



# The process of founding an NGO in 2019

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Laurea University of Applied Sciences

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For my bachelor's thesis I choose the functional type. The reason for this, was to found my own NGO in order be able to enable people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities, to achieve a higher quality of life. One of my main purpose is to develop the mobility and quality of life for the selected client group, as well to create an innovative space where they can improve skills such as, space awareness, mobility, focus and social skills. In addition, I want to implement new working methods and create activities suitable for people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities.

For the development process I have used different research methods such as SWOT analysis, quantitative research methods/data collection, survey studies, descriptive studies, using costs-procedure-process-outcome analysis, online/offline research, conceptual research, general issues research. Whilst gathering information I was also proceeding forward with my project of founding the organization.

On 16.4.2019, the organization was officially registered at PRH. As a main result, I and my team, were now able to proceed further with our plan of receiving the y-tunnus, open a bank account and apply for subsidies in September. Prior to applying for the subsidies, I have collaborated with a professional financial adviser, in order to determine the budget for the first year of 2019. In addition, we have determined the budget for the following two years. During my journey, I have met and stumbled on many different challenges, that have slowed down the process of applying for subsidies in May 2019. On a personal matter, I have been challenged by mental health issues, as in on a professional matter I was challenged by the third parties such as, PRH officers, Helsinki City and other working life partners. In September 2019, our application for subsidies has been finally forwarded to Helsinki City. The process of receiving the subsidies is not finalized yet, since Helsinki city will feedback us by the end of December 2019.

As a whole, the process of founding an NGO in 2019, it has been a memorable journey that had enabled me to develop and improve my skills as a social services professional, as well to build and learn about the social enterprising in Finland and UK. The social field

and the selected client group's quality of life it is on a continuous developmental process that can be improved only by acting and challenge the system.

Keywords: NGO, RESEARCH,2019, FOUNDING, FUNDING

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## 1 Introduction

My thesis is a project-based functional thesis, which means that in the following pages I will present the process of founding an NGO in 2019 in Finland, as well with this written report. The NGO I have founded is called Lumikko- Autsitien, Kehitysvammaisten ja Vammaisten yhdistys ry, and has been created to serve the service users with learning disabilities and physical disabilities in Helsinki metropolitan area and later across Finland. The client group has been selected after completing the "Accessibility for environment" course at Laurea University of Applied Sciences in 2016.

As a young future social services professional, I was looking for new ways to develop the social and health field for the selected client group and bring in the market a brand-new range of services. While combining leisure, therapy, social activities, support and entertaining in one single place I have decided to create an NGO that will offer these services for the selected client group: people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities.

The project has been started in August 2017 and the process is yet ongoing. In the following pages I will present the process of researching abroad and in Finland, the available services and the lack of them, together with the whole process of founding and NGO in 2019 in Finland, with theoretical framework and material gathered during me project.

## 2 Background

While completing my academic year in 2016, I have joined "Accessibility for environment" course, where I've learned about the daily challenges of people with physical disabilities and how I can support them. Part of the course, included the development of IKEA Vantaa, staff area from non-accessible to fully accessible for all staff members to be much easier to perform and complete their tasks.

In the process of learning and developing small spaces for people with disabilities I have evolved my passion for the selected client group. A great inside kindle grew more and more, and I had to keep it alive. I have started to notice more and more

people with physical disabilities, visual impairment or audio impairment around me and I decided that I have to do something to promote social inclusion among them.

By having the possibility to complete the “Accessibility for environment “course, I have networked with Heikki Aulio, who now is my organisation’s board secretary. Heikki presented to me the daily challenges of people with physical disabilities, from a different perspective, from making coffee to using technology.

In summer 2017 with the little knowledge that I had about the selected client group, I have decided to research more and learn how to improve the quality of life and mobility for people with disabilities. Therefore I have moved to Bristol UK and work from August until May, for a care provider company and in the same time I was using descriptive studies method, for gathering information and eventually to select the client group.

Descriptive research attempts to describe characteristics of a sample and relationships between phenomena, situations and events observed by the researcher (Rubin & Babbie 2008; Thomlison, 2001). Researchers seek to do this by better understanding and measuring how variables are naturally distributed (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2002). The result is to provide data about the sample that describe the basic relationship to increase our understanding of the question being asked (Rubin & Babbie, 2008). To this end descriptive research often targets a population and/or phenomenon and aims to answer to the questions “who, what, when, where and how”.

