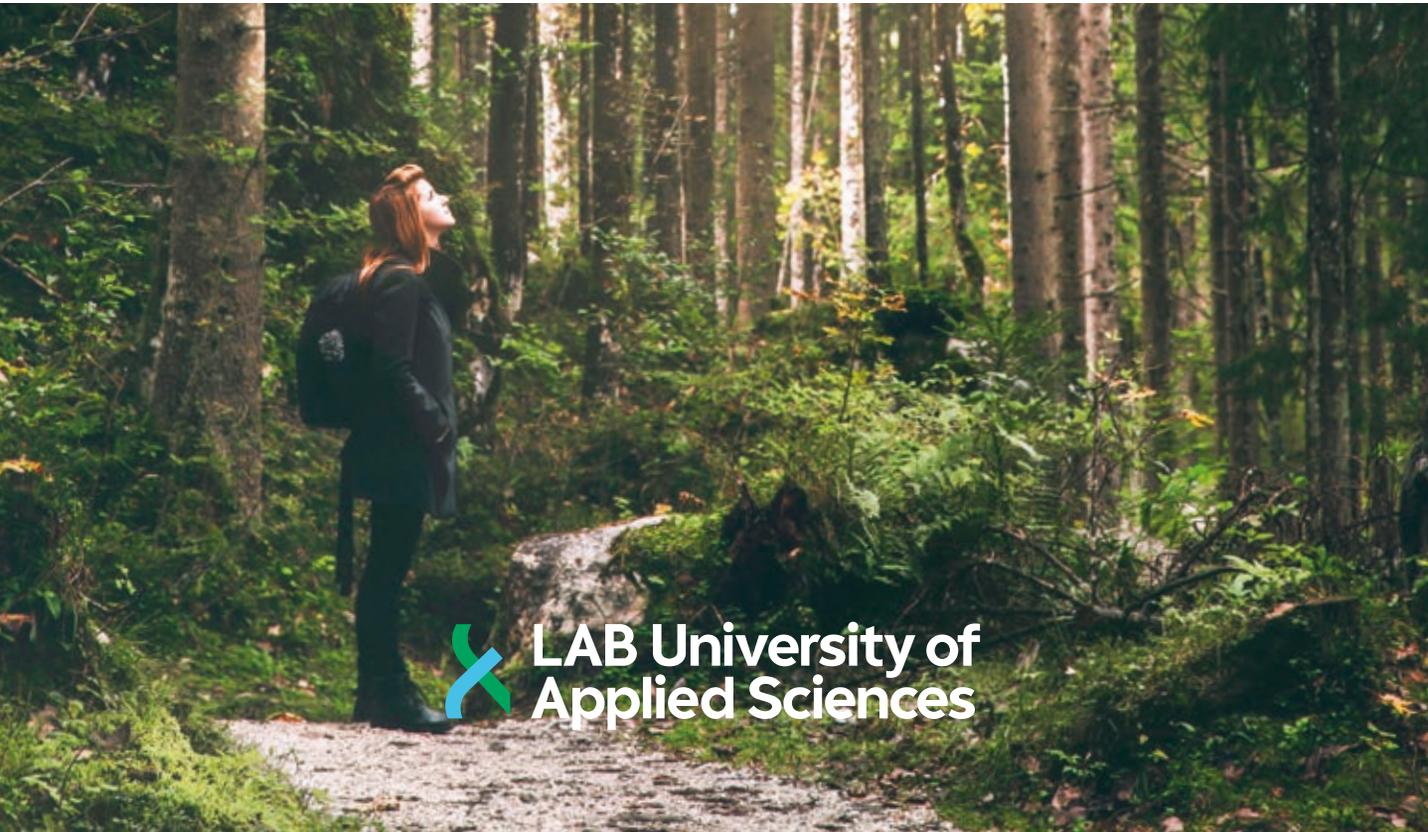




Anita Hartikainen & Kati Peltonen (eds.)

LAB Health Annual Review 2020

The Publication Series of LAB University of Applied Sciences, part 5



LAB University of
Applied Sciences

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LAB Health
Annual Review **2020**

The Publication Series of LAB University of Applied Sciences, part 5

Editor-in-chief: Henri Karppinen

Technical reviewer: Heli Vilja-Sarromaa

Layout: Oona Rouhiainen, Mainostoimisto SST Oy

ISSN 2670-1928 (PDF)

ISSN 2670-1235 (print)

ISBN 978-951-827-333-5 (PDF)

ISBN 978-951-827-334-2 (print)

Lahti, 2020



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Kati Peltonen

Preface: Service Innovations for Health and Well-being

This spring highlighted matters and challenges related to health and well-being. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced all of us to look at the building blocks of our well-being and the well-being of our loved ones in a new light. At the same time, it has challenged us as well as working communities and society to seek new ways and solutions for health promotion, preventing social exclusion and maintaining well-being at work.

As we all witnessed during the spring of 2020, our well-being is made up of several different elements. We need to recover from work and be physically active to counterbalance the immobility of remote meetings and sitting at our desks. We also need to have a sense of inclusion and have access to the functioning and high-quality service chains. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of functioning health care service chains and the basics of health promotion, such as good hand hygiene. At the same time, a huge leap forward has been taken in piloting and implementing remote services and digital and technological solutions. We have also increasingly discovered nature and exercising as sources of well-

being. Since traveling far has not been possible, we have enjoyed experiences found nearby.

LAB Health is one of the strategic focus areas of LAB University of Applied Sciences, directing both the research, development, and innovation activities and the development of instruction. The key themes of research and development in LAB Health include: 1) Well-being from physical activity and living environment, 2) Social inclusion and safety in everyday life, 3) Health promotion and smart self-care and 4) Efficient service chains. Each of these themes approaches health and wellbeing from a different angle, but they all share the objective of the RDI activities to generate different service innovations that promote health and wellbeing in cooperation with various stakeholders.

Service innovations generally refer to a new core service or service concept deliberately created to achieve a certain benefit, a service delivery method, or technology or reform related to the provision of the service in some of these service dimensions (de Jong & Vermeulen 2003 845–846). In short, service innovations for health and wellbeing thus

refer to various service and operating models that strengthen and promote health and wellbeing, the solutions provided by wellbeing and health technology, as well as to the various methods to renew and reform service processes within the health care sector. The concept of service innovations for health and wellbeing also covers the renewal of wellbeing business, as well as the generation of new wellbeing business and entrepreneurship based on innovations in products, services, or operating methods. Service innovations for health and wellbeing may also be social innovations, which refer to new solutions stemming from everyday needs and aiming to resolve social grievances by influencing society's practices (Hämäläinen & Heiskala 2004). Overall, the objective of service innovations for health and well-being focus area is to promote the well-being of individuals and communities sustainably and effectively.

The LAB Health Annual Review 2020 compilation consists of 22 articles that highlight the diverse research, development and innovation (RDI) activities

being carried out under various main themes in the Service Innovations for Health and Well-being focus area of LAB University of Applied Sciences. As the articles show, the activities carried out in different projects promote health and well-being in many ways in collaboration with different stakeholders. The articles are written by the health well-being experts from different fields of study at LAB University of Applied Sciences together with writers from other partner and stakeholder organizations. I would like to express my warmest thanks to all the authors for their valuable contribution to this publication.

This publication seeks to disseminate the activities and results of these ongoing projects and provide insights on how RDI projects can be used as tool to make a difference and promote overall well-being. I hope you enjoy reading the articles!

In Lahti, 19 September 2020.

Kati Peltonen, Research, Development and Innovation Director, LAB Health

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**PART 1:
WELL-BEING
FROM PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
AND LIVING ENVIRONMENT**

Niina Ihalainen

Increasing equality in nature tourism hospitality – An unbroken chain of barrier-free and accessible services

In a just society, the basic rights belong to everyone. Personal characteristics, such as disability or age, should not impact a person's opportunities to receive various services (Oikeusministeriö 2020). The accessibility of nature tourism services can be considered to be an equal basic right, and therefore, persons with functional impairments or disabilities should have the opportunity to both receive information about and use nature tourism services, if they so wish, in accordance with the principle of equality.

Tourism that is both physically barrier-free and digitally accessible makes hospitality equal and continuously aims to develop tourism destinations, products and services so that they serve all consumer groups and provide the groups with equal and independent opportunities to enjoy and access tourism experiences that are as versatile as possible. A tourism product that is open to all can be purchased and used by everyone and, in terms of its service design solutions, is also suitable

for special groups. Not all special target groups require any changes in the physical frameworks or structures of tourism products or services, but to reach the target group, targeted communication is needed. The existence of a barrier-free service provides no benefits if the traveller or potential user cannot find information about it or if it cannot be reached in an accessible manner. (Business Finland 2020)

The principle of Design for All (or Universal Design) is to create solutions that suit everyone. When the diverse needs of people are taken into consideration at as early as the planning stage, there will be less need later to separately modify product or service so that it is barrier-free and accessible (Invalidiliitto 2020a; Invalidiliitto 2020b). Changes are always a cost factor, which is why it is worthwhile to be proactive and pay attention to both physical and digital accessibility in the development of services all the way from the planning stage. In this way, both will be integrated in the development of operations and services

and the improvement of customer service, and all this supports the principle of equality and Design for All.

The Nature for All (LUKA) project (2018–2020), coordinated by the LAB University of Applied Sciences, the Finnish Paralympic Committee and the Parks and Wildlife Finland unit of Metsähallitus, aims to develop barrier-free and digitally accessible nature tourism services and promote the equality of special groups in terms of the accessibility to such services (LAB University of Applied Sciences 2020). Eight pilot excursions were organised in the project jointly with the users and providers of the services, tourism enterprises, wilderness guides and organisations of the disabled in the Kanta-Häme and Päijät-Häme regions in 2019–2020. Some of these pilots were

overnight outings. The pilot excursions were also used to test the functioning of the brainstormed barrier-free and digitally accessible nature tourism services and to give a voice to the special groups, in other words, the users of the services. Product cards were compiled based on the pilots and the feedback received, and enterprises in the nature tourism sector can use them when providing similar nature tourism services for special groups. The objective is to increase the service offering in the target areas of the project so that special groups would have better opportunities to enjoy nature and its well-being enhancing effects. The starting point is that experiencing nature is a basic right that belongs to everyone.



Figure 1. Learning the ropes of orienteering in the nature excursion pilot organised in the Liesjärvi National Park. Photo: Anemone Aaltonen

The LUKA project has also addressed the accessibility theme, and a seminar was held on accessibility in terms of attitudes in March 2020. The live webinar was followed by more than 100 people. One week later, the webinar recording had been viewed by 420 followers. The presentations given in the webinar highlighted in particular the importance of advance information and encountering people (Suomen Paralympiakomitea 2020a). This topic clearly raises interest on many fronts, and information on the theme is in high demand. Inclusive tourism is also increasingly highlighted in measures taken by the EU. However, the supply of services provided to all target groups in an equal manner does not yet meet the demand in the tourism services in Finland today (Business Finland 2020). A central problem is the lack of information on accessible tourism services. This article talks about the importance of an unbroken chain of barrier-free and digitally accessible services.

Barrier-free access to the built environment

Barrier-free access, or physical accessibility, refers to taking into consideration the equality and diversity of people in the design and implementation of the built environment (Invalidiliitto 2020a). A party embarking on a construction project must ensure that accessibility and usability are taken into consideration in the design and construction of the building and its yard and shared

areas with regard to children, the elderly and people with disabilities, in particular. The Land Use and Building Act (132/1999) and the National Building Code of Finland specify the general conditions concerning building, substantive technical requirements, building permit procedure and building supervision by the authorities (Ministry of the Environment 2020). The construction of new buildings complies with the accessibility regulations meticulously, including ensuring that doorways are sufficiently wide and there are no thresholds and that sanitation facilities meeting the needs of people with physical disabilities are automatically integrated in public spaces. (Aamulehti 2020)

The Land Use and Building Act and the National Building Code currently support the implementation of accessibility in new construction. Visit Finland (2018) has compiled a document on the criteria for accessibility in tourism ("Esteettömyyskriteerit matkailussa"). The document lists general criteria for physical accessibility in the built environment as well as factors to consider with regard to advance information, accommodation, events and programme services to ensure that the accessibility criteria are met.

Accessibility in the built environment alone is not sufficient to ensure that the entire service chain and service package function as desired. Thus, in addition to the physical accessibility of services, digital accessibility is an equally important factor, and one that

still needs a lot of work.

Unbroken service chain of physical and digital accessibility

Physical and digital accessibility are concepts that are often applied together and are intertwined. Above, we talked about accessibility in the built environment, which refers to the physical environment, outdoor areas and public transportation. Digital accessibility refers to the “intangible” environment, such as information, comprehensibility of information, websites, and services. As a rule, services, communication and websites should be provided in a manner that makes them suitable for everyone. Digital accessibility in communication, availability of information, and services also means that the user has the option to choose between different ways of communicating as well as obtaining information and services. (Invalidiliitto 2020a; Invalidiliitto 2020b)

An atmosphere and attitudes that take into consideration diversity and differences between people also constitute accessibility. Positive attitudes towards diversity may be manifested in customer service encounters and as respectful behaviour in all encounters between people, for example (Invalidiliitto 2020a; Invalidiliitto 2020b). Establishments providing services often lack tools for encountering people with disabilities, even if they physically have ramps and appropriate spaces that make them structurally barrier-free. Structures are important, but what is

particularly important is encountering persons with disabilities and the right attitude towards them. (Aamulehti 2020)

At their best, physical and digital accessibility should be integrated in all planning and implemented so that nobody even notices that something is missing, out of the ordinary or stands out in the environment. Taking physical and digital accessibility into consideration is important so that we will not build a society of barriers but proceed towards a society where everyone has the opportunity to function and obtain information and services as well as be mobile without restrictions. According to Könkkölä (2013), nature tourism has plenty of potential, but tapping into such potential requires unbroken chains of accessibility: barrier-free travel from the airport, bus station or railway station to the destination at a reasonable price, accessible routes, break areas and accommodation as well as digitally accessible communications. The lack of information is specifically one of the problems in accessible tourism.

It affects the functioning of the entire service chain. Physical accessibility requires a built environment that is barrier-free for everyone. The service must be accessible through various communication channels, including phone, the web and face-to-face encounters. This means that, for example, websites are accessible by means of screen reader programmes, the customer service desk is located in a barrier-free build-

ing and within the reach of accessible transport connections and that customer service takes diversity appropriately into consideration. (Invalidiliitto 2020a; Invalidiliitto 2020b)

Physical and digital accessibility of services can also act as criteria for selecting the enterprises one patronises, provide enterprises with a competitive advantage and help them stand out from competition. For example, an enterprise may designate a person from among its personnel who will be responsible for developing physical and digital accessibility and monitoring the realisation of accessibility. Emilia Mäkiranta's experience published in the *Aamulehti* newspaper (2020) illustrates how poorly information is available overall. Emilia Mäkiranta uses a wheelchair due to congenital cerebral palsy and often has to call 10–15 restaurants when planning an outing with friends before finding an accessible venue, often wondering if her plans might materialise at all. Decision-making would be considerably easier if the information on accessibility was readily available on the service providers' websites.

It is worth noting that understanding the special needs of different customers often helps improve the customer experience of all travellers and serves all customer groups. Thus, offering barrier-free and accessible services benefits everyone. Audio description is one way of improving the accessibility of services and the customer experience and it, too, benefits everyone. Audio descrip-

tion puts visual information into words. For example, it helps visually impaired people enjoy nature experiences and provides them with an equal opportunity to experience the attractions along a nature trail and receive precise information. An audio describer analyses information from visual elements, picks out the essence of it and conveys it to the recipient. The audio describer does not make interpretations or value judgements about the visual elements but aims to convey the information as truthfully as possible, so that the recipient can form their own impression of the visual elements described. An experience that can be enjoyed through multiple senses and is accessible benefits visually impaired customers and those without visual impairments alike. It creates added value and helps perceive images and pay attention of essential information (Kuvailutulkkaus 2020). Audio description is also a good example of how description can help people without visual impairments to perceive, understand and “see better”, in other words, become more aware of the essential aspects of a visual target or pictures. Audio description can also be used in the advance communication and marketing of services and destinations.

In order to ensure the proper functioning of the service chain, it is of utmost importance that advance information is available and current. A service provider may communicate their attitudes and values by means of

images depicting diversity and, by doing so, convey to members of special groups that the service provided is targeted to and suitable for them as well. Thus, it is recommended that pictures and video materials used in marketing and communication materials and on websites feature people with different abilities and of different ages, so that the service provider conveys an impression of an open and inclusive atmosphere. Impressions are influenced by, for example, who the people appearing in pictures are, since pictures help us identify with the target group of a service and destination and decide if we want to be part of it. Without any characters, even the best pictures of nature and the most breathtaking landscapes do not depict whom the services target and whether they are aligned with the customer's and user's needs and requirements (Skantz 2017). We live in a visual world, and if we want, we can convey the impressions we seek by using visual and verbal communication that is welcoming to a wide variety of recipients.

The accessibility survey of nature destinations forms the basis for route descriptions that can be used in advance communication. The "Luonto-ESKEH" project run by the ESKE centre for accessibility of the Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities in 2014 prepared forms to map the accessibility of nature trails and the related criteria as well as a guide for determining the accessibility of nature destinations. In 2018, the "Esteetön eräpolku" project on the accessibility of wilderness trails, run by the Finnish Sports Association of Persons with Disabilities VAU, joined Metsähallitus and the Finnish Association of Persons with Disabilities to complement the "Luonto-ESKEH" forms and prepared the Eräpolku survey forms for long wilderness trails. The forms help document and communicate the features of excursion routes. Information received in advance is important so that a person planning an excursion receives the information they need on the destination and can assess whether the destination is suitable for them. (Invalidiitti 2020c)



Figure 2. A route description helps determine the accessibility of nature trails.
Photo: Anemone Aaltonen

Digital accessibility refers to both the communication channels and the content of the message. Communication should use various channels in a diverse manner, since different people can be reached through different ways. The contents of a PDF file do not necessarily open correctly with the screen readers used by visually impaired persons if the file has not been rendered accessible. By contrast, simple text files that do not contain unnecessary formatting or im-

ages are very likely readable by a screen reader programme. All video materials should include subtitling for the hearing impaired, or the contents of videos should be available in a text form. Easy language or, at least, language that is clear facilitates communication with many people. (Unicef 2020)

Attention should also be paid to matters such as smooth service provision for tourists with sensory impairments or impairments in social interaction

(Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2019). For example, individuals who are sensitive to noise may need a separate quiet space, and the service provider should communicate the availability of such a space through their communication channels. Information on the properties of the physical environment is important for people with physical or sensory impairments. Audio files that can be listened to, 3D maps, symbols as well as subtitled and signed videos may be decisive factors when searching for information and selecting a suitable target destination or service (Skantz 2017). Tools and materials for supporting communication and a diverse selection of picture communication cards are available on the papunet.net website, for example (Papunet 2020). The Yhdenvertaisen kulttuurin puolesta association for equality in culture maintains the Culture for All Service website (2020), which contains information and tools that help promote accessibility in all sectors.

Physical and digital accessibility among the spearheads of Finland's tourism strategy

According to Finland's tourism strategy published by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Finland envisions being the most sustainably growing tourist destination in the Nordic countries. Tourism offers great potential for growth, with its global annual growth rate being 5%. Almost a third of the European population is in-

cluded in the accessible tourism target group, and there are around 800,000 persons with reduced mobility in Finland (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2019). One of the most central megatrends in the Megatrends 2020 list compiled by The Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra is the ageing of the population (Dufva 2020, 22). The population structure is ageing, and people live longer. Therefore, individuals' ability to function may be a factor more decisive than age in the future. Due to the changing tourist target groups, the providers of tourism services are required to take physical and digital accessibility increasingly into consideration (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2019). It should be kept in mind that a person may lose their ability to function at any time due to an accident or injury, for example. Ageing inevitably reduces a person's ability to function and sensory functions at some point in their life, and nearly everyone will need accessible services at some stage.

Accessibility is viewed as part of responsible operations at Visit Finland. In 2020, Visit Finland established a working group to promote inclusive tourism and attention to various target groups in the travel industry. The supply of services provided to all target groups in an equal manner does not yet meet the demand in the tourism services in Finland today (Business Finland 2020). For example, there are visually impaired tourists in Spain who would be interested in visiting Finland within the framework of the Nature for All project, but there are

no incoming travel agencies in Finland that would serve as a responsible trip organiser and arrange and coordinate trips to Finland for special groups. Illustrative of the current situation is also the fact that the European Commission has developed the Pantou service for European enterprises that provide accessible services. Thus far, the Scandic hotel chain and fewer than ten enterprises have registered with the Pantou service in Finland, even though creating a profile page in the service is free of charge for enterprises (Pantou 2020). It is likely that a lot of business opportunities are missed due to poorly functioning service chains and unavailability of information on the services provided.

In the LUKA project webinar in March 2020, referred to above in this article, Visit Finland's Liisa Renfors (2020) said in her address that Finland's forests and lakes and the infrastructure that is better in Finnish Lapland distinguish the country from the rest of the Nordic countries. In the future, Finland could also distinguish itself by focusing increasingly on the development and productisation of barrier-free and accessible nature tourism services as well as on communicating and marketing them. As has been shown in this article, the current challenges include the unavailability or scarcity of information. There is plenty of work to do with regard to the functioning of service chains. The conclusion that can be made is that investing in physical and digital accessibility is a way to find new markets, new

clientele and to help oneself stand out from competitors in a pivotal manner.

Communicating accessibility signifies an open and hospitable attitude

Barrier-free and accessible tourism services targeting special groups offer plenty of new growth potential for enterprises. As shown in this article, providing an accessible service will not, nevertheless, be of much use if information on the service does not reach potential users or access to the service is not barrier-free. It is also good to know that not all special target groups require any changes to the physical framework of a tourism product or service and that even small changes, such as adding ramps for people with impaired mobility, can be development steps towards the right direction. Various activity aids will also facilitate and lower the threshold of accessing nature.

Developing the entire barrier-free and accessible service chain and ensuring its functioning play a central role. By improving physical and digital accessibility, the quality of services and the experiences created by them can be enhanced in a holistic manner, ultimately benefitting everyone. The availability of information about accessibility is a testament to an open and hospitable attitude towards all travellers. The information also helps travellers to independently decide whether the service meets their needs (Skantz 2017). Users of accessible services should also demand

information and service as well as equal treatment, thus putting positive pressure on providers of services to develop the equality of their own products and services. On the other hand, the users of the services need to be understanding if a service provider is not seasoned in encountering special groups. The spectrum of functional impairments is wide. One cannot assume that service providers could know everything about a customer's ability to function and needs in advance. However, when they listen

to the customer and get creative together, the end result will be a success. (Suomen Paralympiakomitea 2020b)

Willingness to learn and develop oneself are already indicators of a right kind of and positive attitude towards diversity. Using experts by experience will also pay off, since it can help find creative solutions that improve accessibility, and, on the other hand, provide experts by experience with new experiences and memorable moments in the future. Dialogue can go a long way.



Figure 3. A positive attitude boosts success. Photo: Anemone Aaltonen

The LUKA project has provided an opportunity to engage in dialogue and brought together various actors, users and providers of services, tourism companies, wilderness guides and organisations of the disabled in workshops and pilot excursions. The project has acted as a catalyst for many new encounters, and this has lowered the threshold and encouraged entrepreneurs to provide nature services for special groups. A planning guide on barrier-free and accessible nature tourism services targeting providers of nature tourism services

will be published at the project completion seminar in September 2020. As the name implies, the objective of the guide is to offer assistance, instructions and tools that will help enterprises to independently design and implement services for special groups. At its best, the planning guide will promote the accessibility of equal nature tourism services, increase the service provision in barrier-free nature tourism and offer a considerable competitive advantage for enterprises.

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Päijät-Häme region's key project in smart specialisation: Sports and Experiences roadmap 2030

In addition to circular economy and design, sports and experiences (including wellbeing) is one of the key projects of smart specialisation in Päijät-Häme (Päijät-Hämeen liitto 2017, 15). Smart specialisation is an innovation strategy and operating model introduced by the European Union (2020), with the goal of increasing competitiveness, entrepreneurship and innovation based on the regions' own strengths, as well as employment. Other increasingly important objectives are adjusting to climate change and strengthening the visibility and appeal of regions through specialisation strategies (European Union 2020; Markkula & Kuhe 2015). The themes to be developed in all the key projects include shared leadership in networked development, the identification of new business opportunities and innovations, and the promotion of the region's visibility among international investors. The Sports and Experiences project is the latest of the three key projects, and it is still being defined in terms of its shared intention and understanding of the re-

gion's brand, even more so than in the other key projects.

To clarify the objectives of smart specialisation of provincial-level key projects and to define regional measures and action plans, roadmaps directing the activities have been or will be prepared for each of the region's key projects. These activities are being coordinated by LAB University of Applied Sciences in cooperation with the Regional Council of Päijät-Häme and other regional actors. The Sports and Experiences key project's work was launched in February 2020. These roadmap activities are being implemented jointly with the Päijät-Hämeen Liikunta ja Urheilu sports and physical activity association.

The Sports and Experiences (including wellbeing) roadmap 2030 (hereinafter referred to as the PHSERM) defines the baseline, objectives and measures that nationally and internationally strengthen the region's opportunities of being profiled as an active location for exercise, sports and events and as a province promoting wellbeing and a

centre of expertise. The roadmap project identifies and defines the central development themes in the Päijät-Häme region in a community-oriented manner and through co-creation, and defines the objectives for measures that support these themes. A specific goal is to promote the development of RDI activities and business operations related to sports and experiences (including wellbeing) and support the operations of institutes of higher education and enterprises, and the transformation of current processes, products and services driving added value and growth. In addition, the roadmap strengthens competence in sports and experiences (including wellbeing) in the region, making new innovations possible.

The construction of the PHSERM is fundamentally a collaborative process, and an ecosystem approach is therefore applied. Stemming from the natural sciences, the ecosystem approach is nowadays increasingly applied in the context of regional development and economic growth, entrepreneurship, and innovation activity. Although the concept is still underdeveloped, it fundamentally refers to a system or network of relationships that enables interactions between a wide range of institutional and individual stakeholders in an environment which fosters innovation, the creation of new business and corresponding sustainable employment growth within a specific geographic region. (Isenberg 2011)

In this roadmap work, we have ap-

plied both the smart specialisation framework (Foray et al. 2012) and the ecosystem approach (Isenberg 2011) as the building blocks of the PHSERM. This article describes the process of the PHSERM, in which the development relies on the understanding of the extensive scope of coordination required concerning the related strategies, plans and development organisations. In addition, the participation of the residents is very important in such a user-driven development process. The purpose of this paper is to review the state-of-the-art process of the PHSERM project.

Regional development outlook and challenges

Päijät-Häme and the Lahti region are especially known for their strong competence in winter sports and various events. The region's nature offers a setting for the diverse promotion of physical activity. A known challenge in the regional development activities is the fragmented nature of the Sports and Experiences key project under smart specialisation or the related development work, which leaves the overall view incomplete. One of the central future themes in the Päijät-Häme implementation 2019–2020 plan (2018, 8) is the structures of wellbeing and health promotion that make cooperation possible at the provincial level. A thematic group of the central actors has convened under the Sports and Experiences key project at the invitation of the Regional Council of Päijät-Häme.

These meetings have provided a forum for sharing information. The Sports and Experiences key project under smart specialisation is linked to exporting health-promoting exercise and elite and winter sports competence, the development of the tourism and event sector and more broadly, wellbeing (including the ecosystem activities, welltech and wellbeing technology). However, there is a need to integrate the different approaches more systematically and to highlight the theme of wellbeing in a more equal and powerful manner.

The key stakeholders in the PHSERM are the Sport Institute of Finland in Viherumäki, Pajulahti Sport Institute in Lahti, regional universities of applied sciences (Haaga-Helia and LAB), LUT University, with campuses in Lappeenranta and Lahti, the Päijät-Häme municipalities, the Lahti Region, Lahti Region Development LADEC Ltd., Päijät-Hämeen Liikunta ja Urheilu sports and physical activity association, regional non-profit sports organisations, local businesses, and the residents of the region. Although the stakeholders have been identified, the undertakings and actions of the project are still somewhat fragmented. During the roadmap project, the roles of these central stakeholders will be clarified, and an operating model will be created that will help meet the objectives and implement the measures consistently. In addition, the current fragmented development needs are brought together to better consider the existing regional

strategies, the national and international policies behind the efforts in the future, and to find synergies and interfaces between different development needs and themes.

The ecosystem approach has also gained a foothold in the context of human health and health promotion. This approach emphasises the importance of the participation of the local communities, because they have the best understanding of the local concerns, needs and knowledge. It also calls for an examination of community aspirations, the environment and economy as a holistic combination. (Forget & Lebel 2001)

Roadmap outlining the development

As already mentioned, the roadmap work brings the region's key actors closer together and strengthens the shared intention. It also grows the shared understanding of the development focus areas. By doing so, it strengthens authentic co-creation in the region. The roadmap also makes the Sports and Experiences key project, as part of the smart specialisation choices in Päijät-Häme, visible regionally, nationally and internationally. The outcome of the project will be a visualised roadmap that outlines the strategic promotion of sports, experiences and wellbeing in Päijät-Häme in 2021–2030.

Compared to other sectors, the special characteristics identified in the innovation environments and ecosystems of social welfare and healthcare

include research orientation, the different requirements of the pilot activities, the traditional nature of management models and independence of professions, the paradox of the funding of the RDI and innovation environments, the dependence on programme and project funding, the dominance of the public sector, and the slowness of the open innovation processes (Laasonen et al. 2019, 86–88). The intention was to view and prepare the shared outlines of the PHSERM in cooperation with the stakeholders in various workshops. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the workshops scheduled for the spring of 2020 in the project plan had to be cancelled, and their implementation had to be re-planned. Instead of the workshops, the project group carried out the surveys and theme interviews, based on an analysis of the background material, which helped decide the central themes for the autumn workshops.

The project team mapped the background materials by examining and analysing the regional and national background strategies of various sectors. Among the background strategies, the Päijät-Häme tourism and event strategy (FCG & Lahti Region 2016), the Päijät-Häme health-promoting exercise strategy (2016), the Government report on sports policy (2018) and the Finnish Olympic Committee's success plan were deemed to offer the most significant contributions. The Päijät-Häme tourism and event strategy (2016) emphasises the development of the brand,

marketing and sales, the platform economy and digitalisation, the creation of a network to strengthen competitiveness, sustainable tourism, and the development of customer-oriented experience services. The updated key measures and objectives of the Päijät-Häme health-promoting exercise strategy (Päijät-Hämeen Liikunta ja Urheilu ry et al. 2016) target the exercise settings and services, physical activity as part of the lifestyle of children and young people, competence and education in health-promoting exercise, and positive and encouraging communication that reaches the residents of municipalities. The Government report on exercise policy (2018) highlights cooperation between different actors, regions and sectors, the independent and diverse promotion of exercise, the dimension of daily exercise in all activities, and everyone's right and opportunities to exercise. The Finnish Olympic Committee's success plan (2017) emphasises the need for changes in the operating environment and activities, the opportunities for cooperation and working together, and the mission and vision of a vital population that incorporates exercise in daily life. Achieving these calls for the contribution of all parties, from individual and local actors to national operators.

A content analysis of the strategies was performed, and the analysis results were integrated through a grouping method, which enabled a consistent policy formulation between the strat-

egies of different sectors and a harmonised view of the direction for the project team to pursue. The central topics identified included sustainable development and activities, infrastructure and settings, marketing and sales, the development of business life, and participatory cooperation in networks. The topics also included wellbeing and management through data/digitalisation.

The area of sustainable development and activities highlighted tourism, balancing the seasons based on themes, year-round events and innovativeness. Event production should be considered from the perspectives of sustainable development and green values and should examine how those views can be linked with wellbeing and actions promoting wellbeing. With regard to the infrastructure and settings, it is important to note how settings affect the activities. Exercising and sports should be made possible for everyone, and the dimensions of daily exercise, health-promoting exercise and sports should be considered when assessing the issues of facilities, and the availability and accessibility of the exercise and sports settings. Marketing and sales, as well as value, are essential aspects of the provision of service. Important key measures in this context include the development of the brand and customer-oriented services. In the development of business life, it is important to consider the changes taking place and challenges encountered in the operating environment. Business life plays an important

role in the promotion of health through exercise and tourism, and wellbeing can also increase vitality in Finland. Participatory cooperation in networks sums up the cooperation between actors, regions and different sectors alike. The cooperation should include all parties. The wellbeing theme intersects with and binds all the themes, because all themes and areas contribute to the generation and maintenance of wellbeing. All themes also resonate with management through data/digitalisation, including the acquisition, analysis and use of data. In future, as technology develops and digitalisation increases, managing development through digital information will be further highlighted.

In addition to the background strategies, the project team has collected information supporting the roadmap work by familiarising themselves with the activities of several other cities and provinces in the Nordic countries (Åre and Östersund, Trondheim, Jyväskylä, Lapland and Rovaniemi, Kainuu and Vuokatti). A special focus was on the central actors in the exercise, wellbeing and tourism sectors, the strategic backgrounds of the areas and locations, and the implemented development measures. The monitoring and assessment of the objectives were also discussed. Benchmarking was also applied to obtain additional useful information on various measures and strategies that support the project group's observations about the background strategies with regard to the PHSERM.

Measures in progress

Two surveys focusing on the organisation and the user respectively were built around the topics based on the analysis of the background materials. The surveys were conducted online between 30 April and 31 May 2020. The surveys were distributed through various cooperation networks and social media channels in the Päijät-Häme region. More than 100 responses were received to the organisation survey; the survey sent to the residents of municipalities produced nearly 700 responses. More than half (54%) the respondents to the organisation survey represented associations or organisations. The second largest group of respondents (21%) represented companies. Municipalities and government educational or development organisations each accounted for 11% of the responses. The majority (75%) of the respondents had fewer than 250 employees. Slightly less than half (45%) the respondents primarily provided group exercise activities. The primary activities of a third (33%) of the respondents was event organisation. A quarter (25%) of the respondents provided primarily education services. Slightly less than half (43%) of the respondents in the municipality survey were from Lahti, and the rest represented eight other municipalities in the Päijät-Häme region (Asikkala, Hartola, Heinola, Hollola, Kärkölä, Orimattila, Padasjoki and Sysmä). In terms of their physical activity level, the respondents were divided in accordance with the normal distribution on a

scale of 'None' (2%), 'Less than twice per week' (7%), '1–2 times per week' (25%), '3–4 times per week' (38%), '5–6 times per week' (18%) and 'Daily' (11%).

The sports and experiences infrastructure and operating environment, sustainable development and cooperation, and networking within the province were considered essential for the realisation of the activities. In contrast, networking across provinces and internationally was deemed to be only somewhat important. Nearly half the respondent organisations stated that the user-oriented/customer-oriented understanding of the younger age groups would be the most important change and challenge in their future operating environment. The increase in the number of digital marketing channels, fragmentation of the media, and the user-oriented/customer-oriented understanding of the elderly were considered the second most significant factor. Other important future changes and challenges in the operating environment included the highlighted personalisation of the consumption/use of services, environmental and sustainable development perspectives, the development of technology, an increased emphasis on networking and the transformation of work. The aspects identified as the most important in terms of the future need for information and support were the development of services related to wellbeing, health and a good quality of life in the future, the changes/trends in consumer behaviour, and digital mar-

keting channels and the application of technology. Internationalisation was not deemed to be a central area in this question either.

The most important personal factors affecting wellbeing were deemed to be physical health and the ability to function, mental health and a balanced lifestyle. Among services, sports, social welfare and healthcare services were considered to support wellbeing most. The most important factors with regard to sports, cultural and event venues and outdoor exercise areas were flexible access, up-to-date markings and signs, and a location near one's home. The majority of respondents (78%) was happy with the aforementioned services and related opportunities available in their home municipalities. Social media and websites were seen as the most important information channels.

The tentative themes identified on the basis of the responses were examined in more detail by analysing the open-ended questions and theme interviews, for which the interviewees were selected from among the stakeholders' key actors. These measures aim to define the key themes of the PHSERM, which will be covered in the workshops in cooperation with various organisational actors in the autumn of 2020. The purpose of the workshops is to define the objectives and measures of the key themes in more detail with the actors, using tools from areas such as futures research. The roles and re-

sponsibilities of the actors will also be specified to ensure the future realisation of the roadmap.

The Good Morning Päijät-Häme streaming event for the key projects of smart specialisation in June 2020 incorporated all regional roadmaps. The goal was to view the development outlook against the overall situation in Päijät-Häme. The PHSERM has also included cooperation with the development environment projects (Konenäkö, Tekoäly and Hytelab) run by LAB's Health Care Service Innovations. The development environment projects are especially interested in services related to wellbeing, health and a good quality of life in the future, and their development. This was also highlighted in the organisation survey, and respondents considered it one of the most important factors with regard to the need for future information and support. Going forward, the development projects will participate in the planning of the content of the theme interviews and workshops. The completed roadmap will be published in the winter of 2021, after which the measures gathered jointly under the key themes will be deployed by various stakeholders as planned. The stages and measures of the Päijät-Häme Sports and Experiences roadmap are presented in Figure 1.

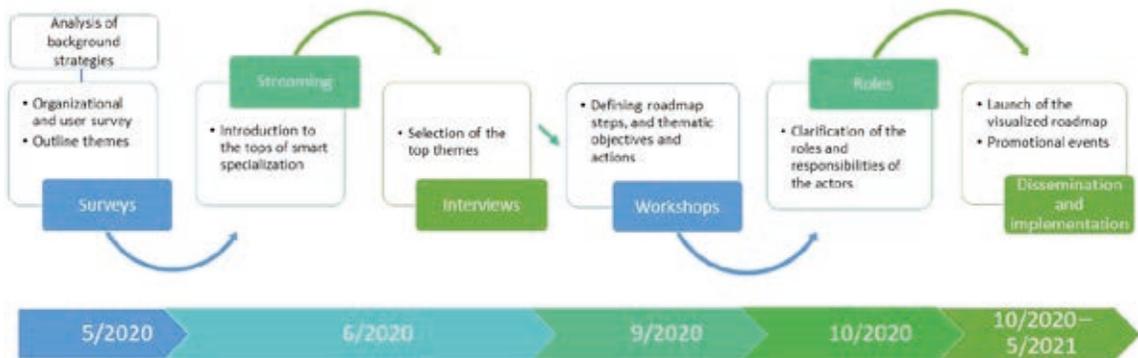


Figure 1. The stages and the measures of the Pääjät-Häme Sports and Experiences roadmap (Kiiskinen 2020).

Conclusion

The proposed basic prerequisites of ecosystems (Laasonen et al. 2019, 82–83) include motivation, commitment, trust between partners and the operating methods supporting them, the infrastructures based on them and the content of the RDI activities. The objective is to reach a stage where the innovations and the generated information and competence are implemented and/or commercialised and marketed. With regard to the success factors of innovation environments and ecosystems (Laasonen et al. 2019, 82), the attention paid to the beginning and end of the process is often insufficient, and the objective of the early stages of the PHSERM is

to generate a shared intention and direction. The PHSERM is needed in the promotion of wellbeing and tourism, because the work involves numerous stakeholders, and it is crucial to bring them together to create a common understanding of the local contextual factors that need to be considered in this process (Racine et al. 2019). Additionally, it is equally important to consider how stakeholders' tacit knowledge is mobilised and incorporated into innovation, decision making and the selection of priorities (Rissola et al. 2017).

The success factors related to the RDI cooperation emphasise the shared value creation of the actors in the ecosystem and their objectives, the inte-

gration activities and entrepreneurial measures, shared development and learning. Common bottlenecks include the lack of strategy and leadership in cooperation, the lack of practical cooperation measures and action, and the lack of an enterprising attitude. If shared strategic goals, coordination of cooperation, and leadership are missing in the operations, cooperation becomes short-sighted and project-like, which are known challenges. The lack of strategy is also manifested as reduced investments in strengthening competence and capabilities, for example. Factors weakening cooperation and compromising the long-term horizon of the activities also include insufficient personnel resources and a high turnover of key employees, which is typical of project activities. (Laasonen et al. 2019, 83–84)

The issues faced by small and medium-sized enterprises often include low personnel resources allocated to development projects in particular (Laasonen et al. 2019, 84). Currently, local companies do not necessarily see the added value of internationalisation. However, from the perspective of the region's competitiveness and success, Päijät-Häme should participate in international development projects and tap into student exchange as part of innovative activities and cooperation. Institutes of higher education can serve as the activators of networks in the PHSERM ecosystem. In future, all

actors must understand the systemic big picture of wellbeing and tourism as the roadmap of sports and experiences. The shared intention and view of the region's brand must be strengthened, because the popularity of exercise, the enjoyment of nature and local tourism is growing as the coronavirus epidemic, among other things, renews and changes values and operating models. However, care should be taken to avoid over-organising the cooperation, which would reduce the space and resources available for concrete activities (Laasonen et al. 2019, 84).

The Päijät-Häme Sports and Experiences (including wellbeing) roadmap will be a tool for bringing the region's actors together. The roadmap will also be a tool for the increased profiling and visibility of regional RDI activities, and will contribute to the meeting of the province's strategic objectives. The roadmap will outline the long-term development work based on cooperation, as well as the development of the sports, experiences and wellbeing business and the strengthening of innovation activities. Awareness and sharing competence will increase, which will help spread competence and strengthen the regional centre of expertise and innovation activities regionally, nationally and internationally as a result of Päijät-Häme's smart specialisation in the key wellbeing, sports and experiences project.

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Hanna Laine

Increased wellbeing in specialist work through employee participation

Today, nearly 50 per cent of employees work in various specialist positions – as teachers, trainers, planners, special experts, project managers and development managers. The work is straining, although very differently from what is traditionally thought. Whereas in the past, a factory worker experienced physical strain and suffered from various musculoskeletal disorders, the strain to which employees in specialist positions are subjected especially affects the wellbeing of the brain. Factors causing this type of strain in specialist positions include fragmented work, frequent interruptions, rush, changes in organisations and content of work, as well as the continuous flood of information. At the same time, an increasing portion of the workday is spent statically in a seated position, which strains both the body and the mind. All this results in weakened wellbeing at work and productivity.

The “Boosting knowledge workers’ productivity and wellbeing at work” project seeks novel solutions to the development of the wellbeing at work

and productivity of knowledge workers in specialist positions. The operating methods being piloted and developed in the project focus on supporting both physical and mental wellbeing and strengthening innovativeness and resilience. The outcome of the project will be diverse, participatory operating models that promote wellbeing at work.

The employees of the target organisations are at the core of the development project. A natural approach to developing wellbeing at work and productivity has therefore been to involve both supervisors and employees of the project’s target organisations from the outset. Workshops are a productive working method, because they enable the entire work community to participate (Manka & Manka 2016, 170). The objective of organisation-specific workshops on wellbeing at work is to make the voice of the employees heard in the organisation, and with the supervisors, to work on those factors influencing wellbeing at work the employees of the organisation find important.

Compared to trying to figure things out all by oneself, exploring ideas that advance work performance in cooperation with the work community makes it easier to find functioning practical solutions (Liski 2011). However, often there are only one, two or a few people who do the talking in various meetings and during development days, while the others listen more or less actively. Shared events where only some of the participants are active may generate many good solutions, but it is also possible that the activities could have been more participatory and taken all participants better into consideration. The latter approach could have produced results that are more versatile, innovative and – in a word – better. At its best, the outcome could be an event in which the creativity, innovativeness, problem-solving skills and competence of all participants are tapped into while

they work together in a motivating and rewarding way.

However, this calls for the authentic presence of all participants. Only then can everyone both give and receive, and the development of wellbeing at work, for example, becomes a genuinely shared process. Working methods found to be useful in these processes include various creative and participatory methods (Kantojärvi 2012, 23–28). So, let's forget about top-down communication from the supervisor to employees, and instead have an open mind and begin working on the matters at hand together.

