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A COMPETENCE NEEDS ANALYSIS IN RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE IN FINLAND

– The need for specialization training through
experts' eyes



MASTER'S THESIS | ABSTRACT

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– The need for specialization training through experts' eyes

Empowering Residential Child Care through Interprofessional Training (ERCCI) is a three-year project funded by the Erasmus+ Programme. ERCCI (2018-2021) is a research and development project between five universities in Finland, Spain, Italy, Lithuania and Germany. The aim of the project is to improve and unify the quality of education and training amongst the personnel working in residential child care (RCC) across Europe. The final result of the ERCCI project is a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) which will be available in 2021. The MOOC will provide the personnel with an opportunity to develop their expertise and knowledge on RCC in unison across Europe. The need for the project is based on concerns linked to the various educational backgrounds and competencies of the personnel, insufficient and varying training and the high turnover rate of the personnel working in RCC. The competence needs of the personnel in RCC is a little researched area also in Finland and therefore this research was conducted.

This research project was executed in the first phase of the ERCCI project. The purpose of this research project was to provide to the ERCCI project knowledge on the competence needs and skill gaps of the personnel in RCC in Finland, based on the views of experts in child welfare in Finland. The aim was to gather the information on the subject for the ERCCI project's use.

The utilized method of data collection was an expert interview. The method is interviewing the experts and researchers in child welfare and residential child care in Finland representing various expertise areas in child welfare. All in all eleven experts participated to the interviews. The interviews were recorded, the data was then transcribed and finally analyzed using content analysis.

The experts saw that the biggest competence needs amongst the personnel in RCC in Finland were linked to interactional skills, knowing different orientations, networking and knowledge in law and regulations.

KEYWORDS:

residential child care, expert, competence needs, competence

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KOMPETENSSIOSAAMISEN ANALYYSI LASTENSUOJELUN SIIJAISHUOLLOSTA SUOMESSA

- asiantuntijoiden näkemys erikoistumisopintojen tarpeesta

Empowering Residential Child Care through Interprofessional Training (ERCCI) on kolmivuotinen Erasmus-rahoitteinen kehittämisprojekti. ERCCI -projektissa tehdään yhteistyötä viiden eurooppalaisen korkeakoulun kesken. Osallistujamaat ovat Suomi, Espanja, Italia, Liettua ja Saksa. Projektin tavoitteena on kehittää ja yhtenäistää lastensuojelun sijaishuollon työntekijöiden koulutusta Euroopassa. ERCCI -projektin lopullisena tuotoksena on Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), joka otetaan käyttöön vuonna 2021. MOOC tarjoaa alan työntekijöille mahdollisuuden kehittää osaamistaan ja lisätä tietoaan alasta eri maissa. Projektin tarve nousi esiin huolesta alan työntekijöiden osaamiseen, työntekijöiden erilaisiin koulutustaustoihin, vaihtelevaan sekä riittämättömään erikoistumiskoulutukseen ja työntekijöiden suureen vaihtuvuuteen liittyen. Lastensuojelun sijaishuollon työntekijöiden osaamista on tutkittu Suomessa vähän ja tämän opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on tuottaa asiasta lisätietoa.

Tämä tutkimusprojekti on osa ERCCI -projektin ensimmäistä vaihetta. Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena on selvittää, mitkä ovat lastensuojelualan asiantuntijoiden ja tutkijoiden näkemykset keskeisimmistä osaamisen puutteista sekä tiedon vajeista lastensuojelun sijaishuollon työntekijöiden keskuudessa Suomessa. Tämän opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli kerätä tietoa tutkimusaiheesta ERCCI -projektin hyödynnettäväksi.

Aineisto kerättiin asiantuntijahaastattelun menetelmällä. Haastatellut henkilöt ovat kaikki alansa arvostettuja ammattilaisia ja edustavat erilaisia asiantuntijuusalueita lastensuojelun työkentällä Suomessa. Yksitoista asiantuntijaa osallistui haastatteluihin. Haastattelut äänitettiin, aineisto litteroitiin ja lopulta analysoitiin sisällönanalyysillä.

Asiantuntijoiden mukaan keskeisiä osaamisen puutteita ja tiedon vajeita suomalaisten lastensuojelun sijaishuollon työntekijöiden keskuudessa ovat vuorovaikutusosaaminen, erilaisten orientaatioiden tunnistaminen, verkostoituminen ja alan lakien sekä säädösten hallitseminen.

ASIASANAT:

lastensuojelun sijaishuolto, asiantuntija, osaamistarve, kompetenssi

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| Abbreviation | Explanation of abbreviation |
|--------------|--|
| EU | The European Union |
| ERCCI | Empowering residential child care -project |
| I1 to I10 | Interviewees 1 to 10 |
| LAPE | Lapsi- ja perhepalveluiden muutosohjelma A Finnish developmental program |
| MOOC | Massive Open Online Course |
| RCC | Residential child care |
| THL | Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos Finnish institute for Health and Welfare |
| TUAS | Turku University of Applied Sciences |

1 INTRODUCTION

The Empowering Residential Care through Interprofessional Training (ERCCI) project is an ongoing international project that aims to develop the education and knowledge of personnel working in residential child care across Europe. There are five different participating countries that all work in unison to form a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) as a final result of the ERCCI project. The MOOC will hold specialization education courses directed to those working in the field of residential child care (RCC). The purpose of those courses is to increase the knowledge and competence of the personnel in the field so that the quality and outcomes of the work would also develop. (ERCCI 2020.)

Timonen-Kallio et al. (2017, 15) state that studies focusing on the personnel working in RCC in Finland are limited. The personnel in RCC represent different professions and come from different educational backgrounds. Various educational backgrounds and the high turnover of personnel are seen as critical factors in developing the quality of RCC.

The ERCCI project aims to research which are the biggest gaps in competences amongst the personnel in RCC in the participating countries. That research and the results then shed light on the fact what kind of studies the MOOC should hold on in order to strengthen the knowledge and competences of those working in the field. Because the educational backgrounds of the personnel vary so strongly in RCC units, the quality of the service the clientele receives also varies amongst different units. Through the ERCCI project and the MOOC's specific and targeted courses specialized education will be available for the personnel across Europe. That will develop the field of RCC as the personnel has the opportunity to possess unison knowledge and education on the field internationally.

Because the research about RCC in Finland is so limited, there is a great need to research the field further. Some researches have been published in Finland but they mostly concern a certain RCC facility or the experiences of one child living in RCC. The competence needs of the personnel are often mentioned in researches with little emphasis but none of the researches in Finland are focused on that. According to Timonen-Kallio et al. (2017, 27-28) competences considered crucial in the RCC personnel are good people skills, dialogism and the ability to perform professional reflection.

This developmental project was a part of the ERCCI project. In the first phase of the ERCCI project competence needs of the personnel in the field were discovered. As those needs and gaps in knowledge were discovered, the ERCCI project proceeded to the other phase where the MOOC courses were formed in order to offer specific education to fill that void of knowledge on certain themes. In this developmental project altogether 11 significant influencers and experts in residential child care in Finland were interviewed. The purpose of this developmental project was to discover and determine through those interviews, which are the biggest gaps in knowledge and competence amongst the RCC workforce in Finland through those experts' views. Through those results a competence needs analysis was made. The purpose of this project was to produce information for the ERCCI project's use but also to strengthen the RCC field in Finland by producing new research and knowledge as an addition to prior knowledge.

The method of data collection in this project was expert interview. This thesis explains how the project proceeded and which were the methodological backgrounds and phases of the project. As a final result an analysis of discovered competence needs amongst the RCC personnel is presented.

2 PREMISES OF THE PROJECTS

This chapter sheds light on the background, need, goal and meaning of the project. Those facts will be considered on two points of view; the ERCCI project and this Master's thesis' point of view. This Master's thesis bases on a research commission from ERCCI project, but is referred to as an individual project as it has it's own goals and purpose in developing RCC in Finland.

2.1 Background

This Master's thesis has some similarity to another Master's thesis from Turku University of Applied Sciences that is written by Elina Martindale (2020). These two theses were partly done in cooperation even though there will be two different theses as a final result. A big part of the work in the beginning with ERCCI project was done together with Martindale.

2.2 ERCCI

Empowering Residential Child Care through Interprofessional training (ERCCI) is an Erasmus funded cooperation between five different universities in Europe. ERCCI project started in September 2018 and it lasts for three years in total. Each year there is a task for the project group. The first phase was to research each country's state of RCC and gaps in competences of the professionals working in the field. This Master's thesis bases on a commission of the first phase on ERCCI project. The thesis is written in English so it can be better utilized for the ERCCI project's needs. These results can also more easily be compared to other participant countries' results as no one has to translate the text from Finnish to some other language.

The Erasmus is an EU programme that aims at cross-border co-operation between states to aid growth of international studying and co-operation between universities. It has 37 member countries and 927 partner organizations. (The Erasmus Programme.)

The ERCCI project has five partner Universities in five different countries in Europe. The participating universities are the University of Mykolos Romanis in Lithuania, the

University Milano-Bicocca in Italy, the University of Kassel in Germany, the University of Oviedo in Spain and the Turku University of Applied sciences in Finland.