Immediately after my employment started, I have been introduced to the world of care providers and care receivers in UK. After 3 weeks of induction, time when I have learned about people with learning disabilities, I was ready to meet the service users. During the time I have worked for the British company I have learned about learning disabilities, autism and physical disabilities, but not only in theory yet in practice too, and how to support the people living in partnership with any of those disabilities.

Later in my employment I have completed my third practise where I have learned about the effects of therapy based art sessions, and yet not the only accomplishment that I have achieved by working for the care provider company, I have concluded my research in the UK, as well I have completed the CARE CERTIFICATE qualification and moved back to Finland.

Prior to moving back to Finland, I have answered to the question presented above from the research and decided that I will support and develop the quality of life of people with disabilities, more specifically learning disabilities, autism and physical disabilities.

After my return to Finland I have started my employment at Rinnekoti Säätiö and learned more about the quality of life of people with autism and learning disabilities. During my employment I had the opportunity to meet Katja Haapala who later in my process of founding Lumikko-AuKeVa took the role of Vice-Chairman. Haapala has become very passionate about my idea and project and due to her experience in working with people with learning disabilities and autism I believed that she would be the perfect candidate for her position in the organisation

## 2.1 What is an activity-based thesis?

A functional project-based thesis is a type of thesis, which is made up of a project, that creates a product, along with a written report, that is based on the project, instead of being a theoretical study in nature. This, in other words means that a project is designed, created, executed, and analysed all as a part of a complete thesis. Indeed, a functional thesis is always made up of both, a product as well as a report (Airaksinen 2009). Airaksinen (2009) also states that a functional thesis seeks in a professional field to: create instructions or guidance on operations, organize operations, and making sense on the operations. This means that by creating an NGO and following up with the process with a written report my thesis can be qualified as functional thesis.

### 2.1.1 Aims and objectives

The main aim and objective of my activity-based thesis is to enable and improve the selected client group's daily life by creating innovative activities, while using

ingenious technology that can support the development of motoric skills, social skills and space awareness. Among the activities that my NGO will offer for the selected client group, I am aiming to support their family by offering guidance on how to be dealing with specific situations that can alleviate the service user's stress managing.

Other aim is to raise awareness among the Finnish society and promote social inclusion, by collaborating with different institution. My aim is to create a system that will offer the service user to have free access in museums, sea-life aquarium, zoo and Linnanmäki outdoor fun park.

As a young entrepreneur my aim is to create an informative note for future NGO chairmen, on how the process of founding an organization in Finland in 2019 is proceeded, together with my own experience of founding Lumikko-AuKeVa.

## 2.2 Research process

From the client selection to the final step of founding an NGO IN 2019 in Finland, I have used many kinds of research methods for social work. Every research that I have conducted had helped me either to determine, analyse or find leads for further actions. Each step has been analysed by using SWOT analyses, in order to maintain a realistic stand.

Whilst conducting descriptive research, I have determined how the variable can be characterized. For example, how many people with physical disabilities are included in the research, and how many people with learning disability and autism, and how many on average age are participants. Describing the characteristics of the sample involves the demographic makeup of the participants as well as the level to which they are experiencing issues or challenges of their interests.

During the process of gathering information about the challenges that the selected client group may face during their daily life activities, I had to determine the need of the future service that is required and not the desire of it.

“When we invoke the concept of *needs*, we may easily assume that we share with others a common understanding of what it is we are talking about. However, it is worthwhile looking more closely to the definition on the term since useful characteristics and distinctions are highlighted when we do so.” (Bruce Thyer, 2010).

The concept of need is not new nor a Tabu in social field. Researchers have defined and redefined the meaning of the term need for decades. When aiming to fulfil ones need it is important to take into consideration the individuality, diversity and particularities in the person's lifestyle. One very important side of my research was to determine what the service users needs but also what they want as well.

The services provided in the UK, were enabling the service user to have a stable and active lifestyle. The service users were included into the society, with the help of their careers. The need most common need in my research was the need of a career. The role that the career represent for the service user and their family's well-being was unmeasurable. Without a career people with learning disabilities would not have been enabled and included in the society.

Among free entrance for their careers in the local Zoo, National museum, planetarium, cinema and so on, a variety of other activities that were enabling and promoting independence among the selected client group were offered by the local organisations and council. Sport activities and arts and crafts seemed to be the most requested by the service users or by their family. All the activities and much more, such as daily walks in the nature, grocery shopping or for example therapy sessions were taken into consideration depending on the person's interests on needs.

