



# COVID - 19 effect on Health & Social organisations during coronavirus pandemic

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The objective of this thesis was to understand how the third sector in Finland and in the United Kingdom (UK) are dealing with the Pandemic situation inside of their social and health organisations. The purpose of the study was to compare non-governmental organisations in two different countries and understand how they are coping with the coronavirus crisis, COVID-19 pandemic. The thesis was done in collaboration with the SOSTE, the Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health. SOSTE requested a comparison of the third sector's role during the coronavirus situation by exploring how the pandemic has affected social and health organisations in terms of activity, finances and continuity.

The study was conducted as a qualitative comparative research. The thesis compared 79 organisations from the UK and Finland. The participating organisations were chosen by answering the electronic questionnaire. Triangulation was used for data collection. Data collection included responses from the interview, document analysis, annual and financial reports from organisations and previous studies. Document analysis can be used to reflect a periodic change and gives deeper understanding of the topic; therefore, document analysis was used in this thesis. Annual reports were used to compare differences from before and after the coronavirus crisis situation, and financial reports were used to support the data from the annual reports to obtain a clearer picture of the organisations' funding structure.

The results of the thesis indicated that the coronavirus situation has had an effect on the third sector organisations in terms of activity, finance and continuity. The study showed that organisations in both countries had to take drastic measures to keep their services going by avoiding physical contact and keeping social distancing in place. Most of the organisations in both countries were still able to thrive through the unexpected circumstances and keep functioning through the corona crisis.

Keywords: Coronavirus, third sector, non-profit organisation

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## 1 Introduction

In Late December 2019, the World Health Organisation (WHO) received information about cases of pneumonia with unknown origin from China, specifically from the city of Wuhan. In January 2020 Novel coronavirus had been identified and was referred as SARS-CoV-2 and associated as COVID-19. By May first, 2020, 3.2 million cases were found globally with over 200,000 deaths. (GOV UK 2020c.) The World was surprised by coronavirus situation and everyone had to evaluate their life and their social behaviour. This naturally affected the third sector as well and organisations belonging to the third sector had to analyse their operations during this time of chaos and disturbance. The third sector had been put in a challenging situation regarding safety, wellbeing and finances due to these suddenly changing circumstances.

In the United Kingdom (UK), the lockdown restrictions started on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020. When restrictions took place in the UK, people were ordered to stay inside their homes and were able to go outside once a day until July 14<sup>th</sup> when government restrictions started to ease out. The UK government announced new restrictions from 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2020, where the UK was divided into a tiered system: from Very High, High, Medium to Low. (GOV.UK 2020b.) On the 31<sup>st</sup> of October the UK government announced new lockdown measures for four weeks in England whereby people were again required to stay at home, avoid gathering with people outside their household, and some businesses as well as all social venues were closed. The process can be seen illustrated in Figure 1. (GOV.UK 2020a.)

Figure 1: Lockdown restriction timeline in the UK



(Louhela 2020.)

In response to the coronavirus situation in Finland, on March 18th gatherings of more than 10 people were banned by the government. Museums, theatres, libraries and other facilities were ordered to close, and the third sector was recommended to do the same. The Coronavirus situation began affecting Social and Health organisations in Finland in the Spring of 2020. Due to “force majeure” situation, Annual General Meetings could not be held. (duodecim 2020; Yle 2020.) The purpose of these restrictions was to slow down the spread of coronavirus, prevent an epidemic and to maintain resource capacity of Finland’s healthcare in order to protect people most at risk. From the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, Finland allowed public events of a maximum of 50 people. The public places that were closed from March opened in a controlled manner in June 2020. Cafés, restaurants and sport competitions could resume with certain restrictions. (Finnish Government 2020a.) From the 19<sup>th</sup> of October, the Finnish government made new recommendations that the private sector adopt extensive remote work practises. Like in UK, the Finnish government made regional recommendations based on the local development of the epidemic. With the new guidelines the government recommended, that people should avoid events that have more than 20 people and private events were limited to no more than 10 people. In Finland, the government's recommendations are not legally binding. (Finnish Government 2020bc). In the UK, breaking government coronavirus guidance is against the law. In UK, police can take action against the meeting in larger groups than permitted and individuals can be fined £200 for a first-time breach, doubling for further offences up to a maximum of £6,400. Holding illegal gathering of over 20 people could lead to a fine of £10,000. (GOV.UK 2020b.)

SOSTE, the Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health has also been greatly affected, with especial concern regarding their member organisations ability to survive this challenging time. SOSTE is an umbrella organisation for 200 social and health non-governmental organisations and partners. SOSTE is a foundation for the promotion of social wealth, health, and advancement of a responsible and fair society. SOSTE’s aim is to increase the impact of social and healthcare organisations in society (SOSTE2020.) The thesis will promote SOSTE’s aims and gather information that will be beneficial for them in the future. How the health and non-governmental organisations in both countries have coped with the coronavirus situation will be compared in the thesis. The impact on the finances of these organisations during this challenging time will also be assessed in the study. This thesis has been completed in collaboration with SOSTE following their request of a comparison of the third sector’s role during the coronavirus situation. They were particularly interested in information about communication with public officials, support to and from stakeholders and co-operation between other entities. SOSTE also wanted the thesis to focus on the immediate and indirect effects of a pandemic on third sector organisations.

Small International development charities network conducted a study between June to August 2020, on small charities that work overseas (income less than £ 1 million pound a year). The



study had 53 respondents. The study showed that since the coronavirus pandemic arrived in the UK, there has been a significant impact on the third sector. Most of their services had to be postponed and efforts to fundraise had to stop. The study showed that 77% of respondents were affected financially, and that 45% of these small charities will have to close within a year if they do not receive additional funding, and that 15% will close in next 6 months. Of these charities, 72% had seen an increase in demand for their services, but 50% had to postpone their activities. 64% have found new ways to deliver their services, while only 11% have been able to continue as normal. (Institute of fundraising 2020.) A report from 1458 charities in Canada conducted in April 2020 showed a similar increase in demand, and a need to reshape activities and programmes in order to survive. This could be done through increasing the online services or modifying services delivered in person or cancelling or reducing the services all together. (Imagine Canada 2020.)

The thesis is about the third sectors in Finland and in the UK, and how they are dealing with the current situation inside their organisations. The purpose of the study is to compare how the health and social NGO's in both countries are coping with the coronavirus situation. The study will also assess the impact on the finances of these organisations during this challenging time. The thesis aims to explore and compare the impact of a pandemic on the third sector in Finland and the UK. The objectives of the thesis will be achieved by analysing the similarities and differences between two countries through conducting an electronic interview to Social and Health organisations. By using document analysis, we can gain a deeper understanding of how the pandemic has affected social and health organisations in terms of activity, finances and continuity. The research questions in the thesis are:

- 1) How has the pandemic affected Third sectors social and healthcare organisations in terms of activity, finances, and continuity?
- 2) How are these organisations coping financially, communicating with public officials, cooperating with other organisations and how are they supported by stakeholders?

## 2 Coronavirus

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has defined coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as an “infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus”. Coronavirus is a part of family of viruses that can cause infection in humans or in animals. People infected with COVID-19 can experience respiratory illness. Older people or people with underlying medical problems are more likely to develop serious consequences of the disease. Best way to protect yourself

and others from the infection and slowing down the transmission is to wash hands, not touching the face and using alcohol gel frequently. COVID-19 is transferred through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose. During the data collection for the thesis, there was no vaccine or specific treatments available for COVID-19 (WHO 2020.) Although, recent developments have shown positive signs with vaccine trials showing 90% success rate for the COVID-19 vaccination. (Pfizer 2020.) December 2020, Pfizer/BioNTech announced that their vaccine had been judged to be safe for use in the UK, and that one week later the UK would be the first country in the world to start vaccinations. The vaccine is a new type called an mRNA vaccine, which uses a tiny fragment of the genetic code of the virus to build immunity against COVID-19. The medicine regulator in the United Kingdom, the Medicine and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) announced, that the vaccine for protection against COVID-19 is safe to be rolled out. The vaccination is to be offered first for residents in care homes, and afterwards to people of 80 years and over. After that, the priority will be front-line health and social care workers. (GOV.UK 2020e.)

In the UK there have been two trials for a coronavirus vaccine: Oxford Vaccine group and Oxford University and Imperial college University vaccine trial. The research partner in England is the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) (NHS 2020a). Both trials have progressed to phase three in their clinical research. Imperial College was the first to test a self-amplifying RNA (saRNA) technology. Imperial College University was able to display that two doses of the vaccine neutralised antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 when used in mice. (Imperial College London 2020.) In July 2020, the Oxford University vaccine trial study showed a strong immunity response. Results of the Phase I/II indicated no concerns for patient safety and displayed strong immunity response. The vaccine was able to provoke a T cell response from white blood cells and showed to have neutralising antibodies. The vaccine was tested on 1000 healthy adults between the ages of 18 to 55 in a random controlled trial. Volunteers received a two doses of the vaccine ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 or a placebo MenACWY vaccine. Phase three of the trial will be tested on 30000 patients in United States, Brazil and South Africa. (Folegatti & al. 2020.) The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in Finland has set an objective to protect the population with a vaccine when it becomes available. Finland is participating in line with the EU agreement with European Commission to purchase the vaccine against coronavirus and make sure the population of Finland has access to vaccines. Finland announced on 31<sup>st</sup> of August to take part in COVAX mechanism. The Vaccine would be part of a vaccination program, which means it would be available for whole population. It also means, being vaccinated would be free of charge and voluntary. (Ministry of Social affairs and health 2020.)

Coronavirus has had a dramatic effect worldwide. Not only had it had an effect on human and animal populations, it has had an effect on finances too. There has been a dramatic impact on stock prices, interest rates and another economic activity related to the gross domestic

product and it remains to be seen how large the impact will be in the long run. The current climate has also caused interest in previous epidemics, such as the Spanish flu. The Great Influenza epidemic, also known as Spanish flu, was active in 43 countries years between 1918 to 1920, killing around 39 million people. At the time, this represented around 2% of the World's population. Applying that figure to the current rates, it would be about 7.5 billion people. The Great Influenza epidemic had three main waves between 1918 and 1919. Some countries did experience fourth wave in the year 1920. The Great Influenza infection was an airborne infection influenza virus subtype H1N1. Today's healthcare, screening and quarantine procedure are much more advanced than then. (Barro & Weng 2020,2.)

Researchers think that there are similarities between the Great Influenza epidemic and coronavirus. There are similarities in terms of virulence and infectiousness. There is also a suggestion, that the economic impact in both epidemics would be similar in terms of the effect on economies. The great influenza spread across the world and had similarities with seasonal flu. Most common people to get sick from it was the elderly and people with high comorbidities. The Great Influenza is still known to be a deadliest pandemic in human history, killing more people than the First World War. It should be taken into consideration that the war scenario did enable the virus to spread with significantly increased interaction and movement between people. One of the similarities between COVID-19 as well as the Great influenza epidemic was that the mild strain of the virus can make the people only mildly unwell, meaning people remain active longer and expose others to the strain. During the Great Influenza epidemic, sanitary and health conditions were poor: Unwell soldiers were kept in crowded spaces like trains and hospitals. (Hedge 2020.)

