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## **CREATIVE COMICS WORKSHOP WITH YOUNG ADULTS**

**Organizing a new working method for youth work**

## 1.ABSTRACT



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The aim of this project-based thesis is to create a new working method for the youth work. Idea for the project came from my last practice placement in Novak-project (Novak-hanke), in the end of the year 2018.

Thesis will examine social exclusion of young adults and process of the comic workshops. Different art methods are widely used in youth work but using comics as one of the working methods is not very common.

Comics workshops were carried out in four different sessions with two different student groups between February 2019 and May 2019. Target was to understand view of the world of young adults by giving the voice and tools for the youth themselves, and assist them to create their stories and views about the world and society by drawing. Idea behind the thesis was to follow Finnish Youth Legislation Act, empower adolescents who were participating in the project and give them meaningful activities. The result was finished comic book with 14 pages from nine different artists.

This will be a project-based thesis where I will examine if comics could be used as one of the working methods in youth work.

Keywords: Art therapy, Social Exclusion, Youth work, Comics, Project

## CONTENTS



1. INTRODUCTION.....	2
2. BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT.....	5
2.1 Youth exclusion.....	5
2.2 Youth legislation.....	9
2.3 Need for the project.....	10
2.4 Novak-project and Valma studies.....	10
2.5 Art therapy and comics.....	12
3. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.....	15
3.1 Objectives of the project.....	15
3.2 Goal of the project.....	17
4.TARGET GROUP AND THE STAKEHOLDERS OF THE PROJECT...17	
4.1 Target group.....	17
4.2 Stakeholders.....	18
5. RISKS.....	18
6. BUDGET.....	21
7.RESOURCES.....	22
8. WORK PLAN.....	24
8.1 Starting the project.....	24
8.2. Implementation.....	25
8.3 Printing .....	30
8.4 Finished magazine.....	32
9. EVALUATION.....	36
9.1 Evaluation of the project .....	36
9.2 Feedback.....	36
9.3 Observations and challenges.....	42
9.4 Ethical principles.....	44
9.5 Data collection and ethical guidelines.....	44
10. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DURING THE PROCESS.....	46
REFERENCES.....	49
APPENDICES.....	52

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Population in Helsinki is growing rapidly, and so is the amount of young people. In the year 2008 there lived 568 561 inhabitants, from where 49 875 were young people, aged 10-18. That makes about 8,8 percent of the population. Latest estimations are predicting that population will grow over 700,000 in few years, and this means that number of adolescents is rising in the future too. (Helsinki city).

Majority of young adults are doing fine. They are not having serious issues in school or work, they eat healthy, exercise and have good relationship with their parents. Unfortunately, all young adults are not so lucky. They might come from broken homes or get bullied in school. Or some people just do not fit for the groups and they feel themselves outsiders in our society from the early childhood. In the future some of them might have difficulties on education or working. If a young adult stays socially excluded from society for several years, it might be hard, and in some cases impossible to help the person back on the track. Mental illness problems, substance abuse or criminal activity usually increase during the time of social exclusion.

Various projects are targeted to tackle social exclusion of young adults, before it is too late to help them. Thesis is focusing on two of these groups, Valma-students, and Novak-project which is funded by Kela.

Both of projects use different methods with students and taught participants about Finnish society and culture in general. Arts activities like painting and designing a poster were some of the many methods that were used in Novak, but comics had not been tried before.

The reason why comics could be used with young adults is because comics are so diverse artform and tool for storytelling. Maybe it could help the professionals

about the things which could be hard to notice otherwise in normal meetings. During the practice placement, it was noticeable how talented these young participants were in different artistic ways and how much they knew about politics and society. Idea came to my mind about using art methods which could also raise conversation about social issues with adolescents.

Comics are rare working method in youth work, but it was important to think how this project would stand out from the other comics workshops. In these workshops, participants got a chance to draw comics, but they would also get own copy of a comic magazine after the workshops, where all the works from the young artists are collected together.

Thesis includes the documentation of the process and analyzes the structures and reasons behind youth social exclusion. Main idea of the process was to study if comics could help us to understand adolescents better and promote their understanding of social issues at the same time.

## 2. BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

This chapter analyzes the background of the project. Main themes are social exclusion and preventive projects that are targeted on the youth who are not studying or working. Sub-chapter 2.1 handles social exclusion of young adults and reasons behind it. On the sub-chapter 2.2, principal elements of youth legislation are explained. Sub-chapter 2.3 tells about the need for this project. Sub-chapter 2.4 introduces Novak-project and Valma-studies, the two groups who were joined in the workshops. Final sub-chapter 2.5 explains about the art therapy methods, and why this art method is used in this project.

### 2.1. Youth Exclusion.

How could it be possible to describe what social exclusion is?

The term “social exclusion” is a phrase with an enormous power, writes David Byrne. The word came into social sciences from the world of politics and

governance. Origins of social exclusion-term can be traced into responses of Continental European, social, religious and political thinkers to the social consequences of industrialization. (Byrne 2005, 52).



When talking about social exclusion in a public conversation, it is often referred on the people who are not working. Some of us might have read about the activating policies which are targeted to increase employment. Unfortunately, the truth is that reasons behind the unemployment and social exclusion can be diverse, and cutting the benefits is not the only answer.

Studies on youth social exclusion are often referred to social structures like education and job market systems, leaving outside and their consequences on well-being. Low education, long-termed unemployment and problems on livelihood all increase the risk to get socially excluded.

Problems in life control and health, scarcity of social relationships and excluding from participation to society are often linked into social exclusion. It is necessary to understand different factors and acknowledge own experiences and thoughts about the issue. Some young adults mention lack of friends as one of the most essential reasons behind social exclusion (THL)

Governments and officials have been trying to think different solutions for the problem where we have over 60 000 young adults outside of the job markets and education. The exact amount was 60191 in the year 2018, according to the statistics of Me-Säätiö. (Me-säätiö)

Statistics Finland report from 2014 shows that during that time people who were not in school or working was about 64000 young adults aged 16-24. This is about ten percent of 15-24 old age group. From this group about two out of third identified themselves as unemployed. (Tilastokeskus)

Group is not united, and all the adolescents have different personal history which is affecting to their present situation. Solving the problem behind the social exclusion is not easy, since all the situations are unique and considerably individual.

Social exclusion strategies are targeted often especially for the young adults aged 15-29. In the social conversation, these people without a job or education are called NEET-youth (Not in employment, Education or Training). According to statistics Finland research from the year 2019, the number of young adults who have been staying outside the education or work has lowered in recent years, but still there are too many who would need special help on their situation. According to the statistics, amount of NEET-youth aged 20-24 years in the year 2015 was approximately 15 percent of the age group. In the year 2018 share had decreased to 12 percent. Almost all the students who have graduated from the elementary school attended to studies, and there are enough of school places for everybody. There has been a slight improvement during last years, but still the number of young adults without secondary degree is noticeable. (Tilastokeskus)

It is important to acknowledge the fact that situations in life vary a lot, and statistics do not reveal the whole truth. Some of the adolescents are having a gap year, some are performing their military service, and others are preparing for the school admissions. But is the NEET-status always a sign of the social exclusion? (Yle: Syrjäytyneiden nuorten määrä on laskenut, syrjäytyneitä silti yhä 60 000 – ministeri pitää tärkeänä "yhden luukun" palveluita)

Based on the national birth cohort 1987-material, it is possible to examine numbers behind the statistics. From under 17-years old, people who have just graduated from the basic education there was NEET-youth approximately 11 percent of the age group, which makes about 6000 individuals. From all the young adults between 16-25 years who were investigated in the cohort, the total amount of people who had been in NEET-status at least for one year was 46000. Having a NEET-status for a short period of time is relatively normal, but statistics reveal that longer the person stays on the NEET-status, it increases the risk to criminal activity, unwanted pregnancies, different psychiatric problems and poverty.

Mental health problems are highlighted during the NEET-years, and they are one of the most significant factors behind the social exclusion process.

It seems that most critical group are the 17-18 old young adults.

(Tilastokeskus)

Finnish society is changing rapidly and working life might seem even harder nowadays than it has been before. People who have only basic education will have a higher risk of social exclusion. One of the reasons could be that a vocational degree is needed in almost every work place. Without a degree finding a job is harder, and longer the unemployment continues, it increases the risk for mental health problems and social exclusion.

Mental health problems among the young adults is not only a Finnish phenomenon. In fact, mental health issues among the young adults have seemed to increase around the globe in the last two decades. In the United States, more adolescents and young adults in the late 2010s, versus the mid-2000s, have experienced serious psychological distress, major depression or suicidal thoughts, and suicide attempts have been increased.

(Science Daily)

So, what reasons there could be behind growing mental illness problems?