### 2.3 Client group selection

The client group selected are people with learning disabilities such as autism, Down's syndrome, Asperger or any other kind of learning disability and people with physical disabilities. I have selected this specific client group because after my research I have learned that in Finland there are an approximate of 40.000 people living with learning disabilities ( Kehitysvammaliitto 2019). In addition, there are an approximate of 30.000 people living with physical disabilities ( Invalidiliitto 2019).

As a future social services professional, I have become passionate about the selected client group while completing "Accessibility for environment" course at Laurea University of applied Sciences in 2016. The I have learned more about the daily basis struggles of people with physical disabilities and later, during my employment at 3Trees Community Support Bristol, I have become passionate about working with people with learning disabilities.

During my research I have discovered the services offered in Finland and the UK and made a comparison that later gave me the idea of creating Lumikko-AuKeVa for improving the quality of life for the selected client group.

### 2.3.1 Learning disability

**Learning disabilities** are neurologically based processing problems. These processing problems can interfere with **learning** basic skills such as reading, writing and/or math. They can also interfere with higher level skills such as organization, time planning, abstract reasoning, long or short-term memory and attention. (Idaamerica 2019)

In the learning disabilities spectrum are included disabilities such as: Auditory Processing Disorder known as APD, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia, Dyslexia, Language Processing Disorder, Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities, Visual Perceptual/Visual Motor Deficit. In addition to these disabilities are included related disabilities such as ADHD, Dyspraxia, Executive Functioning and Memory. (Idaamerica 2019)

### 2.3.2 Autism spectrum

“Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviours, speech and non-verbal communication...We know that there is not one autism but many subtypes, most influenced by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Because autism is a spectrum disorder, each person with autism has a distinct set of strengths and challenges. The ways in which people with autism learn, think and problem-solve can range from highly skilled to severely challenged. Some people with ASD may require significant support in their daily lives, while others may need less support and, in some cases, live entirely independently.

Several factors may influence the development of autism, and it is often accompanied by sensory sensitivities and medical issues such as gastrointestinal (GI) disorders, seizures or sleep disorders, as well as mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression and attention issues.” (Autism Speaks 2019)

### 2.3.3 Disability

“Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations.

Disability is thus not just a health problem. It is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person’s body and features of the society in which he or she lives. Overcoming the difficulties faced by people with disabilities requires interventions to remove environmental and social barriers.” (Who.int 2019)

An individual can suffer from many disabilities at once. One of the disabilities that Lumikko-AuKeVa will focus, is people with physical disabilities, audio impairment and visual impairment. The reason for selecting this client group, is the disablism created among these people.

“Discrimination against people with disabilities in favour of people who are not is called ableism or disablism. Disability discrimination, which treats non-disabled individuals as the standard of 'normal living', results in public and private places and services, education, and social work that are built to serve 'standard' people, thereby excluding those with various disabilities. Studies have shown, employment is needed to not only provide a living but to sustain mental health and well-being. Work fulfils a number of basic needs for an individual such as collective purpose, social contact, status, and activity. A person with a disability is often found to be socially isolated and work is one way to reduce isolation. (Linton, Simi. *Claiming Disability Knowledge and Identity*. New York: New York University Press. 1998).

In the United States, the Americans with Disabilities Act mandates the provision of equality of access to both buildings and services and is paralleled by similar acts in other countries, such as the Equality Act 2010 in the UK.” (E McCaughey, A Casebook on Labour Law. 2019 and S. Deakin and G Morris, Labour Law, chapter 6. 'Equality Act 2010 Explanatory Notes/Introduction/Background and summary. 2012)

### 3 Theoretical framework (Social Enterprise vs. NGO)

Social enterprises can be structured as a for-profit or non-profit and may take the form (depending on in which country the entity exists and the legal forms available) of a co-operative, mutual organization, a disregarded entity. ("What is a Disregarded Entity - Disregarded Entity Definition", Wikipedia.com ) a social business, a benefit corporation, a community interest company, a company limited by guarantee or a charity organization. They can also take more conventional structures.

According to Oxford Dictionary NGO means: “non-profit organization that operates independently of any government, typically one whose purpose is to address a social or political issue.”

An NGO works independently, has its own board members, rules, activity, and client group. Each organisation needs to have a minimum of 3 board members older than 15 years old. They can also have functions in the organisation such as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary.