Since the Great Influenza, there have been other types of respiratory related infections. The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic in spring 2003 also gained attention Worldwide. SARS originated from China, between November 2002 and 2003 the WHO issued SARS-related precautions when traveling to China. 7300 cases of SARS and 500 deaths were reported in 30 countries. SARS was a major health concern and the exposure to the infection had to be mitigated. Like COVID-19, SARS is transmitted by aerosolized droplets but may also be transmitted by contact with contaminated objects. Similarly, to COVID-19, the isolation of people was the one of the biggest defences to stop the spread of SARS. In China, people travelling from the cities where SARS has been confirmed, were quarantined and monitored for two weeks before being allowed to mix with people. A key tactic in detection for SARS was monitoring individuals for symptoms. Chinese law required people to register their temperature each day. If a person had an abnormal temperature over 38°C, they needed to report themselves to the local hospital. Hospital would observe the individual in the quarantine ward for two weeks. (Moore 2004.)

In 2017, the WHO received information about laboratory confirmed infections of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and deaths related to the infection. 80% of the cases were linked to Saudi-Arabia. There had been a transmission of MERS-CoV between camels and humans and human to human transmission in household and healthcare setting. Epidemiologic observations suggest that human to human transmission is most likely through respiratory droplets and it is greater in aerosol-generating procedures without proper personal protection equipment. Also, contamination on surfaces can lead to a MERS-CoV transmission. MERS-CoV was counted as the sixth coronavirus and first beta coronavirus of C phylogenetic lineage known to infect humans. SARS-CoV is also part of the same family of viruses. (Hedge 2020.)

COVID-19 does have a lower mortality rate than SARS or MERS, but COVID-19 has a higher infectiousness rate. The reproduction number is known as R nought of zero ( $R_0$ ), or the effective reproduction number ( $R_e$ ).  $R_0$  is used to describe how many people an infected person will infect as an average, with the assumption that there is no immunity in the community. It is estimated by using factors like the duration that it takes a person to become contagious, likelihood of infection between the contacts and infectious person, and the frequency of contact. COVID-19 has a reproduction number around 2.63, which means each case can infect another 2.6 cases. The Great Influenza epidemic had a reproduction number in the range from 2.0 to 3.0.  $R_e$  has been an important measure to determine how the countries are responding the pandemic. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom announced on May 2020, that if the reproduction number were low, the lockdown would be eased. The strategy for lockdown easing in the United Kingdom was that if the  $R_e$  was above 1, then lockdown measures were expected to continue, but if it the  $R_e$  would reduce, the outbreak would end, and lockdown would end. It is important to highlight, that  $R_e$  number without comprehensive data is not enough to measure COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. It can help to interpret the data, but as alone it's not enough. (Hedge 2020; Mahase 2020.)

There are two main ways to restrict the spreading of the coronavirus. One is building the "herd immunity" to slow down the spread of the epidemic. This method was used in Sweden. Another way to approach coronavirus was to restrict interaction based on the reproduction number of the virus, so that when the spreading of the epidemic is small restrictions can be lifted. This has been found to be impossible and unrealistic in open society unless human movement is stopped. The Finnish government's chosen strategy to stop coronavirus spreading is to prevent the exponential spreading of the coronavirus ( $R_0 \approx 1$ ). (Finnish government 2020d.) The UK at first had a similar approach as Sweden, but then chose the same strategy as Finland. Britain decided that successful management of outbreaks and NSH test and Trace was the approach to be chosen. The UK government felt that this way people would be able to return and maintain a normal life. (GOV.UK 2020f.)

The Great Influenza epidemic had affected countries' economies all around the world. Many countries suffered a macro economic disaster following the Great Influenza epidemic. The World War from 1914 to 1918 cannot be understated with its death toll, which includes soldiers dying from illness. However, there were many countries that were suffering from influenza without being involved in the War that also suffered increased inflation rates at least temporarily. Research done by Barro and Weng 2020 shows that, in terms of the Coronavirus pandemic that we are facing today that economic recession is inevitable and it will be similar than Great Recession of year 2008 and 2009. The research shows that there will be a short-term decline in stocks and government bills but can cause a global distribution to economics but extreme efforts on mitigation has affect to the economic activity. (Barro & Weng 2020, 8.)

Coronavirus restrictions caused a deep collapse in the Finnish economy. The biggest restrictions were put in place for service-based companies such as restaurants and travel related businesses. Demand and supply both crashed same time. Companies had to furlough their staff fast. In May 2020, there was over 170 000 furloughed staff in Finland. The prediction is, that Finnish GDP will decrease 10 percent during the year 2020. (Wilska & al. 2020.) The financial political strategy report made for the Ministry of Finance in Finland highlighted the impact and measures, that the coronavirus situation is causing to the economy of Finland and how can the country recover from the situation. The report shows that Finland's economy is suffering from deep recession because of the coronavirus crisis. It suggests that Finland needs to prepare for similar impacts that happened after the 2008 financial crisis and these effects will be seen in production, demand and supply, but also in the health and social care sector. The lifting of the coronavirus restrictions is the key for economy to recover from the recession. (Finnish government 2020d.)

As in the Finland, the economy in the UK is suffering from the coronavirus restrictions and this has caused a financial loss. (Brahams & Zeitlin 2020, 55.) All of the restriction measures to protect the population have had an effect on the national and the international economy. Though there were some positives such as the short-term reduction of carbon emission and individuals increased savings, the tourism and hospitality industries crashed. Most of the World's economies have faced problems because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the increased unemployment caused by it. In the UK alone, 6.3 million employment contracts were suspended because of the pandemic. (Băhneanu 2020, 102.)

### 3 Financially vulnerable third sector

Coronavirus situation has had an effect on each sector in society, including the health and social care sector. The health and social care sector consist of any organisation that provides non-profit support and services to people. In the healthcare sector it means for example

hospitals or specialist support such as dentists. In the social care sector, it means support such as nursing homes or nurseries. The social and healthcare sector helps people to live more independently and supports that purpose (Princes Trust 2020.) England, Wales and Northern Ireland all have their own healthcare systems known together as The National Health Service (NHS). The NHS is publicly funded by the government and private sector and third sector can provide additional services, that government does not provide. In Finland, the healthcare services are organised in the same way. Social care means wide-ranging services covered by government and additional non-governmental organisations. It varies from child protection, youth work to elderly care. In both countries, local government has a primary responsibility for health and social care. Both care systems provide help for those in need and supporting third sector organisations support the government to fulfil their obligation. (The care workers charity 2019.)

The Third sector comes from the concept that socio-economic activity is divided into three sectors: First, which means the national and the public sector, secondly the private sector which means services that make a profit and finally a third sector, which provides additional services, that do not fall to either first or second sector. Third sector organisations are charitable organisations, which hold non-governmental nature (NGO), such as social (civic) organisations. Their activities often are based on volunteering. (Dominowska 2016, 181.) The third sector includes voluntary organisations that provide services to the community. Organisations can be registered charities, associations, groups and co-operatives. It can generally be said that third sector organisations are independent from government and are value driven. These organisations motivation is to achieve social goals instead of profit. Third sector organisations reinvest generated funds to support their goals, and they can be known as “Non-profit organisations” (National audit office 2010.)

According to the jurisdiction of High Court charity law in England and Wales, a charity is an organisation that is founded for charitable purposes (GOV.UK 2013). In Scotland, charities are regulated by the Scottish charity regulator called OSCR. They define a charity as an organisation that meets the requirement for a charity, which means that it must be solely benefitting the public (OSCR n.d.) All of the non-governmental organisations in the UK are not eligible for beneficial tax treatment. These are the community interest organisations that can benefit the community, but they re-invest their profits back to their purpose. These includes example societies, non-charitable associations, non-governmental organisations and non-charitable enterprises which have social and commercial objective. (Dayson 2013, 22; Thomson Reuters 2020.) In Finland, an association is defined for example as a sporting, cultural or religious association. Registered associations are defined by Finnish law as non-profit associations. Registered associations can apply for funding and financial assistance. All associations need to be registered at the Finnish patent and registration office. Associations usually operate and plan their activities yearly and are audited annually. (Info Finland 2019.)

In the UK, any organisation or charity needs to have an income of more than £5000 to be registered by the charity commission and to receive funding. Organisations are allowed to raise money before becoming a registered organisation/charity as long as it is made clear when starting to fundraise money. The government itself does not fund charities on a national level, but charities can be funded by central and local governments. (GOV.UK 2016.) In the UK, most of the funding comes from private funders and through fundraising. Organisations are also able to obtain funding from wills and legacies. Organisations are able to receive funding from the platforms like the big give Christmas appeal. The Big Give is the UK's funding platform where charities can multiply their impact by matching their funding campaign. (The Big Give 2020.)

In Finland, the organisations need to make sure that they follow the laws and regulations in all activities. In Finland, these actions are legally binding by laws 503/1989 and 18.9.2015/1141 (Finland 2020). Responsibility of the finances of the organisation lies on the board of organisation. (KSL Studycenter 2019.) Organisations require funding, and the most common funders in Finland are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Culture and Education, Ministry of Interior, Finnish National Agency for Education, Cities, municipalities, foundations, institutions, youth academy, STEA, Arts Promotion Centre in Finland, Finn partnership and European Union (EU). Funders usually expect the organisations to self-finance from 5% to 25% of the funding. The European Union helps to support organisations that are not able to self-finance to get funding. (Fingo n.d.)

Most of the studies done during spring 2020 have discovered, that most of the non-profit organisations around the World faced financial suffering during pandemic. Most of the organisations needed to cancel their fundraising events or cut their programs completely, even though there was higher demand for their services. (Charity Navigator 2020). Indiana United Ways with cooperation with the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University Bloomington and The Lilly Family School of Philanthropy conducted a survey of COVID-19 and its impact on services, finances and staffing in July 2020, and what they found out was that coronavirus situation had distressing effect since late 2019. Non-profit organisations had to undertake extensive efforts to move their services to online platforms because they were not equipped to deliver services digitally before. Suddenly organisations needed to have adequate software, IT systems, IT literacy, as well as understanding cameras, internet, IT-security, remote access, files, microphones and equipment they might have never used before. Impact on finances was also clear. (Grønbjerg & al. 2020.)