According to WHO, there are multiple factors that define the mental health of an adolescent at any one time. If young adults are exposed to more risk factors, the negative impact on their mental health grows. Factors like desire for greater autonomy, pressure to adapt with peers, exploration of sexual identity, and increased access to and use of technology. Situation in home and good relationships with parents can protect from mental health problems. Violence and socio-economic problems are recognized risks to mental health. Children and adolescents are especially vulnerable to sexual violence, which has a clear association with harmful mental health. (WHO)

It is hard to say where do these problems occur. Some studies have claimed even social media as one of the reasons behind mental illness problems (Economist), but on the other side, it might have created some problems, but perhaps the use of social media could also reduce loneliness since community

is not tied to a geographical place anymore. It can create new communities and possibilities to meet new friends as well.



According to my personal experience from youth work and studies, many of the youth who are involved in these projects seemed to have history on school bullying, feeling difficulties in adapting for the groups, or might have experienced problematic childhood.

Perhaps depression and other mental health problems can be a normal reaction to our society? A society which encourages for constant competition against others and where everybody needs to show perfect image of themselves for other followers all the time. A society which encourages us to be consumers while at the same time we are reading the news from climate change and global population growth. Adolescents in Finland are living in a different world when comparing it to homogenous culture which was in Finland about two decades ago. What if some people just have decided to stay home away from society or cannot work for health reasons? How is it possible to help them only by cutting benefits and trying to force people to do jobs that they do not want?

Finally, it is important to remember that many things have improved in recent years. Finland is more international and tolerant than ever, and many adolescents generally seem to live and promote healthier lifestyle than earlier generations. Many of the adolescents are eating healthy and sustainably, and heavy drinking and smoking has reduced significantly in recent years.

(Valtioneuvosto).

## 2.2 Youth legislation

This chapter tells about the basic principles of youth legislation. It is in the core of the youth work and it is important to know what it is about.

The youth law act (Nuorisolaki) is meant to promote young people's social inclusion and opportunities for exerting an influence, and to improve their skills and capabilities to operate in society. Aim is to support the growth of

adolescents, their independence and sense of community and facilitate the acquisition of knowledge. It is targeted to pursuit of skills and pursuit of free-time hobbies and activities in civic society, and finally to promote non-discrimination and realization of civic rights while improving growth and living conditions of young adults. (Nuorisolaki,1285/2016)

### 2.3. Need for the project

Idea for the project started to arise while completing the last practice placement in the city of Helsinki vocational schools (Stadin Ammattiopisto) Novak-project. Plan was to combine art methods and promote the awareness of our society with comics workshop. Idea was presented for the supervisors, and since the workers of the project were interested on trying new working methods and plan new activities for the participants, organizing workshops were agreed with them in the end of the year 2018.

During the practice placement, project workers organized different working methods for students and planned trips to museums and exhibitions to raise awareness about society and culture for the participants. There are projects which are targeted to prevent social exclusion of youth, and youth law act is tailored to protect and support the young adults in Finland. But is that enough? Question was that how could it be possible to understand adolescents and their views of the world?

Before starting the project, question was how youth work could be improved, and could there be some new methods that could be used in youth work. Idea behind the project was to combine elements of youth law with comics workshops, about the topics, that are close to their lives. Both groups who were joined in the workshops, promoted understanding of our society for adolescents, and used art methods with participants in weekly activities.

Trying different methods can help us to find strategies and working strategies for youth work, which could be used with young people who might need more

support in their lives towards independent adult life. Aim of the new youth law is planned to strengthen participation of youth, and support their growth, independence, sense of community and hobbies. In the comics workshop, it is possible to combine all these elements with art methods.

Diak

#### 2.4. Novak-project and Valma-studies

This chapter will introduce two groups of young people who were participating in the project.

Various projects have been targeted to help marginalized youth, and one of these is Novak. Project begun in the spring of 2018. "Novak" is an abbreviation from the words: "Nuori osallisena verkostomaisessa ammatillisessa koulutuksessa" (Adolescent involved in networked vocational education). Project is Kela-funded and it is aiming to assist and guide participants to find a job or school place during the project. It is KELA-funded project, which started in the spring of 2018. Target of the Novak-project is to plan and create a new coaching model for young adults who have dropped from the education or are unemployed. Coaching mixes networking, social rehabilitation, and Valma teaching. After the process ends in the year 2020, all the data will be collected and reviewed by Kela. (Kela/Novak-Nuorten-Kehittämishanke).

Participants of the project are young adults aged 16 to 25 years who are not studying or working. Youth are assisted in individual and group meetings, and project is operated in co-operation based on the wishes of the adolescent. Youth were also taken to visit different sights of Helsinki, like museums and theaters along with making handcrafts and arts in the youth center Happi.

Groups were relatively small, approximately ten people are joined to keep the group better organized. Because joining for the meetings is voluntary, it often occurred that some participants decided to skip the meetings. During the practice placement there were usually handful of people who came for the meetings regularly.

Other group who joined in the workshops were Valma-students.

Valma-studies are preparing studies which are intended for the youth who have finished elementary school but are missing a secondary vocational degree. It is closer to real school than Novak-project, but it is mainly youth work instead of education. Target of Valma-studies is to guide and help young adults after the basic education and offer them knowledge about study opportunities. It is also possible to raise school grades there and get support on finding the apprenticeship contract with working life partner.

Like Novak, it is student focused and the path is created based on the wishes and interests of participants. (Valmasta työelämään)

Empowering is a term which is popular in social conversation. Both projects were planned to empower adolescent towards independent life, and finally into adulthood. In individual meetings participants are encouraged towards change and for the future.

Empowering itself, is engaging intellectually, understand the needs of other party, goal settings, assessing and communicating personal strengths, negotiating and practicing communication are important to learn before entering independent life. (Krebs, Pitcoff 2006, 183)

Support from the community and giving the possibility to join, along social skills and self-esteem are important issues. Learning skills, problem solving skills and encouraging positive attitude are important preventing factors, along with creating a path to job or education. Using these elements can be a solution towards meaningful life.

## 2.5 Art therapy and comics

Arts have been used commonly in social work. Goal is the individual and social change, along with transformation. There are wide range of different methods and approaches to get into goal. Since comics have not been used so widely in

youth work, so it was one of the leading thoughts behind this project. Would it be possible to use comics in youth work and what could we learn from these workshops after they are finished?



There are several diverse and divisive narratives in the larger community and media which are focusing on individualism and independence. In turn, they promote the stigmatization, marginalization, and pathologize those who fail to meet criteria for so called normality, due to economic hardship, mental health issues, culture or religion, along with other factors.

In the helping professions like social work, there has been an evolution to engage with these growing individual and social issues. The capacity for individual and social transformation can be supported by identifying more life-giving and transformative metaphors that help people to reframe their lives. (Heinonen, Halonen, Krahn 2019, 78).

This was one of the reasons why comics could be used with young adults. To give them possibility for individual transform and reframing their lives with art.

Creating arts can offer unique perspectives, approaches and tools to meaningfully and effectively engage people through creative expression and traditional storytelling has the potential to varying Indigenous groups today. Storytelling has the potential to unite and anchor a group of people in a collective sense of meaning, identity, and belonging, and empower them to speak of who they are in a realtion to the whole world as we know it.

(Heinonen, Halonen, Krahn 2019, 1-6,76)

This is why comics could have potential as one the art methods. They can be used to tell autobiographical stories, short strips just for fun, and political satire, so there are numerous possibilities to express with this art method. With young adults, it was be interesting to see how this type of art method would work in youth work. One of the leading thoughts during the process was what art could reveal from the artists.

Diagnostics inferences from art are needed to take cautiously, but drawing could sometimes open help us to understand problems which are hiding on the person. (Rubin 2005.112)



Comics in this project are used as a method on self-expression by giving chance for young adults to draw short stories from the modern society. Participants would get free hands without pressure and they would be free to create anything that comes to their mind, without censorship. Obviously, one of the most important elements in the project was to have fun.

The main goal of the project was to create self-published magazine which would be given for the artists a memory from the workshops, and larger goal was to study if comics workshops could be used in youth work to prevent social exclusion.

The methods that are used in social work to raise consciousness of the people, produce critical questions, and drawing attention to what is concerning groups of people. New ideas are needed about social justice to make them known locally, nationally, and internationally. This type of action can even lead to collaboration for better social policies and changing laws. (Heinonen; Halonen; Krahm, 2019, 12)

Maybe giving free hands for adolescents and offering them a chance to draw something that they feel familiar could be a start of empowering process. We also need to remember that even just creating art can be meaningful activity as such.

Working in the creative process can be meaningful itself, since art therapy is widely used method in different fields of health care and social work. Creative expression can bring unique perspectives and tools for people, which can be potentially used for healing, growth, learning and expression. (Heinonen, Halonen, Krahm 2019, 2).

### 3. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



#### 3.1 Objectives of the project

It is usually said that aims are describing the ultimate goal, the purpose of the project, and objectives are describing the steps that are necessary to achieve the goal. Aims can show a vision and purpose but having clear objectives can tell about the details which describe how these aims can be reached. (Martin 2002, 10)

The objectives of the project is to observe comic workshops and have four workshops with two student groups and finally print own copy of a comic magazine for every participant. Hopefully, during the process it can give an opportunity to talk with the students about the given subjects, which will promote their knowledge of our society. After the workshops, all the comics will be collected together for the layover and finally print own comic book for all the participants. The finished magazine includes comic stories from the young adults who might be on a risk of social exclusion. It can be meaningful and nice activity for them, but it can also help us to understand them better. After the workshops are done and feedback from the teachers is collected, the project is finished.