#### 3.1 Chairman's role

“The chairman is the most important employee of the association. His task is to take care of the whole, that the association fulfils its basic mission. The chairmanship: directs, oversees and develops the work of the Board.” Yhdistystoiminnan avaimet, Pirjo Rosengren ja Anneliina Törrönen (2008 KSL)

Among many different tasks, the chairman must ensure that directs and supervises the implementation of the decisions made, manages the division of labour and supports the work of the officers of the association, creates an active and enthusiastic spirit throughout the association, encourages and encourages participation, directs the activities of the association and the government, managing the association's financial decisions and monitoring the economy, responsible for the development of operations

Officially, the chairman has the following roles within the organisation:

- manages the work of the Board
- convene board meetings
- chairs the board and association meetings
- shall be responsible for drawing up the minutes and signing the documents of the association
- acts as the signatory of the association
- represents the association

Yhdistystoiminnan avaimet, Pirjo Rosengren ja Anneliina Törrönen (2008 KSL)

### 3.2 Vice-Chairman's role

There is no mention of a vice chairman in the Associations Act, but in practice, the role of a vice chairman is indispensable. In many associations, the rules refer to the Vice-Chairman.

The Vice-Chairman/President shall be responsible for acting as Chairman when he is prevented from attending to his duties. The Vice-Chair may thus convene and chair the Executive Board meeting. It is good practice for the Vice-President to regularly assist the Chair in various tasks. He may also be given special responsibility for overseeing and assisting with some of the Association's policy areas.

The vice chairman must have the knowledge and skills to chair and the vice chairman should have some special responsibility in the association. (Keys to Association Activities, Pirjo Rosengren and Anneliina Törrönen. 2008 KSL).

### 3.3 Secretary's role

The secretary's duties are mainly written practical tasks. The secretary works closely with the chairman. Although the minutes are usually written by the secretary, the chairman is legally responsible for them and therefore the chairman also signs them. Many of the functions of a secretary are such that they can be assigned to other than secretary, as agreed by the board / board of directors.

Secretary's duties may also include tasks such as, participates in the preparation of meetings: convene the meetings together with the chairman and arrange the meetings, maintains a list of participants in meetings, assist the chairman in the meeting: record requests for interventions, record proposals and endorsements, write the minutes of the meeting, write a draft action plan and activity report drawn up by the Board of Directors and finalize it after approval, draws up extracts and copies of minutes, draws up notices, applications and other documents and communicates them to the parties, handles correspondence for the association, informs members and outsiders unless a separate spokesperson is selected, manage the association's archives, unless a separate archive manager has been selected. (Keys to Association Activities, Pirjo Rosengren and Anneliina Törrönen. 2008 KSL).

### 3.4 Different NGO models

According to Wikipedia, NGO models can be structured simply by their activity or by their orientation and level of how they operate. Worldwide exists seven different models of NGOs classified as such due to their activity: unincorporated and voluntary association, trusts, charities, and foundations, companies not just for profit and entities formed or registered under special NGO or non-profit laws.

NGO types can be understood by their orientation and level of how they operate:

| By orientation  | By level of operation   | Track II diplomacy  |
|---|---|---|
| Charitable orientation often involves a top-down effort with little participation or input by beneficiaries. It includes NGOs with activities directed toward meeting the needs of the disadvantaged people groups. | Community-based organizations (CBOs) arise out of people's own initiatives. They can be responsible for raising the consciousness of the urban poor, helping them to understand their rights in accessing needed services, and providing such services. City-wide organizations include | Track II dialogue, or Track II diplomacy, is transnational coordination that involves non-official members of the government including epistemic communities as well as former policymakers or analysts. Track II diplomacy aims to get policymakers and policy analysts to come to a |
| Service orientation includes NGOs with  |   |   |

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|---|---|---|
| <p>activities such as the provision of health, family planning or education services in which the programme is designated by the NGO and people are expected to participate in its implementation and in receiving the service. Participatory orientation is characterized by self-help projects where local people are involved particularly in the implementation of a project by contributing cash, tools, land, materials, labour etc. In the classical community development project, participation begins with the need definition and continues into the planning and implementation stages. Empowering orientation aims to help poor people develop a clearer understanding of the social, political and economic factors affecting their lives, and to strengthen their awareness of their own potential power to control their lives. There is maximum involvement of the</p> | <p>organizations such as chambers of commerce and industry, coalitions of business, ethnic or educational groups, and associations of community organizations. State NGOs include state-level organizations, associations and groups. Some state NGOs also work under the guidance of National and International NGOs. National NGOs include national organizations such as the YMCAs/YWCAs, professional associations and similar groups. Some have state and city branches and assist local NGOs. International NGOs range from secular agencies such as Save the Children, to religiously motivated groups. They can be responsible for funding local NGOs, institutions and projects and implementing projects.</p> | <p>common solution through discussions by unofficial means. Unlike the Track I diplomacy where government officials, diplomats and elected leaders gather to talk about certain issues, Track II diplomacy consists of experts, scientists, professors and other figures that are not involved in government affairs. The members of Track II diplomacy usually have more freedom to exchange ideas and come up with compromises on their own</p> |
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| beneficiaries with NGOs acting as facilitators. |  |  |
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Different models of NGOs. Wikipedia.com