During the three-year project all the universities will work according to their responsibilities in the project. The project group, the teachers in charge, will meet five times during the project. The project group includes the project manager, the project controller and the project experts. Once per year all the teachers and students, the project assistants, get together in different countries and work based on the goals set for them by the project group. The project assistants in each country are responsible for the collection and analyzation of the data. The overall output of ERCCI is MOOC (Massive Open Online Course). MOOC is a training platform that has training modules that are directed for professionals working in RCC across Europe.

2.3 Project in developing RCC in Finland

This Master's thesis is a developmental project that is conducted on a commission with ERCCI. It has also another purpose, as it can be utilized as a means of developing RCC in Finland. In TUAS Master School, writing a thesis is a central part of the education and those theses are conducted as developmental projects that benefit also the principal organization (Turku AMK 2019).

In this case there is not a specific organization in Finland that will benefit or is developed through this Master's thesis. However this thesis and it's results will hopefully help in developing the field of RCC in Finland. All of the interviewees of the research are significant influencers in child welfare in Finland, and their insights and opinions will hopefully be transferred to developing the field in Finland on a larger scale.

2.4 Need

Residential child care is a very little researched area of the social and health care field in Finland. Some studies have been published in Europe and the United States of America while studies in Finland have been very limited. The studies in the residential child care field in Finland have most often concentrated in qualitative research of a very small population, for example one residential child care facility or a personal experience of one child.

There have been no comprehensive studies focusing on the professionals working in the field. The need to understand the qualification requirements and required skills and experience of professionals working in residential child care has risen. Due to various acceptable qualifications in residential child care the level of professionalism varies between different facilities. The personnel in facilities present different professions and different educational backgrounds and this can lead both into differences in competences and power struggles of expertise or even blur the lines of expertise so that “everyone does everything”. Various educational backgrounds and the high turnover of personnel are seen as critical factors in developing the quality of residential child care. (Timonen-Kallio et al. 2017, 15.)

The amount and quality of residential child care curriculum is insufficient in Universities and in Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland. The content of those studies varies between educational establishments and they should be included with residential child care studies and themes such as identity work, interference of mental health problems and educational restrictive measures. (Timonen-Kallio et al. 2017, 15.)

Finnish law on social welfare professionals (L817/2015, 3§) defines the needed qualifications and legalizes the use of titles for personnel working in Finnish child welfare institutions. The main purpose for this legislation is to ensure that personnel working in Finnish child welfare institutions has adequate training and experience to work in the field and through that the quality of offered services can be maintained. The legislation also ensures that the personnel has the opportunity to develop their professionalism and it makes it possible to organize the surveillance of the use of those titles in the field. (L817/2015.)

The first step of the ERCCI project is targeting the void of information concerning educational needs and qualification requirements for residential child care professionals. To understand the needs for education and training the project will collect information in five different participating countries. In Finland the project assistants gathered information by interviewing the personnel working in RCC facilities, directors of RCC facilities (Martindale 2020) and professionals of child welfare in Finland (this Master’s thesis). There is also a significant need for this Master’s thesis as it show’s out how little there is researched about the field in Finland.

A thesis is a scientific output that has to fill the scientific criteria and the results must be facts, not opinions. Reliability and validity are crucial conditions of scientific criteria.

The purpose of a thesis is to show out everything essential of the subject matter and then accumulate new knowledge to the prior knowledge. New knowledge on the subject matter is the aim of the thesis and the work put into it. (Kananen 2014, 59.)

2.5 Goals and meaning

The goal of ERCCI project is to improve the quality of education and training in the residential child care (RCC) field. Further the goal is to develop an on-line interprofessional training environment to educate the professionals working in the RCC field in Europe.

Timonen-Kallio (2018) presents two goals for the project as the project coordinator:

- 1) To elaborate what residential child care (RCC) as a setting and intervention future RCC workers need for integrated training across partner countries (Finland, Germany, Italy, Lithuania and Spain).
- 2) To develop an understanding of qualification requirements for the RCC workforce that shares common values and respects the diversity of possible approaches in their use and implementation across Europe

The ERCCI project is divided into three main parts. The goal of the first part of the ERCCI project is to collect and analyze information on educational needs for residential child care professionals in each of the five countries. An understanding of the qualification requirements and references to legislation for the residential child care personnel is also needed as practices in participant countries vary significantly. The project assistants in each country are responsible for the collection and analyzation of the data. The ERCCI project group is responsible for gathering and managing the information and create a consensus of the information between the participating countries.

The outcome of the first part of the ERCCI project is to create competence profiles and locate the needs for training for the residential child care professionals. This Master's thesis aims to answer to that void of information. As it was already said, the RCC field in Finland is a very little researched area and there is a great need for further research in order to enable development on the field. This thesis is a part of the ERCCI projects first phase and raises up the need for specialization training for personnel working in RCC. RCC professionals in Finland were interviewed on the matter and the results of this thesis

will shed a light on those professionals' views on need for specialization training in Finland. The ERCCI project can utilize these results in the later phases of the project as the MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) is created. The void of information amongst RCC personnel will determine how the MOOC is conducted and what kinds of studies it should hold.

2.6 Operational environments

These two projects, the ERCCI project and this Master's thesis have many different operational environments. Most part of the ERCCI project's first part was located to Turku University of Applied Sciences mostly due to the fact that it is the coordinator of the ERCCI project. All of the meetings were organized there and a great amount of work on the two projects was done there.

However the ERCCI project is an international project and there was a training session in the University of Mykolas Romas in Lithuania in March 2019 that lasted for a week. There the project participants met and shared information with each other as a part of the first part of the ERCCI project. As a result a matrix of the practices and state of the field in each country was gathered and was taken into making. The results of each project assistant (the theses, including this Master's thesis) will be referred to as the project group publishes a report at the end of the ERCCI project in 2021.

The interviews that are the basis for the results of this Master's thesis were done primarily via telephone. One of the interviews was organized in the organization of the interviewee. Writing process of this Master's thesis was done during autumn 2018 to spring 2021.

2.7 Progress

The ERCCI project has its own timeline and progress and this thesis has its own. Both are described below.

event in Turku. There was also a workshop that aimed to find out what the participants thought about the need for development in RCC in Finland.

2.9 Master's thesis as a project in developing RCC in Finland

The timeline of the ERCCI project defined also some timelines for this Master's thesis. Some tasks had to be done in time with ERCCI project's timeline, so the timeline of the project would't suffer. These timelines are described separately in order to improve readability.



Figure 2. The timeline of the developmental project

Writing this Master's thesis and conducting the developmental project was a task that started right at the beginning of the education and lasted the whole over two years of the

education. The first few months were extremely busy, because there was a tight timeline with the ERCCI project. After the spring 2019 the rush eased and there was time to analyze the results and focus to the writing process. There were times when the project did not proceed at all, because of personal reasons in working life and the global effects of Corona virus.

At the beginning of the studies the ERCCI project was presented on a project tray in TUAS. Right after that was time to attach to the project and get a mentor for the developmental project. Eeva Timonen-Kallio, who is also the ERCCI project coordinator, agreed to be the mentor of this developmental project and Master's thesis. It soon became clear that there was a great rush to establish who would be the professionals to interview for this research and developmental project. Timonen-Kallio had a significant role in helping to decide who to approach with the subject. Contacting the possible interviewees took a few weeks, mostly because they are all significant influencers in child welfare in Finland. It was surprising how many were willing and able to participate to the interviews.

The interviews were done primarily via telephone from December 2018 to February 2019. After the data collection it was time to analyze it in time for the training session week in Lithuania in March 2019. The preliminary results were presented to the other ERCCI project participants in the training session. A more thorough analyzing of the results was made during the year 2019.

The final writing process of this thesis was the most time-consuming part of the whole project. It took for over a year to write this thesis to it's final form. The implementation of this thesis and developing the RCC in Finland through this project begins after publishing this report. The ERCCI project has a major role in implementing these results in the participating countries.

3 DATA COLLECTION

In order to research the field at hand there was a need to search prior information on the subject matter. The systematic review for this thesis was conducted in cooperation with Martindale (see page 8).

3.1 Systematic review

The first phase of the information retrieval was to define the entries. As the information needed was about the residential child care field and personnel in Finland, the information searched was primarily in Finnish. The entries that were used in the information retrieval were “lastenkoti, lastenkotityö, lastensuojelu, henkilöstö, osaaminen, kompetenssi, ammatillisuus”. Translated residential child care, residential child care work, child protection, personnel, know-how, competence, professionalism. Information on expert interviews was also included in the search.

Twelve academic on-line data bases were used, and the information retrieval was executed during a little over three weeks as both authors of Master's theses were conducting the search systematically. The attempt was to find studies published in the field of residential child care work that focused on the required competence and experience of residential child care personnel. Information on residential child care work in general and life in a facility based on the experience of children and other social welfare professional was also searched for.

Residential child care is a very little researched area of the social and health care field in Finland. The research methods used were most often qualitative. The studies were executed by traditional qualitative research methods such as theme interviews, observation and half structured questioners.

There have been no comprehensive researches focusing on the personnel working in residential child care in Finland. A few researches were found that concentrated on understanding the professional competences or need for further education in a certain geographic area or a residential child care facility. Some studies that were not directly researching the residential child care field but discussed some of the same themes were also included in the systematic review. Because there was found only few relevant

researches on the specific themes in Finland, the search was expanded so it concluded also Bachelor's and Master's theses. It is generally advised that any studies over ten years of age are outdated and no longer necessarily valid in academic work. Because the outcome of the information retrieval was insufficient, also researches older than ten years have been taken into account. Those studies that are outdated or written as Bachelor's or Master's theses have been read with great critique and their reliability has been taken into consideration.

