new plan. The researcher focused first of all on the activity part of the day; what to do, where to go, how to make sure the activity was convenient for all the participants of different ages, how to make it exciting enough to make sure it gave long lasting memories to everyone? Then, the researcher concentrated on the meals; which are pleasant venues, what kind of performers to book there to lift up the spirit, how to make a lunch a festive event, and after all, how to respect the given budget?

## 1.1 Needs and objectives

Aims and objectives should always be defined before arranging an event. The aim states the reason why the event is arranged and what is achieved by organizing a certain event. (Bowdin, McDonnell, Allen & O'Toole 2003, 69.)

The Gymnaestrada organization did cooperation with Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. In September 2014 the researcher found out that Gymnaestrada needed help organizing the huge gymnastics event and therefore offered thesis topics to Haaga-Helia students. The researcher discussed with the contact person in Haaga-Helia as well as the one in Gymnaestrada team and they offered the researcher a list of topics they needed a thesis writer for. Planning and organizing the Thank you event for the World Gymnaestrada 2015 trustees was one of them and after a few discussions the researcher promised to take full responsibility of it and at the same time make it as her thesis project.

The researcher was extremely interested in this topic because of mainly two reasons. She has a 15 years' background in gymnastics. The researcher used to do it as her main hobby ever since she was six years old, training many times a week and competing few times a year. With her team she participated five times during her career in international gymnastics festivals in Italy and Sweden, similar to Gymnaestrada, so she knew what Gymnaestrada was all about.

Another reason for the researcher's interest in this topic was her work experience. She works as an Executive Assistant to the President & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as well as for the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of a global company. In her job her main responsibility is to organize meetings, plan practicalities and take extremely good care of time management. This gave her a strong base for organizing such an event as she is educated for it and does similar kind of work in her daily job. A well planned and well implemented event is the researcher's passion. It is a challenge which she is always very excited to take.

The researcher's promise to the Gymnaestrada organization was to organize a successful Thank you event according to their instructions and considering the given budget of EUR 7 000. As suggested by the Gymnaestrada team, they first were given two different proposals for the whole day of which to choose from; one with financial focus on the day activity and one with financial focus on the dinner in the evening. The researcher had also promised to send the organization all the orders she received from different service providers so that they will be able to utilize them in the future even though not chosen to be used in this event.

The Gymnaestrada organization benefited from this project by getting somebody plan and organize the Thank you event by receiving finalized ideas for the day of the Thank you event. The most important of all they had someone to make it happen and do it in practice. The researcher had understood that the team behind the enormous gymnastics event was rather small in Helsinki so the researcher doing this for them saved a lot of their time during spring and summer 2015. By making this all as a student work they did not gain any extra costs of the work which increased the value for them. As mentioned earlier, the organization received all the background information of the whole event planning process with for example price information and contact details, so this way they benefited of the project also after the actual event.

## **1.2 Research questions**

The main research question of the study is:

- How to create a successful Thank you event?

The sub-questions to help the researcher answer the main research question are:

- What activities and factors should be included in the day to make it exciting for the trustees?
- How to organize a memorable event with a relatively small budget?

The date for the Thank you event, the budget, the estimated number of participants and a rough location were given from the organization. Everything else was the researcher's

creation. In this study she figures out how to make sure all the trustees participate in the event and how to make it a fun, exciting, memorable, sporty but still festive event - within the given budget.

## **2 Doing a research**

When doing a research the researcher needs to go through a certain process from the very beginning having decided to make the study until the end when the whole research is ready and finalized.

A researcher should of course start the process with choosing the right research topic. It is important because the researcher has to live with it for a considerable period of time and it would be good if the topic would exploit and develop the knowledge and skills of the researcher. It can also be difficult if there is too much choice, there can be fears that it will be too difficult and insufficiently theoretical. Pursuing a research topic assigned by the employer of the researcher often poses its own problems if the researcher is a student and has pressure from the examining institution on the other side. In such cases the researcher should aim for a balance between the competing demands of the employer and the school. A good research topic is one that the researcher is enthusiastic about and it matches their career goals, and for which resources are available. (Saunders & Lewis 2012, 28.)

Reviewing literature is a big and time consuming part of doing a research. A literature review should offer an overview of significant literature available in the chosen topic including relevant academic journal articles, text books and other sources. It should develop a clear argument to contextualize and justify the research. Critically reviewing the literature is important because it will provide the base on which the research project is built. It also provides insights into secondary data that are likely to be available. The process of searching for and obtaining the literature consists of five stages: deciding on the literature search topic, identifying the key words and phrases to be used, choosing the online databases, undertaking the search, and obtaining the articles. (Saunders & Lewis 2012, 54-55.)

According to Silverman a literature review should contain answers to the following questions:

- What do we already know about the topic?
- What do you have to say critically about what is already known?
- Has anyone else ever done anything exactly the same or anything that is related?
- Where does your work fit in with what has done before?
- Why is your research worth doing in the light of what has already been done?

(Silverman 2010, 327-328.)

Managing the whole research process can be a challenge to anyone doing a research. Organizations are often less likely to grant research access to a person who is from outside the organization. There are, however, strategies that can be adopted to ease the process of gaining access to organizations to do research, for example using existing contacts, and presenting a professional written request and boosting the credibility of the researcher through reducing concerns of the organization. If the researcher is from inside and wishes to do research in that organization they might face other problems such as those concerned with status. (Saunders & Lewis 2012, 82.)

Strategies for managing through the research process include managing the researcher's time and maintaining motivation. On the other hand, strategies for managing a supervisor through the process include being clear about expectations from the supervisor and what the supervisor should expect from the researcher. Further, managing the relationship with the examining institution involves being clear about the standards expected from the researcher in the final written report. (Saunders & Lewis 2012, 82-83.)

Secondary data is often underestimated and even ignored as such when doing a research and searching for data. Secondary data are data that were originally collected for some other purpose. They can be contrasted with primary data which are collected for the specified purpose. Secondary data comes in many forms including both quantitative and qualitative data. Secondary data can provide fantastic research opportunities which

would otherwise be outside the researcher's reach by allowing access to large data sets. Most of the times the data are already in the public domain and thereby avoiding concerns about access and permission to use the data, and they are often available in software-compatible formats allowing easy analysis. (Saunders & Lewis 2012, 99-100.)

However, secondary data may have been manipulated in some way and so not be value-neutral and the definitions used within the data may have changed over time. Data collected by oneself (primary data) is collected with a concrete idea in mind, usually to answer a research question or just meet certain objectives. In this sense, secondary data sources may provide vast amount of information, but quantity is not synonymous of appropriateness. This is simply because it has been collected to answer a different research question or objectives (Denscombe, 2007). In addition, government and other official institutions are often a guarantee of quality data, but it is still not always the case. (Pérez-Sindín López, 2013.)

A research journey may take a number of routes and be accomplished by variety of methods. Choosing the research design consists of choosing philosophies, approaches, strategies, choices, time horizons, techniques and procedures. The main research philosophies are positivism, realism, interpretivism and pragmatism. Two of the main approaches to research are deduction and induction. The main types of research strategy are experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography and archival. There are significant advantages in combining mono method and multi-method in research design. Research studies may be cross-sectional or longitudinal or combine an element of both. This will be covered more in detail in Figure 3. (Saunders & Lewis 2012, 102 & 129.)

Collecting data is necessary for doing a research. There are different ways of selecting samples from which data is collected. Data collection must be organized in terms of answering a specific research question (Silverman 2010, 216). There are two frequently used methods of collecting primary data: questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires are used when the researcher wants to collect data by asking each person to answer the same set of questions in the same order. Before designing the questionnaire the re-

searcher needs to know what data needs to be collected to answer the research question and meet the objectives. (Saunders & Lewis 2012, 132 & 161.)

Semi-structured and unstructured interviews are used when the researcher is unsure of the answers respondents would give, the questions are complicated or the researcher needs to vary the order of questions. To prepare for semi-structured and unstructured interviews the researcher needs to be clear about the topics that are going to be discussed and the questions the researcher is going to ask. Also the number of interviews needs to be considered carefully. (Saunders & Lewis 2012, 161-162.)