The organisation-specific workshops on wellbeing at work in this development project applied the six-step Creative Problem-solving process (CPS) by Osborne & Barnes (Kantojärvi 2012, 23–25) (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Creative Problem-Solving Process (Hanna Laine 2020).

The first three steps of the CPS process clarify the problem, challenge or objective of the matter at hand. Clarification of the challenge is important in terms of sparking the participants' motivation. In addition, discussions should cover the information that is already known about the matter and the methods applied previously in solving the problem or challenge. The goal is to create a shared understanding of the matter at hand and highlight the core issue to be addressed. The participants determine the core issue together. In this way, they are also motivated to find solutions to it (Kantojärvi 2012, 23–28).

The last three steps of the CPS process focus on coming up with new ideas and solving the problem or challenge. This section focuses on planning the solutions. In the divergence, or ignition, stage the number of alternative solutions may be high, and the alternatives may be unrealistic or even unfeasible, wild ideas. Instead of high-quality solutions, the purpose is to generate different kinds of idea as freely as possible and as many of them as the participants can come up with within the allocated time. The unrestrained brainstorming stage is followed by a convergence stage, in which the selected ideas are reviewed more critically and refined into possible feasible solutions. Occasionally, the ideas and the related solutions should be viewed against the original core problem to ensure that the solution truly addresses the original problem or challenge (Kantojärvi 2012, 24–27,

174–175). However, it is important not to scrap even the craziest ideas from the list until they have been discussed as extensively as the other ideas. This is to show that the contribution and ideas of all participants are equally valuable and that everyone's voice has been heard.

After the problem or challenge has been identified, even the wildest ideas have been explored and concrete solutions have been refined, concrete measures are planned to achieve the desired result. If the workshop has been genuinely participatory up until this point, the participants are usually also committed to the further measures (Kantojärvi 2012, 223–224).

Facilitator's role in a participatory workshop

For the activities in the workshop to be genuinely participatory as defined by Manka & Manka (2016, 136), the chairperson, presenter or other event leader should be able to step aside from their role. The workshops of this development project apply the facilitator model, in which a person from outside the organisation facilitates the workshops in the target organisations. This places the supervisor level and the employees of the target organisation at an equal position to that of the participants. The facilitator's task is to inspire and motivate the participants and by doing so, to enable them to reach their full potential in terms of the matter at hand.

The facilitator ensures that the discussion stays on track without over-

steering it and especially in a direction that serves their own interests. As Kantojärvi (2012, 10–11) points out, above all, facilitation means guiding the group process, not interfering with the content. Indeed, the facilitator does not even need to have subject matter competence in the matter at hand. Instead, the basic idea is that the workshop participants already possess all the information and competence that is needed for solving the problem or challenge (Rogers 2010, 11). The facilitator's role is to be a neutral part of the workshop, take into consideration and allow different ways of thinking, find the tools that best suit the group being facilitated, promote participation and inclusion, and ensure that results are generated and documented (Rauramo 2013, 20–21).

However, perhaps one of the most important tasks of the facilitator is to spark the motivation of the participants and create a motivating atmosphere. Therefore, the start of the workshop, in which the objectives are defined, is particularly important with a view to the success of the subsequent stages (Rogers 2010, 56). According to Brookfield (1986, 26) and others, assigning a purpose to the activities is important for motivation. The workshop participants need to know why they are present, what the workshop process is like, what the objective is, and what is expected of them as participants. Motivation increases when the participants are included in the setting of objectives and have a sense of competence – in other

words, the feeling that their own experiences and knowledge make them part of the solution.

An interesting but also challenging aspect of the facilitator role is the unique nature of each workshop. A person who comes from outside the organisation cannot really foresee the motivation of the participants or their interaction when working together. Even heated discussions as such do not necessarily compromise the process, especially in the brainstorming stage or during the selection of the feasible ideas. On the contrary, they may help the participants to discover completely new ways of thinking and novel ideas. That is why both the facilitator and the participants must tolerate differences of views for a sufficiently long time. Kantojärvi (2012, 26–27) illustrates this by saying that one of the tasks of the facilitator is to ensure that the brainstorming stage ignites properly and generates enough smoke, after which the fire goes out, leaving a suitable spark for the future.

Lego blocks as indicators of wellbeing at work

The project workshops applied the LEGO® Serious Play® method, developed by LEGO® Group, as a participatory method incorporated in the CPS process. The method is based on the idea presented by Rogers (2010, 11), among others, that a solution to a problem challenging an organisation or a team can be found within the organisation rather than outside it (LEGO® Seri-

ous Play® Open source guideline 2010).

The LEGO® Serious Play® process consists of three iterative stages: Challenge, Build and Share. In the first stage, the workshop facilitator gives the participants a challenge. This challenge is addressed in the next stage of the pro-

cess, Build. In the third stage of Share, each employee takes turns sharing the story and meaning of the structure they have built. These three stages are repeated as many times as necessary depending on the number of the challenges to be solved (Figure 2).

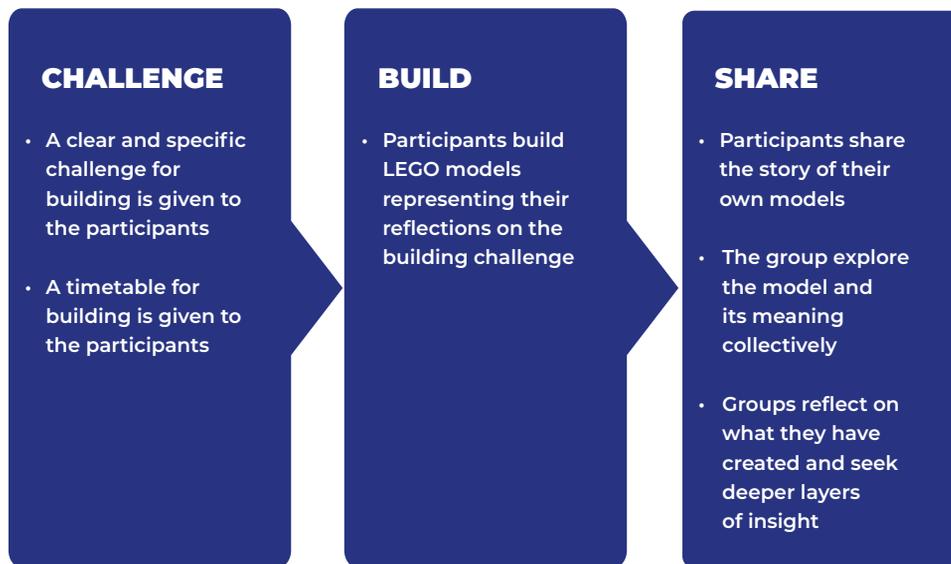


Figure 2. The LEGO® Serious Play® process (Laine 2020).

The participants of the workshops in this project carried out practice runs to familiarise themselves with the method. In the first stage of the practice run, the challenge presented was to build a tower in approximately five minutes. In the second stage, the participants focused intensively on building the towers for five minutes. In the third stage, each participant took turns sharing their stories about the tower. In addition, they were asked to share what the tower revealed about its builder. The purpose of the practice run is to ensure that the participants understand the different stages of the method and how they can use Lego blocks to share their own experiences through narration (LEGO® Serious Play® Open source guideline 2010).

The actual challenges in the project workshops were two questions that map the good practices and challenges of wellbeing at work respectively. It is important that everyone has the opportunity to share their view, and that everyone also hears what the others say and understands the messages conveyed. After this, the participants categorised all the issues brought up by subject area and selected the most important development targets by voting.

Working on these core challenges continued in small groups. The first stage of the two-stage process included unrestrained brainstorming, in which the participants did not need to worry about the budget, time resources or existing rules and guidelines. In the

second stage, some of the wild ideas were discarded and the remaining ideas were refined to make them as practical and feasible as possible. In that stage, the task was to define what benefits were gained from successful ideas, what factors could prevent an idea from succeeding, and what kind of information, skills and support was needed for the idea to succeed. Finally, each small group presented their own idea to the others for discussion. In some organisations, supervisors commented on the feasibility of the ideas at this stage. In others, the development and refining of the ideas continued within the organisation, supported by the project team.

Joy of working together and creative solutions

The strength discovered in the project of the LEGO® Serious Play® method is its ability to motivate the participants to take action. Both seasoned builders and complete novices started playing with Lego blocks even before the building assignments were given. Just the appearance of the Lego blocks activated the participants. Working with the Lego blocks has been very intensive and participatory in the workshops. Processing themes of wellbeing at work through building Lego structures has been creative, motivating and refreshing in the workshops, regardless of whether the targeted practice already functioned well or required improvement. In addition, the building process also activated those participants who assumed a con-

siderably more passive role in previous workshops or meetings.

The feedback given by the participants on the LEGO® Serious Play® method has been positive. The workshops were described as interesting, entertaining and a new way to work on shared issues. Among the strengths identified in the method was the fact that each participant genuinely took part in the activities equally with the others. Compared to a traditional workshop setting, the participants also considered that the LEGO® Serious Play® method made it easier to express one's thoughts. A Lego structure helps make one's thoughts visible concretely, and easier to understand through the visual presentation than through the spoken word alone. In addition, building the structure has also lowered the threshold of putting one's thoughts into words and publicly expressing them. It has been easier for the participants to talk about the structure rather than referring to their own life directly, even if the structure described their own thought processes. Likewise, the speaker feels less pressure, because the audience often looks at the structure instead of the person speaking.

From the project team's perspective, this method and the overall creative problem-solving process have also served one of the project's key objectives well – namely, the goal to listen to and highlight the voice of the employee. In specialist work especially, measures to support wellbeing at work and pro-

ductivity include strengthening innovation and problem-solving ability, as well as self-management and cooperation skills (Bond & Flaxman 2006, 113–130; Lappalainen 2018, 82–91). These are the very factors that have been strengthened in the organisation-specific workshops, regardless of the organisation's sector or baseline situation. As a result of the participatory workshops, the project's target organisations have implemented new or modified operating methods that have enabled them to better support wellbeing at work and productivity in specialist work.

The benefits of the creative problem-solving process as a method to process an organisation's internal issues are not limited to the activities of individual workshops. If the organisation finds the method useful, effective and productive, in the best-case scenario, it may apply it more broadly than in just individual teams. The practice is often naturally disseminated from the team level by starting to apply it in certain departments, for example, following the positive experiences gained. Cooperation between different departments may contribute to the practice being applied more widely and it eventually becoming a company-wide method. The operating method has opportunities for being disseminated further through different encounters in the organisation, cooperation projects between organisations, and the networks of both the entire organisation and individual employees.

The supervisor's support for and positive attitude towards the implementation of new methods is extremely important in, if not the prerequisite for, the novel operating method being implemented in an organisation. Basically, the organisation's operating culture will change. The change may be quite extensive compared to how the organisation operated previously, and as such, it is not always painless. When running in a new operating method, it is of utmost importance that the employees are at some point given the opportunity to influence and to have their voice heard. Operating method changes dictated from the top down are rarely functioning solutions – or at least, implementing them takes considerably longer than implementing changes that are based on mutual decisions.

The process may also be arduous for the supervisor, because to make the choices related to the change, they must examine their management practices and highlight the development areas related to their own actions. However, through their own exemplary actions, supervisors can support their employees' self-management, proactive approach, initiative and goal orientation. The supervisor can promote the development of a proactive approach in employees by acting in openly and enabling independent development at the level of both teams and individuals. The supervisor's task is then no longer to manage the work performance but the employees' ability to innovate and

perform, and in this, listening to and promoting their ideas play an important role. The proactive attitude of both employees and their supervisor also facilitates the setting of individual and team objectives. This, in turn, supports a more extensive change in the operating culture and increases the positive sense of managing one's own work and wellbeing at work.

Since the objective of the "Boosting knowledge workers' productivity and wellbeing at work" project is to create operating models that improve wellbeing at work and productivity, the project team is also interested in the development of these factors during a potential reorganisation. At the individual level, this means activities such as monitoring the development of employees' innovativeness, work community skills and development-focused approach to work. At the organisational level, these properties are developed when the work environment and the related practices support the independent formulation of one's work, participation in decision making and the feedback culture. This is also what supervisors in the target organisations participating in the project are encouraged to do. Both the operating environment and the solutions made by supervisors and in particular, their example, have a significant impact on the development of the organisation's operating culture. Although creating something new and leaving old ways behind may be challenging for both supervisors and employees, the

outcome may be operating methods that genuinely promote wellbeing at work and productivity. As a result of the measures taken in the project's target organisations, the employees and supervisors obtain a more in-depth understanding of the factors that influence wellbeing at work and productivity. Such factors include self-development, strengthening innovativeness, and self-management at both the employee and supervisor levels. In the best-case scenario, these positive teachings are disseminated both inside and outside the organisation.

The "Boosting knowledge workers' productivity and wellbeing at work" project is managed by the Lahti University of Applied Sciences and runs from 1 April 2019 until 30 September 2021. The first participatory workshops were conducted in the target organisations in the autumn of 2019. The project is being implemented in cooperation with the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences and Suomen Urheiluoipiston kannatusosakeyhtiö. The project funding comes from the European Social Fund.

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Päivi Tommola

Popularising and visualising geological information for tourism – Salpausselkä Geopark is aiming for UNESCO site designation

UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed according to a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. UNESCO has stated four fundamental features each Global Geopark should have. These guidelines include strict criteria for geological heritage, management, networking and visibility of the area. (UNESCO 2020)

Salpausselkä Geopark, which is situated in Päijät-Häme in Southern Finland, is known for its massive ice-marginal formations, Salpausselkä I and II, and their feeding eskers surrounded by water. These features were laid down

by the last Ice Age, which ended 12,000 years ago. Today, they form the backbone of the six municipalities in the area: Asikkala, Heinola, Hollola, Lahti, Padasjoki and Sysmä. According to experts from the Geological Survey of Finland, the Salpausselkä Geopark area should fulfil the criteria of possessing geology of international significance. The value of this heritage has been identified in the area for some years, and a strong common will to reach the UNESCO Global Geopark status has been built in two development projects coordinated by LAB University of Applied Sciences (Until 2020: Lahti University of Applied Sciences). (Komulainen 2019)

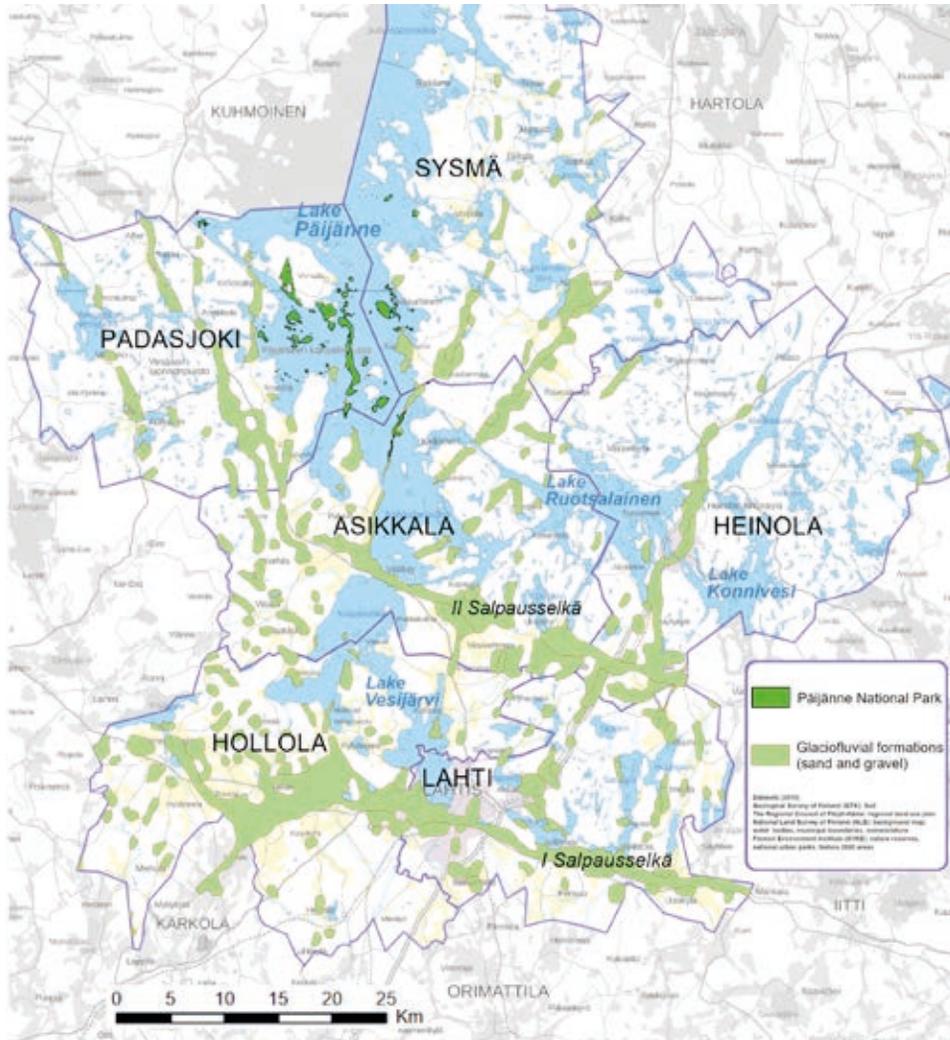


Figure 1. Salpausselkä Geopark, located in Southern Finland, covers the area of six municipalities in the Päijät-Häme region. The backbone of the area is formed by ice-marginal formations and eskers (shown in green). Map: Lahti University of Applied Sciences.

Strong background formed in development projects

Due to efficient networking and comprehensive development project activity, the circumstances in 2020 in the Salpausselkä Geopark project area are almost ready to meet the UNESCO Global Geopark evaluation process. At the beginning of 2020, a new regional administration unit was founded within the regional tourism company Lahti Region. The unit is the main organ guiding the development of sustainable geotourism in the area and boosting the coordination of the growing network of entrepreneurs. It will also be the main actor behind the final UNESCO Global Geopark application.

As for visibility of the Salpausselkä Geopark area, a strong material background has been built in Salpausselkä UNESCO Global Geopark project, coordinated by LAB University of Applied Sciences (until 2020: Lahti University of Applied Sciences). The project was carried out in cooperation with the Geological Survey of Finland (Geologian tutkimuskeskus), Parks and Wildlife Finland (Metsähallitus), local entrepreneurs and municipalities. The material bank built in the project includes inventories of nature types and indicator species at a few sites, most of them focusing on lake nature and Päijänne National Park. Some of the materials were collected underwater by echo sounding and diving. In addition to this, the project has produced geological mapping materials and inventoried about a hundred

potential geosites around the project area, focusing primarily on geology and the geotourism potential of the sites. All materials have been made with scientific accuracy in order to meet the strict UNESCO Global Geopark criteria. (Komulainen 2019)

Visibility built for the public

The present challenge in the area of Salpausselkä Geopark is to transform the core message of the scientific materials to be suitable for a wider public, and most of all, to increase the visibility of the area. UNESCO requires that each Global Geopark should be visible enough for a random visitor to walk into the area, and to become aware of its special status. Thus, information on the geology of the area, as well as that on nature and cultural values, should be easily available online and in brochures and information points situated in nature locations. To strengthen the visibility of the area, a new development project, Visibility for Salpausselkä Geopark -Vitality for Päijät-Häme region was launched by LAB University of Applied Science in coordination with the Geological Survey of Finland in January 2020. The main goal of the project is to improve the possibility of increasing the number of visitors to the Salpausselkä Geopark project area and making the area better prepared to host them, while paying special attention to sustainability. The project considers the viewpoints of tourism and of local recreation.



Figure 2. A guideline for a UNESCO Global Geopark is that the area should be visible also on site. This means, central sites should be provided with adequate location information for a visitor to become aware of the special status of the area. Photo: Päivi Tommola

A great amount of the value of geological information for each of us lies in how it is presented, and how we understand it. For instance, Salpausselkä Unesco Global Geopark project has been valuable not only because of the large amount of detailed information it has produced, but also because of the in-

creased understanding and interpretations formed by the interaction of people from different backgrounds. During the project, we have heard several impulsive “wows”, when something that is obvious to a geologist, opens up also to someone who is not familiar with the subject at all. It appears that a person

with modest preliminary knowledge on the subject, might get a deeper experience by understanding it fully.

Personal interpretations are meaningful

Also detected during the project, the formation of the landscape set in the long-term historical timescale, is quite an interesting thing to many and includes several different aspects and levels to be examined. A photography enthusiast might be thrilled trying to capture the blue and green landscape formed by the interaction of the undulating Pulkkilanharju Esker and glittering Lake Päijänne. For an adventurous child, exploring exciting rock formations and caves can be much more interesting. Finally, for someone who comes from a busy metropolis, something as basic as peace and quiet or clean water might be pure luxury.

All these aspects are quite difficult to put together, and it will demand time and effort to find guidelines for providing information for geotourism in the area and to make it suitable to all target groups. Visibility for Salpausselkä Geopark project is planning to produce thematic drawings and animations, as well as an introductory video of the area. During the project, info points will be planned and, in coordination with local operators, built in a natural setting. The area already has a website, maintained by Salpausselkä Geopark unit (www.salpausselkageopark.fi) within the Lahti Region. However, destinations, routes

and services are being developed further all the time, and building adequate visibility, while keeping the information up to date at the same time, takes a lot of work. In the area of Salpausselkä Geopark, a strong network of different operators is a key factor helping progress in this direction.

Involving the local sector

Some of the destinations in Salpausselkä Geopark are already quite popular also from the viewpoint of international tourism. Forests and Parks Finland registered in 2019 a total of 16 800 visitors in the area of Päijänne National Park, which is the main nature destination of the area (Metsähallitus 2020). As this is a lake area with numerous entrances and with very limited opportunities for registering visitors, the real visitor amount is probably much larger than this figure indicates, and during high season the area can even be crowded. However, Salpausselkä Geopark has also minor destinations with plenty of growth potential.

In addition to the viewpoint of sustainable tourism, the Visibility for Salpausselkä Geopark project also observes the interests of local people. One of the goals is to strengthen local people's understanding and knowledge of the value and most interesting destinations of the area, as well as to instil local people in a positive way with pride of their area, and to promote responsible travelling.

The project will organize various events open to the public, including presentations, public tours and marketing and networking events. As www-sites, printed brochures and site information are the main informational gateway to Salpausselkä Geopark for tourists, many of the events mentioned above are mainly attended by local people. As the area wants to be a sustainable destination with long-lasting positive impacts on local life, the ingraining of the Salpausselkä Geopark as an interesting and inspiring environment, as we say, “the building of local pride”, is started with the young.

Children as active creators

The main theme of the Salpausselkä Geopark is water and glaciofluvial formations are its key features. The experience collected in Salpausselkä Geopark network has shown, that ice-age formations make ideal environments for small children. As children normally do, also local children in Salpausselkä have wanted to experience the landscape themselves, which makes the experience even more memorable. A crucially important partner in the project, the City of Lahti, has been developing

geopark-themed education for kindergartens within the framework of the city’s quality certified environmental education (Sieppi 2019). The City of Lahti Environmental Department employs an environmental educator who works with kindergartens and schools, developing the bond between the geopark theme and local environmental education. As the work progresses, the models piloted in Lahti are offered and made available also for other municipalities of the area to use. In the future, we might even see one or more official Geopark kindergartens in the area.

Children are not only receivers of Salpausselkä Geopark-themed information, but also active creators. In the process of popularising geological information, local children have already drawn geopark-themed figures, which provide very interesting opportunities for the project to develop further. Guided by environmental educators, they have also explored the surroundings of their kindergartens or schools, looking for signs of the last Ice Age, and thus learned to better understand the area and, due to increased interest, maybe also started looking for information on other geological destinations nearby.



Figure 3. Supan Supersankari (Kettle hole superhero), a figure drawn by local children in a workshop guided by environmental educator Emma Marjamäki, situated in front of the Kanerva kindergarten. Photo: Emma Marjamäki

Children and their potential interest in geotourism and sustainability are valuable for the area's future as a growing geotourism destination, and as a potential UNESCO Global Geopark. Environmental education, however, is a thing also grown-up people can learn a lot from. We hope all the work done by Visibility for Salpausselkä Geopark project with

the public sector makes local people proud in a positive way of their area and promotes responsible travelling.

We have a common dream in Salpausselkä. Let's make it real, and after that, let's take care that it maintains its value also to be passed on to our children!

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Ilkka Väänänen, Asko Riihelä

Nature-based health enhanced physical activity in Lahti

Introduction

Lack of physical activity (PA) reinforces the occurrence of overweight, obesity and a number of chronic conditions, such as cardiovascular diseases and diabetes, which reduce quality of life, put individuals' lives at risk, and are a burden on health budgets and the economy. Even though Finland is top in Europe in the proportion of people who exercise or play sport regularly or with some regularity (European Union 2017), there remains a need to develop nature-based solutions (NbS) to promote health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA). In the global action plan on physical activity (GAPPA) for 2018–2030, the World Health Organization (WHO 2018) expressed its vision as “more active people for a healthier world”, and its mission as being:

To ensure that all people have access to safe and enabling environments and to diverse opportunities to be physically active in their daily lives, as a means of improving individual and community health and contributing to the social, cultural and economic development of all nations.

LAB University of Applied Sciences (LAB) and the City of Lahti are consortium members relating to the international Horizon 2020 action entitled GO GREEN: Resilient Optimal Urban natural, Technological and Environmental Solutions, abbreviated to “GO GREEN ROUTES”. The project began in autumn 2020. During the project, the City of Lahti will build an accessible nature trail to Likolampi as part of the Kintterö Health Forest. Nature solutions are already being developed for the area in cooperation between the city and the Joint Municipal Authority for Wellbeing in Päijät-Häme, and the nature trail will be within easy reach from Päijät-Häme Central Hospital.

The purpose of this article is to describe the benefits of health-enhanced physical activity at a general level based on the 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee scientific report, and to introduce LAB and Lahti as the Finnish parties of the GO GREEN ROUTES project.

The benefits of health enhanced physical activity

The 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee (2018) has reviewed the scientific literature about the relationships between physical activity (PA) and selected health outcomes or conditions, about the importance of PA for selected age groups or populations, and about the types of PA that influence health outcomes. Aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and multi-component PA programmes all have demonstrated benefits. The improvements appear to be somewhat greater with activity programmes that include specific muscle strengthening and balance training activities.

Children

There is strong evidence that indicates that PA among children at ages three through five years is associated with a reduced risk of weight gain and favourable indicators of bone health. Among older children and young people through high school age, the evidence continues to demonstrate that PA improves cardiovascular and muscular fitness, bone health, cardiometabolic risk factor status, and weight status. For children aged five through 13, it has indicated that PA improves cognition, including memory, processing speed, attention, and academic performance.

Adults

More physically active people are better able to perform everyday tasks without

undue fatigue. Increased amounts of PA are associated with improved cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness, and improved physical function for adults of all ages. Daily tasks are all accomplished more easily by individuals who are more physically active because of a higher capacity to perform work. At all ages, for a given amount of PA, the relative gains in physical fitness and physical function are greatest for individuals who have not previously been physically active. In addition, PA reduces the risk of several cancers.

Notably, a greater volume of PA is associated with a reduced risk of excessive weight gain for the general population. Regular PA also reduces feelings of anxiety and depression and improves sleep and quality of life. A single episode provides temporary improvements in cognitive function.

Strong evidence demonstrates that greater amounts of PA are associated with preventing or minimizing excessive weight gain in adults, being able to maintain weight within a healthy range of body mass index and preventing obesity. PA has an additive effect on weight loss when combined with moderate dietary restriction. Some benefits occur immediately after a session of PA. The cardiometabolic profile shows improvements soon after an episode of PA. Blood pressure is reduced, and insulin sensitivity is increased. These cardiometabolic benefits persist for hours to days after the PA session.

Older adults

Strong evidence demonstrates that physically active older adults are less likely to experience falls, less likely to be seriously injured if they do fall, and more likely to maintain independence and functional ability compared to those who are inactive. Individuals considered to be frail also benefit from regular physical activity. Strong evidence has also demonstrated that physically active older adults have a lower risk of dementia, better perceived quality of life, and reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression. Experimental trials have demonstrated that even individuals with frailty and with Parkinson's disease can improve their physical function, thus minimizing and delaying aging-related declines.

Individuals with some common chronic conditions

The benefits of habitual PA likely vary from condition to condition, but for several prevalent diseases or conditions, one or more health benefits were evident. PA-related benefits have been demonstrated for the large number of individuals who already have chronic conditions, such as osteoarthritis, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, dementia, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury, stroke, Parkinson's disease, schizophrenia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and recent hip fracture. For example, for people with colorectal cancer, women with breast cancer, and men with prostate cancer, greater amounts

of PA are associated with reduced risk of mortality from the original type of cancer. Adults with osteoarthritis who are more physically active experience less pain, improved physical function, and better quality of life relative to less active adults with osteoarthritis. Habitual PA also reduces the risk of mortality from cardiovascular disease among people with hypertension or type 2 diabetes. More physically active individuals who have Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury, stroke, recent hip fracture, and frailty have better physical function, including walking ability, relative to less active adults with the same condition.

For individuals with some of these conditions, muscle strength and balance are improved as well. Except for the mortality outcomes, evidence regarding the type of PA associated with these reductions often comes from intervention studies in which the PA exposure was a multicomponent program including aerobic activity (commonly walking), strength, and balance training. These findings emphasize that preventive effects of PA are relevant and important for both healthy adults and for adults with chronic conditions. Indeed, for adults with conditions where PA is recommended for its therapeutic effects, the evidence indicates that PA typically provides both therapeutic and preventive benefits.

Current evidence indicates that the majority of potential benefit or risk reduction is achieved by people who per-

form in the range of 500 to 1,000 minutes (between eight and 16 hours) per week of aerobic PA. The target range of moderate-intensity PA per week has been commonly expressed as 150 to 300 minutes or 75 to 150 minutes of high-intensity PA per week. People do not need to reach the lower end of the 150-to-300-minute target range to benefit from regular PA. Individuals who exceed the target range usually achieve even greater health benefits.

Cognition and sleep

PA positively influences several brain-related health outcomes, including cognition, anxiety, depression, sleep, and quality of life. Current evidence indicates a beneficial effect of regular PA on various components of cognition. The evidence is strongest for a reduced risk of dementia and improved executive function. Single episodes of PA promote acute improvements in executive function for a brief period. Executive function includes the processes of the brain that help organize daily activities and plan. Tasks such as one's ability to plan and organize, self-monitor and inhibit or facilitate behaviours, initiate tasks, and control emotions all are part of executive function. PA also improves other components of cognition, including memory, processing speed, attention, and academic performance.

PA also can raise perceptions of one's quality of life and improves a variety of sleep outcomes among the general population, as well as for individuals

with symptoms of insomnia or sleep apnoea.

Depression

Strong evidence has demonstrated that regular PA reduces the risk of developing major depression. It has also reduced symptoms of depression among individuals with and without clinical levels of depression. Similarly, moderate-to-vigorous PA reduces general feelings of anxiety (trait anxiety) among individuals with and without anxiety disorders. Acute episodes of PA also can reduce immediate feelings of anxiety.

GO GREEN: Resilient Optimal Urban natural, Technological and Environmental Solutions project

The objective of the GO GREEN ROUTES Horizon 2020 project, coordinated by University of Limerick, is to position European cities, e.g. Lahti, as world ambassadors of urban sustainability and nature-based health. This inspirational approach shifts the focus of NbS towards the co-benefits to multidimensional health – termed “360 Health”. The GO GREEN ROUTES transdisciplinary consortium will pioneer a unique approach augmenting NbS and urban design with the goal of fostering a positive human–nature relationship, helping nature connectedness flourish and promoting citizen engagement through digital, educational and behavioural innovation. GO GREEN ROUTES components focus on nature-based enterprise (GROW) and sustainable physi-

cal activity (MOVE), as well as on digital, cultural (FEEL) and knowledge innovation (KNOW). GO GREEN ROUTES fosters mental health and well-being by optimising human–nature interactions for all citizens. These innovations will increase the uptake and acceptability of NbS across six “Cultivating Cities” (Burgas, Lahti, Limerick, Tallinn, Umeå and Versailles), three “Seed Cities” (Munich, the Murcia region and Malta) and a “Cross-Pollination Network” (Beijing, Mexico and Tbilisi). An urban well-being lab based on the living lab methodolo-

gy will couple participatory approaches with big data analysis. To advance knowledge, best practices and dissemination, GO GREEN ROUTES will cluster with other Horizon 2020 projects. This novel approach, coupled with the high capacity of the consortium, makes GO GREEN ROUTES an exciting prospect for Lahti as the European Green Capital 2021 (<https://greenlahti.fi/en>) and one of the five forward-thinking cities across Europe (Lerwill 2020).



Figure 1. The logo of the GO GREEN: Resilient Optimal Urban natural, Technological and Environmental Solutions project. Photo: GOGREEN ROUTES

In Lahti, the main aim of the project is to improve the accessibility of recreational areas. Both nature and the built environment have been shown to be linked to the health of the population. As the future green capital, Lahti will be looking for practical environmental solutions that can also be applied elsewhere in the world. Through the project, LAB and the City of Lahti will strength-

en international cooperation aimed at studying and measuring the welfare effects of nature, and will develop the accessibility of recreational areas like Kintterö and Likolampi. The outputs of the project will be available to residents and businesses in all municipalities and regions, which will benefit the tourism and sports sectors.

Lahti – the city of nature-based physical activity

Lahti is a medium-sized Finnish city of approximately 120,000 inhabitants located 100 km northeast of Helsinki. Lahti has also been awarded the title “European Green Capital Award” for 2021. Lahti’s number one mission is to create an environment that strengthens community spirit and social cohesion. The Lahti City Strategy 2030 (2020) states that Lahti will succeed as a bold environmental city. Taking care of the green environment is at the heart of the strategy. Lahti has numerous programmes and projects related to environment, including the following:

- School students have now mapped their local nature areas, similarly to what has already been done by daycare centres. The data is to be incorporated into the city GIS systems.
- A permanent environmental teacher position to guide and train schoolteachers in organizing outdoor lessons and providing equipment (e.g. trekking bags, loupes, binoculars and simple identification keys).
- A mobile classroom, the “Eco-van”, equipped with modern technology for studying nature.
- Environmental grandparents: volunteers who teach children

about environmental issues and nature – connecting children and the elderly.

- 50 kindergartens that mapped interesting nature objects and species in nearby green spaces to help find them more easily.
- The project “Mun juttu” (“My Thing”) for improving wellness among young adults and reconnecting them with nature.

Other actions of the Lahti Environmental Program (2018) and Guidelines for Management and Use of Municipal Forests will continue. In addition, there is the Nature-Based Solutions Research Group at the University of Helsinki in Lahti, which concentrates on solving globally significant environmental problems. One of its research projects, NATUREWELL, examines how interacting with nature affects the well-being and health of young people (University of Helsinki 2019).

The surrounding nature offers a vast amount of recreational possibilities for citizens in Lahti. Forests cover over 70% of Lahti. Lahti has many quiet areas with high recreational value that are easily accessible from the city centre, e.g. Kinttö, Lapakisto and Lehmuspölkky, where more circular hiking routes are planned to complement existing ones, to create a walkable city.



Kintterön terveysmetsä

Figure 2. The logo of Kintterö Health Forest. Photo: Asko Riihelä and Jalo Toivio

During the GO GREEN ROUTES project, investments and local co-operation models for using the new services at Kintterö Health Forest will be developed. The project includes an infrastructure investment for an accessible nature pathway in Kintterö Health Forest. It includes the construction of the nature

pathway and its supporting structures, and technical measurement facilities along the route (sensors, counters, other possible appliances). Kintterö Health Forest will be created in cooperation with the Päijät-Häme Joint Authority for Health and Wellbeing (PHHYKY).

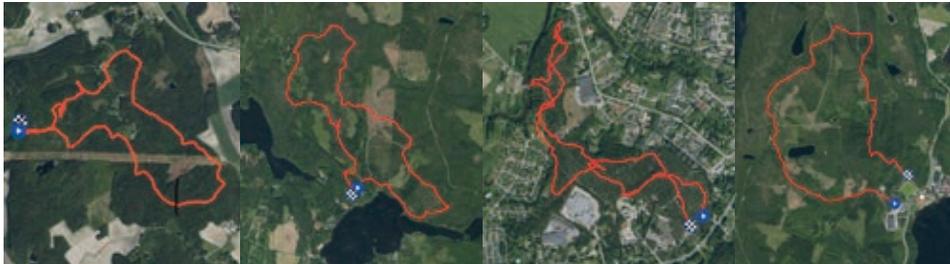


Figure 3. Examples of the green routes. Photos: Ilkka Väänänen

Implications

The coronavirus pandemic has had a positive impact on nature-based PA in Finland, and this positive ethos should continue to exist even after these exceptional circumstances end. Although taking care of health, functional capacity and well-being is primarily the responsibility of each of us, under the Act on the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity (2015), in Finland, municipalities have a role to play in keeping conditions and the environment in such a condition that PA is possible for everyone who wishes to partake in it. Society's solutions must support an active lifestyle in line with sustainable development. Promoting nature-based PA is the task of several branches of government in

municipalities. Investments in outdoor venues are always also investments in the well-being and health of residents, but also in the competitiveness and attractiveness of the region.

During the GO GREEN ROUTES project, a close dialogue will be maintained between applied research and practical implementation of the Lahti parties (LAB and the city of Lahti). Research data on the effects and effectiveness of nature-based PA will be produced by LAB over the next four years, e.g. to support cross-administrative decision-making and planning in Lahti, where a sustainable future calls us all to action. So, let's get up and go out into nature – which is so close in Lahti!

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**PART 2:
SOCIAL INCLUSION AND
SAFETY IN EVERYDAY LIFE**

Marja Ahola, Anita Hartikainen, Mari Lampinen

Resources and support for employing immigrants

The “MALVA – Preparing immigrants for working life” project promotes the employment of young immigrants, and adult immigrants whose position in the labour market is weak in the Päijät-Häme and Uusimaa regions. The project creates a model for timely and easy-to-access support and workplace-oriented guidance that incorporates coaching and targets immigrants and actors supporting immigrants who seek employment. The project maps the need for support and the problem areas of young immigrants and adults and seeks solutions.

The joint project runs from March 2020 until February 2022 and is coordinated by Salpaus Further Education. The project partners are LAB University of Applied Sciences and the Haaga-Helia School of Vocational Teacher Educa-

tion, in cooperation with enterprises in the Päijät-Häme and Uusimaa regions.

The project’s primary target group is young and adult immigrants whose position in the labour market is difficult, and whose weak knowledge of Finnish working culture and workplace practices, or lack of vocational language skills or insufficient recognition by employers of their previously acquired competence are obstacles to their finding jobs.

Another target group of the project is the workplace counsellors of companies that employ immigrants, resulting in streamlined recruitment and job coaching processes in the companies through strengthened **language and cultural awareness**. An indirect target group is personnel that provides job coaching in educational institutions.

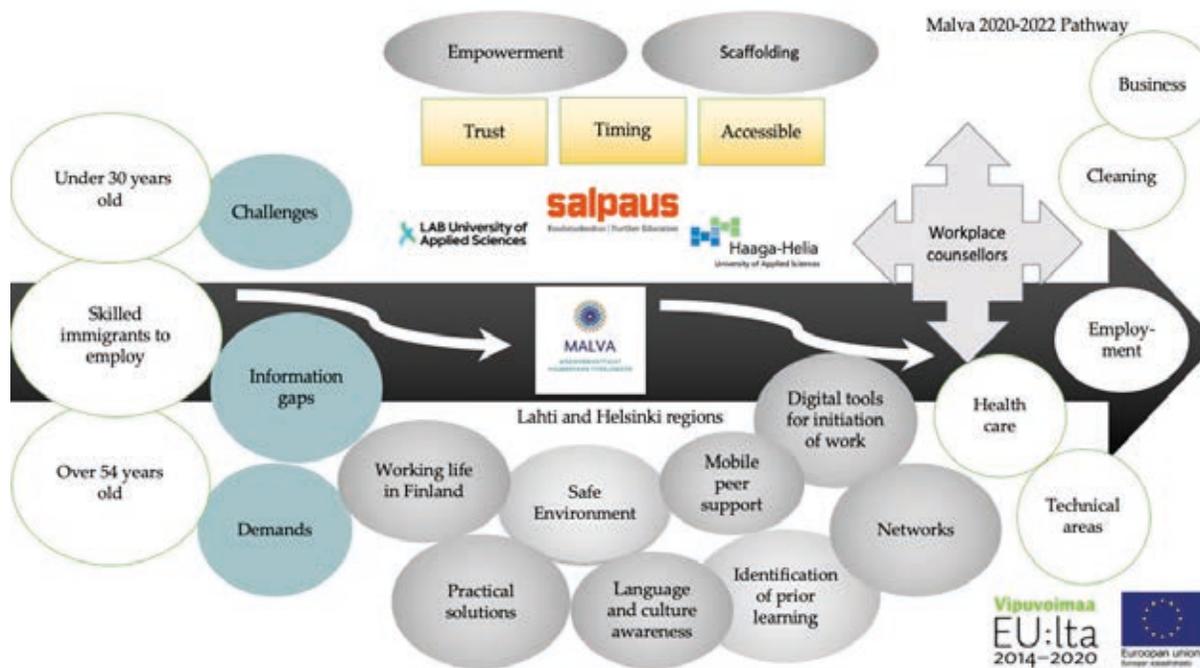


Figure 1. The MALVA project offers empowerment and scaffolding for skilled immigrants to use, and support for workplace counsellors (Marja Ahola 2020).

Project objectives and needs

There is a shortage of skilled workers in many sectors. Currently, the shortage of skilled employees hinders companies' growth. The employment target of 75% set by the Finnish Government requires that more than 100,000 new employees enter the labour market within the next four years. To help address the shortage, approximately 34,000 immigrants would be needed in the labour market annually (Piepponen 2019). At the same time, there are plenty of unemployed immigrants in Southern Finland, who have competence acquired in their former home countries or even vocational studies completed in Finland but who, for one reason or another, cannot find employment. In 2017, the number of foreign-language unemployed people in the whole of Finland was 41,685, and they accounted for 14.1% of all unemployed people (Official Statistics of Finland 2019).

A huge competence pool remains untapped in Finland. This is due to a number of factors, but one reason often quoted is that recruiting immigrants is still considered arduous. The threshold for hiring an immigrant is high, because employers fear both language problems and challenges caused by cultural differences (Sutela 2015). According to a report by the Uusimaa Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (Aulanko 2019), recruitment problems became increasingly common between 2016 and 2017 broadly in all areas and in nearly all sectors.

The immigrants' previously acquired competence is not recognised effectively enough, and companies do not have the resources to provide adequate orientation if the jobseeker lacks sufficient language skills or knowledge of Finnish working culture and legislation. In the worst-case scenario, this will result in the immigrant not being hired in spite of their vocational competence and high motivation. This issue was raised in the 2016–2020 Päijät-Häme immigration programme (Päijät-Hämeen liitto 2015), the 2019–2010 Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme 2.0 prepared by the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council (Aulanko 2019), and in the Future of Immigration 2020 Strategy of the Ministry of the Interior (Valtioneuvosto 2013). The proposed areas of development include various mechanisms that support employers. In addition, methods must be developed to recognise competence, and awareness of immigrants' competence must be increased in business life.

The orientation and job coaching of an immigrant employee requires a different kind of competence and expertise in guidance than is needed with native Finns (Puukari 2013). The role of a workplace counsellor has undergone extensive changes in recent years (Hätönen 2004, Ahonen 2000, Nykänen et al. 2018). Workplaces' role in and responsibility for the professional growth and development of students have grown as a result of the vocational education reform (Nykänen 2018; Korpi et al. 2018; Kukkonen 2018). The target group of

guidance also increasingly consists of young people and adults with different backgrounds who learn in different ways. The number and diversity of immigrant students have increased in vocational education (Nykyri 2017; Arajärvi 2009) and in working life, which is inevitably reflected in the jobs of both workplace counsellors and job coaches in educational institutions. Workplace counsellors and vocational teachers and counsellors in educational institutions are increasingly required to possess **language and cultural awareness** in guidance provision (Puukari 2013), and to be able to transform their professional identities.