Joanna Dominowska states that economic crises can bring a reduction in funding that is provided by government and giving that is done by corporations. This can lead to dismissal of workers, delaying of progress, cancellation of services and freezing of wages. (Dominowska

2016, 179.) The economic impact of the crisis was seen in the respondents. Both countries, Finland and United Kingdom have increased their support for the third sector. In the United Kingdom, support for the third sector has been available in the form of the resilience fund, voluntary service emergency fund and third sector infrastructure enabling fund. The primary focus of the funds is to help third sector organisations to stabilise and manage cash flow over this difficult period. (Welsh government 2020; SCVO 2020.) In Finland most of the third sector organisations receive funding from Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden tutkimuskeskus (STEA) in Finnish, which translates to the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health organisations. STEA manages funding for non-profit projects and receive funding from the gambling revenue of Veikkaus Oy. The Act of Discretionary Government Transfers (Valtionavustuslaki, 688/2001) is applied to the granted funding. STEA operates with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in Finland to grant funding for non-profit organisations. (STEA 2020.)

In April 2020, STEA announced that they won't be opening a grant for spring 2020, and that the only grant to receive support was the grant to employ young people. The reason for this was the changing environment, and STEA announced that the funding for year 2021 would decrease. (STEA 2020.) Slot machines were closed for four months in Finland during spring 2020 and were only able to open in June 2020. Veikkaus Oy removed 8000 slot machines, which accounted for 40% of the machines in public places. In addition, during the coronavirus crisis, the playing of slot machine games decreased significantly. Revenues dropped by a third from the usual 30 million euros a week. Online games and lottery were still available during the coronavirus crisis. (Yle 2020.)

In Finland in spring 2020, the Finnish government announced it would support organisations with a special fund (Ministry of Social affairs and health 2020.). Local government also provided funding to the local organisations. (Pori 2020.) The Government granted additional funds for psychosocial support and the development of digital services totalling 5 million euros. Additional funding was put in place in late May to support 382 organisations and foundations, this funding was approximately 25 million euros. (Ministry of Social affairs and health 2020.)

Dayson Christopher (2013) has defined a term of "financial vulnerability" in the third sector. Being financially vulnerable means, that a crisis affects the non-profit organisation's ability to complete their mission and fulfil their objectives due to funding constrains. This means that the organisation is not able to deliver their programmes with the expenditure they have. Being financially vulnerable has a resonance, in times when there is economic uncertainty. Many non-profit organisations struggle with the rigorous demands of financial management. If financial measurements would be available, organisations would have better chances to survive the crisis though better support. By identifying the need of third sector would help the organisations survive long term. (Dayson 2013, 22.)



The UK government rolled out a furlough-scheme, which helped the organisations. The furlough scheme was implemented by the UK government for maintaining the employment of the work force while operations were affected by coronavirus situation. Instead of making employees redundant, the scheme helped organisations to furlough their staff, meaning they would not be required to work but 80% of their usual monthly salary (up to £2500 per month) would be paid by the government. This scheme was active from 1<sup>st</sup> of March till July 1<sup>st</sup>. From August 1<sup>st</sup> employees were asked to contribute 20% of the cost towards the wages. If staff costs are publicly funded, organisations could not furlough staff, so the scheme did not involve all the publicly funded organisations. During the furlough, the employees are not allowed to do any work or provide any services, that makes money for the furloughing organisation or organisations that are associated with the organisation, but they can take part of training, volunteer or work for another employer. (Gov.uk 2020.) From 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2020 the UK government announced a new job support scheme, which would replace the coronavirus job retention scheme (furlough scheme). The new scheme will run until April 2021. The new scheme was aimed to protect the jobs that will face low demand during winter. With the new scheme, employees need to work at least 33% of their usual hours and employers will pay them the wage for these hours. The hours not worked, the government and employer will each pay third of the usual hourly wage. Employees can earn a minimum of 77% of their normal wage. (Gov.uk 2020.)

In Finland, there is no furlough scheme in place in the same way as in UK. In Finland, a lay-off means an interruption of work and wages on employment, but the contract between employee and employer stays in place. The Finnish government changed a law from 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2020, that during temporary layoff, the worker is entitled to the unemployed benefits but were also obligated to accept a job from their current employer. This law was temporary and lasting until 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2020. (Ministry of employment and economy 2020.)

A report made in Canada also showed that the coronavirus pandemic has had profound effects on the finances of organisations. Seven out of ten of charities reported loss of revenues since the pandemic started and revenues declined almost a third even though expenditures increased. A decrease in revenues was seen in donations, fundraising, memberships and other revenue generating events. Organisations in Canada released triple the average amount of staff during the pandemic. During the Spring of 2020, 37,000 people were made redundant. Generally, hours were reduced significantly, and further reductions are likely. Only a small portion of organisation did not need to lay off any staff, while charities with revenue more than \$1.5 million were more likely to lay off staff than the small charities. (Imagine Canada 2020.)

### 3 Crisis

The modern World has not faced a situation like the COVID-19 crisis, and it has had a surprising effects on the third sector. The COVID-19 situation can be defined as a crisis. Hannes Eder and Patrick Alvintzi have defined a crisis as an atypical situation which consists of a threat to the operation of organisations to run safely. Usually, the crisis has a negative impact on finances, politics and business, especially if not managed properly. Crisis management is the intervention done by individuals, alone or in a team, aimed at minimising possible losses and protecting organisations or businesses. Interventions can be done before, during or after the event. Crisis management is a way to prevent and decrease possible damage that can be caused by the crisis itself. (Eder & Alvintzi 2010, 10.) A survey conducted by the Institute of Fundraising for charities in the UK found, that charities will play a vital role during the crisis with demand for their services expected to rise 43%, while at the same time operating with an estimated 48% drop in income. In total 91% of charities expect to see their income negatively affected, and 52% have already had to reduce their services. (Institute of Fundraising 2020.)

Pekka Iivari has defined a crisis as a vital part of economy or organisations life cycle. For humans, a crisis situation or event is something that goes beyond the comprehension of the human mind and is something previous experiences and learned skills and are not able to explain. The situation then becomes too much to handle for individuals. Crisis always causes change, after which the organisation and the surrounding world will never be the same as before the crisis. (Iivari 2012, 184.) This is what happened during coronavirus situation to the third sector organisations. When a crisis occurs, the uncommon situation endangers the organisation's existence. A crisis is possible in all organisations and communities. Organisations need stability to survive a new kind of environment. (Iivari 2011, 4). Changes during the crisis can causes resistance. People are usually capable of change but do not want to change. When an organisation is strong inside, they are able to sustain a crisis better than organisations who do not hold an identity. Change can be mitigated by training, providing more information, support, co-operation and providing a positive change with open attitude (Iivari 2011, 57-58.)

Joanna Dominowska has stated that an economic crisis in society can have a negative effect in governmental funding and donations to the third sector. During a crisis, organisations are trying to keep their activities running as normal and for as long as it is possible. When crisis is over, the non-profit organisations will grow substantially. They can adopt faster to changing situation, than the for-profit sector. Non-profit organisations can also survive longer than for-profit because they do not generate profit and are able to preserve jobs better than the for-profit side. In times of crisis that social needs grow, and the sources to fill the needs shrink. The services that the third sector provides becomes more desirable, but they are not able to

provide as much as they would like to. What third sector is able to do, is design new kinds of solutions to tackle the root causes of their organisation crises. In the time of crisis, the third sector can use themselves as much needed resource to build the needed infrastructure and be still effective. The third sector's advantage is that they can be more flexible than the for-profit sector. The third sector has basic goals and work with volunteers, and this is the key of survival in crisis. (Dominowska 2016,181.)

In the UK, the coronavirus crisis attracted people to look into volunteering more than usual. Many people were being furloughed or made redundant, and without anything to do people had more time than usual, and they felt they needed to help the society. In the UK, people were asked to reach out to their neighbours and offer help with shopping and errands. Organisations created safety videos and training online so that they could take all the volunteers into action as soon as possible. Another way that volunteers were asked to help was to support the causes closest to their hearts. (NcVo 2020.) In Finland the coordination of volunteers was similar. People were asked to be a friend, help with shopping and run errands and give their time. People were also trained for chat-help online. (The Finnish Red Cross, 2020.)

Between 14<sup>th</sup> of July and 18<sup>th</sup> of August, research was done by 'Suomen kyselytutkimus oy' which interviewed 1000 people from Finland over the age of 15. 66 % of the people who answered the survey had helped someone who they knew personally after the start of the crisis. 42% of the respondents had also donated money to help. 11% of those asked had volunteered in an organisation that helped either elderly, children or young people. Volunteers had given about 10 hours of their time a week for volunteering. People had donated money between 20 to 50 euros. Money had been donated to either health or social causes, wellbeing services or international help. Research showed that there was definite change in desire to help people. (Suomenkyselytutkimus Oy 2020.) A report made by imagine Canada also showed change in work in non-profit organisations. Charities faced a difficulty with engaging volunteers the same way as before. Most of the problems came from the incompatible social distancing measures with the work that needed to be done physically. Also, volunteers' numbers dropped because of concerns of getting sick themselves from the virus. There was also a challenge of procuring PPE equipment to prevent potential exposure. (Imagine Canada 2020.)

In the UK, the volunteer numbers also dropped and most of the organisations were not able to attract more volunteers. One organisation explained that lockdown measures, like social distancing compromised the office flow. "Stay at home, save lives and protect the NHS" was national guidance for England during the COVID-19 outbreak during spring 2020. The guidelines differed a bit between the countries of the UK, while the main national message stayed the same. People were asked to avoid close contact and keep social distancing from

everyone they do not live with or are not in the same “support bubble”. Support bubbles allowed socialising between members from two exclusive households. Guidance also promoted regular handwashing and wearing of face coverings in enclosed public spaces where is hard to socially distance. Masks were expected to be worn in markets, public transport, museums, cinemas, libraries, shopping centres and post offices. For people not complying with the rules, police and Transport for London (TfL) officers could issue fines of 100£. Repeat offenders’ fines could go to a maximum value of 3,200£. The law forbids gatherings of more than 30 people to take place in private home or in public. This included weddings and funerals, religious ceremonies and sport activities. (GOV.UK 2020.)

Crisis communication has become a vital part of the organisation management. The problem that organisations are facing, is that they do not hold plans or organised models for different kinds of crisis. To communicate well in a crisis requires the leadership of the organisation to have great crisis management skills. Crisis management need to be seen as encounter where several stakeholders and members of organisation of public communicate using different communication portals. During the crisis the need for information grows massively, and to prevent the crisis from escalating and decreasing panic, information needs to be widely available. (Iivari 2012, 203.) Crisis tests the organisations build character more than anything else. Delaying the affect and ignoring it does not work. Treating the unwelcomed series of events always a crisis is better for organisation than brushing it under the carpet. (Wheeler 2018, 11.)