A structured interview is also known as a formal interview. The questions are asked in a set and standardized order and the interviewer does not deviate from the interview schedule or probe beyond the answers received. These are based on structured, closed-ended questions. Unstructured interviews are sometimes referred to as discovery interviews and are more like a guided conversation than a strict structured interview. They are sometimes called informal interviews. An interview schedule might not be used, and even if one is used, they will contain open-ended questions that can be asked in any order. Some questions might be added or missed as the interview progresses. (McLeod, 2014.)

After data is collected it needs to be analyzed. The data that the researcher analyzes can be divided into two types: quantitative data that are numerical and qualitative data that are not numerical. Tables and diagrams are often used to present quantitative data. Statistical analyses are used to describe data and to examine relationships. Qualitative data are often analyzed in text form. The process of qualitative data analysis can be undertaken both deductively and inductively. It is important that in analyzing data the arguments the researcher offers and the findings the researcher presents support claims the researcher is making clearly and logically. (Saunders & Lewis 2012, 198-199.)

Finally, it is wise to write a research proposal. It is important because it clarifies the researcher's ideas and helps organizing them, and it shows the researcher has a good knowledge of the existing work. The content of the research proposal is often likely to

be: research overview, title, introduction to research, research questions, literature review, research objectives, method, time scale, resources required and literature references. (Saunders & Lewis 2012, 225-226.)

The research proposal should answer to three questions suggested by Keith Punch (2006, 20):

- What is the purpose of my research and what am I trying to find out?
- How will the proposed research answer these questions?
- Why is the research worth doing and what will we learn and why is it worth knowing?

(Silverman 2010, 185.)

### **3 Event management and project description**

The definition of an event is being explored in the context of event management. The main purpose is to reveal the features that define an event in order to get a deeper insight of the event management processes and the theory behind them.

There are various types of events with different purposes, aims and goals. However, the event operations and execution process of any event remain the same. Silvers (2004) defines an event as follows:

“An event is an experience, carefully crafted to deliver and impact on the person in attendance. The activities, environment, and layers of multisensory effects are integrated into an event design that is staged and choreographed with precision and polish. The best event experience is one in which the mechanics are imperceptible to the attendee and the intended impact is delivered effectively and invisibly.”

(Silvers 2004, 2.)

Defining an event may be a challenge since there are various approaches to the categorization (Bowdin, Allen, O’Toole, Harris & McDonnell 2011, 18). Events can be catego-

rized for instance according to the event size or purpose. Figure 1 presents the event types according to their purpose dividing them into religious, cultural, musical, sporting, personal and private, political and governmental, commercial and business, and corporate events (Raj, Walters & Rashid 2009, 13-18).

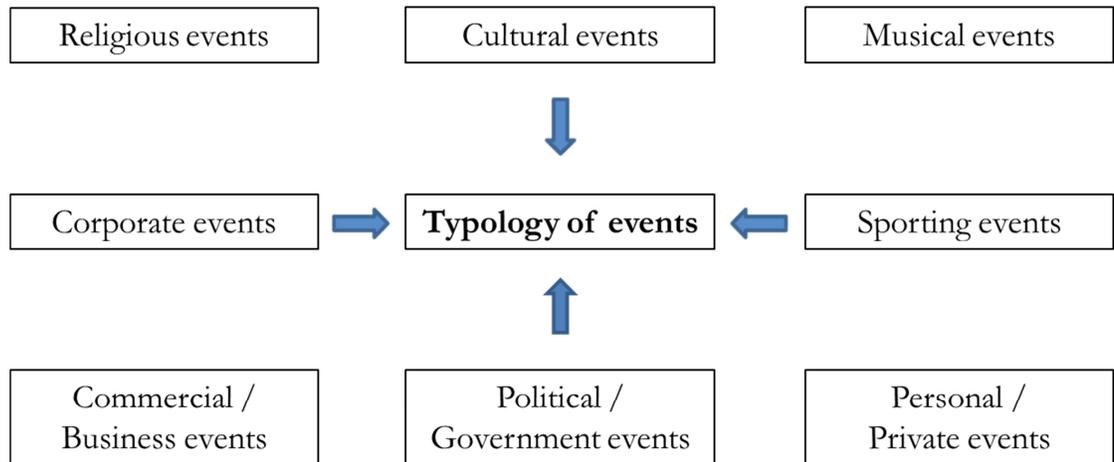


Figure 1. Typology of events (Raj, Walters & Rashid 2009, 13-18.)

When utilizing this method of categorization, the Gymnaestrada Thank you event falls mainly under the category of private but partly also under the sporting category. For most of the trustees the work related to Gymnaestrada was part of their free time and private life. The event was all about having fun, enjoying the time together and getting rewarded for the valuable work in the World Gymnaestrada.

According to Raj, Walters and Rashid (2009, 11) event management is the capability and control of the process of purpose, people and place. Event management consists of four main stages regarding the operations and execution process in order to create and sustain an event. These four stages are demonstrated as a process in Figure 2.

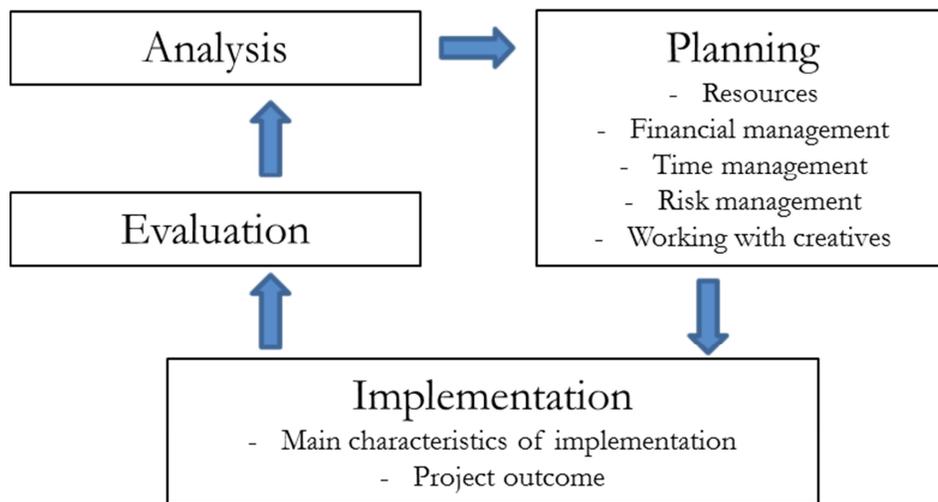


Figure 2. Thank you event’s operations and execution process (Raj, Walters & Rashid 2009, 33; Getz 2005, 3.)

Stages are explored in detail within the context of the Thank you event by beginning from the analysis stage, then continuing through the planning and the implementation stages to the evaluation stage.

### 3.1 Analysis

The first stage of an event organizing process can be comprised into six questions; who, what, when, where, why and how. “Who” defines the target group of the event, “What” reveals the nature of the event, “When” defines the time the event is organized, “Where” indicates the location and “Why” summarizes the purpose and main objectives of the event. “How” is supposed to answer the question about the budget. By answering to the five W’s and How the focus is put on the relevant aims and objectives to achieve the wanted results (Fenich 2008, 231; Wolf & Wolf 2005, 1).

Before writing the project plan for the Thank you event, the five W’s and How were answered as seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The five W's and How

Questions	Answers
Why?	To reward the trustees for their work at World Gymnaestrada 2015 event in July
How?	Budget EUR 7 000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• about EUR 260 per person</li> </ul>
What?	Thank you event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activity part</li> <li>• festive lunch</li> <li>• surprise performance</li> </ul>
When?	Sat, August 29, 2015 during day time
Who?	27 trustees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adults</li> <li>• mainly women</li> <li>• all from Finland</li> </ul>
Where?	Helsinki downtown

All the above mentioned facts were given to the researcher by the Gymnaestrada organization. Why to arrange such an event as this Thank you event was the starting point and very clear all the way from the beginning. Gymnaestrada organization wanted to acknowledge the valuable trustees for their work at World Gymnaestrada 2015 by offering them a memorable day all together doing something fun.