### 3.5 The role of NGOs in the Finnish social and health care sector

One third of social services is provided by private social care providers or NGOs (Statistics of Finland 2015c). The majority of services produced by the private providers are financed by the public sector. Finland has over 3000 private social care providers (THL 2011). The most common private social service is assisted-living accommodation for older people followed by home services for older and disabled people. Foster care under child welfare arrangements and institutional childcare are also common private services. At least some private social services are operating in about 87% of the municipalities. (THL 2011)

The aims of NGO's in Finland for people with disabilities according to the Ministry of Social Affairs in Health is to: "...support the working and functional capacity of people with disabilities and their individual autonomy. Municipally organised services and support enable people with disabilities to cope with every-day life". In addition, the role of Lumikko is to promote independence, social inclusion, human rights and to support the families of our selected client group, while creating an environment 100% accessible and disability friendly.

#### Roles of NGOs in Civil Society Development

In considering international development cooperation, non-governmental organizations are acknowledged to play a wide range of different roles - as civil society organizations- and as partners supporting the development of civil society. For donor organizations, NGOs are valued for their roles in service delivery, advocacy work, capacity building, democratization, information dissemination, and building relations between donor countries and developing countries. In many cases, it is recognized the Northern civil society organizations may be better suited to work with their Southern counterparts, to provide support for building civil society organizations in the South and developing the capacity of those organizations, especially the smaller community-based organizations and grassroots groups. The three Finnish NGO

Foundations are not merely instruments for managing small- grant schemes. Nonetheless, it is useful to consider experience with other options for managing donor-financed small-grant schemes. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland).

### 3.6 Funding of NGOs in Finland

There are several institutions that support NGO's in Finland with annual funding for organisations that are offering services for people with disabilities. Among most of them are STEA, Helsinki city and Aviavustukset. When looking forward to applying for funding, must be taken into consideration each institution's requirements and criteria for approving subsidies. Every year each institution is offering subsidies for specific field of expertise of each NGO. For the year of 2020, the maximum number of subsidies offered by STEA was 380 million euros. (STEA 2019).

The main fields of expertise that have received the funding are organizations that are focused on the well-being, health and health care and problem solving in changing structures, example integration of non-governmental activities such as peer support. (STEA 2019).

STEA grants may be awarded to eligible registered non-profit organizations and foundations for the promotion of health and social well-being. For example, non - profit associations registered in the Register of Associations and foundations registered for the purpose of health and social well-being promotion in Finland. Eligibility is assessed by STEA on the basis of the rules. No STEA grant may be awarded to individuals, government agencies, municipalities, or parishes. The grant will not be awarded to financially oriented professionals, companies and firms cooperatives. However, non-profit cooperatives and public limited companies may be eligible. When applying for the first time for subsidies from STEA, the applicant must have evidence of what has already been done activities. The annual report or annual report of the NGO's activities and annual accounts for the previous financial year, are necessary when applying for a grant. Non-resident entities and foundations are not eligible for STEA grants.

In Finland a registered non-profit community can apply for a grant for expatriate health and social to promote well-being. The applicant must have a solid position in the country of operation and cooperation with relevant stakeholders, local organizations and authorities with. The project or targeted activity should target non-Finnish expatriates, access to similar support through other means.

STEA's grants are eligible upon application and are subject to discretion. STEA will use a holistic approach when preparing a grant proposal. Consideration is fixed attention example the following conditions for the award of a grant:

- The purpose for which the grant is sought is socially acceptable.
- Granting is justified by the objectives set for the use of the grant point of view.
- The grant focuses on the areas and policies defined by STEA.

Activities.

