Enhancement of foreign UAS students’ employability in Finland through worklife projects

Olha Kushnir

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ABSTRACT

This bachelor’s thesis is raising question about worklife project as a first step to successful employment of international UAS graduates in Finland. Worklife projects are part of study programmes in Finnish UASs and aim to give students practical knowledge through cooperation with local companies. They are resembling real working situations and give useful working life skills before graduation. This thesis also studies levels of confidence foreign UAS students and graduates have towards employment in Finland.

This thesis is commissioned by Floworks – a unit of Tampere UAS, which offers worklife projects for students in Tampere region and specializes on the development of services in higher educational institutions (HEIs). SCIL – Smart Campus Innovation Lab – is a part of Floworks unit and currently offers various worklife projects and practical training opportunities for students. The outcome of this thesis will be used by SCIL when designing new projects.

Qualitative research was conducted in order to get answers to the research questions. The author collected answers with the use of web-based survey. The survey was sent to 50 people and the response rate was high – 54%. Open-ended answers were analyzed using qualitative content analysis method.

Answers indicate the importance of worklife projects in student’s preparation to working life. Designing of future worklife projects should be focused on strong cooperation of student and commissioner. Confidence levels of students are low when thinking about employment in professional field in Finland. Students suggested that universities should provide more assistance in internship seeking and career advice throughout the years of study.

Key words: worklife projects and cooperation, confidence in job seeking
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<tr>
<td>CIMO</td>
<td>the Centre for International Mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEA</td>
<td>European Economic Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>HEI</td>
<td>higher educational institution</td>
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<td>SCIL</td>
<td>Smart Campus Innovation Lab</td>
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1 INTRODUCTION

Finnish companies, which perform international business operations, are expected to be interested in recruiting foreign students with a degree from Finnish HEI. International graduates have equivalent studies as Finns, and can differentiate with native language skills and in-depth culture knowledge of their home country. Most of students familiarized well with Finland, its language and culture during four-year stay in country.

The employment percentage of foreign graduates in Finland is quite low. The survey conducted by CIMO shows, that international students not only want to get a degree in Finland, but also have a possibility to build their career here after graduation. (The Finnish National Agency for Education 2011)

To boost internationalization and competitiveness on the global market, government focuses on attracting foreign students to get their degree in Finnish universities. International students are contributing around 170 million euros to the Finnish economy yearly. (Yle Uutiset 2014)

Knowing that it is very difficult to get a job after graduation in Finland, compared to other EU countries, potential students will not find it reasonable to get a degree here anymore. In 2016, the number of international applicants went down by a third, compared to the year 2015. (The Finnish National Agency for Education 2016)

Universities use cooperation and worklife projects during studies as a learning method and a way of connecting students to local companies, giving them chance to establish useful networks which can influence future employment possibilities. The usefulness of such projects has not been studied from the perspective of employment of foreign alumni.

This thesis aims to find out if such projects and collaborations indeed helped them to be more competitive on the job market. SCIL as a platform for conducting such projects in Tampere region aims to improve its services and make project experience more valuable for students.
2 THESIS PLAN

2.1 Thesis topic

The major focus of this thesis is to research how worklife projects during studies at Finnish UASs helped international degree students to get practical training and professional work placements in Finland.

The commissioner of the thesis is Floworks (picture 1) – a unit in Tampere UAS, which collaborates with staff and students of various study programmes to influence the quality of higher education.

![Floworks logo](picture1.png)

PICTURE 1. Floworks’ logo (SCIL)

SCIL (picture 2) is a part of Floworks, and serves as a platform for carrying out worklife projects and practical training placements for students in Tampere. SCIL is a living lab, which works on development of universities in Tampere. SCIL is also collaborating with KILKAS project (SCIL), which promotes foreign UAS students’ employability in Finland. During November 2017 – January 2018, there are four student teams at SCIL, working on the development of this project.

![SCIL logo](picture2.png)

PICTURE 2. SCIL’s logo (SCIL)
The author of this thesis is an international student in Finland, who participated in several worklife projects, including internship at SCIL, and has a big interest in this topic.

There are numerous quantitative researches on foreign students’ employment in Finland. The topic of this thesis concentrates on how students see working in projects as a way to develop their working life skills and connect to local companies. This topic has not been researched much and carry both social and business significance.

The outcome can be used not only by the commissioner, but also by all Finnish UASs, as well as organizations with same orientation as SCIL. This topic is crucial in developing a solution for students who want to get a job in Finland in their professional field, and universities who aim their alumni to be employed after graduation. The outcome of the thesis will help SCIL to analyze their current processes and apply new solutions to future projects organized for students.

2.2 Thesis objectives and research questions

This thesis has a researching objective. The research will provide an answer on how worklife projects students take part in during their studies at UAS influence students’ employment possibilities in Finland. The thesis will also study confidence of international students towards job seeking in Finland.

Intended outcome of this thesis is to get answers to the research questions, which will help Finnish UASs and SCIL to know the real situation and different perspectives on the topic from students and alumni, and use them in planning of future projects/study paths.

Initial research questions:

1) Did worklife projects students participated in during their studies help them to find practical training placement/job in their professional field?

2) How worklife projects affect students’ confidence towards future employment in Finland?
2.3 Concepts and theory

Main concepts of this thesis are: student project based learning, worklife cooperation and confidence in job seeking.

**Project based learning** is one of pedagogical methods in education, in which students obtain valuable skills and experiences by solving a real working life problem. This method is widely used by Finnish UASs to prepare their students to enter job market already from the first years of study. (Buck Institute for Education)

**Worklife cooperation** is a situation, when employers can connect with educational institutions to combine classroom learning with worklife learning. (Institute for Adult Learning Singapore 2015)

During studies, students have chance to work with real companies and receive tasks from them. They can participate in the development of new product, making marketing research or organizing an event (University of Turku).

**Confidence in job seeking** is believing in own ability to find a suitable employment. This characteristic can increase graduate’s chance of getting a job and building a successful career – people with high level of confidence tend to get their dream jobs easier. Fresh graduates usually are not confident due to lack of professional experience and networks, GPA and financial instability. (Stemler 2016)

2.4 Working methods and data

Qualitative research is the right choice of method to be applied to this topic, as only real-life experiences can answer the research questions of the thesis, and there cannot be one standard solution or theory applied in this case.

The survey will be conducted between foreign UAS students and alumni of International Business and Environmental Engineering degree programmes. Because some of students are not physically in Finland, it is necessary to conduct an online survey.
The survey will consist of open-ended questions to gather real experiences and perspectives of foreign UAS students around Finland. This will help to understand if UASs are on the right track of guiding their international degree students to the Finnish job market. The outcome of the research can be used in SCIL’s development projects for foreign students.