The budget was told to be about EUR 7 000. However, until July 2015 the number of invitees for the event was expected and told to be 30-40 persons. At that time the researcher was a little worried about the rather small amount of money (about EUR 200 per person) she was allowed to use for the whole day and night. The problem disappeared when it was informed that there will only be 27 persons invited in the event. Later in this study the researcher presents the budget in more detail.

What exactly the Gymnaestrada organization wanted the researcher to organize for them changed during the process. That was the biggest change and turn-around when doing the project. At first they asked the researcher to arrange a day activity and a festive dinner with a performer and gifts and some surprises. The researcher planned and organized all this during spring 2015 but after presenting the ideas to the Gymnaestrada

organization they decided to change the whole concept of the event by skipping the dinner and shortening the event only to a day happening. They combined ideas and suggestions of the researcher and asked to arrange basically an activity part and a festive lunch. That was it.

Two things that did not change during the process were when and where the Thank you event was taking place. The date of August 29, 2015 was good because it was six weeks after the hectic week of World Gymnaestrada 2015 but the weather was still warm and sunny. It was a Saturday to make sure as many invitees as possible were able to participate. The city of Helsinki was given the researcher to be the location for the event and the researcher decided to make it happen mainly in downtown. The city center is the most familiar part of Helsinki for the researcher so she could utilize her own experiences and her expertise when choosing the restaurants. Choosing downtown also gave all the attendees a possibility to use public transportation to arrive to and leave from the event.

### **3.2 Planning**

The importance of planning cannot be emphasized enough. Thorough planning helps in

- setting goals and objectives for the event
- designing the event
- identifying and understanding the target audience of the event
- setting dates, times, locations and themes for the event.

The planning process is often found frustrating but getting it right from the start the event organizer will benefit by enjoying a smooth and well-run event with great result. (Kilkenny 2011, 47.)

The purpose of events is to deliver guests an emotional experience and provide something different from their original daily lives. In order to achieve a successful event it must appeal to the guests' senses. At least that should be the goal. Important elements

such as decoration, catering and entertainment have an important role on creating the right atmosphere. (Matthews 2008, 59.)

### **3.2.1 Resources**

To finish the R&D project as planned the biggest resource needed was time. As the researcher is working full time it was very challenging to find the time and sometimes also the energy needed for the thesis process. The researcher's strategy was to dedicate one evening every week for the thesis work. But as the Thank you event was getting closer the researcher had to take care of many ad hoc cases during any time of the week or day to put the event together – also during a summer holiday trip and a business trip abroad.

Most of the communications was done via email. The researcher has a company phone so no financial resources were needed for phone calls. For travelling to meetings with Gymnaestrada organization and to thesis seminars the researcher used her own travel card.

Potential obstacles that in worse case could have occurred during the thesis process were sudden illness of the researcher or a family member, giant workload at daily work which would have required working in the evenings as well, or an unexpected change in plans at Gymnaestrada organization regarding the Thank you event. Changes did occur, also at the last minute, but that is normal in event arranging and the organizer just needs to adapt in the given situation and take care of whatever is needed in whatever time frame.

A positive aspect was that there was a clear and unchangeable date for the Thank you event from the very beginning and a true need to organize the event.

### **3.2.2 Financial management**

Financial resources together with well-established aims and objectives are the base for the event planning process. These factors determine if organizing the event is feasible.

(Allen 2000, 2.) Financial planning and decision making is always carried out in the light of the set aims and objectives. If the purpose of an event is not to generate financial profit, the aim is on non-tangible factors, such as networking for instance. In such cases measuring the return on investment can be rather complex. (Bowdin, Allen, O’Toole, Harris & McDonnell 2011, 295 - 300.)

Regardless of whether the event is organized to generate financial profit or not, financial management is a crucial part of event management operations. In order to actualize an event, planning process must be conducted within the limits of a set or estimated budget. (Bowdin, Allen, O’Toole, Harris & McDonnell 2011, 295 – 296; Allen 2000, 2.) Budget is a tool for monitoring and controlling that the expenses do not exceed the generated income (Robinson, Wale & Dickson 2010, 62).

Actions taken within the financial management also contribute to the evaluating process of an event. Events are commonly evaluated based on their return on investment. Comparison between the projected costs and actual costs reflect whether the outcome of the project was successful or not. Event can be stated to have been successful if the operations were conducted within the budget resulting into breaking even, if its purpose was not to generate profit. (Fenich 2008, 255.)

The funding of the Thank you event came from World Gymnaestrada organization. In February 2015 the researcher was given a budget of EUR 7 000 which was the base for the planning.

Table 2. Budget for the Thank you event

Category	Estimated price
Brunch	EUR 600
Activity	EUR 2 200
Lunch	EUR 1 500
Performer	EUR 1 200
<b>Total</b>	<b>EUR 5 500</b>

In Table 2 the costs of the day are divided into the categories the event consisted of. These categories were the ones which caused costs; for example transport from brunch to activity was by foot, therefore no costs of that. The prices on the table are estimated prices which varied depending mainly on the amount of consumption on meals. The most expensive part of the Thank you event was the activity session but the Gymnaestrada organization had instructed the researcher that they wanted the event to be memorable and offer new experiences for the trustees. This part of the day fulfilled the request very well.

Gymnaestrada organization took care of the final invoices and the researcher does not have the exact final prices. The researcher was still happy to notice that the budget of EUR 7 000 was more than enough and the event could be well arranged within the given budget.

### **3.2.3 Time management**

In order to work efficiently and implementing event more smoothly it was important to manage time. Time management is essential in event planning and implementation as it helps to gain positive results and avoid oversights. It supports project leaders when controlling teamwork and organizing workload but also helps individual event organizers to manage their time. Without a structure the work is a series of unrelated tasks which provides little sense of achievement and no feeling of advancement.

To successfully manage time, Allen (2005, 6-7) suggests to follow four steps. The first step includes tracking time, the second step is about breaking down working components, the third step is calculating own time allocation and the last section is creating time lines and schedules (Allen 2005, 6-7.). After completing the first three steps according to Allen (2005, 5) a timeline should be created in order to accomplish assigned tasks on time and control the event management process throughout the project.



fers were again presented to Gymnaestrada organization. All the above mentioned is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Agenda plans

<b>Agenda option 1</b>	<b>Agenda option 2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at 15.00 public boat to Suomenlinna, Tykistölahti</li> <li>• at 15.30 lunch at Café Chapman</li> <li>• at 17.00 RIB boat safari               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– pick-up from Tykistölahti, finish at Market square</li> <li>– 3 x 12 pers. boats, equipment provided by organizer</li> </ul> </li> <li>• at 18.00 walk (1 km) to Wanha Satama</li> <li>• at 18.30 buffet dinner at restaurant Brasserie</li> <li>• at 20.00 live music 2 x 45 min, duo J.E.S</li> <li>• at 22.00 after party with own cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at 14.30 lunch at Salmisaari leisure center FunGo CaféBar</li> <li>• at 15.30 supervised wall climbing at Kiipeilyareena</li> <li>• at 17.00 private sauna premises at Salmisaari</li> <li>• at 18.30 common transportation to Katajanokan Kasino</li> <li>• at 19.00 table served dinner at Karimosali</li> <li>• at 21.00 dance performances + playful dance class + common dance routine, Keränen &amp; Bergström or Puro &amp; Mäkinen</li> <li>• at 21.30 live music 2 x 45 min, duo J.E.S               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– OR at 21.00 live music 2 x 60 min, Megaman Streetband</li> </ul> </li> <li>• at 23.30 common transportation to after party</li> <li>• at 24.00 after party at Teatteri(?)</li> </ul>

Just before Midsummer week 25 the researcher went to Gymnaestrada offices to meet with her contact person. The researcher presented her ideas and different possibilities of the event program. They liked what they heard but a few days later she received a phone call telling that they had second thoughts on the structure of the Thank you event and had decided to change it to a day event and forget the evening part. They said they wanted to start with a morning coffee of which they would take care of themselves, then continue with an action part, after which having a festive lunch with a performer. The agenda (Table 5.) was then confirmed and the researcher continued to work on the new plans.