- Granting is necessary when considered other public support received by the applicant of the quality, scale and environmental information of the project or activity being assisted of the quality and effectiveness of the non-grant applicant's activities of the quality of the applicant's previous work with the STEA grant; and effectiveness of the applicant's own resources controlled by or for the applicant financially or functionally funds available to affiliated entities or foundations income from the aided activity.

The award of the grant is not expected to give rise to any less than negligible competition, and distortive effects on the functioning of the market within the European Economic Area State.

- Applying for an investment grant or project grant is enough when applying for the grant a statement of the functional or technical design of the project.

The investment grant:

In addition, the applicant shall provide a sufficient explanation of the conditions for financing the investment project self-financing and operating costs.

- The activity to be assisted must be in the public interest. In addition, the following boundary conditions have been set for the use of STEA grants.
- The grant cannot be used for economic activities. Economic activity means the provision of goods or services on the market.
- Grants may not be used for activities that are part of a municipality, state or other authority general or special organizational responsibility. General organizational

responsibility means that services which must be provided by the municipality within the limits of the appropriations it reserves, and to the extent possible. Specific organizational responsibility refers to the subjective rights-based service, which signifies a person's right to receive a particular service if he or she meets the legal requirements to be eligible.

- The grant may not be used for activities that are legally or otherwise apparently covered responsibility for the organization of the church or other religious community or require action participation of target groups in religious activities. Potential beneficiary religious activities should be separated economically from assistance activities; and functionally.
- Different forms of NGO activities may also involve policies on what some of the operating costs may or may not be covered by a STEA grant. Activities related the guidelines have been published on the STEA website.

#### 4 Implementation

When founding your own NGO there are specific steps that need to be followed in order to have a successful and fast process. While founding Lumikko I have received guidance from Heikki Aulio, who is also our secretary and board member.

In January 2019 I have contacted the board members and asked for collaboration. After agreeing who will take which role, we all have gathered in February 2019 and created the founding charter and later 19<sup>th</sup> of February applied for official registration. According to PRH website the process of registering a new association normally last for a maximum of 26 working days.

[https://www.prh.fi/fi/yhdistysrekisteri/kasittelyaika\\_ja\\_oman\\_ilmoituksen\\_kasittelyn\\_seuranta.html](https://www.prh.fi/fi/yhdistysrekisteri/kasittelyaika_ja_oman_ilmoituksen_kasittelyn_seuranta.html).

However, later in April 16<sup>th</sup> Lumikko has officially been registered. As a following step I have then applied for y-tunnus on YTJ website. During the process of receiving the Y-tunus the laws have changed, and we have automatically received it later in September the 16<sup>th</sup>.

During the period of time that we have been waiting for the organisation to be fully registered, we have conducted a few board meeting, where we have discussed about

the action plan and as well had a guided team building meeting, where we have shared the tasks. As a chairman I have been involved in every action taken by the board members. I have followed, delated and learned from my team new ways of working and how to develop specific areas from our organisation.

In mine and my team's plan we were aiming to apply for subsidies from the Helsinki city latest on 30<sup>th</sup> of September. However, due to the delayed process of registering Lumikko-AuKeVa we have not been eligible for the current application period. In order to be able to apply our association would have needed to have one year of activity.

Meanwhile, I have taken advantage of the new challenges presented and took my time to create the bank account of the NGO and look for partner association's and organisation that would support our cause. The process of creating a bank account is still on going, and it is due in January to have the meeting with the bank's officials. As what concerns the future partners, there are few organisations interested in our cause such as Rinnekoti Säätiö, Autisi Säätiö and Helsingin Invalidien Yhdistys. At this point we are planning meeting where we can discuss more about Lumikko-AuKeVa and what we are aiming on doing.

Since our main plan could not be fulfilled, we have been focusing on way to receive support from the society. When planning a fundraiser or a pro-profit activity, you may need the approval from the municipality's police you are conducting the activity. "Fundraising usually requires a fundraising permit. Fundraising is for fundraising for nonprofit organizations, organizations, and foundations only. No solicitation of funds by individuals or companies is permitted. However, individuals and companies can do good, for example, by donating money to an authorized fundraiser, or by participating in an association or organization in some other way. There are many ways to volunteer and there are many ways you can help!" Arpajaishallinto 2019.

## 5 The purpose of founding Lumikko-AuKeVa

More specific, my organization's aim is to provide the selected client group with a space fully accessible and friendly where our service users can climb, jump, use technology to increase and develop their social skills and do many different activities, that can develop their mobility, space awareness, flexibility and social skills.