Immigrants whose position in the labour market is weak should be provided with support that meets their needs and wishes in order for them to navigate the requirements of education and working life, even if they already had the required competence (Pakarinen 2019, 199). The project seeks to clarify the understanding of what young and adult immigrants need from job coaching provided by educational institutions and municipalities, and from orientation given in workplaces. Following their paths towards working life, interviewing and observing them will help generate guidelines for educational institutions and workplaces, while personal support is provided to the young people and adults who personally take part in the project.

The project builds a more effective model for the job coaching of immi-

grants through a customer-driven, research-oriented, multidisciplinary coaching approach that focuses on working life. The model is being prepared jointly with immigrants, educational institutions, and municipalities' job coaches and workplace counsellors. This will help seek a method that would enable immigrants to receive exactly the support and information they need in the different stages of their path to employment, ranging from the basic information on Finnish working life provided in educational institutions to the specific characteristics of individual workplaces.

Supporting and educating the network of job coaches in educational institutions and municipalities will strengthen the working life skills of immigrant students and their awareness of the special requirements of Finnish working life. The project also addresses the need for guidance and support of workplace counsellors and job coaches in educational institutions. They will be guided and supported in improving their linguistic and cultural awareness and finding their own strengths, which in guidance settings can help them cope at work better and make the orientation of immigrants needing additional guidance less daunting or burdensome. Supporting and educating workplace counsellors will lower their company's threshold for hiring immigrants. Training them to become expert mentors in their respective companies will ensure that the company maintains

a low threshold for hiring an immigrant after the project ends. The project also increases companies' awareness of the various available forms of support. For example, there is insufficient awareness of the pay subsidy as a form of support for recruiting immigrants. Therefore, one of the items in the Government programme is to increase the use of the pay subsidy in companies, and the maximum amount of the pay subsidy for immigrants will be increased in the third sector (Valtioneuvosto 2019).

Supporting counsellors and planning the coaching process

The project supports the transformation of the professional identity and coping at work of workplace counsellors, recruiters in companies, as well as teaching and guidance personnel working with immigrants in a resource-oriented and coaching manner (Ojanen 2007). Providing support for educational institutions that send learners out into working life, the immigrant and the future employer enables the creation of an operating model that takes all parties into consideration and clarifies processes in the transition stage. Designing and modelling the coaching process integrates immigrants more effectively in Finnish working life.

The support and guidance process is designed in the project to take the immigrants' individual needs into consideration from the outset and throughout the project. Job coaching is developed in multidisciplinary cooperation to fa-

cilitate immigrants' employment and adjustment to the working culture, and to ensure that all parties on the path leading to integration become aware of each other's duties and avoid overlaps. Multidisciplinary teams combine their competence, and this enables the immigrant to receive quick and targeted support in finding employment (Koivisto et al. 2016; Valtakari et al. 2018; Hurjanen-Pohjavuori 2017). The MALVA project is based on the immigrants' own wishes, needs and goals. The person pursuing employment is provided with a personalised scaffolding (Suni 2008) that helps develop their agency and self-direction in a new working culture.

A variety of services is available for immigrants, but the target group of young immigrants is a new challenge. The parents of young immigrants are often unfamiliar with Finnish society, or the young have arrived in Finland without their parents. Their need for support is higher than with young native Finns and focuses on different things. For example, native Finns' upbringing usually provides them with the knowledge, skills and soft skills related to the cultural context. In contrast, young immigrants must find their place in the new culture's operating environment and test the customs and skills they learned at home in the Finnish environment. The process takes the communication channels of young people into consideration, and customer orientation is ensured in that support reaches the young people at the right time and

in an appropriate way. The project maps the channels used by young people and a model of peer support and guidance is created for the mobile environment to support the immigrant in working life problems. The communication channels of adult immigrants are not automatically the same as those used by young people. The project also aims to find forms of support that adult immigrants find natural and suitable. The project provides low-threshold support as quickly and flexibly as possible.

It also maps the needs of the job coaches of educational institutions and municipalities and partner companies, especially their workplace counsellors. Solutions to these needs and potential problem areas are sought in cooperation with the companies. In addition, the project examines whether the same kind of peer support is suitable for workplace counsellors and teaching and coaching personnel.

Measures and outcomes

The project is implemented with a focus on the customer and working life by applying an investigative approach with the aim of achieving impacts that are as permanent as possible. The project maps the actual needs related to job coaching of immigrants aged under 30 and over 54 who are entering working life from a variety of backgrounds. This is carried out jointly with the participants, so that a guidance method based on need-based coaching and goals can be modelled for their transitioning to

working life. The project also seeks and pilots new low-threshold forms of support, such as mobile support and bots.

The objective of the project is to transform job coaching and workplace counselling permanently in the direction of a more linguistically and culturally aware concept in the partner companies. Despite their good intentions, large-scale training events often provide takeaways that ultimately are not applied in practice. This is why the MALVA project seeks to find individual solutions that facilitate everyday activities.

MALVA supports and guides the workplace counsellors of immigrants and the job coaches of educational institutions in a resource-oriented manner in their everyday tasks. The workplace counsellors participating in the project will be assigned intermediaries, and this will help incorporate expert competence in the workplaces. The project seeks operating methods for workplace counselling that the counsellor finds natural, stem from their own strengths and strengthen their coping resources, but that also serve the needs of immigrant employees. This will establish a new type of expert in companies, one who can be a mentor within their company or more broadly, companies in their own sector.

Counselling competence and job coaching will also be developed on the basis of the needs of young and adult immigrants, which the counselling should address. A mobile peer network will be created to help immigrants find

employment and their place in Finnish working life and workplaces, and bots will also be used for guidance, as applicable. The implementations are designed flexibly with the immigrant and are also based on the needs of companies.

The project models the different paths of different participants. People with different cultural, linguistic and educational backgrounds have different issues and needs in transitioning to working life. A person may be directed to different paths on the basis of their cultural, professional or life circumstances.

The opportunities of women and men to find employment are taken into account by seeking partner companies from male- and female-dominated sectors alike. According to international studies, finding employment is still more difficult for women than men, regardless of women's educational backgrounds (OECD 2018). The project considers the special needs of women in the employment process and works to solve cultural challenges or issues related to life circumstances that complicate finding employment. In the Päijät-Häme region, attention is also paid to young men, whose employment has been a cause for concern recently. The modelling will show the parties providing guidance that there is more than one correct way to provide job coaching. They will be assisted in finding several ways of providing their services and developing their own professional skills

and activities in an agile manner when encountering new individuals in need of coaching.

The project will incorporate methods that practise peer mentoring in work-based learning, which also splits the job coach's role and responsibilities between the members of the group. The strength-based approach (Nnaemeka 2018; Komu 2018) examines the importance of peers in learning and performing job duties in practice.

Mapping the guidance needs of companies

At the beginning of the project in the spring of 2020, companies were contacted by offering digital support to cope with the state of emergency declared due to the coronavirus. The cooperation began by mapping the needs of the partner companies. Due to the pandemic, it has been problematic to reach companies, but the needs mapping in companies has started gradually.

The project aims to find a minimum of ten partner companies in the Uusimaa and Päijät-Häme regions. Initially, the project includes six partner companies representing the cleaning services sector, construction and metal industries, as well as the well-being services sector. In particular, the focus is on micro enterprises and small businesses that have not previously employed immigrants. The cooperation begins by jointly mapping the existing operating models and development needs of job coaching and guidance with the

workplace counsellors. Based on the findings, support materials and new practices are developed for coaching the workplace counsellors and teaching and guidance personnel. The approach to testing the new forms of operation is resource-based (Hyväri & Vuokila-Oikonen 2018; Christensen et al. 2008; Anttonen & Räsänen 2009; Seligman 2008).

In MALVA, the resource-based approach means that a positive way of thinking increases job satisfaction, well-being, working ability and effectiveness in all stages of providing and finding employment. Positive thinking is strengthened by identifying and applying individuals' existing strengths and characteristics, such as kindness, independence, sense of humour and optimism. The mapping seeks to determine whether the company's workplace counsellors need practices and tools that strengthen their resources and help save time (Figure 2). Guidance

in the MALVA project aims to establish a positive overall understanding for all parties concerned when the jobseeker or new employee is an immigrant. The project will develop and pilot a resource-based (Hyväri & Vuokila-Oikonen 2018) model of linguistically and culturally aware job coaching and workplace counselling, and establishing it in companies and providers of education and guidance in the region will be supported (cf. Härkönen 2019).

All the project's partner organisations have had immigrant students, who form an extensive network of competence in both Päijät-Häme and Uusimaa. The project makes available to companies its competence network, consisting of former students of educational institutions and partners, and its support at the beginning of employment. If needed, MALVA provides support for workplaces.



Figure 2. Resource-based support in the MALVA project. Figure: Marja Ahola and Anita Hartikainen

A web-based coaching package on linguistically and culturally aware guidance will be developed on the basis of the mapping and the pilots. If a company is interested in time-saving digital solutions, such as an orientation bot, the workload of the workplace guidance can be lightened through a customised counselling bot that can answer frequently asked questions specific to each company. The questions and the other information to be entered into the counselling bot, including instructions, will be determined jointly with the company's workplace counsellor.

Customised training to meet the needs identified in the mapping will be prepared for the workplace counsellors and teaching and guidance personnel. The training may include a variety of topics, such as linguistic and cultural awareness, special education approaches and knowledge of employment subsidies, as well as good orientation practices. As all activities are planned to meet the company's needs, the practices will be permanently integrated in the companies' daily operations. The project supports the companies' own processes by easing the workload and clarifying daily processes.

Identifying immigrants' competence reduces obstacles to employment

The project seeks 40 immigrant job-seekers and employees as participants. The situation of each participant is determined through interviews, group dis-

cussions and questionnaires. Once the participant's competence and needs have been established, their employment goals are prepared jointly with them. The participants' subjective experiences of obstacles to employment are determined, and solutions to these obstacles are created.

Making the immigrants' competence visible calls for methods for developing the identification of competence. Practices that facilitate immigrants' employment are piloted and modelled during the project. Individual needs are considered, and the participants are provided with assistance in improving their working life and jobseeking skills.

Participants' individual situations are addressed through customised pedagogical solutions and support measures. They are continuously modified and developed during the project and as required, because the participants are monitored on a long-term basis and provided with personalised support in finding employment.

The needs and wishes of employers are discussed with partner companies to find a matching company for a participant's competence and a suitable way for the participant to demonstrate their competence. The demonstration methods include a short internship, work try-out, pay subsidy, apprenticeship and a job.

The project's guidance professionals visit companies and support the co-operation and counselling interaction between the workplace counsellor and

the immigrant. Supporting and guiding both parties in real-life situations in a timely manner prevents potential problems.

Digital guidance for workplaces of immigrants

The company's existing digital services are mapped at the beginning of the project. The goal is to use channels already used by companies and find the channels that suit them best. Based on this, a service is customised that enables timely and real-time mobile guidance. A

suitable channel for the peer network of immigrants is determined similarly. The selection of the channels considers accessibility and the parties' commitment to using the service during the piloting to gain concrete benefits. Employers, workplace counsellors and the immigrants participating in the project are guided in the use of the services and the feedback received is used to develop them. The forms of mobile support are modelled, and a recommendation is prepared.

Mobile peer network for employees and companies

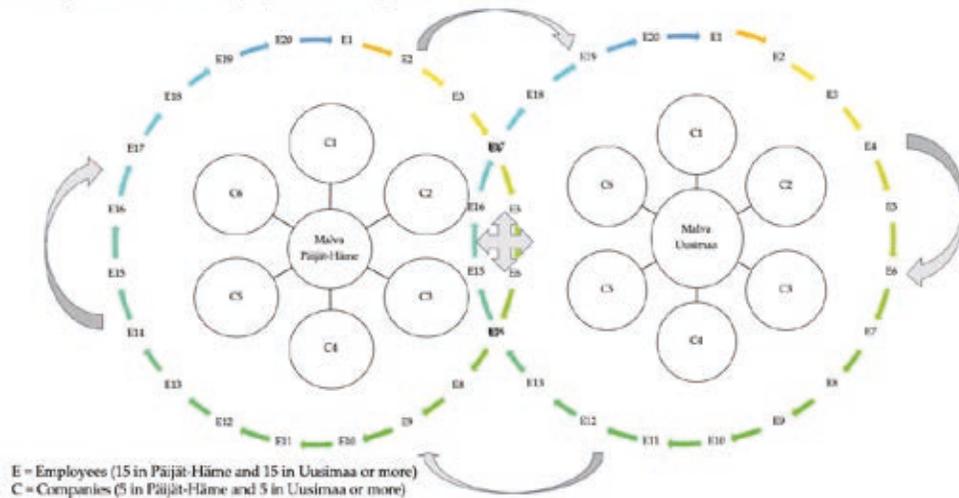


Figure 3. The MALVA project promotes peer networks. Figure: Marja Ahola and Anita Hartikainen

Counselling bots are developed for the orientation and guidance of a new employee, which can be tested by the companies and new employees during the project. The content of the bots is prepared in cooperation with the workplace counsellor. The bot includes frequently asked questions. The users are provided with instruction on using the bot, and feedback received is used to develop it. The bot may direct the user to the Intranet of the workplace or another information source. It offers clear messages that can be repeated over and over again without burdening the workplace counsellor. Content that can be entered into the counselling bot includes user instructions, descriptions of the workplace's values and safety guidelines.

A visual modelling (a process description) is prepared and placed on the project website (www.osaamisenpaikka.fi) on the implementation and use of bots and mobile guidance tools. The purpose of the modelling is to facilitate the implementation of new tools in the companies that still have little experience in recruiting immigrants and the benefits of AI solutions.

Ensuring accessibility is a central aspect of the technical implementation and content production of the digital services of MALVA (Selovu 2019). The

Non-Discrimination Act and the EU's Directive on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies oblige the providers of publicly available services to make their websites accessible (European Union 2018). The design and implementation of the web-based coaching package and mobile services being developed in the project comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 (WCAG) and pursue level AA, required by the directive.

Accessibility refers to a work and study environment in which everyone can operate equally, regardless of their different characteristics. The services must be accessible via mobile devices. The colours, contrasts and size of texts and backgrounds, as well as the reliability of the technologies and tools used have been carefully considered (Selovu 2019, Kirkpatrick et al. 2018). The services are easy to access, and they have been implemented in a linguistically and culturally aware manner (Heimonen 2019). According to recommendations (WCAG), the materials must be perceivable, operable and understandable, among other things. The information and the operation of the user interface must be predictable and readable in its content.

Web-based training designs and mobile services of Malva project according to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1

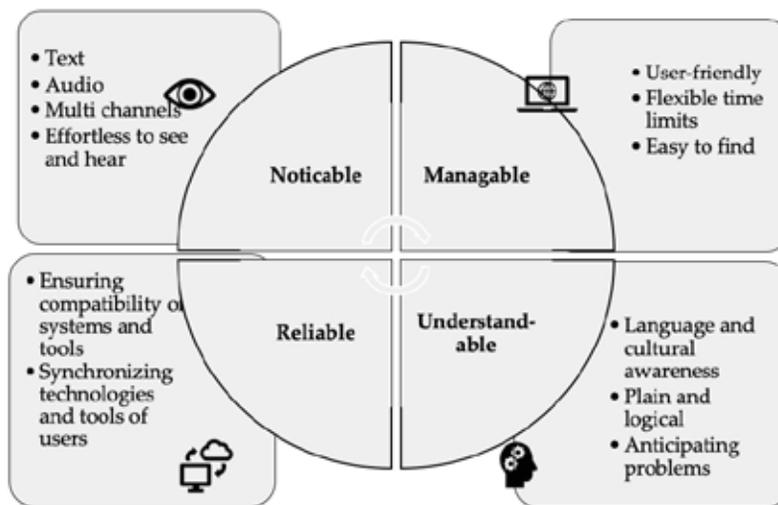


Figure 4. Digital services in the MALVA project are designed according to WCAG 2.1. Figure: Marja Ahola and Anita Hartikainen

Project outcome and impact

Mapping the needs of immigrants with different backgrounds and the needs of companies in a diverse manner helps create a clearer operating model for job coaching. Clarifying the roles of educational institutions and workplace counsellors lightens the workload of everyone and ensures that immigrant jobseekers or employees receive sufficient information and skills for navigating Finnish working life. Training and

supporting parties that provide services in a person's transition to working life provides results that benefit a larger group of people, even if the target group of these activities is small.

The targeted change in the operating methods is a coaching operating model that is based on cooperation and community-based activities, and that applies peer support and is workplace-driven. This operating model helps strengthen immigrants' employ-

ment opportunities and includes them in the process. The goal of the project is to find 15 jobs for immigrants in the Uusimaa region and 15 in Päijät-Häme. The jobs may be in sectors suffering from a shortage of workers, such as cleaning services and the restaurant and technology sectors.

Creating this operating model calls for in-depth cooperation and the transformation of cooperation towards a partnership that promotes employment. The partnership with various actors assesses, develops, pilots and models the form of cooperation and maps the scope of working life coaching and guidance needed to enable immigrants to complete their studies and find employment.

The underlying idea is to transform job coaching into an activity that incorporates guidance and coaching, and that is implemented in close cooperation with teaching and guidance personnel, a job coach, a workplace counsellor and working life representatives. In this model, the support and coaching are designed to meet the needs of the customer and the employer. This will shorten the target group's path to

employment and help recognise their competence, strengthen the professional identity of teaching and guidance personnel and the workplace counsellor, as well as the positive attitudes in the educational institution and working life, and strengthen and develop multidisciplinary cooperation skills and working methods.

MALVA will create a low-threshold web/mobile service that suits immigrants in need of guidance and support, and facilitates the guidance of customers on the path to working life. The professional identity and positive attitudes of the workplace counsellor and teaching and guidance personnel are strengthened through the new forms of support, clarified cooperation, and the resource-based coaching model and training. Electronic publications on the planning and coaching models can be found on the websites of the project partners and on the osaamisenpaikka.fi website. The models created jointly will be used as training materials and distributed more widely through the partner networks in workshops, training and services promoting employment, for example.

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Maisa Anttila, Elina Elme, Taija Nöjd

The Roleplay project – experiential pedagogy for promoting gender equality in education and career choices

Gender segregation in education and working life is strong in Finland. In 2017 only 10% of all employees worked in an equally divided profession (at least 40% representation of both genders) (Suomen virallinen tilasto (SVT) 2019). Gender segregation increases the pay gap between genders, enforces stereotypes of different occupations/fields and restricts individual choices. Gender segregation may reduce the efficient use of resources in the economy and cause employee shortage in some sectors (Kauhanen & Riukula 2019; Microsoft 2017; Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare 2018; Pantsu 2020). The general public also supports the change to more gender equal jobs (Nieminen & Attila 2018, 24).

The most predominantly female occupations (over 90% women) are in the social and health services (nurse, childcare and home services/home care) and the most male-dominated fields are drivers, construction workers and mechanical fitters/repairers (Suomen virallinen tilasto (SVT) 2018). The segrega-

tion is also regional: in Päijät-Häme 2017 share of women was highest among the health and social care (87% of the working places) and hotel, restaurant and catering sectors (75%) while predominantly male occupations were construction (91%), logistics/warehouse (79%) and industry (75%) (Päijät-Hämeen liitto 2019, 10). What are the reasons behind the described situation and how to mitigate segregation?

Gendered education and working life

Gender segregation has its roots in the time when women accessed the labour market for the first time and only certain occupations such as teaching, and health care were regarded as suitable for women (Pesonen 2020). Despite various information campaigns, projects and other efforts, the gendered roles remain. The division starts from gendered educational choices (Kauhanen & Riukula 2019).

Gender based differences in learning outcomes and attitude towards differ-

ent school subjects can be recognised already in comprehensive school where it influences the choice of study subjects and educational choices during school transitions (Jakku-Sihvonen 2013; OECD 2018). The segregation is strongest when transiting from elementary school to vocational upper secondary school (Lahtinen 2019). Joint applications to universities of applied sciences 2020 reveal there is still strong segregation of the sexes in fields of study with technical and IT studies being predominantly male (71% men) and social and health studies female (82% women) (Novia 2020). On average in OECD countries educational choices are gendered; boys see themselves as becoming ICT professionals, scientists or engineers more than girls, and girls envisage themselves more as health professionals than boys do (OECD 2018, 4).

Gender differences in performance of science vary significantly across countries, which indicates that it is not about innate differences in aptitude, but rather caused by factors that parents, teachers, policy makers and opinion leaders can influence (OECD 2018, 6).

Young people's educational choices

Young people's educational choices are influenced by many factors such as school performance, understanding of one's abilities and aptitude, values, family and its social networks, economical resources, friends, hobbies, structures and practices, social and cultural phe-

nomena and regional factors (Lahtinen et al. 2019; Mäntyniemi et al. 2019). Gendered impressions, discrimination and prejudices in working life may work as negative push factors not to apply for certain fields (Lahtinen 2019, 135–136; Microsoft 2017). On the other hand, it is also recognised that girls may avoid male-dominated vocational upper secondary studies to be rid of the boys who disturb a peaceful learning environment (Mäntyniemi et al. 2019, 23–24).

Encouragement from parents, friends and school personnel to explore professions/fields not typical for one's gender varies (Attila & Keski-Petäjä 2018, 55–56). Experiences of students indicate that teachers still have gender-segregated attitudes and actions, for example, in evaluation, content of study materials and division of tasks (Aapola-Kari 2019; Attila & Keski-Petäjä 2018; Hoikkala et al. 2019; Mäntyniemi et al. 2019). Career counselling practices do not direct young people actively enough to atypical educational choices (Hoikkala et al. 2019). Teachers and guidance counselors may see, for example, girls with a migrant background as natural carers and guide them easily into the care industry. This is supported by girls' parents who may see some vocations and fields as too masculine and not suitable for girls. (Mäkelä 2019)

Youth culture may also play a role in what occupations are perceived as suitable for oneself, often subconsciously (Mäntyniemi et al. 2019). General discussion and news influence impressions

of different professions and how students feel about their own study field (AMIS 2018). TV-series are an important source of occupational perceptions as well (Mäntyniemi et al. 2019, 20–21). Stereotypes influence gendered roles, providing quick, simplified and easy assumptions of characteristics and behaviour generalised to members of a social group (Koenig & Eagly 2014). Stereotypically we associate different characteristics to men and women. The theory of cultural moderation postulates that gender stereotypes are culturally moderated, not universal. For example, in collectivistic cultures men are regarded as more collectivistic than women and in individualistic cultures men are rated as more individualistic than women (Cuddy et al. 2015). The social role theory suggests that the gendered division of labour determines the content of gender stereotypes and gender-based differences in behaviour. Enacting gendered roles modifies behavior in a role-consistent direction and shapes personality, enforcing the stereotypes (Koenig & Eagly 2014). To make a change, gendered stereotypes and perceptions need to be challenged.

Promoting gender equal careers – the “Roleplay” project

Research results highlight the importance of adults for the educational and career choices of young people. That is why the Roleplay (01/03/2020–28/02/2022) project by LAB University of Applied Sciences and Outward Bound

Finland focuses on breaking down the gendered divisions with professionals who work to support young people in their educational and career choices. The main target groups of the project are teachers, student counselors, youth workers and hobby counselors. The aim of the project is to develop and provide concrete tools with and for these professionals to identify patterns that enforce gender segregation and provide ways how to mitigate it. The main goal of the project is to develop and pilot a coaching programme for education and guidance professionals. Experiential learning is used as an educational method in the project to support the learning and development of adults and young people.

Experiential pedagogy and learning

Experiential learning is the process of learning through experience, more specifically defined as “learning through reflection on doing”. Skills, knowledge, emotions, imagination and experience are acquired outside a traditional academic classroom setting. It is based on the needs and motivation of individuals. Experiential learning focuses on the learning process for the individual, which is based on four main elements operating in a continuous cycle during the learning experience: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. Outdoor learning is one of the forms of experiential learning where functionality as well as changing envi-

ronments and social interaction situations create an opportunity for personal growth and learning. The positive outcomes individuals experience manifest the form on increased self-confidence, awareness and respect for the interdependence of individuals and a desire to

make a positive difference in their own lives and in the lives of others. Through shared challenges, adversity, failure and success, individuals discover and develop new skills, confidence and passion. (Beames 2017; Outward Bound 2020; Outward Bound Finland 2017)



Figure 1. In outdoor learning changing environments and social interaction create an opportunity for learning. Photo: Joel Nykter

Tools and resources available for promotion of gender equality

Even though gender segregation is still strong in Finland it is normative today

that gender equality and mitigating gender segregation are considered when working with children and youth. There are organisation-specific plans

to promote gender equality and good practice examples at schools (Finnish National Agency for Education 2008 & 2019) and materials available to educate children and youth on gender equality (TANE 2020). As there have been several past and ongoing projects on the mitigation of gender segregation, there are also ready-made tools available to apply and spread out: publications, policy recommendations, educational materials and models for functional equality training. Many of these materials consider gender sensitivity, as it is gender diversity that we need to take in account and respect. The Roleplay project not only aims at developing tools for mitigating gender segregation and promoting equality, but provides a chance to support finding tools and resources that are already available.

Also, for projects involving youth it is useful to reflect on their practices and communication from the gender segregation and equality perspective. It is essential to understand the effects of the project on gender equality already in the planning stage and ensure equality throughout the project execution and communication (Salmenkangas & Wallin 2019).

How Roleplay will promote well-being

The Roleplay project promotes social inclusion, equality and diversity in society by contributing to the work of previous projects, actions and campaigns breaking down gender-based

roles and divisions. Mitigating gender segregation is a slow process requiring different actions (Mäntyniemi et al. 2019, 2). Roleplay is a gender sensitive project: gender norms and stereotypes are addressed both at individual and societal level. Even though the focus of the project is on gender majorities, gender plurality is considered. In addition to gender-based segregation, we are aware of stereotypes in working life and education related to other social groups such as age, religion, status, political beliefs and ethnicity.

The aim of the Roleplay project is to mitigate gender segregation in education and career choices by finding ways for education and guidance sector. When adults are more aware of the phenomena of gender segregation and factors influencing it, they can counsel and guide young people to education and career paths without excluding some choices because of gender. This broadens the possibilities of choices for individuals and contributes to the employment of young people. One aim is that the gender stereotypes and general attitudes towards different occupations are changing as well, starting from the organisations participating in the development tasks of the project.

The Roleplay project is funded by the European Social Fund (Leverage from the EU 2014-2020).

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Kotoa kotiin – peer activities to support immigrant women’s integration

The Kotoa kotiin (“My home in Finland”) project, managed by the LAB University of Applied Sciences, is part of the European Union’s measures to promote integration. The Kotoa kotiin project is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) under the European Union’s Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, and the target group of the project is nationals of third countries. The project primarily targets women whose native language is Arabic, Kurdish, Dari or Thai, who are still in the integration stage, and who remain beyond the scope of services and integration measures. However, women whose integration period has ended can also be included in the project for justified reasons. These include being a vulnerable person, having poor language skills, being unemployed or at risk of marginalisation. The project offers group activities in which the women can participate with their children. The group activities strengthen the target group’s social inclusion, activity in society, Finnish language skills, cultural competence and mental health,

thereby supporting the participants’ integration. In addition to the group activities, peer activities, run by immigrant and native Finn volunteers who have received orientation in the activities, are organised for the participants. The project is implemented jointly by LAB, Salpaus Further Education and Lahden Diakonialaitos (Dila). Specialists from Salpaus are in charge of implementing the group activities and assisting the participants in finding suitable pathways after the project, and Dila is responsible for developing the peer support activities.

The Kotoa kotiin project draws on the results of the Amal project, implemented for Arabic-speaking women in 2018. The further development of the good practices in the Kotoa kotiin project, launched in April 2019, has been facilitated by the fact that the project shares some of the specialists with the previous project, and project personnel are already familiar with each other’s operating environments and local networks. The Kotoa kotiin project runs for 2.5 years, and it is more extensive in its

content than its predecessor: there are more language groups to reach, supporting mental health is highlighted, and developing voluntary peer support activities is a completely new element. Because arranging childcare with the help of only students and volunteers was previously considered challenging (Liski & Rask 2018, 86), a separate cost item has been reserved for it in this project. Likewise, interpretation services are also a separate cost item, because the project does not include counsellors who speak the participants' languages.

Becoming active outside the home and finding integration pathways

According to the December 2018 statistics, there were approximately 400 Arabic-speaking and 275 Kurdish-speaking women in Lahti. The number of women speaking Thai was 250, and the native language of 90 women was Farsi or Dari. In the participant recruitment stage, it was noted that the number of Arabic-speaking women had as much as doubled since the preparation of the project plan. It was also important to define what a vulnerable person meant in this specific target group to market the project appropriately. According to Article 21 of the EU's directive on the reception of applicants for international protection, vulnerable persons include pregnant women, single parents with minor children, persons with serious illnesses and persons with mental disorders. For the project work, all these

are fairly easily recognisable and apparent reasons for being marginalised from employment, education and regular integration services.

Without language skills and information on the available services, arranging one's livelihood and creating social contacts are difficult. The position of immigrant women in the labour market in Finnish society, which is based on the model of two breadwinners, is fairly poor, and their weak employment situation manifests as poverty in families. As employment is an important factor in securing an individual's wellbeing, and workplaces are where social connections are made in a new country, the issue also affects the children of immigrants, because poverty is increasingly cross-generational (Larja 2020, 28). Successful integration and a sense of inclusion prevent marginalisation, and narrow wellbeing and health differences (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos 2019). Since it is also known that when children adjust to being in a group and function in a Finnish-speaking environment, it may make it easier for them to transfer to early childhood education and care in the future (Eronen et al. 2016, 33). It is therefore clear that the Kotoa kotiin project's activities supporting the integration of immigrant women also indirectly affects the future of the women's children.

Reaching parents who take care of their children at home calls for networking, practical outreach and the active use of the grapevine. Once the activi-

ties have been established, reaching the target group becomes easier, because trust has been built, and information is spread in the target group's own networks, provided that the target group considers the service of high quality (Kotona Suomessa -hanke 2017, 12). Attention must be paid to diverse marketing through multiple channels, as well as to face-to-face communication, especially in the case of open groups that do not require a referral from any party (Eronen et al. 2016, 35).

Reaching women in the target group of the Kotoa kotiin project began with visits to groups established for integration training and Finnish language and culture, so that the information on the activities would be disseminated as widely as possible through the women's own circles. Brochures about the project activities in easy language with translations into the target language were handed out in the groups. Before the group activities began, the project was introduced to approximately three hundred people in integration training and other language study groups with target-language participants.

In addition to the immediate circle of the target group, the project was pre-

sented to actors in the healthcare, guidance and support sector working with immigrants in the Päijät-Häme region. The most central of these actors were child health clinics, social work among adults and families, early childhood education and care and basic education, parishes, the ALIPI Regional Integration Service Point, the Finnish Red Cross, the Finnish Refugee Council, the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare and the Let's Read Together network. The Kotoa kotiin project personnel have regularly participated in the network meetings of the region's immigrant education working group and immigrant actors. The project has also been presented at events targeting various organisations and immigrants. Additionally, outreach efforts have included cooperation with Arabic-language culture interpreters working in comprehensive schools in Lahti. The project's first pilot reached 35 women who belonged to the target group. Twenty-nine of them joined the group activities. The number of Arabic-speaking participants was 20, Dari was spoken by six participants, and the rest were individual speakers of Kurdish Sorani, Kurdish Kurmanji and Thai.



Figure 1. The participants of the Kotoa kotiin project are women whose native language is Arabic, Dari, Kurdish or Thai, and whose reasons for immigration and length of residence in Finland vary. A factor shared by all of them is that they are currently at home and not employed, studying or included in other services. Image: Oona Rouhiainen, project illustration

Childcare arrangements and space issues

The Kotoa kotiin group activities have been organised since October 2019. The group convenes for two hours on Mondays and Thursdays. The initial location was the space reserved for Dila's Stoori workshop, and the group moved to Multi-Culti in January 2020. It was clear from the start that there was a high demand for the project activities in the region: the first meeting drew 18 women and 12 children. In the Lahti region,

there are no other activities to support the integration of stay-at-home mothers during their integration period that also include childcare.

The project's childcare arrangements aimed to ensure that there would be one caregiver at each meeting whom the children already knew, and with whom they felt safe. The caregiver task was filled by a long-term unemployed immigrant woman found through the network, and she is assisted by young people participating in workshop ac-

tivities, students and volunteers. The children accompanying mothers participating in the group activities are primarily babies or under three years of age, so the leaders of the group activities have also assisted to give the women a short break to write instead of dictate, for example. The participants have repeatedly given positive feedback on the childcare arrangements. This is important for them to commit to the activities. Childcare is important for the success of education targeting stay-at-home parents: if the children are uncomfortable with the care arrangements, it is difficult for the parents to concentrate (Eronen et al. 2016, 33).

The childcare arrangements also involve an issue related to space. Since some of the children are still breastfed, and some of the older children are unused to being away from their mothers at all, the space must allow for switching between the areas reserved for adults and children in an uncomplicated manner. When considering the suitability of a space, the space needed by the buggies of ten children during heavy rain or snowfall must be taken into account, especially if some of the children still sleep in their buggy.

There have been two types of opinion concerning a suitable location for educational and peer group activities organised for immigrant parents. On one hand, bringing the activities to the vicinity of the target group makes par-

ticipation easy and supports the involvement with the surrounding community. On the other, providing the activities in the centre of the city may encourage the participants to explore areas further away from their homes and boost their confidence, which helps them get to know their hometown better (Eronen et al. 2016, 33). In any case, the space should be reachable by functional public transportation connections. A noisy space frequented by outsiders is unsuitable for group activities, because the group needs to be able to meet without interruptions. It is also a good idea to select a location where people can meet even after the organised peer group activities end (Kerkkänen 2014, 16).

The vision of continuity was the decisive factor behind selecting Dila's Stoori workshop as the initial location for the Kotoa kotiin group activities. A group of Arabic-speaking women had continued to meet at Dila after the Amal project ended. The idea was to familiarise a larger group of immigrant women with the operating environment, which would incorporate the group and voluntary activities of the Kotoa kotiin project as part of the regular activities at Dila at an early stage. However, the unexpected popularity of the group activities called for a quick reassessment of the space issue, and it was decided to move the group to Multi-Culti.

Language skills and wellbeing from group activities

More than a third of the 18 women who were active participants in the activities in the spring of 2020 were either fully or partially illiterate, also in their own language (Atkinson & Lampinen 2020). However, additional challenges to the planning of the operations were created by the fact that some of the women had already obtained some language skills in the integration training modules. Some were at a kind of a standby stage: for example, their family or health situation had at some point prevented them from continuing integration training, and they did not yet have the language skills required for vocational education or for skill level three in the National Certificate of Language Proficiency test required for citizenship. Some were waiting for the delayed information on the start of the next training or were not even sure about the training for which they had applied. The rest of the women were those who wanted to learn the rudiments of basic language proficiency while on maternity or parental leave or taking care of their children on the homecare allowance.

Unemployed immigrant mothers often have a low level of education and poor Finnish language skills, and lack employment experience. Returning to the labour market from parental leave is slow, because the extended homecare allowance creates a considerable wel-

fare trap for people with a low income in particular, which is the very group to which many immigrant mothers with little education belong. For them, becoming employed is not necessarily even a rational option, because the available work opportunities are often jobs that are physically burdensome and carried out at irregular hours. As such, they do not even offer social interaction with a work community. However, being a stay-at-home mother may be a fairly respected “career” (Larja 2020, 37).

Supporting the improvement of the women’s language skills is important not only for inclusion but for enabling participation, and strengthening mental health. In the first pilot of the Kotoa kotiin project, the support for improving language skills is built on the Amal project. A new kind of cooperation has been carried out through the “Osallistava turvallisuus maahanmuuttajille” project that promotes safety awareness among immigrants, organised by the Finnish National Rescue Association SPEK: the group activities have covered, among other things, financial security, fire and electrical safety, iciness and darkness, and traffic safety. In addition, guidelines concerning the coronavirus pandemic have been provided, and materials have been prepared concerning the disciplining of children and domestic violence.

The Finnish language skills of the participants in the group activities of the first pilot have been developed through five different topics:

- Introducing oneself; family and friends
- Daily schedules and using various services
- Nutrition and meals
- Clothing, home and living
- Health and wellbeing

The order in which the topics are covered, and the time allocated for each have been defined as the activities progress, based on the number of participants and the baseline of their language skills. In covering each topic, the participants have been divided into three small groups based on their language skill levels if required, so that everyone receives personal attention and can see themselves as a learner in a positive light. The division into small groups has been made possible by the fact that of the three S2 specialists in the project, at least two have always been there to facilitate the group activities.

Organising the training sessions into different groups based on the skill level is the most effective solution with regard to language learning. In low-threshold activities, the content of meetings should not be planned

in too much detail, but one should be prepared to improvise. The number of participants may vary between meetings, which affects the extent to which the teaching can be differentiated. In addition to teaching, the work involves encountering and supporting participants, which calls for a certain kind of attitude to work. The nature of the activities should be communicated clearly to the teachers and volunteers (Eronen et al. 2016, 34–35). In the Kotoa kotiin project, the key aspects of strengthening the participants' Finnish language skills are participant-orientation, unhurried pace, interaction, revisiting the items learned regularly and learners' activity supporting language learning. The activities during the first pilot included baking, visiting a flea market, stretching and doing buggy workouts.

The coronavirus epidemic put all face-to-face encounters on hold, but there was a desire to continue the activities. After all, the women were already in challenging situations, and it was expected that their need for support would increase. Since the WhatsApp application had already been used in the group's internal communication, the group decided to continue the activities through the application. Although it was challenging that the women were unable to participate simultaneously because of their children and their schooling taking priority, the experiences were positive (Atkinson & Lampinen 2020).

The Kotoa kotiin group activities activated the women in thinking about their education and employment paths or use of other services such as rehabilitative activities instead. Individual assessments concerning their situation and mental health were conducted on the women, and they received guidance in everyday matters as required (Atkinson & Lampinen 2020). Themes including the maintenance of good mental health have been among the topics in the group and volunteer meetings organised in the project by LAB's nursing and social services students. They have also been covered in individual guidance discussions.

The variety of assistance needed in daily tasks has been wide: applying for day-care or a study place; housing allowance applications; health-related matters such as making an appointment with a physician or optician; converting medical care instructions into easy language; communication related to a child's school photograph session or reserving materials at a library; downloading and assisting in the use of the mobile application for Lahti region public transport; issues with using KELA; and bank services. Such activities also need competence in integration guidance or social counselling in addition to competence in teaching the language (Eronen et al. 2016, 35). There has been a great need for interpreters in the activities. Part-time counsellors who speak the target language would often have been helpful, because volunteers with language skills are at work or studying

during the day.

The individual guidance discussions have shown that some of the women participating in the activities do not know how or do not want to think about the future at all. Questions concerning their wishes and interests primarily result in embarrassment, and many additional questions are needed to determine what type of competence they acquired during the years spent at home in their previous home countries and in Finland. Even if their educational and employment experience is non-existent, skills in crafts, baking and cooking or taking care of a large group of siblings may help the women discover what vocation they want to learn, and this in turn may motivate them to learn the language. In addition, the experiences and positive role models provided by other members of the group and volunteers motivate the women.

By May 2020, ten participants of the group activities in the project had been guided to further pathways: integration training; basic education for adults; VALMA preparatory education; and another project for immigrants. The guidance sessions have confirmed that the project enables close cooperation between different actors and supplements the participants' support network. Good cooperation and information flow are of the utmost importance for the project to constitute a module that makes sense for the target group, and for the participants to be directed to appropriate activities (Eronen 2016, 35).

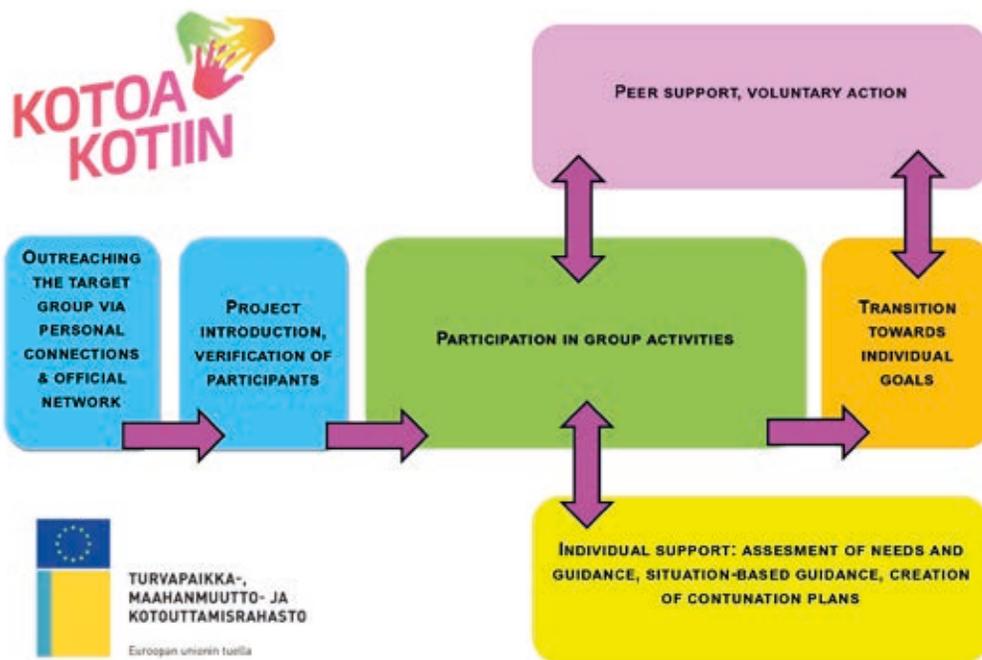


Figure 2. Participatory pathway, the Kotoa kotiin project.
Image: Anna-Leena Atkinson & the project team

Peer support from women to women

Lahden Diakonialaitos is an operator in the social services and healthcare sector, and voluntary work is a significant part of Dila's social work activities. In the Kotoa kotiin project, Dila's contribution is to develop voluntary peer support that strengthens inclusion and wellbeing and promotes integration. This development work includes the modelling of the recruitment and orientation of volunteers, as well as producing materials to support volunteer work. Those

recruited as peer support volunteers include both immigrant women who have lived in Finland for an extended period and women who are native Finns. The Kotoa kotiin volunteer work promotes the cultural competence of immigrants and native Finns and provides immigrant women with opportunities to make contacts and network with Finns. The volunteers' inclusion and competence are also strengthened by the activities.

From the outset, the activities have been developed by building them on

the volunteer work models created by Dila to integrate the Kotoa kotiin activities as part of Dila's operations. A special characteristic of the Kotoa kotiin volunteer activities is that only women are recruited and orientated as volunteers. Volunteers have been recruited through Dila's website and social media channels, the Vapaaehtoistyö.fi service, and Dila's networks and partners, including the integration training groups of Salpaus Further Education.

The volunteer activities are a two-way process that benefits both the person offering support and the support recipient. The volunteer learns new skills, experiences joy, gets to know new people, gains new experiences and at best is empowered by the volunteer activities. Volunteer activities can prevent loneliness and marginalisation, as well as increase inclusion (Kansalaisareena 2020a). Peer activities are a special form of voluntary work and require a similar life situation or a similar experience, for example. Peer activities take the form of either informal or organised assistance and support, based on a sense of solidarity, shared interests and similar life experiences. The goal of peer support is to promote the participants' wellbeing and coping. Key aspects of peer support are reciprocity, equality, respect for others and trust. The most important elements of peer support are telling one's story and listening to the other person (Kuikka 2018; Kansalaisareena 2020b; Terveyskylä 2019).

Peer support that promotes inte-

gration is often provided in the participant's own language. Benefits provided by peer support groups in the participants' own language include enabling the participants to express themselves better and to understand what is being discussed. In a peer group in one's own language, fewer misunderstandings are related to interaction. However, a shared language is not enough to generate the experience of being a peer with others. This experience, combined with commitment to interaction and collaboration, forms the foundation of the peer activities. It is important that the participants receive the kind of support that they need. Many immigrants would like to have contacts with Finnish-speaking people, in which case the participant gains the most benefits from peer activities that strengthen social networks (Vertaistoimijat 2020).

