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Bachelor of Social Services (UAS)
Thesis, 2018

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Photovoice project with young asylum seekers

ABSTRACT

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Home Away from Home: Photovoice project with young asylum seekers

67 Pages and six attachments

November 2018

Diaconia University of Applied Sciences

Bachelor's Degree Programme in Social Services

Bachelor of Social Services

This project-oriented thesis stems from the wish to answer to a real need at the community level, contributing to the transitional process of those who came in Finland as asylum seekers, while waiting for the decision regarding the international protection and their refugee status. The "Home Away from Home" photographic exhibition project was developed with the young asylum seekers from Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers and took place between August and December 2017.

Vamos for young Asylum Seekers, a project of the Deaconess Institute of Helsinki, was implemented between 2016 and 2018. It aimed to improve the well-being of young asylum seekers, aged between 16 and 29, increasing their participation and offering a holistic program for vulnerable individuals.

The photographic exhibition took place between 13th and 30th of December 2017, and it showcased 24 posters, gathering over 44 pictures with captions having as a theme the concept of home. Finding a new home is captured and narrated by young asylum seekers. The main method used in this project is Photovoice. Belonging to the large family of participative methods, Photovoice was the tool designed to increase the social involvement and participation of the youth.

"Home Away from Home" aims, on the one hand, to involve the participants actively and the other hand to open an opportunity for discussion about the integration of the newcomers at the community level. Photovoice has the power to transcend the language barrier and can have a ripple impact initiating change. Altogether, nine asylum seekers, men and women aged between 16 and 29 years old, participated in three workshops producing 66 pictures regarding their feelings and perception of "home", and introducing themselves to the public. The event took place in Sello Library from Espoo, a location highly accessible to the whole range of the public. Overall, the exhibition and the entire project results are evaluated to be positive. The objectives of increasing the social involvement, the sense of belonging and homely feeling, as well as bringing awareness of the difficulties of a young person going through the asylum process, were reached. However, the extended results of the broader goals of a small-scale project may be seen developing in the future.

"Home Away from Home" brought together different stakeholders, participants, public and other professionals, and aims to be a model for further photovoice projects involving different types of target groups.

Keywords: Photovoice, Home, Young asylum seekers, Social involvement

“Every day is a journey, and the journey itself is home.”

Matsuo Basho



CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	3
2 BACKGROUND	5
2.1 Refugee crisis	5
2.2 Statistics.....	6
2.3 Projects involving asylum seekers	9
3 TARGET GROUP AND STAKEHOLDERS.....	12
4 NEED OF THE PROJECT	16
5 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.....	18
5.1 Photovoice as a method of achieving the goals and objectives	20
5.2 Concept of home.....	21
6 RESOURCES	25
7 BUDGET	27
8 RISKS.....	29
9 PROCESS DESCRIPTION	35
9.1 Implementation	35
9.1.1 Documentation.....	36
9.1.2 Meetings	37
9.2 Work plan.....	39
9.2.1 Recruiting the participants.....	39
9.2.2 Venue and promotion of the exhibition.....	40
9.2.3 Workshops	42
9.2.4 Photo collection and interviews.....	45
9.3 Ethical considerations	45
9.3.1 Project authorisation	46
9.3.2 Considerations regarding working with the vulnerable group.....	46
9.4 The event.....	49
9.5 Challenges	50
10 EVALUATION	52
11 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	58
12 CONCLUSIONS.....	60
SOURCES	63
APPENDIX 1. Photo of the exhibition “Home Away from Home”	67
APPENDIX 2. Consent for data treatment for the participants	68
APPENDIX 3. Interview questions	69
APPENDIX 4. Ethical behaviour for taking pictures	70
APPENDIX 5. Invitation to the exhibition	71
APPENDIX 6. Examples of photovoice from the exhibition.....	72

1 INTRODUCTION

Some photographs are known to have made history, therefore can be considered iconic. For example, the first step on the Moon made by the humankind is one of those photos. Although this Photovoice project did not have such ambitious goals, it marked a significant step for those who were involved in it.

In 2015 and 2016 the news about the asylum seekers arriving in Europe was heard on a daily basis on radio broadcasts, television, media, but also nearby ourselves, in our community. This project was designed to use photography as a means to illustrate glimpses of the stories of young asylum seekers who arrived in Finland between 2015 and 2016, hoping to find a new and safer home. The direct interaction with the young asylum seekers and witnessing the struggle of being unrooted in a new and sometimes unfriendly environment raised questions about what makes a different place to feel like home.