The researcher checked a couple of considerable venues for the lunch during late June and early July. She wanted the venue to be beautiful and festive, and the location was very important. This was to be the most important part of the event so the venue needed to be perfect. Also the performer had to have enough appropriate room to perform.

After all, the quality of sales service of the two restaurants was the determinant when choosing the venue.

When the arrangements were ready enough the invitations for the Thank you event were sent out to 27 persons by the Deputy Secretary General of Gymnaestrada late July week 31, after the World Gymnaestrada 2015 event. In the invitation the researcher was mentioned to be the one to take care of the registrations. From that onwards she received enrollments, communicated with the attendees and took care of the participation list over all.

During the same time, late July and early August, the researcher took care of finalizing the event and made the needed special arrangements for some participants. She was the one coordinating everything between the requests coming from the Gymnaestrada organization and the implementation of the services. These parties did not communicate directly with each other as everything was in hands of the researcher. She confirmed the number of participants to every place involved in the event and informed the food restrictions to the restaurant, for example.

As the process went on, in August couple of weeks before the Thank you event the researcher was in close contact with the restaurant, the activity provider and the performer. She gave them detailed instructions how to implement the day to make it as smooth as possible. She agreed on exact timings, on the needed contact details, on some late arrivals and early leavers and on billing, to mention some.

Fine-tuning an event is always a bigger part of the whole organizing as expected and is time consuming. Things change constantly and the amount of participants changes often many times before the event takes place so it is important to have everything up to date all the time to ensure a successful event. One example of a last minute change was when the Gymnaestrada organization's original idea of a brunch venue failed and they asked the researcher to find a suitable restaurant for brunch in the beginning of the week of the Thank you event. Luckily the researcher's first choice was successful and she was quickly able to confirm the brunch with all the needed arrangements done.

Finally the Thank you event took place August 29, 2015 following the agenda presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Final agenda

## Agenda

- at 10.30 **brunch** at restaurant Sunn, cabinet Aleksi
- at 12.00 **RIB boat safari**
  - pick-up from Market square, finish at Katajanokan Kasino
  - 2 x 12 pers. boats, equipment provided by organizer
- at 13.30 table served **3-course-lunch** at Katajanokan Kasino, Karimosali
- at 15.00 **dance performances** + playful dance class + common dance routine at Karimosali, by Keränen & Bergström

During fall 2014 and winter 2014-2015 the Gymnaestrada contact person at Haaga-Helia, teacher Seppo Suominen, gathered together all the students who were writing their thesis for Gymnaestrada. Each of these optional seminars held every three or four weeks by Mr. Suominen were checkpoints for the researchers as they presented status summaries of their thesis processes.

### 3.2.4 Risk management

Risk assessment was conducted in the early planning stage when creating the project plan by using Conway's (2006, 28-30) method for evaluating the possible risks. The researcher began the assessment by indicating the most likely hazards with the greatest possibilities and severity levels to cause any harm. Five risks with the highest possibility to have negative impact regarding the overall success of the event were chosen. Table 6 indicates these five risks starting from the most severe one as follows: technical difficulties, performer cancelling at last minute, restaurant personnel not following agreed rules,

bad weather for outdoor activity, and last minute change requests by the Gymnaestrada organization.

After indication of the risks each item was scored based on its likelihood and severity according to Conway's (2006, 29) risk assessment scoring chart. Priority score was calculated by multiplying the likelihood score with the severity score. Preventing actions for each risk were established accordingly as listed in Table 6.

Table 6. Risk assessment of the Thank you event (Conway 2006, 29-30.)

RISK	LIKELIHOOD	SEVERITY	PRIORITY	PREVENTING ACTIONS
Technical difficulties	4	32	128	Organizing technical support in place in case of emergency
Performer has to cancel at last minute	2	32	64	Arranging back-up activity in case of an emergency
Restaurant personnel does not follow agreed rules	3	24	72	Agreeing detailed rules and practices for the whole dining session
Bad weather for outdoor activity	3	12	36	Preparing enough time to fresh up before dining
Last minute change requests by Gymnaestrada organization	5	6	30	Taking care of all the arrangements even with a tight schedule to make sure the guests get the best

The only risk with very high priority score of 128 was “technical difficulties”. Preventing action is to organize technical support in place in case of emergency. Performer cancelling at the last minute and restaurant personnel not following the agreed rules, revealed to be tolerable risks that had to be prepared for. Last minute agenda change requests by Gymnaestrada organization was put on the risk list but since the researcher had a high ambition of handling even the last minute changes with a professional and efficient way the severity score was low. The goal was that whatever might happen on the way organizing the event, the guests would not notice anything and everything would run smoothly for them throughout the Thank you event.

### 3.2.5 Working with creatives

As explained earlier in this study the whole plan of the Thank you event changed two months before the event took place. The researcher had worked on preparing the event agenda already for months when hearing about the change. Even though the researcher works as an Executive Assistant at private sector in a dynamic business world and is more than used to constant changes in plans, she was surprised about this change. The researcher figured out that working with creative and artistic type of people is somewhat different from working with financially or results outcome oriented people. It can be a total opposite to project plan based way of working, as for example following a Gantt chart process.

Creativity works in mysterious and often paradoxical ways. Creative thinking is a stable, defining characteristic in some personalities, but it may also change based on situation and context. Inspiration and ideas often arise seemingly out of nowhere and then fail to show up when we most need them, and creative thinking requires complex cognition yet is completely distinct from the thinking process. (Gregoire, 2014.)

As scientists now understand it, creativity is far more complex than the right-left brain distinction would have us think (the theory being that left brain = rational and analytical, right brain = creative and emotional). In fact, creativity is thought to involve a number of cognitive processes, neural pathways and emotions, and we still do not have the full picture of how the imaginative mind works. (Gregoire, 2014.)

Psychologically speaking, creative personality types are difficult to pin down, largely because they are complex, paradoxical and tend to avoid habit or routine. And it is not just a stereotype of the tortured artist - artists really may be more complicated people. Research has suggested that creativity involves the coming together of a multitude of traits, behaviors and social influences in a single person. (Gregoire, 2014.)

It is possible for everyone to nurture his or her creative side, but honest observation shows that fresh ideas come more easily to some people than to others. Professor

Øyvind L. Martinsen of BI Norwegian Business School has listed seven personality traits that have stood out among artistically inclined people:

1. Associative orientation: Imaginative, playful, have a wealth of ideas, ability to be committed, sliding transitions between fact and fiction.
2. Need for originality: Resists rules and conventions. Have a rebellious attitude because of a need to do things no one else does.
3. Motivation: Have a need to perform, goal oriented, innovative attitude, stamina to tackle difficult issues.
4. Ambition: Have a need to be influential, attract attention and recognition.
5. Flexibility: Have the ability to see different aspects of issues and come up with optimal solutions.
6. Low emotional stability: Have a tendency to experience negative emotions, greater fluctuations in moods and emotional state, failing self-confidence.
7. Low sociability: Have a tendency not to be very considerate, are obstinate and find faults and flaws in ideas and people.

(Stillman, 2013.)

While there is no typical creative type, there are some tell-tale characteristics and behaviors of highly creative people. First of all, they daydream. Mind-wandering can aid in the process of creative incubation. It has been suggested that daydreaming could actually involve a highly engaged brain state - daydreaming can lead to sudden connections and insights because it is related to our ability to recall information in the face of distractions. Neuroscientists have also found that daydreaming involves the same brain processes associated with imagination and creativity. Another purpose of daydreaming is to help us to get out of our own limited perspective and explore other ways of thinking, which can be an important asset to creative work. (Gregoire, 2014.)