3.2 Complementary search

After the systematic review and preliminary results of the project it became clear that some complementary search had to be done. The main results of this thesis guided the complementary search as it had to be figured out whether other researches have had similar findings on the subject matter. The complementary search was done to compare the results of this thesis to other researches and their results.

4 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The phenomena under observation is professionalism in residential child care in Finland. There will also be references to competences and qualification needs in residential child care workers as well as to known practices and evaluation of the field.

4.1 Everyday life and work in residential child care

Laakso (2009, 7–8) has published an ethnographic doctoral thesis on residential child care. The goal of the research was to describe what is everyday residential child care work like and what are the main dimensions of the work. The work in residential child care was divided into four themes based on the everyday routines and day-to-day practices. The four themes were everyday work and caring in residential child care, work with children, work with parents and finally troublesome issues in residential child care. The thesis described the work professionals perform in residential child care in detail and gave you a clear understanding of the demanding work. The work is a complex combination of routines, interaction, caring, group dynamics, confidential relationships, affection, respect for individuality, flexibility and power. On top of the work with the children the professionals are also responsible for working in a partnership with the biological parents.

Laakso (2009, 233–239) also introduced her idea on the professionalism in residential child care. She underlined that the professionalism is hard to define and described the personal challenges the personnel often face in residential child care. One has to have a strong professional identity to be able to perform the work at the expected level. The personnel in residential child care has the overall responsibility of raising the child. The work is performed through professional parenting and a reliable relationship with the child. The child needs warmth, closeness, physical contact, trust, affection, attachment and attention. The child needs somebody to understand them and to believe in them. The child needs somebody to show them how to solve conflicts and how to manage complex social situations in life. At the same time the child needs somebody to set the boundaries for their behavior and to explain them the consequences of their actions. All this needs to be done while keeping a healthy professional distance to the child and preserving one's personal space.

In his Master's thesis Pokela (2016, 39–41) describes and analyzes the work in residential child care. The thesis is an ethnographic research and uses participant observation and interviews to collect the data. The research underlined the important role the personnel has in creating a trusting and safe relationship with the child in his or her care. The research described the work in residential child care as guidance. A guiding professional supports the child's growth and faith in the future. The research introduced some important characteristics for the personnel in residential child care. Personnel need to be genuine in their relationship with the child and show that they care through their actions and respectful interaction with the child. They need to take the role of a responsible adult and set the boundaries and explain the consequences for the child's actions. Personnel need to be present, value the child as an individual and praise them for their positive behavior.

Pokela (2016, 34–38) also emphasizes the importance of the cooperation with families and wider professional network. A professional's intention is to support the family in raising the child and to help repair the deficiency in parenting skills. A successful cooperation with the family is possible only through mutual respect and trust. This trust is sometimes difficult to achieve but is the requirement for productive work with the child and the family. The most important partner in professional network is the child's social worker, who is responsible for the planning and implementation of the child's care.

In her Master's thesis Jussila (2014, 68–71) researches young people's opinions on elements of good residential child care. The research is qualitative using a sympathetic method as means for collecting data. The data was collected from 21 young people living in residential child care. The research revealed that according to the young people's opinion, the three most important aspects of good residential child care are different kinds of joined daily activities, opportunities to influence their own matters and personnel that is willing to spend time with them and who are available for discussion. Young people wish to be trusted by adults and be able to influence their daily life and future. They also want the personnel to intervene in their matters when needed and to guide them to make the right choices and to act accordingly. Another important aspect of good residential care, according to the young people, was the personnel's ability to support the young people in maintaining their good mood and to help tolerate the bad. Another main aspect of good residential child care was also the possibility to meet with friends.

4.2 Professionalism in residential child care

4.2.1 Legislation and supervision

Finnish legislation (L817/2015, 3§) defines the needed qualifications and legalizes the use of titles for personnel working in Finnish child welfare institutions. The main purpose for this legislation is to ensure that personnel working in Finnish child welfare institutions has adequate training and experience to work in the field and through that the quality of offered services can be maintained. The legislation also ensures that the personnel has the opportunity to develop their professionalism and it makes it possible to organize the surveillance of the use of those titles in the field. (L817/2015.) Only the work of a social worker has a definite specification determined by law. Otherwise the personnel can have other educational backgrounds on the social and health care field.

The Child Welfare Act legislates that child welfare institutions must have several professionals in social welfare and other personnel that is sufficient with regard to the care and upbringing required by the children and young people (L417/2007, 60§). This law also defines that possible special needs of the clientele or special working environments must be taken into account in the personnel structure. A residential child care facility can have only seven children in a unit and the required minimum number of personnel is the same; seven (L417/2007, 59§).

In Finland legislation plays a big role in the field of residential child care. It also guarantees that everything is done up to high standards and requirements and ensures that the personnel in those facilities is highly educated and professional. Residential child care is a part of social welfare and the execution of it is supervised on a national level by the controlling authority, Valvira (Valvira 2015).

4.2.2 Professionalism in social services

Helminen (2013, 7) has written a dissertation on work and professionalism in social services. It is necessary to analyze professionalism in the field as the functions and structures have been and are being developed in Finland. The research is qualitative and based on a phenomenographic approach. The research focuses on the perspectives of social counselors and how they see their work, professional skills, professional

development, expertise and the future image of social services in Finland. To retrieve the data 60 thematic interviews were executed to those who were social counselors by education and had been working in social services after graduation. All in all, the data was collected in three parts, starting in 1996 and finishing in 2009.

According to interviewed social counselors professionalism in social services was considered to be expertise and professional skills that mature along with development and growth. Professionalism is also defined as a combination of knowledge and skill and it depends on the person's specific properties (such as empathy, patience, courage) whether it can be utilized in the line of work. Characteristics, such as knowledge of the human being, the society and profession, skills related to customer work and well-being at work are essential in professional skills in social services. Professionalism is linked to expertise and the foundation of it lies in professional skills. The capability to influence and develop also features professionalism strongly. (Helminen 2013, 7–8.)

Lohi and Niiranen (2005, 23) define professionalism as a combination of general- and basic competences, where general competences are those skills that are typical also in other fields than just in the field of social services and well-being. Basic competences are those gained through the appropriate education. Professional competences are represented as fluent practical actions and as an ability to utilize gathered knowledge in practical work.

4.3 Professionalism in residential child care in Finland

The information retrieval revealed that professionalism in residential child care in Finland has been researched primarily in Bachelor's or Master's theses. Thus, this part of this report refers to those theses.

Mental health problems and the effects of traumatization and stress are common amongst children who are placed in residential care facilities. It is also difficult to separate the reasons behind children's behavior or make possible diagnoses. Children's problematic behavior forms a need for psychiatric knowledge and competence and practical knowledge in the personnel working with those children. Personnel in residential child care in the city of Turku thought they need more education on psychiatric challenges in residential child care though most had had some training already. (Seppälä 2018, 2; 22–23.)

Helenius and Oksaharju (2015, 3) have researched how the personnel working in a residential child care facility in Töölö experience professionalism and what kind of support in professionalism they need. Threat of violence, violent situations and aggressive behavior in youngsters were mentioned as difficult situations in the working community. Personnel saw the professionalism developing primarily in an empirical way, by experiencing and sharing with others. They seemed to value that they were not left alone in challenging situations. The most important single factor was the support of the whole working community.

Ciftci and Rantala (2008, 17) have also researched residential child care work in Finland and have defined that professionalism consists of theory and practical work (see also Helminen 2013, 7–8 and Lohi & Niiranen 2005, 23). An expert is a person who has more information and knowledge on the matter and has the qualification and degree that is required. Expertise can increasingly be defined through networking and cooperation; it is a characteristic of teams and work communities.

4.4 Elements of professional competence

Timonen-Kallio et al. (2017, 27–28) write about three main elements that are crucial in the professional competences of residential child care personnel. Those elements are good people skills, dialogism and reflection of one's own actions. The personnel in residential child care must identify the meaning and the basis for their work through professional information basis. There has to be also a sufficient amount of knowledge and competence in therapeutic residential care amongst the residential child care facility personnel in order to the child to receive the needed help and support both therapeutically and educationally on a daily basis. Often situations are dealt through the element of home-likeness and something of the ordinary when they should be considered through theoretical knowledge and both interventions and methods known in therapeutic residential care and pedagogical professionalism (Timonen-Kallio et al. 2017, 15). Multidisciplinary co-operation over sector boundaries is a necessity in helping and caring for children and youngsters more effectively.

Due to loose qualifications required in residential child care the level of professionalism varies between different facilities. The personnel in facilities present different professions and different educational backgrounds and this can lead both into differences in competences and power struggles of expertise or even blur the lines of expertise so that

“everyone does everything”. Various educational backgrounds and the high turnover of personnel are seen as critical factors in developing the quality of residential child care. The amount and quality of residential child care curriculum is seen insufficient in Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland. The content of those studies varies between educational establishments and they should be included with residential child care studies and themes such as identity work, interference of mental health problems and educational restrictive measures. (Timonen-Kallio et al. 2017, 15.)