The goal of this project has a holistic view aiming to increase the social participation of young asylum seekers. Simultaneously, the project sought to offer the public a collection of photos and stories by asylum seekers, allowing these young people to express their views and feelings towards Finland as new their home and to influence their participation in the community positively.

This thesis paper was divided into twelve chapters. The introductory section is followed by a chapter which explains the background aspects of the refugee crisis of 2015, statistics and other projects that involved asylum seekers. Sections three and four discuss the target group, stakeholders and need of this project. In chapter five, the general goals and the specific objectives developed are explained, as well as the photovoice as a method of implementation and the theme project, the concept of "home". Sections six and seven have the role of describing the resources and the budget needed in this project, followed by chapter eight that explains the risk assessment designed for the project and the risks that actualised during the process.

Chapter nine includes the process description divided into five subchapters, explaining in detail the implementation, the working plan, the ethical considerations, the final event and a part including the challenges encountered during the project. The evaluation section debates the main results and the methods of dissemination, followed by the last chapters, the professional development, conclusions and recommendations regarding future implementations of similar projects.

2 BACKGROUND

In this chapter aspects of the refugee crisis, statistics regarding the asylum seekers applying for refugee status and different projects that involved young asylum seekers and or photovoice participatory method are discussed.

2.1 Refugee crisis

The events that are known as the Arab Spring starting in 2010 caused unrest and geopolitical instability across the Arab world. The crisis developed over the years when the Syrian war reached the culminating point. The refugee crisis of 2015 represents one of the biggest migrant waves since the second world war. The number has been estimated up to 16.7 million refugees worldwide. According to Eurostat, the European Union received a total of 431,095 refugees in 2013. In 2014 this figure increased to 626,960. For the following two years the number over doubled to 1,322,845 and 1,260,910 for 2015 and 2016 respectively. The number of refugees arriving in Finland had reached annual circa 3,000 before 2015 when it surged to 32,345. Since then it has settled down to approximatively 5,000. (Eurostat 2015)

In 2015 most of the refugees arrived in Europe by using the so-called Western Balkan route. Refugees taking this route entered Europe by crossing the Aegean Sea. Below, figure 1 shows the different routes taken by the refugees

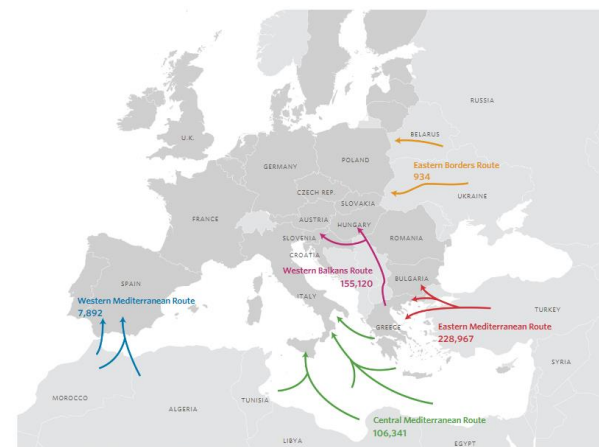


FIGURE 1. Primary routes used by refugees in 2015 (Rigdon & Umlauf 2015)

From Greece, they travelled through the Balkan countries to Austria or Hungary and from there to Germany. Some continued their journey further north. Other often used routes to Europe in 2015 were the Eastern Mediterranean route and the Central Mediterranean route.

The annual quota of refugees for Finland before 2014 was 750. In the years 2014 and 2015, this was it has increased to 1,050 due to situation generated by the deteriorating Syrian crisis. Despite all this, the largest ethnic groups admitted to Finland are Iraqis, Afghans, Sudanese, Myanmarese, Congolese and Iranians.

2.2 Statistics

By the time they arrived in Finland, some of the young people had travelled from different countries already. Their exhausting journey had a sole purpose, that was to request the international protection status. According to Eurostat (2015), first-time asylum applicants were citizens of the following countries:

	Q1 2014			Q2 2014			Q3 2014			Q4 2014			Q1 2015		
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
Non-EU	35 655	30 940	32 805	34 740	38 825	41 330	51 390	50 070	61 675	62 865	58 625	62 710	60 120	64 590	60 105
Kosovo - (XK)	325	785	760	700	655	710	1 020	1 285	3 155	3 545	7 495	13 075	13 860	22 460	12 550
Syria - (SY)	5 840	5 430	5 315	5 530	7 095	8 915	11 530	12 480	16 500	14 860	13 185	12 380	11 090	8 370	9 635
Afghanistan - (AF)	2 955	2 295	2 135	1 960	1 980	2 435	2 975	3 095	3 915	4 300	4 220	5 555	4 560	4 105	4 245
Albania - (AL)	1 110	1 595	1 500	1 410	1 210	1 240	1 400	1 030	1 060	1 280	1 585	1 605	2 170	2 325	3 645
Iraq - (IQ)	840	835	755	800	785	850	1 040	1 245	1 745	2 035	2 035	1 835	2 175	2 245	2 875
Serbia - (RS)	1 390	1 180	1 165	1 035	985	1 170	1 990	1 780	1 790	2 320	2 380	2 310	2 295	2 095	1 945
Pakistan - (PK)	1 640	1 525	1 715	1 455	1 480	1 475	1 775	1 680	2 010	2 125	1 875	1 715	1 730	1 685	1 900
Ukraine - (UA)	110	205	545	630	790	395	1 370	1 570	1 895	2 170	1 815	1 440	1 300	1 650	1 760
Nigeria - (NG)	1 050	855	1 120	1 285	1 565	1 600	2 005	1 665	1 955	2 350	1 655	1 700	1 445	1 425	1 350
Somalia - (SO)	1 265	1 045	1 060	1 270	1 250	1 295	1 340	1 290	1 515	1 300	1 090	1 070	1 040	1 125	1 250
Russia - (RU)	1 515	1 090	1 120	1 145	1 000	1 050	1 195	1 145	1 265	1 220	1 125	1 160	1 080	1 080	1 015
Eritrea - (ER)	1 315	720	905	2 450	4 570	4 115	6 040	5 015	4 090	3 260	2 270	1 485	1 295	875	985
Gambia - (GM)	785	570	600	865	870	885	1 055	920	1 225	1 340	1 005	1 180	1 050	1 025	1 010
Bangladesh - (BD)	500	505	595	530	555	430	675	785	1 405	1 755	1 140	1 115	835	705	825
Senegal - (SN)	360	445	500	460	530	470	525	455	485	730	695	605	675	800	800
Iran - (IR)	860	600	610	825	740	660	770	770	950	1 085	940	845	830	675	755
MK - (MK)	855	500	500	420	305	470	650	550	545	705	695	530	630	655	880
Mali - (ML)	610	660	970	1 130	1 630	1 245	1 290	1 080	1 345	1 315	865	645	595	595	775
Stateless	580	535	645	750	1 200	1 100	1 360	1 650	2 550	1 960	1 525	1 270	870	520	405
Algeria - (DZ)	455	475	520	500	525	450	480	485	540	615	510	470	470	475	630

FIGURE 2. First-time asylum applicants by citizenship (Eurostat 2015)

According to the European Union directives and the Finnish Aliens Act, international protection is defined as refugee status or subsidiary protection status. Those who receive a favourable decision also receive a residence permit.

These statistics include decisions on international protection as well as decisions on residence permits for asylum seekers. “Nonetheless, decision-makers need to be held to very high standards of proficiency, for the human consequences can be disastrous if a decision-making process miscarries in the sphere of refugee protection”. (Maley 2016, 34).

United Nations have defined an asylum seeker as “someone who has made a claim to be considered for refugee status under the 1951 United Nations (UN) Convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees, the 1967 Protocol relating to the status of refugees and Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).” (O’Neill 2010, 6).

Underlining the clear distinction between the terms “asylum seeker” and “refugee” is essential for this project. An asylum seeker is a person in the process of asking for protection. Thus the future is uncertain. Living in limbo between different borders makes it even harder to define what is the meaning of home, or where that place might be. However, it is necessary to make a clear distinction between an asylum seeker and refugee terms. According to the Ministry of the Interior (n.d) “An asylum seeker is a person who seeks asylum and the right to reside in a foreign nation. A refugee is someone who has been granted asylum in one state or another. A person may receive refugee status if they arrive in Finland based on a proposal by the UNHCR with respect to Finland’s refugee quota. Asylum seekers become refugees if they are granted asylum.” (Ministry of the Interior, n.d.)

Following there are illustrated the numbers of the applicants for asylum in Finland in 2015 and 2016 as a total number and on age groups.