Obtained data will be analyzed using the content analysis method. Qualitative content analysis is a method, which explains and organizes data, received from the qualitative research. This method is used when the researcher should interpret data for the reader. This method reduces unnecessary information from data to help present clear and systematic overview to the reader. (Schreier 2012, 5)
3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Finnish higher education for foreign nationals

Finnish higher education is often described as quality, efficient and internationally-oriented. One of the main objectives of the higher education system is to promote competitiveness of Finland on the global market (Finnish National Network for Internationalisation, 2009).

Until August 2017, Finnish HEIs did not charge tuition fees from students, including international ones. Free education made Finland an attractive destination for those, who wanted to get a degree in English without huge investments. Other factors, which attract international students, are easy residence permit procedures, degree programmes in English, interest in Nordic countries and their unique cultures, partnership agreements with universities all over the world, etc. (Shumilova 2013, 62)

The Finnish Government agreed, that starting August 2017 new non-EU/EEA students will be paying for their studies at Finnish HEIs. Non-EU/EEA students, who started their studies before August 2017, can continue studying for free (Educations Media Group 2017). For those, who obtain an A-type residence permit in Finland, the tuition fee is waived for any Bachelor’s or Master’s degree programme.

Despite scholarship opportunities opened to non-EU/EEA students, the cost of living in Finland during pursuing a university degree – usually 3.5-4 years - is high, if to compare with other EU countries. There is a threat that potential students will not find Finland an attractive study destination anymore. Other countries with quality higher education systems and cheaper costs of living, as well as more possibilities to get part-time job during studies, will influence students’ choice.

3.2 Employment challenges

Finland becomes less attractive study destination for students also because of the hardship of getting job in Finland. Only less than a half of international graduates are employed in Finland within a year after getting a degree. (Yle Uutiset 2014)
Foreign UAS graduates have more opportunities to find job in Finland than those, who studied in university (yliopisto). The reasons for this is the duration of studies and compulsory practical training period, valued by Finnish employers. (Yle Uutiset 2014)

The major obstacles on the way of foreign alumni to the Finnish job market were defined in various researches, conducted during last decade. These are lack of Finnish/Swedish language skills, unwillingness of employer to risk or change company’s culture by hiring a foreigner, lack of career services at UASs which match employers and students, etc. (Levander 2016)

Some employers revealed, that they did not want to change their office language to English, even the job itself did not require fluent Finnish. Moreover, older employees felt uncomfortable with a new-coming foreign worker.

The outcomes of the VALOA project, which was studying international graduate employability during years 2011-2012 in Finland, show the most common challenges that foreign students face when seeking for employment in their field.

![PICTURE 3. Major obstacles to getting a job (Shumilova 2013, 58)](image-url)
Picture 3 shows that lack of Finnish/Swedish language skills is the most common obstacle for international graduates. 90.3% UAS graduates said they could not find job without knowledge of local languages. (Shumilova 2013, 58)

At the same time, UASs do not stress the importance of learning Finnish language throughout study years. University offers only A-level (beginner) language courses as a part of the curriculum. All further studies are voluntary and at the expense of student. After graduation, students do not possess the language level required by Finnish employers.

To compare, in South Korean HEIs, it is obligatory for foreign degree students to study Korean language during one year before they can start professional studies. Students obtain good knowledge of the local language from the beginning and improve it to fluent level till the end of studies, when they will start searching for the job. In this case, there is no language skills related obstacles in the employment of foreign graduates in South Korea.

Another two major obstacles on the way to employment are lack of the right contacts (47%) and lack of opportunities to gain relevant work experience (47, 8%). Foreign students have a big disadvantage in professional networking if to compare with Finns. Even Finnish students just started studies, they have already useful networks from previous summer jobs, family connections, friends employed in Finnish companies, etc. Foreign student knows only few people after moving to Finland, and they are not much connected to professional life. International student must work hard to establish useful professional networks during studies.

When searching for internships in Finland, foreign students compete with locals on the same terms. It is almost equivalent procedure as finding a job in Finland, and students face same obstacles as lack of native language skills, unwillingness of employer to hire foreigner, lack of access to job search information, discrimination, etc. Many students end up doing any internship they can get, usually not the one they aimed for and not remunerated.
Finnish higher education degrees are usually recognized all over the world. However, some 14% of UAS students had difficulties with recognition of their degrees according to VALOA project’s results. Problems can occur due to different educational regulations, various fields of studies, which can happen with recognition of any other country’s degree. But the research showed that foreign students had problems with Finnish employers recognizing their Finnish degree. Some employees believe, that foreign student have some other study path which does not coincide with the one local students take. (Shumilova 2013, page 59)

3.3 Worklife projects and cooperation at Finnish UASs

Finnish UASs are HEIs with a strong professional orientation. Already during first months of study, students are familiarized with own field and involved into working life. This is possible through projects and cooperation between students, university staff, municipalities and local companies. (Finnish National Network for Internationalisation 2009)

UASs stress group work as the best way of integration into working life. It promotes multicultural communication and prepares students to interact professionally in various situations with people from different backgrounds, like in real company. Companies bring cases and challenges to be solved by students as a part of their studies. Usually these could be development projects, product design, marketing research, event organization, etc., depending on the field of study. Such cooperation brings benefits to all parties – university, employers and students, and can be done on a local or international level. Projects imitate real working environments and are the first steps to working life. (StudyPortals 2017)

Worklife projects require collaboration between university teachers, students, customers and workplace professionals. Project work creates new knowledge and experiences. Projects are research-oriented and solve working life challenges. (Eskelinen 2016)

There are 25 UASs in Finland and each of them has own image, orientation and vision. All of them set working life experience during studies as the most valuable aspect of higher education. They offer various opportunities for students to obtain professional
working life skills in Finland and internationally. The majority uses projects as the way of development of working life skills.