Terms like “project” can be used in quite a precise way. However, it can encompass many different types of activity. Projects can be personal, like planning a special celebration. it can also refer to a major construction like building a new hospital. All the projects are different, but they do have something in common. A project includes a clear purpose which is possible to achieve in a limited time and it needs to have clear end when the outcome has been achieved. Projects are resourced to achieve specific outcomes and would not normally be repeated. Usually they have also someone acting as a sponsor or commissioner who expects the outcomes to be delivered on time. (Martin 2002, p.8)

To make sure that everything is working, project needs to have clear objectives. This can be achieved when they define what can be achieved, tell when it is completed and explain how everybody knows that the project is finished. It is possible to view these objectives by using the word SMART to remind us what the project is about. (Martin 2002, 10)

The term SMART is an acronym for: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time Bound. This is the criteria to define project objectives. (Free management E-books).

Specific part means that everything is needed to define with the completion criteria. Measurable is to make sure if the completion criteria is achieved and is the project achievable in the current environment and among the skills that are available. It is needed to think are the aims of the project possible to achieve, which means it needs to be realistic. Timebound tells about the completion time. Based on the SMART template, the following chart (Table 1) includes the objectives which are relevant to reach for the goals of the thesis:

Table 1. SMART Objectives

SPECIFIC	Organize workshops, do the layout and print the comic magazine. Analyze the workshops in the thesis. Aim is to keep four workshops with two groups.
MEASURABLE	Ten participants are needed in the workshops and meetings can be done in the class rooms. Materials are easy to obtain. After everybody has finished their comics and the magazine is printed, this part is ready.
ACHIEVABLE	There are risks that some are not motivated for the workshops, but to get at least some participants should be easy with the collaboration of the teachers.
REALISTIC	Participants are part of Helsinki city student groups from NOVAK and VALMA-studies. Most of them are familiar with arts and the number of participants is not high.
TIME BOUND	Workshops and printing of the magazine will be done during February and May 2019. Comic will be finished until June. Final feedback from the teachers will be gathered during autumn. Thesis will be ready until December 2019.

### 3.2 Goal of the project

Main goal of this project is to prevent social exclusion of young adults. Plan is to find out if drawing comics could give us information about the lives of young adults and encourage them to talk about different subjects with of our society by giving them topics which are close to their lives. Experiences from the workshops can be used afterwards with Novak participants and possibly in the Valma teaching as well. Hopefully it can give us some information if this working method could be used in the youth work afterwards.

## 4. TARGET GROUP AND THE STAKEHOLDERS OF THE PROJECT

This chapter will introduce the main stakeholders and partners who were involved in the project.

### 4.1 Target group

Thesis was done cooperation with Helsinki city and Stadin Ammattiopisto, which is the working life partner. Main target group of this project are the youth who are participating in the workshops, and Mediakylpylä students who helped with the magazine layover.

In workshops youth could express themselves and let their creativity to flow. Drawing omics do not just encourage creativity, but this could open a possibility for the conversation about different things like creativity and social issues. All the participants will receive own copy of a comic book as a memory after the workshops have ended.

For the layout, help was received from the Mediakylpylä graphic design students, which is part of the Stadin Ammattiopisto as well. Mediakylpylä has 34 work practice places and it offers possibility to learn and study graphic and visual design. It was possible to their skills for the layout of the magazine, and they got also good work experience from their own field in the same time. (Mediakylpylä 2019).

## 4.2 Stakeholders

Some stakeholders might be a potential risk for the project if they are not fully supporting the aims or processes of the project. Sometimes they can be damaging for the project and they might even have the possibility to stop that. (Martin 2002, 59)

The staff from Stadin Ammattiopisto student groups were helpful, and it helped that they were familiar with the youth already, which made the actual process and organizing the workshops easier.

Besides the youth who are benefitting from the creative workshops, this type of method could benefit youth workers and other professionals who are working with the youth. Comics workshops gave a possibility to see how this art method could be used in the youth work and could it be used as one of the working methods in Novak or Valma-groups.

## 5. RISKS

Risk assessment is more than identifying a potential risk. It is needed to estimate how probably the risk will occur in the process.

Things that needs to be considered, are: What is the risk, and how it is possible to recognize if the risk becomes a reality?

Is the probability behind the risk high, medium or low?

How serious threat this would be for the project and what signals or indicators there would be notice?

(Martin 2002. 56)

For preventing the risks, I used two tables where I will analyze the risks on this project. In the first table there are categories for every risk item, what kind of problems it would bring, what is the cause and how it would affect. Finally, there comes a remedy, which means the best recommended action.

Table 2. Risk analyzation

Item	Failure mode	Cause of failure	Effect	Remedy: recommended action
Getting the approval from school board in time	Nobody is not answering for the contact requests	Busy schedule	Delay of the thesis and agreed workshops	Getting help from the other teachers and staff of the working life partner
Layout of the comic	Layout would not be possible to do in time	Not contacting partners early enough	Printing delay	Start contacting editing layout partners in the middle of workshops
Minimum of ten participants joined in the workshops	Because attendance in projects is voluntary, would there be enough students?	Collaboration with the teachers and project staff	Not necessarily the end of the project, but the comic would be shorter	Getting the participants interested and getting assistance from the staff from Vamos and Novak
Printing the comics on time before summer holidays	Layout delay and/or comics are unfinished in the workshops	Not planning the timetable	Participants would not get the comics before summer holidays	Planning and following the timetable
Permission from the ethical committee	Waiting for the permission takes longer than predicted	Not getting the approval from the school board in time	Not possible to use any information from the workshops	Focusing on the timetable and getting the approval from the working life partner
Enough time for drawing in the workshops	Participants do not get any ideas or have trouble in drawing	Not assisting the participants	Delay of the layout	Informing the participants and ensuring that there is enough time

In the following table I used the risk register where all the risks were listed, assessed and ranked. Each risk item is shown, with potential risks marked numbers from 1-5, so that number 1 means very low risk, number 3 is medium risk event, and finally number 5 means highest risk. From the final risk register we can see the total ranking of the combined numbers to analyze scenarios with most risks. (Lock, 2007 101-105).

Table 3. Different risk factors

Item	Chance	Severity	Detection difficulty	Total ranking
Getting the approval from school board in time	3	4	4	11
Layout of the comic	1	2	1	4
Minimum of ten participants joined in the workshops	2	2	2	6
Printing the comics on time before summer holidays	3	3	2	8
Permission from the ethical committee	3	5	3	11
Enough time for drawing in the workshops	2	3	2	7
Participants are not interested on drawing or comics	3	4	2	9

When looking at the table, it seems that most of the risk factors are related for the permissions. Since the organization of Stadin Ammattiopisto is wide, there was a risk on delay when applying permission from the principals for the project. In this chapter I will analyze and review potential risks for the project.

Stakeholders were communicating during the project and only the permission from the school board and not getting the approval from the ethical committee was the biggest threat for the project.

Teachers and students seemed to like the idea and it was relatively easy to start planning the project with them. One of the risks was ethical issues. Since the project was done with young adults and some students are under aged, approval from the ethical commission was mandatory.

Biggest risk was related for the size of the Helsinki city organization. Stadin Ammattiopisto and especially City of Helsinki has thousands of workers and students, and because the workload of teachers, it might take time to get permission from the principals.

Preparing for risks does not mean that risks could still occur at any stage of the project. Some are associated with precise functions and others originate from outside the project and can manifest themselves without warning. Identifying risks saves terms of time and money (Lock 2007, 101-105).



## 6. BUDGET

There are three methods used commonly when estimating costs. Analogous, parametric, and bottom-up. Analogous estimating reviews if there is a need to estimate data based similar work activities that are done in the past. If past and present projects are similar, this type of estimation can be highly useful, since it might be less costly and does not need so much time. Downside on using this type of estimating, is that it might not be so accurate. (Wells, Kloppenborg 2015, 83)

The following shortcomings during beginning of the project can condemn it to almost certain failure: Estimated costs, timescale or benefits are too optimistic, either risk assessment is not complete, or it is flawed. (Lock 2007,17)

Materials and expenses often constitute more than half the costs of the project, and controlling their costs are important. (Lock 2007, 431)

Personal knowledge from attending comics courses earlier already existed, so there was an idea about the structure of the workshop and approximated time which was needed. Calculating the costs was relatively easy. Costs included pens, papers, and printing.

Pens and papers were found already from myself, printing was the most expensive part. 25 copies of the magazine costed 105 euros done by Picaset printing group. Originally magazines were supposed to print together with Mediakylpylä, where the layout was done, but because the printing machine refused work, I needed to contact for the printing group which could do the comics quickly enough.