While networking and collaborating with different professionals, my aims and goals are closer to become reality now more than ever.

### 5.1 The purpose of physical activities

As a personal trainer, I understand the benefits and importance of physical activity in each individual's life. Physical activity is affecting the human body as a whole, including the mental well-being, physical well-being and spiritual well-being.

Benefits of regular physical activity can reduce your risk of a heart attack, manage your weight better, have a lower blood cholesterol level, lower the risk of type 2 diabetes and some cancers, have lower blood pressure, have stronger bones, muscles and joints and lower risk of developing osteoporosis, lower your risk of falls, recover better from periods of hospitalisation or bed rest, feel better - with more energy, a better mood, feel more relaxed and sleep better. (<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/>)

Several studies have found that exercise helps depression, mania/hypomania, anxiety and so on. There are many views as to how exercise helps people with the above-mentioned mental health issues:

- Exercise may block negative thoughts or distract you from daily worries.
- Exercising with others provides an opportunity for increased social contact.
- Increased fitness may lift your mood and improve your sleep patterns.
- Exercise may also change levels of chemicals in your brain, such as serotonin, endorphins and stress hormones. (<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/>)

Spiritual wellbeing means the ability to experience and integrate meaning and purpose in life through a person's connectedness with self, others art, music, literature, nature, or a power greater than oneself.

- Spiritual wellbeing is about our inner life and its relationship with the wider world. It includes our relationship with the environment, our relationships with others and with ourselves.
- Spiritual wellbeing does not just reflect religious belief although for people of a religious faith it is obviously a central feature.

- Each person's spirituality is greatly impacted by the community they are a part of and their relationships. To be spiritually well will mean a positive engagement with others, self and our environment. (Ritika Srivastava, 2018).

## 5.2 Lumikko-AuKeVa's services

Most people without disabilities chose a space/ place that can satisfy their needs when comes to physical or social activities. Since my selected client group is having quite sensitive needs when it comes to time, space/place and social stimulants, Lumikko-AuKeVa's location and space needs to be taking into consideration service user's needs. From 100% accessibility to privacy when completing their activities, the selected client group will benefit by accessing Lumikko-AuKeVa's facility. All the activity spaces will be accessed for free for my NGO's members and for a small fee the extracurricular activities that we will create. The members can be anyone who is interested in our cause.

Since Lumikko-AuKeVa has not been eligible for funding this year, we are looking for partners that will allow us to do some of our activities until we will receive or raise the money needed for renting or building our own facility.

## 6 The funding process of the NGO

The process of funding Lumikko has been cancelled after receiving information from both STEA and Helsinki city that we are not eligible for applying due to the lack of activity during the year of 2019. Therefore, we will be having one full year to work on our action plan, create fundraisings, find partners to collaborate with, create activities and learn more about how to develop the quality of life for our selected client group.

In November 30<sup>th</sup>, Lumikko-AuKeVa has planned a board meeting, where we will discuss about the action plan for the year of 2020 and what kind of activities, we can create with the resources we have at the moment. I am planning of applying for subsidies from STEA in May and from Helsinki city in September 2020.

## 7 Conclusions and discussions

Whilst completing my thesis project there are many things that I have learned, together with many skills that I have developed and many weaknesses that I have strengthened. However, I am still realistic, and I understand and acknowledge my skills that are yet under development. As a future social services professional, I have developed a significant amount of skills that I will benefit while working with the selected client group. Skills such as self-reflection, time managing, patience, empathetic attitude and most importantly the skill of leadership.

Whilst becoming a young entrepreneur I have discovered skills that I never know I was having, as well skills that are yet under development. As a young leader of a small team I have realised the importance and meaning of my role quite early in my journey as I am assuming responsibility for other three people with whom I am collaborating. I understood the importance of good communication in several languages and distinct cultures. My communication skills have significantly been increased while communicating with official on daily basis and learned how to represent myself and my team.

On a personal level I have become more honest with myself and others about the tasks that I can complete and also learned how to ask for help and delegate to other, while supervising their development. My fears of failure have been diminished and I have become more open to changes. Flexibility and understanding have also been two other skills that I have developed during the thesis project process.

During my thesis project have been came across many obstacles. On a professional level, the Lumikko-AuKeVa founding process have been very stressful due to the major delays in registering and receiving the y-tunnus. Then I had to learn how to resolve issues that were in my hands to be solved and be patient when issues that came across were not in my power to manage and solve. Whilst all efforts to go on with my project seemed to be crashing, I have received support and understanding from my team, which made me uplift myself and still go on.