4.5 Known orientations in residential child care

4.5.1 Residential child care orientations internationally

Eronen and Laakso (2016, 26–27) executed a systematic review on what were the main orientations and practices of residential child care internationally during the years of 2010-2016. Based on their review they did not find one orientation or practice being more effective or superior over the others. They also underlined that international research provides information on the matter but when transferring international orientations between countries one has to be critical and evaluate the suitability to the local system.

Following international research provides information on experiences and traditions in residential child care. In their review Eronen and Laakso (2016, 3) did not find anything surprising or new. In fact the elements of good residential child care proved to be familiar. They highlighted that children need a safe environment, their needs have to be met, personnel in residential child care have to attend to matters thoroughly and have to have a comprehensive approach to the children’s situation.

The outcome of the review was a summary of known orientations and practices in residential child care. Eronen and Laakso (2016, 16) divided the findings in three themes: multidimensional treatment foster care, therapeutic residential care and social pedagogical orientation in residential care.

Multidimensional treatment foster care is an intensive short-term solution to rehabilitate both the child and the family. The goal is to return the child back home and avoid a placement in residential care. The work is done at the same time with the family and the child. The aim is to create a therapeutic and structured environment where the child can

learn social skills, go to school and be attached to the society. (Eronen & Laakso, 2016, 17.)

Therapeutic residential care has a wide range of orientations and practices that have been found promising in different countries. A shared view for all the therapeutic residential care orientations and practices is the expectation that the personnel in the field recognize the needs and feelings of the children. The professionals do not only react to the behavior of the children but attempt to understand the underlining cause for that behavior. The therapeutic orientation also includes the idea of creating and maintaining a safe environment and a supportive relationship with the child. This makes it possible for the children to go to school, learn social skills, make friends and to be part of normal childhood institutions and communities. Co-operation with the child's family also plays a very important role in the therapeutic residential care. (Eronen & Laakso 2016, 18-20.)

Social pedagogical orientation in residential child care emphasizes lifelong learning and upbringing in everyday settings. The principles of change, empowerment and sharing everyday life are essential elements of the social pedagogical orientation. The relationship between the child and the personnel is seen as a pedagogical relationship where the adult is educating the child. Being part of a community and surrounding culture are also important factors in social pedagogical orientation and in becoming a functional part of the society. (Eronen & Laakso 2016, 22.)

Eronen and Laakso (2016, 10) recommended that the foster care system in Finland should be researched and developed further. In 2012 a new law regulated that the first choice for out-of-home placement for children should be foster care. In 2017 69% of children living outside of their home were living in foster care (National Institute for Health and Welfare 2018). They also recommend that the use of social pedagogical orientation should be reinforced in the Finnish residential child care field. (Eronen & Laakso, 2016, 27.)

4.5.2 Residential child care orientations in Finland

Timonen-Kallio et al. (2017, 4–5) and their team of seventeen experts in the child welfare field noticed similar findings as Eronen and Laakso. Timonen et al. together explored the current child welfare system, practices and orientations in Finland. Based on their expertise, current research, and the experiences of the personnel and customers in the

field they proceeded to describe a good and safe residential child care facility. The goal of the team of specialists was to create a framework for rehabilitative, educational, caring and therapeutic residential child care. They called the framework “therapeutic residential care” and recommended the framework should be nationally implemented and used as the basis for all residential child care work. They further discussed the therapeutic and social pedagogical nature of the framework and introduced the following professional orientations as the key elements for the therapeutic residential care: therapeutic, social pedagogical, child-centered and family-centered orientations. They also introduced different practices and interventions for residential care.

According to Timonen-Kallio et al. (2017, 16–17) therapeutic orientation in residential child care focuses on responding to the child’s experiences. The goal is to, together with the child, create a more whole life story from the often fragmented past. To make sure the past experiences do not damage the child permanently the personnel help the child to process the experiences to enable lasting changes. The child and the personnel together build a solid base for the future.

Social pedagogical orientation helps the child to become attached to the surrounding society. The sense of community and involvement in the community support the child in becoming an active agent in his or her life. This strengthens the child’s ability to make decisions and life choices while living in residential care and later in life. (Timonen-Kallio et al. 2017, 17–18.)

Child-centered orientation emphasizes the important relationships with others. According to Timonen-Kallio et al. (2017, 18–19) the most important elements of the child’s wellbeing are safety, positive self-image and active participation. These elements are constructed in interaction with others. Good and bad experiences, relationships and feedback affect the child’s development and future either positively or negatively.

Working with the family during the time the child is living in residential child care and creating a reliable relationship with the parents are very important. Family-centered orientation is seen as an empowering element of residential child care. The goal is to rehabilitate the family and enable the needed change for the child to be able to return home. To reconstruct the child’s life story and relations with her family are important for the child’s identity and future. Both the family and the child are important parts of the process and both need the support in the challenging situation. (Timonen-Kallio et al. 2017, 22.)

Different kinds of professional practices and interventions are needed to effectively implement therapeutic residential child care. A critical evaluation needs to take place when choosing the practices and interventions used. The educated professionals have to agree on the framework and methods used in their work in order to effectively do their work and contribute to the children's wellbeing and future. (Timonen-Kallio et al. 2017, 20–21.)

Timonen-Kallio et al. (2017, 21–22) recommended that the internationally used therapeutic methods, practices and interventions need to be developed further to suit the Finnish residential child care system. They also recommended the following practices and interventions, that have been noticed to be effective in residential child care, to be widely used in Finland: Aggression Replacement Training, Multidimensional Family Therapy, Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy, Motivational Interviewing, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Mindfulness and Narrative Work.

4.6 The evaluation and future development of residential child care

4.6.1 The current state of child welfare in Finland

The National Institute for Health and Welfare gathers statistical information in child welfare in Finland. Those statistics reveal that the amount of emergency placements and number of child welfare notifications grew in 2019. The total amount of children or youth placed outside the home during 2019 was 18,928. The same year, a total of 52,858 children and youth were open care clients of child welfare services in Finland. (National Institute for Health and Welfare 2020.)

4.6.2 Evaluation in child welfare

It is important that evaluation itself serves families and children as a way of support in child welfare. It helps families to find their own strengths and empowers them when executed well and properly and also guides them to the relevant services and support. Evaluation should be seen as a continuous process – it should be a part of every situation and step in child welfare, not only when considering certain services or need for services. Evaluation should be directed to the overall situation of the child and the family. The

equal treatment and understanding of the needs of families and children in child welfare does not come true in Finland. It is important to develop the evaluation, so it can be ensured that the child gets the unique help and support he or she needs. Evaluation should be executed by multidisciplinary teams; it should include the child and the family, personnel in child welfare and experts of different professions. (Heinonen 2016, 4.)

Families are often confused about the indefinite initial evaluation process in child welfare in Finland. Families tell they don't understand what it means to be under child welfare services, how the situation is evaluated and how the process proceeds. This indefiniteness dwells forth from the unequal practices of social workers at the beginning of the process. Social workers should promote the sharing of information to families on used methods and evaluation, the progressing of the process and what is expected on the clients' behalf during the process. It is seen that open communication and gaining of needed information decreases unneeded fears and anxiety towards child welfare actions and strengthens the cooperation between personnel and the family. (Hietamäki 2016, 37.)

Cooperation between different parties and multidisciplinary practices have increased through years but still families in child welfare feel that services are divided and are seen as separate authoritative actions. Families under child welfare are still bounced from expert or authority to another and the flow of information is insufficient between practitioners. When evaluating the need for child welfare actions the child and the family should be understood as a unity and the evaluation needs to be performed by multidisciplinary teams. (Tuomela-Jaskari 2016, 76.)

4.6.3 Effectiveness in child welfare

Rousu (2007, 15) has written a dissertation on assessment of child welfare effectiveness in organizations. Child welfare has been studied in Finland mostly from the perspective of client work and work with parents, not from the perspective of administrative sciences. Child welfare organizations should however monitor and evaluate their actions and the impact their work has on the lives of children and families. Effectiveness and ways to measure and assess it in organizations has been a topic of discussion in administrative sciences for a few decades. The amount of clientele in child welfare has continued to grow for years. Added to that the costs of child welfare have increased and the problems of maintaining personnel in the field have also risen (Lastensuojelun Kuusikko-työryhmä

2020, 78). Those themes have provoked discussion about the development of effectiveness within child welfare.

Rousu (2007, 16) discovered that discussion is an absolute strength of child welfare organizations. That discussion bases especially on experience information and dialogue in different forums. This guidance and management in connection with effectiveness assessment in those organizations is defined as social instinct.

“Social instinct is the community competence of the organization members to pilot personal and common activities with the aid of interpretation discussions conducted on the basis of experience information existing here and now and in the organizational memory” (Rousu 2007, 16).

The main areas that are listed in the assessment of effectiveness in child welfare are effective interaction between different parties, the possibility to participate, the assessment of success as a part of daily activities, organizational values and ethical responsibility towards clients and the collection of feedback. The quality of interaction and continuity of personal relationships are the key success factors in client work in child welfare. The personnel working in child welfare facilities must possess professional competence and an ability to cooperate as well as to commit to the particular case and the child as a client. (Rousu 2007, 16–17.)