## 7. RESOURCES

The inputs of this project include the small group of people united together to make a comics magazine with the materials, and finally have a small publishing party together.

Overall outputs of the project would be wider and include a new working method for the youth work that could be used later with the similar groups.

Projects generally include the transformation of inputs into an output. Work, the materials and other resources that are used and energy that is put into the project all create the final transformation, which is the overall outcome of the project. This is the change that the project has produced. (Martin 2002, 35)

In this process, the necessary resources are human resources and material resources. Human resources are the students who joined in the workshops, and the staff of Helsinki city who made this project possible.

About the material resources, organizing the workshops need a place for drawing, along with pen and paper.

Finally, it is needed to ask what outputs or outcomes will be produced, and what will be the quality of them?

And finally, what amounts there will be produced?

Answering these questions help us to understand the project costs, the cost of transforming inputs into outputs and outcomes. Proposed outcomes are important to express clearly, because projects in social and health care are not always meant to create things that can be counted and then costed as separate items. (Martin 2002, 37)

Proposed outcomes are the finished comic magazine and planning a new working method for the youth work that could be used afterwards in the future too.

Resources in this project are not only financial. The budget has been calculated earlier, but important resource are the adolescents who are joining in the project.

Human resources of the project are the youth themselves and the staff from both groups. Along with pen and paper, they will make this possible.

## 8. WORK PLAN

This chapter tells more about the project from start to finish. On the sub chapter 8.1 there will be information about the start of the project. Sub chapter 8.2 tells about the implementation of the workshops and how they were organized.

Projects at social work and health care can consist of various types. Some might be short-term, like organizing an event, making a major purchase or moving an office. Sometimes they can last longer and grow larger, which involves more people. Examples from this can be developing a new service or a new function. The project is expected to improve a service provision. Sometimes it may be expected to deliver financial benefits to the organization in some way. In the public sector, projects are usually expected to lead social, economic and political outcomes. (Martin 2002, 7)

The comics workshop will be short-term project where new art method is experimented with adolescents. It might be hard to predict the actual income since the number of participants in the groups stays relatively low, but hopefully it can give some information if this method could be used later in the youth work as well. This chapter will outline the process behind the thesis project, along with ethical guidelines and copyright legislation.

Most essential dates of the process are listed in the following table.

Table 4. Essential dates during the process

22.2.2019	First meeting with Novak-staff
20-21.3.2019	Comic workshops with participants from Novak-project (2 x two hours)
21.3.2019	Contacting the teacher from Valma-group
27.3.2019	Introduction for the Valma-group
15-16.4.2019	Comic workshops with Valma-students (2 x two hours)
6.5.2019	Meeting in Mediakylpylä
17.5.2019	Layout done for the magazine
24.5.2019	Magazines ready
27.5.2019	Sharing magazines for the groups and teachers

## 8.1 Starting the project

In the beginning it is needed to understand the purpose of the project.

Projects are conducted to be useful, and usually there is a need for a new product or a service to be developed or it might be already existing, but it needs to be improved. (Wells, Kloppenborg 2015, 49)

This thesis is supposed to create a new working method for youth work, and wider goal is to prevent social exclusion of young adults.. Various art methods have been used with adolescents, but this time participants are given a chance to be creative and have group discussions on the important topics in our society.

I got a chance to organize comic workshops with two groups before the actual thesis project. During my practice placement I kept two comic drawing sessions in Stadin Ammattiopisto. Students were mostly teenagers and older migrant-based students. I tried similar tasks with them that I used later with Novak and Vamos-groups.

They were given topics where to draw, and after sessions we had a conversation together. One of the tasks was called “problem”, and after the class was over, I got a chance to talk about one work from the younger student, which revealed problems with math studies. I encouraged the student to seek assistance for that from the school professionals. In my opinion, this was quite relevant information, that probably could not have revealed otherwise, since the student seemed very shy and quiet. Other

student who came from the country where comics are not so common decided to draw a chess board. When asked why the student drew a chessboard, answer was that life is like a game of chess. It needs planning and strategy and there are numerous ways to play it through. Can you say it better?

The working method that I decided to use with each group included three short drawing practices in the beginning. First would last five minutes, second two minutes, and last practice only one minute.

I would just give random words for the participants and the group needs to draw from anything that comes to their mind about the words. Idea of this method is to let them make up ideas fast from the inner self, without limitations.

We did comic drawing sessions during my practice placement about the given topic, "Problem". I was curious to what people would draw from the given subject, and everybody drew different problems that came into their mind. Overall, these first pilot groups gave good knowledge how the upcoming workshops could be organized.

## 8.2 Implementation

In the final project workshops, I decided that I will use the same method with Novak and Valma-students, but this time participants would be given more themes where to draw.

I decided five themes for the group: Environment, friendship, human rights, social media, politics and future.

The reason why these topics were chosen was the reason that I feel that they are relevant according to our society and generation of young adults. It would be interesting to see what they would create on the given subjects.

First workshops were planned to do with Novak group, since the students were already familiar from the practice placement, and we were already tried different art methods with the group. Workshops were organized during spring 2019. There had been discussions about the comic workshops with

supervisors and idea was agreed on December 2019, before my practice placement ended. I presented my plan for the assisting principal of Stadin Ammattiopisto in in the same month, and we agreed that it would be possible to start my thesis cooperation with them during spring 2019.

In the beginning of the year, we had first meeting with Novak-supervisors. It was decided that first workshops would be held on 20.3, and in case that some participants would not get their work done on time, there would be option for second work shop on the following day. Before the first workshop with the group I designed an advertisement for Novak's Instagram page, which you can see from the following link:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BvMUPTthBUZ/>

After the dates were agreed, it was time to plan the structure for the workshops in the first day of workshops. On the second day students continued their work where they left.

Table 6. Workshop manual

Introduction on the comics	5 minutes
Warming up practices	1,2, and 5 minutes.
Drawing the comics	2 hours

At the beginning of the workshops, participants had a short 5 minutes introduction to comics. After that they were given three warming up practices about three topics that came into mind. Students were given one word each time where they should draw anything that comes to their mind. First round lasted 5 minutes, second 2 minutes, and final practice only 1 minute. This was to support their creativity. Participants had limited time to draw, and this practice was meant to show that ideas can occur quickly and sometimes it is good to let go of the inner critic and just start drawing, without thinking too much about the result.

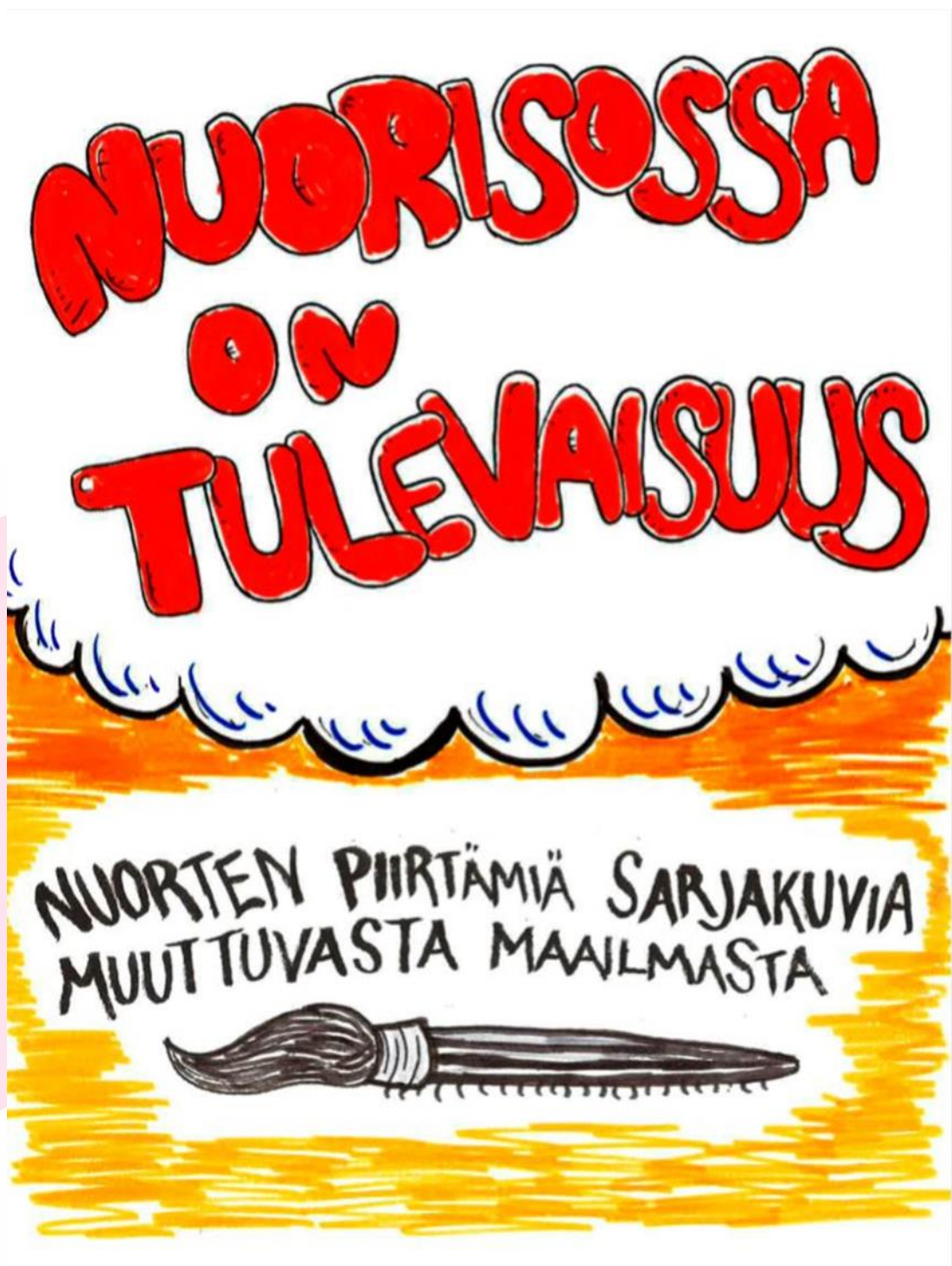
Finally, participants were given five subjects to draw: Environment, friendship, future, politics, and social media. Then it was time to start drawing the comics.