Orientation, activities and support materials

The orientation provided to the volunteers consists of two modules of two hours, which take into consideration the participants' lack of language skills, possible illiteracy, lack of knowledge of Finnish culture and customs, and the differences between the social structures of their former home country and Finland. These may also apply to some of the immigrant volunteers. The themes of the orientation include the principles of volunteer activities, how peer support in the Kotoa kotiin project is provided, cultural sensitivity, easy lan-

guage and linguistically aware communication, and brainstorming volunteer activities together. Orientation can also be provided individually and if required, via a remote connection. In addition to orientation, a project worker conducts a one-on-one discussion with each prospective volunteer concerning their wishes, potential concerns and need for support. The goal is to provide orientation to and enable participation in the activities for all prospective volunteers.

Encountering others is at the core of the Kotoa kotiin volunteer activities. The activities the volunteers can be involved in include planning and implementing pop-up activity sessions for the group, getting to know the other women and talking with them in Finnish, helping with childcare during the group activities, assisting women in their individual needs and preparing materials (such as photographs, instructions and tips) that support the integration of immigrant women, and the group and volunteer activities. The modelling of the activities has considered different levels of participation. One-off and longer-term peer support are equally valuable, and each volunteer can participate exactly as much as they wish.

Dila's project worker is with the volunteers every step of the way in the process by being in regular contact with each volunteer, in addition to the recruitment, orientation and initial discussions. Get-togethers, recreation and additional orientation as required are organised for the volunteers. A familiar

and approachable project worker, informal meetings and regular contacts contribute to the volunteers' commitment to the activities and their sense of doing something valuable and being heard. Providing peer support as a volunteer should also be an empowering experience for the volunteer.

With the volunteers and the target group, the project develops visual and functional support material to support the volunteer relationship. The material enables the volunteers to get to know the activities' participants and to familiarise the immigrant women with Finnish society and culture, even if they do not share a language or have literacy skills. LAB's social services and healthcare students have participated in developing the materials, which have been tested in group meetings.

The low-threshold meeting places provided by organisations, and the models of peer support and volunteer activities, are the kind of measures supporting inclusion and the special nature of the organisations that no activities provided by other sectors can replace. They are therefore of the utmost importance (Jämsen & Pyykkönen 2014, 64). Based on the first pilot of the Kotoa kotiin project, the combination of group activities and volunteer peer support seems beneficial. There may be a permanent need in Lahti for low-threshold activities targeting immigrant women, provided in an informal setting and including childcare.

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Anna-Leena Atkinson, Maija Eerola

The Osallisuuskortteli project boosts studies, and provides students with resources for working life

The Osallisuuskortteli (“Participation Block”) project managed by the LAB University of Applied Sciences develops and pilots, in cooperation with Lahden Diakonialaitos (Dila) and Harjulan Setlementti (Harjula), an operating model that provides LAB’s social services students with a workplace-oriented method of advancing their studies and developing their working life skills in authentic job settings. The operating model’s objective is to speed up graduation and provide the students with a streamlined path to working life. The Osallisuuskortteli project, launched in April 2019, falls under development work funded by the European Social Fund with the aim of improving services that support equality in transitions and education.

The development work in the Osallisuuskortteli project is based on strong cooperation with working life. The learning environment for working life that is being developed in the project is formed by the Dilakortteli

concept of Lahden Diakonialaitos and the immigrant projects ran by Harjulan Setlementti, which represent the third sector. The main focus of the development of the project’s learning environment is on the activities of Dilakortteli and Harjula partners by piloting the operating model being developed as part of its own operations. Osallisuuskortteli offers an alternative way to complete one’s studies. The learning process applied in Osallisuuskortteli is referred to as work-based learning; in other words, studying takes place in a workplace. The student earns and strengthens the competence required by their degree through working. The difference between the conventional model of work-based learning and the Osallisuuskortteli project is that the student is not employed by the workplace but also plays the role of a student in the workplace (Kempe-Hakkarainen & Pirttikoski 2019).

Goal-oriented co-creation with working life

According to Kelo (at al. 2012), the basis of developing cooperation with working life is to identify current forms of cooperation and assess their functioning. The realisation of work-based learning calls for cooperation that is implemented in equal terms between universities of applied sciences and working life organisations. It challenges both teachers and working life actors and requires re-evaluation of practices and structural reforms. Work-based learning sets the sights beyond today's working life, supports students in learning new skills in the changing needs of working life and provides opportunities for creating preparedness for operating in working life in the future (Kelo et al. 2012).

When learning takes place at the interface of education and employment, traditional teaching methods alone are insufficient. New kinds of solution are needed. What is needed is pedagogy to help link theory and practice, develop self-regulation skills and critical thinking, as well as integrate the learning of generic skills and sector-specific knowledge. In addition to the actual pedagogical planning, educational institutions and teachers are required to actively interact with workplaces and make pedagogical principles known (Tynjälä et al. 2006).

In the development of the Osallisuuskortteli operating model, this cooperation has been realised by conducting co-creation workshops for

social services students, Dila and Harjula employees, and teachers and other instruction personnel from the University of Applied Sciences. The workshops have designed the learning environment, mapped the guidance needs of students and employees, and examined the importance of peer support from the perspective of both advancing studies and professional growth. The outcomes of these workshops have been crucial for designing the Osallisuuskortteli operating model, which describes the roles and responsibilities of and cooperation between the student, the educational institution and various working life actors. An equivalent co-creation of dialogue and the operating model will continue throughout the entire project period until the end of 2021.

Personalised paths for advancing one's studies

The project plan of Osallisuuskortteli is based on the views of Nuutinen (2018) on professional growth paths, enabling the personal growth of students and supporting their personal identity so that students receive the knowledge and skills needed in working life in the future. Success gives the student inner strength and resources to continue their studies. Other students, teachers and working life professionals support the student's growth into a professional in their sector. Peer support helps advance one's studies. Being encountered as an individual strengthens the student's commitment to the studies and

their confidence in completing them (Nuutinen 2018).

Although the majority of LAB's social services students currently graduate within the target time of 3.5 years, the predefined graduation schedule may generate extra pressure for some. When the stress created by the schedule is combined with either learning difficulties or stressful life circumstances caused by financial, social or health reasons, the burdens may paralyse the student, further delaying the progress of their studies. In addition, the changed working life requirements concerning professional competence may seem difficult to meet.

The primary target group of the Osallisuuskortteli project is those of LAB's social services students who find advancing their studies for one reason or another challenging, or whose studies have been prolonged beyond the targeted graduation time. Reaching this target group proved extremely challenging at the project kick-off stage. The number of students who had exceeded the attendance period by one or two years, or those who had transferred to the Open University of Applied Sciences to complete a degree, was approximately twenty in the autumn of 2019. The attempts to reach these students in October after the pilot of the learning environment had launched included a short text message with a link to a survey and a repeat message sent after the turn of the year. Only one response was received. When the situ-

ation of these students was reviewed with teacher tutors and the study coordinator, it was noticed that many of them had already moved elsewhere, which made it impossible for them to complete their missing studies in a working life learning environment in Lahti. In addition, outreach guidance was used as an attempt to reach students in the target group. Cooperation is needed to identify and reach those students whose studies are at risk of becoming prolonged or in the worst-case scenario, interrupted completely, as early as possible. Disseminating the operating model among LAB's social services teachers will continue in the autumn of 2020.

While attempts were underway to reach the primary target group, the piloting of the Osallisuuskortteli operating model began with designing the operating environment in small groups. Concurrently, the marketing efforts were outlined to target social services students in the final stages of their studies and promote Osallisuuskortteli as an alternative method of completing missing studies from previous years in authentic work environments and receiving personalised support for advancing and completing their studies. For example, Osallisuuskortteli has already proved a feasible alternative for the customised completion of studies or parts thereof no longer offered in the curriculum. The project's learning environments also offer versatile possibilities as thesis topics.

Other study unit components piloted in small groups in the Dilakortteli activities were a two-credit module on individual and group guidance skills and a three-credit module on the promotion of health and wellbeing. In the spring of 2020, the piloting of the components of these study units continued and with regard to individual and group guidance skills, were expanded to the services offered by Harjula. In Osallisuuskort-

teli, work placement periods included in the social service studies can be redesigned by spreading them over a longer period or by compiling them from sections of several different activities. These pilots have been carried out in work placements in social guidance, services for children, adolescents and families, and the application of vocational competence.

Piloted Studies (amount)	Completed ECTS credits (students) 12/2019	Completed ECTS credits (students) 4/2020	On-going ECTS credits (students) 5/2020
Full credit courses (2)	5 (1)		5 (1)
Partial credit courses (3)	74 (33)	15 (5)	24 (12)
Training periods (3)	15 (1)	15 (1)	45 (3)
Theses (2)			30 (2)
TOTAL	94 (35)	30 (6)	104 (18)

Figure 1. Completed and on-going studies in Osallisuuskortteli Autumn 2019 – Spring 2020. Image: Anna-Leena Atkinson and Erno Hokkanen

The objective of Osallisuuskortteli is to commit social services students to the learning environment over the long-term as the project progresses, so that they complete studies of up to six months or one year as a work pair or team in the activities provided by Dilakortteli or Harjula's immigrant services. The first experiences have been gained concerning the structuring of such combinations of several study units. In the spring of 2020, some Osallisuuskortteli students were already working on modules worth 17–30 credits. In the future, the activities of Osallisuuskortteli will focus not only on the development of longer-term learning processes but on offering an opportunity to complete such missing study units or parts thereof that will enable the student to graduate.

In addition to social services students, the target groups of the Osallisuuskortteli project include, in accordance with the project plan, the workplace counsellors of the learning environments of Dila and Harjula, as well as LAB's social services teachers, who direct students to Osallisuuskortteli and other support personnel. The designing of the learning environments applies the principles of team learning and uses a shared online platform to ensure interaction and information sharing between various actors. The selected digital platform is Teams, which will be implemented in the autumn of 2020. Platform development will continue as the project progresses. Online cooperation has already

been piloted in workshops organised via remote connections in the spring of 2020.

Dilakortteli offers resources for working life

Lahden Diakonialaitos is a non-profit third sector actor that offers social services and healthcare services, develops regionally influential church social work and through social work, helps people who are at risk of being left outside other social assistance. The community-oriented Dilakortteli block, located in the centre of Lahti and ran by Lahden Diakonialaitos, brings together people of different ages, backgrounds and capabilities such as employed people, students, volunteers, elderly residents of service housing, commune residents, youth participating in workshop activities, work try-out participants and persons needing special support. The Dilakortteli block provides persons needing special support with opportunities for inclusion in society. The social work services organised by Lahden Diakoniapalvelut continuously develop new forms of active civic activity and community-oriented activities with the help of development project funding and project funding. The block is the home of approximately 100 elderly people in units of intensive sheltered housing, standard sheltered housing and senior housing. More than 400 social services, healthcare and education students of Suomen Diakoniaopisto (SDO) study there, and approximately 350

volunteers and 100 employed persons work in the block. The Dilakortteli concept also includes a social services and healthcare workshop for young people, and the Lahden Diakonialaitos day-care centre and Marie home for persons with memory disorders, both of which are located within a couple of kilometres.

In the Osallisuuskortteli project, Dilakortteli is a learning environment for LAB's social services students. The students can work in authentic customer encounters with the various customer and actor groups in the block. Dilakortteli is well equipped to be a learning environment for students in the social services sector.

Dilakortteli follows the principle of an expanding community, with the objective of using dialogue based on equality to make the knowledge and skills of all members of the community available for everyone and apply them in the planning of the activities. Key concepts in the expanding community include inclusion, community

orientation and agency. In the expanding community, each actor is important. Volunteers, students, and customers come up with the majority of Dilakortteli's events, groups, and ideas. Dilakortteli's employees make collaboration and implementation possible. Dilakortteli is a platform for extensive and diverse learning for the community. The diverse activities at Dilakortteli offer opportunities for learning in tasks such as guidance provided for customers of different ages, volunteer activity coordination and guidance, event production, projects involving social reinforcement, cross-generational counselling, guiding the learning process of upper secondary level students, various coaching activities, the implementation of networked and multidisciplinary work, as well as marketing, communication and advocacy, to name only a few. Dilakortteli offers a learning environment in which yet undiscovered connections to the content of the study units of the social services education can be found.



Figure 2. An image of Dilakortteli's activities. In the Osallisuuskortteli project, social services students work in the diverse services offered by Dila and Harjula with children, young people, families, adults, the elderly and immigrants as the customer groups. Photo: Sonja Siikanen

Dilakortteli is an environment that promotes learning and works in active and open-minded cooperation with educational institutions. The social services provided by Dila apply the pedagogy of team learning, project learning and the model of learning by taking responsibility (Lahden Diakonialaitos 2020). The block enables the student to be an active actor. Parallel to the Osallisuuskortteli project's development work, the

Diakortteli block is being designed as a work-intensive learning environment for youth and community counsellors. The block also has students learning Finnish as a second language and young people participating in social services and healthcare sector workshops. The diversity of learners enables multidisciplinary team learning and peer support. In the spring of 2020, LAB's social services students successfully

led the work-intensive studies teams of upper secondary level students, and actively participated in the guidance and planning of the learning process of these students, while also being peer learners themselves.

Students on personalised learning paths and in real jobs

An inclusive and personalised learning path is designed for each student in the Osallisuuskortteli project, and arrangements are made for the provision of personalised support and guidance. The planning and implementation of the learning process involves a workplace counsellor, the teacher in charge of the study module and a project employee (a project coordinator). The project employee is the link between the educational institution and Dilakortteli, and with the workplace counsellor, provides orientation for the students on the operations of the learning environment. The principle of genuine and unhurried encounters with students, which guides Dilakortteli's operations, is also extended to student guidance. The feedback given by students during the project development work (quotes in bold below) is valuable.

The project seemed a feasible way to complete all my missing studies. I was particularly impressed by how welcoming, warm and supportive all the Dila employees whom I met were (A social services student, spring 2020).

In Dilakortteli, the schedule of the study module can be extended over a longer period if required, if there are overlapping study units or the student's resources or life circumstances require it. The work-based learning content can be compiled from Dilakortteli's diverse activities, based on the student's personal wishes and needs. This offers the student opportunities for genuine participation in concrete and meaningful job duties. Flexibly targeting the content of the learning process based on the student's interests and needs has offered positive experiences.

Osallisuuskortteli has offered me inspiring opportunities and chances to learn and demonstrate my skills. Work has been flexible and student-driven (A social services student, spring 2020).

The work community and peer support play a key role in supporting the student's professional growth. The students are welcomed into the work community and given responsibility. The actual job duties in Dilakortteli's learning environment during the first year of the project operations included organising an excursion to the forest for the day-care centre and a daytime get-together with dancing for the elderly, guiding group meetings that support the integration of immigrant women and include various activities, producing instructional and support materials, and arranging recreation for volunteers. In the spring of 2020, two theses lead-

ing to graduation were in progress by students who had exceeded their maximum period of attendance.

Students are provided with opportunities to encounter other students and reflect on their learning. Once a month, the project organises a get-together for the Dilakortteli students as a shared forum for students from different education levels and youth workshop participants. The event includes a breakfast and lightly facilitated and free-form discussion. The participants have found

it important to be able to get to know one another and make the activities of Dilakortteli visible. This facilitates and increases cooperation between students and strengthens the students' social skills. In addition, it helps broaden the students' social networks.

At the April 2020 event, the students evaluated the Dilakortteli learning environment from their own perspective and highlighted encounters, support and diversity as its specific benefits.



Figure 3. The strengths of Dilakortteli as a learning environment from the students' perspective, April 2020. Image: Maija Eerola and Erno Hokkanen

Co-creation of the working life skills of the future continues

In the future, one's ability, willingness and opportunities to develop one's working life competence will be highlighted further, as will be the partnership of universities of applied sciences

with working life to develop the competence of the workforce. This will increase the importance of authentic work environments that increase the interaction between education and working life as a supporter of professional growth. The factors that the Finnish National

Agency for Education (Opetushallitus 2019b) and the National Forum for Skills Anticipation have defined as the most important competence needs in social services in 2035 include the ability to learn, tolerance of pressure, flexibility, creativity, versatility, multidisciplinary competence, interaction, and both communication and social skills. In the Dilakortteli learning environment, the student can practise all these skills.

When the methods to obtain competence change and become more diverse, competence will be accumulated from several sources. Working life, hobbies and the third sector are strongly involved in the process. In the future, one of the roles of the education system could thus be to act as an enabling platform, which would, for example, bring together different actors and create the framework required for the co-creation of learning and competence (Opetushallitus 2019a, 44).

The Osallisuuskortteli project strengthens the importance of the students' role as equal members of the work community and their competence, as well as improving the student-driven guidance and coaching skills of workplace counsellors. Co-creation workshops at Dilakortteli have been arenas for workplace counsellors to emphasise the importance the learning environment could, at its best, have for a student's

professional growth. The student gets a feel of what work is like in the third sector, characterised by fragmented work, project-based operations, a fast pace and networks. However, workplace counsellors have raised a concern about the extent of the need for support and the insufficient self-direction of the students. Discussion of these matters will continue on co-creation forums as the project progresses. At this point of the project operations, it is already evident that for work-based learning to succeed, contact persons are needed in both the learning environment and LAB who actively participate in the building of personalised learning processes. This will ensure continued dialogue between the educational institution and the learning environment.

In future operating environments, the ability to change will be among the basic skills of employees and securing one's competence will require continued self-development. The Osallisuuskortteli project will develop students' working life skills, advance the completion of their studies and streamline their entry into working life. The project generates innovative new forms and practices of cooperation that serve all concerned parties and works to integrate them into the operations of LAB, Dilakortteli and Harjula.

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Marja Kiijärvi-Pihkala

Step by step – With a mentor towards working life in Finland

A person moving to a new country and culture begins a long process of integration. For adults, a key element of integration is finding a job. LAB University of Applied Sciences implements the “MESH – Employing immigrants via mentoring” project jointly with the universities of applied sciences of Turku and Tampere. The project is funded by the European Social Fund, and the project period is 2019–2021. The objective is to improve immigrants’ opportunities to find employment by strengthening their networks and by mentoring. The project develops mentoring tools and structures that suit immigrants. The project implements and assesses various mentoring pilots and works in close cooperation with organisations promoting immigrants’ employment.

Turku University of Applied Sciences coordinates the project and is in charge of making mentoring systematic. Tampere University of Applied Sciences builds the networking model and tools. The networks serve the needs of both employers and immigrants. LAB especially focuses on mentoring tools and examines peer mentoring as a form of mentoring to work. In addition, LAB

coordinates the international cooperation in the project. All three universities of applied sciences have strong experience in guidance and employment projects for immigrants, as well as extensive cooperation networks in their respective areas.

In Lahti, the MESH project can be seen as a continuation of the “Ossi – Skills Up” and “Ossi2 – Employing Immigrants” projects. The work carried out in these projects among immigrants and employers has shown that the path to employment is not necessarily made smoother by appropriate competence and language skills; what is often needed is someone to open doors, an advocate, someone to offer personalised support and guidance.

This article covers the mentoring pilots conducted in the MESH project and discusses how mentoring can assist immigrants on their path to employment.

A rocky road to working life

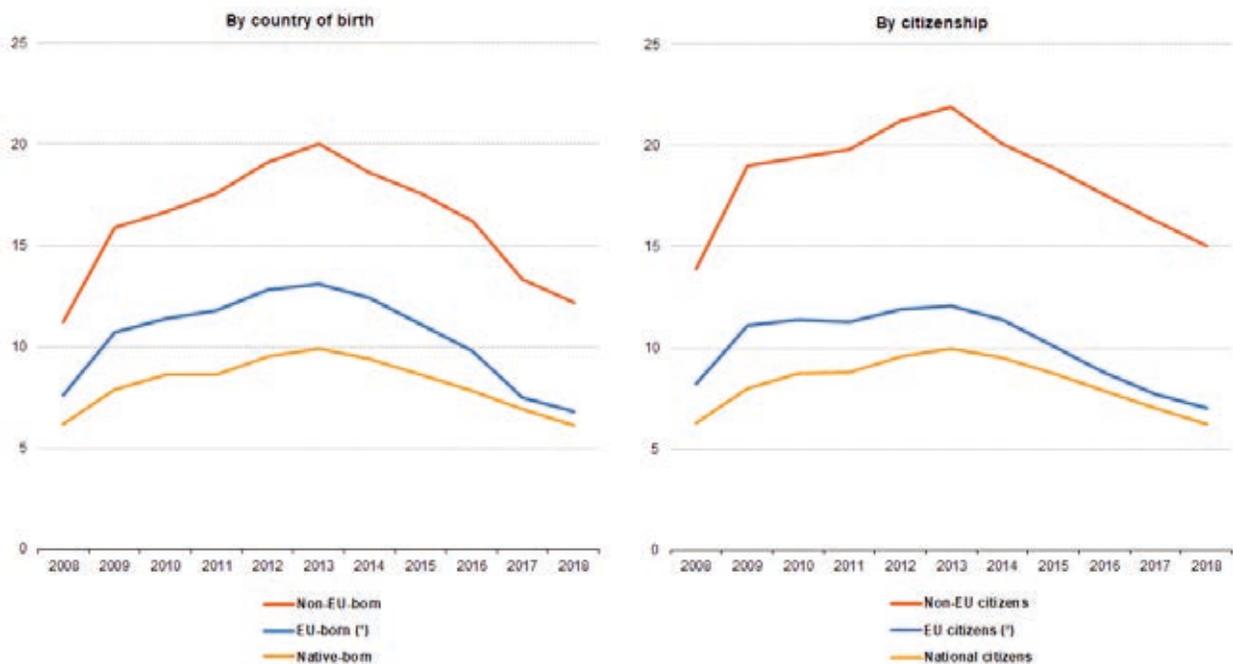
Integration is incorporated in many aspects of life, such as relationships, cultural customs and their acceptance, opportunities to participate, etc. The different areas of the process progress

at different speeds, and the areas are interlinked. Insufficient integration in an area may also hinder progress in other areas (Kärkkäinen 2011).

In Finland, integration is monitored through indicators based on survey data and statistics. The indicators are divided into five groups: employment, education and skills, well-being, participation and two-way integration (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2020). However, in many ways, employment plays the key role. Employment can be considered to facilitate integration as a whole and promote well-being in one's new home country (Kärkkäinen 2017).

Many studies and statistics show that finding employment continues to be more challenging for an immigrant than for the native population. Finding employment is difficult not only in Finland. Immigrants' employment rate is on average approximately 10 percentage points lower than that of the native population in Europe as a whole. There is wide variation between groups in employment: The employment rate of Europe's internal immigrants is good, even better than that of the native population. In contrast, the employment of people who were born outside Europe and immigrate as refugees may be very low.

Development of unemployment rates for the population aged 20-64 years, EU-28, 2008-2018 (%)



(*) Other than in the reporting Member State.

(*) Other than national citizens.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: ifsa_urgacob and ifsa_organ)

Figure 1. Development of unemployment rates in the EU (Eurostat 2019).

In other words, an ageing Europe has concerns about the sufficiency of its labour force while simultaneously having untapped potential, such as immigrants, who find it difficult to find employment.

Despite the interest in mentoring and the opportunities it offers, little academic research has been conducted on its actual impacts thus far. The definition of mentoring and the boundaries to concepts close to it are unclear (De Cuyper et al. 2019).

What mentoring is?

Mentoring is a collaborative process in which a person with more experience (the mentor) supports and guides the less experienced one (the mentee) in meeting their objectives. Mentoring is applied, for example, in working life to pass on tacit knowledge and in educational institutions to clarify career goals. In that situation, the mentor is often a peer, for example, another student or a co-worker. However, they have more experience in certain matters and

can therefore provide support for the beginner.

The MESH project focuses on mentoring to work. The goal is to develop the mentee's working life skills, expand their professional networks and assist them in looking for a job. The mentor is a professional in their field and has experience and networks that are useful for the mentee.

The MESH project adheres to the following definition of mentoring to work:

A person with more localised experience (mentor) offers guidance to a person with less experience (mentee), the objective of which is to support the mentee in making sustainable progress in his or her journey into the labour market. Both mentor and mentee voluntarily commit to this and establish contact on a regular basis. The relationship is initiated, facilitated and supported by a third actor (organisation). While asymmetrical, the mentoring relationship is of a reciprocal nature. (De Cuyper et al. 2019, 117)



Figure 2. Mentoring means cooperation. Photo: Fauxels from Pexels

The target group of the MESH project in the Päijät-Häme region is immigrants in the transition phase. This refers to immigrants who are transitioning from integration training, a vocational institution or a university to working life and whose insufficient knowledge of the Finnish working life and/or poor Finnish language skills (vocation-specific language, in particular) creates obstacles for the transition. The project aims to determine the kind of mentoring programme that would facilitate the entry of such people into the labour market.

The development work focuses on the immigrant's needs and goals.

International co-creation

The MESH project has studied mentoring programmes available in Finland and networked with parties concentrating on the mentoring of immigrants, in particular. Internationally, the MESH project partners with three Belgian organisations: KU Leuven/Hiva Research Institute for Work and Society, Economic House of Ostend, and Beyond the Horizon. The organisations are all different,

but they all work to make it easier for immigrants to find employment.

The HIVA Research Institute for Work and Society is a multidisciplinary research institute of KU Leuven. HIVA specialises in academic and policy-oriented research that provides specific responses to current policy issues. HIVA conducts research that creates a foundation for more detailed definition of mentoring and produces information and tools for ensuring the quality of mentoring.

The Economic House of Ostend (Economisch Huis Oostende) is an organisation based in Belgium, linked to the City of Ostend. The main objective of the organisation is to promote urban economic development by attracting companies, city centre management, industry area management, support for start-ups and employment projects. The Economic House of Ostend works to bring together immigrant jobseekers and employers, and is particularly interested in discovering how to improve the inclusion of immigrants in various networks.

The Beyond the Horizon International Strategic Studies Group (ISSG) is a non-profit think & do tank. Its mission is to promote global peace and security by empowering decision makers and policymakers with knowledge, and advocating paths to prevent, mitigate or end crises and conflicts. It does policy-oriented and applied research in its focus areas, including migration and social inclusion & integration. Beyond the

Horizon is currently building a digital platform that would make encounters between mentors, jobseekers and employers possible.

The Turku and Tampere Universities of Applied Sciences, LAB University of Applied Sciences and the aforementioned three organisations in Belgium work in a goal-oriented manner and in accordance with the principles of co-creation during the MESH project. The objective of the international co-operation is to:

- identify critical factors and good practices in the mentoring practices of immigrants;
- assess and further develop the models being developed in Finland and Belgium by applying the various competence profiles of the partners and the expertise accumulated in different countries;
- define the minimum criteria for high-quality mentoring by using the pilots carried out in different countries, and clarify the concepts related to the topic;
- develop an operating method for the activities of the networks that facilitates more effective encounters between employers and employees.

Mentoring pilot for nursing students

In the spring of 2020, two mentoring pilots under the MESH project were implemented at LAB University of Applied Sciences. The language of both pilots was Finnish.

The first pilot targeted nursing students who were completing their English-language nursing studies and seeking to be employed in the Finnish labour market in the future. They were offered the opportunity to participate in the pilot, in which a personal mentor from the healthcare sector was assigned to each of them.

Interviews were conducted with both the mentor and mentee candidates. Based on the interviews, 13 mentor-mentee pairs were formed, primarily on the basis of the sector or specialisation option in which the mentee wished to find employment in the future. Hobbies and other interests that the participants had spoken of in the initial interviews were also factors that affected how the pairs were formed. The goal was to match pairs who would be comfortable with one another from the outset.

The programme kicked off with an orientation meeting, which both the mentors and actors attended. The purpose of the meeting was to provide basic information and tools for a successful mentoring process. The meeting began with a review of mentoring as a cooperation process, and the roles and responsibilities of the mentor and the

mentee. The actors were encouraged to benefit from the mentoring to the fullest and ask questions, be active and express their own goals.

A sense of trust and safety is important in mentoring. The orientation covered ways to build and maintain trust. The mentor-mentee pairs were guided to agree, from the outset, which matters in the mentoring process could be disclosed to outsiders. For example, the mentor and the actor might agree that only one's own insights or thoughts during the meetings could be disclosed, but not what one has learned about the other person during the discussions. Ground rules for the practical activities should also be agreed during the first meeting, concerning when and where to meet and in what way the meetings are agreed, for example (Lappalainen & Pirttikoski 2020).

The goal of all the mentees was to find employment in Finland. The mentoring process is a good way to strengthen one's Finnish language skills. During the orientation, the pairs were instructed to agree what they would do in terms of language. It is important that the objectives are set with the benefit of the mentee in mind: a mentee with strong language skills may wish the mentor to correct their Finnish as they talk. In contrast, it may be extremely stressful for someone with weaker language skills if someone constantly draws attention to their mistakes.

The mentor should speak clear Finnish and avoid using dialect. It is also a

good idea to verify that the actor has understood the message (Lappalainen & Pirttikoski 2020).

A simple structure to be used in each meeting was presented in the orientation meeting:

1. Start and topical issues: how are you today, what has happened since the last meeting, what is the goal of this meeting?
2. Discussing the theme: the agreed topic is worked on together. The tools described in the toolbox or exercises can be used to this end.
3. Closing the meeting: how did we progress towards the goal today, what did we learn and when will we meet next.

In addition, the orientation covered the ending of the mentoring relationship. In the concluding and assessment stage, it is a good idea to review what was learned, and whether the expectations were met and goals reached, as well as to agree on possible further contacts. The ending of the mentoring process conducted together offers a clear end point for the process and a good place from which to move forward (Lappalainen & Pirttikoski 2020).

The mentors and mentees were given the mentoring toolbox developed in the project. The toolbox includes a vari-

ety of exercises and discussion topics, as well as outlines that support the meetings. The mentors and mentees began their working together at the end of the orientation meeting. They got to know each other, discussed the goals of mentoring and prepared a cooperation agreement in this first meeting.



Figure 3. The mentoring toolbox offers concrete support for both the actor and the mentor. Photo: Virve Pirttikoski

The pairs met at least five times during the spring. Towards the end, the pairs met via a remote connection due to the

coronavirus. The final meeting that concluded the process for all 13 pairs was also held online.

The final meeting included a congratulatory speech and music. The attendees also discussed their experiences. The mentees felt that the support provided by the mentors had benefited them in many ways. Concrete successes included a successful job interview that resulted in a summer job. The mentees felt that having an opportunity to practise the interview setting with their mentor had made a considerable difference to their success.

Mentoring pilot for students in preparatory training

The second mentoring pilot of the spring targeted immigrants participating in education preparing them for higher education. The purpose of the preparatory training is to support the development of the skills required in entrance examinations and studies at higher education institutions. In this case, the mentoring was provided in groups. Each group consisted of mentees pursuing the same field of study. The group was assigned a mentor who had already studied in the field in question. The pilot included 17 actors. There were five mentors, representing social services, the technology sector and business administration.

In this pilot, the factors the mentors and mentees had in common were their life circumstances and interest in the same field. Many were of approxi-

mately the same age. The key difference was their different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

This process was also kicked off with a joint orientation meeting, which covered the basics of mentoring, the content of the mentoring toolbox and practical matters. After the orientation, the groups continued to meet independently. Due to the coronavirus situation, many groups met virtually towards the end of the process. The pilot ended with a remote completion meeting.

Lessons learned so far

What is a good mentor like? How experienced, networked or successful should they be? Feedback on the MESH pilots is collected from both the mentees and mentors at the beginning of mentoring, halfway through the programme and at the end. The feedback materials will be analysed in the summer of 2020. The preliminary results indicate how crucial it is to find a suitable mentor for each mentee. The right question to ask is not “What kind of mentor is the best?”, but “What kind of mentor does each mentee need?”

A graduating student about to enter working life benefits from a professional working in the student’s dream job. Such a mentor can tell the mentee about the requirements of the job, give tips about useful networks and support the mentee in the development of the skills that employment in the sector in question requires.

An immigrant at the beginning of

their employment path seems to benefit from a mentor who can identify with their situation and help with the challenges associated with transitioning to the next stage. A student is well suited for this task. A student in the social services, technology or business administration sectors has up-to-date information on how to apply for studies, what studying is like, and what it takes to be admitted and perform well in the studies. They are also a motivating example for the immigrant. In other words, a young person just starting on their own path who is also a student may be the best possible mentor for an immigrant in preparatory training.

Supporting the immigrants' integration and employment has no single correct solution. Each process is different, and each person's situation is unique. The services should always be based on the individual's needs.

What's next?

In the MESH project, "mentoring to work" refers to a systematic activity organised by a specific organisation. This organisation is in charge of the recruitment and training of the mentees and mentors, as well as the matching of the pairs. The organising party monitors the process and assesses the activities.

Mentoring to work can succeed only if the organising party has strong links to working life, employment authorities and various providers of guidance. Cooperation between these three players has already been set in motion in all

three locations, in other words in Lahti, Turku and Tampere, and it will be the focus in the coming autumn.

At the national level, MESH collaborates with the YES network. The network maintains the yeskummit.fi website, which assigns entrepreneur sponsors to schools interested in entrepreneurship education. In future, the portal will also be extended to mentoring and will include a section about mentoring. The section will be developed in the MESH project.

In Päijät-Häme, the MESH project works in close cooperation with the region's entrepreneurs and employment authorities. Now that the structures and concrete tools of mentoring have been developed, it is important to integrate the service with other structures so that it can help bring together the region's talents and employers in the optimal way. Potential points of reference might include the educational institutions in the region that can offer mentoring as a form of support for their students who are completing their education process. Mentoring would benefit jobseekers completing their integration training, vocational education and higher education alike. It would also be interesting to pilot mentoring as part of the service range offered by the employment office. A mentor could be the very factor that ensures an immigrant's progress on the path to employment when they have the right competence and attitude, but the doors to the Finnish labour market still fail to open.

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Wompatti – a resource-driven tool for assessing the need for assistance, developed in the Neighbour project

Introduction

The Neighbour – Community Living Model project included an assignment to develop a resource-driven indicator for measuring the need for assistance. The basis for developing the indicator, hereinafter referred to as the tool, was the principle of co-creation. The participants of the development work included the target group, namely residents with intellectual disabilities who live independently with support, as well as their counsellors. The objective of the tool was also to highlight factors that increase well-being and not just bring up deficiencies in one's ability to function. The outcome of the cooperation was the Wompatti tool for assisting supported self-assessment.

The development process was aligned with the national programme of the UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The target group was not simply being included in or allowed to be involved in the development work but also genuinely

participated in the development of the tool from the outset. The process followed a cyclical development process so that the contents generated in each workshop were always updated to the next version of Wompatti. The reliability of the tool was ensured by evaluating the development work together with researcher Petteri Paasio, who joined in the development. He and his team have created the first comprehensive indicator to measure the well-being of the adult population, and this indicator was the model for the Wompatti tool as well.

The development of Wompatti did not just take place in the workshops with the target group representatives and their counsellors, but it was also tested in authentic situations. The groundwork for the testing was laid in a training day, which included a review of the tool's development process and a simulation of the use of the tool. The feedback collected from the test participants was applied in further

development.

The goal was to ensure the language of the tool was easy, since its target group was individuals with intellectual disabilities who live independently with support. To do so, assistance from various experts was harnessed and the image bank provided by the Papunet service was used.

A hardcopy of the tool was created in PDF format and it was implemented in the organisations that participated in the development work. An electronic version of Wompatti was also developed with students in the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Business Information Technology at the LAB University of Applied Sciences. The development of the electronic tool is still pending.

Background of the Wompatti tool development process

In the publication "Right to social inclusion and equality – The National Action Plan on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2018–2019", the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health stated that the first measure to increase inclusion is to develop operating methods for the inclusion of disabled persons in the preparation of legislation and in development projects (Publications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2018). Thus, the practical development work carried out in the project was aligned with the national guidelines on increasing the inclusion of disabled persons. The development of the Wompatti tool has included rep-

resentatives of the target group of the tool users from the project outset.

The inclusion of the target group in the development process ensures that different views are accepted and that the actors participate in the process in a genuine and equal manner. This process also enables the participation of an expert developer in the activities. "The developer is not an external party but pursues authentic dialogue with the actors." (Toikko & Rantanen 2009, 10–11)

Inclusion, involvement and participation are different concepts and mean totally different things. Inclusion means that a person is a functional individual in a community. Participation is a continuum of inclusion and requires concrete action in, for example, the decision-making concerning oneself or one's immediate circle. Involvement contains the idea of an actor being a passive target who is encouraged or demanded to participate in activities in society. On the other hand, successful involvement may result in inclusion and participation. (THL, Vammaispalvelujen käsikirja)

In accordance with the aforementioned concepts, the process of developing the Wompatti tool started from involvement, but fairly soon embraced the principles of inclusion and participation.

The development work carried out with disabled persons follows the same principles as development work carried out with any other target group. Central to this development work is to

support the participation and inclusion of a disabled person and to make sure their opinions are heard (THL, *Vammaispalvelujen käsikirja*). In genuine development work that includes the target group, this is naturally self-evident.

The development processes take many forms. The key question is whether the objective of the development process has been defined externally or whether it is a goal defined by the actors themselves (Toikko & Rantanen 2009, 15). With regard to the Wompatti tool development process, the project application for the “Neighbour – Community Living Model” project by the LAB University of Applied Sciences (2020) defined the project objectives, one of which was to define an indicator for the need for assistance. Once the actual development process began and the theme had been determined, the target group and the project team defined the contents of the development activities.

Toikko & Rantanen (2009) highlight the interests of the development activities. Thus, the process to develop the Wompatti tool was put in motion by the project decision in accordance with the project application, which was obligatory for the actors in the project. One of the obligations was to develop the tool in cooperation with the actors and the target group. Traditionally, development work has been carried out through cooperation between multiple actors from the authorities and organisations. In the development of this tool, the target group took the central role.

The Wompatti tool is originally based on the first national indicator of the well-being of the adult population developed by researcher Petteri Paasio (Socca 2020). The well-being indicator was developed jointly by the municipalities in the Helsinki metropolitan area and Socca ry (the Centre of Excellence on Social Welfare in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area). In his licentiate work, Paasio studied the relationship between social work practice and research into social work (Paasio 2014). According to Paasio, the indicator of the well-being of the adult population is a holistic, customer-driven and easy-to-use tool. It consists of nine different areas: accommodation; work, competence and livelihood; health; family and friends; daily life and leisure; future and awareness of self; inclusion; use of social services and health care; and crises. Each area is viewed through multiple-choice questions. The total number of questions is 27. (Paasio 2016)

As is the case in the well-being indicator developed by Paasio, the core aspect of the Wompatti tool is well-being. There is a number of different indicators and tools for mapping the ability to function of disabled persons as well. For example, the Toimia database maintained by the Finnish Institute for Health and Well-being (THL) includes approximately 100 indicators that describe the ability to function (Toimia-tietokanta). Often the indicators focus on an assumed deficiency in the ability to function or map the level of the

deficiency. Surely this is important in order to properly target the measures to meet the need for assistance. In the same manner as the indicator of the well-being of the adult population, the baseline of the Wompatti tool is the notion that a person usually has both factors that increase well-being and those that reduce it.

The Wompatti tool also includes different areas that are specified by means of statements concerning the respondent's experience in each area. Based on the responses, it is possible to determine which factors increase and reduce the person's well-being. At best, the tool is an instrument of self-assessment that helps the person and the professionals working with the person to identify both the existing resources and any need for assistance.

The approach of the Neighbour project of pursuing the inclusion of the client was integrated in the Wompatti tool development process. The project wanted to make the voice of the person with intellectual disabilities heard when their resources and need for support were determined. This was made possible through the gradual further development of the tool and the related workshop activities. Such operating method that includes the client has elements familiar from a progressive method of service development, such as the Bikva methodology (Högnabba 2008).

The model selected for the development of the Wompatti tool was the cyclical development process. The cycli-

cal nature of progress and concurrent development provided by the method was the best fit for the framework of the project activities. The process progresses from a planning stage to observation and, further, to information gathering and reflection as well as the redirection of the development measures (Salonen, Eloranta, Hautala & Kinon 2017, 53). The next chapter describes the application of the process in the development of the Wompatti tool.

The Wompatti tool process

One of the assignments in the Neighbour project was to develop an indicator for the need for assistance. A workshop of process actors and experts from different provinces was organised for this purpose in order to define the need for and criteria of a resource-driven assessment tool for identifying clients' need for assistance. The goal of this approach was to solidify cooperation between the target group members, other stakeholders and professionals in the services for persons with intellectual disabilities. The focus area of the tool was life skills and the development thereof (not just the person's ability to function and deficiencies therein). The goal was also for the tool, once completed, to include properties that would make it possible to determine when and what kind of assistance was needed and how the assistance should be planned and implemented.

The process to develop the tool started with determining what tools already

existed. The aforementioned indicator of the well-being of the adult population was used as a foundation of the tool, but *Kykyviisari*®, an assessment method of working ability and ability to function for all working-age people, was also applied to find ideas. In addition, a form for mapping the everyday resources of families expecting a child, prepared by the Finnish Institute for Health and Well-being (THL) was used. The form helps identify the need for support and target guidance and other support in a customer- and needs-oriented manner. Areas that were worked on in the workshops were collected from all of the aforementioned.

Initially, the project objective and different models of tools and indicators were introduced to the project team and partner representatives (South Karelia Social and Health Care District Eksote and Päijät-Hämeen hyvinvointikuntayhtymä PHHYKY). The resource-driven philosophy was presented through the indicator of the well-being of the adult population, and its usefulness as a tool for assessing the well-being of the target group was discussed. The project team appointed a development group from among its members to be in charge of the development of the resource-driven indicator of the need for assistance. It included project actors from both the LAB University of Applied Sciences and the services for people with disabilities.

The target group of the project and the tool being developed was individuals with intellectual disabilities living inde-

pendently with support. The workshop fairly quickly came to the conclusion that the different areas defined in the indicator of the well-being of the adult population were valid in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities as well, although the words used (such as “crises”) were considered to be difficult. The workshop also made the development group realise that the matters included in the different areas and encountered by members of the target group were often very concrete. Whereas the original indicator of the well-being of the adult population included the question “What is your financial situation like”, it became clear to the workshop participants fairly soon that this was not the right question for the target group. The experts who participated in the workshop were the very people (counsellors) who work daily with the target group (residents who have intellectual disabilities). Challenges encountered in the daily life with regard to financial matters could include the resident not knowing money or how to use the scales in the product department when shopping.

After the first workshop, which targeted the counsellors, the *Wompati* areas were reorganised based on feedback from workshop participants, and a new workshop was organised. This workshop consisted only of target group representatives, or persons with intellectual disabilities living independently with support. The workshop also included some of their counsellors as support persons on an as-needed

basis. The participants (approximately ten people) came from three different municipalities, and not all of them knew each other from before. The participants were divided into smaller groups and given only the headings of the indicator of the well-being of the adult population, modified into an easier language (e.g. the area “work, competence and livelihood” had been changed to “money matters”). The task of the participants was to discuss what they had experienced in their lives with regard to the areas presented. In practice, the role of the counsellors in the small groups was primarily to act as secretaries. The target group members themselves produced the contents that were then grouped under the relevant areas in the summary section.

After the second workshop, the development team met with researcher Petteri Paasio. This meeting and analysis ensured that the tool was still aligned with the indicator of the well-being of the adult population and that it also met the scientific criteria overall. The meeting was useful, as the comments provided by the researcher helped the team modify the areas and planned questions so that they were as neutral as possible, for example, to avoid questions that were leading or overlapped two different areas.

After the areas of the Wompatti tool were modified, the team started working on the related questions. The first version was again tested with target group representatives. After the test-

ing, no more changes were made to the headings of the existing areas, but the questions continued to be fine-tuned throughout the development process. At this stage, the area headings were family and friends; living and surroundings; money matters; concerns and worries; work; everyday tasks; health; my own thoughts; and exercise and leisure time.