Greater New Orleans Foundation and Prosper Strategies published communication tips for non-profit organisations during the Coronavirus crisis. On the guidance, they advise that stakeholders needed to be frequently updated. They need to be given accurate information from WHO, local community and the country’s health department as well as the organisation. Communication should be clear, effective, and articulate. Non-profit organisations are also in key position to make sure that their members are taking the correct steps to stop the spread of the infection. Organisations should be clear of the impact the crisis has had on operations, the community, and activities during the crisis so that stakeholders can plan and support the organisation better. If services are disturbed, organisations should communicate about alternatives ways the members can access the resources they need. Internal communication plan is the key. This includes a process for reaching the organisation’s workers, volunteers and board members through post, fliers, emails, videocalls etc. The plan should identify the key message with continual updates with possibility for feedback. Organisations should also have a communication plan for external communication to reach external stakeholders such as participants, community members and the media. (Greater New Orleans foundation 2020.)

Crisis situation is always unusual. It can’t be expected that communications are working always well when there has not been practise for unusual events. Crisis takes the strains of

organisations and often someone from outside sees the situation better than the one inside. (Wheeler 2018, 62.) Crisis communication is never known to be absolutely perfect. It is up to the listener, if the information they are given matches the reality that person is viewing. Good communication does however make organisations work more efficiently. When it comes to crisis communication, quality goes over quantity: The trust in the source of information and rapid access to the information is more important than the amount of it. (Iivari 2012, 203-204.)

A global survey for non-profit organisations done by the charities Aid of America found, that one in three organisations is at risk of closing down in the next 12 months because of coronavirus and revenue loss related to the coronavirus situation. Rest of the organisations are still unaware to know, how long they are able to cope the situation. With available funds decreasing, most of the organisations are struggling with increased demand for their services. The study also found most of the organisations are struggling to cover salaries and are not able to pay office rent or another bills. The pandemic has also caused additional expenses for the organisation. Most of the organisations need additional funding to digitise their services as well as put safety measures in place, for example installing plastic shields, providing masks and other PPE. (Non-profit Business Advisor 2020.)

Organisational structure has a big effect how organisations handle a crisis. The structure of the organisation can make or break the organisation during the crisis. Individuals inside of the organisation might be well prepared for the crisis situations and state of emergencies, but if the organisation is slow with optimising communication and inflexible to change, it blocks fast decision making. The structure of an organisation can also have a restraining effect on innovations and new ideas that benefit the organisation. The organisation is able to survive being static for a moment, but after being static, organisations need to make radical decisions. Making changes is the way organisations can adapt to new changing environment. (Iivari 2017, 67.)

## 4 Research design and method

### 4.1 Qualitative comparative study

The research was conducted as a qualitative comparative study. Qualitative research focuses the research as a humanistic or idealistic approach. Qualitative research is trying to understand beliefs, behaviour and attitudes and does not generate numeric data. (Pathak & al. 2013.) Comparative research can give a better understanding of research topics, structures and routines. Comparison can highlight systems, cultures, patterns of thinking and

acting. By comparing we can test theories and evaluate the scope of phenomena. (Esser & Vliegenthart 2017,4.)

The thesis compares 79 organisations from both countries. 16 organisations were from UK and 63 from Finland. By using a purposive sampling plan, sampling will be done by the organisations who answer the interview, which will be conducted electronically online. In Purposive sampling plan, the organisations are chosen by how they will fit the criteria of the study. In purposive sampling, the researcher uses their own judgement when choosing the participants in the study (Research methodology 2019). In the research, the electronic interview link with the covering letter was sent to over 800 Social & health member organisations. Participating organisations are sampled based on answering the electronic questionnaire which aims to understand how coronavirus has affected their organisation.

In qualitative research, drawing multiple evidence is needed to seek collaboration through the different sources and methods. Triangulation will be used for the collection of data. Triangulation means the use of multiple approaches to a research question. The objective of triangulation is to increase the confidence of findings by using more measures than one. By using triangulation, the credibility of evidence grows. (Bowen 2009,2 ; Healy & Forbes 2013.) Data collection will include responses from the electronic interview, annual and finance reports and independent information from previous research. Electronic interview was completed as structured interview. Questions on the electronic interview were qualitative open-ended questions where the aim to understand how the pandemic has affected the organisation, and what effects it has had terms of activity, finances, and continuity.

#### 4.2 An Electronic interview

Interview as a method is one of the most used way to collect information. It is a flexible method as it can be completed several ways and it gives the researcher opportunities to gain deeper information about the research topic. The data from the interview is used to analyse, understand and answer the research question. In the interview, the researcher and the interviewee are having a discussion with each other about the topic of the research. Interview can be used to collect information about people's opinions, beliefs and perceptions and it is a natural conversation method. An interview is always a unique interaction between the researcher and the interviewee. The researcher and the interviewee should always feel comfortable at the interview situation. The interviewee is aware of what is expected of them and the researcher has an idea of what to expect of the interview in terms of implementation and preparation. (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka. 2006; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008,12.)

### 4.3 Document analysis

Document analysis can be used as a qualitative research method. Document analysis has been defined by Glenn A. Bowen as a “systematic procedure for review or evaluate printed and electronic material. Data can be examined and given meaning.” Document analysis can be used to describe the nature of the document’s outlines, advantages and limitations. It can highlight the strength and weakness of document itself. Recorded words and images have been done without intervention from the researcher, and documents can be defined as “social facts” when produced and used in a social manner. These kinds of documents can be advertisements, meeting minutes, brochures, press releases, radio and television scripts, photo albums, agendas, diaries, journals, letters etc. (Bowen, 2009, 35.) In the research, annual financial statements and annual reports of activity have been used as part of the triangulation.

Organisations annual reports have been used as a part of research. Document analysis is particularly useful when researching a single phenomenon, organisation or program. All types of documents can be used for research for uncovering meanings. By doing this, a better understanding is developed, and this gives the research relevant insight about the research question. Documents serve the purpose of understanding the research and can give historical insight. Documents can give answers to questions that have been asked and can generate new questions for research. Documents can also provide additional data for research. Documents can be seen as valuable addition as base of knowledge, and they can provide a tracking system of change and development. In research, the document analysis can be used to identify the changes that are happening. By reflection the periodic changes the clearer pictures of the document are given. (Bowen, 2009, 30). Annual reports are particularly useful in this research, to draw comparisons between the time before and after coronavirus situation and the activities during the lockdown. In this research, Financial reports support the data received from the annual reports and provides a clearer picture of an organisations funding structure.

In England and Wales, the annual reports and accounts are searchable by the name of the Charity or their charity number on the website of the Charity commission. All the annual reports must explain their purpose and last year’s plan to carry out this purpose. All the organisation needs to state in detail their strategy and their assessments. The accounts help charities’ transparency for the public. All the accounts need to be submitted to the Charity commission at the latest 10 months after their end of financial year. (Charity commission for England and Wales n.d.) In Scotland, the Scottish Charity regulator (OSCR) that has a registry of Scotland’s 24,000 charities. They publish information about Scottish charities and publishes the accounts of all Charities. (Scottish Charity regulator OCCR 2017.)

When analysing the documents, initially the documents are skimmed which means that the document is superficially examined for the interpretation. This process has elements from content analysis and thematic analysis. In content analysis, the information is organised into categories surrounded by the research question. The process starts by identifying and separating information that is relevant from that which is not. In Thematic analysis, patterns are recognised from data with categorisation. Codes can be used for categorization. By evaluating the evidence, the researcher tries to find the information that can be used in their study. The researcher should always use a critical eye and needs to establish the meaning of the documents by determining the relevance for any given purpose. The researcher need to determine if the document fits with the conceptual framework of the study. Documents also need to be viewed in their sense of comprehensive, their selective nature, their balance and researcher also need to consider the original purpose of the document - why was it produced, who was it produced for and who was the target audience originally. (Bowen, 2009, 32.)

Part of the research is to evaluate the information against other sources of information. In the research the Annual report is compared to the answers of the electronic interview. Design to use in research was cross-sectional. When using documents as verification, finding few documents can provide an effective meaning for completing the research. Annual reports can give community-based information about activities in communities. These are artefacts of proceedings of organisations and how they have told the story of their organisation in a years' time. These reports are verified every year in a meeting and signed as official documentary. (Bowen, 2009, 33.)

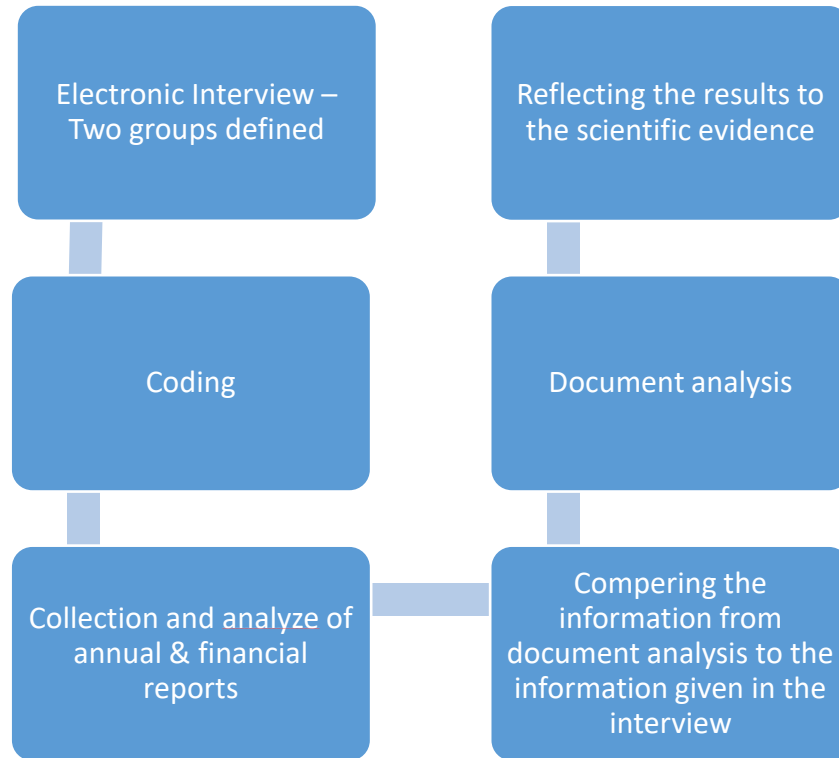
#### 4.4 Data collection

The thesis process started with the first initial conversation with the supervisory teacher in January 2020. After several chats about current topics and relevant literature, the idea for the subject came to light. After finding a partner to cooperate with the thesis, the vision of the thesis became clearer.

After going through the research literature, the form of the interview was constructed to meet the needs of the research and data was collected. From the interview, the respondents were divided into two groups based on the country of their origin. Respondents were given a code number. Annual and financial reports were then separated from the interview and examined as individual documents. Financial reports were used to support the data from the annual report. Information from the annual and financial reports were then compared with the interview data. These results were reflected to the scientific evidence of the topic. The process is displayed in figure 2.



Figure 2: Data collection process



(Louhela 2020.)