For example, all studies at Hämeen UAS are worklife oriented. University uses such methods as Project Learning and Learning by Developing to prepare students to enter real working life. There are up to 30 nationalities studying in Hämeen UAS, which gives opportunity to work in multicultural teams. UAS offers variety of international research and development projects based all over the world. (Finnish National Network for Internationalisation 2009, 2)

Metropolia UAS cooperate closely with businesses and industries. It involves students into worklife projects from the first years of study to give them skills, which are needed in real labour market. (Finnish National Network for Internationalisation 2009, 11)

At Lahti UAS there is Innovation Centre, which is in charge of research and development projects. Many projects are EU-funded and connected to local entrepreneurs. Students work on the development of Lahti region in different areas, but mostly in economic and cultural. Projects also work on development of Lahti UAS nationally and internationally. (Finnish National Network for Internationalisation 2009, 17)

Laurea UAS stresses competence development as the most important part of practical education. University uses Learning by Developing model of teaching, which is closely connected with working life. Professional experts coach students in real working life challenging situations, preparing future competent and skilled employees. (Finnish National Network for Internationalisation 2009, 18)

Oulu UAS does R&D work within Oulu region and students are closely connected to local business life. There is an innovation centre, where students work on international projects together with experts from various fields. (Finnish National Network for Internationalisation 2009, 22)

Tampere UAS works closely with public sector of Pirkanmaa region and companies all over Finland. International cooperation is a key of high-level education and Tampere UAS supports it with international projects and cooperation with over 300 partner universities worldwide. (Finnish National Network for Internationalisation 2009, 28)
3.4 Worklife project opportunities in Tampere

Participating in worklife projects through UAS is not the only choice for students. There are different organizations, which offer students possibilities to get involved into working life through projects and collaboration.

Three universities – Tampere UAS, Tampere University and Tampere University of Technology - work together on the improvement of higher education in Tampere region and Finland. Students can choose courses from other university and make them a part of the study path. Three universities will merge into one new university in future. Currently, this process is called “Tampere3” (Tampere3). Professors, students and municipality of Tampere are constructing modern university together.

Students from Tampere can participate in worklife projects at SCIL, Demola Tampere, InnoEvent Tampere, y-kampus, etc. and earn credit points. Some projects are sponsored by companies and students are remunerated for their work.

3.4.1 SCIL

SCIL focuses on arranging learning environment for students through worklife projects and is organized by Floworks and Tampere UAS. SCIL offers credits for such projects as well as internship and thesis placement opportunities. Lab has coaches, who lead students throughout the project work and support their development.

Any student from three universities in Tampere can participate in projects regardless the field or year of study, nationality or age, since SCIL values diversity at the most. Projects are conducted either in Finnish or English, so the language requirements are taken into consideration when forming teams.

SCIL takes project ideas from Tampere UAS’s units and hire teams of students to work on those cases. Students work together with teachers and staff of university and gain experience through teamwork. The aim of each project is to co-develop higher educational services at universities such as new technologies, services or learning methods. (SCIL)

The descriptions and results of past (picture 5) and current projects (picture 4) can be found on SCIL’s webpage.
Students are reflecting their project work in blog posts and videos, which makes it easy for upcoming participants to understand the working style of SCIL and continue the existing cases.

SCIL will be working internationally this summer and welcomes students from Tampere UAS’s partner universities to participate in worklife projects together with local students. The experience gained throughout such projects is reflecting the working life and gives opportunities to develop worklife skills while studying.
3.4.2 Demola Tampere

Demola Tampere is a network of students, universities and companies, which offers around 100 projects each year. Nearly 450 students take part in working life projects annually and give brilliant results to be used by companies. Moreover, it is possible to get a job through Demola – some 15% of students were recruited by their case company after completing the project in Demola Tampere.

Demola Network is located in 17 cities globally and is well-known on international level. It offers projects in such areas as business and concepts, coding, design and art, education, engineering, environment, governance, media and communications, healthcare and social science. (Demola Tampere)

Demola’s year is divided into three periods – spring, summer and autumn – during which students work in teams on unique cases assigned by companies. The best project results are awarded financially and licensed by companies. The examples of past and current projects are showed in pictures 6 and 7.

![Autumn 2017 Projects (Demola Tampere)](image-url)
3.4.3 **InnoEvent Tampere**

InnoEvent Tampere is an innovation event and an intensive worklife project for students of any field of study. Around 700 participants join InnoEvent each year in Tampere for one week to work on the cases assigned by local companies. Students work in teams and are guided by InnoEvent’s coaches and companies’ professionals. Picture 8 shows international team working on a solution during the event. There are projects in English and Finnish according to the company’s needs. Judges of the event assess each team’s project results and award 1000 euros to the winners.

During years 2013-2017, InnoEvent was building future together with 2250 students, 150 coaches and 42 companies through worklife projects. This event is a great opportunity for students to gain working life experience, establish new networks and sell the team’s idea to the case company.

Companies which actively collaborate with InnoEvent and offer project cases are Valio, Sandvik, Tampere Areena, Särkänniemi, Tays, Pihlajalinna, etc. The event is supported by other partner companies as well as three universities in Tampere. (InnoEvent)
3.5 KILKAS workshop results

KILKAS is an EU-funded project which aims to boost the employability of foreign UAS students in Finland.

Several workshops took place during the Days of International Degree Programmes on October 5th, 2017 at Tampere UAS. The theme of the first workshop was “Worklife projects and cooperation”. The aim of the workshop was to find out how project work could be more connected to working life and how it can help students to succeed in Finnish job market in future. Summary of the workshop is based on the comments of participants - students and teachers of Finnish UASs.

Students pointed out, that there are not much real worklife cases offered during the study years, and many projects are based on imaginary cases. More company visits and networking events should be added to curriculum as well.

Teachers shared their experience about organization of the project work with real companies – employers expect to get quality results from students, but usually they are not
using those solutions after the project. In most cases, they are also not interested to hire students as interns or employees.

However, such worklife projects are good opportunity for students to know more about local businesses and learn to work in a team. Students improve their leadership and time management skills. Companies can get valuable insights from international students, for example, if they are planning to enter foreign market, and it is free for them as students do not get any remuneration for projects included in the study path. (KILKAS 2017)

3.6 Confidence of students and graduates in job seeking

Even students have excellent GPA, some references and achievements, majority thinks that they will fail to find a job after graduation. This unconfident attitude indeed reduces employment possibilities. Employers believe, that lack of confidence is a sign that graduate is not ready to work in constantly challenging environment. Lack of confidence is unprofessional and shows that the candidate is not competent.

On the other hand, non-confidence is a natural stressful behaviour, especially for those who are searching for their first job. Graduates think realistically – there are a lot of more experienced applicants on the job market. The confidence of international students is even lower, as they must compete with locals on the same terms. In Finland, lack of native language skills causes a lot of non-confidence. Even those international students, who speak Finnish on an advanced level, still feel not confident when applying to Finnish speaking positions and talking at the interview in Finnish. (Revesz 2013)

Some positions do not require fluent Finnish language skills, but most of them do. Often the employer does not state clearly in the advertisement the level of language acceptable, because they assume foreigners will not be able to read job offer and will skip it.