Creative people observe everything. The world is a creative person's oyster as they see possibilities everywhere and are constantly taking in information that becomes fodder for creative expression. Some people keep a notebook with them at all times writing down observations about people and events as a way to better understand the complexi-

ties and contradictions of their own minds. Observant by nature and curious about the lives of others, creative types often love to people-watch, and they may even generate some of their best ideas from it. (Gregoire, 2014.)

They also work the hours that work for them. Many great artists have said that they do their best work either very early in the morning or late at night. No matter when it is, individuals with high creative output will often figure out what time it is that their minds start firing up, and structure their days accordingly. (Gregoire, 2014.)

Successful artists understand how business works in the art world. They understand the entrepreneurial aspects of making a living as an artist. These people spend time only with those who are 100 percent supportive of their art career - successful artists do not allow unsupportive people to be an obstacle to their plans for success. (de Wal, 2010.)

Creative people take time for solitude. Artists and creatives are often stereotyped as being loners, and while this may not actually be the case, solitude can be the key to producing their best work. This links back to daydreaming - we need to give ourselves the time alone to simply allow our minds to wander. (Gregoire, 2014.)

If one wants to be able to work with creative talent, they have to understand how creativity works. They cannot turn it on and off. Finishing something might take time and maybe distance from the project. Hovering over creative people does not help, and neither does offering suggestions. What actually works is leaving them alone for a bit, and only doing some checking in every few hours. That said, creativity also does not work with a blank slate. They need to be told what the specific desired end result is, so that their subconscious has something to process for a particular project. On the other hand, telling creative people exactly what is wanted down from them to the last detail defeats the purpose of their presence. (Perkins, 2013.)

Creative people love to expose themselves to new experiences, sensations and states of mind, and this openness is a significant predictor of creative output. Openness to experience is consistently the strongest predictor of creative achievement. This consists of

lots of different facets, but they are all related to each other: intellectual curiosity, thrill seeking, openness to emotions, and openness to fantasy. (Gregoire, 2014.)

Successful artists know that success does not happen overnight, it requires hard work. These artists understand that things do not always work out the way they expect. When they make mistakes, they focus on solutions, not on regrets. They learn from experience and experiment to improve on any success they have. (de Wal, 2010.)

Resilience is practically a prerequisite for creative success. Doing creative work is often described as a process of failing repeatedly until you find something that sticks, and creatives - at least the successful ones - learn not to take failure so personally. It is said that creatives fail, and the really good ones fail often. (Gregoire, 2014.)

They ask the big questions. Creative people are insatiably curious, they generally opt to live the examined life, and even as they get older, maintain a sense of curiosity about life. Whether through intense conversation or solitary mind-wandering, creatives look at the world around them and want to know why, and how, it is the way it is. Part of doing creative work is also taking risks, and many creative types thrive off of taking risks in various aspects of their lives. There is a deep and meaningful connection between risk taking and creativity and it is one that is often overlooked. Creativity is the act of making something from nothing. It requires making public those bets first placed by imagination. (Gregoire, 2014.)

Creative types are likely to see their lives and the world as a work of art and they constantly seek opportunities for self-expression in everyday life. Creatives like to shake things up, experience new things, and avoid anything that makes life more monotonous or mundane. (Gregoire, 2014.)

Art is the core of their lives. These artists wake up and go to sleep thinking about art. They carve out time in their day making art or marketing it. Successful artists have a strong work ethic. They manage themselves, their creative energy and resources. They balance the time to produce art and to market it. Whatever rhythm of working they

choose, they stick to it. Whether these artists enjoy the business tasks or not, they know they must be done and they do them without complaint or resentment. (de Wal, 2010.)

They follow their true passions. Creative people tend to be intrinsically motivated - meaning that they are motivated to act from some internal desire, rather than a desire for external reward or recognition. Psychologists have shown that creative people are energized by challenging activities, a sign of intrinsic motivation, and it has been suggested that simply thinking of intrinsic reasons to perform an activity may be enough to boost creativity. (Gregoire, 2014.)

When creative types are writing, dancing, painting or expressing themselves in another way, they might get "in the zone", or what is known as a flow state, which can help them to create at their highest level. Flow is a mental state when an individual transcends conscious thought to reach a heightened state of effortless concentration and calmness. When someone is in this state, they are practically immune to any internal or external pressures and distractions that could hinder their performance. (Gregoire, 2014.)

If there is one thing that distinguishes highly creative people from others, it is the ability to see possibilities where others do not. In the words of Steve Jobs: "Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they did not really do it, they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while. That is because they were able to connect experiences they have had and synthesize new things." (Gregoire, 2014.)

### **3.3 Implementation**

The third stage of event operations is implementation actions aligned with the established plans.

### 3.3.1 Main characteristics of implementation

There are five main characteristics that are typical for the implementation phase. First one of them consists of practicalities that are vital for the plans to develop into actions. For instance recruiting staff and making contracts with performers are included in such actions. Second typical feature of this phase consists of monitoring and controlling actions. (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris & McDonnell 2011, 263.)

The relevancy of plans needs to be assessed constantly as proceeding with the implementation actions. Plans that appeared to be relevant during the planning stage might not perform as well as thought in practice, so decision making is the third, very essential characteristic. Two remaining features are constant risk management and active communication with stakeholders. The key stakeholders need to receive the work-in-progress reporting throughout the process and they also need to be aligned about the possible risks. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 263.)

The beginning of the implementation phase is a time of high activity with meetings to discuss specific issues, decisions to be made and communications between various parties. The management may need to visit the planning phase when there are major changes and the plans need to be revised. At this time the team has to be focused on the project scope and ensure all the plans are compatible with each other and with the overall objectives of the event. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 263.)

In this study, organizing the Thank you event, the first characteristic for implementation being practicalities was mainly networking and building bridges between the researcher and different actors and companies. The idea was to contact service providers and make preliminary contracts with them.

The second characteristic of monitoring and controlling appeared mainly as budget controlling throughout the project. Whatever the researcher was planning or arranging the budget was important to keep in mind and keep careful control on it. Also monitoring

the schedule and timing of the activities during the day was an apparent part of the organizing.

Decision making as the third characteristic for implementation was rather easy since the researcher was doing the project alone. Some decisions were given by the organization and some decisions the researcher made herself. As stated earlier by Bowdin et al. the relevancy of plans needs to be assessed constantly during the implementation. In this research the researcher made two alternative agenda plans (Table 4.) for the Thank you event just as she had been advised to do. However, when presenting the plans to Gymnaestrada organization they suddenly decided to change the plan and instructions for the event and make it a half day event instead of a full day event. Some parts of both agenda plans were chosen and some parts were rearranged and that was how the final agenda (Table 5.) for the event was formed. This is a good example of how the original plans of event organizing can be revised during the process as more knowledge is received and thoughts and ideas get clearer.

The fourth feature of constant risk management when implementing the plan was mainly to take into consideration the possibility of a bad weather during the Thank you event. Another risk to tackle was the fact that the Finnish summer vacation period was at its best when the event implementation took place. This needed to be taken into consideration and take care of all possible correspondence and agreements well in advance.

This leads us to the fifth characteristic: communication. Again, it was not too complex since the researcher was the only person arranging the event. However, it was absolutely important to keep in close contact with all the different service providers and stakeholders of the event. Small changes were made many times during the implementation process and the timings during the day were modified as the big picture got clear. After everything was ready with the agenda and with all the details, the most important thing of course was to communicate everything to the Gymnaestrada organization.