The research data was collected by using an electronic questionnaire sent directly by email or through web form to organisations. The electronic interview link with the covering letter was sent to over 800 Social and Health organisations. Organisations' budget and annual reports are available for public use in the UK, but in Finland the law is different. In Finland the reports are not public information and are only available for the organisation members, unless given permission otherwise. (Sopimustieto.fi n.d.) In the electronic interview, permission was asked to access organisations budget and annual report. I used these reports to comper the data. 33 organisations from Finland and 9 from UK provided these reports.

After data collection, organisations were in two groups. 16 organisations from the UK and 63 organisations from Finland based on answering the electronic interview. There were also two organisations who were interviewed separately using video platform in Microsoft Teams, these are included in the 16 groups that responded from the UK. 33 organisations from Finland and 9 from United Kingdom gave their annual and financial reports to be used part of the study. Quotes from the UK organisations have been taken "verbatim" which means using exact words. (Merriam Webster 2020). Organisations have been coded by running numbers, based on the order of answering the survey. Example: Organisations from the UK, who answered the

electronical interview first are coded GB01 and equivalent for Finnish organisation respondent would be FI01.

#### 4.5 Data management

The data management plan was completed before the research took place and it was reviewed during the thesis process. With the data management plan, it was made sure that the research followed the guidelines and data was kept safe and protected throughout. The thesis will be published on the Theseus database and will not be published without permission from the supervisor. Theses published by Laurea University of Applied Sciences are public documents. The thesis is part of a degree and must be evaluated. This is part of fair and objective treatment. Until the thesis is completed it will be kept as confidential, but after assessment it will become public. All the data of the thesis was kept in the E-lomake platform and original information was kept in there the whole thesis process. Thesis did not include confidential information any time. (Laurea University of Applied science 2017.)

## 5 Results

For the research, 33 annual and finance reports from Finland and 9 from the UK were received. The financial reports were used to support the data received from the annual reports to gain a better understanding of the financial structure of the organisations. By identifying the patterns, the theoretical support for the research findings was found. By clustering the codes to substantive categories, they could be compared to interview responses from both countries. These segments were compared by asking questions such as “How is this text similar to, or different than the text”. “What kind of words and ideas are mentioned in both interview statements and documents?” By identifying similarities, and differences the new categories were given to new data. After this process, the interview answers, and annual reports were re-analysed to determine the categories. From this, the documents and interviews painted a consistent picture of understanding how crisis had affected the organisations in Finland and United Kingdom.

Initial coding for the content of the documents was based on search terms: (1) financial structure. (2) Communication (3) Volunteering (4) Activity. Original interview used also words “support”, “continuity” and “worries”. These are not words, that are usually used in annual reports and for that reason, they are left out from document analysis. By using the cross-sectional design, the original sentences and paragraphs were taken from annual report and compared to the original text to the answer from the interview. By doing this, conclusions

were made on the state of the state of the non-profit organisation during the coronavirus crisis. Document analysis is highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1: Document analysis

Organisation	Finance Structure	Communication	Volunteering	Activity	Finances
GB04	<p>Membership subscriptions and donations from individuals and Gift Aid.</p> <p>Organisation seeks funding from the companies, charitable trusts and other sources to fund running costs and projects.</p>	<p>Media coverage including TV, pharmaceutical journal, magazines: Mirror and the Sun. Also covered in Lad bible in social media.</p>	<p>Volunteer-led group network continue to operate successfully throughout the UK. Groups are free to attend and open to adults and families.</p>	<p>Organisation provide information and support in many ways: Local support groups. Networking of families, adults, children and young people.</p> <p>Tailored education to healthcare professionals and another organisations.</p>	<p>Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year 216,867 181,396.</p> <p>Cash and cash equivalents at end of year 222,985 216,867</p>

### 5.1 Electronic interview

Thesis interview was conducted online with using Laurea's Elomake - electronic service platform. In the form, the reason for and the aim for conducting the interview was

highlighted shortly in the cover letter. Data was collected using the online interview from participants from two countries: Finland and the UK. The electronic interview had open ended questions to understand the effects of the pandemic by communication, activities, finances, and continuity of these organisations after the epidemic is over. The “time of crisis” in the interview referred to the time from 23rd of March onwards in United Kingdom and from the 18th of March onwards in Finland in year 2020. The study involved a document analysis as part of the research, where the annual and financial reports were compared with the answers provided in the interview. This was highlighted in the interview form. The electronic interview was available online between 1.7.2020 to 15.8.2020 and received 16 replies from the UK and 66 from Finland. Two interviews were conducted in Microsoft Teams live by using video platform. Participation for the interview was voluntary. By participating in the research, the organisations agreed to the following terms by submitting their answers: They agreed, that they have read and understood the research information, they gave permission on behalf of the organisation to be a participant of the research and understood, that they can refuse to answer any question and they can withdraw themselves from research at any time. They also acknowledged that the information provided will be used for comparative research. (Appendix 1.)

Questions were designed to understand the effects of the coronavirus on different themes. The themes were communication, activities, finances and continuity. Questions 1 to 3 were defining specifics of the organisation. The first question was the name of the organisation, the second was the category and purpose of the organisation and third question was the location of the organisation. In the UK, categories of the organisation varied from health, health advice, support for allergies, medical research, support network, education, health promotion, social, voluntary organisation or support charity. In Finland the categories were defined into three categories: social, health or both. 12 of the organisations were health orientated, 26 social and 27 social and health. Locations in both countries were well represented, in Finland 10 of 65 the organisations were located in capital area. In United Kingdom only one of the organisations was based in the London metropolitan area. Question numbers four to six were about finances. Questions from seven to nine were about activities of the organisation. Questions from ten to eleven were about communication, and support through communication. Question number 12 was about the organisation’s future and the organisation concerns for future.

## 5.2 Financial structure

When analysing organisations financial structure, the organisations were asked if the organisation was provided any type of direct financial support during the crisis. They were

also asked, if the organisation was able to employ new staff during the crisis and if they needed to make any redundancies or furlough staff. Most of the organisations from Finland stated in their annual report that most of their funding comes from STEA, the Finnish Funding Centre and they would not be able to function without the funding.

Five of the Finnish organisations in the study were able to receive funding from cities and municipalities. Based on their annual reports, in Finland, the organisations were also able to receive funding from European Social fund, ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and “Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund”. One organisation also stated that they received money from the rental of flats that they owned and were able to fund their activities through rental income. One organisation disclosed in their interview, that they faced massive losses during the coronavirus crisis, and disclosed that they needed to furlough 15 people because of the coronavirus crisis. One organisation stated in their interview, that they had received a funding of 70000 euros for building a chat-helpline and was one of the only participants that was able to hire additional staff during the crisis. Another organisation stated on their annual report, that they received funding from the Ministry of Foreign affairs in Finland to support a development project abroad. In their interview they said that they were able to raise 5000 euros during the coronavirus situation for their development project abroad. They were the only organisation that does not have any paid staff, so they did not need to think of furloughing or firing anyone during the coronavirus crisis.

One Finnish organisation stated on their annual report, that not only their funding comes from STEA, but also from events. The organisation arranges a large annual fair and receive most of their funding from selling entrance tickets to organisations and individuals. Organisation disclosed during their interview, that they needed to cancel the fair and they were not sure if they were able to organise the event of October 2020, this meant a potentially significant loss of ticket sales. Only one organisation stated that they receive funding from the education they provide. They also received funding from weekend education seminars and study fees. They were the only organisation who also undertook independent scientific research. Based on the annual report, there were only a few organisations in Finland that had multiple sources of income and not only STEA. They received funding from several different sources including grants, ticket sales for events and products they sold to their members. Based on the interviews, there were three organisations from Finland that were able to hire two staff during the corona crisis, all other organisations were not able to hire any staff.

Some of the organisations in the UK were able to receive funding during the time of the crisis. Seven of the organisations answered that they were not able to receive any kind of help during the time of the crisis. Some of these organisations received some help from their landlords and councils. The organisations that did receive help, received it from charities aid foundation, community fund (National lottery). Some organisations were also able to take

business loans and grants from local governments and personal donations. One organisation disclosed, that they were supported by the governmental funds through the National Lottery and COVID emergency response fund. Some organisations in the UK were able to receive based on their annual reports: membership fees, legacies, donations, and most of had fundraising activity. Other organisations also raised funding by sending booklets, creams, supplements and another therapeutic material. Funding was also received through gift aid.

One organisation from the UK disclosed on their interview that they had received a charity grant of £4000 at the start of the crisis, but still had to furlough 6 of 13 staff. In the following months they only had one staff member return from furlough in mid May 2020. Another organisation (GB08) disclosed in their interview when asked about furloughing staff:

Yes: 20 staff on furlough April - October 2020, 10 redundancies. All programmed work requiring expenditure suspended (e.g. funding research).

Organisations from Finland did not receive as much help as organisations in the UK. Most of the organisations from Finland did not receive any kind of financial help for the crisis and said they were running the organisation with the funding they had. Some of the help and support organisations were given material and staff. Help was also given for advertising and continuity of normal organisation activities. Organisations disclosed, that they were able to get some help from the municipalities, to receive a rent holiday for few months during the coronavirus situation from City of Helsinki. Organisations generally felt they were supported best by organisations, who were experiencing the same problems. Organisation F141 stated in the interview, that they were able to get emergency funding from STEA during the spring 2020:

We were able to get emergency funding of 70,000 euros from STEA on June 2020 to help with running a new chat-service.

Organisation (F149) stated, that even though they were not able to receive official funding, they received help from a local supermarket:

Do you mean financial help? One of the biggest activities we have in the organisation is helping elderly and vulnerable people who are shielding with their shopping. The local supermarket initiated a help scheme for vulnerable people, with five euros discount when the organisation purchases the products behalf of the shielding elderly.

Most of the organisations in Finland and in the UK were not able to hire new staff during the time of crisis. Six organisations in Finland stated that they did not see a need of hiring a new staff during the time of crisis and three organisations listed stated that they would have been able to, but there were enough volunteers, or the current staff were able to do more tasks than usual. Some organisations had students doing projects or volunteers doing workers jobs. Two of the organisations in the UK listed that they did not require new staff. Only one organisation in the UK stated that they were able to hire new staff.

Most of the organisations from the UK who answered the interview had to furlough staff, varying from one to 20 staff who were put on furlough. One organisation from the UK stated in interview that they had made ten people redundant. One organisation stated that the furlough scheme saved the organisation £50 000. From the organisations interviewed, most of the organisations in both countries did not need to lay off anyone, but same time they were not able to hire people either. From the interviewed organisations that needed to lay off people, the amount laid off varied from 5 to 16 people, between one week to 90 days. Some organisations stated, that because the organisations were running on volunteers, they did not need to let go people. Also, cancelling usual events had an effect for organisations because staff only focused on administrative tasks. One organisation from the UK stated that they did not need to release people because they made staff redundant just before the crisis period started, and one organisation stated that they had to furlough 5 staff, but were able to have them return either full or part time and did not need to let any staff go.