First session was organized with Novak group. Like it was prepared, there was not many attendants joining. Some of the group members did not like to

draw, and there were some students away on that day. Because of the voluntary nature of the Novak-project, this was not uncommon. Finally, there were three participants who joined and started to draw comics. Idea of the workshops were introduced for them and it seemed that all the group members were familiar with comics earlier.

Because some of the students did not feel comfortable on drawing at first, they were told that it is completely voluntary to join, and they can do something else if they do not want to join in the workshops. Rest of the group who did not draw comics, did origamis and played board games while other members drew comics. All the participants were informed about the process and they were given the contract where they signed to give permission to use their finished work in thesis and to make sure that no information of the students was used at any circumstances.

We listened music together with the group and discussed what would be the name of the magazine. One of the participants suggested “Nuorisossa on tulevaisuus - Nuorten piirtämiä sarjakuvia muuttuvasta maailmasta” (translation would be something like this: “Youth Have The Future -Comics Made By Youth On The Changing World), so we decided to use that. Below there is a cover that was drawn based on the suggested name.



Picture 1: Frontpage of the magazine

The title sums up what it is about: Give power for the youth and let them draw their views from the changing world.

After the cover was finished, group members were assisted if they had some concerns or problems with drawing. Overall, it was relatively easy process and only one of the participants could not finish the comic, so we decided to organize meeting for the next day.

On the following day, all the comics were scanned and saved together with approval documents on the USB flash memory stick. Now there were three finished works, so I contacted the teacher of Valma if this project could be possible to finish with their group and get more participants joined.

The idea was presented for the group on similar way like with Novak on 27.3. It was decided that workshops with Valma-students would be held after the Finnish Parliamentary Elections. It was interesting to see if that day and election results could bring any ideas for the comics as well.

Soon came April, and it was time for the workshops with Valma-students. Like in the previous workshop, group had three quick sketching sessions in the beginning and after that the project the thesis idea was introduced for them. Before sessions, young participants were handed agreement form to be signed. After the warming up practice it was time to start drawing.

This time was different compared to Novak. More students were joined in the workshops, and it was not very difficult to get the them to draw. Teacher of Valma-group had planned this session for the study module, so it was easier to get everybody participating. Obviously, there were few students who did not feel motivated at first, but in the end of the workshops, majority of them seemed to like drawing.

Few students refused to give permission to use their works in thesis, which was slightly unpleasant, since they were talented works. Otherwise these two-hour workshops succeeded well.

It also seemed that Finnish parliamentary elections influenced the artists during the workshops in April 15th and 16th. Topics and discussions were political, lots of students had opinions and understanding about politics in general. This can be seen in the finished comics after the workshops were finished.

It influenced our group to talk about political satire, and about the political neutrality of teachers. Group were discussing about political views and politicians generally.

After the workshops were done, it was time to summarize the experiences. While drawing the comics, we had interesting and good conversations with students about the given subjects. Overall, the group seemed to have fun in the workshops, I needed to practice censorship unlike it was originally planned, because there was some swearing in one of the comics. I thought that it breaks the rhythm of comic book and it was not necessary to put it in the final comic. This was just in case if parents of the youth and Diak staff would be viewing the comic later. Still, the comic was good even after the small censor in the final work.

### 8.3 Printing

After the comics were finished, it was time to start preparing for the printing and layout as well. Comics were slightly operated in Photoshop to make modifications on the contrast and colors. After that it was time to contact Mediakylpylä, which is part of Helsinki city as well, and ask their staff if it could be possible to get help for the layout from them.

Mediakylpylä organizes graphic design studies, where young adults can apply for a work practice to learn skills on graphic design and other parts of visual communications. Because they have knowledge on printing and layout design, maybe it could be possible to ask their help too, since they were in the same organization. (Mediakylpylä.fi)

After the comics were finished, they were asked if the final comic book could be printed with help of their students.

At the same day, on 17.4 they responded for the email, and we agreed to have a meeting in the 6th of May. In the meeting the plan was introduced for the responsible worker of the graphic design group from Mediakylpylä. They seemed to like the idea as well, and this type of project would be good practice for the students as well.

They promised to do the layout for comics, and originally it would be possible to use their printer to print the comic book with their printing machine. Finally, the layout was ready on 17.5, one day before I got finally a response from Helsinki City ethical commission. Everything seemed to be working fine and in time, but then I encountered for a problem. I was supposed to print the copies in Mediakylpylä for free, but unfortunately it turned out that their printing machine did not work after all. Now it was time to think about the alternative option, comics were needed to print with some printing company. In the end printing was payed myself, which costed 105 euros for twenty five copies.

Then comic magazine was ready to be given for the participants. All the participants had their own copy in time, as it was promised before summer holidays. We had a small publishing party with both groups, where we discussed about the finished works. One photo from the publishing party can be seen from the Instagram account of Novak.

(<https://www.instagram.com/p/ByUfon7hBjO/8.3>)

#### 8.4. Finished magazine

“Nuorisossa on tulevaisuus”-comic magazine, done together with Novak, and Valma-youth was published on 27.5.2019. Magazine was given only for the group members and assisting teachers and supervisors who participated in the making process.

Name of the magazine came from one of the participants. We were thinking suitable name for the magazine, and “youth has the power”-summarizes everything that was the idea behind the project.

Aim was them to be creative and using their skills to create stories from the changing world. There was a wide range of comics and in this thesis, four finished works are presented from the students. First comic comes from the group member who decided to draw comics related to education, anxiety and student debts:

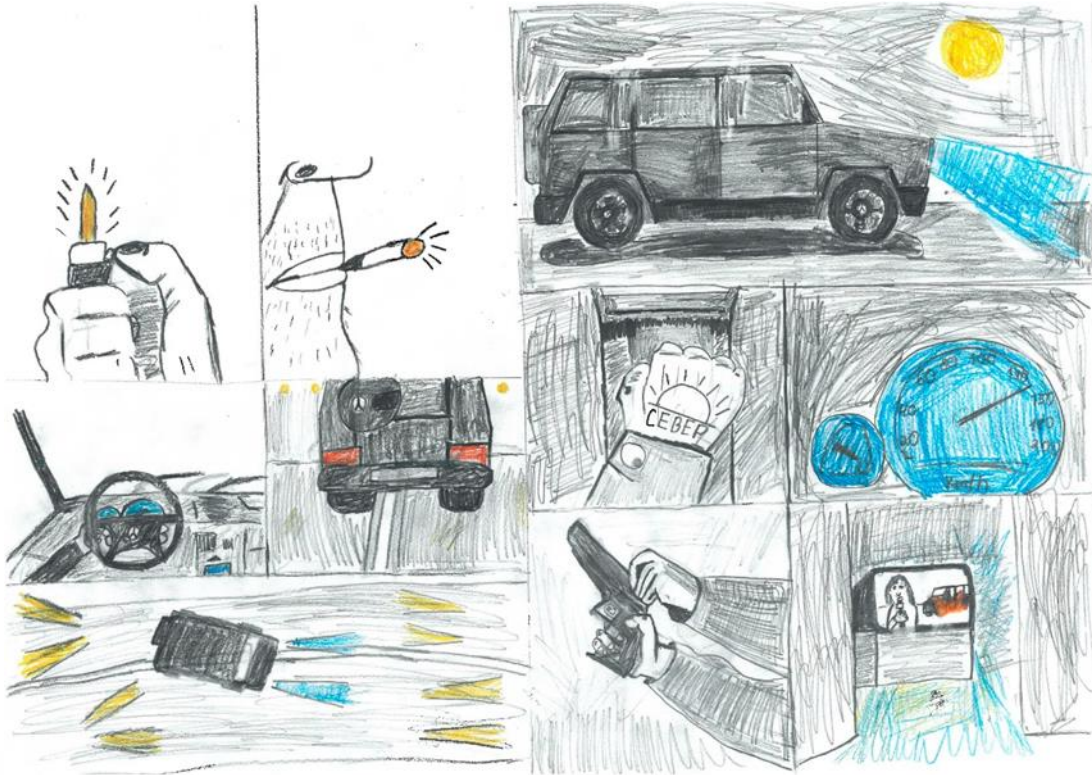


Picture 2. Comic strip about the things that worry in our society

This was one of the works which was influenced by environment and future themes. In the first picture left it says “Youth is getting tired and anxious, what gives?” In the picture right answer is: “Youth: At least climate change, nazis and chilly student loan debts promptly”.