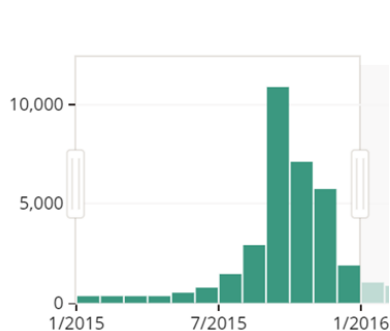


FIGURE 3. Applications 2015

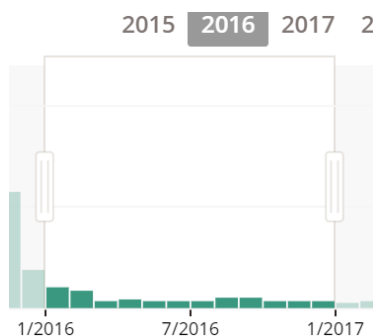


FIGURE 4. Applications 2016

(Migri, 2018)

According to the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri) in 2015, there were 32,477 applicants for international protection and 5,646 in 2016. These numbers are the official statistics registered by the authorities, and they are a public domain.

By age group, the applicants aged between 18 and 34 who applied in 2015 were 4,995 and 1,019 in 2016.

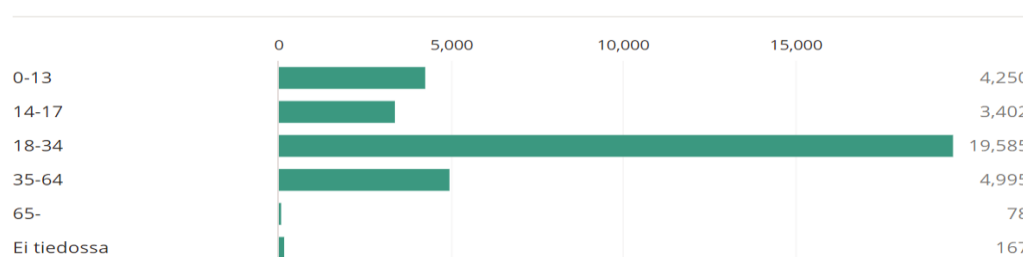


FIGURE 5. Age group of the asylum seeker applicants 2015 (Migri 2018)

In 2016 the number of young asylum seekers and minors decreased dramatically after 2015 as Figure 6 shows:

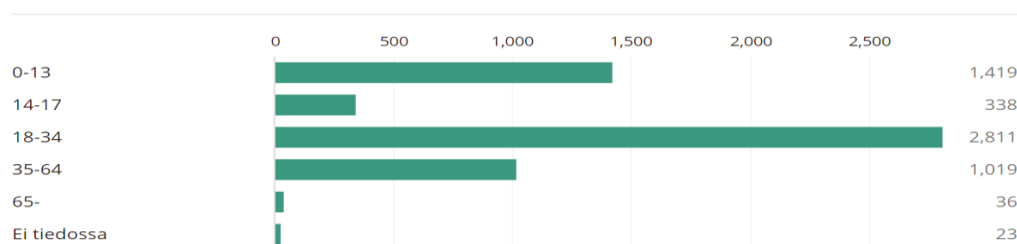


FIGURE 6. Age group of the asylum seeker applicants 2016 (Migri, 2018)

There is an evident dissimilarity in numbers between 2015 and 2016. However, the numbers are noticeably lower in 2016. The relevance of this statistic in the target group of this project, it reflects on the fact that the participants were men and women from Syria, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan, aged between 16 and 29 years old, that came in Finland and applied for international protection and refugee status in 2015 or 2016.

According to the Finnish Youth Research Society “The global migration of today has a strong impact on the lives of young people and children. The number of young people in the world is higher than ever before in history, and the young generation is among the most active migrants – be it migration within a country or between countries or continents, forced or voluntary. More than 80 per cent of the 32 476 asylum seekers who arrived in Finland in 2015 were under 35 years of age according to the Finnish Immigration Service. The proportion of unaccompanied minors was around ten per cent (3024 persons)” (Finnish Youth Research Society 2017, 7.)

2.3 Projects involving asylum seekers

The relevance of these data about the target group it reflects on the fact that the aim of the project had targeted young asylum seekers, both men and women. The asylum seekers from the target group were living in different reception centres from the capital area and surroundings. During the period I had been a volunteer and later a student in practical placement with Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers (see Chapter 4), I visited some of these reception centres starting January 2017. All together I visited the reception centres from Evitskog (Kirkkonummi), Siikajärvi (Espoo), Auramo (Vantaa) and Kera (Espoo). These reception centres opened in 2015 and at by now some of these have been closed. Migri and the Finnish Red Cross organised their services.