### 5.3 Volunteering

When asked if organisations had been able to attract more volunteers, if volunteering has increased, or if organisations had received any support to increase volunteering during the time of crisis, answers varied. Most of the organisations were able to get more volunteers than usual but had to let some go because of their age, due to their requirement to shield themselves from COVID-19 infection. In the UK, the people who were at high risk from the coronavirus (clinically defined as extremely vulnerable) were asked to shield during the pandemic. (NHS 2020b.) One Organisation from the Finland stated on their annual report, that most of their peer activity was run by volunteers. In the interview the organisations stated that were able to attract more volunteers during the crisis and this made it possible for the organisation to keep running. Meetings for volunteers were raised as a priority. This organisation had to be creative to in arranging these meetings with the new emergency law regarding social distancing. They also stated that it was so important to them, no matter if it was state of emergency, that these meetings would be held. Organisation (FI65) stated that it had no relevance to them whether they would get more volunteers during the time of crisis, they stated on their interview:

We did not get more volunteers than usual. The number of volunteers does not make a difference of surviving this crisis.

Most of the organisations were able to get more volunteers during the crisis which had a big impact to help the organisation to stay active during the time of crisis and it had significant impact to the continuity of the organisations. None of the organisations in either country received support to increase volunteering. In Finland, organisations felt they received more support from other third sector organisations and who assisted each other and kept each

other informed. Organisations also felt that generally volunteers reached out to them instead of them asking people to volunteer.

When asked if the organisation was able to attract more volunteers during the crisis, the answered varied between the countries. In Finland, almost every other organisation said yes. The ones that were able to attract more volunteers stated, that it made the continuity of the organisation possible. The volunteers were able to support the organisation in their everyday tasks. One organisation stated that their new volunteers were able to help their clients by giving support by phone and as chat operators. Some of the new volunteers were also involved with the food support services funded by EU and with crisis phone service provided by Finnish Red Cross. When asked about their views on the volunteers during the coronavirus crisis, one organisation (FI41) answered:

Volunteering increased demonstrably during the corona virus crisis. Volunteers were a remarkable help with running the helplines and chat-services online.

Organisation (FI17) disclosed on their interview, that volunteers were supporting the organisation by telephone:

Organisation grew with few new volunteers. Volunteers have been helping and supporting members in crisis through the telephone service.

Not every organisation was able to get more volunteers. One organisation stated on their annual report, that one of their goals for year 2020 was to increase the numbers of volunteers but based on the electronic interview, they were not able to get any new volunteers during the crisis. Some of the organisations also stated, that volunteers became stagnated and unmotivated during the coronavirus crisis and they were not able to give the usual effort the organisations events which lead the events being cancelled. Another problem that organisations were facing, was that elderly volunteers did not have the digital connections that were needed. One organisation from UK stated on their annual report, that during year 2019 they had 15 social family events and two-family weekends. In their interview the organisation disclosed, that they were unable to deliver any clinics, fundraises, or conferences and all the family events were cancelled. The ones who stated otherwise, said that volunteers were feeling a bit stagnant because they had small children and their everyday life became very overpowering. One organisation stated that their volunteer group was elderly people and were not able to help during the crisis. Five organisations stated that their volunteers were shielding and were not able to take part in the normal activities of the organisation. The Finnish government recommended avoiding physical contact based on age to reduce the infection risk. (Finnish Government 2020). Organisation (FI23) stated, that there was a break in volunteer numbers:

Our organisation grew with one volunteer. And again, we did not have “old” volunteers anymore. They are on break because of the COVID-19 restrictions.



One organisation stated that their volunteer numbers literally crashed when the crisis happened, and it had huge impact on the organisation. They were heavily involved with hospital work in their local area and that had huge effect on the members services because the work needed to be stopped. Restrictions were seen also in volunteering, when asked if the organisation GB08 was able to get more volunteers:

No - volunteering was largely suspended due to staff shortages and uncertain working arrangements.

The only two organisations that stated that they were able to attract more volunteers, said that most of their staff were eventually furloughed so the volunteering ended as well. One of the successful organisations disclosed, that they were part of the national engagement “Scotland cares” campaign, which attracted 35000 volunteers around Scotland. One organisation discussed the need of a new kind of online volunteer, that were not part of the organisation’s services before. Newly recruited and trained volunteers offered support over the phone and younger people got interested with volunteering online.

#### 5.4 Activity

When asked if they have been able to keep running as normal during the crisis and what issues has organisation faced, most of the organisations responded that they had to cancel most of their events. The resilience for non-profit organisations comes from the type of activities that they conduct. Even though most of the events and activities had to be cancelled by organisations, multiple organisations were still able to organise some activities in several different cities during the coronavirus crisis. One Finnish organisation stated on their annual report to have held over 105 meetings for over 1000 people during year 2019. In their interview the same organisation stated that most of this year’s activities and meetings had to be cancelled. Another organisation, whose activities mostly included rehabilitative weekend retreats, was worried that their activities could not run because they did not have appropriate personal protective equipment PPE. Another organisation with rehabilitative activities had to cancel all of their events. One organisation had stated on their annual report, that their activities gather 18 different groups. All these groups were cancelled for six months. Organisation did however build a new kind of digital services for their members and volunteers by using a discord-server.

Most of the organisations had to cancel their events during the crisis, but they were able to keep their helpline services running. An organisation from Finland stated on their annual report that they had lot of training and events to honour their volunteers. During the interview, the organisation disclosed that they had to cancel all these events. They did try to make a connection to their volunteers by using a telephone, but the volunteers were old and

hard hearing and could not always be reached this way. A few organisations stated that they initially needed to cancel all their events, but that they have now learned how to organise them with social distancing in the future. Organisation (FI27) disclosed during the interview that:

All of the organisation's activities had to be stopped for few months because all of our activities are communal, there was no possibility to meet up.

Not all organisations had to cancel all their events. Some of the organisations were able to digitalize their services. One organisation from Finland stated on their annual report, that they had introduced a new electronic software system in 2019, and this made it possible that the organisation did not need to cancel their events during the crisis because of the activities were based on telephone operated helpline and chat operations. Another Finnish organisation stated on their annual report, that their activities are based on scientific research as well as education they provide. During the interview, the organisation disclosed, that they needed to move the whole study program online. This was significant to the organisation, as this was the only organisation that provides official qualifications and completing them online had to be also approved with the Kela, the social insurance institution of Finland, which provides funding for students to apply for education.

One of the organisations from Finland stated on their annual report that most of their activities were supporting family and group activities. They disclosed on their interview, that they also had to set their activities online. This caused problems because most of the members of the organisation had problems of using digital services either because they did not either know how to use them, they had no tools or they came from broken homes where there was no possibility to get online in peace when attending the organisation's events. For these people, attending events physically in person was vital. One organisation stated that their activities were heavily based on crisis help. They offered counselling, shelters, group activities, phonelines, training and advocacy work. The organisation (FI03) stated on their interview, that they did not want to stop any of the activities because of coronavirus situation and went above and beyond to make sure that the supporting activities kept running. They disclosed on the interview:

We aim to return to "normal" in August. We will never be the same, because we want to utilise the learned skills with online help and use that to our advantage. With the remote access, we are able to provide training and meetings for volunteers, with or without "force majeure" situation. Our preparedness did not decrease during the coronavirus crisis because we adjusted our services when we faced the state of emergency. The few things (services), we were not able to provide, will return on August

One of the organisations stated on their annual report that their main activity is to provide rehabilitative activities for their elderly members. On the interview they disclosed, that they had to stop all of their activities and start to use all of their resources to make sure that all

the elderly members were able to survive the corona crisis and were safe in their home. Their members came first, organisation second as a priority. The organisation stated on their annual report, that most of their activities were organised with the local parish and in the interview, stated that they were able to continue this co-operation during the crisis. One organisation from the UK stated on their annual report, that one of their biggest events in a year was the annual conference. In the interview the organisation disclosed, that they were able to hold the annual conference online. They also stated that most of their activities could be completed online, but they felt that there was digital poverty among on their members and people were reluctant to learn how to use online platforms like zoom.

When asked, if organisations were able to continue their activities as normal, most of the organisations in Finland said yes. Organisations stated that they moved their activities, trips, lectures, and training online and they used chat-providers and platforms such as Zoom and WhatsApp. All the meetings were done online. Organisations informed their member about coronavirus situation by using different platforms available online. One medical support organisation for disease used videos where a medical professional would be answering the most common questions about the patient's disease and its relation to COVID-19. Building these new digital services has taken a toll on the organisation and it took its time and effort to get these new platforms up and running. Two of the organisations stated that they did not have sufficient money to digitise their services, which caused problems in their ability to fulfil their organisational aims.

Nine organisations from both countries stated, that because most of their members are over 70 years old, they were not able to join the organisation's activities. Most of the over 70 years old did not have digital connections, so they were supported with telephone. These organisations had to suspend some of their activities entirely for the time being. One Finnish organisation stated in their interview, that sharing information was difficult as all the members did not have the access to the internet and the local newspaper stopped their usual column where organisations used to promote their events. The volunteers who kept the organisation running, were shielding and could not help, which affected the organisation. The organisation (F111) disclosed:

Yes, we needed to modify our services a bit, but most of the activities had to be cancelled. Our members and their families are vulnerable, and they needed to shield. Most challenging was to reach the people who have no digital skills and physical contact was not allowed. Over the phone was the only way to be in contact with them. Also, volunteers found it challenging to use the digital services and most of them were also vulnerable.

Four organisations from Finland mentioned the financial burden of the pandemic and how suspending activities also stopped the fundraising and events that would bring revenue to the organisation. Organisations also stated that they had to change their support services online

and pause all the non-essential projects. Similarly, to Finnish organisations, the organisations from the UK were worried about cash flow and needed to make sure they would stay functional during this time of crisis. With many staff on furlough or working from home, the challenges were to quickly learn a new way of working with new technology, while trying to keep everyone in high spirits. Organisations stated that their face to face meetings changed to a zoom-calls. One organisation (GB17) stated:

All staff had to work from home which was a huge challenge for a small charity. Main issues were embracing new ways of working, utilising technology, keeping up morale as well as finding new ways to raise funds as all events were cancelled.

Some organisations stated that they faced inequality because of digitisation in the quote from GB05:

All working from home. Volunteering project has had to go online to train volunteers. Have had to move annual patients conference online. Some digital poverty among members. Others just don't understand/intimidated by Zoom!

A few organisations disclosed, that even though they could have been able to continue their activities, volunteers were generally so tired and exhausted that they did not have any energy for volunteering. Some organisations also had only few people to hold the whole organisation together. One organisation from Finland disclosed, that the organisation had to oversee all their elderly members and their care needs at home. Elderly members were not receptive to take any help or cancelled all their appointments thinking they were unnecessary. This was a vital service for the elderly to survive during the pandemic. Some organisations also felt that they were needed more than ever. They provided vital information for their members. All the members lives had changed too, so organisations were worried about their members surviving during the crisis.