Because graduates lack of professional working experience, that does not make them unsuitable candidates for entry-level positions. Graduates have new perspectives, fresh ideas and drive – something what each company needs. (Pianin 2014)
4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Qualitative research

This research has a qualitative nature. The author uses an open-answer survey method and is studying a small sample.

Qualitative research is less structured than the quantitative one. It gives the respondent freedom to reveal his or her ideas and feelings, what is limited when one need to choose and answer from the multiple choice. (Davis 2007, 140)

There is no big importance of such categories as age, nationality or gender in qualitative research, but they can provide an additional background information about participants of the research. In the survey of this thesis, the author asks question about respondent’s nationality, but keeps it optional to give the respondent possibility to answer completely anonymously. The answers to this category will just show the variety of nationalities present in Finnish UASs, although it cannot describe the overall tendencies since the sample is small. Also, it will show the percentage of respondents who are more comfortable with answering survey completely anonymous.

Studying small sample has many benefits. It is less stressful and less problematic with a survey sample of 50 people than, for instance, of 150 people. Small study sample consists of several elements – groups and individuals. The core sample is a group of respondents, whose answers are of a primary importance for the research. (Davis 2007, 143)

In this research, the core sample are students, who were a part of SCIL summer and autumn projects. The survey received 10 responses from SCIL participants. The other groups include students from Tampere UAS Consulting Academy, foreign UAS students, Demola Tampere and InnoEvent participants, and international graduates.

It is important to reduce any occasional bias in small sample. The author designed the survey in a way that the personality of the respondent cannot be revealed easily.
4.2 Web-based survey

This research is done with the use of a web-based survey. Google Forms is chosen as a platform for the survey, as it is well known, easily accessible and require no costs from commissioner/researcher. The survey was sent to the target audience by email on December 19th, 2017. The reminder email was sent two weeks later, on January 2nd, 2018.

The web-based (also online-based/web/online/internet survey) is the most widespread method for research data collection. If to compare it with other methods, such as face-to-face interviews or paper questionnaires, web-based survey is the most fast and flexible one both for researcher and respondent. (Sincero)

It is easy to create a professionally-looking online survey using various platforms on the web (for example, Google Forms, Survey Monkey, Survey Pal, etc.), and it is possible for free or on a low budget. Online surveys save time of the researchers and respondents, as they do not require face-to-face interaction. Some respondents tend to reject interviews or other research methods which involve personal contact due to their shyness, tight schedule, no big interest in the research, etc.

Online survey, especially anonymous, can get more respondents and gather more quality data for the research. The respondent can choose by himself or herself, when and where the survey will be done, and they do not need to meet personally with the researcher or reveal their identity.

There are backwards and limitations of the web-based survey as well. It could be unwillingness of the respondent to answer specific questions in the survey. They could either skip them, or, if it is obligatory to answer the question to proceed further – giving up on the whole survey. In addition, person can simply forget about the survey, if he or she does not fill it in immediately or put a reminder into the calendar. Internet connection issues, unsuitable time frame (for example, potential respondent is on vacation and does not go online), technical problems are also some of the disadvantages of a web-based survey. (Fricker 2002, 16)

Even the sample of 50 people is not big, web-based survey was the most natural and fast way to get answers to the research questions of the thesis. One group of target respondents
– graduates – are not necessarily in Finland anymore. Moreover, some third and fourth year students are doing their exchange studies or practical training abroad. With the online survey, the author could reach all the student and graduates in a short time, what would be impossible, for example, using the interview method.

4.3 Qualitative data analysis

In this thesis, the author is using qualitative data analysis method to summarize the research data.

The answers in qualitative research can be both short and long – from one word to few sentences. Taking each question separately, the answers are grouped and analyzed according to the subject of the survey. There can be multiple answers given by respondent due to the nature of the question. After analysis of each question separately, the survey material is structured and explained to the reader in a narrative way. All the unnecessary information should be removed from data to form clear statements about the research. (Davis 2007, 187-188)

Long answers should be interpreted by the researcher carefully. Usually long responses are descriptions of person’s experience or open feedback. Such information can be grouped as positive/negative experiences, satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the service, etc. and show the main tendency in the survey. (Davis 2007, 189)

When analyzing qualitative survey, the author should not edit person’s words and present them in an original form. Editing out words can lead to the loss of the idea of the respondent or its change.
5 RESEARCH RESULTS

The sample of the survey consists of 50 people which were picked by the author. The response rate was high and the research got 27 answers. The questionnaire consists of 4 sections, 16 questions and an open voluntary feedback (see appendix 2). Most questions are open-ended ones as this research is qualitative.

5.1 Background information

Participants were asked few background questions at the beginning of the survey. The survey is anonymous and questions cannot reveal the identity of the respondent. Only the answer about nationality can give some hint to the author about the respondent (for example, if there is only one representative of that nationality in university). This was the reason to make a question about nationality optional and give the respondent chance to answer completely anonymously.

5.1.1 UAS and Degree Programme

The first question asked about UAS, where the respondent studies/studied. 74% of survey participants represented Tampere UAS. Research also got valuable answers from other Finnish UASs’ students and graduates – three from Lahti UAS, three from Hämeen UAS and one from Laurea UAS (figure 1).

The next question of the survey gathered information about the study degree of respondents. This research was focused on International Business and Environmental Engineering English-taught degree programmes, which have the most of foreign students in Finland.

77.8% of respondents represented Degree Programme in International Business while 22.2% were students or graduates in Environmental Engineering (figure 2).
5.1.2 Nationality

The next question was optional and one third of respondents have chosen to stay completely anonymous. Based on the received answers, most of survey participants were from
China, Russia, Vietnam and Italy. Students and graduates from France, Kenya, Tanzania, Bulgaria, Belgium, India and Japan also took part in the survey.

The sample of the research is very diverse as students and graduates come from different parts of the world – Eastern and Southern Europe, Central East Africa, South-, South East and East Asia.

5.2 Progress of studies

There are three questions in the second questionnaire section, and they are related to the progress of studies of the respondent. The first question asked about the beginning of the respondents’ studies at the UAS and/or graduation year. The sample of the survey included students from different study years, recent graduates and other alumni. The purpose was to receive different perspectives on the topic and get various ideas for development of worklife projects.

The alumni answers are valuable as they are already employed in Finland or failed to find a job in their field of study here after graduation. The analysis of their experience can give a clearer picture on why they could/could not find a job in Finland in their professional field.

The next question was related to students’ practical training experience in Finland. As probably in any country, internship experience in own field of study brings higher possibilities to be employed after graduation. When done during studies, this can be person’s first working experience in that particular field and a way to successful employment after graduation.