Another work was done without subtitles.

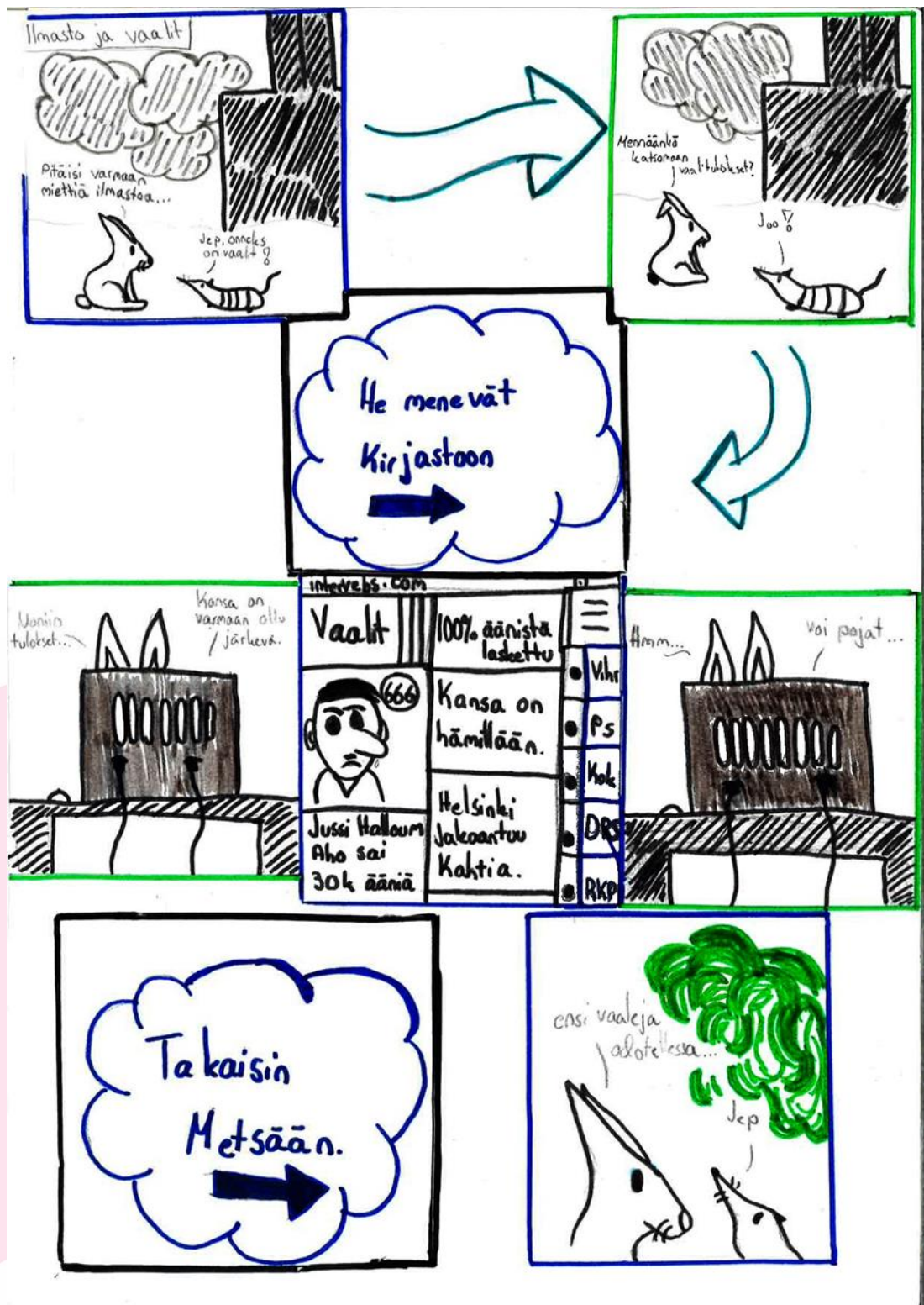
It is not entirely sure which category the following comic is done, but it is a good example about the variation and skills of the youth who joined in the workshops.



Picture 3: Car drive

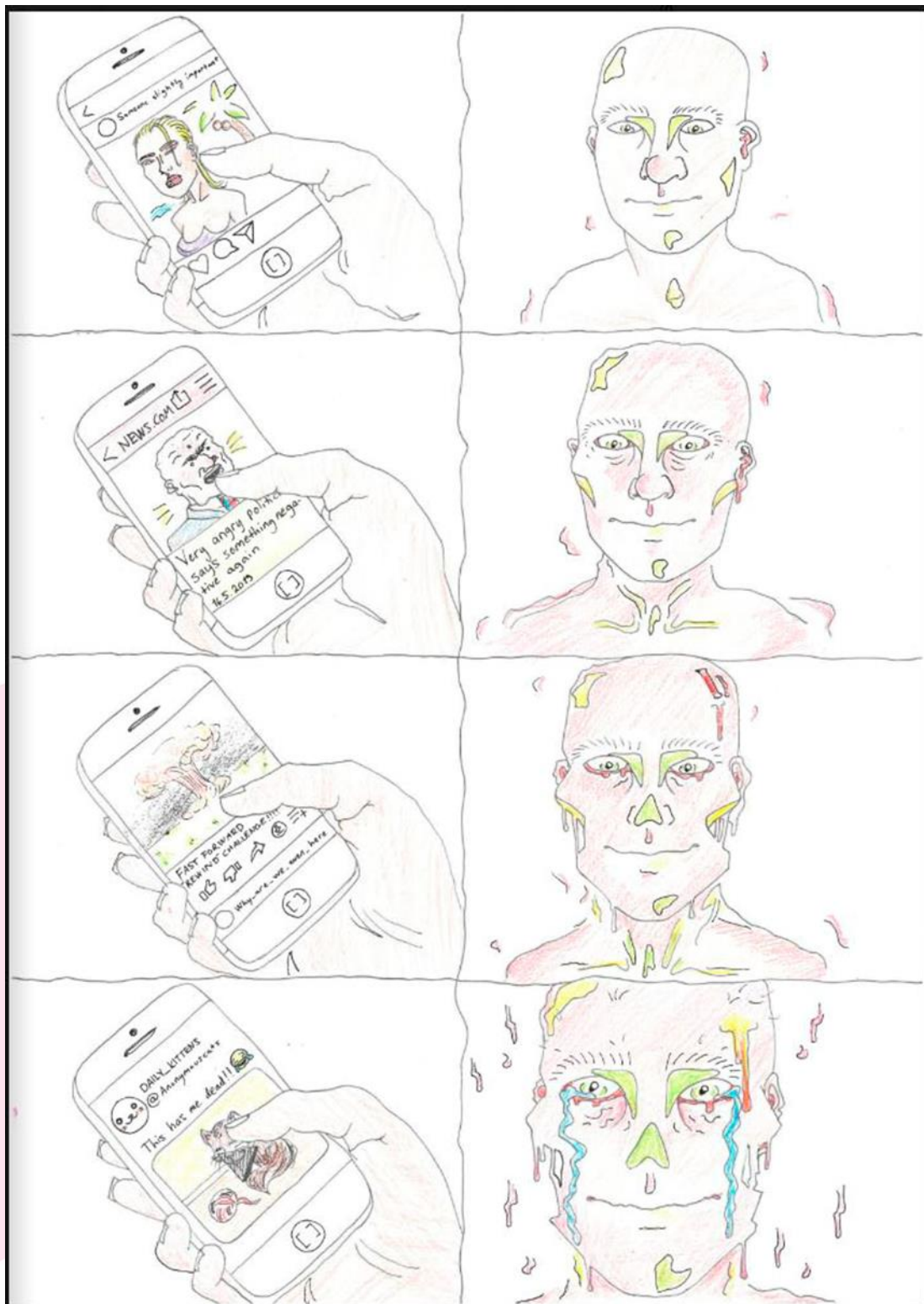
Finally there is one of the examples where the election results influenced on the drawings of Valma-students.

Climate and elections. "We should be thinking about the climate. -Yup, thankfully we have elections." The couple is leaving to library and are seeing the results: "Okay, so the results are here. Citizens might have been reasonable". In the picture middle it seems that so called "Jussi-Halloum Aho" got 30 thousand votes and leaves citizens frustrated. So, the rabbit and the mole are going back to forest to wait for the other elections.