## 5.5 Communication

When asked if they have been given support by public officials through communication, the answerers varied. Organisations were also asked, if they were able to communicate back to the government, public officials and supporting organisations during the crisis. Most of the organisations stated in their annual reports, that their main focus in communication is to highlight and raise important topics to the discussion about their focus group. Based on the interview, most of the organisations felt that they were able to communicate with their members quite well during the crisis. It is absolutely vital for organisations to communicate during the crisis situation with their members and the public.

Based on the annual reports of the organisations, they used a wide variety of ways to reach their members. Organisations used multiple methods, including magazines, books, articles, seminars and trainings, newsletters, bulletin boards, blogs, pictures and videos to share information for their members. One Finnish organisation disclosed in the interview, that during corona crisis they were given lot of positive feedback for their communication during the crisis. Another organisation stated in their annual report, that they were mostly using mainstream media to draw attention to their organisation. One organisation from the UK stated on their annual report that they had a very wide approach towards communication and during coronavirus, they felt they were able to use that for their advantage. They had a webpage, a member magazine, member letters and online groups. In 2019 alone they had 153 different published sources of information for their members. They were also very active on their meetups, ran a helpline, books, articles and attended conferences as well as organised training for their members.

One Finnish organisation had listed in their annual report multiple ways that the organisation communicated. In the interview, the organisation disclosed that during the crisis communication was very difficult because they could not afford to mail their paper leaflets to their members. Also, the local newspaper stopped their news column, what organisations would use for informing their members about upcoming events. One organisation from the UK stated on their annual report, that their main goal was the education through communication, and they had lot of educational events and material they shared on their events and seminars. In the interview, the organisation stated that they had to cancel all of their events, but their digital communication improved, and they were able to strengthen it further through channels such as podcasts and videos that were not available previously for their members.

Even though one of the organisations from the UK did not show very wide communicative methods on their annual report, they stated in their interview that they were able to communicate quite well during the crisis. They stated in their interview, that they had to learn new ways to communicate but generally felt that change was positive. The organisation stated on their annual report, that they are an information standard certified, which means that they have NHS quality mark for medical information for patients. (NHS n.d.) On their interview they thought during the crisis the communication remained clear and they were able to keep communicating with their members.

Organisations divided in two groups when asked if the government or public officials been clear with communication during crisis. Organisations in the UK stated that the government, NHS, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), banks, legal professionals have been giving information. The communication from the public officials was plenty and sometimes overflowing. Organisations felt that some of the guidance has been very unclear and

confusing and some organisations felt they had not had any communication at all. Some felt that communication from national level was small but local government had much more dynamic approach. Generally, organisations thought communication was clear. Like organisation (GB16) states here:

Communication was as clear as it could be considering this was a very difficult and unprecedented set of circumstances.

Organisations in Finland said on the interview, that they were trying to reach the public officials, but they were not able to receive any answers from them. Organisations also thought that the system was slow, or they were no opportunities to reach the public officials. Organisation (FI42) stated that:

Answers for a lot of things was difficult to get from the government. We would have wished that for example the public officials from the child protection would have helped to interpret the guidance, that they gave for child protection during the crisis. Now everything was just left to the service provider and just spontaneous decision making. It was very difficult to get conversation going with the health sector. We knew that we had to wait the officials to make decisions from our clients and staff about quarantine, but we were not able to discuss these things with them.

Most of the organisations stated in the UK, that they have had not even attempted to communicate back to the governmental officials, or they did not have an appropriate channel to communicate. They stated that the supporting organisations were much easier to reach. Some organisations stated that bureaucracy slowed things down. Finnish organisations thought they were able to keep contact with public officials. One Finnish Organisation also stated they received positive feedback of their content during coronavirus and thought the conversation was flowing both ways and reaching out was easy. Organisation (FI32) stated:

communication was easy, because the connections were built before the crisis.

## 5.6 Continuity

Organisations were asked if they expect to return to the same function as before the crisis, and if so, how long they think this process is going to take. Another question that was asked, was if they were worried about the future of the organisation. Most of the organisations were worried about their future and they were not sure when thing would return to same function as before crisis, if ever. Only two of the organisations stated, that they would be able to return immediately to how they were before the crisis. Most of the organisations from both countries were expecting slow recovery that could take years. Most of the organisations also stated, that they were expecting to return gradually, and see if the organisation's shape will change. Some of the main effects of the crisis was the reduction in staff and services

provided. Organisations had to reduce their fundraising and all the workflow attached to it. Organisations thought that fundraising will not recover in terms of activity until next year. Organisation (GB09) stated

No. We do not expect to return to the same functioning. We expect to function very differently”.

Organisations in Great Britain were less optimistic about their future than the Finnish organisations. Finnish organisations felt like they will be able to return to their normal activities in Autumn 2020 or latest at end of the year if the second wave of coronavirus did not hit. They agree like their colleagues in the UK, however, that organisations will never be the same and digital connections are here to stay and will be utilised more in the future. Organisation (GB16) stated:

We will never function the way we did before the crisis in that we will maintain some better ways of working which we had to adopt. We have, however, begun to re-start our various projects and are functioning at full capacity as we were before the pandemic. While we have been very fortunate to date with public and industry response to supporting us financially if this crisis continues for another year or more then it will have a massive impact on all areas of our work and our funds. It may not be possible to sustain our staffing levels if fundraising is impacted by the recession as well as the inability to have traditional fundraising events.

Most of the organisation remained hopeful, that they are now more prepared to face a crisis than before. Organisations have taken on board many new digital services and are better prepared to cope if a second wave or another crisis will hit, as most of the services will stay online in the future. When asked about their activities, some of the organisations thought they will recover when their shielded community can return again for face to face activities. Organisation FI15 stated:

I think we will recover. We are a great organisation and we keep supporting each other even during the crisis. Organisation binds us closer together. We are going to be fine.

Most of the organisations believed that they have learnt new skills in technology and digitisation. Organisations had to react fast and learn new ways to communicate. Some of the new platform’s organisations made available for their members included webinars, videos, podcasts and training. Organisations thought they have provided more services to more people than they were able to do before the crisis with the help of the technology. Another organisation (FI19) was very optimistic about the future:

Maybe we do not need to recover the way we were? I think, we need to learn new ways to support the old good ones. I believe we will land to our feet fast - like we did when we faced the lockdown situation.

When asked what worries they had for the future, organisations were conclusive in both countries. Most of the concerns came from lack of resources. Organisations felt they were resilient but learning new ways of working at such a fast pace was a concern for some of the organisations. Organisation (FI25) stated:

If there are any changes, I do not think the crisis was the one to blame. COVID - 19 highlighted a problem that were already there, they were not new ones.

Most of the organisations in both countries mentioned financial troubles when talking about future. One organisation from the UK stated, that because most of the events had been cancelled, the fundraising for the year 2020 is not looking good. Fear that funding for next year will be smaller than usual was a real fear. It is still yet to be seen, whether the government will provide support in terms of funding. A few organisations from Finland stated in their interview, that the current situation is uncomfortable, and they will have to wait and see what happens. Two Finnish organisations thought that organisations will not recover until a vaccination is discovered and were worried about the second wave of the coronavirus spreading even further than the first. Organisations in both countries were worried about people and how they are able to support themselves. One of the common worries were also protecting their community and having enough PPE.

One organisation from Finland stated, that they did not think they suffered from the corona crisis at all, quite the contrary. They stated that they received new volunteers and the most important thing was to ensure these volunteers settled in quickly to the organisation. Another organisation still had concerns, and sometimes these concerns crossed country borders: one of the organisations was worried about their support organisations abroad. During the pandemic, the supporting countries living conditions had reduced drastically and recovering from this looked difficult. For most of the organisations, pensioner members were a concern. They were worried that some of their vulnerable members would not recover from the crisis. This was a reality already for one organisation. One of the organisations, whose members are veterans, (FI32) stated that

Our organisation was slowly dying even without the crisis. In two to three years we need to change our organisation to Heritage association because our members are disappearing. We feel it is important that we give the organisation the significance that it needs. It is very sad, that we are not able to have a parties or meetings. Our members found these events important and it was important for their quality of life.

One Finnish organisation was worried about how to keep people active and get back to the volunteers: they were worried that people would disappear. Also, isolation was a real concern about people that have been left alone with their worries with challenges. They are exhausted. Most of the biggest concerns of organisations were that they were not able to support their members. Organisations who had families as their members disclosed that they



are worried that families and their carers will face struggles to cope and recover. Organisation (FI27) stated:

Even though the organisation is functioning, if the volunteers disappear, the organisation will also change fast. This crisis can affect the active involvement and reduce it.

All the organisations stated on their interview, that they were worried their funding would be discontinued after this year, but they will not know this until December 2020. Knowing that funding would decrease dramatically was real worry for most of the organisations and they were fearing that year 2019 was the last year that organisation was truly active. Organisations will have to wait to see how things unfold.

## 5.7 Result comparison table

Comparison between the two countries organisations are highlighted in Table 2.

Table 2: Result comparison table.

	Finland	United Kingdom
<b>Financial structure</b>	Organisations from Finland did not receive as much help. Most of the organisations from Finland did not receive any kind of financial help for the crisis and said they were running the organisation with the funding they had.	Furlough scheme helped to save money.
<b>Activity</b>	Most organisations were able to continue their activities as normal. Organisations stated that they moved their activities, trips, lectures, and training online and they used chat-providers and platforms such as Zoom and WhatsApp. All the meetings were done online.	Some digital poverty among member. Digitalization caused inequalities among members.

<b>Volunteering</b>	Lost volunteers. Volunteers were found to be generally exhausted and tired. Organisations needed to hold the association together with only a few people.	Big increase in Volunteering. Volunteers that joined organisations during the coronavirus crisis were utilised in services such telephone and digital chat and other crisis work that kept the organisations going.
<b>Communication</b>	Organisations were not able to communicate with public officials and communication only went in a one-way direction. Local level the support from public officials was much more dynamic than on the national level.	Lot of information and it was overflowing. Organisations were given positive feedback for being active and that communication had improved due to the new ways of communicating online.
<b>Continuity</b>	Finnish organisations felt that they were able to return their activities in the autumn 2020, or latest at end of the year.	Organisations from the UK were expecting a slow recovery from the crisis that could take years.

## 6 Conclusion and reflection

### 6.1 Conclusions

The aim of the thesis was to find out how the third sector organisations are dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and how they are coping with the coronavirus crisis situation. The thesis explored and compared the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in Finland and The UK by analysing the results found from the electronic interview that was send to the social and health organisations in both countries. Using interview and document analysis, a deeper understanding of how the pandemic has affected social and health organisations was gained.