4.6.4 Future development

Porko et al. (2018, 4) have researched private residential child care facilities in Finland. There is no national register of residential child care facilities in Finland. The information about residential child care facilities is scattered in different directions; there are some statistics provided by Valvira, National Institute for Health and Welfare and municipalities but the information from various service providers is not gathered as a national register. Residential child care services can be provided by private, municipal, organizational or governmental facilities. There is a great need for a national register of residential child care facilities that will guide counties' navigation and development in residential child care. A national register would also promote children's rights and make it easier to find each child a facility that serves his or her needs best.

If the reform of Social and Health Care services in Finland carries through it also affects residential child care. The reformation can also be seen as an opportunity to residential child care and the quality of services because the responsibility of organizing services

on county level also requires ethical conversation and pondering of the used practices. There have been inequalities in the services provided depending on the municipality. Those inequalities can better be taken into consideration through the reformation and can be guided on a national level by national policies. It is also thought that through the reformation the number of private service providers will increase. It is predicted that the responsibility for supervision in residential child care will shift to counties with the organization of services. That is supposed to unite used practices in municipalities and make it possible to ensure that there appears no omission of supervision. (Porko et al. 2018, 36–38.)

The hope is that in the future no child in Finland has to be placed outside of home because of the shortage in Finnish service system. It is crucial to gather information on the effectiveness of provided residential child care services. The information is needed to make sure the continuance of children being underprivileged and badly-off is discontinued after the placement in residential child care. (Porko et al. 2018, 37.)

4.7 The theoretical frame of reference

The theoretical frame of reference is strongly guided by ERCCI and Erasmus funding. There will be researches about professionalism in residential child care in each participating country, so the theoretical frame of reference must be what is stated in the application for funding. This fact itself works as a justification for the choice of the theoretical frame of reference. The goal of the first part of the ERCCI project is to collect and analyze information on educational needs for residential child care personnel in each of the five countries. An understanding of the qualification requirements and references to legislation for the residential child care personnel is also needed.

Education, competences and competence needs are concepts that include to professionalism in residential child care. It is also important to see the context as a whole: professionalism in residential child care also includes the daily work in residential child care facilities, evaluation, used known practices and methods, effectiveness and prospects on the field.

5 EMPIRICAL EXECUTION OF THE PROJECT

5.1 The goal and meaning of the project

The goal of this developmental project and thesis is to develop RCC in Finland. This thesis provides information and valuable points of view from prominent persons in the field of child welfare in Finland. This information can be utilized in developing the field and increasing professionalism and specifying the education. There is also another goal and meaning for this thesis that is linked to the ERCCI project and its goals in developing RCC across Europe with the MOOC.

5.2 Research questions

Altogether three research questions were defined for this project.

1. What has been researched about professionalism in RCC?
2. What are the educational needs of personnel in RCC?
3. How should professionalism be developed in RCC?

The thematic interview questions for the interviews came from Germany, as a part of the ERCCI project. They were the same questions for each participating country so the results would be as comparable as possible.

5.3 Method of data collection

The method of data collection in this research was expert interview. Alastalo, Åkerman and Vaittinen (2017) write about expert interviews. They define expertise to be something that is determined through one's action or through professional tasks and their institutional position. The experts that are interviewed are persons who have special expertise and knowledge on the subject matter. That sort of knowledge only very few person obtain.

Altogether 11 experts on the subject matter were interviewed. Two of the interviewees participated as a pair in writing to the research questions, one was interviewed personally and eight were interviewed via telephone. All of the interviews were also recorded in

order to enhance credibility and reliability in the research. The expert interviews were thematic interviews. Most of the interviews were conducted using telephone because of long distances. Also Alastalo and others (2017) see telephone interviews and remote access methods functional in expert interviews. It was assumed that it would be very difficult to contact the interviewees because they are all significant professionals in their lines of work. It was very surprising how many were willing to participate to the research. Often the experts are willing to participate when the interviewer presents him- or herself well and highlights the significance of their participation to the research and the success of it (Alastalo et al. 2017).

All of the interviewees received material concerning the research before the interviews via e-mail. A research announcement (Attachment 1) and covering letters added with consent forms and research questions (Attachment 2) were all sent to the interviewees after they had promised to take part to this research. The interviewees signed the consent forms and delivered them to the author. By sending the interview questions beforehand all of the interviewees had an opportunity to prepare themselves to the interview and had the opportunity to receive more information about the upcoming research.

5.4 The interviewed experts

The experts were chosen to this research based on their expertise on the field of child welfare and especially their expertise in RCC. All of the experts have a long experience of the field from various angles. The interviewees are listed below. It is important to introduce the experts and their positions in child welfare in Finland in order to improve the reliability of this research. However anonymity also plays a role in this research as none of the answers or results can be identified to a specific interviewee.

Aula, Maria Kaisa: the project manager of Lapsi- ja perhepalveluiden muutosohjelma (LAPE) in Finland. The LAPE -project is a governmental program that aims to develop the field on various levels spanning from increasing the wellbeing of children to improving the welfare of experts working on the field. The LAPE is a program that is conducted in Finland during years 2016 to 2022. (THL 2020A.)

Eronen, Tuija: a university lecturer of The University of Tampere. Eronen specializes in child welfare, RCC and has also conducted several scientific researches on the field (Tampereen yliopisto n.d.).

Heinonen, Hanna: the executive manager of The Central Union for Child Welfare and the editor of the Child's World -magazine. The Central Union for Child Welfare is an organization that works actively to enhance children's rights on a national and EU-level (Lastensuojelun keskusliitto n.d.).

Kalmari, Hanne: lead expert of the Finnish institute for health and welfare (THL) and the project leader of Lapsi- ja perhepalveluiden muutosohjelma (LAPE) in Finland. Kalmari's expertise is in LAPE -program and in development and management of social- and healthcare services for children, youth and families in Finland. (THL 2020B.)

Ojaniemi, Pekka: a Senior Officer of Valvira (National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health). Ojaniemi specializes in supervision of social welfare and professionals working in the field. (Valvira 2016.)

Pekkarinen, Elina: the Ombudsman for Children in Finland. The Ombudsman for Children ensures that children's rights are carried out in legislation and decision-making on a national level. (Lapsiasiavaltuutettu n.d.)

Raassina, Marita: a Senior Officer of Valvira (National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health) in Social Welfare supervision. Raassina is specialized in child welfare and access to a child. (Valvira 2015.)

Ronkamo, Tiina and Virtanen, Sini: Senior Officers of Regional State Administrative Agencies. Ronkamo and Virtanen specialize in child welfare supervision. (Aluehallintovirasto n.d.)

Yliruka, Laura: developmental chief in Socca - The Centre of Excellence on Social Welfare in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. (Socca n.d.)

Ylönen, Oona: currently a professor of practice in social work in Turku University. During the interview Ylönen was the executive director of Turun ensi- ja turvakoti. Ylönen has a long work history of child welfare in different positions in Finland.

All of the experts listed above meet the criteria of expertise. They have all had a significant influence in child welfare on a national level, through their work experience and research in the field.

5.5 Method of data analyzation

Transcription is the first phase of analyzation in interviews. There are many levels in which the transcription can be done. There can be very exact markings on the volume of the speech, pauses and tone. Transcribing can also be done focusing mainly on the content of speech. It is crucial to choose the right level of transcription commensurate to the research at hand. Translating a transcription needs twice the work. First the transcription is done, then it is translated to another language. A perfect translation is impossible to achieve, which has to be taken into account in the research. (Ruusuvuori and Nikander 2017.)

In this research the transcription is done mainly based to the content of speech. There was no need to focus to other factors as the interviews were individual and the interaction occurred only between the interviewee and interviewer. The interviews were done in Finnish and the translation was done only on those parts that are written in this report as quotes. The data was destroyed after this research so there was no need to translate all of the transcription as there is no use for the data afterwards.

After transcribing content analysis was done. The transcriptions were read through several times. After that they were considered commensurate to the research questions. The data was divided to several themes that were considered as results to the research questions. Those results were gathered to similar entities and then divided again according to different themes which then became the final results of the research.

6 RESULTS

There were three research questions for this research. The results of the interviews were all quite similar, and it can be assumed that the issues that rose from the interviews are common in RCC in Finland.

1. What has been researched about professionalism in RCC?
2. What are the educational needs of personnel in RCC?
3. How should professionalism be developed in RCC?

6.1 What has been researched about professionalism in RCC

In the beginning of this project and thesis, it became clear that RCC in Finland is not widely researched. After analyzing the results it also occurred that this research question wasn't really answered to in this thesis. There were however a few themes that rose from the interviews on the matter.

The life and situation of a child in RCC and during aftercare has been researched in Finland.

"...bases on some studies of my own that compared to the situation the child comes from to RCC, it is a top result that the child is even alive at the age of 18... but maybe that one has learnt the necessary social skills to cope in life with, knows how to get help, recognizes their own need for help, I think that's a good result." (11.)

It soon became clear that effectiveness was a term that doesn't really occur in RCC in Finland. Only a few of the interviewees could say anything on the matter. Research on RCC in Finland shows out to have a serious gap and especially the life of youth should be researched furthermore after and during aftercare (18). It was seen that the best result of RCC could be that the child him-/herself feels well and is able to feel happy and feels safe (11, 17).

The LAPE program is a subject that arose from various interviews when talking of research on the field. There are several different researches on the making during the LAPE program. Some of the program's researches have been conducted and there were some themes that the interviews highlighted on the matter. Perhaps the biggest gap of competence showed out to be in skills on interaction.