### 3.3.2 Project outcome

As presented earlier, the final agenda of the Thank you event August 29, 2015 was the following:

- 10.30 Brunch at restaurant Sunn
- 12.00 RIB boat safari
- 13.30 Lunch at restaurant Katajanokan Kasino
- 15.00 Dance performance at Katajanokan Kasino

The group of 23 persons gathered at restaurant Sunn (Picture 1.) by the Senate Square in Helsinki August 29 at 10.30. The group had a private cabinet Alekski booked for their use to enjoy a brunch there. The brunch was served in a cabinet to make it more personal and to make it run smoothly. The brunch was pre-set so all the group needed to do was to dig into the delicious tastes of restaurant Sunn. The researcher had organized a beamer and a screen in the cabinet which enabled the event hostess to share pictures and memories of the Gymnaestrada July event with the trustees while having the brunch. A fascinating detail was that from the cabinet they had a window view towards the Senate Square which was one of the event venues of the World Gymnaestrada week in July.



Picture 1. Restaurant Sunn.

After the brunch the group walked five minutes to get to the Market Square by which two RIB (rigid-inflatable boat) boats were waiting for them. They were told to be leaving for a RIB safari (Picture 2.) and given the needed equipment for that: overall, gloves, hat, glasses and life jacket. It was agreed with the researcher to have a one hour ride, starting from the beautiful coast line of Helsinki and Espoo, then continuing to open sea and finally finishing the boat ride right next to restaurant Katajanokan Kasino. The guests had liked the safari a lot with high speed and beautiful view.



Picture 2. RIB boat.

Then they entered the traditional building of Katajanokan Kasino (Picture 3.) for a festive lunch after getting rid of the RIB safari equipment. A three course table served menu, chosen by the Gymnaestrada organization, was pre-set for the group. They enjoyed it with some good wine and more speeches and memories of the Gymnaestrada week. A beamer and a screen had been arranged in this private part of the venue as well. With the help of the researcher the hostess of the event had even delivered some material to Katajanokan Kasino in advance. It was distributed to the guests during the lunch as a keepsake.



Picture 3. Restaurant Katajanokan Kasino.

When the lunch was about to finish, a surprise performance took place. Well-known competitive dancers Ansku Bergström and Marko Keränen took over the part of the floor that was left as their dance floor and performed a couple of routines for the guests. They were said to be luminous and very talented dancers with good energy. After their performance it was agreed that they inspire the guests to stand up and dance with them. Bergström and Keränen taught the guests couple of Latin dance routines which they then danced all together.

With these happy moments the Gymnaestrada Thank you event finished about at 16.00. The feedback was absolutely positive which made the researcher pleased to hear that the guests had truly enjoyed their day.

In traditional project management this third phase implementation is the final phase and involves the handover of the deliverable. Events are not a tangible asset that can be handed over in the same way as a building. For this reason it is wise to add an extra phase into the project phases and call this evaluation. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 263.)

### **3.4 Evaluation**

Although this is not seen as a separate phase by traditional texts on project management, it fits into the definition above. The project event manager works during the deliverable, the event. During the event the tasks and responsibilities tend to roll on regardless of what the management wants to have happen. The number of staff during the

event including volunteers may increase dramatically. The short time period of attendance of the major stakeholders, the audience and the participants means that the management cannot rely on the same management techniques that were used during the lead-up to the event. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 263.)

Event evaluation is the last stage of event operations and it reveals if the aims and objectives of the event have been accomplished. It also provides valuable information for future improvements. In order to conduct useful analysis, information can be obtained by using a survey or having feedback discussions with staff and commissioner. (Van der Wagen & Carlos 2005, 248-252.)

Event evaluation is also known as a process, which measures and criticizes the implementation of an event in order to assess its final results. Evaluation process is seen throughout the event management. (Bowdin, McDonnell, Allen, O'Toole 2003, 271.)

Going back to this study, the researcher planned, organized and arranged everything ready in advance. The last changes and confirmations were taken care of the day before the event took place. The researcher herself did not take part in the event as everything had been agreed with the restaurants, service providers and performers before the event and they were able to implement everything by following the rules and agreements made with the researcher.

Gymnaestrada Deputy Secretary General was the hostess of the event. The researcher had kept in contact with her during the last weeks prior the event and briefed her thoroughly about all the practicalities during the event day. The Deputy Secretary General had also received all the contact information for the persons involved in the agenda so that she could have contacted them in case any unexpected changes during the day.

Luckily everything went very well and no challenges were faced at the event. The schedule had worked smoothly, restaurants were said to be extremely good and people had enjoyed the event a lot. The researcher received a couple of thank you emails from the participants after the event and also the Gymnaestrada contact person gave really good

feedback. The most important was of course that the participants of the event, being the Gymnaestrada trustees, had been thankful for the day and very pleased with the agenda of the day.

Couple of weeks after the Thank you event the researcher was invited to Gymnaestrada offices for a feedback discussion. The feedback she received was wonderful. The Deputy Secretary General was amazed of the professionalism with which the researcher took care of the event organizing and how she had handled it all alone managing still everything so well. Special thanks were received for the restaurant choices which had turned out to be really good with delicious food and nice locations.

The Deputy Secretary General wrote a feedback letter to the researcher. (Attachment 3.) The letter included the following topics:

- good cooperation between the Gymnaestrada organization and the researcher
- wide research of agenda possibilities with clear estimate of costs
- diverse and adventurous agenda
- professional and reliable way of organizing the event
- positive feedback from the trustees/participants

The value of the project for the Gymnaestrada organization was great. Also the researcher was happy being able to help Gymnaestrada personnel by arranging the Thank you event on their behalf. The crew was tired after the extremely busy summer period due to the World Gymnaestrada event in July 2015. Many of the personnel left for well-deserved summer vacation at the end of July which also would have been a challenge for the Thank you event organizing without an external arranger.

#### **4 Methodology and methods**

The research assumptions in this study, referred to the research questions listed earlier, were the following:

- Question: How to create a successful Thank you event?
  - Assumption: Making sure the assignment is clear, finding good partners to work with, planning well in advance, arranging all possible factors ready before the event and being prepared for last minute changes.
- Question: What activities and factors should be included in the day to make it exciting for the trustees?
  - Assumption: Fun program for the day, eventful and interesting activity part, festive meal with high quality food, surprising performance and beautiful venues.
- Question: How to organize a memorable event with a relatively small budget?
  - Assumption: Making thorough research on different possibilities for the event, trying to negotiate on prices, keeping track on costs and the budget clear in mind during the process, and prioritizing certain parts of the program to save money from other parts.

There are often three different approaches to research described: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research. The last one incorporates elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Often the distinction between qualitative research and quantitative research is framed in terms of using words (qualitative) rather than numbers (quantitative), or using closed-ended questions (quantitative hypotheses) rather than open-ended questions (qualitative interview questions). (Creswell 2014, 3-4.)

A more complete way to view the gradations of differences between them is in the basic philosophical assumptions researchers bring to the study, the types of research strategies used in the research (e.g., quantitative experiments or qualitative case studies), and the specific methods employed in conducting these strategies (e.g., collecting data quantitatively on instruments versus collecting qualitative data through observing a setting). (Creswell 2014, 4.)

Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's

setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. (Creswell 2014, 4.)

The researcher not only selects a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods study to conduct; the inquirer also decides on a type of study within these three choices. Research designs are types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design. (Creswell 2014, 11-12.)

Saunders uses the onion metaphor (Figure 3) to describe the general steps of a research process. As described briefly already in chapter 2, every research process has several layers and to proceed, the previous layers need to be completed. According to Saunders every research process starts with the research philosophy that is the outer layer of the research onion. Next is the research approach, the third layer is research strategy followed by research choices, time horizon and data collection techniques and procedures.