Practical training in Finnish UASs is a compulsory part of studies and Finnish employers can still hesitate to hire a foreigner even they did practical training in Finland. Although, some students are lucky to be hired after the end of internship, depending on the availability of open positions in the company.

The third question asked whether respondent searched for a job in Finland previously, for example, sent applications or went to interviews. The answers will show who succeeded
in job hunting and got a job in Finland in own field of study, those who searched but failed to get working contract, and those who have not done it yet.

The research aims to analyze on which stage of studies students start thinking about the employment and take actions. The open-ended answers will give reasons why job hunting was not successful for some respondents.

5.2.1 Beginning of studies/graduation

The proportion of students and graduates, who participated in the survey, is almost equal and is suitable for the analysis. Thirteen participants already graduated from their UAS and fourteen students are still in the beginning, middle or end of their studies.

The majority of graduates, who took part in the research, were recently graduated students of UASs. Six fresh graduates received their degree certificates in December 2017. One respondent graduated earlier last year, in June 2017. There were three answers from graduates of 2015, two answers from 2016 and one answer from a graduate of 2014.

Among current UAS students, the ones at the middle and the end of their studies were more active. Five third-year and five fourth-year students filled in the questionnaire. There are only four participants who are at the beginning of their studies – they were accepted to UAS in August 2016 (figure 3).

FIGURE 3. Year of study
5.2.2 Practical training in Finland

50% of respondents have done their compulsory practical training in Finland. Two UAS students have done it here partially, and nine completed internships outside of Finland. Others have not completed practical training yet (figure 4).

![Practical training location](image)

**FIGURE 4.** Practical training location

5.2.3 Job searching in Finland

The question asked if a person searched for a job in Finland, for example, sent applications, went to interviews, and if that experience was successful. Some respondents replied just “yes”, which can be understood as “yes, I searched for the job in Finland”, but there was no explanation on whether the search was successful.

Some of the respondents who did not do the practical training in Finland also did not search job here. This can be explained as absence of interest in employment in Finland. Many students coming to study in Finland choose working in their home country after graduation due to several reasons, for example, willingness to live with family, bad integration into Finnish culture, and most frequently, hardship of getting job in Finland. Some of the respondents who did not search for a job in Finland yet are those at the beginning of their studies.
Ten respondents said, that they searched for a job in Finland, but it was not successful. Some got invitations to few interviews, but many were not selected after the application round.

There are five respondents whose job search in Finland was successful. Although, one of them stated that after interview he or she got an unpaid job. Probably, the respondent was talking about internship or volunteer work, which can be unpaid in Finland, since a regular work should be always paid according to Finnish legislation.

Two graduates got the job contract in the same companies where they completed practical training. This shows that it is possible to continue with the permanent contract after internship, if there are vacant positions in the company.

5.3 Worklife projects

5.3.1 Projects offered by UASs

The first question is related to projects included into study path, and which were commissioned by real companies (see full answers in appendix 1).

Some are totally satisfied with the worklife projects opportunities in their university. They pointed out, that during such projects they got more valuable knowledge than from lectures, developed new skills and get to know local companies. Finnish UASs offer wide choice of projects connected to real companies and also organize company visits frequently.

Majority of participants stated that projects offered by UAS were not useful and challenging enough. They do not see that this worklife experience is close to reality, and also companies were not very serious about students’ work. Quite often companies could not set clear objectives and describe their processes in a detailed manner. Although, it was still interesting for students to participate in such projects, as they could work in teams and learn in a practical environment.
5.3.2 Extracurricular projects

The second question asked if respondents participated into any extracurricular projects, for example, SCIL, Demola Tampere, InnoEvent, etc., organized outside of the study programme (see full answers in appendix 1).

41% of students participated in worklife projects offered outside of the UAS curriculum. These projects were very popular among Tampere UAS students. They took part in SCIL, Floworks Living Lab, Demola, y-kampus and InnoEvent projects. Student from Lahti UAS was in the team of Finnish pavilion: Astana Expo 2017, which was a worklife project as well. Worklife projects outside of university are not popular among Hämeen UAS students.

Again, experience of respondents is quite diverse towards extracurricular projects, but positive feedback prevails the negative one. Many students are totally satisfied and enjoyed these kinds of worklife projects and pointed out, that they are more practical and more “real” than UAS projects. Worklife projects outside of university also helped to expand networks in professional field.

Some respondents stated that these projects were pretty much similar to the ones at UAS and did not give them desired working life experience. Few students were not satisfied with the organization of projects.

5.3.3 Working life skills

The next question aimed to know which working life skills students were able to gain through participation in worklife projects (see full answers in appendix 1).

According to the answers, most of students gained such working life skills as teamwork, leadership, intercultural communication and organizational skills. Such skills as flexibility, cooperation with superiors, project management, time management and problem solving were mentioned by respondents as well.
Three students said they did not get any working life skills out of participation in such projects. Some pointed out, that those skills were basic skills everybody acquire during studies at HEIs and they will not help to differentiate on the job market.

5.3.4 Networking

Question 10 asked students if they were able to establish useful networks through participation in worklife projects.

29.6% of respondents answered that they were able to establish useful networks during projects and used them in future, for instance, when applying for internship/job, in CV, etc. 25.9% of students stated, that networking was a part of worklife project, but they could not reach established connections after finishing the project. 22.2% of survey participants said, that company representatives did not give their contacts to students (picture 9).

PICTURE 9. Networking

Such results show that it depends on the willingness of company to be in touch with students after the project. Some companies try to attract foreign students and see them as innovative future workforce, others cooperate with students only through projects.

Six respondents gave an open answer on this question, because they were not quite sure or were not interested in networking themselves.
5.3.5 Recruitment possibilities after project

The next question asked whether commissioner companies were interested in recruiting international students for internship/permanent job positions after participation in projects.

The majority - 51.9% of respondents – said, that commissioner companies could offer cooperation with students only through projects. 18.5% of students pointed out that companies encouraged foreign students to apply for vacant positions (picture 10).

![Were commissioner companies interested in recruiting foreign students as trainees/permanent workers in future?](image)

PICTURE 10. Recruitment possibilities after project

Eight respondents gave open answers to the question. Some of them were not sure about whether companies had interest in recruiting foreign students. Others said, it is more likely employers are interested to hire trainees, but not permanent workers.

5.3.6 Differentiation on the job market

The question asked if students believe that projects helped/will help them to differentiate from other applicants when applying for internships/jobs in Finland. Most of respondents think, that worklife projects during their studies will not help much in job hunting, even they would include project experience in their CVs. It is better to have worklife project
experience than no practical experience at all, but it will not cover internship and real work in professional field.