The thesis linked to the development of working life. The thesis was completed in cooperation with SOSTE, the Finnish federation for social affairs and health. SOSTE requested the comparison study to research the effects of coronavirus for non-governmental organisations in two countries Finland and the UK. SOSTE was involved with the thesis process by suggesting and developing the ideas for the thesis and the thesis has been developed to meet the needs of SOSTE. The thesis will provide information to SOSTE to help them gain valuable information about social and health organisations during the coronavirus crisis. The situation is brand new and ever changing. The ideas that the UK came up with can be

functional ideas in Finland and SOSTE can use them to benefit and support their members organisations, which will allow them to develop improved work life practises.

The thesis used triangulation as a research method, utilising electronic interviews combined with document analysis to increase the trustworthiness of the thesis. The combination of the different research method continued throughout the thesis to bring confidence in the research's trustworthiness. The credibility of the research grows by the use of triangulation. Original interviews, annual and financial reports would hold true throughout the thesis process and words and paragraphs were kept with their original meanings. The data supports the findings, conclusions and recommendations which brings confirmability to the study. The thesis conducted the electronic interview for 16 organisations from the UK, while from Finland there were 66 respondents. When assessing the trustworthiness, it is important to point out, that because the UK organisations were less presented in the data, the data from organisations from UK cannot be treated same level as Finnish ones, even though answers from the organisations from both countries were mostly conclusive.

The thesis found similarities and differences between the organisations in the two countries. Most of the organisations in both countries had to cancel their activities, meetings and events because of the coronavirus crisis situation. Organisations had to act fast to adapt their services to reflect the new rules of avoiding physical contact and keep social distancing. Organisations needed to learn digitisation fast and it was not only organisations that needed to adapt fast, members and volunteers had to learn fast too. Fast digitisation of the organisations services was not easy, and it created digital poverty among organisation members. This remark was made from organisations from both countries. In both countries, often the elderly members of the organisations did not know how to use the online services and generally digitisation created inequality for members receiving vital services who did not have the tools available. For this reason, telephone services were in heavy use in both countries

Organisations in both countries also had to make changes the way they were working as some of their members were shielding. Organisations were concerned about their members safety and this caused worry in most of the organisations. Organisations in Finland lost lot of volunteers. Volunteers were found to be generally exhausted and tired. Organisations needed to hold the association together with only a few people. This was not the case in the UK, where there was a big increase seen in volunteering. Volunteers that joined organisations during the coronavirus crisis were utilised in services such telephone and digital chat and other crisis work that kept the organisations going.

Most of the focus of communication during the COVID-19 pandemic was on the members. The research found that members of the organisations felt that organisations did a good job

communicating with their members. Organisations in Finland felt like they were not able to communicate with public officials and communication only went in a one-way direction. Organisations in Finland felt that on a local level the support from public officials was much more dynamic than on the national level. Organisations in the UK, however, felt that there was a lot of information and it was overflowing. Organisations were given positive feedback for being active and that communication had improved due to the new ways of communicating online.

By assessing the impact on finances, the research found that organisations were facing a financial burden due to the pandemic in both countries, and with events stopping it also caused fundraising to stop. Organisations in both countries were worried about cash flow and staying functional during the crisis. Organisations faced pressure with people losing jobs: many staff were being furloughed and made redundant in both countries. There was a fear that funding would decrease next year and whether the organisations would remain financially viable, there was also uncertainty about whether the governments in both countries would compensate the lost funding for organisations.

The research found that most of the organisations were worried about the future. There was a recorded reduction in staff and services. Finnish organisations felt that they were able to return their activities in the autumn 2020, or latest at the end of the year. Organisations in the UK were less optimistic about the future than the Finnish organisations. Organisations from the UK were expecting a slow recovery from the crisis that could take years. They were hoping, however, that they can gradually return and see how the organisational shape will change.

There were some positive results found regarding organisational hopes for the future. The research found that organisations were able to learn new ways of working and functioning, and they were able to make a positive change in the way they provided services for people. Organisations were sometimes the only places that remained open, when the lockdown was implemented in both countries people faced an ongoing battle in accessing services that they badly needed. In this environment support services that these organisations provided became absolutely vital.

Even though some organisations in the UK felt like they would never be the same and the COVID-19 pandemic had a huge effect on the organisations, most remained hopeful in the way things are running now, and in the future organisations felt like they were better prepared for a crisis than before. Most of the organisations had taken on board the new ways of working and felt like they had adapted and survived the crisis, and even if a new wave were to strike, they would continue to function. Most of the organisations stated, that increased numbers of new volunteers was vital. All of the organisations were hoping for the return of their shielding and elderly community.

The research showed that the COVID-19 pandemic had effects on the organisations in terms of activity, communication, finances and continuity. It was inevitable that that crisis would cause change, and the research showed that is clear the organisations are not the same as before the crisis. Organisations faced a big challenge during the coronavirus situation that they were not prepared for but were able to survive through the crisis. Organisations in both countries were able to comply with the wide measures introduced to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including limiting their services and physical contact with their members. Even though organisations in both countries had to cancel or reduce their services, most of them were able to keep activities going, which had huge impact on society. Organisations were able to keep important services running despite the unexpected circumstances and keep helping people when they needed it the most.

## 6.2 Reflection

Like many others, the COVID-19 changed lot of lives. The third sector played a large role in the society, and it was greatly affected during the coronavirus crisis. The third sector provided vital services to people and it is very important that they are supported in times of uncertainty.

What I learned from the subject is that people can come together and find the ways to support each other, through volunteering or just lending a hand to a neighbour. This also brings together the ethos that non-profit sector stands for. People can have problems due to the crisis and it is important to remember that we need to support each other even though we might be in crisis too. If I were to start this process again, I would choose the document analysis and explore this method even further. Document analysis as a research tool is often ignored even though it gives a great insight, especially when trying to define a timeline before and after certain time period.

I truly believe that my thesis brought new information for this new subject and it had a tangible link to working life. What I found comparing the data between the organisations, was that some of the political decisions taken during the lockdown caused the biggest changes in the countries. The reduced funding affected both countries. The UK government's furlough scheme had a great positive effect for the third sector enabling the workforce to stay home safely without losing their job while still being able to keep most of their salary. This also allowed them to help and volunteer. In the future, if there is a pandemic, hopefully Finland's government can also focus on providing more substantial help for their non-governmental sector. The final thesis has been given to the SOSTE, the Finnish Federation for Social Affairs. SOSTE have responded to the thesis, that they will read and familiarise themselves with the

given information and use the research result to benefit their member organisations in the future.

### 6.3 Ethical and legal considerations

The thesis topic and schedule were approved with the supervisor before commencing the collection of the data. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured. There was no copyrighted, confidential or personal data used in the thesis process. The thesis contract was signed with the collaborative partner SOSTE - Finnish federation for social affairs and health and the thesis supervisor. The thesis is copyrighted by the writer. Ethical review was not needed, as the thesis does not include any specific personal data. It was important to note, that most of the guidelines leading the thesis were the rules and regulations of Finland and UK. Data services and digital curator services were contacted during the thesis process to make sure that all the rules and regulations were respected. There was no cost for this thesis. Resulting material will be given to the SOSTE and they have the right to use it, but the thesis will remain as a public document. This has been approved in a co-operation agreement. There are no conflicts of interests with this thesis.

### 6.4 Limitations and recommendations for future research

Firstly, it must be noted, that COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing, and it is ever changing. New research is coming out at a rapid pace. What is known to be true information today, might not hold tomorrow as more information is available and more knowledge of COVID-19 is gained.

Secondly, for future research, it would be advisable to focus on one organisation in one country, and individual face to face interviews might gain an even deeper understanding of the situation. Also, the fast-growing online health social services would need a further research input.

For future transferability, in this thesis detailed description of the context, selection of participant characteristics and data collection is written clearly, but as the text includes a contextual factor related to this research, subjectivity cannot be avoided.

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## Figures

Figure 1. Louhela, E. 2020. Lockdown restriction timeline in the UK. Personal collection.

Figure 2. Louhela, E. 2020. Data collection process. Personal collection.

## Tables

Table 1 Document Analysis

Table 2. Results comparison table

Appendices

Appendix 1: Thesis questionnaire..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**



## Appendix 1 : Thesis questionnaire

I am a master's degree student in Laurea University of applied science in Global health & Crisis management degree program. The purpose of this research is to analyse how the third sector in Finland and the United Kingdom are dealing with the COVID-19 situation. The aim of the Thesis is to explore and compare the impact of the pandemic on the social and health organisations in both countries.

The Research will be conducted as a qualitative comparative Research. Data will be collected through an online interview from participant organisations in two countries, Finland and UK. Qualitative open-ended questions will be used in order to best understand what effects the pandemic has had on the communication, activities, finances, and continuity of these organisations.

The "time of crisis" refers to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2020 onwards in the United Kingdom and from the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 onwards in Finland

The final information requested will be the latest available annual and financial reports. Part of the research will involve document analysis where the reports are compared with answers provided in the interview.

Please do not attach any confidential information.

Any questions regarding this research can be addressed to the researcher Eeva Louhela (eeva.louhela@student.laurea.fi)

The interview will be available online between 1.7.2020 to 31.7.2020.

The interview will take approximately 10 minutes.

Participation in this research is voluntary.

Terms of the research

By participating in the research, you agree to following:

- I have read and understood the research information
- I give permission for our organisation to be a participant in this research and understand that I can refuse to answer any question and can withdraw from the research at any time for any reason.

I understand that the information provided will be used for a comparative research.

Interview questions:

1. Name of the organisation
2. Category & purpose of the organisation (Social or health, any specifics?)
3. Location of organisation
4. Was the organisation provided any type of direct financial support during the crisis? If yes, where from and in what form? (e.g. funding, mortgage holidays) (example : Third Sector Resilience Fund) (Voluntary Services Emergency Fund)
5. Was the organisation able to employ new staff during the time of crisis? (Third Sector Infrastructure Enabling Fund).
6. Was the organisation required to furlough any employees or make any redundancies? If yes, how many people?
7. Has the organisation been able to attract more volunteers than usual during the time of crisis? If yes, has increased volunteering helped the organisation during the crisis?
8. Has the organisation received any support to increase volunteering?
9. Was the organisation able to keep running as usual during the time of crisis? What issues has the organisation faced?
10. Have the government or public officials or supporting organisations been communicating with the organisation during the crisis, has the communication been clear?
11. Was the organisation able to communicate back to the government, public officials or supporting organisations during the crisis? What was the organisation's experience of this?
12. Do you expect the organisation to return to functioning as it did before the crisis? If so, how long do you expect this would take?
13. Are you worried about the future of the organisation?
14. Please attach the latest available annual and financial reports. Please do not attach any confidential material.

Any feedback or questions, please contact Eeva Louhela [eeva.louhela@student.laurea.fi](mailto:eeva.louhela@student.laurea.fi)