“... those working with children, youth and families have serious deficits in encountering skills which means that even though they (children, youth or families) get to meet a professional it doesn't necessarily mean they automatically feel they've been heard and therefore it doesn't really lead to anything.” (16)

The LAPE program was also seen as a way of lifting the overall course of child welfare in Finland (17). On the other hand it was also seen as a megatrend that the therapeutic orientation in RCC is so widely enhanced via LAPE. Therapeutic orientation in RCC was seen as an important element, but even therapy doesn't solve everything. The worry of the interviewee on the matter was:

“...it kind of individualizes, that you child there, learn to behave in another way even though the childs' behaviour can be totally wise and relevant compared to the situation and professionals shouldn't forget the structural side...I believe in diversity and multi-professionalism, maybe those are some issues that come to mind on the matter.” (19).

Through these results it became clear that RCC in Finland should be researched much more and through different points of view. Through research and those results the field could be developed utilizing also researched information and not only through practical work.

6.2 What are the educational needs of personnel in RCC

There were a lot of results and opinions on educational needs of personnel in RCC. Mostly the interviews were upon the same themes on the matter. Those main themes were social pedagogical orientation, trauma orientation, interaction skills and knowledge of law and regulations on the field. It became clear that there are a few theoretical frames through which the work is done in Finland. There is a school of the theory of affection, school of a strong systemic theory and a school of a strong trauma theory (13).

6.2.1 Social pedagogical orientation

Social pedagogical orientation in RCC was considered to be a very important educational need on the personnel working in the field. It was said that the relationship between the child and the grown-up in social pedagogical orientation is always educational. The grown-up isn't a friend to the child and doesn't offer compensatory experiences. The grown-up supports the child but the relationship isn't affectional. (11.)

There were also opinions that stated otherwise and emphasized some other schools of theory. It was also seen that the grown-up needs to be able to surrender themselves for an affectionate relationship with the child as a professional.

“To be able to risk yourself for affection. I always think about the view of hope. Many times my thoughts wrap around yielding hope. Optimism and courage that is associated to it. I think our job is to yield hope, produce prospects and produce scenarios.” (I9).

There are a few different emphases on theory in RCC in Finland. Others emphasize compensatory experiences and others emphasize an educational relationship between the child and the personnel. Further research should be conducted on those emphases to report the benefits of each school of theory.

6.2.2 Trauma orientation and psychiatric knowledge

Knowledge in trauma orientation and psychiatric knowledge were also considered to be highly important for personnel working in the field (I1, I3, I4, I8, I9). Education should include some studies in facing nuisance behaviour, asocial or antisocial behaviour and possible underlying factors of them. When a professional understands those underlying factors they can also better act with upcoming consequences which are commonly challenging behaviour of the child and the family. (I3.) “We are facing so much mental health issues in facilities with children and parents that it is necessary that there is knowledge of those factors in the team” (I9).

Psychiatric knowledge of the personnel was seen significant as the clientele in RCC is getting more challenging and their challenges are more and more accumulated. Co-operation between psychiatric treatment and RCC facilities should be enhanced, and there occurs some issues in those children getting to psychiatric services. Through that raises a need for psychiatric knowledge also for the personnel in those facilities. (I4). Also personal factors of the personnel have an impact on the quality of the services the children and families have. The professionals should have great skills in reflection and they should recognize their own ways of reaction when coming across and working with traumatized children. (I8.)

6.2.3 Skills in interaction

Interactional skills was a theme that rose from the answers of the interviewees when it comes to needs of education in RCC (I1, I2, I3, I4, I5, I6, I9 and I10). It was seen that there should be skills in group leading skills as well as in seeing the child as an individual. The atmosphere in an RCC facility should be considerate for the children as well as for the work community. The core of the work should be in leading the everyday life in an RCC facility so that every child can express their opinions openly and that they are being heard when it comes to their own lives (hobbies, maintaining social relations outside the RCC facility, choosing something special for dinner etc). (I1, I4, I5.) The main point of the work should be the everyday life and spending time with the children but nowadays all the demands of documentation have tightened and more of the working time goes to writing reports and documentating restrictive measures. All of this documentation takes the time from actually spending time with the child. Right now the situation is that there is only the minimum amount of personnel in a facility and they have to do all the paperwork and be with the children at the same time. "Right now money talks." (I3).

It was seen important that there is a named worker for the child, that there is someone who has a special responsibility of the child. That doesn't still mean that no one else "has to be the least interested about the child's matters. There has to be a joined responsibility of the everyday life of the children." (I1). The RCC facility needs to be felt safe, and the personnel needs to be trustworthy adults that are there to take care of the children on every aspects of life (I7). The community can be used in the work as well, which shows up in everyday-life work. In addition there is the individual work with the child that is a central strength in RCC work. There are important people for the children which with they can surrender to interaction and through that they can be unified and find their own place in another way. (I2).

"I believe in named workers for the children and that rehabilitation happens in interaction. Stability is a value in those situations and in forming affectionate relations. On a structural level the attention should be in stability of personnel. We have an understanding that the personnel works hard and there is a worry of how people cope with rush and how they recover from work. Education shields a person from that perspective and brings elements which help personnel cope and they can see the larger picture of relations between causes and consequences." (I9).

Work with families was also emphasized. Personnel in RCC facilities need to supervise the best interests of the child and with that comes also the whole immediate family. Personnel have to tolerate that and learn how to work with that, and that can sometimes

be a much more demanding task than the child. Basic interactional skills such as listening, creating trust in a relationship, explaining things in a way the recipient understands it and closeness, were highlighted. Researches show that children and families are feeling dishonesty and being lied to but the fact actually is that they have not been explained situations so they would have understood them thoroughly. (I3).

It is also very important that the child gets some closeness in a facility. Unfortunately our society has made it very difficult for example to make someone a hair-do or give a massage as closeness is so easily seen as crossing the line of intimacy.

“These children need a lot of closeness...Who dares to come and pamper and show affection in an environment where everything is interpreted very easily through a sexual frame of reference or abuse. Yeah, I wouldn't dare.” (I3).

Interactional skills in RCC were highlighted in almost every interview. It became clear that there is a serious need for further training in interactional skills of the RCC personnel.

6.2.4 Knowledge of law and regulations

The Regional State Administrative Agencies of Southwestern Finland receives the most complaints and reports of defects concerning deficits in knowledge of law and regulations and interaction skills. Law and regulations are changing and demands are tightening. Through that raises a need for further education on the matter for personnel working in RCC. (I10). There are also misgivings about maltreatment in conducting restrictive measures. The personnel needs to perform restrictive measures so they don't harm anyone physically and learn how to prevent them. It is essential that no one works alone so that there is always someone to ask for guidance and advice. There has risen some signs and deficits which show that the quality of care and maintenance isn't at the level it should be in every facility. (I3). Using restrictive measures always touches a child's basic rights and restrictions should always be totally exceptional situations. Restrictive measures cannot be seen as educational factors, but as elements of support and maintenance. (I9).

Human rights and children's rights were also highlighted when discussing about the need for education in RCC. Personnel in those facilities should have an understanding of basic human rights and children's rights and how it should appear in practice in the everyday-life work. There needs to be a united opinion on the undivided rights of children which

are all the same for everyone. The value system of the personnel in RCC facilities should base on that. (I3, I5, I6, I8).

The law regulates that there has to be a certain amount of personnel in an RCC facility, and they have to present a certain educational background. It was seen as an important factor that the law regulates the amount and quality of personnel in Finland. (I4, I9).

6.3 How should professionalism be developed in RCC

Most of the interviewees' thoughts of developing professionalism in RCC combine to same themes as were mentioned as educational needs of personnel in RCC. Psychiatric knowledge, knowledge of law and regulations, digitalization, cultural sensitivity and working with immigrants, trauma orientation, interactional skills, self-determination and restrictive measures, reflection, supervision, work with families, involvement, childrens' rights and networking were themes that came up from the interviews. It was often mentioned that those themes that were seen as educational needs, were also those where gaps in knowledge most commonly occur.

Gaps in competence in psychiatric knowledge was a theme that divided opinions. It was said that there is a gap in psychiatric knowledge in RCC. On the other hand it was also seen that there is a sufficient amount of knowledge on the matter amongst RCC personnel, but the void of information is actually directed to understanding the behaviour of a child instead of searching for diagnoses on mental health (I1, I9).

"...pain based behaviour and understanding it. It bases on understanding that if someone has grown up in difficult conditions, it has demanded a certain type of behaviour to survive in those conditions and in a new environment that behaviour shows out to be undesirable." (I1).

Knowledge in law and regulations was seen as an important developmental task in RCC. It was seen that law and regulations have tightened and it was assumed that they will become even more strict in the near future (I10). It was seen that juridic knowledge should be something that everyone working in the field obtain. It was also said that knowledge in law in RCC should also cover basic human rights, children's rights and the understanding of how deep in those basic human rights the work touches when conducting restrictive measures. (I5, I6, I7). It also came up that there have been challenges in conducting those restrictive measures. There are complaints that cover restrictive measures and how they have been managed and how the child has been

heard in the process. It is important to learn how to work in such a way that the use of restrictive measures could be voided as much as possible. (I4).