Although, some of current students expect worklife project experience to help them find a job in Finland. Few students stated that these kind of projects have absolutely no value for Finnish employers and are just a part of a standard study programme at UAS.

5.3.7 Improving the collaboration with the working life and students

The author analyzed ideas given by students/graduates and noticed the main tendency in their answers. They hope universities and companies will collaborate more and offer more internship positions for foreign students. Practical training in UAS is an obligatory part of studies and foreign students must find a place while competing with Finnish students on equal terms. There is no support from university or, for example, quota for foreign student trainees in big corporations.

A lot of respondents suggest organizing more company visits and career advice from employers. Students need to know what Finnish companies require from their employees and on which working life skills students should focus during their studies.

5.4 Confidence in job-seeking

The fourth section of the survey aimed to know whether foreign students were confident about their ability to find employment in Finland on different stages of studies at UAS. Participants were also asked to explain the reasons of their lack of confidence.

60% of respondents were not confident that they will be able to find a job in Finland in their own professional field, while 30% were confident in the beginning of their studies. Other 10% stated that they were not sure, as everything is possible and time can change a lot of factors (figure 5).
The question related to confidence during the end of studies was optional, as some respondents are still at the beginning of studies. 22 students gave responses to this question.
68.1% of students lacked confidence in the end of their studies when approaching graduation. Only 22.7% of students stayed confident when thinking about future employment in Finland (figure 6).

The level of non-confidence tends to grow, as students already tried to find internships/jobs and can evaluate the situation more clearly. Although, some students said that even they were not confident, they were optimistic. The rest of respondents were not sure about the answer, because they graduated long time ago.

Among the factors, which influenced non-confidence, the leading one is lack of Finnish language skills. 61.5% of students were not confident in their future employment because of poor language skills. Students said, that even some of them were speaking basic or intermediate Finnish, they still did not believe in their success on the Finnish job market.

Another common factor, which influenced confidence level of foreign students, was experience of their friends / other international students, who could not get a job in their professional field. The statistics is discouraging and real experiences make students think they will fail to get working contract in Finland.

5.5 Feedback

In the end of the survey, respondents were asked to give a voluntary feedback on any aspects related to the topic of the survey – employment of foreign students in Finland and worklife projects (see full answers in appendix 1).

Eight participants have given feedback based on their experiences. They believe, that universities should be more involved into the process of getting practical training positions for foreign students. For example, it could be the same process as applying for study abroad programmes. When students apply to UASs’ partner universities exchange programmes, they get intensive assistance throughout application and study periods. There should be internship options exclusively for international students, as they cannot compete with natives on the same terms due to lack of any working experience in Finland and many other factors.
Universities should collaborate with companies which are not against difficulties of recruiting foreign nationals. Many employers, especially small companies, do not want to deal the immigration and tax issues when hiring international workers.

One respondent pointed out, that he or she “got internship by pure luck but still did not integrate well as there were really Finnish employees”. Students need proper guidance and assistance, which will help to integrate better into Finnish working life. Compulsory courses, which train international students before going to interviews and before starting internship, are needed in the study curriculum.

Worklife projects, offered by UASs or other organizations, should offer networking possibilities for students. Projects should resemble working life and have clear objectives and deadlines.
6 SUMMARY

The objective of this research was to find out if worklife projects students take part in during their studies at UAS enhance their employment possibilities in Finland. The thesis also raised a question about confidence of international students towards job seeking in Finland.

The research of this thesis was conducted in a form of web-based survey and has a qualitative nature. The sample of the research consists of 50 people, and the response rate was 54%.

The reliability of the research is high as the respondents were experienced in worklife projects. 37% of respondents were involved into worklife projects organized by SCIL. The answers were collected anonymously and the identity of respondents cannot be revealed.

The data analysis showed experiences and opinions of foreign students and graduates towards employment in Finland and worklife projects. Minority of respondents believe that worklife projects influenced the success of their job seeking. However, majority thinks that these projects are an excellent opportunity to develop various worklife skills. Students wish projects are more structured, more challenging and offer networking possibilities with commissioner. Those who had positive worklife project experience see more opportunities for employment in Finland and are more confident.

Companies are not very cooperative during projects at UASs. They do not set clear objectives, do not monitor the process and usually do not use the results of student work. Extracurricular projects are considered more connected to employers and more challenging. Students’ work is rewarded and licenced after the completion of the project.

Foreign students wish UASs took more active part in helping them to find practical training positions in Finland. UASs give basic guidance and send emails with internship offers, but students need to compete for jobs with Finnish students, who have a lot of advantages as local language knowledge and work experience in Finland. Survey respondents want UASs to cooperate with big corporations and local entrepreneurs, and arrange placements exclusively for international degree students. This would give a chance for them to get better traineeship places and help to succeed in future career path.
International students become less confident in job seeking when approaching graduation. After applying for practical training in Finland, or already searching for the job in professional field, students see that Finnish employers are not eager to hire foreign employees. Fresh graduates with Finnish diploma are still same foreigners for them, they do not trust their competences and do not believe they can learn Finnish.

Participation in worklife project does not influence confidence of students positively. Discouraging experiences of international alumni makes students lose confidence even before the actual process of job seeking. Universities cannot influence the culture of Finnish companies, but can find and cooperate with employers, who wish to work with international graduates and are not afraid of change.

SCIL can take into account students’ feedback when planning future worklife projects. First of all, respondents suggest setting objectives of the project more clearly. Time management is one problem which should be fixed too. Students want to have better scheduling both at SCIL and in own team. All in all, students wish to be involved into interesting and challenging projects, and SCIL has a lot to offer for them.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Survey answers (selected)

**Question 7.** Did study courses of your degree programme include projects, commissioned by real company (e.g. marketing research, product development)? If yes, shortly describe your experience.

1. Yes, marketing project for GOF Oy, preparing marketing strategy for entering French market.

2. Yes, I was in TAMK consulting academy where I got involved in several projects with external clients, it was a mind opening experience as to how business in Finland is conducted.

3. Not so many, we had some marketing researches, but in my opinion they were so far from reality and pretty much useless.

4. Yes.

5. Yes.

6. Yes. For example, I was responsible for development of social networks in order to make them visible for the project Lahti Science Day.

7. No.

8. Yes.

9. Yes, Project Work. There was a wide choice of projects. I was doing noise measurements at rock crushing site in a group with other engineering students.

10. Yes. Great and refreshing experience. Probably the most valuable part of my degree.

11. I had several courses which included projects commissioned by real companies. In most of the cases it turned out to be more challenging than expected due to reluctance of the companies to share information, lack of time to meet and further discuss project specifics. Also, quite often the companies could not set clear objectives and describe their processes in a detailed manner. Miscommunication was also a big issue. However, in general those projects did extend my practical knowledge.