After a brief testing round, the team noticed that the tool did not have any sensory questions. The development team again convened with researcher Petteri Paasio to discuss the necessity of including that area in the tool. It was jointly determined that, considering the special nature of the target group, questions relating to the senses were important. The questions were fine-tuned in cooperation with experts (including occupational therapists), and an area consisting of sensory questions was added to the tool.

Next, a wider group of counsellors working with the target group was provided with training on the use of the tool. The principles of the resource-driven self-assessment tool were reviewed with twenty or so counsellors who participated in the training, and conducting self-assessment was practised through simulation. The counsellors were given the assignment to test the tool in authentic client encounters. In addition to the feedback collected in the training event, the counsellors were also given feedback forms for the actual testing. Counsellors from Eksote

and PHHYKY used the tool in authentic client encounters over the next few weeks. Nearly 50 feedback forms with user experiences from both clients and counsellors were handed in and used to fine-tune the tool and its contents in the development team. Thus, the tool was tested in authentic situations and client encounters. For privacy protection reasons, client information was not collected, and the feedback forms were destroyed after the testing. In the final seminar, the tool was acted out to present it to all of the parties to the development work.

The Wompatti tool

The target group of the self-assessment tool being developed was persons with intellectual disabilities. This is why special attention was paid in the clarity of the language and visual appearance of Wompatti in order to ensure the tool would be easy and clear to use. Target group representatives took part in the development of the Wompatti tool from the outset to make sure that the concepts used in the tool were comprehensible.

Two versions were prepared of the tool. The first version was a printable PDF document. The tool comes with a cover sheet providing a brief description of the purpose of the tool in easy language as well as the names and pictures of the areas. The pictures were courtesy of the Papunet website. The objective of Papunet is to promote the inclusion in society of people with

speech impairments and others needing support in learning, understanding and communicating. (Papunet) The cover sheet was followed by a description in easy language of the well-being areas covered by the tool and the use of the tool.

In the Wompatti tool, each area has their own pages with questions, so the user can start answering the questions from any area. For example, separate instructions are provided in the questions column of the “Work” area if the respondent is employed or participates in work or day activities. The first column contains a pictogram tip on the question being presented. The second column includes the actual questions, such as “Do you like your job tasks?”. The third column displays the answer options (e.g. “I like my job tasks a lot”, “My job tasks are ok”, and “I do not like my job tasks”). In the fourth column, the respondent can provide additional comments on the question or elaborate on their response, if they so wish.

Since the purpose of the tool is to highlight the factors that increase and reduce the respondent’s well-being, the answer options have been designed to indicate the differences. In the aforementioned example, the first answer option “I like my job tasks a lot” clearly shows that the respondent likes their job tasks and that the tasks supposedly increase their well-being. The third answer option in the example, “I do not like my job tasks” clearly describes that the respondent does not find their

tasks pleasant and the tasks potentially reduce their well-being. The middle answer options of the questions are by no means without importance. In Petteri Paasio's indicator of the well-being of the adult population, one of the key notions is that there may be plenty of factors in a person's life that do not particularly increase or reduce well-being. In other words, they are "OK", and in burdening situations, may provide support for the person in question. A person's subjective experience of them coping "just OK" with a thing or situation may as such reinforce their sense of capability. In this example, the tool answer option "My job tasks are OK" is not meaningless but it can be used to conclude that apparently, at least the job tasks do not reduce well-being.

A summary graph that would provide the respondent and the survey implementer an at-a-glance view of the factors increasing and reducing well-being is not available in the PDF-format version of the tool. However, the results provided by the tool should be discussed with the respondent afterwards. If this review indicates areas in which the respondent needs assistance and such need has not emerged before, the situation will naturally be reported further. The first extensive testing round brought up factors in the client's life that reduce well-being but that had not been detected before, even if the same counsellor had been working with the client for years. The issue was addressed immediately.

The purpose of the indicator of the well-being of the adult population has been to expressly monitor changes in well-being after the measures taken by the client or interventions. With the Wompatti tool, monitoring is also possible by repeating the self-assessment after a certain period of time. Therefore, the development team recommends that the tool be used, for example, when the service needs of a new resident are assessed and again after six months or if the circumstances change.

The development of an electronic version of the Wompatti tool was also launched. The group working on the electronic version included the development team, researcher Petteri Paasio, as well as four students in the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Business Information Technology at the LAB University of Applied Sciences.

The electronic version offers a more streamlined visual summary of the responses. It provides an at-a-glance view of the areas and shows which ones include factors that increase the person's well-being and which ones reduce it.

Conclusions

Research, development and innovation activities are an important part of the operations of universities of applied sciences. Project plans often emphasise the importance of target group participation in development work. In projects where tools and aids are being created, for example, participation by the target group is at least as important as in the

development of various services. Viewing the development processes from the perspective of the target group and the life of the target group members also calls for courage from the part of the development specialist to think outside the box in terms of procedures and methods. One must dare to “expose” them to a new kind of an approach. Participation by the target group in the shared process also ensures that the product is suitable for meeting the target group’s needs.

The suitability of the Wompatti tool created in the Neighbour project was also ensured by the commitment and involvement in the development process of those using the tool. There is a number of different kinds of assessment tools and indicators available for persons with intellectual disabilities. The ones to be implemented are those

that best suit the purpose in each situation. A good tool is usually clear and easy to use, such as Wompatti.

Digital services are widely used today. This project resulted in a hardcopy version of the tool, but the development of a digital version continues. Suitable partners were networked with during the project and the development work continues with the potential actors.

There is plenty of competence in Finland with regard to the development and implementation of electronic services. Educational institutions have good contacts with the field and the users of the services in question. When the actors work together from the outset to create and develop these new services and tools, the projects also produce results. This will also ensure that the products developed will continue to be used.

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Pipsa Murto, Tiina Vaara

Simulation for strengthening awareness in educators in early childhood education

Interaction is a quality factor that powerfully defines early childhood education (Karila 2016, 26), since the interaction between a grown-up and a child has a marked effect on the development of the child's social and emotional skills (Määttä ym. 2017, 45).

The "This is my place" project (Täällä on se mun paikka 2020) developed an online team coaching model for staff working in early childhood education and care. The model helps improve their ability to support a child's social and emotional skills in early childhood education and care.

Coaching targeting the entire team offers an opportunity to share experiences and review the working meth-

ods together. The goals set by the team itself with a focus on the needs of the group of children motivate the team to seek and try out new ways to develop their work. Joint reflection increases an individual employee's awareness of their own actions as an educator, and this also builds the team's overall pedagogical awareness.

The team coaching consists of five online coaching discussions with assignments in between, which focus on the development areas the teams selected in advance. The online sessions are also supported by a functional simulation workshop to examine the interaction of an educator in a number of early childhood education situations.

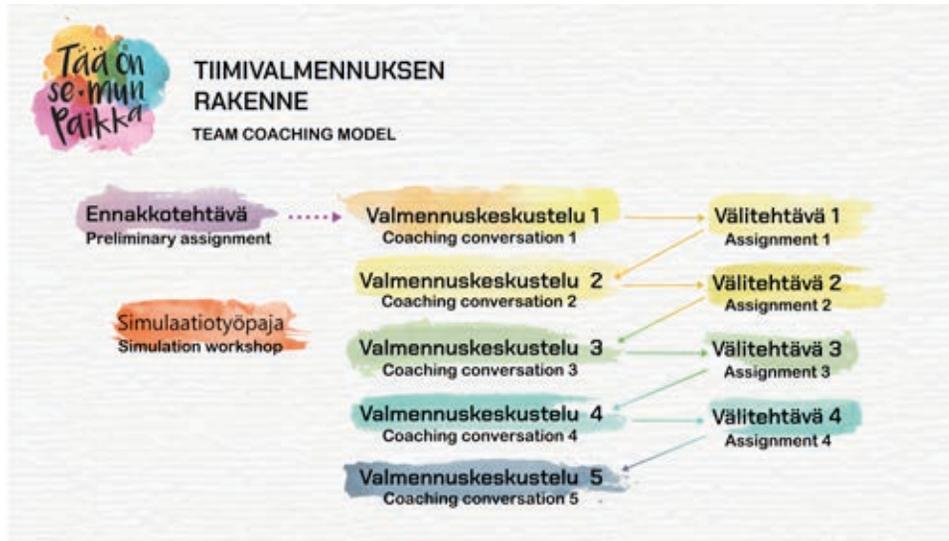


Figure 1. The “Tää on se mun paikka” team coaching programme.
Photo: Oona Rouhiainen 2019, Edit: Pipsa Murto 2020

Developing different aspects of interaction in a simulation

A simulation mimics practical action in a safe environment (Society for Simulation in Healthcare 2015). Simulated interaction situations offer employees an opportunity to view and develop their own methods of interaction. The simulation provides team members with a place where they do not need to be afraid to make mistakes, since failure provides a valuable learning opportunity (Niemi ym. 2019, 5).

A safe “playground” was built in the simulation through working methods

that apply drama and with the help of props. The playground enabled the participants to test their interaction skills in a variety of pedagogic situations. Owens and Barber (2010) justify the use of functional methods by saying that drama helps the participants expand their awareness and understanding of interaction and social relationships between people. They help develop shared deliberation based on emotion and knowledge and find various solution alternatives. In the drama work, the facilitator and participants must tolerate incompleteness.

Professionals of early childhood education and care test their skills on a daily basis in the hectic everyday interactions, which is why the authentic material created in the simulation offered fruitful moments of learning and insight for all participants. The feedback collected in the coaching indicated how one can learn new skills by observing one's colleagues.

The case exercises integrated in the simulation applied the five different interaction methods described by Ahonen (2015), which the employees used in challenging pedagogic situations, in particular. They are the methods of warm, conflicting, technical, avoiding and distant interaction. In the case exercises, the participants acted out situations in which the actions of an educator were conflicting, technical, avoiding or distant. The situations were reviewed together from the children's point of view, and concrete suggestions were made on how to add warm interaction in the situation.

In warm interaction, the educator encounters the child in a calm manner, valuing them. The educator is committed in the situation, listens to the child and aims to fully grasp the child's experience. The educator's empathy and sensitivity are highlighted when they identify and respond to the child's needs. (Ahonen 2017, 78).

Dunderfelt (2016) describes interaction as a social field that is a psychological, or experiential, space generated by verbal and non-verbal messages

between two or more people. It is like a map of the interaction between people and can be described through the dimensions provided below. They can be combined and viewed as overall experiences.

Verbal communication includes words and verbal expressions that to an outsider may sound like a code used by an inner circle or professional jargon. This is why it is very important for work communities to define the common concepts and their meaning in practice. The educators in early childhood education who participated in the coaching voiced a variety of opinions on interaction: *"I ran into the terms for the first time", "I know them from before -- and I will continue as before -- interaction was never a problem for me" and "warm interaction is a conscious tool". In order to implement warm interaction in pedagogic situations, personnel should first discuss the meaning of the concept and agree on the shared operating methods.*

The participants of the team coaching found it important to understand that interaction requires continuous development and one does not need to become "ready". They expressed their desire to be better able to share the working method of warm interaction, which would enable the group to grow in an atmosphere of shared awareness.

Physical communication pays attention to gestures, movement in space, way of talking and even scents or touch. The simulation also examined the im-

portance of changes in the sounds or colours in the surroundings and their impacts in the guidance of play or rest sessions. The simulation offered the participants a physical experience of what it feels like to be woken up from a nap by someone snapping the blackout curtains open harshly and shouting *“Wake up, time to have a snack!”* as opposed to waking up to a gentle touch and quiet music.

Emotional communication includes the atmosphere and a full spectrum of feelings and emotions. Coaching participants described the feeling of *“having a sense of closeness with the children; it is important to reinforce the sense of security”* through clarity and repeated routines. Takeaways from the coaching were also described as follows: *“someone in the group vents their feelings but everyone feels safe since the grown-ups handle the situation”*.

One coaching participant wrote: *“I am valued the way I am. Even if one is quieter than others, they are accepted.”* Accepting differences between children was emphasised in the coaching experiences. The simulation also viewed the role of grown-ups as supporters of the play of and friendships between children and as promoters of warm interaction. Poikkeus (2013) describes how power relationships, norms and roles at the group level impact the kind of social activity that is considered acceptable. Conformity with regard to attitudes, for example, develops in most groups – of both grown-ups and children – over time. The social reputation of each member may be fairly permanent and not easily changeable in the minds of the members of the group. Different positions are formed in groups of children in terms of dominance.



Figure 2. Simulation exercises helped participants to immerse themselves in various roles of children and educators in daily early childhood education situations. Photo: Pipsa Murto

Emotional communication and recognition of the educator's own responses

According to Dunderfelt (2016), different levels can be identified in emotional communication. It is important that educators recognise and learn to observe their own emotional communication and the related interpretations, since people can sense the atmosphere and the emotional state of another person,

and emotions are contagious. Poikkeus (2013, 84–85) points out that even a short interactive encounter includes lots of messages that are picked up through different senses. The situation consists of many kinds of contextual clues that we apply to make interpretations. Unconscious misinterpretations happen in the emotional communication channel. To a large extent, the issue is how aware we are of interpretations. Seeing things

from another person's perspective requires, also in the case of children, that one is aware of the other person's separateness and their theory of mind and that one makes a conscious effort to see the situation through the eyes and from the position of the other person.

Emotional intelligence defines our neurological preparedness to receive, understand and process emotions and our ability to develop our skills in emotion regulation. Emotional intelligence is based on innate characteristics, but it can also be practised. An emotional intelligence profile describes a person's way of applying emotional intelligence and their skills thereof. The development of emotional intelligence in a child is affected by the emotional intelligence profiles of the educators the child encounters. By identifying the emotional intelligence profiles of children, educators can support this development by anticipating actions and by targeted emotional education. (Köngäs 2019, 29, 36, 60.)

The participants of the team coaching simulation workshops learned to observe the moments of interaction and conflicting encounters that give rise to different interpretations and ways to respond. Dunderfelt (2016) also discusses how interpretations are influenced by the experiences a person has accumulated since childhood. In addition to identifying interpretations, the simulations viewed different response styles and their impact on the peda-

gogical atmosphere and provided an opportunity to practise them. Everyone can work on their self-awareness and become aware of their own way of responding. It is important to together think about what different ways there are for expressing feelings in the team and how each person functions under pressure or when things are busy.

The innate temperament characteristics of both grown-ups and children impact on how they respond to different things. The person's surroundings can either reinforce or dampen these characteristics. The different models applied to analyse temperament highlight reactivity and the tone of the emotional responses. The biological stress control system of individuals whose temperament is highly reactive activates faster than in individuals whose reactions are slower. Temperament also directs the tone of the individual's responses towards negative or positive. Temperament characteristics cannot be labelled good or bad, but one must learn how to regulate one's responses. The safety provided by educators and the environment of the child supports the child in learning this regulation. (Sajaniemi ym. 2015, 47–50.) Specific challenges can be generated by the opposing temperaments of the child and the educator. A way brought up in the coaching to handle such situations was that "the child does not change but we grown-ups should change our actions accordingly."

Children need grown-up's support in stress regulation

The everyday environment of early childhood education is flooded with various stimuli that challenge one's attention and willpower. Emotions fill the most part of one's awareness and also regulate other contents of consciousness, such as senses, attention and memory (Nummenmaa 2019, 51). Processing the wealth of messages in the environment depletes one's willpower and one's working memory is burdened, and this weakens one's preparedness to deal with stress reactions. (Sajaniemi ym. 2015, 163.) Stress is a common symptom in both grown-ups and children in early childhood education (Köngäs 2019, 65).

In order to learn how to regulate stress, a child needs someone to help them. Being repeatedly left without the support that carries them when their stress control system activates results in the child learning to become increasingly sensitive in their reactions to the stimuli of the stress situation. The ultimate outcome of this is a permanent state of alertness. (Sajaniemi ym. 2015, 39–40.) In the simulation, the educators took the role of the child and identified with the emotional state in situations that activate stress. An educator who was in the role of the child in the waking up from the nap scenario commented, "Now I truly know how the child feels like". An understanding of the child's feelings and needs gives the educator tools for modifying their own actions and anticipating situations.

The ability of a grown-up to regulate emotions may also fail in stressful situations, resulting in uncontrollable release of stress (Sajaniemi ym 2015, 191). Many coaching teams felt that the hectic schedule and the challenging behaviour of children in their groups depleted their resources. The multitude of tasks and a lively group of children force the educators to constantly plan the next activities and focusing on the present moment is often difficult. The hectic feeling is illustrated by a participant's comment: "It would be wonderful to have time to understand the child". Practising mindfulness calms down the daily life by increasing one's ability to feel empathy and to pick up on one's own states of mind and those of others (Manka & Manka 2016, 172). The development of awareness lifts up the mood and strengthens one's ability to encounter factors that activate the stress system and protects against the harmful impacts of stress (Sajaniemi ym. 2015, 164).

Voluntary attentiveness is developed by directing one's attention consciously to sensory matters in one's environment and inwardly to one's thoughts and feelings. In order to become present, one can concentrate on observing one thing at a time, such as one's own breathing or physical sensations. When the mind begins to wander, one gently returns to the focus of one's attention. (Sajaniemi ym. 2015, 163; Manka & Manka 2016, 173.) In each team coaching session, a brief exercise to strengthen awareness was

carried out at the beginning. The purpose of the exercise was to calm down the body and mind for the shared learning and sharing of experiences. The exercises used are suitable for application in a group of children, for example, as part of the daily routines. Awareness skills have been shown to have a positive impact on social skills, attentiveness and academic performance (Sajaniemi ym. 2015, 164).

Emotional situational awareness through reflection

The national core curriculum for early childhood education and care (Opetushallitus 2018, 62) highlights self-assessment by personnel as a key quality and development factor. The most important prerequisite of self-assessment is conscious reflection on one's actions (Ahonen & Roos 2019, 94). The goal of observing one's actions and assessing them is to obtain awareness of the phenomena taking place within oneself and of one's experiences. Reflection aims to look at the experiences from the role of an observer, without making value judgements or evaluating them. Examining one's feelings and actions and gaining insights require a conscious intent to study one's own thoughts. (Manka & Manka 2016, 172)

When assessing one's own actions, it is good to pay attention to emotional situational awareness. In order to be able to act in a sensitive manner, one must identify the feelings and needs of others, invest in the understanding

of the feelings of others and be aware of one's own choices related to interaction. The first step towards developing emotional situational awareness is to become aware of one's development needs. The key to developing this is to commit to the moment. By listening actively and conveying to the other person a sense that you find their matter important, you enable a positive interaction while developing your sensitivity. (Ahonen & Roos 2019, 97–99)

Identifying one's development needs can also be challenging. One easily becomes blind to one's actions, and admitting one's shortcomings may also feel difficult. Everyone has blind spots, i.e., conscious or unconscious ways of operating or characteristics. A person can chart their own blind spots by thinking about what kind of behaviour or characteristics in others resonate with and even irritate them. Often the person also has these same characteristics although they are barely aware of them, which is exactly why they set off such a strong reaction (Ahonen & Roos 2019, 100–101). Many participants of the coaching gained insights into their actions as educators. While observing the actions of others in a fictional but authentic situation in the simulation, someone uttered in astonishment, "Is this what it really looks like?". By contrast, another participant felt that there is no need for improvement in their actions.

The reflection of one's own professional activity should be made visible

to oneself, for example, by writing down observations, thoughts, experienced and development in a learning journal (Ahonen & Roos 2019, 107). The participants of the team coaching observed, in accordance with their objectives, the activity in their group of children and wrote down their observations in a notebook they carried with them. The conscious attention targeted various interactions both with children and among educators. The notes enabled them to revisit the situations in team meetings and coaching discussions which allowed for the reflection of various interpretations and experiences. The small notebook became an important everyday tool.

Team as a resource for shared development

The development work carried out in the “Tää on se mun paikka” project was part of the implementation of the national core curriculum for early education and care (Opetushallitus 2018). In order to develop the operating culture, it is important that continuing education targets the entire personnel (Määttä ym. 2017, 46). Changes to operations require active participation by the implementers. If an employee does not understand what the objective of development is, resistance and activity impeding the development often ensue. (Manka & Manka 2016, 136)

In the coaching model, the teams select their own development objectives from the framework of supporting so-

cial and emotional skills. The objectives are based on the factors of quality in early childhood education and care and the indicators describing them, defined by the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (Vlasov ym. 2019). The activities developed during the team coaching included the practices of pedagogical documentation, small group activities, and daily infrastructure as well as practices that correspond to the objectives based on the needs of the group of children. Developing documentation made it easier to bring up the experiences of children. New working methods, including drama, were discovered for emotional education.

The national core curriculum for early childhood education and care (Opetushallitus 2018) is still a fairly new binding guideline of operations, and implementing it requires educators to question many learned customs and routines. Strong routines developed over time may become obstacles to learning in the team. Different ways of thinking, combined with the team's lacking opportunities to engage in dialogue, were identified in the team coaching as factors that create challenges for development. The team's preparedness to develop is also defined by its collective psychological capital, including the interaction between team members and the dynamics that directs it. Collective psychological capital consists of the psychological capital of the members of the work community and is characterised by the team's con-

confidence in their ability to have an impact and the understanding of different ways to perform work. Optimism towards the future of work and a calm attitude towards stressful situations also increase this capital. (Manka & Manka 2016, 170)

A safe atmosphere as well as shared objectives and ground rules play a crucial role in the development of the team. Open dialogue is a prerequisite for learning in the team. Sharing one's experiences and interpretations requires a safe atmosphere in which one can express their thoughts without risks. Every member of the team must contribute to building trust (Kupias 2019). When the coaching period began, some of the teams had just started working together and had not yet formed shared understandings and operating methods. The coaching discussions offered an opportunity to discuss values and their manifestation in the operations as well as to agree on shared objectives and operating methods related to them. In the simulation, the teams collected their notions of values into house rules, which they took with them to their respective day care centres.

In the first implementation of the team coaching, the team members' own desire to participate in the coaching was highlighted as a factor committing them to development work. In the second implementation, motivation was a factor that was focused on as early as the enrolment stage. If participation in development work is dictated from

above, resistance and a failure to see what the development needs are may ensue. According to the feedback given by one of the teams, "the topics of the coaching were good but the meetings took time away from other practical matters the team needs to take care of". The motivation to develop one's own work was also reflected in the team's development results.

Encouraging participation and competence development is part of supervisory work (Manka & Manka 2016, 135). The support provided by and the presence of the supervisor in the process has a noticeable impact on the commitment and goal-oriented work of the teams. The coaching meetings included supervisors and early childhood special education teachers working with the teams. The presence of a supervisor or early childhood special education teacher in the discussions made it possible to address acute problems at the decision-making level. In the discussions, the employees had the opportunity to share their thoughts concerning their work, and themes could be reviewed together. Feedback was also given and received in the discussions and both matters needing resolving, and successes experienced were verbalised. Thus, an important duty of a supervisor is to make every employee feel that they are important (Manka & Manka 2016, 135).

Conscious implementation of warm interaction

The participants of the team coaching said that they had started paying more attention to their way of interacting. They also felt their awareness of interaction had heightened. Many felt that they had learned to be calmer, listen to children better and in a more authentic and interested manner. This was deemed to have generated good conversations and enabled them to get to know children better. Warm interaction was applied as a concrete and conscious tool in many teams, and the sentiment in the teams was that competence in applying it had improved. Tangible evidence had been received for implementing warm interaction, and this was discussed together in the teams. According to feedback received from the children, many felt that the feeling of closeness with the children had improved. Some team members felt that even though there already had been warmth in their interactions, a culture of dialogue with the children had improved as the grown-ups had given the children more space and time.

The involvement of the entire team in development was considered to be important. Shared operating methods had been found and an opportunity to develop together had been discovered through dialogue. Mutual giving and receiving feedback had also increased between the educators in the team. Daily life in early education is hectic, which often burdens the personnel. This could occasionally be seen in the team coaching sessions as well: developing

the practices and reflecting on one's own actions may sometimes feel like an extra and secondary burden when the daily work is busy. However, they are methods that can help make the daily life less burdensome.

The most important feedback on their development work was given to the educators in early childhood education by the children in their own groups. Each grown-up who encounters a child leaves a mark in the child's memory, either consciously or unconsciously. Encounters that invoke powerful emotions, whether positive or negative, may be carried along by the child into adulthood and bring back memories of the meaningful situation. Therefore, an important aspect of professional reflection is to observe the behaviour of children in relation to one's own actions (Ahonen & Roos 2019, 102). The team coaching participants said the increased interaction competence strengthened their ability to accept each child as an individual and to encounter the child without hurrying. The educators focused their attention on the children and could anticipate situations better. This enabled them to spend more time with the children and also increased positive verbal interaction and feedback in the entire group of children. Increased trust in grown-ups was manifested as an increased sense of security among the children.

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Mari Rask

Increasing the appeal of the social services and healthcare sector among men?

The “Mainstreaming Gender in Social and Health Care Training” project (1 April 2019–30 November 2021) is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). The purpose of the project is to attract more male applicants to social services and healthcare education at the university of applied sciences level and to subsequently employ them in the diverse positions offered by the sector. This will address the needs of both working life and customers to receive social and healthcare services provided by men. The project outcomes will include a method for assessing the realisation of equality in the provision of social services and healthcare education, a mentor operating model, as well as an assessment and modelling of the mainstreaming process. These outcomes will be made possible by the measures completed so far and those in progress. This article examines the measures taken in the project and the resulting conclusions, as well as open issues that need to be solved to attract men to the social services and healthcare sector.

Men in social services and healthcare positions

As early as 2004, the “Equality in the Labour Market” committee established by the Ministry of Education proposed that equality planning be increased in educational institutions especially. One of the central objectives was to increase projects that motivated men to seek employment in predominantly female sectors. The committee proposal highlighted the reduction of segregation as one of the main operating principles in the regional cooperation between educational institutions and in the development of cooperation. Promoting equality was also the focus in projects targeting and increasing the appeal of vocational education. The committee also proposed the inclusion of non-discrimination and equality as well as the promotion thereof in education planning in different educational institutions. In the same context, the committee expressed its desire for a statistical survey on sectors in which there is ine-

quality in terms of gender distribution, and in which the shortage of labour force will be most severe in the future. (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2010, 19). Considerable research has been carried out on equality from working life perspectives in which success factors specific to men were previously used as a reference. As a result, efforts to increase equality in education have primarily focused on increasing the number of women in fields dominated by men such as mathematics, science and technology. The low number of men in sectors that are predominantly female has not received equal attention. (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2010, 19). The Finnish government report extending to 2020 raises the issue of equality between men and women in education and employment. The report highlights directing men to and employing them in the social services and healthcare sector. Many measures concerning equality often target a specific gender and aim to improve its status. In the big picture, every type of measure that promotes equality will strengthen the status of all genders. (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö 2010, 20)

The number of men seeking education in the social services and healthcare sector is low. The underlying factors include pay, attitudes, preconceived ideas and impressions. In sectors dominated by women, the working methods and culture of the gender majority are linked to gendered roles. (Tenkanen 2013). The structures of occupations are changing,

and there is increased movement across gender boundaries in different sectors. However, statistics reveal that women tend to move to sectors dominated by men more than the reverse. Gender-related questions are both social and labour market issues. In technical sectors, economic fluctuations are linked to the instability of employment, and this may influence the selection of fields of study. From the employment perspective, the social services and healthcare sector is in a favourable position, and this could be an appealing factor in marketing and attracting men to the sector. (Alanko & Orjasniemi 2018, 152)

Among men, the group most likely to apply for education in the social services and healthcare sector consists of men seeking a new career. The main reason for seeking a new field of occupation is the reduced employment opportunities in a sector that is predominantly male or female. As a rule, men who have switched to and work in the social services and healthcare sector are satisfied with their positions. The personnel structure in the social services and healthcare sector is becoming more balanced in terms of equality, with increasing numbers of men working in the sector. Above all, the diversity of the personnel structure helps meet the needs of customers and makes the provision of services more versatile. The significance of men in the social services and healthcare sector is demonstrated by how quickly they find employment after entering the sector.

(Laukkanen 2017, 101–104)

Mainstreaming the gender perspective is important in society and refers to including the objective of promoting equality in all activities. Equality is being promoted in a number of areas in society (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö 2020). In addition to the labour market, education must also take into consideration matters related to equality. Education plays a significant role in the realisation, promotion and mainstreaming of equality. The “Mainstreaming Gender in Social and Health Care” project can influence stereotypical impressions of the social services and healthcare sector and the duties it entails, as well as the suitability of social and healthcare sector occupations from the gender perspective.

Development need survey to support development work

The objective of the “Mainstreaming Gender in Social and Health Care” project is to promote equality between the genders and to increase the interest of men in higher education in the social services and healthcare sector, as well as in the variety of positions the education prepares students for, and subsequently, to increase the number of potential male applicants and admissions. The measures taken in the project reinforce the importance of equality in the different levels of education and in working life. The view of the suitability of occupations for different genders will become less stereotypical, and the information

about the education provided in the social services and healthcare sector will reach potential male applicants better and offer men more opportunities for admission. Over the long term, men’s employment and career development in the social services and healthcare sector in particular will be strengthened, and the personnel structure in working life will become more balanced in terms of equality. The strengthening of the equality perspective in workplaces in the social services and healthcare sector will promote the experiences of wellbeing at work among male employees. At the same time, the wellbeing of working communities, the status of the social services and healthcare sector in the labour market and the position of customers will improve as social and healthcare services are produced and provided by men.

One of the project’s objectives is to make a positive change in the appeal to men of the education leading to a university of applied sciences degree in the social services and healthcare sector. At the beginning of the project, the current situation of those who had applied for and been admitted to education programmes in the sector was mapped by gender (Figure 1). The survey was conducted in the Bachelor’s degree programmes of nursing, social services and physiotherapy in seven different universities of applied sciences. A declining trend in the number of male applicants since 2016 could be seen in all degree programmes. The same de-

velopment trend is visible in all the universities of applied sciences included in the survey (Opetushallinnon tilastopalvelu 2020).

Number of applicants/ admissions (men) in the Bachelor of Social Services degree programme	2016	2017	2018	2019
Karelia	93/2	83/5	87/10	57/5
Lahti UAS	260/10	240/7	217/12	168/5
Lapland UAS, Kemi	92/6	58/6	67/6	54/8
Metropolia	556/20	568/20	475/21	445/21
Saimia	148/9	123/6	96/4	75/4
Turku UAS	201/9	153/4	295/3	251/7
Xamk	161/8	138/7	120/11	94/4

Figure 1. An example of the number of men who applied for and were admitted to social services and healthcare education (Opetushallinnon tilastopalvelu 2020).

Based on this, working life networks were established, and development needs were determined and analysed in the project in 2019. The project also networked with universities of applied sciences in Switzerland and Iceland to partner with them in establishing good practice in aiming to attract men to social services and healthcare education. In Iceland, the situation was considered extremely difficult, because work in the social services and healthcare sector is still seen as appropriate for women only. It is considered unusual for men to seek a career in the social services and healthcare sector and even negative for their career development. In Iceland, the discussion concerning attitudes and values should be raised to the same level as the discussion concerning social issues. The social services and healthcare sector is predominantly female in Switzerland as well. In line with Finland, the social services and healthcare education programmes that see the highest number of men are those training physiotherapists. Recruiting men to the social services and healthcare sector was also deemed difficult, and marketing was considered to be important in Switzerland. Good practices were shared in the partnership, and the groundwork on which the practices were built provided benefits for all parties.

Development needs were examined in workshops, which included both public and private sector employees, employers, students, male alumni, stu-

dents active in student organisations, teachers and study counsellors from upper secondary schools. The workshops aimed to determine factors that could increase the appeal of social services and healthcare education among male applicants and ways for sector workplaces to draw men to positions offered in the sector. Issues identified in the workshops included low pay, the resilience of traditional gender roles, negative media visibility and minimal marketing in the sector. Technological and digital competence were seen as future opportunities to recruit more men to the social services and healthcare sector. The factors identified as decisive to that effect included investment in education, marketing and various marketing channels in the sector.

The development needs analysis highlighted marketing as a feasible method for the project to use for making an impact. Marketing “tailored for men” that would also specifically target men was among the suggestions generated in the workshops. Information about social services and healthcare education and the sector in general should be made intensively available in places frequented by men such as at sports events. The sharing by men of their personal experiences of their jobs and duties in the social services and healthcare sector was also considered important. The workshops indicated that marketing social services and healthcare degree programmes to upper secondary schools and upper secondary education

is minimal. Marketing efforts could also include visits to educational institutions, targeting students at various levels of education. Marketing was considered stereotypical. It was felt it did not depict the true nature of the work in the sector realistically. Social media marketing was seen as a modern method that could appeal to men through its straightforward and fast-paced approach.

Cooperation between workplaces and education was considered important. Describing authentic workplace situations and the diversity of the duties and challenges encountered in the sector to potential applicants could increase the sector's appeal. Marketing should highlight work content that breaks free from the stereotypes traditionally associated with education and occupations in the social services and healthcare sector. The image of social services and healthcare occupations as vocations for people deeply drawn to nurture others and on the other hand, as vocations for saviours was considered outdated. Marketing efforts should frame the social services and healthcare sector as work that offers meaningfulness and interaction, suiting men with good social skills and emotional competence who are interested in diverse duties.

A step closer to a more equal social services and healthcare sector

Based on the development needs survey, the project has launched measures to promote the project's objectives. At this stage of the project, the overarching themes include the mainstreaming of the student admission process, marketing efforts targeting students, as well as the development of pedagogical solutions. All of the above aims to model operating methods for national application to achieve positive change that helps attract men to social services and healthcare programmes at universities of applied sciences and subsequently, employ men in the sector.

The mainstreaming of the student process has strengthened the awareness of various routes to proceed that can be taken through partnership with occupational colleges, including presentations on the available degree programmes in the social services and healthcare sector. Disseminating information about the degree programmes has also been piloted at garrisons with the military service. The plan is to continue the cooperation with garrisons in 2020. The mainstreaming of the student process also monitors the impacts that the implementation of a grade-based and electronic admission system will

have on mainstreaming. The project has applied the existing information on the digitalisation of the entrance examination and examined its impact on the admission of men to degree programmes in the social services and healthcare sector. The surveys conducted so far have resulted in the conclusion that the digital entrance examination does not seem to negatively impact the number of male students. Instead, the trend indicates that the number is growing slightly.

As a student marketing measure, co-operation has been launched with the local Employment and Economic Development Offices, One-stop Guidance Centres and Vauhdittamo work search service points to direct potential applicants to social services and healthcare studies. A partnership has begun with Aamos ry, an organisation that helps with the job search process, and assists jobseekers to develop their job search skills and plan their work careers with the help of the employment services. The project has also included work trials of subsidised employees. Marketing to students has also been carried out in open house events for the general public and in workshops involving stakeholders.

Social media marketing, a method highlighted in the development needs survey, has also been taken into consideration in marketing. During the joint application round in the spring of 2020, the project implemented a social media

campaign targeting men. During the campaign, men working in different occupations in the social services and healthcare sector posted stories about their occupation and work in social media for a month. The campaign was very popular and was considered a fresh idea. The reachability of the campaign was also good: over the course of the month, the campaign's Instagram account received more than 300 followers. The campaign also showed what type of marketing is effective and reaches the target group. Video materials will be produced for the autumn joint application round in 2020. The goal of the materials produced in the project for distribution over multiple channels is to reduce the stereotypes associated with different occupations, and to promote awareness of diverse job descriptions and job opportunities.

The theme of developing pedagogical solutions will develop pedagogical operating methods that meet the needs of men. During 2020, the project will look into factors related to supporting the studies of male students in the social services and healthcare sector, their experiences of equality and the importance of equality in the work carried out in the social services and healthcare sector, customers' experiences of male employees, and the importance of male employees in the working community. The objective of all the aforementioned is to produce materials on pedagogical solutions that support mainstreaming.

Towards the mainstreaming of social services and healthcare

Men generally seek help at social and healthcare services less frequently than women. In particular, it has been observed that seeking help for emotional and personal issues or matters concerning their own personality is more difficult for men than for women. Role expectations related to masculinity, the upbringing of boys and the structures of service systems have been suggested as the underlying reasons. Based on this, gender-specific vocational competence on wellbeing is justified, and the need for such competence in social and healthcare services is considerable. In gender-specific vocational competence on wellbeing, it is important to maintain a natural relationship with the masculine identity and the cultural concept of men and being a man. This calls for vocational competence in service systems, in which attention must be paid to gender-specificity at a sufficient level. Key aspects in terms of its realisation include communication and providing targeted services to men, as well as the highlighting of the male perspective (Peitsalo 2015).

The increase in the number of male employees in social services and healthcare positions makes it possible to better focus on male customers as men, and this may also help with the handling of other challenges. Although the work framework applied in social and healthcare services is not that of gender-specificity, many customers find it

positive that they can approach or process their own situation from a male perspective. Male-specific assistance provides considerable benefits, because it offers a feeling of being seen and listened to, and makes seeking assistance easier. (Peitsalo 2015). This underlines the importance of men applying for social services and healthcare education at universities of applied sciences. After applying for and graduating from the education, measures should be taken to ensure that men also remain in the employment arena of social services and health care, so that customers can benefit from the male perspective.

Men dominate the technology and finance sectors, whereas the social services and healthcare sector is predominantly female. Increasingly, the men who seek the social services and healthcare sector come from jobs in another sector. The main reason for entering the new sector is the desire to help people, interest in interacting with people, and the quest for meaningfulness at work. Men want to work and interact with people, and their previous job descriptions or occupations may not have provided opportunities for it. Their own life experiences or life events may also draw them to studies and occupations in the social services and healthcare sector. Their experiences have helped them see what is meaningful in life, or the men want to be of assistance and fulfil their obligation in society by helping others. If men are to be attracted to the social services and healthcare sector and en-

abled to experience meaningfulness by doing so, gender stereotypes must be dismantled in all areas of society (Haunberger 2019; Hintsala 2005, 99).

Currently, the social services and healthcare sector is the largest employer in Finland. One in five new jobs are created in the private social services and healthcare sector. Over the course of the past two years, this sector has seen the creation of 19,000 new jobs. On average, this means that 26 new jobs have been created every day of the year for two years. When the public sector is included, the largest number of new jobs has been created in the social services and healthcare sector since 2017. The growth in employment continues in the private social services and healthcare sector, and the number of new employees in the private sector will grow by 36,000 during the current parliamentary term. This accounts for more than 60% of the employment target set by the government. Factors connected to education that would anticipate an increase in the number of applicants should also be taken into consideration in employment (Erkkilä 2020). Important factors will also include a potential increase in the number of locations providing education, the pedagogical solutions in studies, the students' needs and taking these needs into consideration.

Conclusions

In future, increased attention should be paid to the education and career choices girls and boys make in early

childhood education and care plans and curricula, as well as in the degree requirements. Ensuring they complete upper secondary education through the implementation of flexible methods of learning, among other things, supports all genders as they move on to further education and enter working life. Education plays a significant role in the promotion and mainstreaming of gender equality in the working life.

The objective of the "Mainstreaming Gender in Social and Health Care" project is to increase interest among men in higher education in the social services and healthcare sector and in the variety of duties for which it prepares students, and subsequently, increase the number of potential applications and admissions of men. The project develops pedagogical solutions that support learning by men and aims to influence an education culture that would increase the number of men and strengthen their role in higher education in the social services and healthcare sector and in working life. The measures to be taken in the project will develop operating methods that support the objectives on a national scale. The purpose of the operating methods is to better take into consideration the needs of men who apply for the education, which is directly proportional to the number of men in jobs in the social services and healthcare sector. Nationwide distribution of materials is important to ensure that the number of men increases in social services and health care at a national

level.

Over the long term, the project will especially impact the wellbeing of boys, men and their families by encouraging boys and men to break free from traditional gender roles in their daily lives and subsequently, in working life, which will make the personnel structure in the social services and healthcare sector more balanced in terms of equality. Partners whose operations include working with men play an important role in the distribution and use of the materials generated in the project, meaning the impact of the material will multiply, resulting in desired outcomes. From the perspective of the customer base, the project aims to develop customer service in such a way that service provided by men would also be available to customers more often. The need for social and healthcare services provided by men is increasing. The increased number of male employees in social and healthcare services will lower the threshold of men to seek and accept help, which will improve the wellbeing of men and help prevent issues from escalating. This is also a factor that has economic impacts on society and the

services it provides.

A considerable number of measures have been taken in the project that have revealed pitfalls for men in the social services and healthcare sector. Areas of improvement have been recognised in pay, attitudes and beliefs, for example. The project cannot eliminate all of the factors that impact men's career choices, but it can help alleviate prejudice and reinforce factors considered strengths in the social services and healthcare sector. Performing meaningful work and encountering people are to a large extent matters worth focusing on. Viewed from men's perspective, marketing in the sector needs fresh ideas and new channels. Marketing also impacts attitudes, preconceived ideas and beliefs. It can also strengthen the satisfaction that performing meaningful work brings. The project has acknowledged the aforementioned and works to ensure that in future, men will increasingly choose studies in the social services and healthcare sector, and the ensuing opportunities provided by the positions in the sector.

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Tarja Taurula

Taking the MOTARI route to higher education



This article describes the experiences of the students in the MOTARI programme of LAB University of Applied Sciences and the counselling given in the programme. The material used for the article consists of the responses to a survey sent to the students in April 2020. The survey was implemented as part of the “KETTU – Agile career coaching in vocational education and training” project, in which LAB University of Applied Sciences (Lahti University of Applied Sciences until 2019) is a partner. The project creates a career counselling model for vocational institutions in the Päijät-Häme region. The goal of career counselling is to support the working life skills and competence of students in vocational institutions, reduce their drop-out rates and improve their employment. The feedback received from the MOTARI students is used to develop a career counselling model for upper secondary education as well as route

studies and the related guidance.

The KETTU project is coordinated by Salpaus Further Education. The partners are Kiipula Vocational College, Lahti Academy of Liberal and Fine Arts, Diakonia College of Finland (SDO), Pajulahti Sports Institute, Sports Institute of Finland (Vierumäki) and LAB University of Applied Sciences. The project kicked off on 1 May 2018. As of this writing, the project has reached its final stage and will be completed in the autumn of 2020.

What is MOTARI?

The traditional route to higher education in Finland – and internationally – has been via the upper secondary school. General upper secondary school studies are considered to prepare the student for higher education, and with many subjects, higher education is seen as a continuation of the competence path that begins in the upper second-

ary school. However, this situation has changed as a result of the establishment at the beginning of the 1990s of the second pillar parallel to the academic universities in the Finnish higher education system, namely the universities of applied sciences (Kokko 2018, 11). Increasingly, students who continue their studies in a university of applied sciences are those who have completed their upper secondary level qualification in a vocational institution.

Various projects have created routes for transitioning from a vocational institution to higher education in order to support the continuation of studies in a higher education institution, faster transitioning to further studies and shorter duration of studies. Such projects include the Huippis and Jatkoväylä projects. One of the methods for streamlining the transition phase is the route studies or further route studies (both terms are used), which in LAB University of Applied Sciences include the MOTARI studies or path studies.

The MOTARI studies refer to university of applied sciences studies that students can incorporate in both their upper secondary vocational education and training and university of applied science studies.

On the “MOTARI route”, the student completes part of the studies included in the first semester or first academic year at a university of applied sciences concurrently with their vocational studies. When the student continues their studies at the university of applied

sciences in which they completed the route studies, the route studies are recognised as prior learning in full in the UAS degree that the further route studies are part of. Some of the route studies completed at a university of applied sciences are also recognised in the vocational upper secondary qualification. The route studies shorten the total duration of studies required for completing a vocational upper secondary qualification and a university of applied sciences degree by 0.5–1 year. The studies and the related counselling are planned jointly by the provider of the vocational education and training and the university of applied sciences.