Self-determination and being heard was also a theme that rose up from the interviews in terms of need in developing RCC in Finland. It was seen that children and families still don't feel like they've been heard in their matter even though the personnel might think they have made it possible. (I2, I4, I5, I6, I8, I9). It was seen that there is a lack of knowledge in interactional skills of personnel in RCC.

“That we are coating the speech in professionalism too much, and therefore the clients don't understand it and so becomes the feeling of not being heard. You need to be able to use words and concepts in a way the information can be received.” (I9).

Whereas interactional skills need to be enhanced in RCC, also cooperation with families and networking with other parties such as social workers, schools, mental health personnel and enhancing social contacts of the children and youth should be developed. It was seen that working towards networking and knowing other parties' line of work should be familiarized with during studies (I5, I6). It is also highly important to work with the parents during the child is in foster care.

“In a way the best interest of a child includes also supporting the whole family and at the moment that isn't thoroughly thought through in RCC units. In a way the best interest of a child never carries out without supporting the whole family and the parents.” (I2).

“When a care order is made, the parents are often left struggling alone and the game is over immediately... We fail miserably in reuniting families and it isn't the fault of the personnel, it is a structural challenge... The biologic parent can be replaced with nothing as parenthood is always something irreplaceable and the personnel need to keep in mind that despite the problems the interaction between all the parties always crumbles or builds the reunion of families.” (I9).

Challenges in the near future in RCC involved also digitalization and immigration. It was seen that it is very important that the personnel in RCC keep up with digitalization that is developing rapidly (I1, I3). As interaction between people happens more and more online, there becomes even a greater need for the personnel in facilities to teach and show the children how to act in real-life social situations and environments (I3). Knowledge in working with immigrants and multiculturalism was also emphasized in the interviews.

“It requires a delicate cultural sensitive touch and understanding if there happens to be tortured children there (in an RCC facility)... and those refugee children can

have trauma to the power of ten and that requires networking and collaboration on a totally different level already.” (I1).

All in all there is a lot to develop in RCC in Finland. There is an enormous amount of requirements for those working in the field. Informant 9 told that “...a diagnose and a pill, those are way too easy explanations. This is much harder, so much harder.” Also Informant 3 emphasizes that “...mercifulness towards yourself as an employee would probably increase if the personnel would become aware that we are working with highly complicated situations...”

6.4 The competence needs profile of RCC personnel

According to the results of this thesis there are few competences the personnel in RCC should obtain.

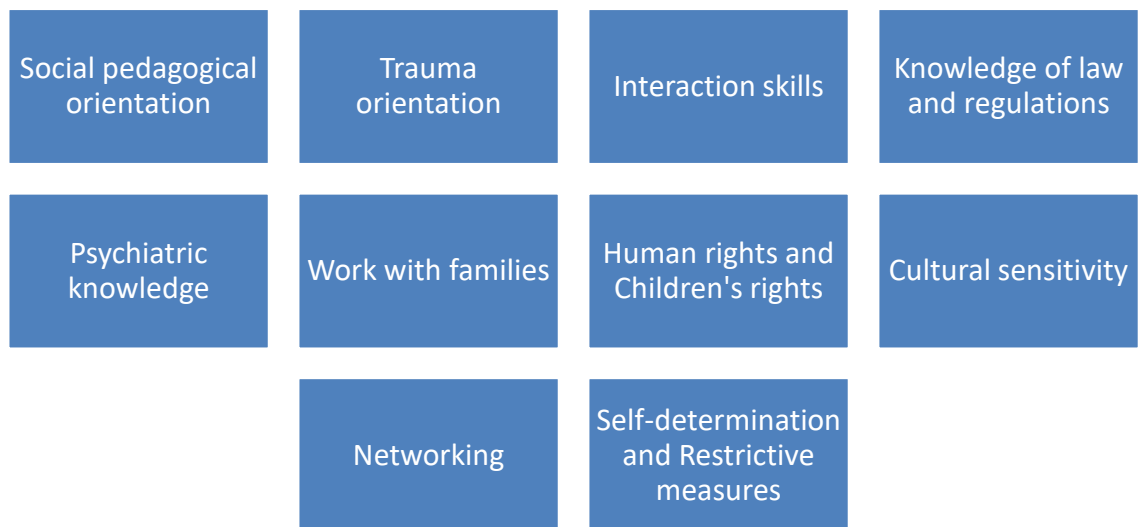


Figure 3. The competence needs of the personnel in RCC

Figure 3 shows that there are a lot of competences that personnel in RCC should obtain. It is crucial that the education prepares that personnel so they can take in as much of the required competences during their studies as possible. Some of the competences can be obtained through education such as knowledge of law and regulations and different orientations. However some of the competences are something that matures

through practical work and the person maturing as a professional, such as interaction skills and work with families.

The list of required competences is quite demanding and it can be said that the work of the personnel in RCC is highly demanding. There are numerous themes to take in and to master and the work isn't easy. Therefore it is important that the education the personnel receives would be as unison as possible. It would improve the quality of work and the service the RCC clientele receive in Finland. All in all the results of this thesis offer a needed point of view on the competence needs of that personnel and through these results the MOOC can be conducted so it responds to the void of specialization education of that personnel.

7 EVALUATION

7.1 Scrutiny of the results

The first research question wasn't thoroughly answered to. It also became clear very soon that the other two questions and their answers are linked together. The interviewees are all significant influencers in their line of work but those lines of work also vary even though they are all situated in child welfare in Finland. There were some quite opposite answers to the interview questions amongst the interviewees which might dwell from the work history and professional position of the interviewee; there is assumed to be differences in the points of view when interviewing for example a supervising author or a project leader of a child welfare project. However also many similarities were found amongst the answers of the interviewees and those similarities are highlighted as the main results of this research. As it can be seen, the results of this research were mainly quite similar to prior knowledge on the matter that came up when creating the theoretical framework of this research.

As a result a competence needs analysis was conducted through these results so it can be said that this research met its' goal and these results can be utilized furthermore in the field. The goal of this research was to visualize the gaps of knowledge amongst the personnel in RCC. Through this research those gaps were found and through that the competence needs profile (Figure 3) was formed.

7.2 Ethicality and reliability of the research

In this research ethicality carries out well as long as the researcher follows good scientific practices, such as honesty and precision in scientific work (see Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 132–133). The participation to an interview must always be voluntary and there can be no consequences to the participant if he or she does not want to take part in the interview. Voluntariness is a part of self-determination and it is highly important to make sure voluntary carries out in a research. Voluntariness includes also the possibility to refuse to answer certain questions during the interview. The self-determination of an interviewee is highlighted in the ethical principles of human sciences. (Ranta & Kuula-Luumi 2017, 414.) This research was voluntary and all the interviewees answered to the

questions. Some interview questions showed out to be quite difficult, such as the one concerning the effectiveness of RCC. It revealed to be a concept that isn't usually related to RCC in Finland and therefore some of the interviewees refused to answer to that question or thought they don't have enough knowledge on the matter.

To ensure reliability of this research Tuomi and Sarajärvi's (2009, 140–141) list of facts that should be referred to when evaluating reliability of a research has been followed to. Those facts include amongst other the collection of data, the informants of the research and the analyzation of data. The ethical decisions of the researcher and the reliability of the research are united. The researcher is always responsible for the research being conducted following good scientific practices and it bases on integrity, transparency and honesty. Good scientific practices include, amongst other things, that the research is executed using methods acknowledged by the scientific community and that the research is planned, executed and reported in detail, following the demands of scientific knowledge. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 132-133.) This research is transparent as all of its' phases are reported in this thesis and it could be repeated quite similar if wanted.

7.3 Conclusions

This research and its results can be used as a part of the ERCCI project and the MOOC as well as developing RCC in Finland. Utilised research methods are common methods in scientific research and are reported as good scientific practices demand. However a thesis is never considered to be a scientific research and therefore should be considered accordingly. Because the interviewed experts are highly appreciated in their lines of work in RCC in Finland, the results of this research can be considered to be prestigious.

Most of the themes that came up from the results were quite same as the author had earlier assumed. The hypothesis was quite accurate that mostly the competences yield around law and people skills. It is often said that personnel working in social and health care field work with their persona. However there are also numerous skills which can and should be obtained through education. The work in RCC also requires lots of creativity and the ability to adapt learned knowledge in practical work. When working with people, surprises are always possible and situations often require rapid procedures. In those situations a firm educational background offers many tools and ways to react. Therefore it is important that these results are taken into account when developing the field.

Conducting this research and writing this thesis was a great learning opportunity for the author. It was very rewarding to attend to the ERCCI intensive week in Lithuania and learn about RCC across Europe. There was also a lot to learn about international projects and attending to one was a great learning experience. As the world globalizes and develops, also experience in international projects will probably be even more appreciated in the future.

7.4 Implementation

As this thesis is made in commission to the ERCCI project, also the implementation will happen mainly through the ERCCI project. This thesis and its results will be utilized as a part of the ERCCI project paper in unison with other theses associated to the project. This thesis amongst the other theses also form a base for further phases of the ERCCI project as they shed light to the knowledge gaps in Finnish education concerning RCC related studies in Universities of Applied Sciences across Finland. The results of the ERCCI project's first phase will also be taken into consideration when creating the MOOC, which is the final product of the ERCCI project.