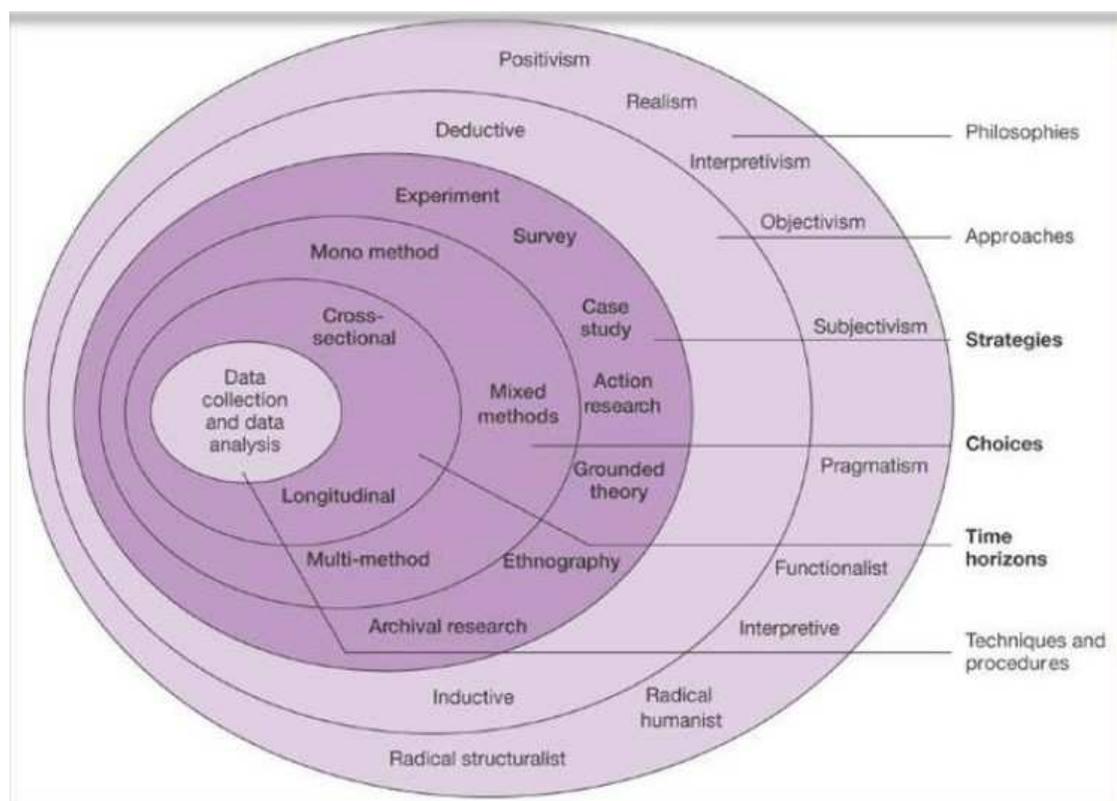


Figure 3. Research onion (Saunders et al.)

Philosophy; A research philosophy refers to the set of beliefs concerning the nature of the reality being investigated (Bryman, 2012). It is the underlying definition of the nature of knowledge. The assumptions created by a research philosophy provide the justification for how the research will be undertaken (Flick, 2011). Research philosophies can differ on the goals of research and on the best way that might be used to achieve these goals (Goddard & Melville, 2004). These are not necessarily at odds with each other, but the choice of research philosophy is defined by the type of knowledge being investigated in the research project (May, 2011). Therefore, understanding the research philosophy being used can help explain the assumptions inherent in the research process and how this fits the methodology being used. (UK Essays.)

Approach; An inductive approach usually uses research questions to narrow the scope of the study. For inductive approaches the aim is usually focused on exploring new phenomena or looking at previously researched phenomena from a different perspective. These approaches are generally associated with qualitative research and are concerned with the generation of new theory emerging from the data. (Gabriel, 2013.)

Strategy; Case studies are a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time. (Creswell 2014, 14.)

Choice; Mono method uses single data collection technique and corresponding analysis procedures. A single research study may use quantitative and qualitative techniques and procedures in combination as well as use primary and secondary data. (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill 2009, 151.)

Time horizon; Cross-sectional is a type of observational study that involves the analysis of data collected from a population, or a representative subset, at one specific point in time.

Techniques and procedures; Regardless of the methodological approach used in the research, the type of data collected can be separated into two types: primary and secondary. Primary data is that which is derived from first-hand sources. This can be historical first-hand sources, or the data derived from the respondents in survey or interview data (Bryman, 2012). However, it is not necessarily data that has been produced by the research being undertaken. The primary data is therefore best understood as the data that is being analyzed as itself, rather than through the prism of another's analysis. (UK Essays.)

In this study, the researcher needed to receive data about the trustees who were the invitees for the Thank you event. Background information about the persons taking part in the event was helpful to make sure the event was suitable for all and met with their expectations. However, the most important data was the financial data. The budget gave the frame for the whole planning. The researcher needed data about prices for different kind of activities, venues, performers, etc.

The data was collected through internet by visiting different service providers' webpages and getting to know their pricing. The data about the participants was provided by the Gymnaestrada organization on request. All the data was collected together during spring and early summer 2015 to make sure all the needed information and actions were in place during summer 2015. The researcher then compared together all the prices of different possibilities trying to find the most efficient solutions for the day. The prices were accommodated in the Budget plan (Table 2.) presented earlier.

After coming to a conclusion of two possible options for the day the researcher presented the agenda proposals of the day to the Gymnaestrada organization. At this stage all the knowledge behind the prices needed to be in place to be able to answer the questions the Gymnaestrada team might have had before making their decision of the concept for the day.

#### 4.1 Validity and reliability

Validity refers to the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific concept that the researcher is attempting to measure. Validity is concerned with the study's success at measuring what the researchers set out to measure. (Writing@Colorado State University.)

Researchers should be concerned with both external and internal validity. External validity refers to the extent to which the results of a study are generalizable or transferable. We need to know whether the conclusions of a study have any larger import, are they transferable to other contexts, and how far they can be generalized. (Miles, Huberman & Saldana 1994, 279.)

Any conclusions of this study can well be used for any other similar kind of case. The idea is that the methods and any practices stated useful and practical can be utilized also in future events. A future event can be any kind of activity event or festive event or their combination as in this case, and the best practices in this study will then become useful and helpful. The basic elements of event planning and event organizing are of course valid to any kind of event so the study can be generalized almost as far as needed.

Internal validity refers to the thoroughness with which the study is conducted. The main point is to find out the truth value. Do the findings of the study make sense? Are they credible to the people we study and to our readers? Do we have an authentic portrait of what we were looking at? (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña 1994, 278.)

Since this study is so pragmatic the findings do make a lot of sense. The findings are very credible to the people involved and the real value of the study could be seen in practice when the Thank you event took place in August 2015.

Reliability is the extent to which an experiment, test, or any measuring procedure yields the same result on repeated trials. Without the agreement of independent observers able

to replicate research procedures, or the ability to use research tools and procedures that yield consistent measurements, researchers would be unable to satisfactorily draw conclusions, formulate theories, or make claims about the generalizability of their research. (Writing@Colorado State University.)

The underlying issue here is whether the process of the study was consistent. It is kind of a quality control to check if things have been done with reasonable care. In this study the research questions are practical and clear. The study was made step by step consistently proceeded from given resources to actual implementation. However, the findings of the study may vary over time and possibly also depending on methods used which decreases the reliability a little.

#### **4.2 Role of researcher**

In qualitative studies the researcher is considered an instrument of data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). This means that data are mediated through this human instrument, rather than through inventories, questionnaires or machines. To fulfill this role, consumers of the research need to know about the human instrument. The qualitative researcher needs to describe relevant aspects of self, including any biases and assumptions, any expectations, and experiences to qualify his or her ability to conduct the research (Greenbank, 2003). In addition, it is a useful for the qualitative researcher to keep a research journal explicating personal reactions and reflections, insights into self and past, in a separate journal, and how bracketing takes place. (Simon, 2011.)

The qualitative researcher should also explain if their role is “emic” – an insider who is a full participant in activity, program or phenomenon, or the role is more “etic” – from an outside view, more of an objective viewer. There also could be a great deal of variations in between. (Simon, 2011.)

A good qualitative researcher asks probing questions, then listens, then thinks, then asks more probing questions to get to deeper levels of the conversation. An effective qualita-

tive researcher seeks to build a picture using ideas and theories from a wide variety of sources. (Simon, 2011.)