From Huippis to MOTARI

The largest educational institutions in Päijät-Häme – Salpaus Further Education and LAB (formerly Lahti University of Applied Sciences) – worked together in order to develop career coaching and smooth transitions in the 2016–2018 “Huippuosaamisen kasvupolku” project on growth paths for excellence (the Huippis project). The project created a model for smooth transitions from secondary school via the upper secondary level to the university of applied sciences. The model was based on the need to encourage students who completed an upper secondary qualification to continue studies at the university of applied sciences and to speed up their graduation and employment. The goal was for students to complete their vocational upper secondary qualifications and

university of applied sciences degree in a streamlined manner in 5–6 years (Kallioniemi & Hakio 2018, 14). Concurrently, a more extensive national project with the same objectives, named “Jatkoväylä – sujuvasti ammatillisesta koulutuksesta ammattikorkeakouluun”, was underway to streamline the transition from vocational education and training to higher education. It was a joint effort of a national partner network of 11 vocational institutions and universities of applied sciences. (Centria University of Applied Sciences 2020)

In the Huippis project, the new model was piloted in the Wood Technology programme. After the pilot stage, the model was expanded from Wood Technology to all fields of study in LAB University of Applied Sciences and was named MOTARI. “Motari” is a Finnish colloquial word for “motorway”, a road where travelling is fast and smooth.

The first students were admitted in the autumn of 2018. During two years (2018–2020), the MOTARI studies have been taken by 63 students. At first, MOTARI was a joint effort of Lahti University of Applied Sciences and Salpaus Further Education. This year (2020), the cooperation will expand to new educational institutions, as the studies have also been opened to the students of Saimaa Vocational College Sampo and the Lahti campus of Diakonia College of Finland. The cooperation also includes the Omnia students studying for the vocational qualification in wood industry who aim to continue in LAB’s Wood Technology

programme.

The MOTARI programme includes studies shared by all LAB students (such as language studies) as well as sector-specific vocational studies. The MOTARI students participate in the same study units as the degree students: contact instruction is provided on the LAB campus in Lahti, although attending classes online is also possible. The students prepare their own study plans by merging the schedules of their own institution and LAB’s study units. The student can include some of the studies they complete at LAB in their vocational upper secondary qualification. Once the student has completed their qualification and at least 30 credits in the MOTARI programme, they may submit their degree student application to LAB through the separate application process. (LAB University of Applied Sciences 2020)

A central aspect of both the former Huippis project and the MOTARI programme is the extensive cooperation between upper secondary vocational education and training and higher education. The Huippis project already showed that several background structures are needed that make the Huippis path as smooth as possible for the student and enable the student to progress seamlessly from one level of education to the next. Administrative measures and agreed shared and consistent ground rules are needed. These will not be directly visible to the students during the study path, but once aligned, they

ensure a good study progress, smooth guidance and an opportunity to graduate in an accelerated schedule (Kallioniemi & Hakio 2018, 19). The foundation of the prerequisites – the cooperation of educational institutions, the structures and the ground rules – of the MOTARI route studies was laid during the Huippis project.

Implementation of the MOTARI survey

The primary place of study of the MOTARI students is the vocational institution, and they complete route studies in at university of applied sciences concurrently with the studies leading to a vocational upper secondary qualification. In a large, multidisciplinary university of applied sciences, the MOTARI students form a small and rather “invisible and silent” group. This is due to not only their small numbers but also the fact that they are not degree students but enrolled in the open university of applied sciences.

During two years (2018–2020), a total of 63 students have taken the MOTARI studies. The studies and counselling have been planned jointly by the educational institutions, but student feedback is also needed in order to develop the studies and activities. The KETTU project on developing career coaching in upper secondary vocational education and training included a Webropol survey that was sent to former and current MOTARI students in April 2020. The objective was to learn about the students'

experience of the MOTARI studies and the related guidance and communication. The survey consisted of 10 questions, half of which (5 questions) included several answer alternatives or were multiple-choice questions and the rest (5 questions) were open-ended questions. Feedback received on the MOTARI studies and counselling is applied in the development of the career coaching model for upper secondary education as well to develop the route studies and the related counselling.

Student experiences of the studies and counselling

The survey was sent to 61 MOTARI students, 27 of whom responded. The response rate (44%) was good. Almost all respondents (93%) were satisfied with the MOTARI studies. The difficulty level of the study units of the university of applied sciences was either suitable or easy in the opinion of 81% of respondents. Five respondents found the study units difficult. According to the majority of the respondents (81%), communication concerning the MOTARI studies was sufficient. However, the respondents felt the communication could be clearer and more personal. Communication concerning the separate admission process received praise.

The Huippis project had shown that a student embarking on the path provided in the project must be active and self-directed, since they have to navigate between two goals, a qualification and a degree. The younger the student,

the more support they need. The teacher's role is to motivate the student (Vihtonen 2018, 27). When a student studies in two institutions simultaneously, the responsibility for providing counselling is also divided between several players. Study counselling was provided for the MOTARI students particularly by teachers or study counsellors of the vocational institution as well as the staff of the open university of applied sciences. In addition, tutoring was provided by the tutor teacher at the University Applied Sciences and peer students. Some respondents had also received guidance from the study counsellor of the University of Applied Sciences. All respondents said they had received counselling, but as many as 41% of them felt it had not been sufficient.

"Whenever I had a question, I received assistance quickly. Surely one has to be proactive and have confidence in oneself in the MOTARI studies."

"Initially, I would have wanted more counselling on selecting courses at LAB and on studying at a UAS in general. Everything was new: the credits, the recognition of prior studies, the work-based learning, etc."

"I feel that the amount of counselling I received was insufficient. During the first semester, counselling was clear but during the

second semester, there has been less and less counselling. When I ask questions concerning my studies/courses, everyone gives me a different answer. I think things would be easier if I had a scheduled appointment with the tutor teacher once per semester, for example."

One of the survey respondents suggested designating a student tutor in each field of study for the MOTARI students and setting up a WhatsApp group that could be used for questions concerning the studies. In addition, the respondents would like to be more integrated with a certain group and more involved when studies begin for that group. Not being a member of any group of students or a group that is starting their studies makes the student feel disconnected. There is also a risk that the student misses out on information from peers or other assistance.

The importance and application of peer tutoring was also brought up in the study conducted by Päivi-Katriina Juutilainen and Nina Mäkelä in the Jatkoväylä project. The University of Applied Sciences Students they interviewed would have liked to see peer tutoring used more in the transition stage from the upper secondary level to higher education. In this manner, the experiences of students who have already taken the route from vocational education and training could be tapped into during the upper secondary education (Juuti-

lainen & Mäkelä 2018, 114). The national recommendations concerning the provision of further route studies and counselling also highlight the importance of peer tutoring and the need to develop it (Juutilainen et al. 2018).

The responses called for a coordinating teacher in order to develop the MOTARI studies. One of the respondents would have liked to have someone ask them, midway through their studies, how they were progressing and if they had had any difficulties. Another respondent suggested a scheduled appointment with the tutor teacher once per month. The responses clearly brought up the need for more and clearer tutoring.

Many of the respondents in the MOTARI survey found the instructions provided concerning the studies confusing. The respondents indicated that luck, emails from the Open University of Applied Sciences, and help from peers had enabled them to keep going. Part of the important information had never been received, or had been received from friends but too late, such as the enrolment in the online summer studies. Feedback was also provided on the flow of information and the follow-up of the study progress between the two educational institutions.

Achievements and challenges

The MOTARI students study in a vocational institution and the University of Applied Sciences concurrently. A surprisingly many survey respondents felt

that everything had still gone well – the vocational institution was flexible and, for the most part, encouraging towards their studies at the university of applied sciences. However, the respondents criticised overlapping contents, assignment deadlines and schedules in both the vocational studies and the University of Applied Sciences Studies. For many, balancing the studies with other areas of life proved difficult. In addition, completing the required scope of 30 credits in the MOTARI studies within one year also considered challenging.

“Time. When the vocational studies took a full workday and I have two small children at home, there was no time left for the MOTARI studies. At first, some of the teachers in the vocational institution did not like it when I missed classes due to my MOTARI studies.”

“The most challenging thing was to manage my time so that I was able to complete the courses, particularly the language studies, while also taking care of my studies at Salpaus. The opinion of the Swedish-language teacher (LAMK) was very clear: if you don’t meet the attendance requirement, you won’t pass the course. However, I had quite a lot of obligatory courses at Salpaus at the same time, so quite a bit of juggling was needed to fit everything in.”

“You have to focus. You can’t keep jumping between two schools; with work and all you just can’t handle it.”

“Not really any problems. When you started both studies in good time, time management was not an issue.”

“When you are not a member of the group and are only able to attend a few courses, you are easily left alone and don’t get much help. In addition, learning the basics of studying in a higher education institution was also somewhat insufficient for me. (Use of the applications, the method of working, communication and such). Of course, it’s partly my own fault, too.”

“A vocational qualification alone does not motivate me. The MOTARI studies are motivating and interesting in terms of the future as well. Doing this is a great opportunity!!”

Time management and the considerable workload were the greatest challenges experienced by the respondents. On the other hand, challenging oneself, the interesting course contents, good teachers, social interaction, the campus and learning new things were motivating and inspiring. Many felt that the MOTARI studies were a good opportu-

nity to get a feel of what studying in a higher education institution is like, and someone mentioned that the studies had helped clarify their future plans.

A fast track to degree programmes

After the student has completed 30 credits in the MOTARI studies, they can apply for a degree programme at the University of Applied Sciences in the separate admission process. By April 2020, out of 39 students who completed their MOTARI studies, 17 completed a minimum of 30 credits. Of them, 11 students were admitted to degree programmes. Technology students are the largest group: a total of 23 students completed the MOTARI programme and five of them have started their degree studies. Social services and health care had the second highest number of students: out of 14 students, five continued to degree studies. (Kuosmanen 2020)

When a MOTARI student transitions to a degree programme, it is important to ensure that their study path continues in a comprehensive and, in part, personalised manner. The student has completed part of the first semester’s or first academic year’s studies in MOTARI. When the studies begin, it is important to review the personal study plan with the tutor teacher and initiate the process of identifying prior learning and prior competence acquired through work. The process of identifying prior learning is based on the study unit’s

learning outcomes. If the student already has certain knowledge or skills, they do not need to study/complete them again. This shortens the student's study path, because eliminating overlaps, accreditation and the studies in the Open University of Applied Sciences accelerate their progress. (Vihtonen 2018, 26)

Students with a vocational qualification in higher education

In the *Jatkoväylä* project, Päivi-Katriina Juutilainen and Nina Mäkelä interviewed a total of 32 university of applied sciences students across Finland who had completed a vocational qualification. Some of the interviewees had been admitted to the University of Applied Sciences Studies through the regular entrance examination process, while some had completed further route studies before applying.

The majority of those with a vocational qualification first acquire work experience and any further studies are postponed. Many of the UAS students interviewed by Juutilainen and Mäkelä said higher education had not been a clear plan or goal for them but something they had gradually decided to pursue. (Juutilainen & Mäkelä 2018, 106–110)

“For many of these students, employment and personal experiences gained while working had been powerful incentives for their contemplation on their professional future. Matters related to the quality of work were factors most

often listed as drivers of self-reflection and embarking on a new career. Examples of such matters included the lack of challenges in one's job and shift work. Maturing as an individual and growing up were also among the reasons given for pursuing further studies. Other factors motivating interviewees to pursue further studies included being disappointed with the lack of appreciation of their vocational qualification on the labour market. They also felt that further studies opened up opportunities for future career advancement. (Juutilainen & Mäkelä 2018, 110)

In the study by Juutilainen and Mäkelä, interviewees found study counselling on further studies and career provided in upper secondary vocational education and training to be theoretical and fragmented. Counselling on further studies was considered random and dependent on the study counsellor or teacher providing it. However, the study supports the importance of route studies as part of counselling on further studies on the upper secondary level: according to Juutilainen and Mäkelä, educational institutions which had participated in various development projects concerning route studies succeeded best in providing counselling on further studies. Nevertheless, counselling related to further studies was primarily counselling-oriented and provided information on the university of applied sciences studies in the field in question. (2018, 118)

More emphasis should also be placed

on the general eligibility that vocational qualifications provide for higher education, since all students or their parents are not necessarily aware of this opportunity. According to Juutilainen and Mäkelä, it had been a common conception among the students during their vocational education that the only route to higher education was through upper secondary school. In the interviews, vocational education and training was primarily considered an arena for learning a vocation and a route leading to working life. However, some of the students said they had always been aware of the opportunity to continue their studies and advance their careers in that manner. According to many interviewees, even if information concerning further studies was available during their studies, it had not resonated with them. On the other hand, further route studies that were included in the upper secondary vocational qualification seemed to spark the students' interest in university of applied sciences studies at an earlier stage, according to Juutilainen and Mäkelä. (2018, 108–111)

The experiences collected at Haa-ga-Helia on the study performance of students following the vocational route are fairly positive. Any challenges are mainly related to mathematics and languages. On the other hand, students' vocational competence is high and they are very committed (Kokko 2018, 11). As a study counsellor at LAB University of Applied Sciences, I have the same experience. Although students inter-

viewed by Juutilainen and Mäkelä were concerned about their preparedness to embark on academic studies and their competence at the beginning of their studies, they also felt that their upper secondary vocational education and training had supported them in the university of applied sciences studies. The vocational background and work experience in the sector provide a context for a better understanding of the theoretical studies. The general working life skills were also considered to be a strength. (Juutilainen & Mäkelä 2018, 116)

The central objective of the *Jatkoväylä* project was to increase the awareness of all students in upper secondary vocational education and training and their guardians concerning the further study opportunities and to guide students interested in studying at the university of applied sciences to the further route studies. On the other hand, the MOT-ARI survey and the surveys conducted in the *Jatkoväylä* project brought up the challenges faced by students in terms of time management and personal resources when the route studies were combined with studies leading to a vocational qualification. Therefore, it is worth keeping in mind that the route studies do not suit everyone and all life circumstances, even if the student was interested in higher education and had the required potential.

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Working together has helped us accomplish more

The “Neighbour – Community Living Model” project was funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), and the project period was 1 January 2018–30 April 2020. The project’s target group was adults with intellectual disabilities who live or are about to start living independently. The project was implemented by the LAB University of Applied Sciences, Päijät-Häme Joint Authority for Health and Wellbeing (PHHYKY), the profit centre of the services for the disabled of the South Karelia Social and Health Care District (Eksote), and target group representatives. The purpose was to strengthen the social inclusion and well-being of adults with intellectual disabilities, and to improve their social prerequisites of functioning by seeking personalised solutions based on the individuals’ strengths that would enable independent living, prevent marginalisation and promote inclusion.

The project consisted of three main objectives. The first objective aimed to strengthen the social inclusion of adults with intellectual disabilities and increase their opportunities to live safely

in their own homes by developing and piloting neighbour community activities. The goal was to expand the action model derived from social property management into a form of support that is better integrated with the operating environment and promotes inclusion. The second objective was to increase customer-driven activities and solution-oriented competence related to operating methods of persons working in services for the disabled. The third objective was to develop customer orientation of different actors in the service system and support for personalised solution alternatives. In addition, the project assessed the possibilities and prerequisites of digital tools in the integrating of neighbour community activities, their economic impacts and financing models, and the suitability of the action model for a scalable environment.

The development work was driven by a strong principle of inclusion – a wider concept than participation, the participation of the target group and the practical implementers, and the oppor-

tunity to develop. Being an actor and an implementer in the development work instead of just being handed down the services being developed constituted inclusion. Inclusion in activities makes it easier to recognise and understand meanings and connections between actions and to manage them (Alasoini 2010). The background was the more extensive philosophy of people's opportunity to influence decision-making concerning their own lives, living environment and the services provided to them.

Inclusive and collaborative development methods highlight the interaction between users and clients of the services, as well as between developers and experts (Pöyry-Lassila 2018). One of the premises of the UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is that persons with disabilities should have the opportunity to actively participate in decision-making processes – including those that concern them. Co-creation strengthens the customer-driven nature, impact and quality of the services (Krokkfors & Lampinen 2019). The basis of an idea behind working with clients are their needs, which makes co-creation customer driven. The activities should progress systematically, the objective and process should be defined, and the parties and persons needed in the process should be identified. During the development process, continuous feedback should be given on the impacts of development and the processing of development results, so

that motivation is maintained between the persons included in the process, and the activities continue to be productive. Different methods of co-creation help convert participants' personal, experience-based tacit knowledge into shared explicit information, which promotes learning that creates something new. The goal is to generate a shared social space of information sharing and creation for the participants, in which information is shared and new understanding is created based on conversations founded on the participants' experience. In co-creation, interaction between the participants and its facilitation are key (Pöyry-Lassila 2018).

This article discusses the inclusion and agency of residents in a neighbour community and the key results of the ESF-funded Neighbours project. Finally, it assesses the project's realisation.

Inclusion and agency of residents in the neighbour community

The social status of persons with intellectual disabilities is changing towards a state in which the objective is their full inclusion and agency (STM 2015). Employees in the services for the disabled, for their part, contribute to the transformation of persons with intellectual disabilities from a target group into actors and ensure that the persons receive guidance and support for their agency (Rasa 2015). Agency refers to activeness, a proactive approach, the ability and resources to influence one's own life, mak-

ing choices, and managing one's own life. Agency is needed for an individual to manage their own life, such as leisure time and lifestyle. Social inclusion and making life meaningful require agency (Eteläpelto et al. 2011).

Neighbour community activities were developed to promote the reali-

sation of the inclusion and agency of persons with intellectual disabilities in society and their own immediate community. The project outcome is the model of Neighbour community activities, which offers meaningful experiences to residents as part of the local community.



Figure 1. The Neighbour Community model. Photo: Ida Mäkinen

A Good Neighbour helps and considers others based on their own strengths. Authentic encounters and concrete help build a sense of community among neighbours (Ojala 2020). A Next-Door Neighbour is a person who commits to spending five hours a week with residents who have intellectual disabilities and is ready to assist them at other times as well if needed. The Next-Door Neighbour does not need to be available all the time, but they assist residents, depending on the situation and their own resources. The Next-Door Neighbour supports residents in their leisure time and in establishing social networks. The Next-Door Neighbour receives rent reduction as compensation for their participation. A Next-Door Neighbour can be a student, who also accumulates content competence and receives study credits in the intellectual disability sector for participating in the activities (Karhu 2019).

The Ilta-Olkkari service in Lahti and Ilta-Pumppu in Lappeenranta provide persons living alone with an opportunity to belong to a community, receive peer support and make friends. The Ilta-Olkkari service is run by voluntary evening counsellors trained during the Neighbour project. The evening counsellors themselves plan the content of the community activities with the participants and if necessary, receive guidance and support from the supervisor of the housing services. The Ilta-Olkkari service includes community-focused activities, such as watch-

ing films, playing indoor and outdoor games, excursions to the vicinity or singing karaoke. The Ilta-Olkkari participants and evening counsellors (client coordinators) share their experiences and receive support from each other in a number of matters and situations. They establish trust-based relationships with each other. Everyone can come as they are. Ground rules defined together are adhered to in the activities. Peer support prevents marginalisation, and the participants/clients get a sense of belonging to the community, which is important to them. The activities have been regularly assessed, and development and correction proposals have been made as needed. The content of the activities has been well aligned with the needs of the clients/participants, increasing well-being and providing a sense of inclusion. The differences between the participating residents as individuals is an asset in community activities and has highlighted various resources and strengths. Togetherness has strengthened and developed interaction between the residents and increased their self-esteem. The residents contribute to the development of activities in both the Ilta-Olkkari service and community activities. Each member of the community has an opportunity to influence the content of activities. It is important to continue to reserve time for discussing the content of activities and assessing the past period.

A need to organise leisure activities for residents of supported accommoda-

tion was also identified in Eksote. The shared premises of the centres offering daily support were too small for this purpose, but the Pumpppu activity centre completed in Lappeenranta at the turn of 2019 provided a setting for the new activities. The Ilta-Olkkari service in Lahti was used as a model, and in February 2019, the activities of the Ilta-Pumpppu open house began. Following the example of Lahti, Lappeenranta also invited persons living independently with support to first attend training and plan the activities. After that, Ilta-Pumpppu was launched, led by these client coordinators, or evening counsellors, with a supported living employee always present to provide background support. Being an Ilta-Pumpppu counsellor is included as a role in the employment of one peer counsellor, and the others are volunteers. When planning activities for each month, support and assistance have been provided by two supported accommodation employees.

The evening counsellors are highly committed to their duties, work responsibly and are interested in developing the activities, although they find planning and coming up with new topics a little difficult at times. One of the evening counsellors first felt they would not want to lead the activities right away but was soon completely immersed in them. For another, Ilta-Pumpppu was a dream come true, because they had previously lived in a town where similar activities were also available. They had wanted to find a place that was open to

all and brought people together.

Ilta-Pumpppu offers the evening counsellors an opportunity to take responsibility and assume a new kind of role in their own community. For the residents of supported accommodation in the vicinity, Ilta-Pumpppu is a place where they can spend time with others in the evenings. Despite the themes defined for the evenings, Ilta-Pumpppu is a laid-back place to spend leisure time with friends.

This is how you should enter my home

Services provided in a person's home require strong professional competence, sensitivity, empathy, the ability to be present and a resource-driven approach to work. Understanding the client's daily life is a basic skill that is complemented by the ability to encounter the client. This means that the client is approached taking their wishes and needs into consideration.

Home is a part of us. Our daily lives, our loved ones, and important objects are all closely linked to our home. The home is where we are free to be joyful, sad, happy, rambunctious, down, tired, in love, angry – to experience the full spectrum of emotions. The home is an archive of our lives. However, a home of one's own is not necessarily a given. In accordance with the Social Welfare Act, supported accommodation is organised for people who need support in living independently or who are transitioning to living independent-

ly. Supported accommodation means supporting accommodation through social counselling and other social services (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos 2019). The objective of supported accommodation is to ensure that the client can live independently in a regular apartment, location and environment.

The saying “My house, my rules” sums it all up. At home, everyone can live in peace. They are safe and can do what they want. They also have the final say in who can enter their home. A person with intellectual disabilities may not cope alone but needs assistance in everyday activities. They have the right to receive adequate assistance provided by reliable professionals. Interaction with a familiar counsellor is easy, and the counsellor also helps the person live a life of their own choosing in their own home.

When the home is where care, rehabilitation or support is provided, the providing employee enters the resident’s private space. Each professional brings their own views, values, attitudes and expectations of what a good daily life and a comfortable home are to the encounter. Dialogue-based working calls for reciprocal interaction. In an equal relationship, everyone exercises power, and mutual trust is key. Trust is not built through interaction skills alone, but by sharing experiences and being open (Seikkula & Arnkill 2009, 171–174). However, this does not justify being judgemental or trying to alter the resident’s home to the professional’s own liking.

By respecting the resident’s autonomy, we show appreciation and strengthen the resident’s sense of being an equal citizen in all situations.

At its best, a home visit is a form of work that respects the resident and has a proven impact. According to studies conducted in the USA and Finland, home visits to families with a baby have had positive impacts on the well-being of such families (Hakulinen et al. 2019). A home visit provides an opportunity to customise counselling to better meet the resident’s needs and may also help identify previously undetected support needs. Professionals working in other people’s homes say the most important aspect of their work is respecting the home of the person in question. What does this respect mean in terms of concrete action (Hakulinen et al. 2019)?

During the Neighbour project, the residents of supported accommodation in services for the disabled and their counsellors jointly prepared a set of house rules called “This is how you should enter my home”. Respect the privacy of the home by announcing your visit well in advance. This helps the resident prepare for your visit. If the visit is cancelled, it is respectful to let the resident know you won’t be able to make it. Always knock or ring the doorbell when you arrive, even if you have the keys to the apartment. In this way, you won’t frighten the resident when you enter. The home is a place of safety, and nobody wants argumentative or insensitive people there. When working in

another person's home, leave your own worries outside – always enter another person's home with good intentions.

The competence to encounter others includes the ability to openly and ethically view the life situation of the person from their perspective. It is good manners to always greet the resident and introduce yourself. When entering another person's home, always greet everyone present. It is also important to

pay attention to children and animals. A concrete way of showing respect to another person's home is to remove your shoes, even if the visit is short. An important aspect of the competence to encounter others is to focus on the present, which is why you should not use your phone during the visit. Remember that my home can look like me – do not change this.

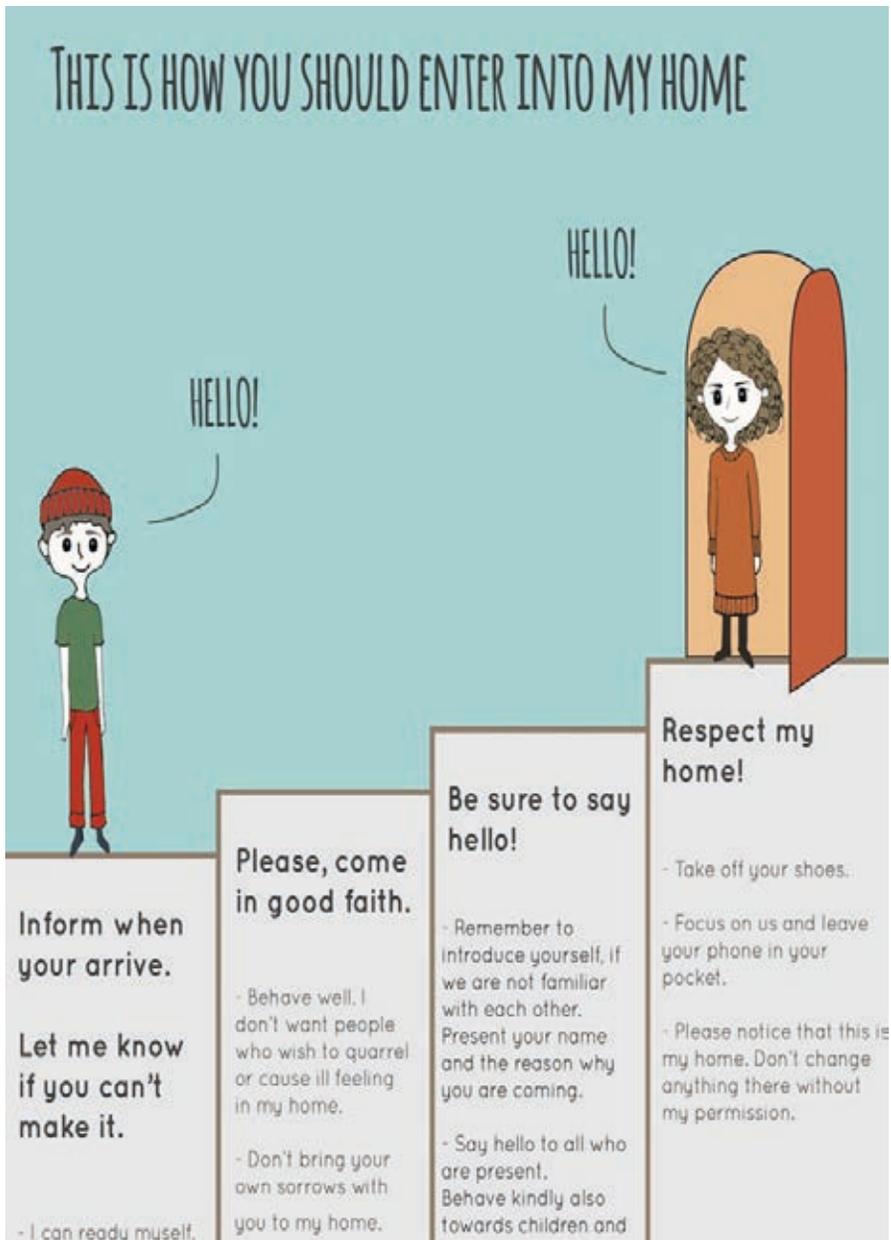


Figure 2. "This is how you should enter my home" infographic. Photo: Ida Mäkinen

Wompatti – a resource-driven tool for assessing the need for assistance

The Wompatti tool for identifying the need for resource-driven assistance (Figure 3) is intended for the self-assessment of the well-being of persons with intellectual disabilities who live independently. The tool is based on the comprehensive indicator of the well-being of the adult population in Finland, developed by Petteri Paasio and his team. One of the objectives of the project was to develop a resource-driven indicator of the need for assistance. Workshops

of process actors and experts from different provinces were organised for this purpose to work on the indicator in a step-by-step manner. Since the development of the actual indicator was a long and complex process, the project did not intend to create a validated indicator for assessing the need for assistance, but fairly soon focused on developing a tool for the self-assessment of well-being. The goal was to make visible the resources of persons with intellectual disabilities and factors that increase their well-being.

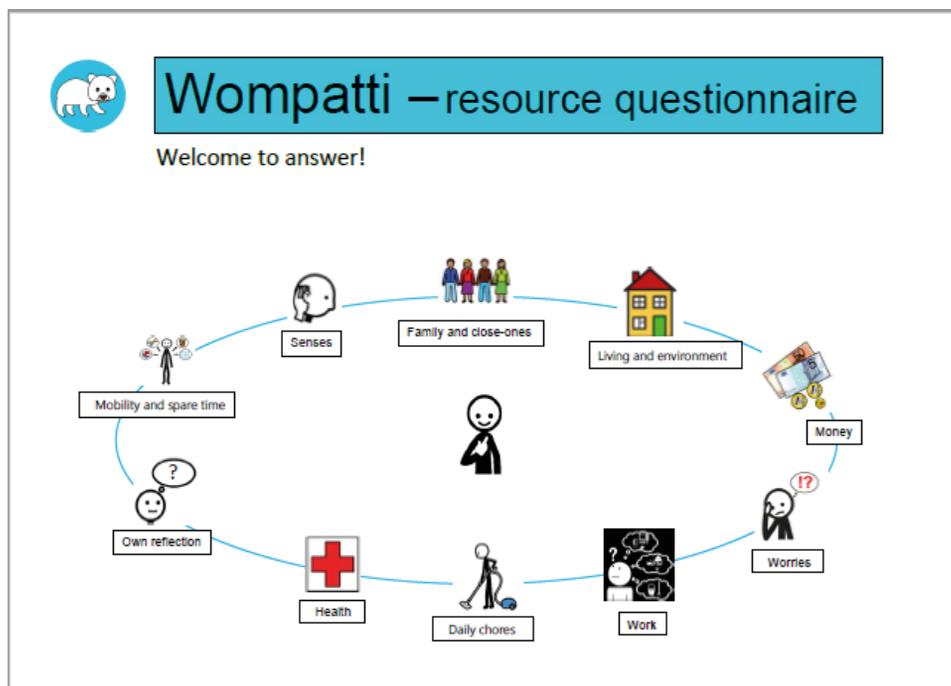


Figure 3. The home page of the Wompatti questionnaire. Photo: Ida Mäkinen

Wompatti was developed jointly with target group representatives, disabled services professionals and other stakeholders. It focuses on everyday skills and includes statements in the following areas: family and friends; living and surroundings; money matters; concerns and worries; work; everyday tasks; health; important things in my life; and exercise and leisure time. However, the assessment tool also identifies potential factors that weaken well-being, or assistance needs, which can be rapidly assessed by professionals potentially supporting the self-assessment. This makes it possible to provide individualised support to the client without delay. The impacts of support can also be evaluated by having the person retake the questionnaire after an agreed period.

A version modified in the workshops and preliminary testing was presented to the counsellors of services for the disabled of Eksote and PHHYKY in a training event. After this, the use of the tool was piloted in client work in both provinces. The tool's areas, questions and statements were elaborated on and further clarified, based on feedback provided by counsellors and clients. Based on the feedback, the Wompatti tool identified the client's resources and highlighted factors that would not have been detected otherwise. Such factors, if left undetected and in particular, unaddressed, would compromise the client's well-being.

In addition to the pilot use, the Wompatti assessment tool was tested by

university of applied sciences students during the CampusOnline study unit. One of their assignments in the online course focusing on children, adolescents or adults with intellectual disabilities as clients ("Asiakkaana kehitysvammaisen lapsi, nuori tai aikuinen") was to use the Wompatti tool to conduct an interview with a person they selected and subsequently evaluate the tool's usability. Based on a summary compiled on the assignments handed in by approximately 140 students, Wompatti is easy to use and comprehensive. Pictures complement and clarify the text and improve usability. Students also liked the feature that allowed comments to the answers to be added, and being able to complete the questionnaire gradually. According to the students' experience, Wompatti is a rapid way to obtain information on the current situation and the future outlook, as well as need for support. The subjective nature of the tool, the focus on how the person in question themselves saw their situation, was considered important. The person can become aware of which areas they need assistance in, and with which they are satisfied in their life, and the strengths of which they can be proud. Wompatti was found to be a tool that strengthened inclusion and autonomy.

Currently, the tool is being used as a hardcopy version in the services for the disabled in the Eksote and PHHYKY regions. The development of an electronic version of Wompatti was launched in the autumn of 2019, when four students

in the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Business Information Technology at the LAB University of Applied Sciences chose it as the topic of their project studies. The electronic version of the Wompatti tool is almost complete, but before implementation, certain issues need to be resolved, such as data storage and privacy protection. The intention is to offer the tool to the development team of SoteDigi Oy. SoteDigi Oy is a state-owned development company that develops and supports digital solutions at a national level for the needs of multi-sector public administration (SoteDigi Oy 2020). In the future, Wompatti could be integrated in the Omaolo service. Omaolo is a nationwide digital service that helps assess the need for care or service (Omaolo 2020).

Overall assessment of the project

Assessment and impact are integral parts of structural social work, which examines and develops complex matters. Among the starting points of this project was the systematic production of information that serves social practices, is experimental, reflective and focuses on problems and solutions, as well as an increase in the opportunities of a person with intellectual disabilities to participate in the planning and development of the services they use. In such an investigative and development-oriented operating method, various parties, like users and providers of services, as well as project specialists, align their inter-

ests on the basis of respect for the special nature and competence of different parties.

The assessment of the project was carried out through regular interim assessments, in which the parties' own actions and the realisation of the project objectives were evaluated against the project plan and the feedback collected from the groups of actors. In addition, the project was assessed by means of LAB's project assessment and monitoring tool (the Repotronic's project traffic lights). At the end of the project, a comprehensive evaluation was carried out by applying the Suunta tool of the Terveyden edistäminen keskus centre for health promotion (Nikula 2011). In addition, the Neighbour community model has been evaluated as part of the Coordination Project for the Promotion of Social Inclusion - the joint Inclusion Pieces of the Socra and ESF specific objective 5 (Social inclusion and combating poverty) projects.

Feedback from the steering group and quantitative monitoring data

The project was considered ground breaking by the steering group. The expectations of the project were initially high, and the project team was deemed to have exceeded the expectations. The inclusion of the target group in the benchmarking trip abroad was applauded. It was deemed that inclusion had been realised, and the message from the steering group had been

deployed in action. The project was considered to genuinely include clients and develop activities for actual needs, and not just in theory. The activities related to the theme of the project were found to be worth continuing in a new project that is to be implemented at a national level.

All of the numerical targets were met in the project. Actually, the numerical targets set in the project for the realisation of the project- and programme-level outcomes were exceeded; for exam-

ple, the number of participants was exceeded by 65 per cent. The number of participants who started in the project was nearly 100, whereas the target had been 57. The target for the supervision and consultation days had been 152, and it was exceeded by 16 per cent, amounting to 176 days. In accordance with the objective, a total of five enterprises and two other organisations (a joint municipal authority and a parish) participated in the project.



Figure 4. The completion of the final seminar in the Neighbour project.
Photo: Henri Uotila

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**PART 3:
HEALTH PROMOTION
AND SMART SELF-CARE**

**Annamaija Id-Korhonen, Heli Oksanen,
Eija Viitala**

Digitalisation in social services and health care – increasing competence through flexible online studies

The purpose of this article is to provide the social services and healthcare sector with examples of how the increased availability of open learning materials through digitalisation supports learning and competence development. In the social services and healthcare sector, professionals face increased competence requirements due to the digitalisation of part of the services offered, and the implementation of new knowledge-based management methods and technology that supports wellbeing. Education and competence development also increasingly apply digital methods, the mastering of which requires in-depth study and learning new skills. The development of digital services may even change our interpretation of learning. This article describes the production and piloting of open digital learning materials – MOOC study units – in electronic services and knowledge-based management for the DigiCampus learning environment in

the SotePeda 24/7 project.

The SotePeda 24/7 project

The SotePeda 24/7 project, funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture, began in the spring of 2018 and will end at the end of 2020. The project is being coordinated by Laurea University of Applied Sciences. The project participants are 23 Finnish institutes of higher education and an extensive cooperation network in the social services and healthcare sector.

The project objectives are

- to strengthen the competence of teachers, students and professionals in different fields in the use, management and development of digital services and structures in the social services and healthcare sector

- to create an ethical operating model for the digital world in social services and health care
- to define the digital competence in the social services and healthcare sector
- to create a flexible, digital Living Lab learning environment
- to develop pedagogical solutions and models for strengthening multidisciplinary digital competence in social services and health care.



Picture 1. The logo of project Sotepeda 24/7

The spring of 2020 will be remembered for its exceptional circumstances, including the restrictions imposed on teaching arrangements. The quick

transfer to remote teaching in mid-March challenged institutes of higher education and their employees to adjust all of their instruction to enable it to be provided through digital channels. The SotePeda 24/7 project was already in the process of producing open digital materials, but these plans were changed. The increased demand for digital teaching materials was addressed by providing study materials online in the form of MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) study units more rapidly than originally planned. The goal of the project was to pilot several MOOC study units during the spring and summer of 2020, but now they were produced on an accelerated schedule for piloting.

For example, approximately 370 micro study modules have been produced in the project so far. They are pedagogically meaningful modules that are short in duration and contain a maximum of one learning outcome. Examples include an information package, set of assignments, a video, an image or a podcast, and a possible assessment. The micro modules are available for teachers in the teacher network to use as part of their instruction. The project has also produced 23 MOOCs with a scope of 1–3 credits. They are study units that are provided fully online, openly available and intended for independent study. The first study units' pilots will be available during the spring and summer of 2020.

The digitalisation of social services and healthcare sector challenges learning to a new level

The continuous transformation of working life is challenging universities of applied sciences to develop their operating methods in the education of future professionals. Information and communication technologies change rapidly, as does a person's role as a processor of information and a learner. With regard to access to information, the position of clients and professionals is increasingly the same. New information is available to everyone, but accessing it requires competence. Developing services is no longer a task only for professionals. It is multidisciplinary, and clients and municipalities' residents also want to participate in it (Honkanen & Veijola 2015).

The development of social services and health care, as well as management, calls for researched information and knowledge-based management. The range of services is expanded by continuing to develop digital and remote services with the goal of improving their accessibility (Valtioneuvosto 2019). The "eHealth and eSocial Strategy 2020" (2014) supports the social services and healthcare renewal and citizen's active role in maintaining their wellbeing, which are promoted by improving the management of information and increasing electronic services. The objective is to make social services and healthcare information readily accessible and refine it into knowledge that will help to both develop the service

system and promote the maintenance of wellbeing by individuals (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö 2014).

According to the "Vision for higher education and research in 2030" prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2018), flexible and individual study paths and degrees will enable continuous learning in different stages of life and in different situations. Digital services and open learning environments renew teaching and learning, as well as institutes of higher education. They also offer new channels for competence development. Finnish institutes of higher education already contain some of the best study environments in the world, and education is developed in a student-centred manner.

The expansion of learning networks makes it possible for teachers and students to learn in different environments. Lavonen et al. (2014) discuss an innovative school, where the physical learning environments include both physical and virtual environments for learning to take place. In addition, they bring up shared leadership in which teamwork plays a role. Technology is applied in them in a diverse manner. According to Fullan (2016), collaboration between students and teachers is an important factor in future education.

The learning network also includes various digital networks that integrate blogs, wikis, social media and online videos in teaching. The potential benefits that information technology provides in the maintenance of the networks ena-

ble increased interaction, more versatile teaching, and demonstration of the topics being taught. Learning networks can apply online teaching, which will provide students with new insights and ways to learn, thus promoting learning. (Basiel & Sutton 2014)

The programme of Sanna Marin's (2019) government encourages institutes of higher education to extend their education offering beyond degree students, as well as to organise education in cooperation with other institutes of higher education. In accordance with the government programme, information systems are also developed to support flexible study in different institutes of higher education. (Valtioneuvo 2019)

Online studies as part of higher education

When the learning environment is expanded beyond the educational institution both physically and through information and communications technology, we speak of digital learning environments. Online learning is becoming increasingly common in social services and healthcare education, even in online degrees. Online learning as part of education can be as effective as regular contact teaching. (Koch 2014)

Online learning offers interesting and engaging learning activities. The motivation of a committed learner improves, which influences the quality of learning. Online studies also enable the learner to apply their personal learning

style, resulting in a customised learning process. Students can choose from a variety of different learning paths to meet the objectives of the curriculum without restrictions in time and location. The possibility to use various devices, such as a laptop, tablet or mobile phone, also increases study flexibility. A wireless connection makes studying possible anywhere and learning more global. Automatic assessment tools and online feedback surveys allow for real-time monitoring of students' progress. A teacher can easily spot the differences between the students in terms of their progress and react quickly to contact students who might otherwise drop out. (Yaron 2017)

Developing online studies on the national DigiCampus Moodle platform

The collaborative development of study materials by different universities of applied sciences was kicked off in work package 3 of the SotePeda project by defining the concepts of and competence needs concerning electronic services in the social and healthcare sector and knowledge-based management. The theoretical background was studied and the goals to be set for EQF level 6 (<https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/content/descriptors-page>) learners in the online studies were defined. The next step was to design the content and pedagogy of the MOOC study units to be provided in electronic services and knowledge-based management.



Picture 2. The online course “Digital flow in the services of social and health”

Work package 3 of the SotePeda project produced a new, 5-credit study unit “Digi virtaa sosiaali- ja terveysalan palveluihin” concerning the digitalisation of the social services and healthcare sector as a collaboration of four universities of applied sciences for the national Digi-Campus platform (digicampus.fi). The content of the study unit included electronic services for the social services and healthcare sector, the provision of guidance for users of the services, and data protection and information security in electronic services. The objective of the study unit was to increase competence in digital services that expanded the service range, and in knowledge-based management in the social services and healthcare sector. LAB University of Applied Sciences, Oulu University of Applied Sciences, Tampere University of Applied Sciences and the Universi-

ty of Eastern Finland were involved in the development cooperation between organisations.

The online studies were designed using the ABC model (UCL 2020). This approach offers a visual learning storyboard. The model serves as a co-creation tool for teachers designing the same study unit and offers the teacher an opportunity to view the study unit from a student’s perspective. The design uses cards that depict the learning types. On the back of the cards, there are suggestions for how a certain learning type can be realised in contact teaching or online. The learning types in the cards are acquisition, production, collaboration, discussion, practice and investigation. (Marstio 2020)

A collaborative approach to learning

The continuous transformation of working life is challenging universities of applied sciences to develop their operating methods in the education of future professionals. Information and communication technologies change rapidly, as does a person’s role as a processor of information and a learner. With regard to access to information, the position of clients and professionals is increasingly the same. New information is available to everyone but to access to it requires competence. Developing services is no longer a task for professionals only. It is multidisciplinary, and clients and municipalities’ residents also want to participate in it (Honkanen & Veijola 2015).

Professionals should be able to listen to the feedback and wishes of clients with regard to the use of digital services and select the services that suit each individual client (Hyppönen et al. 2018).

A collaborative approach to learning means a shift from an individualistic, monological philosophy to collaborative work and concrete development targets. An essential aspect of the collaborative approach to learning is that technology has created and will increasingly create new and more flexible tools for working on common targets and processes on a long-term and diverse basis. “Collaborative” refers to how the outcomes to be developed jointly convey the connection between the designers and users through the activities of an individual and a group. (Paavola 2012)

Piloting the online study unit developed collaboratively by institutes of higher education

The collaboratively produced “Digi virtaa sosiaali- ja terveystalvluihin” 5-credit online study unit was first piloted in the form of summer studies provided online for university of applied sciences students and workplace professionals in 2019. The study unit was marketed through the CampusOnline portal, which is where the University of Applied Sciences Students enrolled in the study unit. Workplace professionals in the social services and healthcare sector were engaged via the designers’ own workplace networks. They enrolled through the open university of applied

sciences system. Feedback was requested on the study units produced, and applied to develop the study unit to better meet the needs of the students and workplace professionals. In the first pilot’s online studies, provided as summer studies, the students worked interactively online in small groups. Some of the assignments were completed individually, while others required work in pairs or groups. The students formed the groups by independently joining a new group at the beginning of the study unit. The templates for each group to establish their shared discussion platform were already available. Each of the three different sections of the online study unit were scheduled over a period of 3–4 weeks, from the beginning of May until mid-July. A total of 29 students enrolled in the online study unit, 14 of whom were university of applied sciences students and 15 were workplace professionals. Eleven of the students passed the online study unit.