Picture 4: The elections

Final comic was related to smart phones, as it can be seen.



Picture 5: Smart phone problem

After the workshops, the project with the adolescents was finished and the comic magazine was printed for the participants. As a project is close to its completion, the focus is centered on from implementation activities to ensure that all the products are handed over to the suitable recipients. These deliverables are not necessarily tangible, and delivery of the outcomes will

vary according to the purpose and objectives of the project. (Martin 2002, 146)

After the workshops, it was time to think the actual impact. What worked and what could be improved later?

## 9. EVALUATION

In this chapter project and workshops are evaluated. Feedback from the class is analyzed and finally there will be personal reflection about the whole process.

### 9.1 Evaluation of the project

Evaluation is a systematic study of the worth or significance of an object. It usually involves some standards, criteria, measures of success, or objectives that describe the value of the object. Evaluation can identify criteria for success, lessons to learn, things to achieve, ways to improve the work, and the means to move forward. (Zarinpoush, 2016)

After the project is finished, it is time to start evaluation about the project objectives and were they achieved. In this chapter the project will be analyzed from the beginning to the end. I will investigate what worked during the process and what could be done different way in the future.

### 9.2 Feedback

After the summer it was time to ask feedback. Workers of Novak and Valma were asked to answer for four questions together with the group, to summarize if this type of art method could use with other similar groups in the future as well.

Because some of the participants were underaged, it was decided in the beginning of the project that there would not be any personal interviews which could reveal anything from the identities of participants who were

joined in the project. This was also to make sure that permission from the ethical committee would be smoother, because waiting for the answer could have delayed the whole process.

With the magazine, important aspect was to study how the workshops succeeded.

Overall, majority of the students seemed to like the project. One of students told that even when she was not interested to do it, but after seeing the final version of a magazine, participant thought it was worth it.

In the beginning the idea was to give tools for the people to be creative and support their knowledge on the various issues on our society. Along with that, it promotes the original Youth act, which aims to promote possibilities for hobbies and social participation of youth. (Nuorisolaki,1285/2016).

Afterall, the most important data comes from target group and stakeholders of the project, so it was possible to discuss about the workshops with them after the project. Originally, I was thinking that information from the publishing party would be enough, but I was wrong.

After the workshops and comics were done in the end of May, we discussed briefly in small groups about the project in the publishing party before the summer holidays. In the Novak project, there was not any participants in the publishing party, since some of them were already in summer holidays, or in the school entrance examination. The number of participants stayed relatively low with Novak in the workshops so I was prepared that there might not be participants in the final meeting. Notes were made from these sessions, but since there was only Valma students answering before the summer holidays, workers from Novak and Valma were sent four questions after the summer holidays to get more information. Idea was that teachers could tell their opinions about the workshops, and they could also ask questions from the students as well.

Questions were:

Best and worst thing while doing the comic?

What did you think about the final comic magazine?

Could it be possible to use comic workshops in youth work?

How would you improve comic workshops if they would be held in the future as well?

Emails were sent for the responsible persons of these two group, and feedback was collected based on the anonymous answers by the participants themselves which were sent afterwards.

When asked about the best thing in workshops, one of the adolescents responded that best thing was to see others doing what they had in mind, and worst part was to hate own drawing. The finished comic magazine looked good. This could be used later if the group members want.

I was prepared for this and I knew that there would be probably students who would not like to draw. But sometimes, you need to do something in school or life that you are not interested. Some of the adolescents might also have low self-esteem, so showing their own picture publicly would be hard for them. This is something I had not thought enough earlier.

One of the participants responded that drawing the comic was fun, but I was not necessary to publish it as a magazine. Student hoped that others were happy of their release in the magazine, but respondent was not inspired of that personally. In the end student thought that comics looked nice anyway.

Printing the magazine was something that I was figuring out during the process. Would it be necessary? But it was decided in the beginning and I thought that at least they would get some memory from the process after the workshops. This was the most important aspect.

Third anonymous member of the group thought that it felt good to use own creativity, but there was too little time. It was also nice to see what others had drew and the magazine was done well. This student thought that using the comics in youth work would be really good idea.

Time was something that I also thought. Would these two workshops be enough? There were few students who did not have time to finish their works because they could not make it in time.

However, majority of the students managed to finish their works in time, and few students got possibility to finish their comics outside workshops.

Teacher of Valma-students answered that it was delightful to see how all the group members started drawing and writing when there was outsider directing the process. Magazines are still with our group and it happens that new students are viewing those as well. Best thing in the comic workshops was, that there was a new possibility for the youth to express themselves and their thoughts. This was also a good opportunity to promote own thoughts and views for others and try a new art method.

Worker from the Novak-project thought that downside of the workshops was that for the many of the group members, drawing itself could be an haunting or even traumatizing experience, because of the earlier experiences from art teaching in schools. Maybe it could have been better to promote that comics would be free to do for everybody, but there was no need to get them published in the magazine.

Still, finished magazine was a great idea, because It left a concrete memory for the participants and gave living for the finished works and made them eternal. Along with that, it is possible to use magazine when promoting the action of the group in the future for outsiders.

In the end, comic workshops could be possible to use in youth work, or other fields of social work, like other art methods as well. Personally, he would improve them little bit, so that introduction could be clearer, and why the comic magazine is done. Along with that, it could be possible to start from simple works, like drawing caricatures and expand it for the comic strips etc.

These two feedbacks from the staff of both groups gave also important information. When thinking about the workshops afterwards, it worked better with Valma-students who had strict curriculum, and their activities were more study oriented. It was easy especially when their teacher had added workshops in their curriculum. This was not so easy with the other group.

Group was usually small and perhaps the participants of the group would have needed even more support to get joined, or they could have just drew comics which would not have been published in the magazine.

About the idea that they could draw anything that comes to their mind. Why not, it would be a basic art method that are used. But I wanted to see could we have conversation with adolescents during and after the workshops.

When thinking about this afterwards, I think it worked quite well with Valma students.

According to the answers, majority of the respondents seemed to like comic workshops. Still, maybe it would be better to have at least three sessions per group to make sure that everybody can finish their works and think ideas.

Maybe comics could have been done in open workshops, without themes.

Just drawing, without pressure for some participants.

It was a personal decision that I printed the magazine for everybody. It was not probably necessary, but majority of the adolescents and all the workers seemed to like it.

Themes of the magazine was also something that is important to think in the future. It was decided in the beginning of the project that participants would be doing comics from given themes that are current in our society. I was curious to find out how the participants would be viewing these issues in the comics. I still think that this could be a good tool to work in more advanced groups which are aiming the students towards the studies, but for the groups which might have more challenged participants and who need more time to get forward, it might be possible to use comics without pressure and just let the group members to draw anything they like.

It was known from the beginning that there might be some group members who would not probably like the idea of comics, but it was delightful to notice that even these members seemed to like the comic afterwards.

Overall, this type of comic course with the current or personal topics could be used in the similar environment, but perhaps this worked better with Valma-students, where joining for the workshops was mandatory in the curriculum. In some youth projects, joining for them is voluntary and participants are not

forced to do anything that they do not want. This is the reason why groups might be small. Still it was nice to hear opinions from the students who first were not willing to draw, that after the magazine was ready, they thought that it was fun to do after all. Even though it looked hard to get permission from the school and ethical committee at first, everything was done in time. Aim was to try new working method with adolescents and print own copy of the comic book for them. We managed to have publishing parties with the groups as well, where we discussed about the workshops and comics.

Comparing the finished product for the SMART template of the objectives, it seems that project succeeded. Original plan of ten participants was not achieved, but in the finished magazine there were comics from nine different artists. Original plan was to organize workshops, do the layout and finally print the comic magazine. Aim was to keep four workshops with two groups, and all this succeeded in the given time.

There was a risk that some of the participants were not motivated to join for the workshops. Luckily I got help from the staff, who were more familiar with youth already. That helped a lot in the workshops.

Workshops and printing of the magazine was done in time between February and May 2019, and comic was printed before June. Final feedback was collected from the teachers on time, and original deadline for thesis worked out as well, the December of 2019. It would be fair to say that most of the aims and objectives according to the SMART-template were achieved in this project.

Idea was to try different working method with young adults by drawing comics and raise conversation about the different issues of our society, and in the workshops this original idea seemed promising. We had good and informative conversations with participants about the subjects, which was something I hoped in the beginning. It would have been interesting to try comics with different subjects to see what kind of results there would have been.

Most of the participants seemed to like the finished magazine as well.

Unfortunately, it could not be printed with Mediakylpylä, but that was a risk that needed to be prepared in the beginning.

Some students thought that because of the time limitations, it was hard to finish works. One participant was thinking that getting ideas seemed hard at first, but doing the comics was still fun.

One of the adolescents in the group said that this type of action was fun, but it might be better if comics workshops could be operated together with writing and illustrating course that pupils had earlier in the spring 2019. This is something that could be possible to do with some groups.