In this study the data was mediated totally through human instrument. All the data went through the researcher and all of it was gathered via communication between two humans. However, this is a study where the researcher was "etic" since she looked at the case from outside during the whole process and was not involved in the actual Thank you event itself. She was an external viewer while doing the study and was therefore the third party in the process in addition to the Gymnaestrada organization and the service providers.

The role of the researcher was big and vital in this process since she organized the whole event and did everything alone from the start until the end. The researcher did not know any of the participants nor the service providers in person before the process. In that way the role was easier since she could make all the decisions based on facts and what she thought was the best solution - without knowing too much background information about the participants and without being therefore forced to meet someone's expectations.

## **5 Conclusions**

This thesis report introduced the event management process regarding the Thank you event for the trustees of World Gymnaestrada 2015. The purpose of this thesis was to arrange a successful event with the given instructions and resources to thank the 27 trustees who had been the main volunteers at the World Gymnaestrada 2015 in Helsinki. The goal was to make the trustees as well as the Gymnaestrada personnel pleased and happy with a professional implementation of a well-planned event agenda.

The researcher's promise to the Gymnaestrada organization was to organize a successful Thank you event according to their instructions and considering the given budget. First the instructions requested to arrange a day activity session after which a festive dinner party. The researcher worked on that until the instructions changed due to Gymnaestra-

da organization, and so she started to plan and implement a new idea of arranging a festive lunch instead of a dinner. The amount of participants was cut down from 30-40 persons to 27 persons but the maximum budget of EUR 7000 remained the same during the whole process.

The result of this thesis was the project outcome that was actualized August 29, 2015. First the group of 23 persons (number of enrollees) gathered at restaurant Sunn by the Senate Square in Helsinki to enjoy a brunch. The event hostess shared pictures and memories of the World Gymnaestrada July event during it. After the brunch the group walked to the Market Square and left for a RIB boat safari. This was the activity part of the day, consisting of a one hour speed boating at the sea and finishing to restaurant Katajanokan Kasino.

There the group enjoyed a nice lunch with a festive atmosphere. More memories were shared with a help of more pictures and some material of the summer event. The lunch event was finished with a surprise performance given by a competitive dance couple Keränen & Bergström who performed great routines for the guests, and at the end taught them to dance as well.

The target of this thesis was to solve the research questions. As a conclusion the researcher wants to state that to be able to create a successful event one must analyze the need of the event very carefully, plan all the possible things in advance and take everything into account, implement the plan and all the details as organized as possible, and evaluate the process latest in the end of it. The main research question of “How to create a successful Thank you event?” was solved very well in this study since all the parts of the final event were in place just as needed. The most important thing is to be systematic, careful, organized, exact and even a bit pedantic. When the event organizer implements and takes care of every single thing systematically one by one, the outcome tends to be a success.

Also the sub-questions of this thesis were solved. To answer the question of “What activities and factors should be included in the day to make it exciting for the trustees?”

the researcher ended up building the day on delicious food, nice and beautiful locations, and on a fun but easy summer activity. At the end, the company of other trustees was the most important thing to make them enjoy.

The other sub-question of “How to organize a memorable event with a relatively small budget?” was solved easily in practice after all, since the number of participants was cut down during the process. However, it is possible to find inexpensive activities for bigger groups of people after making some research. Also dining can be arranged in many different ways for saving money, if needed. It is only a matter of the organizer’s imagination and the amount of time and effort they are willing to put on planning. In this study the researcher noticed that especially the musicians were the ones with whom it was possible to negotiate on their compensation.

The researcher was personally satisfied with the outcome of the event as she managed to meet the expectations of the Gymnaestrada organization. With her professional way of arranging, coordinating and implementing events she was able to run through the whole event organizing process with a successful end result. Time management in the researcher’s private life and on the other hand the change of plans by the Gymnaestrada organization were the challenges she faced during the project but challenges are always part of any type of projects and they can always be solved.

While working on the thesis, the researcher learned how to work with creative people, how to tackle changes and problems that one is not able to affect themselves, and how to understand and please people that are totally unknown persons, mentioned only by names. Before the Thank you event process was kicked off the researcher did not know any of the Gymnaestrada personnel she started to work for. Also at the end, the trustees who were the guests of the event remained unknown for the researcher as well. However, she was happy to notice how different people can enjoy the same event as long as it is well planned and well organized and the mood is positive.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Agenda plans for the Thank you event in Finnish

## Ohjelmavaihtoehto 1

- klo 15.00 yleisellä vesibussilla Suomenlinnaan Tykistönlahteen
- klo 15.30 lounas Café Chapmanissa
- klo 17.00 RIB-venesafari
  - 1h, nouto Tykistönlahdelta, lopetus Kauppatorille
  - sisältää parhaat nähtävyydet lähivesillä ja lenkin avomerelle
  - 3 x 12 hlö veneet, varusteet (puvut, liivit, lasit, pipot, hanskat) järjestäjältä
- klo 18.00 kävely (1 km) Wanhaan Satamaan
- klo 18.30 buffet-illallinen ravintola Brasseriessa
- klo 20.00 livemusiikkia 2 x 45 min, duo J.E.S
- klo 22.00 jatkot omakustanteisesti --> paikkavaraus?
- kiitoslahjat?

## Ohjelmavaihtoehto 2

- klo 14.30 lounas Salmisaaren liikuntakeskuksessa FunGo CaféBarissa
- klo 15.30 ohjattu kiipeily Kiipeilyareenalla
- klo 17.00 yksityissaunatilat Salmisaareessa
- klo 18.30 yhteiskuljetus Katajanokan Kasinolle
- klo 19.00 pöytiintarjoiltu illallinen Karimo Salissa
- klo 21.00 tanssiesitykset + leikillinen tanssinopetus + yhteistanssi (salsa, latino tai bollywood), Keränen&Bergström tai Puro&Mäkinenklo 21.30 livemusiikkia 2 x 45 min, duo J.E.S
  - TAI klo 21.00 livemusiikkia 2 x 60 min, Megaman Streetband
- klo 23.30 yhteiskuljetus jatkoille
- klo 24.00 jatkot Teatterissa(?)
- kiitoslahjat?

## Ohjelma

- klo 10.30 **brunssi** ravintola Sunnissa Aleksi-kabinetissa
- klo 12.00 **RIB-venesafari**
  - 1h, nouto Kauppatorilta, lopetus Katajanokan Kasinolle
  - sisältää parhaat nähtävyydet lähivesillä ja lenkin avomerelle
  - 2 x 12 hlö veneet, varusteet (puvut, liivit, lasit, pipot, hanskat) järjestäjältä
- klo 13.30 pöytiintarjoiltu **lounas** Katajanokan Kasinon Karimo Salissa
- klo 15.00 **tanssiesitykset** + leikillinen tanssinopetus + yhteistanssi (salsa, latino tai bollywood), Keränen&Bergström

### Appendix 3. Feedback emails on the Thank you event

”Hei Carita

Lämmin kiitos vielä kiitoskaronkan 29.8.2015 klo 10.30–16.00 järjestelyistä Gymnaestrada-tapahtumamme avaintoimijoille. Yhteistyö kanssasi sujui kaikin puolin erinomaisen hyvin. Olit kartoittanut ja esitit meille selkeästi hyvät vaihtoehdot kustannusarvioineen. Päivän ohjelmasta rakentui monipuolinen ja elämyksellinen, juuri kuten olimme toivoneet. Kun valinnat oli tehty, hoidit kaikki järjestelyt ammattitaitoisesti, luotettavasti ja loppuun asti vieden. Palaute osallistujilta on ollut erittäin positiivista ja kiittävää. Toteutit meille hienon karonkan!

Kiitos yhteistyöstä ja hyvää jatkoa, Päivi

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”Olipa elämyksellinen ja mukava karonkka lauantaina! Loistoruokailut ja -paikat, huippuveneily ja kymmeniä muisteloita ja Gymnaestrada-tarinoita. Kaikki viihtyivät, kivaa oli. Kiitos Carita!”

One of the participants