In the “Flexible digital services of social and health care” section, the students prepared an independent orientation assignment based on the materials provided and uploaded it to the discussion platform. In this section, the students also produced a video on an electronic guidance situation which included the provision of background information concerning the client, the guidance tool and the guidance provided. The video was also shared through the discussion platform. In the “Citizen using digital tools” section, the students

produced a mind map based on the client case concerning digital services that they would provide for the client in question. The students also uploaded the mind map to the discussion area and provided their comments on the services provided in the client case. In the “Data security in online services” section, the students familiarised themselves independently with the materials provided. The groupwork included a client case for which the students provided solutions on the basis of the materials and uploaded them to the discussion area. The group also produced a blog text within the study unit presenting the solution found for the client case in question. Although the students did not know each other beforehand, working in groups functioned well.

Assessment of the development of competence in the “Digi virtaa sosiaali- ja terveystalvluihin” study unit

The development of the participants' competence in the study unit was assessed by a questionnaire. The objective of the study unit was to develop the participants' competence in the use of electronic social and healthcare services, the provision of guidance to users of electronic services, and data protection and information security. The competence of the University Applied Sciences Students and professionals in the social services and healthcare sector was assessed at the beginning and at the end of the study unit. The materials

were collected through a questionnaire in the summer of 2019, when the online course was included in the study selection. The initial questionnaire was answered by 19 and the final questionnaire by 9 course participants. Data was analysed statistically using frequency distributions. Based on the responses received, the competence of the course participants had improved in all the study unit's three sections. Due to the small sampling size, the survey results can be considered indicative. The survey results reinforce earlier impressions according to which training in electronic services should be part of vocational social services and healthcare education. The training should also be offered to workplace professionals as continuing education. (Haukirkaura & Ikonen 2019.)

Student feedback and further development

According to the feedback provided on the “Digi virtaa sosiaali- ja terveystalvluihin” online study unit offered in the summer of 2019, students would like to be able to proceed in the online studies independently and at their own pace. According to the workplace professionals who took part in the pilot, breaking the study unit down into smaller entities would make it easier to balance the studies with work and allow the smaller entities to be completed to a faster schedule than the entire 5-credit study unit. This resulted in breaking the study unit down into MOOC study units with a scope of 1–3 credits, each

assessed automatically, in the national DigiCampus environment. In accordance with the collaborative learning approach, the study unit is then monological. The interactive aspect of the online studies was abandoned, and the nature of learning changed, because the study unit no longer included fruit-

ful discussions and group assignments supporting learning. However, university of applied sciences teachers can still integrate the MOOC modules in their own study unit and expand them by adding interactive elements, practical applications and development assignments that benefit working life.

Digitalisation in social services and health care – increasing competence through flexible online studies

Digital services of social and health	Knowledge based management
Flexible digital services of social and health care 2 ECTS	Basics of knowledge based management 3 ECTS
Citizen using digital services 1 ECTS	Evidence based data in health services 1 ECTS
Data security in online services 2 ECTS	Re-use of data in health care 1 ECTS

Table 1. The MOOCs produced in work package 3

The online “Digi virtaa sosiaali- ja terveystalvluhin” study unit, piloted in 2019, was broken down into small separate MOOC units, which will be piloted as summer studies in the DigiCampus platform in 2020. At the time of writing, the piloting is still in progress. In the spring of 2020, three additional new MOOC-type study units were produced jointly by four universities of applied

sciences to be included in the 5-credit knowledge-based management module in the DigiCampus platform. These automatically assessed MOOC-type study units were made available to students nationwide through the CampusOnline platform. Some of these study units were released a month early, because the coronavirus pandemic of the spring of 2020 and the subsequent can-

cellation of the students' work placement periods created pressure to offer online studies more extensively. Some of the study units will be translated into English in the autumn of 2020.

The MOOC study units produced in work package 3 of the SotePeda 24/7 project are assessed automatically, which is why no designated teacher resources are required at the end of the project. However, these MOOC studies do require a "home university" when offered to students. This ensures that the credits earned in a passed MOOC study unit are entered in the student's study register or the study register of an open UAS student. For university of applied sciences students, the credits are transferred from the CampusOnline portal to the study register system of their respective university of applied sciences through the Puro service <https://puro.joopas.fi/puro>. An agreement is being prepared in the SotePeda 24/7 project that will ensure that future study materials produced in the project through co-creation will be available to students as part of the online studies offered by universities of applied sciences. In accordance with the agreement, the universities of applied sciences that produced MOOC studies in the SotePeda 24/7 project will provide these MOOC studies nationally via the CampusOnline portal, for example, with each institution taking turns offering the MOOC study unit (e.g. annually).

The plan is to break the study units down into even smaller entities (micro

modules), which consist of the study unit materials, videos, or assignments. A teacher in an institute of higher education can integrate these micro modules into their own study unit (open educational resources). In addition, the goal is to translate some of the study units into English in the autumn of 2020. Open educational materials refer to materials intended for teaching and learning published by their author for open availability (Avointen oppimateriaalien käytön edistäminen 2020). The micro modules produced in the project are available on DigiCampus (www.digicampus.fi) under the SotePeda 24/7 project learning materials. The national DigiCampus Moodle platform used in the pilot was established through project work, and the opportunities to continue the operation of the platform as a joint service provided by universities of applied sciences were investigated in the summer of 2020. Some of the micro modules have been and will continue to be collected in the library of open study materials, provided by the Finnish National Agency for Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture, at AOE.fi. The materials will continue to be available in this library after the project ends. Teachers can copy micro modules' study materials from the library to their own online learning platforms and integrate them in their own study modules. As a rule, the materials on the AOE.fi site are openly available.

The importance of metadata has been highlighted because material

has been added to the open platform available to everyone. Metadata refers to information on the content author or authors, for example. The author has the copyright to the materials they produce. An agreement is being prepared on the use of the materials after the SotePeda 24/7 project ends that will also assign the authors the responsibility to update the materials they produced. All materials produced in the SotePeda 24/7 project have been licensed with the CC BY-SA 4.0 (Attribution-ShareAlike) licence.

Conclusions

The co-creation of online studies with the representatives of different institutions of higher education in the SotePeda 24/7 project has been an interesting journey. The studies have been produced through co-creation methods on the national DigiCampus Moodle platform and offered to the students of every university of applied sciences in Finland. Using the ABC Learning Design model in co-creation offered a student-centric design approach and a concrete tool for planning the learning assignments. According to the preliminary information, the collaborative and interactive online course increased the online study competence of both the University of Applied Sciences Students and the workplace professionals. An interactive online study unit always

requires the participation of a teacher. The teachers' contribution to the "Digi virtaa sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden" online course was to design the assignments and materials, and assess the students. Guidance was provided via e-mail on request. The student's schedule was guided by the online platform guidelines concerning progress. There were no face-to-face meetings with the teacher. The design and implementation of the automatically functioning MOODLE studies expanded staff's own view of the pedagogy of online studies and helped them understand the benefits provided by the studies' automated assessment. What was also learned was that using an online learning platform required highly meticulous planning of the materials and diverse learning assignments, as well as teaching technology competence, if the assessment was to function as planned, and the student was to find the study unit interesting. The MOOC-type implementation that made the provision of a flexible learning environment for students possible has helped teaching staff examine their own pedagogical foundations and especially the importance of interaction in the learning process. A dialogue between students, teachers and workplace professionals enriches the learning process and will hopefully continue to be part of higher education in future.

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Anna Lahti, Jukka Karjalainen

Possibilities of machine vision technology in the social services, healthcare and wellbeing sectors

Artificial intelligence and the possibilities it offers, have been topics of discussion for long time. There is debate about its potential and what threats are seen in its development. Artificial intelligence is a broad concept, and it can be approached from the perspective of several disciplines. In future, applications that use artificial intelligence will increasingly assist us in common everyday tasks the promotion of wellbeing and the prevention of illnesses. Artificial intelligence is also considered to change how we work. To a considerable extent, it has already done so, because a machine can perform many routine activities more quickly and with fewer errors than humans.

Machine vision is part of artificial intelligence and refers to analysing and interpreting data contained in an image based on predefined information. For machine vision to function reliably and to seamlessly meet the requirements set for it, we must teach a computer what we expect the computer-camera combination to find from an x-ray image, for example. Machine vision can

identify shapes, colours, movement and temperatures and has long been used to identify objects in industry, among other things (Neittaanmäki et al. 2019; Ailisto et al. 2018).

Finland has a long track record of machine vision research, and the expected future applications of machine vision include assisting the human eye in medical diagnostics, for example. Its possibilities in analysing the meaning of emotions and of facial expressions have also raised to interest. The desired impacts of artificial intelligence include improving the sense of security and the quality of services. For example, a machine can provide a preliminary assessment of a fracture in spinal column, but before doing so, it must learn to identify, among other things, a certain type of a spinal fracture visible only in a specific x-ray image projection from among thousands of images. For the time being, machine vision can only provide decision support for physicians in a scenario like this, and the final decision concerning the line of treatment will be determined by a physician. Ar-

tificial intelligence can also be used to develop healthcare service processes by extracting the required data from medical records, among other things. (Pietikäinen & Silven 2019, 127–138)

Machine vision can help achieve better treatment outcomes in tasks which a computer performs more accurately and quickly than a human. Measuring haemorrhage during surgery is a key aspect of the successful care of a surgical patient. Currently, surgical haemorrhaging is measured visually by using the scale in the container where the blood is collected with a suction device. Yet the volume measured in this manner only tells part of the truth, because some of the blood is absorbed by the drapes used in the surgical area. A traditional method of measuring the volume of blood absorbed by the drapes is to weigh them with scales, although this method is used rarely.

A machine vision application has been developed for monitoring and measuring haemorrhaging during surgery. It measures the volume of blood in the surgical drapes by using machine vision. To use this method, a surgical staff member must unfold the drape used in the surgery and allow a camera to “see” the volume of blood in the drape. The method is based on light transmittance and the feedback it provides.

Machine vision technology in the social services, healthcare and wellbeing sectors

The purpose of the “Innovative Machine Vision Solutions in the wellbeing and healthcare sector” project that kicked off at LAB University of Applied Sciences in the autumn of 2019 is to encourage companies in the social services, healthcare and wellbeing sectors, as well as the public and third sectors, to pilot and develop solutions based on machine vision technology. The objective is to support companies in the development of new business models and internationalisation. The project creates a development environment based on machine vision technology that serves stakeholders in the Päijät-Häme region on a multidisciplinary basis and enables the production and sharing of usage and experience data related to machine vision applications, as well as the development and marketing of new solutions.

The “Innovative Machine Vision Solutions” project supports the regional promotion of wellbeing and health in Päijät-Häme and the related business competence. It also shares information about and the competence related to the possibilities of machine vision technology in the social services, healthcare and wellbeing sectors. Machine vision technology can be one of the options to address the challenges related to the age structure of the population and the changes taking place in the dependency ratio in the future. Technology

based on machine vision can also be used for routine tasks, enabling healthcare personnel to spend more of their working time on customer and patient encounters.

The application of technology based on machine vision is still used moderately in the social services, healthcare and wellbeing sectors in the Päijät-Häme region. A medication dispenser robot can help provide comprehensive assistance to a customer living at home, and camera technology is available for detecting motion and preventing falls. The hospital pharmacy in the Päijät-Häme Central Hospital uses automation based on machine vision in the medication storage and retrieval system. In addition, several automated guided vehicles are being used internally to transport supplies and food, among other things, to wards in the hospital.

Experiences of using machine vision technology in the social services and healthcare sector in Päijät-Häme

The competence and customer needs survey carried out in the “Innovative Machine Vision Solutions” project revealed that regional machine vision technology competence is minimal in companies in the social services, healthcare and wellbeing sectors. The survey, conducted in November 2019, received responses from 13 companies operating in the Päijät-Häme region. In addition, the competence need was mapped in two workshops that were held in the

project in the spring of 2020. The majority (77%) of the companies that took part in the survey did not use any machine vision technology applications or devices, and felt they lacked sufficient machine vision technology competence. The technology that companies reported as being used included devices related to security technology, such as door alarms and safety bracelets, as well as wellbeing technology related to heart rate monitoring and heart rate variability.

The majority of respondents also did not identify (54%) or could not define (38%) development needs with regard to machine vision technology, although a need to develop smart technological solutions was identified. The development needs defined included systems related to customer calls and motion detection, among other things. Nearly half the respondents (46%) believed that artificial intelligence would change their job descriptions in the future.

In the interviews, companies raised the need to comprehensively receive information on technological devices, as well as their usage possibilities and applications. Respondents found the development cooperation with the university of applied sciences important in terms of data management and the development of the companies’ operations. Expertise in the application of machine vision technology to meet the organisations’ needs was considered important and significant from the perspective of the quality of

care and customer-centred operations as well. The interviews also highlighted the goal of small enterprises to operate cost-effectively and the importance of the development cooperation related to such operations.

Changes identified in the competence needs in the social services and healthcare sector in the future include the use of various digital solutions and platforms. The importance of the competence needed to use robotics, increase and guide customers' digital skills and implement services is also increasing (Leveälahti et al. 2019). The results of the survey conducted in the project confirm that development and competence needs related to machine vision solutions should be addressed more intensively in the social services, healthcare and wellbeing sectors.

The survey and discussions conducted in the project highlighted three significant factors: 1. Strengthening the competence-related machine vision technology could alleviate the apprehension people feel about using the technology and devices. 2. Collecting fragmented data on one platform

makes it possible for companies to develop customer-centred operating models and offers an opportunity to test devices and applications in a flexible manner. 3. Development cooperation with the university of applied sciences enables agile product development in each stage of a product's development.

Machine vision technology applications

At the beginning of 2020, the "Innovative Machine Vision Solutions" project held three workshops with the goal of determining in greater detail the kind of machine vision technology experience there is in the region and of addressing the emerging challenges in a multidisciplinary manner. Several areas in which machine vision can be applied were identified in the workshops and interviews held in the "Innovative Machine Vision Solutions in the wellbeing and healthcare sector" project. Below are a few examples to which machine vision can be applied and project has started to build some prototypes around these areas.

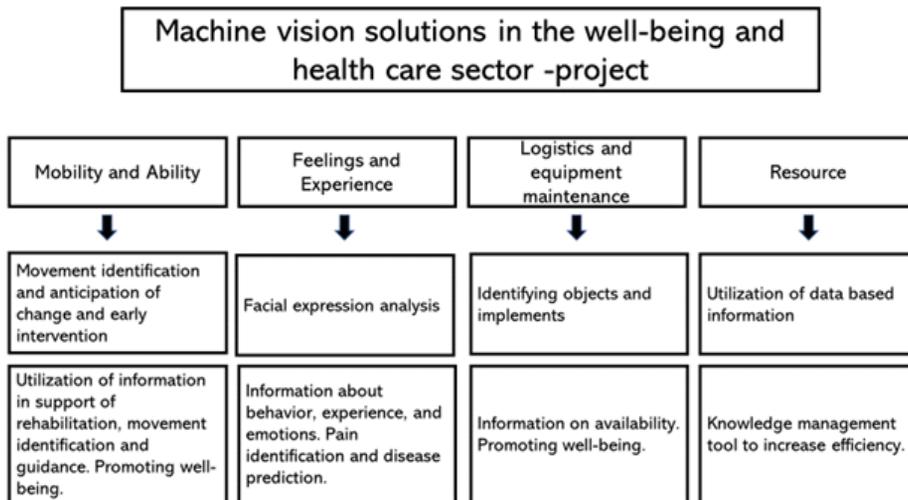


Figure 1. Application areas identified in the “Innovative Machine Vision Solutions in the wellbeing and healthcare sector” project. Image: Anna Lahti

Mobility and ability

The report by Parliament’s Committee for the Future (Linturi & Kuusi 2018, 136–137) lists radical technologies for reforming operating models. The report also assesses values related to the maintenance of a person’s ability to function, the related costs and the resulting benefits for society. The most important values include matters related to a good quality of life, an active old age and awareness. It is forecast that in future, people whose ability to function is compromised could have a personal artificial intelligence assistant that monitors the functioning of their body and

mobility, as well as detecting hazards and anticipating incidents. According to Kaasalainen & Neittaanmäki (2018), changes in an elderly person’s ability to function could be prevented by means of activities that increase mobility like exercises aiming to prevent falls.

Human Activity Recording (HAR) is a method that helps monitor a person’s mobility indoors in particular, and any deviations in it. In its simplest form, machine vision can indicate when a person has been immobile for an extended period or has fallen in their residence, for example. In such a case, the system connected to a camera can send an alert to

a homecare provider, who can then call for additional help for the person.

A more advanced version of the application can tell if any changes have taken or are taking place in the person's mobility which could anticipate a potential fall. This information helps care personnel to allocate resources for the customer in question. This type of preventive technology generates considerable financial savings and above all

prevents human suffering. (Colantonio et al. 2018)

The "Innovative Machine Vision Solutions" project examines how machine vision can be applied in rehabilitating customers, and identifying and directing mobility. Changes in mobility can be anticipated, and this information can be used in the promotion of wellbeing and health.



Figure 2. Machine vision in rehabilitation and motion analysis. Image: Ville Teräväinen

Emotions and experience

A person's facial expressions can reveal at least seven different emotions (neutral, joyful, sad, surprised, angry, fearful and disgusted), and machine vision is being taught to identify these emotions. Facial expressions showing emotion are important in communication between people. The face can also be used to make conclusions concerning matters related to health such as pain or illnesses. However, machine vision can be used to interpret involuntary micro expressions and even heartbeat from a person's face. (Pietikäinen & Silven 2019, 148–150)

Some commercial applications are available on the market that are claimed to reliably detect customers' emotional states by imaging their facial expressions. The use of technology aims to obtain reliable data on matters concerning customer satisfaction, which will help improve the customer experience.

Facial Expression Recognition (FER) technology has proven very accurate in optimal, or laboratory, conditions: a computer recognises up to 97% of facial expressions correctly. However, this requires optimal lighting and the correct angle of the face to the camera. In settings outside a laboratory where lighting and other ambient conditions are not necessarily consistent, the accuracy may drop to 50%. This means that the computer can no longer tell whether a person's facial expressions indicate joy or sadness (Najmeh et al. 2019).

In their article, Najmeh et al. (2019)

report how the inaccuracy described above can be a source of criticism concerning facial expression recognition by artificial intelligence. The technology used for facial expression recognition is not yet sufficiently accurate to function reliably, because the differences between individuals in expressing emotions are simply too extensive for machine vision. The technology cannot therefore be fully trusted at this stage, and this poses a considerable ethical dilemma if, for example, facial expression recognition is used to expose a person who has committed an insurance fraud. An enormous volume of data – in practice, a large number of different people and their facial expressions – is needed to bring machine vision technology to a reliable level for the automatic recognition of facial expressions outside laboratory settings.

However, combining different sensors can improve accuracy considerably, although harnessing sensors for commercial use is still impractical, because using them involves attaching various electrodes to the skin (Najmeh et al. 2019).

Machine vision can provide information on our behaviour, experiences and emotions. The “Innovative Machine Vision Solutions” project is interested in developing a facial expression analysis that can improve the quality of customer experience, detect pain and anticipate illnesses.

Logistics and instrument maintenance

Machine vision has long been used in industrial sorting functions and quality control such as the inspection of wood surfaces and the related quality classification. In robotics, machine vision has been used in material handling and sorting tasks. Machine vision also assists in conditions that are dangerous or unpleasant for people. (Pietikäinen & Silven 2019, 155–157)

Monitoring medical instruments and the related logistics is a complex process in which people are key. An instrument goes through a cycle in which it is exposed to the same daily routines year after year, from the sterilisation process

to surgery and back to the sterilisation process. The primary method of monitoring the logistics of the instruments is manual, but the process involves steps in which machine vision could be faster and more resilient than the human eye.

The “Innovative Machine Vision Solutions” project aims to discover whether machine vision can be applied when determining the availability of instruments and supplies, as well as in demand forecasting in the social services, healthcare and wellbeing sectors. In hospitals, methods used in the industry can be applied in the sorting of surgical instruments in instrument maintenance, for example.

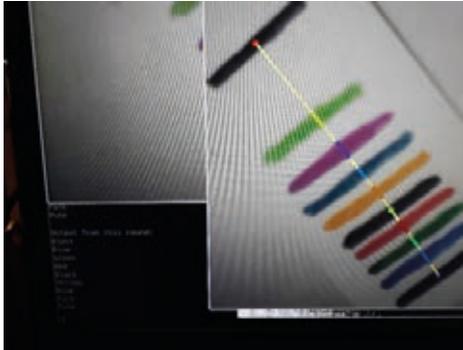


Figure 3. Machine vision identifying objects and implements. Photo: Jan-Erik Sandelin

Resource allocation

Machine vision can be applied to challenges related to management and resource allocation in organisations. Artificial intelligence can increase productivity, and information based on various types of data can be used in decision making. Applying technologies based on artificial intelligence should be part of the strategy in companies, and in addition to the management, other experts from operating processes, information systems and the customer interface should be engaged. This would allow for the systematic applica-

tion of artificial intelligence in the more extensive digitalisation programme of companies (Allisto et al. 2018).

According to Neittaanmäki et al. (2019), increased use of smart technology and an improved service system will make working time more efficient, resulting in cost savings of up to 4 billion euros in social services and healthcare in the coming decade. It is estimated that 15% of indirect nursing tasks can be replaced by robotics, whereas the share of replaceable direct nursing tasks is approximately 5% (Figure 4).

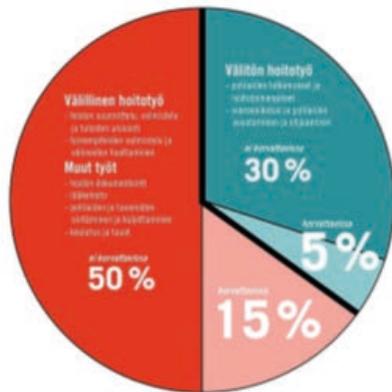


Figure 4. Estimated share of tasks replaceable by technology (Neittaanmäki et al. 2019, 174).

The “Innovative Machine Vision Solutions” project focuses on the application of data provided by machine vision in management and decision making. Machine vision can be applied in the planning of services and care being provided for customers by using it to obtain information on nutrition and mobility.

Further plans

There is a place for machine vision applications in the social services and healthcare sector, and in the promotion of wellbeing. However, multidisciplinary competence is needed, and existing good examples should be boldly implemented for piloting and testing purposes. The “Innovative Machine Vision Solutions” project challenges companies to consider solutions based on machine

vision. However, it is not enough to simply implement machine vision technology. Stakeholders should ponder how to build processes in a customer-centred manner while taking technology into consideration.

The development environment being created in the project will provide a multidisciplinary method for serving companies based on their needs. This will highlight the role of the University of Applied Sciences as a project partner. The project enables bold and fast pilots and applied research in the context of machine vision. However, all development must take into consideration the directives of the European Commission, as well as ethical and social perspectives.

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Pirjo Tuusjärvi

Modelling the operation of a wellbeing technology testbed in the HyTeLab project

Introduction

The modern world is in constant change, driven by global megatrends that impact business, economy, society, culture and people's personal lives. However, as has been noted in several articles and reports, technological development is one of the most fundamental and influential drivers of change in the 21st century. It is changing production methods and operating models and affecting all companies and markets. (Cleverby 2020; Dufva 2020; Zeev 2017)

Technological developments are also significantly affecting healthcare, and this development will continue to evolve dramatically in the future (Haughom 2014). Technologies and digitalization are creating new opportunities to develop new products and services. New applications and technologies that improve the quality of health care and increase its efficiency are being adopted quickly. There are many forces driving the need for innovation, with advances in, for example, artificial intelligence, VR/AR or 3D printing (Meskó 2020; Haughom 2014; Thimbleby 2013). Thus, the future of health care works together

with technology developments. (Meskó 2020; Haughom 2014)

When we talk about new technologies or technological development in the field of healthcare, it is important to define the context or purpose for which they are developed. Are they medical devices for medical use only and intended to maintain life, such as disease prevention, diagnosis, treatment or monitoring? Examples include monitoring equipment, and X-ray radiographic equipment, medical equipment, surgical instruments, dental equipment and instruments, in-vitro diagnostic equipment and reagents, information technology and the communications industry (Ståhlberg 2015).

On the other hand, are they technological solutions that promote and support the health and wellbeing of individuals and their daily survival? These include a variety of digital and technical solutions and applications that monitor, maintain or improve human performance, health, wellbeing, quality of life or independent performance.

That means assistive and security technology, communication and infor-

mation technology, social technology, robotics etc., which are not intended for primary medical use (Ahtiainen & Auranne 2007). In this article, wellbeing technology is understood and discussed according to Ahtiainen and Auranne (2007).

The importance of user-driven design in testbeds and authentic user environments

There are challenges in implementing and deploying new technological solutions in the field of wellbeing. As technological opportunities increase, the problem is whether wellbeing products or services are user-driven or usable in the very activities in which they are sought to be deployed. Unfortunately, often in product and service design and development processes, the customer or user and their needs are not involved in the process (Raappana & Melkas 2009). The development of technological solutions for wellbeing requires cooperation between the private and public sectors, as well as user-centric development.

In connection with development work, companies may have difficulties finding a multidisciplinary development platform for testing or co-developing applications or products, collecting user data, or using service design to develop a product or service. In recent years, several development environments and testbed activities have been launched in the health sector in Finland. In these development environments, products and services are researched, developed

and tested in either a real or simulated environment. The Finnish network of health testbeds is coordinated by Business Finland (Lahtonen 2019).

The testbed activity is based on the Living Lab operating model, which in turn is based on ecosystem thinking. In ecosystems, design, development and testing work are carried out in co-operation between a multidisciplinary team of experts and the end user or customer (Lahtonen 2019). A multi-lateral and multidisciplinary testbed supports a company's development of products and services at various stages, e.g. idea development, user testing and co-development.

In order to generate new innovations in the health sector, it is important to provide companies with an easily accessible, low-threshold development environment. In such an environment, a plan for the necessary testing or piloting can be drawn up in a multidisciplinary collaboration and made possible in practice.

In Finland, the development of wellbeing and health technology is largely concentrated in the Helsinki metropolitan area, Turku, Tampere and Oulu. For that reason, more domestic references are also needed in Päijät-Häme. In the ERDF-funded HyTeLab project (www.hytelab.fi), the main goal is to make an action plan for a wellbeing technology innovation, test and development environment in Päijät-Häme. The aim is to support the development of existing technological solutions or innovations

in wellbeing technology products and services in the Lahti region. This article focuses on describing a few of the functions and activities that have been carried out in the HyTeLab project and their importance in building the action plan for the innovation environment.

Improving the development skills of future healthcare professionals

In addition to testbeds accelerating the development and implementation of innovations or better solutions, they also enable the professional and competence development of healthcare professionals and students.

The HyTeLab project is carried out by the higher education organizations LAB University of Applied Sciences and LUT University. The operations of the innovation environment to be built during the project are expected to continue on the campus also after the end of the project. For this reason, it was seen as important to include students in the development of innovation platform's action plan, from the perspective of developing the skills of future healthcare professionals.

The growing importance and the use of new technology in healthcare require technical know-how, in addition to clinical knowledge. New professionals must have the ability to adopt new or improved technology in the workplace and the ability to participate in the development of cost-effective and innovative services and solutions through new technology.

During the HyTeLab project, several Wellbeing Technology Days were organized for healthcare students. At the first two events, students had the opportunity to explore a variety of technological devices and robotics. As part of the purpose of the day, students were asked to discuss the pros and cons of the devices, their usability and possible areas for development. The event provided information about the attitudes of new students towards wellbeing technology and how interested they are in developing new solutions through technology.

The aim of the next event was to develop students' innovation capacity, and to collect new development ideas as well. Students were asked to find and define the challenges in working life in healthcare and how these challenges could be solved using technology. To accomplish the task, they worked either individually or in small teams. As a result, at the end of the event, students presented their new solutions to healthcare processes. The best of them are doable and possible to further develop in an innovation environment.

In the last two Wellbeing Technology Days for students, the multidisciplinary teams developed new products or services using the method and tools of service design. The topic on which the development challenge had to be found was given to the students in advance. Their first task was to define the challenge, and then to create a solution to the problem. The solution had to be

developed using the technology.

According to the feedback received from the students, they found the collaboration with students from different fields fruitful and eye-opening. For example, engineering students were unaware of all the regulations in the health sector that affect the development of services and products.

During the day, the students learned to use user-driven methods and tools in development, as well as the importance of involving the customer in the design of products and services in order to be able to develop personalized solutions in care.

Strengthening user-oriented development and co-creation with companies

Strengthening innovation activities plays a key role in maintaining Finland's competitiveness in the global economy and in promoting its development, so the promotion of RDI activities between companies and research organizations is central (ETLA 2010). The importance of wellbeing and health technology and related business opportunities will continue to increase in the future. This is undeniably a fact, as health technology is one of Finland's fastest-growing industries, with business and exports growing by 4–6% annually.

The HyTeLab project promotes the implementation of the EU's digital strategy and the EU eHealth Action Plan 2012–2020 (2012) by promoting innovations in the field of wellbeing

and the development of wellbeing technology solutions, and by strengthening user-oriented product or service development.

The above-mentioned objective of the project is realized during the project, when valuable experiments, pilots and development cases have been carried out together with technology and wellbeing companies and LAB's multi-disciplinary development teams. These development cases originated from companies contacting project actors. Companies inquired about the possibility of testing or developing a product or service process.

For each development case, a multi-disciplinary development team was established, with health, service design and industrial design students working under the guidance of an expert. The development task included interviews with the user of the product or service, so the planning started by identifying the user and his/her needs. Companies were actively involved in the development process by assessing the progress of development work and giving valuable feedback information to the team.

Customer- and user-oriented design of services and products helps to bring out an aspect that is often overlooked in development work. At the end of the development work, the new solution was presented to the end users and their opinions were mapped for the final solution. Finally, the students submitted a report on the implementation of the work and presented the devel-

oped model of either a new product or service to the company.

When students were asked for feedback on the development task, they felt that these development cases strengthened their skills in collaborative development in multidisciplinary teams, as well as user-driven co-creation with companies. According to the feedback received from the companies, they were satisfied with the cooperation, and the development process had worked well. They appreciated the fact that development cooperation in the development environment could be launched quickly and flexibly. Further, companies appreciated the opportunity for multidisciplinary teams, which they felt enable high-quality outcomes. It was also mentioned that the discovery of co-operation was easy and promoted by the network of welfare actors previously established in the region.

Conclusion

In addition to the functions described above, the HyTeLab project has also carried out impact assessments of different technologies, collected customer experience in authentic operating environments, and studied the usability of the technology in different operating environments. LUT University was responsible for conducting the research and surveys, while LAB University of Applied Sciences was responsible for implementing development cases with companies together with undergraduate students.

The purpose of the activities has been to provide information to support the development of an action plan for the innovation, test and development environment in Päijät-Häme. The information gathered provides answers to the following questions:

- How well did the used model of operation of the development environment or testbed work during the project?
- How did companies experience the cooperation within the development environment?
- Which methods and procedures are useful for strengthening cooperation, co-creation and the development of user-driven welfare technology solutions with welfare and technology companies?

As a result of the HyTeLab project, the co-creation model of the test and the development environment, an impact assessment will be prepared with identified elements and critical points. It will be utilized in the planning of the start of Päijät-Häme's wellbeing technology testbed operations on NiemiCampus in Lahti.

As is highlighted in several strategies, reports and articles, technological development is one of the most influential drivers of change in healthcare (Cleverby 2020; Zeev 2017). Strengthening

innovation activities and promoting RDI activities between companies and research organizations have key roles in maintaining Finland's competitiveness in the global economy and in promoting its development. An environment for innovation and entrepreneurship is essential also for the vitality of the regions (ETLA, 2010).

In the health care sector, testbeds accelerate the development and deployment of better innovations and solutions, increase co-operation between different actors and companies in the

health sector, and enable professional development (Lahtonen 2019).

The best practices of co-creation, testing and development obtained during the HyTeLab project will be the foundation of the start-up of the regional testbed and put in action through cooperation between different actors. By starting the operation of a testbed and development environment, Päijät-Häme may become a region of wellbeing expertise with wellbeing as its attractive factor.

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Pirjo Tuusjärvi, Annamaija Id-Korhonen, Arja Sara-aho, Susanna Tella, Hannele Tiittanen

The growing importance of technology in healthcare poses challenges to education

The ageing of the population is of great importance and will affect all European countries in coming decades (Eurostat 2019). According to a UN report, the increasing share of ageing people in Europe's population will be one of the most significant social changes of the

twenty-first century (UN 2015). Ageing is expected to have a major impact on healthcare especially. As the population ages, the number of working-age people will decrease and result in a shortage of care professionals (UN 2015) (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Population Division, World Population Prospects (UN 2015).

As the population ages, the incidence of chronic diseases will also rise. Most patients with a chronic disease like cardiovascular disease (CVD), Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and diabetes are more than 65 years of age (Prasad et al. 2012). In addition to these illnesses or fragility, disabilities and other limitations associated with old age will also increase the need for care. This will lead to a growing burden on working age people in the field of care. Such a development has raised concerns about how to respond to increased health and long-term care needs at the same time as the working age population is declining (Cylus et al. 2019; Eurostat 2019; Haughom 2014).

In coming decades, the ageing population, increase in chronic diseases and consequently the growing need for healthcare and long-term care will pose challenges to healthcare organisations in developing healthcare services in a new way (Haughom 2014). One way to solve this challenge is technological development. Indeed, technological developments are already affecting healthcare, and they will continue to evolve dramatically in the future (Thimbleby 2013).

Evolving technologies' role, especially in elderly care

There are many areas in which the scale of the healthcare market will drive technological developments and accelerate their use (Thimbleby 2013). Potentially transformative developments like nanomedicine, brain implants, net-

worked sensors and exoskeletons are already underway. People are collecting health-related data about themselves to promote their health and wellbeing (Thimbleby 2013). Furthermore, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and related technologies will increasingly be applied to healthcare (Davenport & Kalakota 2019).

Especially in an ageing population, emerging technologies have the potential to change healthcare. Exploiting the development, healthcare organisations are, for example, increasingly transferring care from hospitals to homes. This can be done by using eHealth, remote patient monitoring technology and digitalisation. (EC 2012; Maresova et al. 2019)

In addition to remote healthcare, utilising various technological solutions enables the elderly to live independently and safely in their own homes instead of care homes (Raappana & Melkas 2009). Technology developed for the benefit of the elderly is divided into passive and active technologies (Raappana & Melkas 2009). Passive technology includes, for example, cameras or sensors embedded in the residential structure to remotely monitor individuals' activities and detect possible falls. Examples of active technologies are e.g. wearable technology and devices, which can generate alerts and reminders, and allow the person to press a button to summon assistance. (Demiris 2015)

Healthcare companies are under great pressure to deliver services cost-effectively and innovate solutions through new technologies (Haughom

2014). Overall, it is clear that technological developments are shaping the future of healthcare systems (Fellows & Edwards 2016). Inevitable changes in healthcare are also likely to cause changes in the skills and competences required of healthcare workers in the future. It is necessary to consider how the education and training of present and future workforces need to change (Haughom 2014). The growing importance and use of new technology in healthcare require technical expertise, as well as clinical knowledge (EC 2012). It is essential to anticipate future skills needs and develop the education and training of the present and future workforce to meet the change (Fellows & Edwards 2016).

The NICCoLLa project promotes the education of “future-proof” professionals

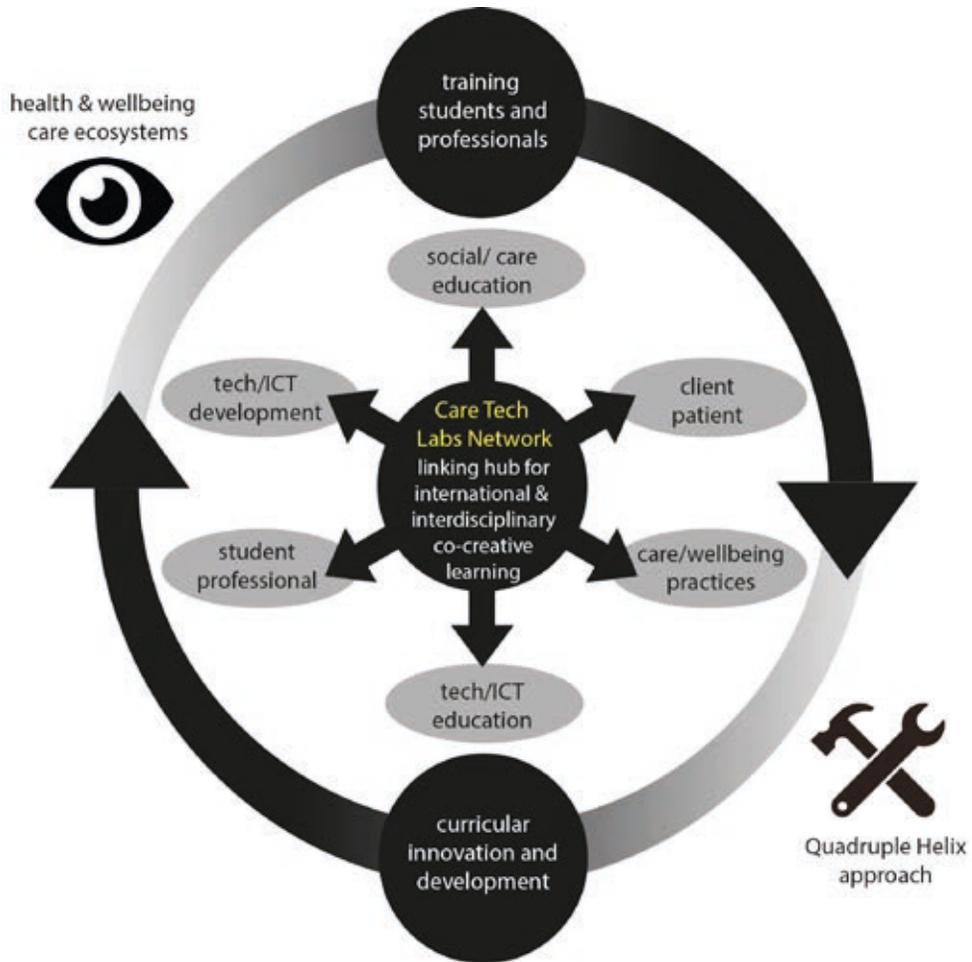
In the future, care professionals who can work with and co-create care technologies that deliver effective and user-friendly services, will be greatly needed. The aim of the Network for Innovative Care Competence Learning through Labs (henceforth, NICCoLLa) project is to “increase and amplify the

skills needed for the successful implementation of technology and ICT in the care and wellbeing sector” (NICCoLLa 2020). Utilising the Quadruple Helix approach, it brings together healthcare and wellbeing, technology and ICT students, care professionals and patients.

The NICCoLLa project is funded by the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Programme of the European Union. The project’s implementation period is 1 September 2019 – 30 August 2022. The consortium consists of project partners from Avans University of Applied Sciences (The Netherlands), Universitat Politècnica de València (Spain), LAB University of Applied Sciences (Finland) and Instituto Pedro Nunes (Portugal).

The main objective of the project is the development of curricula and course content for HEIs (see Figure 2). The primary aim is to develop the competences and skills of healthcare and wellbeing students, as well as technology students. These skills will be useful in a future in which technological solutions and innovations will play an increasingly important role.

Figure 2. NICCoLLa project visual (www.niccolla.eu)



The project activities will focus on curriculum development, and this will be achieved by conducting a needs analysis and background questionnaires to collect the necessary data, arranging intensive study weeks for students parallel with a wide variety of events for relevant stakeholders in partnering countries.

As a result of the project, content worth 30 ECTS will be delivered in modules of 5 ECTS. The topics of the modules are:

1. Working with technology as an expert and professional
2. Working with clients/patients using technology; focusing on user perspectives and the usability of technology solutions
3. Legal, ethical, and moral dilemmas of working with technology in the health and wellbeing sector
4. Transdisciplinary co-creation of technological solutions, successful design and implementation of care technology
5. The “future-proof” professional in the health and wellbeing sector; focusing on changing attitudes to care technology

6. Focusing on concepts of service design in developing health and wellbeing innovations

In addition to the course content development, the NICCoLLa project aims to develop a blueprint for the development of a “Care Technology Lab” (CTL). The CTL is defined as a living lab or test-bed environment. Learning through CTLs ensures sustainable development of competences and updated curricular content.

Topics important for the development of technology and innovation

In the NICCoLLa project, LAB University of Applied Sciences is responsible for leading the development of the course contents for modules 2, 4, and 6. The following topics are central to these curricula.

Service design (Service innovation process)

Service design is an interdisciplinary field of design, emerged as a methodology for service innovation. It focuses on customer experiences produced by concrete connections, “touchpoints”, between a service provider and a customer. Service design has an impressive set of tools and methods for the service innovation process. (Tiensuu et al. 2011)

The user-driven service innovation process can be utilized in the renewal and development of services (Harmokivi-Saloranta 2020). In her dissertation,

Harmokivi-Saloranta (2020) elucidated the kind of information the initial stage of the user-oriented sports service innovation process produced for service developers. The user-driven service innovation process collected data in multiple ways and produced seven forms of knowledge: declarative; experiential; productive; emotional; skills; user-driven; and community-driven sociocultural knowledge. These forms of information increased understanding of the user's residential area and generated concrete development ideas related to sports services.

Co-creation

In the co-creation process, service providers and customers are committed to development and service delivery. It is therefore necessary to understand the needs, expectations, motivation, and values of both. The voice of the user is understood as a collective indicator of collective and broader service development perspectives than as a metaphor for the needs and wishes of individual service users (Hennala 2012). The goal is that all issues and perspectives related to the service will be taken into account as widely as possible in the data collection and analysis phase of service design. Co-creation is the method and principle of service design, not the actual development tool (Tuulaniemi 2011).

Living Lab

Living Lab operates as a co-creation environment enabling collaboration

between citizens, industry, academia, and the public sector (the Quadruple Helix Open Innovation model). "Living Labs (LLs) are defined as user-centred, open innovation ecosystems based on systematic user co-creation approach, integrating research and innovation processes in real life communities and settings. LLs operate as intermediaries among citizens, research organizations, companies, cities and regions for joint value co-creation, rapid prototyping or validation to scale up innovation and businesses". (European Network of Living Labs 2020)

The progress of the NICCoLLa project in 2020

In the spring of 2020, the NICCoLLa project is in the planning phase. For the course design, descriptions of the current situation in participating HEIs' curricula and needs assessments for future competences have been carried out by needs analysis and questionnaires in each of the project's partner countries. The design of courses has started in transnational teams, and project partners are defining course structures and learning outcomes.

Following the schedule of the NICCoLLa project, the first intensive study programme week for students is planned in November in Breda in the Netherlands. The purpose of the week will be to test and further improve the content of the courses.

Care professionals, representatives from local health organisations, and

clients/patients will be involved in the events of the intensive week in order to gain insights from daily experiences and needs from the perspective of the relevant stakeholders and target groups. This will help participating students understand the needs and challenges of different target groups and develop their innovative thinking in developing new services and products that utilize new technologies.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has forced the formulation of alternative plans for the project's activities. If there are new restrictions on travel between the countries in the autumn of 2020, the intensive week will be postponed until next spring in Lahti in Finland. Thereafter at the latest, the project can report interim information on the progress of the project's objectives.