12. Yes. Quite often we visited companies and this was very good match.
13. During marketing course we happened to do marketing research project in cooperation with a company. It went fine, since the company had a great interest in the project results. We had several project meetings with a company representative, who was eventually very satisfied of the project outcome. However, I wish the school was more supportive during the project implementation phase.

14. Yes, many. I would not say they are always useful, but we definitely get more experience than just from the theory.

15. Yes. Market research for several companies.

16. Yes. Interesting but not challenging enough.

17. Yes. The projects were very useful because they have shown the complexity of the operations that cannot be described in a study only environment.

18. Yes, marketing reports for companies looking to internationalize to other countries.

19. It was a nice experience. I learnt a lot about myself and improved my skills.

20. No.

21. Yes. The thesis required us to find and work closely with the company. It was tough to get the companies interested and in my case we had difficulty in communication between me and the company and the teacher never meet up with the company heads so he relied on answers from me.

22. Yes, I did marketing research for Teknikum but I did not see this as very useful experience for future employment.

23. Nothing too serious in my opinion.

24. Yes, project work for construction company and Finnish students from other degree.

25. Yes, though knowledge gained from those projects is not exactly currently applicable at my job.

26. Yes. Helping VR the train company with their food car.

27. Not really. Only for the Business Development course where there were real companies coming and giving the task for us students. We work intensively for a week to come up with the team's plan and ideas and then present it before every one.
**Question 8.** Have you been involved in worklife projects outside of the study courses (e.g. Floworks, SCIL, Demola, Y-kampus, Innoevent, etc.)? If yes, shortly describe your experience.

1. No.
2. No.
3. No.
4. Yes. The projects were quite involving.
5. Yes, did project for y-kampus for entrepreneur course and helped with marketing project in Floworks.
6. Yes, I was in the team of Finnish pavilion: Astana Expo 2017 and I was send by my university as this one is the member of FUAS.
7. No.
8. No.
9. No.
10. Demola, Innoevent and a few others. Exciting and diverse projects that were incredibly enjoyable.
11. No.
12. Yes. Innoevent.
13. I took part in Demola Autumn 2015. I find such experience useful. Only recently I have understood that that project experience was very similar to regular day-to-day working life.
14. Yes. SCIL. I expected more, the teamwork is not good and there is no clear person in charge, so many people ask for the same question and we are lost who we should ask and give info to at the first place.
15. No
16. Yes. It felt like a normal school project.
17. Yes: Demola, Y-kampus, Innoevent. The projects were very useful because they have shown the complexity of the operations that cannot be described in a study only environment.
18. Yes, innoevent.
19. Yes I’m working on one the SCIL projects called KILKAS. I am finding it to be very interesting and enjoyable. I have met several people from different nationalities.
20. I got to learn new tools like divi and got my hands on Wordpress. Enjoying my experience!

21. No.

22. I participated in SCIL, Innnoevent and Demola project. In my opinion Demola is the most practical experience.

23. Yes.

24. yeah, floworks-smart campus

25. No.


27. Yes. SCIL was the projects I am currently working with. Since the schedule was quite tight, I cannot work really efficient. However, I learned how to carry a project from scratch and to cooperate with other teams. I get to work with diverse groups of people and made more relations.

**Question 9.** Which working life skills have you gained during these projects?

1. Market research knowledge, preparation of entry strategy.
2. Intercultural communication, Resilience, Teamwork, Problem solving.
3. None.
4. Team work. Organization.
5. Zero.
6. Presenting and selling products, was responsible for presenting basic info to the potential customers, communication skills; guiding VIP guests.
7. None.
8. Teamwork, communication skill.
9. Making project plan, cooperating with supervisor (or boss, or client).
10. Team work, leadership, innovation, project planning, pitching and report writing.
11. Time management.
12. Teamwork.
13. Project management related skills.
15. Team working, leadership.
16. Flexibility.
17. Patience, organizational skills, people skills.
18. Organizational and communication skills.
19. Web development on Wordpress, team player as well as team management skills, discovered leadership qualities in me.
20. How to communicate with other people in business ways.
22. Working in a team, new skills in media field.
23. Intercultural communication, that's it.
24. Group work.
25. Bunch of skills which I haven't yet had a chance to apply in real job.
26. Project planning, meeting with superiors.

**Question 12.** Do you think, projects helped/will help you to differentiate from other applicants when applying for internships/jobs in Finland?

1. My applications were not successful even though they included the projects.
2. Perhaps outside Finland the experience will matter most, but in Finland it's a gamble.
3. I think these project are better than nothing, but they will not cover the real work experience.
4. No.
5. No, absolutely not. Please study Finnish language.
6. Yes, bc of the relevant experience.
7. Yes.
8. Yes.
9. Yes.
10. In the process of getting a job, not likely. At least as a foreigner. But once I get into a job, I believe the skills will aid me.
11. To a certain extent yes, however not much. Only one company considered my project experience, whereas all the others demanded actual work experience.
12. I don't know, probably?
13. Yes.
14. I am not sure, since most of companies still require Finnish.
15. I do not think it will matter so much.
17. Yes.
18. No idea.
19. Hopefully it should help me stand out. My experience can differ from others which can be useful for companies.
20. I don't think so.
21. Yes. If you show case your talents well I guess.
22. Yes I think so.
23. No.
24. No.
25. It depends what kind of job the student is applying for. Projects we were mainly doing at school were related to marketing, so I believe the skills learnt from the projects are more useful for positions related to marketing.
26. Yes a little bit.
27. Of course.