So, could it be possible to use comic workshops in youth work? I would say yes. Workshops gave promising results and they gave opportunity to talk with youth in relaxed atmosphere. But most important thing was that participants had fun while doing the comics. However, all of the adolescents are not interested of drawing and they cannot be forced to do something that they do not like.

### 9.3 Observations and challenges

Most challenges occurred with research permits. The process itself took time and planning but reaching the headmasters from the Stadin Ammattiopisto was the hardest part. It took several months until the permission was finally granted on April. After that, all the documents were sent for the ethical commission of Helsinki City which gave me a permission for the research. It was decided in the beginning that there would not be individual questionnaires for the adolescents, since the research permit might have taken even more longer. Instead, observation was done in the workshops and later I sent email for the teachers to get more information from the groups after the summer was over.

From here I can go to the next conclusion. I knew that there would be some participants who would not be interested on drawing at all. In the other group there was only three participants. But it was something I was prepared in the

beginning, and I did not want to force anybody to draw if they would not like to.

I had more participants from the other group which was closer to actual teaching in the schools. Teacher planned the comic book workshop for their curriculum, and everybody needed to participate. Of course, there were some rejections in the beginning, but after the comic was printed, one of the participants told that first she thought that it is totally stupid idea, but after seeing the results she thought that it was actually fun to do. In the publishing party, everybody seemed like the workshops and the finished result.

Time was one of the problems I mentioned, and some of the students thought that it could have maybe been better to organize this kind of course together with illustrating and writing course. This is a very good idea and I could see this type of workshop used in the same kind of environment where Valma teaching happens.

To raise awareness with the youth about social issues, this method could be useful with some groups. That is what we want after all, citizens who can use their own creativity and who have courage to be themselves and follow their own path.

Since the number of participants remained low, the sample is only directional. To get more better and precise outcomes, workshops should be organized with other target groups, with different themes.

One of the challenges was the voluntary nature of the projects, especially Novak. Over all, adolescents are guided according to their wishes and needs, and forcing to do something that would not like to, does not work.

Personally, it gave a chance to understand young adults better, like with the first group during my practice placement where one of the students claimed to have difficulties with math studies, and other older student thought life to be compared as a chess board.

One of the risks was that could all the group members finish their works in time. Since most of the finished works were short, majority of the participants

managed to finish their works in time, and few finished their works independently.

#### 9.4 Ethical principles

It was decided in an early stage of the project that thesis would include only background information of Novak and Vamos groups. All the documentation was done anonymously, and no personal details of the participants was revealed. Everybody in the group signed a letter only to use their finished comic in the thesis and the original works were left for the participants. They signed their names and approval document was saved for the memory stick together with the work. The consent form included the name of the author in thesis project, and purpose of the data use.

The guidelines were conducted by the ethical principles based on the Finnish Board in Research Integrity. (Kivirinta, M., Nylund, M. & Vesterinen, O 2018.)

If there would not have been any permission from Stadin Ammattiopisto board or ethical committee of Helsinki city, comic courses would have kept anyway, but the research would have to be targeted again. Art methods are commonly used with group of adolescents, so most of the worries were related to the age group and the sensitivity of the projects. This is the reason why all the identification was not public. To minimize the risk of getting any delay from the ethical committee, the decision was done that I would not be doing any questionnaire survey, because some of the participants were underaged. Instead I took notes from the sessions and the publishing party. No names or identities are revealed but I can tell some of the most important conclusions.

#### 9.5 Data collection and ethical guidelines

Copyright begins when the work is done. Protection starts from the beginning of the work till the end according to law. Usually the authors names are published, but due the sensitivity of the target group, we decided to leave all the names from the magazine, because they were handed only for two small

student groups, and the magazine was not planned for the commercial purposes. (Tekijänoikeus.fi)

Approval was asked from all the participants who joined for the workshops. They were asked to sign a contract where idea of the thesis project was explained. Permission was asked for the use of comics in the thesis, and only works were published from those who gave the permission to do that. Since some of the participants were under eighteen years old, I decided not to do any personal survey. Instead observation was done in the workshops, and publishing parties. After the summer I decided to send email for the teachers of the group, so that they could think together with the group about the benefits and potential of the comic workshops.

All the copies of comics were saved in the USB memory stick, and they have been removed after the printing was done.

After the comics were printed, only few comics are shown in thesis and all the data was erased of the comics from the computer. Nobody was not forced to do anything, and all the data collection methods were approved by youth who were in this project, the ethical committee and staff from Stadin Ammattiopisto.

Ethical principles concerns each choice at the different stages of the work. It is important to be careful with data collecting, data use and data storage (Kuula 2006). (Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR): Guide: Ethical principles)

All the participant was informed that comics workshops are part of thesis. and they asked permission to use some of the finished works in the thesis. No names or data that could reveal person's identity is revealed in thesis. The consent form included information on the author of the research/development project, the purpose of the project, the use of the data and who has access to it.

Building a trust was important before starting the workshops. It is important to make sure for all the participants that joining or refusing to participate

workshops will not complete the lives of the participants, and the results will not harm them.

Question template for the groups can be found in the end of the thesis.

## 10. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DURING THE PROCESS

Original plan was to create new working method for the youth work and youth workers. Idea was that young adults could have opportunity to draw something that is close to them, and it could give a possibility to discuss with them at the same time.

After the workshops and printing the magazine for everybody I can say that results were satisfying.

This started from my interests with comics as a storytelling tool, combining elements from social exclusion and youth work.

Benefits on this working method comes from the easiness. Only pen and paper are needed. I realized that my personal experiences from comic drawing courses were useful. Having few drawing practices to warm people up seemed to work well. Participants told that it was interesting to see how they just needed to start drawing without any complete idea on their head. After that it was easier to start drawing, and I think giving subjects for the group was needed in this case to make the whole process smoother and faster. It would have taken longer time to start thinking whole new comics, especially when some of the students did not have much experience on drawing before.

This gave me a good knowledge on project planning and all the aspects that are related to that. Since I was doing this myself, it was important to plan the project well from the start to finish, and to be carefully prepared for the risks.

While writing this, I have learned a lot about the social exclusion since my last training. I understand better young adults and how they view the world.

Other thing where I developed during the process, was time management. Currently I am working in adult social work, but it would be interesting to work in some projects with young adults later. The original idea was to understand who are these youth who are not working or studying. Why is it so and what is happening to them? After working with them, I realized that these people were as smart and more creative than some would think. They have lots of talent and have strong opinions about the society and the world. Most importantly, everybody seemed to like the results and at least we had fun doing that. That could be a good start when trying to understand “generation-Y”.

One of the most crucial lessons was to learn more about social exclusion of young adults. There are numerous reasons why thousands of adolescents are staying outside society and this project showed me just a glimpse of that. During the project I got good knowledge about the issues and about the youth work in general. This is useful information which can be used in the future if I will work with young adults later after the graduation. These young adults should be saved back into society before it is too difficult or even too late to help them. There is no one right answer how to this, listening what the youth has to say is a good start. Like it can be seen with social work clients, every individual has their own personal story which leads them to different situations in life. Working with these two groups gave me important knowledge about hopes, fears and dreams of young adults in Finnish society.

In the final page I wrote message for the students from myself. In the text I told that it was interesting and amazing to work with the participants and see how creative they were. Original text is translated like this:

“Thanks for the Stadin Ammattiopisto students who made it possible to create this comic magazine. It was a great joy and privilege to work in this project with you. Finished words were funny, personal, and sharp-eyed. As a friend of comic books and seeing the finished works I can say I am more than happy of the result. From this day you can also call yourself comic book artists as well.

I wish you all great beginning of the summer. Enjoy the weather and remember to rest before the autumn starts. And especially remember: You have the future!

Best regards,

Jarkko Rähä

On May 2019

I knew that I would not be probably see adolescents when the summer comes, so I decided to write a note from myself. If the happen to take this comic book in their hands later, I hope they can remember those words later in the future.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Contract for the workshop participants.

#### SUOSTUMUS OPINNÄYTETYÖHÖN OSALLISTUMISEEN

Diak Ammattikorkeakoulun opiskelija Jarkko Räihä toteuttaa opinnäytetyön järjestämällä sarjakuvapajoja Stadin Ammattiopiston opiskelijoiden kanssa. Sarjakuvapajoilla tehdään erilaisista aiheista lyhyitä sarjakuvia, jotka lopulta koostetaan yhteiseksi pienlehdeksi, jonka kaikki osallistujat lopulta saavat itselleen. Mitään henkilötietoja joista käy ilmi opiskelijan henkilöllisyys ei julkaista mutta tämän kirjallisen suostumuksen tarkoituksena on pyytää osallistujilta lupaa käyttää osaa valmiista teoksista valmiissa opinnäytetyössä. Tietoja joita tullaan käyttämään on lopullisten osallistujien määrä ja työpajojen prosessien eri vaiheet sekä analysoida valmiita sarjakuvateoksia.

Annan suostumukseni käyttää valmista työtäni opinnäytetyössä.

Kyllä ( )

Ei ( )

Paikkakunta ja päivämäärä

Nimikirjoitus ja nimen selvennys