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PART 4:
EFFICIENT SERVICE CHAINS

Taina Anttonen

New direction for the use of digitalisation in SMEs providing social and health services



Picture 1. Experts, entrepreneurs and master's degree students sharing the knowledge.
Photo: Aku Mattila

The objective of the “VERSOTE – Verkostoituvat sote-yritykset” project on networking among SMEs providing social and health services was to promote the competitiveness of such enterprises in the Päijät-Häme region in relation to the sector’s public providers, large private health companies and third-sector service providers, because the operating environment is undergoing change and reform. The coaching organised in the project reached up to 75 SMEs in the social and health services sector in 2018–2020. A key aspect of the coaching was to proactively view the provision of services and the structural change. Digitalisation of the social and health services is among the important change trends, and it will also considerably impact the operating environment of SMEs in the future. Making active use of digitalisation and reforming their business will be challenging for SMEs in the social and health services sector, but they will also offer opportunities. The “VERSOTE – Verkostoituvat sote-yritykset” project was implemented jointly by the LAB University of Applied Sciences, LUT University, Päijät-Häme Entrepreneurs’ Association and Lahti Region Development LADEC Ltd. The project was funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Regional Council of Päijät-Häme.

Digitisation challenges SMEs to change their core operations

The fundamental driver of digitalisation is digitisation, which refers to convert-

ing matters, objects or processes into a digital format either in part or in full. Digitalisation changes the behaviour of people, market dynamics and the core operations of companies. From the company’s perspective, digitalisation changes strategies, mechanisms of income, products, services, operating models, competence, and much more. The company’s deliberate change of its income and operating models through digitisation is called active digitalisation. Passive digitalisation refers to a company that is only adjusting to the changes taking place in its operating environment (Ilmarinen & Koskela 2015, 22–23, 25). Digitalisation boosts the company’s growth, profitability and competitiveness, which are key objectives of the business operations when companies pursue successful performance. It is a tool for reforming the business operations. Digitalisation can help accelerate growth, cut costs, improve the quality of operations and offer a better customer experience. The structural change in workplaces shapes operating models. Change is taking place in the form, content, meaning and division of work, among other things (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2019). According to the “Sote-tieto hyötykäyttöön 2020” strategy on utilising social and health services data prepared by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (2015), the focus is on the client who is capable of using the social and health services, the skilled professional, and the changing operating environment. It seems that as

service providers, large health services companies have developed and utilised digitalisation considerably more than the public sector, third sector and SMEs.

Increasing the digitalisation competence of SMEs providing social and health services through coaching

A three-part coaching series on using digitalisation in companies, named “Uusi suunta digitalisaation hyödyntämiseen yrityksessä”, was organised as part of the “VERSOTE – Verkostoituvat sote-yrietykset” project in the autumn of 2019. The coaching included expert lectures, workshops and assignments. The coaching aimed to find solutions to challenges faced by businesses through digitalisation, helped reform operating models, and reviewed the client and the customer experience of the digital service. The assignments consisted of finding solutions to cases related to client relationships, client experience, using digitalisation and service design, and conducting APESTE analyses on factors impacting the future of the sector (see Metsämuuronen 2000). The operational tools applied in the coaching series included the Business Model Canvas, empathy map, client path and prototype. In addition to SMEs providing social and health services, the participants in the coaching series included university of applied sciences master’s degree students, who worked at a private health company during their studies. The workshops enabled the SMEs

and master’s degree students to share the knowledge together as a network and strengthen their competence from a broader perspective. The SMEs were immediately able to use the materials produced in the coaching workshops to strengthen their competitiveness and actively develop customer relationships, client experience and digital services.



Picture 2. Visualising the new knowledge.
Photo: Aku Mattila

Client and client experience in digital social and health services

Finland is among the leading countries in the development of digital services, and the level of digital competence is high in Finland compared to the other EU countries. The impact of digitalisation on the development of social and health services has been considerable. This development is continuing, as is manifested by the increase in remote services, among other things. The objective of the development of digitalisation is to achieve increased impact, profitability and cost-effectiveness through social and health services (Finnish Government 2014). Sitra (2016) also estimates that the digitalisation of social and health services will improve the quality of services and help allocate services in an increasingly personalised manner.

According to Gerdt and Eskelinen (2018), the client experience is important in the development of digitisation. When a company begins to digitise the client experience, it should determine its baseline, its capacity to implement the change and a timeframe for the development. If the company has previously used technology mainly for communication, for example, the changes in its operations will be extensive. Preparedness for change, competence, attitudes and the existing systems must be assessed. Reviewing the company's current status alone is not sufficient, because digitalisation changes customers' expectations rapidly. A service provided

by the company will lose its applicability quicker than before. New technologies and the expectations of clients require that the customer experience is developed, and they also accelerate this development.

Today, clients continuously receive information about the experiences of other clients through a variety of channels and reflect them onto their own experiences. The bar is raised for the next clients by a single excellent experience and exceeds the previous client's expectations. If this new expectation is not met, the client will be disappointed. Most people trust technology, but this trust erodes quickly if the systems are not reliable and work in real time. The key development areas in the digital client experience are therefore real-time service provision, personalisation, user-friendliness and the technological environment. Digital services are expected to be fast. Previously, a client waited for weeks or months to connect with the company providing a service; today, the expectation is to receive service instantly. It is becoming the default to expect that services should be real time, available 24/7 and largely automated. The feeling of personal service is no longer sufficient: the service must actually be personalised. User-friendliness in a digital service means that the service is easy to find, accessible and easy to use. Processes or functions that are deemed unpleasant must be eliminated to improve client experience. The technological environment and IT infra-

structure must be robust and function well (DIGIA 2019).

Identifying and acknowledging phenomena and weak signals through analysis

Companies should monitor their operating environment and the changes occurring within it. The concept of a sector can be defined through three components: clients; suppliers; and competitors. This is the framework for assessing things that exist in the environment and are meaningful for the company. Competitors are divided into three groups: current competitors; the threat posed by new competitors; and the threat posed by substituting products. Companies mostly focus on their current competitors, current strengths and weaknesses, strategy and business models (Kamensky 2015, 40). It seems that SMEs providing social and health services have yet to notice the future competitors who are actively using digitalisation in the development and provision of their services.

In the “Uusi suunta digitalisaation hyödyntämiseen yrityksessä” coaching, phenomena and future weak signals that SMEs should be able to identify and acknowledge were analysed and collected through the APESTE analysis in community-centred coaching workshops, and they should help the SMEs compete in the future with the public sector, large health service providers, third sector and other SMEs providing services. In terms of the community, the following phenomena and weak

signals were observed in the coaching workshops:

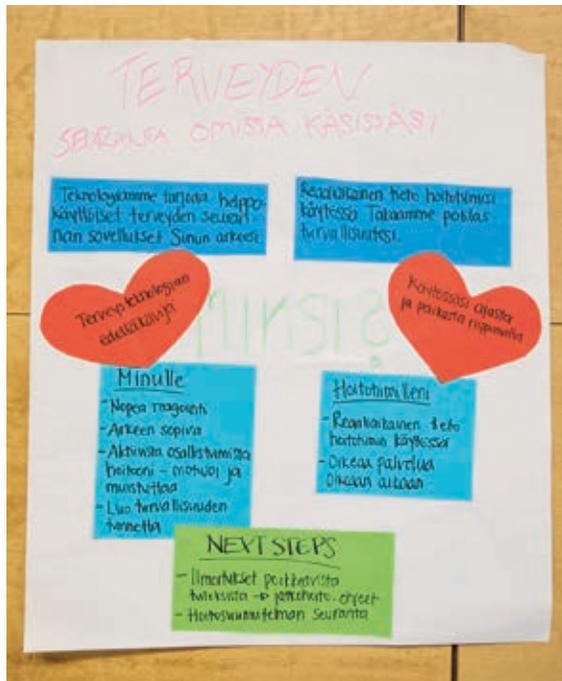
Changes in client relationships: Clients want services to be easy to access, cost-effective, fast and convenient. An SME providing social and health services must have good visibility to ensure that clients find their services easily.

Political changes: The healthcare and social welfare services reform has been in the works for a long time, which creates uncertainty in the operations of SMEs providing social and health services. Other factors they have had to adjust to and adopt include legislative changes, the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation and several EU directives. SMEs providing social and health services must follow the discussion in society and be ready to update their competence on a continuous basis.

Social changes: Some clients and competing SMEs providing social and health services have more digital competence and tools than others. The proportion of ageing and other vulnerable population groups is increasing in the demographics. The incomplete status of the healthcare and social welfare reform makes it impossible to assess how much the reform, once implemented, will impact the operations of SMEs in the sector. The extent to which public sector service providers will be able to offer services, including digital services, to clients in the future is also unknown, as is what structural change will mean for SMEs providing social and health services.

Technological changes: Digitalisation is increasing in all areas of life. The client's privacy must be ensured. The functioning of systems must be taken care of. At the same time, aligning and adopting digital tools and new systems are challenging. The sufficiency of resources must be assessed to secure high-quality services. As efficiency increases, there should be more focus on ethics.

Economic changes: An ability to respond quickly in a competitive situation and the profitability of operations are of the utmost importance to SMEs providing social and health services. New digital tools and other changes relating to the operations incur costs. As the digitisation of the operating environment increases, client orientation, an assessment of the client experience in the provision of services and proactiveness in ensuring the accessibility of services are of the utmost importance.



Picture 3. A plan of how an entrepreneur can use digitalisation in the self-monitoring of health. Photo: Aku Mattila

For SMEs, digitalisation is both a challenge and an opportunity

Once the SME providing social and health services has identified and acknowledged the phenomena and future weak signals impacting its business operations and assessed their baseline, the capacity to embrace change, and the development timeframe, the enterprise is better equipped to implement change and create new services. Implementing change and reform requires tools and development methods in which the client takes centre stage, and the client experience is taken into consideration. The coaching organised in the “VERSOTE – Verkostoituvat sote-yrittäjät” project provided concrete tools and recommendations for measures supporting development and the use of digitalisation. It is understandable that purchasing new digital tools and acquiring the required competence incur costs for SMEs, which is why they should

be considered carefully. The volume of new change trends and innovations continues to be high. It is essential that the SME providing social and health services is able to forecast the phenomena and weak signals related to the provision of services and better adjust to the structural change once the healthcare and social welfare reform is reactivated. Active digitisation is important for the SME providing social and health services when it competes with the sector’s other small businesses, as well as with public sector, large private companies and third sector service providers. Passive digitalisation refers to companies that simply adjust to the changes in the operating environment. This is not sustainable for future business operations. It’s the attitude that counts, even in the use of digitalisation. Change is not a bad thing – as long as it is the SME that chooses to embrace it.

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Mari Berglund, Larissa Franz-Koivisto, Tuula Hyppönen, Adriana Saarialho, Tarja Tolonen, Veera Vähämaa

The Duuni Model: From Parental Skills to Working Life Strength

Introduction

Parenthood brings responsibilities, but also offers many new competences and skills. Skills like self-management, and the abilities to organize activities and make rapid decisions are required in daily life with children. These skills are directly transferable to working life environments. However, identifying, recognizing and a person's own know-how establishing the connection between parenthood and working life skills may be challenging for parents. In particular, young parents whose working career has been short or non-existent may have difficulties in seeing their own parenthood skills as a resource for their future working life career.

In the "DUUNI - Parenting skills to the use of work life" project (LAB University of Applied Sciences et al. 2014), the purpose was to find and test different kinds of art-based and sport-oriented interventions as methods for parents to recognize their own competences. The target group was parents aged 16 to 29 who were not in working life or

in education. Interventions were tested in individual guidance and group activity sessions. The objective was to find methods to make it easier for young parents to recognize their own competences. In addition, the objective was to help parents to find the connections between competences and their future career planning. Each individual guidance and group activity session had different themes. Additionally, a separate guidance course was developed for immigrant parents, called the "Immigrants' Path". The objective of the Immigrant Path was to strengthen the knowledge of immigrant parents' working life skills and to find tools to plan their personal career in Finnish society, with individual guidance.

Another objective of the DUUNI project was to develop and strengthen the methodological competence of professionals who are working with young parents. To achieve this, an eCoaching course was developed and tested. The themes of the eCoaching followed the same themes as young parents had in

their group activity sessions.

Through evaluating the interventions and the feedback received, best practices were chosen for “The DUUNI Model: From Parental Skills to Working Life Strength” (Figure 1). The tested interventions, methods, guidance and activity sessions are described in this article.



Figure 1. The DUUNI Model: From Parental Skills to Working Life Strength. Figure: Pixabay (CC0), modified: Tuula Hyppönen 2020

The “DUUNI - Parenting skills to the use of work life” project (2018–2020) is a national project funded by European Social Fund, leverage from the EU’s 2014–2020 Programme for Sustainable Growth and Jobs. The coordinator of the project is

Turku University of Applied Sciences, and the partners are LAB University of Applied Sciences, University of Lapland, Kirjan talo ry, Lounais Suomen Liikunta ja Urheilury and Caritas Finland.

The best practices and interventions of the DUUNI Model Reflecting Parental Skills through Literary Art

The group activities were organized in Turku, Helsinki, Raisio and Rovaniemi. Each group had common themes, but the approaches varied from art-based methods to sport methods.

Each group shared the same principles: confidentiality, a sense of community, reflection and participation. The structure of each meeting was planned by integrating the participants’ fields of interest, common themes, a certain method and tasks. The group size varied between three and ten participants, depending on the operational environments. The most effective way to reach the target was to operate in close collaboration with organizations that already work with young parents.

Groups oriented towards literary art were placed in Turun Tyttöjen talo and Opetuskoti Mustikka. These groups had only female participants, because the environments are meant only for women. The DUUNI groups had total six meetings, held every two weeks. Between the group sessions, the participants had total three sessions of personal guidance.

When the project started, there were

no existing methods combining literary art-based methods and parenting skills. The literary art-based methods are described below (Figure 2).

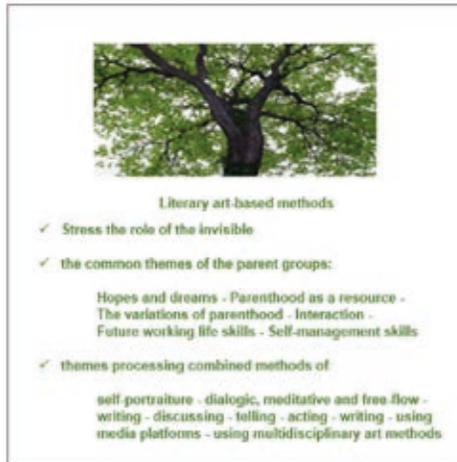


Figure 2. Literary art-based methods.
Figure: Pixabay (CC0), modified: Veera Vähämaa 2020

The foundation of the methods was created by combining methods of self-portraiture, dialogic writing and free-flow writing. Literary art was seen as a tool to identify, recognize, and reflect on the connection between parenthood and working life skills. The concept of literary art refers to activities that are based on literature, language or stories. Themes and stories can be processed by discussion, telling, acting, writing, using media platforms or using multidisciplinary art methods. (Opetushallitus 2017.)

The main method in group sessions was free-flow writing, in which the author writes only free associations without any idea of the conclusion. This method is widely used in the teaching of creative writing. The leader usually gives a time limit of 5–10 minutes. Sometimes, the leader offers words, pictures or other materials for inspiration. During the writing process, people are allowed to think freshly: in organizing the words, we use our own experiences while creating new things, places and concepts. (Huotarinen 2018, 27.)

Dialogic or meditative writing was a method used mostly in the “homework” that participants completed between the meetings. The method was developed by Riitta Suurla, and it is a widely used method in literary therapy. The main point in this method is that the writer searches for a state where they are highly concentrated and focused on the task. Meditation and breathing exercises are useful. The leader can give a ready-made question, or the writer can decide what the first question is. The motive of the questions should be positive and constructive. (Suurla 1998, 32.) The writer answers the question in an intuitive way, and the answer leads to further questions. In the DUUNI project, the questions elaborated the goals and the skills that the parents had. Often, using this method brought forth dreams, goals and skills that the parents had not reflected on before. In these cases, the method was used as a tool in the process of identifying prior learning.

This learning was considered not only in terms of formal education, but also from the aspect of “silent knowledge”.

The iceberg model (Hätönen 2011) demonstrates the invisible side of know-how and working life skills. The invisible part of the iceberg is associated with motives, self-image and personal features. The art-based methods stress the role of the invisible parts of know-how. Literary art-based methods are well-adapted for identifying prior learning: the goal is to reach fresh and innovative expressions.

Individual guidance sessions

Alongside the group activities, the young parents participated in three individual guidance sessions. The instructors were group session leaders and guidance experts in the DUUNI project. The objective of the individual guidance sessions was to strengthen the recognition of the parent's own skills and to help to build their individual future career plans. The role of the instructor was to bring up in the conversation the themes that had been discussed in group guidance sessions, to reflect on the themes, and to help the parents to find connections between those themes and their own thoughts for the future. The focus of the sessions was on the parents' own goals, needs and wishes, on the basis of which the concrete actions and methods in the sessions were chosen. For some of the parents, the need was to explore the alternatives of the adult education pro-

grams, while for others it was to practice writing a CV or job application.

In the conversations, the parents were asked to reflect on positive changes or features that parenthood has brought. Discussions, exercises and tasks were targeted to empower and to increase the parents' self-confidence, in order for them to make future career plans of their own. Parenthood as a resource was processed through different methods, like using picture cards and parenthood role maps, or by utilizing material that the parents had produced in the sessions. Discussions about parenthood skills as a value, and about skills transferable to working life, were also highlighted in the sessions. Reflecting on these skills and mirroring them against the parents' own thoughts and wishes about their future career path led to several good conversations.

Between the individual guidance sessions, parents continued self-reflection related to themes by completing small tasks. Parents saved the outcomes to an electronic platform in the Padlet application and built up their own “competence wall” as a result of the guidance. The content of the “competence wall” was a collection of samples, showing their strengths, skills and thoughts about the future. The samples were written material, photos, videos or useful links that had been gathered. The idea was for the parents to utilize the “personal competence wall” as a portfolio in the future. In addition, concrete outcomes like an updated CV or appli-

cant description for job applications, or education alternatives, were achieved. Some of the parents got accepted into work trial positions or apprenticeships during their participation in the DUUNI project.

According to feedback received, the parents told that they have been treated individually and with respect in guidance sessions. The guidance offered time and place to plan and dream about their own goal-oriented future. The parents' participation in the project expanded their picture and awareness of their own competences and skills and increased their self-confidence and motivation to make plans. It also gave them concrete ideas about how to take the next steps towards education or working life. Parenthood was seen as a significant resource that participants experienced as having benefits in their future career paths.

Parental guidance using the Immigrants' Path

Caritas Finland participants were often vulnerable people. The targets included refugees and people from immigrant backgrounds who face challenges, even after completing official integration courses. Also, Caritas observed that many participants demonstrated post-traumatic behaviours.

According to a large study of asylum seekers' health and wellbeing, post-traumatic conditions are present among some asylum seekers in Finland. Almost 50% of the adult respondents

(n=784) have received injuries caused by accidents or violence, 83% have experienced at least one dramatic incident (e.g. being a victim of violence), and 40% have significant depression and anxiety symptoms (Ahmed Haji Omar, A. et al. 2019). Post-traumatic stress affects everyday life, studies, work and personal relationships.

During the project, Caritas developed a series of best practices, such as:

Interviews: Participants were interviewed before the group activities to discover their individual starting points and motivations, as well as to ensure that the participants understood the idea of the project.

Translation services: Participants were encouraged to communicate in the Finnish language. When this was not possible, translator support was provided. This supported the creation of a safe and comfortable environment to encourage the practice of the Finnish language.

Childcare support: Childcare was arranged during all group meetings, providing parents with a well-received pause from childcaring, motivating them to concentrate on the session.

Group size: A maximum of four participants with immigrant backgrounds ensured better focusing, as translation and context interpretations take time.

Digital tools: Weak reading and writing skills means poor digital skills. That's why in relation to developing digital skills also reading and writing

skills were supported hand-by-hand.

Caritas Finland applied tailored approaches, which better serve immigrants' needs. It was observed that by using handcrafting and/or pictures, paper and pen while dealing with life situations, helped to create a safe environment for discussing personal strengths and weaknesses. Some strengths came up more clearly, such as raising children. By using these methods, parenthood skills become clear, and the parents learnt to understand their own strengths, which can be implemented in their future working or study life.

One of the important tools was to use concrete concepts. For example, visiting an employment office in small groups and observing concretely how the process works, the participant learns how to register as unemployed, as well as how to apply for job positions or study places. It was very important not to leave the participants alone in the study and job applying situations.

Immigrant women receive atypical job offers, such as temporary job contracts, part-time jobs or atypical working hours (Larja & Luukko 2018), which are not attractive because they interfere with childcare arrangements and/or social benefits. Therefore, it is challenging to encourage women in weaker job situations to get started in working life.

The supervisory eCoaching

The objective of the supervisory eCoaching was to strengthen the methodological instruction competence of

those providing guidance to young parents, to promote mutual networking and cooperation, and to support the development of methods of identifying parenting skills competence (the "DU-UNI – Parental skills to the use of work life" project plan). LAB University of Applied Sciences was responsible of planning and implementing the coaching, with the technical support of University of Lapland.

The coaching was implemented four times during 2018–2020, with 22 participants representing professional instructors working in social and health care, labour administration, youth services and parish organization. Two lecturers arranged the coaching.

The coaching included six meetings on the Skype for Business and Zoom platforms. A digital working platform was provided in the Optima environment for instructors. The working platform included themed guidance packages, literature, examples of methods, the platforms for submitting assignments and an assessment questionnaire. (Hyppönen & Tolonen 2019, 92.)

The coaching applied art-based and functional methods, such as sociometric applications, relaxation, and reflective and narrative exercises, to support the objectives of the instructors. The content of the eCoaching is presented in Figure 3.



Figure 3. The best practices of the supervisional eCoaching. Figure: Pixabay (CC0), modified: Tuula Hyppönen 2020

The best practices and interventions produced by the instructors and the e-coaches comprised a coaching framework, principles and practices securing reflective and participatory guidance, as well as more concrete individual guidance plans, exercises and tasks.

The framework structuring eCoaching

The coaching framework discusses parenthood and working life skills to clarify the transfer between the two. Parenthood is based on a systemic approach that is a product of the surrounding culture. Parenthood and parenting skills definitions are based on: 1) a family assessment model by Bentovim and Bingley Miller (2006); 2) the Role Map of Parenthood by the Southwest Finland Child Welfare District (Helminen & Iso-Heiniemi 1999, Novitsky & Alitolp-

pa-Niitamo 2012); and 3) the variations of parenthood based on Finnish family research. (Itäpuisto 2005; Ritala-Koskinen 2001; Toppinen-Tanner et al. 2016 & Mattila 2019)

The project identified parenting skills and strengths as transfer skills applicable in working life. They include self-management, metacognition, self-regulation, change management, stress control and decision-making skills. These support parents in making career-related choices and decisions. They are learned throughout life at work and during leisure time (Ruohotie 2004, Korhonen-Yrjänheikki 2011).

The framework provided six thematic meetings: 1) supervisory work and a reflective work approach; 2) parenthood as a strength and self-management; 3) variations of parenthood as a working life strength; 4) interaction skills in working life; 5) future working life skills; and 6) supervisor's competences and good practices. Based on the framework, the eCoaching principles were confidentiality, a focus on the actor, a systemic approach, inclusion, participation, functionality and a sense of community.

Every eCoaching meeting was based on articles, videos, presentations, discussions and functional exercises. The theme "Supervisory work and a reflective work approach" applied the "Reflective eyeglasses model" (based on Mallingtjer 2016).

A warm-up exercise, "Chain story of interaction at work", in the theme "Interaction skills in working life" was created

verbally by the participants. After that they told stories of “Interaction in my own work is like...” by using pictures.

The objective was to deepen the instructors’ understanding of the coaching themes, to use applicable methods and to increase interaction and innovation.

Inclusion as an objective and a method

Participation can be seen as a prerequisite for inclusion, which means e.g. safety to ask simple technical questions and to get knowledge to manage on your own with it.

The coaching process started with a two-hour “technical check-in” to provide instructors with the basics of the Skype for Business, Zoom, Teams and Optima environments. Technical questions were also taken up in the coaching meetings. These practices were considered supportive in the participant feedback.

The recurring structure of the three-hour coaching meetings included the following: 1) technical launch and orientation to working (a review of the theme, working method and schedule) lasting 30 minutes, 2) a dialogue about good practices (a discussion of practices, making connections between theory and practice, and sharing) lasting 1–2 hours; and 3) an assessment of the coaching and feedback discussion, lasting 30 minutes.

The aim was to support participant involvement and personal develop-

ment, to support reflective learning diary writing, and to share the used working methods.

A model of a guidance plan was shared to ensure consistency for practising and documenting art-based and functional methods.

Functional exercises were activating in themselves and they encouraged the instructors to mutual encountering, interaction, and participation.

Guidance plans were shared in good practice dialogues, where the presenter described or simulated the plan with the used exercises. The rest of the group reflected on the plan from the objective, content, methods and evaluation points of view.

Shared reflection of the guidance experiences was valuable for the instructors, who reported having missed professional feedback. This practice was seen very supportive in the feedback. Here, peer evaluation enhanced participation.

Feedback was collected by using quantitative and qualitative questions on how the content, methods and coaches supported the participants’ learning. Additionally, what worked fine, what needed development, and what to use in one’s own work in the future were important questions. Feedback was also shared briefly in the final discussion.

The dialogic, reflective and inclusive coaching culture challenged the instructors and coaches to practice interconnective and sensitive practices.

Dissemination and exploitation of the DUUNI Model

The final product of the project – The DUUNI Model: From Parental Skills to Working Life Strength – is an online repository of the best practices. These include the guidance interventions that proved to be the most effective and other good practices that resulted from the young parents' individual and group guidance and the coaching for instructors, available at <https://duuni-taidot.turkuamk.fi/>. The model can be utilized as a whole or by using part of the activities and methods.

The project experiences showed the challenge of reaching young parents directly by marketing the activities through social media channels. Although young parents use social media actively, it was not enough to motivate them to register for the DUUNI groups. The best results were obtained by recruiting parents directly in those environments in which they already were acting, such as other existing group activities. For those reasons, the objective of disseminating DUUNI's best practices for professionals who work with young parents strengthened during the lifetime of the project.

The methods developed and tested during the project adapt well to various operational environments across sector boundaries. They can be utilized by social workers, teachers and other professionals who work with parents. Even though the target group in the project were young parents, the methods can be used among all age groups.

The activities of the DUUNI project have been marketed widely for professionals in the social and health care sector, NGOs, educational institutions and churches in the Turku, Helsinki, Lahti and Rovaniemi regions. Emails and face-to-face meetings were efficient marketing tools. In addition, pop-up events were organized where DUUNI's activities were presented to professionals and young parents. During the project, new professional networks have been formed, where best practices of the DUUNI model can be disseminated and further exploited. It is also planned to organize online events for professionals to disseminate the results and to find ways to continue exploiting the results.

Additionally, the DUUNI project is a member of the nation-wide project OSUMA, which coordinates those projects funded within the Skills for Inclusion initiative. The OSUMA project produces results, research and other development work for projects related to children and young adults, disseminates the results nationally, and does lobbying for the projects. Being a member of the OSUMA project is a valuable way for disseminating and exploiting the DUUNI model. The finalized DUUNI model will be presented at the closing seminar of the project in November 2020 at Turku. Working life representatives from different sectors, teachers and social- and healthcare students will be invited to the closing seminar. There will also be an online possibility to join the seminar.

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Taina Heininen-Reimi

OTE – Development of open badges and cooperation with the KOE student union

The “OTE – Students promoting employment opportunities with the staff of Universities of Applied Sciences” project (referred to below as the OTE project) is funded by the European Social Fund’s “Sustainable growth and jobs 2014–2020 – Finland’s structural funds programme” for the period 1 October 2019 – 31 December 2021. The project includes five universities of applied sciences: Turku University of Applied Sciences, Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (Diak), Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Oulu University of Applied Sciences, and LAB University of Applied Sciences. The project is being coordinated by Turku University of Applied Sciences, and LAB and the other universities of applied sciences are the project partners. The project works in close cooperation with the student unions and personnel of the universities of applied sciences and with workplaces. LAB University of Applied Sciences works with the KOE student union (referred to below as KOE).

OTE project’s objectives, work packages and actors

The objective of the OTE project is to support the employment of students in cooperation with the student unions and the universities of applied sciences. The key aspects of the project include strengthening the role of student unions in supporting students’ employment and developing common criteria for demonstrating the students’ expertise to employers. The project develops operating concepts based on the students’ own wishes, needs and activities, including student employment services, a job search clinic, the development of open badges for workplace skills, and the introduction of new ways of supporting entrepreneurship. Students themselves play a strong role in planning and implementing these practices by serving as coaches at the job search clinic, for example (OTE-hankehakemus 2020, 6).

The project consists of five work packages (WP1–WP5) under two themes. The first theme is activities promoting employment. This theme

has been divided into three concrete work packages. Below, I provide a concise description of the content of the work packages and list the universities of applied sciences responsible for each package. Work package 1 (WP1) develops national descriptions and criteria for open badges for workplaces, and they are piloted jointly by the universities of applied sciences participating in the project. LAB is responsible for this work package, with Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Diak, Oulu University of Applied Sciences, and Turku University of Applied Sciences as participants. Work package 2 (WP2), Employment support and entrepreneurship, focuses on social services and healthcare students, whose competence is developed through the cooperative and team entrepreneurship operating model. Oulu University of Applied Sciences, where the cooperative activities previously concentrated on the competence area of business administration, is responsible for this work package. LAB also participates in work package 2. Work package 3 (WP3) develops jobseeking over multiple channels in cooperation with the student unions. The work package is coordinated by Savonia University of Applied Sciences. All the partner universities of applied sciences participate in the work package (OTE-hankehakemus 2020, 7–8).

The second theme in the project is co-creation. Work package 4 (WP4) focuses on the cooperation between student unions and universities of applied

sciences, and on peer review. The work package is coordinated by Diak and Turku University of Applied Sciences. All the student unions and universities of applied sciences participating in the project contribute to the work package. Work package 5 (WP5) includes project coordination and tasks related to the management and communications of the overall project. The work package is coordinated by Turku University of Applied Sciences (OTE-hankehakemus 2020, 7–12). The project partners agreed to combine work packages 4 and 5, because the two packages are interlinked. This article describes the development of open badges taking place in WP1. For the combined work packages 4 and 5, the focus is on the cooperation between LAB University of Applied Sciences and the KOE student union in the OTE project.

Cooperation with the KOE student union

The student unions of all the participating universities of applied sciences are equal developers and actors in the project with the UAS personnel. The operating principles applied in the project should therefore be based on transparency, equality, and respectful encounter. An example of the realisation of these principles is the shared Teams template in the environment used by Savonia University of Applied Sciences. The OTE-Teams template includes the project's shared materials and joint meetings, and is open for all student un-

ions and project personnel. Another example is the selection of the logo for the OTE project. Turku University of Applied Sciences requested the visual designer of the project activities to submit four logo suggestions. The student union and project personnel were given the opportunity to vote for their favourite from among the four suggestions. The logo that received the most votes (Figure 1) was presented at the joint project meeting in Helsinki in December 2019.



Figure 1. The OTE project logo and the logos of the funding providers

LAB University of Applied Sciences' key partner in the project is the KOE student union. LAB University of Applied Sciences was established through a merger of Saimaa University of Applied Sciences and Lahti University of Applied Sciences, which was completed on 1 January 2020. LAB is part of the LUT Group. As a result of the merger, LAB now operates on three campuses: Lahti, Lappeenranta, and online. The merger also resulted in the establishment of a

new student union.

The KOE student union has 4,750 members and operates on the Lahti and Lappeenranta campuses. The role of the student union is diverse. The key objectives of the operations include strengthening the wellbeing of LAB University of Applied Sciences students. Activities to achieve this include the promotion of the interests of all LAB students and the quality of education, as well as making sports, and entertainment activities available (KOE 2020).

The merger and the resulting amalgamation of two student unions has required extensive goal-oriented preparations. Before the merger, the student unions were LAMKO in Lahti and SAIKO in Lappeenranta. The boards of both student unions were active and played a pivotal role in the establishment of KOE.

KOE is a new operator, which brings together the students, actors and cultures of the two former student unions. Creating a new organisation and initiating activities takes time and effort. Timing is therefore of special importance in this case. Although KOE is in the process of launching their own operations, they had time to participate and were very active in all the OTE project's work packages. Most importantly, the OTE project is engaging the participants in development cooperation, which, it is hoped, will create new opportunities for further project activities in future.

Open badges – what are they?

This article describes the development of open badges (work package 1) for the OTE project and outlines the cooperation with the KOE student union in their development. LAB is responsible for the development of the open badges in the project. In the project application, the role of LAB University of Applied Sciences is described as follows: “The work package coordinated by LAB University of Applied Sciences develops the national descriptions and criteria of open badges for workplaces, and pilots them in cooperation with the universities of applied sciences participating in the project (OTE-hankehakemus 2020, 7–8).” The project application lists the tentative open badges assigned to each university of applied sciences. Diak is responsible for defining the criteria for the issuance and usage of an open badge for project and process competence. Oulu University of Applied Sciences defines the criteria for the issuance and usage of an open badge for entrepreneurship and project competence. The work package for which Savonia University of Applied Sciences is responsible consists of the development of an open badge for alumni and tutor activities. Turku University of Applied Sciences participates in establishing the criteria of open badges by developing and piloting the competence areas of guidance, development, network cooperation and others related to the operations of the job search clinic (WP 3) (OTE-hankehakemus 2020, 8).

During the autumn of 2019 and spring of 2020, the OTE project mapped the use of open badges available for university of applied sciences students. No national open badges specifically targeting university of applied sciences students could be found in the mapping. The open badges available for university of applied sciences students were primarily UAS-specific and achievable through projects. Open badges may have been issued based on participation or competence. The International Talent open badge issued by Savonia University of Applied Sciences is an example of a UAS-specific open badge (Savonia University of Applied Sciences 2020). In the education sector, work to develop open badges has been and is being carried out in the “Competitive Skills” project, for example. The target group for this project is teaching and guidance personnel and students in the 16–65 age group in vocational education, vocational adult education and liberal adult education. (TIEKE 2020). Another example is the Open merkit (Teacher’s badges) digital badges system. It targets students of vocational teacher education (Häme University of Applied Sciences et al. 2020). These two examples offer a good overview of the arena in which open badges are being developed in the teaching sector. Open badges are primarily used in liberal adult education, vocational education, and vocational teacher education, although individual employers also issue open badges in personnel training, for

example.

The open badge survey conducted in the spring highlighted a key observation. The primary area in which competence has been and is being demonstrated through open badges at different levels of education is digital skills. In addition to digital skills, areas in which competence has been demonstrated include the safety of a specific educational institution or career guidance in the “Open merkit” project, for example. However, the only project in which competence has been demonstrated in “soft skills” such as encounters with others, ethics and interaction was SOSTRA (Soft Skills Training and Recruitment of Adult Educators). This project enables adult educators, managers, and HR personnel to demonstrate their “soft skills” competence (Häme University of Applied Sciences 2020). I will revisit “soft skills” later in this article.

What are open badges? Talk about open badges evokes an image of a badge. The “LOVE – teacher coaching programme” was implemented in the Lahti University of Applied Sciences in 2016–2017. The objective of the programme was to develop the pedagogical skills of teaching personnel, and to renew teaching, guidance and assessment methods. The participants of the coaching programme could demonstrate their competence in eight different areas in the end of the programme. Figure 2 includes examples of open badges: Learning process online, Digital tools F2F, Future orientation, and

Co-teaching. (Lahti University of Applied Sciences 2017).



Figure 2. Open badges in the “LOVE – teacher coaching programme” (Lahti University of Applied Sciences (LAMK) 2017)

The LOVE coaching programme is also one reason for LAB being responsible for developing the project’s open badges. When the project was being prepared, LAB University of Applied Sciences was deemed to possess proof of a successful overall process for developing open badges. Another reason was the administration of the existing Open Badges platform.

The content of the open badge icon is an essential aspect of making competence visible. The icon contains metadata indicating the badge holder’s com-

petence, skills and accomplishments. The person may have acquired the competence in their daily life, at work, through hobbies or in many other contexts. The badge is a digital open badge located on an electronic platform. The most common format is Open Badges, an open standard developed by the Mozilla Foundation (Open Badge Factory 2018). The Open Badges format was also used for the open badges of the LOVE – teacher coaching programme at Lahti University of Applied Sciences.

Towards future competence: cooperation with the KOE student union

The objective of the OTE project is to develop an open badge or open badges that make common workplace skills and the related competence visible. Tentative open badges for the participating universities of applied sciences have been described in the OTE project application (see the previous chapter). In addition to the competences included in these tentative open badges, the project has found it necessary to study the workplace competence required in the future. Future workplace skills have been among the topics of discussion with the student unions in joint meetings. These discussions are the basis of the survey of future competence being conducted in the spring of 2020. The idea is to establish a shared view and understanding of future competence with the student unions, workplaces and university of applied sciences per-

sonnel, and use them as the foundation of open badge development. National surveys concerning future competence have recently been conducted by the Finnish National Agency for Education and Sitra, among others. According to the “Competences and Skills In 2035” report by the Finnish National Agency for Education, meta-skills that promote change management will increase in importance in the future. Such meta-skills include problem-solving skills, the ability to learn, development of personal competence and information assessment skills. In addition, the required skills include digitalisation competence and knowledge of sustainable development (Opetushallitus 2019, 5). The objective of the OTE project is to develop an open badge or badges that university of applied sciences students representing different fields of study could earn. Open badges will make visible the informal competence acquired before or during the studies. In other words, the intention is not to create indicators of competence concerning the substance of certain professional sectors but to make common generic skills visible through open badges.

In the spring of 2020, we reviewed reports that described future competence with KOE. Based on these reports, we have been building the concept of breakfast events for jointly mapping future competence with students, workplaces, and LAB’s teaching and RDI personnel. A breakfast event was held with workplace representatives

at the Lahti campus in February 2020. KOE presented the participants with a summary of future competence built on the competence surveys. Based on this competence summary, the participants and students examined future competence together, and outlined the additional competence required in the future. The workplace representation at the breakfast event was diverse and offered an interesting overview of different views of future competence. The student-driven event was highly rewarding and set a positive tone for upcoming similar events.

The coronavirus epidemic in the spring of 2020 upended daily social routines and completely changed the OTE project's schedule for the spring. The breakfast events on competence scheduled for campuses had to be cancelled. This prompted us to seek new ways of making the events happen in the spring of 2020. In May, meetings between students, LAB's teacher tutors and project managers will be held online via Zoom. The meetings will follow the breakfast event concept in the same manner as on the Lahti campus in February. The content will be the same, but the implementation setting will differ. At this point, it remains impossible to obtain an overview of the results of the meetings, because the meetings remain ongoing. A summary of the meetings will be available at the end of May.

In the spring of 2020, the work involving the project actors and student unions to develop open badges focused on

creating a shared understanding of future competence and the foundations of the open badges. Achieving a shared understanding has included plenty of discussions, mapping, studying and envisioning. Efforts are progressing towards decisions on the implementation of open badges, concept definition and pilots. All this will take place in cooperation with KOE and the other student unions, as well as the project's partner universities of applied sciences.

What is KOE's experience of the participation in the OTE project thus far? KOE's chairperson Onni Kuparinen shares his insights (2020). Onni says:

"The KOE student union has joined LAB in implementing a project that aims to develop operating methods for promoting employment among students. The starting point is the inclusion of students in the project, which is designed to benefit them. KOE's extensive student network will also provide added value to the project, because it allows for the incorporation of authentic student perspectives in the project.

The cooperation with LAB's personnel has functioned well, and such an operating model would also benefit other projects. This could even include involving the student union as an official partner in the projects."

This form of project work in cooperation with the student union is a new experience and begs the question "Why hasn't this been done before?" Working with students as equals in the development work has been refreshing and

eye-opening. It has been a pleasure to see how committed and responsible KOE has been in the OTE project. Onni Kuparinen proposes that the student union could also be an official partner in the project.

What will happen next?

One phase in the development of open badges has been completed in the OTE project. The spring of 2020 was characterised by laying the foundation for the open badges. The measures taken included mapping, reporting, and establishing a shared view and understanding. A shared workshop on open badges will be held with the student unions and partner universities of applied sciences in June. The workshop will make visible the results of the groundwork carried out in the spring, and we hope to be able to start preparing the open badge theme. The key themes specified in the breakfast events on competence included teamwork, entrepreneurship and a multidisciplinary approach. At this point, we wish to take a moderate approach to the open badge themes, because the content will be specified during the autumn of 2020. Nevertheless, we hope that the workshop will provide a shared view of the national open badge to be developed in the OTE project, which focuses primarily on the demonstration of “soft skills” competence. These “soft skills” were highlighted at each breakfast event. This alone is a significant step, which outlines the future path of the project activities. The

open badges assigned for the different universities of applied sciences and listed in the project application should also be taken into consideration. How can the tentative open badge for entrepreneurship and project competence being prepared at Oulu University of Applied Sciences be integrated with the themes of teamwork, entrepreneurship and a multidisciplinary approach? And how will these themes be integrated with the alumni and tutor activities of Savonia University of Applied Sciences? The content of the open badges also needs to be determined and developed.

Decisions on deploying the open badge in practice will also need to be made in future. “Effective deployment is not a series of milestones but a systematic, expansive and accumulative process” (Halonen 2019). The joint discussions conducted in the spring showed that a lot of work was still needed for the deployment of the open badges. One of the matters to be determined before the OTE project ends at the end of 2021 is the party or parties that will be responsible for the administration of the open badges in future Will these parties be universities of applied sciences, student unions or a combination?

Concerning the deployment efforts, the “place” of the open badge should also be investigated. Several questions remain open. Could a national and multidisciplinary open badge be included in studies? Could the scope of the open badge be defined as the number of credits? How can the open

badge be made attractive to students? What are the elements that motivate competence sharing? How much work are students willing to put into demonstrating their competence when they apply for an open badge? As the project also includes working life development measures, some of the questions target workplaces. What added value will the open badge provide for workplaces? How can the open badge be communicated to workplaces? How will employers understand the purpose of the badge?

At the time of writing this article, we hoped that by the beginning of June we would take a step forward in the development of the open badge, but many open questions and matters remained that needed to be considered and developed together in the project.

The LAB personnel involved in the OTE project is facing a new situation. We launched the project at two different universities of applied sciences (LAMK and Saimia) in the autumn of 2019, before the merger in January 2020. At the time, there were two OTE project

employees in LAMK, and one in Saimia. The post-merger number of project personnel was three. One of the project employees transferred to a new position in May. The project's key idea of working with the student unions will become concrete in a new way at the beginning of June. A KOE representative will become an OTE project employee in LAB. This will create an interesting opportunity to develop the project cooperation with student unions in a new way. It will also challenge us to think about the division of responsibilities and tasks in the project from a new angle. The OTE project is also creating new situations for KOE. When one of their representatives becomes a project employee, KOE will be required to rethink the student union's responsibilities in the OTE project's different work packages.

The OTE project is going through interesting times with regard to open badge development work and cooperation with the student union. This lays a good foundation for the project's future.

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Service Innovations for Health and Well-being is one of the strategic focus areas of LAB University of Applied Sciences. This publication compiles examples of interesting ongoing or recently ended Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) projects implemented and carried out in this focus area.

This publication seeks to disseminate the activities and results of these RDI projects and thus to increase communication between LAB University of Applied Sciences and its partner universities, companies and other stakeholders. With this publication we wish to activate the discussion on the multifaceted issues of health and well-being.

The Publication Series of LAB University of Applied Sciences, part 5
ISSN 2670-1928 (PDF)
ISSN 2670-1235 (print)
ISBN 978-951-827-333-5 (PDF)
ISBN 978-951-827-334-2 (print)

Leverage from
the EU
2014–2020



EUROPEAN UNION
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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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