**Question 13.** How would you improve the collaboration with the working life and the students?

1. Provision of Erasmus+ internships for English speaking people. The fact is that for that kinda internships they can hire students and the minimum wage would be splitted between university and the company. All in all cheaper work force.
2. Instead of only offering projects they can offer some few Confirmed positions to students such as summer work positions since this is the most sure way to learn on the job and increase the chances of students getting into career jobs after studies.
3. I know, in Finnish degrees, some companies representatives (for example, Yara) come to visit, make interviews and employ 1-3 people from the class as summer trainees, it's not many, but it's something. I believe we should have same practice for international degrees.
4. The companies should offer more career advice first hand beside the projects on what qualities they seek from graduates.
5. Universities do their best, but the organizational culture in Finnish companies is developed poorly for international students and expats.
7. More working experience in practice should be provided to students.
8. Doing more practical training to experience real working life.
9. Companies and industries can organize excursions to their facilities. Introduce different positions and their duties in a company.
10. Foreign students should be incorporated and trained from day one to a path that leads them to be polished and efficient employees. Finnish language at TAMK needs to have a path and option that offers a more intense level; so as to be able to hold your own when applying to a job after graduation.
11. Educate companies about the nature of internships, their prime purpose and establish the connection between universities and companies. Make companies aware that every years there is going to be a N amount of students looking for internship placements. Give out contact information of working life representatives to students.
12. With more communication.
13. The school could cooperate with companies more.
14. It would be amazing if TAMK could have some kind of data base with the companies that are willing to work with foreigners. Projects with small companies. Big companies just handle over projects that have little importance to them.
15. Projects with small companies. Big companies just handle over projects that have little importance to them.
16. I don’t know.
17. I don’t think it is students’ responsibility to establish and maintain these connections. I think TAMK as an organization should provide the connections and students should only chose among the offers. TAMK can also evaluate suitability of these projects, so IB students wouldn't for example make coffee during their internship.
18. Organize more internship and job fairs on the campus.
19. Companies should be more open in recruiting foreign students not just that they are from different nationalities but they have skills which could be impressive and which will benefit the company, so that more foreign students can be motivated to apply and show their skills.
20. Connect employers and students directly, offering internship positions for international students.
21. Through internships or training projects.
22. Studying language and giving students opportunities to connect employers.
23. More connection with "real" companies.
24. Language courses.
25. I would recommend for international students to work on their Finnish skills, since there is just a tiny chance to get some proper job in Finland without language.
26. By offering the possibility for foreign students to get an internship in the company or so.
27. Encourage students to apply for projects that present the working life effectively.

**Question 16.** Which factors influenced your confidence/non-confidence? (e.g. lack of Finnish language skills, friend's negative experience, etc.)

1. Friends negative experience.
2. Negative experience from other students and myself too.
3. Lack of Finnish language and degree.
4. Friend's opinion on employment opportunities in Finland.
5. Lack of language skills, felt discriminated upon my nationality.
7. Finnish job market is not so encouraging to employ foreigners.
8. Lack of Finnish language skills.
10. Confidence was the projects with companies that seemed to care about our opinion. Non confidence due to the growing belief that companies may prefer the "safer" route of employing a Finnish worker as opposed to a foreigner.
11. Lack of Finnish language skills, reluctance of companies to hire non-native speakers, economic stagnation, narrow-mindedness of Finnish companies, lack of network.
12. Lack of Finnish.
14. 2 factors mentioned before. A few of my friends were not able to find a job even though they have a small level of Finnish.
15. Lack of Finnish skills, my friends experiences.
16. Lack of connections which apparently are crucial in Finland.
17. During the participation in work-life projects I saw more employment opportunities.
18. /
19. Lack of Finnish Language skills are not the only reason. I have many friends who speak basic Finnish yet they were recruited because they had work experience. Unfortunately number of my friends like that are very few. I personally had to struggle in improving my technical skills for which I faced lack of opportunities in Finland.

20. Lack of Finnish language skills, preference of hiring native people.


22. Finnish language, experiences from many projects.

23. I'm still a foreigner in this country, even if my Finnish level is over B2.2.

24. Language.

25. Difficulty of finding good job in Finland in general.

26. Lack of positions for beginners.

27. Finnish language skills.

**Question 17.** Add any other relevant ideas or thoughts about the topic of survey: your personal positive/negative experience, ideas for improvements, etc.

1. All in all I would be happy if university could be making connections with possible employees and make finding internship the same process as applying for study abroad programs. There would be options of employees who are the partners of the university and a student can send an application to the partner. Or something like that. I know that universities have that kinda option for Finnish speaking students but not that much of a thing for international ones.

2. I believe there are 2 major problems foreign students face when looking for a job in Finland: Finnish language and the fact that companies don't really wanna deal with foreigners as it's much easier to work with natives.

3. Got internship by pure luck and still did not integrate well as there were really Finnish employees.

4. It is great that TAMK started to develop courses related to the employments for foreigners. SCIL itself is a great idea, but I think there are some negative aspects that ruin the whole experience of working there.

5. To the experience I personally had in Finland, with respect to that I would like to suggest companies and Universities to offer experience to foreign students to improve their skills. It could be internships or practical training.
6. It is natural but employer want to hire student who have master degree background compare to bachelor students.

7. I am one of the member of team Navigators at SCIL. We are three members’ in our team but two of us are active and one of the member is quite busy with her own schedule. Well, we don’t have any position within our group member but we have some more responsibilities within individuals. I usually used to write an email to the client, coach and some other needy people. We had some deadline to do at the very beginning of the project. I usually note all the things that we discussed during our weekly meetings and so on. As a foreigner students, I get to know more ideas about the KILKAS itself. Different ideas, skills. I also get chance to make a network within new peoples. I learn to organize the event. To deal with some unknown faces. The project should be somehow staytuned at least twice or thrice in a week so that all the participant eagerly wanted to know the next steps right away within the same week.
Appendix 2. Survey questions

Background information
1. Your University of Applied Sciences.
2. Degree programme.
3. Nationality (optional).

Progress of studies
4. When did you start your studies/graduated?
5. Have you done your practical training in Finland?
6. Have you previously searched for a job in your field of study in Finland (sent applications, went to interviews, etc.)? Was it successful?

Worklife projects
7. Did study courses of your degree programme include projects, commissioned by real company (e.g. marketing research, product development)? If yes, shortly describe your experience.
8. Have you been involved in worklife projects outside of the study courses (e.g. Floworks, SCIL, Demola, Y-kampus, Innoevent, etc)? If yes, shortly describe your experience.
9. Which working life skills have you gained during these projects?
10. Were you able to establish useful networks?
    - Yes, and have used them in future (e.g. when applying for internship/job, in CV, etc.)
    - Yes, but I could not reach established networks after finishing the project
    - No, company did not give their contacts to students
    - Other:
11. Were commissioner companies interested in recruiting foreign students as trainees/permanent workers in future?
    - Yes, they encouraged foreign students to apply for positions at their company
    - No, they can offer cooperation with students only through projects
    - Other:
12. Do you think, projects helped/will help you to differentiate from other applicants when applying for internships/jobs in Finland?
13. How would you improve the collaboration with the working life and the students?
Confidence of students towards employment in Finland

14. Were you confident about future employment in Finland during 1st-2nd years of study?

15. Were you confident about future employment in Finland during 3rd-4th years of study? (if applicable)

16. Which factors influenced your confidence/non-confidence (e.g. lack of Finnish language skills, friend’s negative experience, etc.)?

17. Feedback (optional): Add any other relevant ideas or thoughts about the topic of the survey: your personal positive/negative experience, ideas for improvement, etc.