In my opinion the process of founding Lumikko-AuKeVa from my side has been well conducted. However, I believe that a better preparation for the what was about to come and the actual founding process could have been better planned. At this point I still must familiarise myself with the legislation regarding the activity for the selected client group. How I can promote their independence and empower them and

their families. I believe in constant development of social and care field, therefore my passion and dedication for the selected client group is an ongoing process. Many of my and my team's skills need to be improved and work on different qualifications, that will support our aims and goals.

In my journey I had the opportunity to collaborate with many professionals from different institutions that made me understand how important our organisation's role will place for the selected client group in the Finnish society. At the beginning of this process I have not fully understood the importance and meaning of my work. I knew that the social and care field has so much potential to be improved, but yet, the true meaning of my aims and goals were not as high ranked by me as it has been by the professionals that I have come across.

Unwinding and learning how to separate professional life and work have also been of my development process. Learning how to make decisions rationally and disconnect and enjoy my personal life, have been probably the most difficult challenges that I came across during this process. I have learned that if I can't disconnect, I can't manage to work at my best. When having the responsibility of a team, I learned how my decisions can affect others. Therefore, my constant communication with my team has been very important. Nevertheless, I have developed great relationships with Lummiko's board members and build a trustworthy and reliable relationship.

In conclusion I would like to thank all those who have supported me to keep my passion alive and believe in progress and development in social and care field. My dedication for the selected client group it has grown more and more in the past two years. I believe that I have become a good leader and a respectable member of the Finnish professional society of social service field. As a promise to myself that I made once I have decided to move forward with this project, I am going to work as hard as possible to improve the quality of life for people with learning disabilities, autism and physical disabilities in Finland. I will always focus on innovative ideas and solutions for a better quality of life and improvement of social and care field. Throughout my career in social services, no matter how many obstacles I have come across, my passion and altruistic personality have kept me straight and faithful to my mission.

## 8 Further research/innovative ideas

While completing my academic year in 2016, I have joined “Accessibility for environment” course, where I’ve learned about the daily challenges of people with physical disabilities and how I can support them. Part of the course, included the development of IKEA Vantaa, staff area from non-accessible to fully accessible for all staff members to be much easier to perform and complete their tasks.

In the process of learning and developing small spaces for people with disabilities I have evolved my passion for the selected client group. A great inside kindle grew more and more, and I had to keep it alive. I have started to notice more and more people with physical disabilities, visual impairment or audio impairment around me and I decided that I have to do something to promote social inclusion among them.

By having the possibility to complete the “Accessibility for environment “course, I have networked with Heikki Aulio, who now is my organisation’s board secretary. Heikki presented to me the daily challenges of people with physical disabilities, from a different perspective, from making coffee to using technology.

In summer 2017 with the little knowledge that I had about the selected client group, I have decided to research more and learn how to improve the quality of life and mobility for people with disabilities. Therefore I have moved to Bristol UK and work from August until May, for a care provider company and in the same time I was using descriptive studies method, for gathering information and eventually to select the client group.

Descriptive research attempts to describe characteristics of a sample and relationships between phenomena, situations and events observed by the researcher (Rubin & Babbie 2008; Thomlison, 2001). Researchers seek to do this by better understanding and measuring how variables are naturally distributed (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2002). The result is to provide data about the sample that describe the basic relationship to increase our understanding of the question being asked (Rubin & Babbie, 2008). To this end descriptive research often targets a population and/or phenomenon and aims to answer to the questions “who, what, when, where and how”.

Immediately after my employment started, I have been introduced to the world of care providers and care receivers in UK. After 3 weeks of induction, time when I have learned about people with learning disabilities, I was ready to meet the service

users. During the time I have worked for the British company I have learned about learning disabilities, autism and physical disabilities, but not only in theory yet in practice too, and how to support the people living in partnership with any of those disabilities.

Later in my employment I have completed my third practise where I have learned about the effects of therapy based art sessions, and yet not the only accomplishment that I have achieved by working for the care provider company, I have concluded my research in the UK, as well I have completed the CARE CERTIFICATE qualification and moved back to Finland.

Prior to moving back to Finland, I have answered to the question presented above from the research and decided that I will support and develop the quality of life of people with disabilities, more specifically learning disabilities, autism and physical disabilities.

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## 10 Tables

Table 1: Different models of NGOs ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