As RCC is so little researched in Finland, every researches dealing with the subject can be seen as valuable information and addition to prior knowledge. Some of the interviewees were very interested in the ERCCI project and this thesis and said they will be following the project and await for the results. The interviewees had high expectations on the ERCCI and the MOOC and the project was considered to be ambitious. Hopefully the experts find this thesis and the ERCCI project paper and the MOOC useful and through that the implementation will proceed.

7.5 Meaning of the results

This thesis is a research that also aims to develop RCC in Finland on a larger scale. This thesis and its results shed light to the common state of RCC in Finland when scrutinized through the eyes of experts working in the field. This thesis also shows out the gaps in knowledge of RCC personnel which the interviewees saw to be the most significant. This information can be utilized in planning and creating new curriculum in Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland. The curriculum concerning RCC in educational

establishments varies highly. Therefore these results could also be made of good use in harmonizing those studies and their contents.

7.6 Reliability and ethicality of the project

This research can be repeated quite similar as its phases, utilized methods and data collection and analyzation are reported transparently. This leads to the research being quite reliable. Every part of the interviews were also done voluntarily and in open cooperation with every parties.

7.7 Overall evaluation of the project

The SWOT method is a method that can be used for example in evaluation. SWOT comes from four different words: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. All those four factors are scrutinized when using SWOT analysis method. (Nyarku & Agyapong, 2011, 1 - 2.)

| | | |
|--|----------|----------|
| | Positive | Negative |
|--|----------|----------|

| | | |
|----------|--|---|
| Internal | Strengths The project is lead by TUAS, where the author studies The ERCCI project manager is the mentor of the author | Weaknesses Elapsed time of the project The field isn't the substance of the author |
| External | Opportunities The intensive week in Lithuania, comparing practices in participating countries The collection of data was possible utilizing long-distance methods | Threaths The timeline of the ERCCI project vs. the timeline of this research |

Figure 4. A SWOT analysis on the project

A SWOT analysis in this developmental project was made. It was a great strength that Finland and Turku University of Applied Sciences was the leader of the ERCCI project. Therefore it was possible to receive information and comments from the project manager and the mentor of this project Timonen-Kallio quickly. There were also some opportunities, such as the Intensive week in Lithuania. It was very useful to learn about the practices in other participating countries and be able to discuss about the similarities and differences in person. That helped to form a unison impression on the competence needs for personnel in RCC across Europe. There were also some significant weaknesses in this project such as elapsed time. Due to personal factors and the influences of Corona virus, it took two and a half years to finish this project. This may also have a negative affect on the final result, this thesis. The ERCCI project has proceeded with its' timeline even though this projects' timeline has elapsed.

7.8 Further study

In the answers of the interviewees, management and leadership came up many times. It was seen that many of the issues considering RCC in Finland should be resolved by developing management. It was said that the responsibility of the challenges in the field are not there because of the individuals. It was said that it is a structural challenge that

there is such a high turnover in the field and that there occurs situations that lead to complaints. It is always the responsibility of the manager on the RCC unit to make sure that the personnel is introduced to the work and that the work is done according to laws and regulations. There would be a great opportunity for further research on the competence needs of the managers of RCC in Finland and how the issues revolving RCC could be developed through developing management in the field.

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Research announcement

TUTKIMUSTIEDOTE

“A competence needs analysis in residential child care in Finland – the need for specialization training through experts’ eyes” -tutkimus

on osa Turun ammattikorkeakoulun ylemmän ammattikorkeakoulututkinnon opinnäytetöitä, joka liittyy Turun ammattikorkeakoulun koordinoimaan kansainväliseen ERCCI (Empowering Residential Child Care through Interprofessional Training) -hankkeeseen. Hanke on Erasmus-rahoitteinen ja osallistujamaina Suomen lisäksi ovat Liettua, Saksa, Italia sekä Espanja. Kussakin maassa kerätään vastaavaa aineistoa, jotta pystytään luomaan maiden kesken mahdollisimman vertailukelpoisia tuloksia.

Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on kartoittaa lastensuojelun työntekijöiden osaamista ja osaamistarpeita Suomessa. Tarkoituksena on kerätä alan asiantuntijoilta tietoa työntekijöiden osaamistarpeista ja osaamisen kehittämistä koulutuksen kautta. Tutkimusaineistoa kerätään puolistrukturoituina haastatteluina, lastensuojelun kentän asiantuntijoilta. Haastattelut tapahtuvat joko henkilökohtaisesti, puhelimitse tai Skypen välityksellä. Aineiston keruu tapahtuu tammi-helmikuussa 2019 ja haastattelut äänitetään. Haastattelujen tarkka aika sovitaan haastateltavien toiveiden ja osallistumismahdollisuuksien mukaan. Haastateltaville lähetetään etukäteen tutustuttaviksi sekä tutkimustiedote, saatekirje suostumuslomakkeineen, että haastattelun kysymykset.

Aineistoa hyödynnetään ja sen tulosten pohjalta koostetaan kolmivuotisen hankkeen päätteeksi Euroopan kattavat lastensuojelun työntekijöiden perus- sekä täydennyskoulutuksen verkko-oppimisympäristöt sisältöineen. Tutkimukselle on saatu lupa projektikoordinaattori Eeva Timonen-Kalliolta 10.12.2018.

Tutkimuksesta saa lisätietoja

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Covering letter, consent form and research questions

SAATEKIRJE

Opinnäytetyön nimi: A competence needs analysis in residential child care in Finland – the need for specialization training through experts' eyes

Hyvä vastaaja

Kohteliaimmin pyydämme Teitä osallistumaan haastatteluun, jonka tavoitteena on kartoittaa asiantuntijoiden näkemyksiä lastensuojelun työntekijöiden osaamisesta ja osaamistarpeista Suomessa. Tarkoituksena on kerätä alan asiantuntijoilta tietoa työntekijöiden osaamistarpeista ja osaamisen kehittamisestä koulutuksen kautta. Näiden tulosten pohjalta koostetaan kolmivuotisen hankkeen päätteeksi Euroopan kattavat lastensuojelun perus- sekä täydennyskoulutuksen verkko-oppimisympäristöt sisältöineen. Tämä aineiston keruu liittyy itsenäisenä osana kansainvälisen ERCCI (Empowering Residential Child Care through Interprofessional Training) -hankkeen ensimmäiseen osaan, jossa osallistujamaat (Suomi, Liettua, Saksa, Italia ja Espanja) keräävät kukin omasta maastaan vastaavaa aineistoa. Hanke on Erasmus-rahoitteinen. Lupa aineiston keruuseen on saatu projektikoordinaattori Eeva Timonen-Kalliolta 10.12.2018. Suostumuksenne haastateltavaksi vahvistatte allekirjoittamalla alla olevan Tietoinen suostumus haastateltavaksi -osan ja toimittamalla/antamalla sen haastattelijalle.

Teidän osallistumisenne haastatteluun on erittäin tärkeää, jotta tutkimus saadaan Suomen osalta toteutettua. Vastaaminen on luonnollisesti vapaaehtoista. Tutkimuksen tulokset tullaan raportoimaan julkisesti, jolloin haastatellun tunnistetiedoista nimi sekä organisaatio ja organisatorinen asema saattavat käydä ilmi. Teillä on täysi oikeus keskeyttää haastattelu ja kieltää käyttämästä Teihin liittyvää aineistoa, jos niin haluatte.

Tämä haastattelu on osa Turun ammattikorkeakoulun Sosiaali- ja terveysalan ylemmän ammattikorkeakoulututkinnon opinnäytteitä. Opinnäytetyön ohjaaja on Anssi Lähde, lehtori, Turun AMK /Terveys ja hyvinvointi.

Osallistumisestanne kiittäen

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Tietoinen suostumus haastateltavaksi

Olen saanut riittävästi tietoa A competence needs analysis in residential child care in Finland – the need for specialization training through experts' eyes -opinnäytetyöstä, ja siitä tietoisena suostun haastateltavaksi.

Päiväys _____

Allekirjoitus _____

Nimen selvennys _____

Yhteystiedot (tarvittaessa) _____

HAASTATTELUKYSYMYKSET

Alla on listattuna kysymykset, joita haastattelussa käsitellään. Haastattelu toteutetaan puolistrukturoituna haastatteluna, joten haastateltavalta saatetaan kysyä alla olevien kysymysten lisäksi myös tarkentavia lisäkysymyksiä.

- 1) Mitkä ovat mielestäsi lastensuojelun laitostyön työntekijöiden koulutuksen ydinkompetenssit, perusedellytykset ja/tai työntekijältä vaadittavat ominaisuudet? (esim. koulutustausta, luonteenpiirteet ym.)
- 2) Mitä välttämättömiä taitoja ja ydinkompetensseja lastensuojelun laitostyön työntekijöiltä mielestäsi vaaditaan?
- 3) Missä näet osaamisen puutteita?
- 4) Onko ydinkompetensseissa mielestäsi odotettavissa muutoksia lähitulevaisuudessa? (esim. seuraavan viiden (5) vuoden aikana?)
- 5) Mikä on näkemyksesi lastensuojelun laitostyön työntekijöiden tehokkuudesta? Mikä on työntekijöiden suurin työpanos? Missä näet olevan heikkouksia?
- 6) Miten arvioisit lastensuojelun laitostyön työntekijöiden työn laatua ja tulosta?