Regarding the young people as a target group, the international legislation and the Finnish Law, specifically, the Youth Act (unofficial translation) states that children and youth must be considered in all the matters that concern their lives. Their opinions matter and they must be heard. Honkasalo, (2017) a researcher of the Finnish Institute argues that: “by being heard, young people can feel that they are a part of society. Moreover, being heard is only one form of participation. Therefore, we must consider what “being heard” means. And what do we mean when we talk about issues that focus on children and young people? Being heard does not mean just pattern like situations where one is heard only through verbal communication. It is equally important to examine how we can promote participation when the status of the young person is

fragile or when no common language necessarily exists. One possible indicator of participation is how strongly the young person feels that they can influence the important aspects of their life.” (Honkasalo 2017, 9.)

Similar projects with young asylum seekers were developed worldwide but also at a local level. Some the relevant projects include: “Music Intervention as a Tool for Well-Being: A Pilot Project at a Family Group Home for Unaccompanied Minors” (Abdallah & Mirzakhani-Moghaddam 2018), “Well-being through plants: The project of creating a therapeutic balcony for young asylum seekers” (Muda 2017)

The University of Edinburgh has presented in 2016 the Photo-Voice Exhibition: “The lived realities of asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland” allowing immigrants to express their view on the policies on supporting asylum seekers and refugees in the United Kingdom. (Global Health Academy 2016). Alternatively, Foto Historias is a “Participatory Photography project that documents the life stories of migrants in the North, in the South, and at the US-Mexico Border, to help surface the richness, diversity and depth of their roots, experiences, and aspirations. “(Gomez & Vannini 2015).

According to the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri, n.d) when individuals arrive in Finland, they should inform border control authorities that they apply for asylum. After that, they are sent to a reception centre and, the asylum procedure begins. The Finnish Immigration Service will process the application, and after an interview with the authorities, the applicant receives a positive or negative decision. This period is rather lengthy, between three and six months, sometimes over a year. In case of an adverse decision, an applicant for asylum has the right to contest it and reapply on a different base and additional information. Due to these reasons, the process can be extremely long and burdensome. Meanwhile, the asylum seekers live their lives in reception centres in uncertainty regarding their future.

Living for months in a reception centre does not encourage the youths to participate in the outside community. Many young people live in a sort of time capsule still remembering everything they left behind but also having dreams of what might be incoming in a new and safer country. While many programmes tried to reach the asylum seekers in the reception centre, offering for example language courses, different programmes aimed at bringing the youth outside the reception centre, to help them identify common traits and facilitate the integration process. Finding a new home is not a target but is a journey in which these young people build brick after brick, the foundation of their future.

3 TARGET GROUP AND STAKEHOLDERS

In this chapter, the target group and the stakeholders are explained. As stated in the project management literature, one of the essential parts of a project is the target group and the stakeholders.

The target group can be defined in project management as individuals or entities that will be affected directly by the implementation of the goals and objectives of the project. The participants described as “target group” in this project are young asylum seekers arrived in Finland in 2015 and 2016 and living in reception centres from the capital area.

The target group of the “Home Away from Home” project were young people, aged between 16 and 29, both men and women, still living in reception centres and waiting for a decision regarding their application for refugee status. The “Home Away from Home” project aimed to involve between five to ten young asylum seekers from reception centre, clients of Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers. According to the Finnish legislation, Section 2 of Youth Act (72, 2006) states that “young people means those under 29 years of age” and “social empowerment means measures targeted at young people and geared to improve life management skills and to prevent exclusion”.

In every project, during the designing stage, there is a need for stakeholder analyses in connection with the target group and other beneficiaries. The stakeholder analyses can be done using different tools and models, to measure the relevance of the stakeholder and their impact on the development of the project. According to Blackman (2003), the “stakeholders are people affected by the impact of an activity, people who can influence the impact of the activity. Stakeholders can be individuals, groups, a community or an institution” (Blackman 2003, 22.)

In this project, Blackman’s (2003) model for stakeholder analysis was used. Two types of categories of stakeholders involved in this project were identified. These are the primary stakeholders and secondary stakeholders. The main

criteria for the division were the likelihood of the impact of the implementation of the project.

The partner organisation of “Home Away from Home” project and one of the stakeholders, is Deaconess Institute of Helsinki, represented by one of its major projects, “Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers”. The Deaconess Institute is a large national organisation that has been operating in Finland for over 150 years. The core value of this organisation is “dignity for everyone”, aiming to empower those disadvantaged categories of people.

The Vamos project of the Deaconess’s Institute of Helsinki is one of the major projects by this organisation and states that “Vamos is a low-threshold activity designed to strengthen young people’s resources and support their involvement in education or work.” (Deaconess Institute Helsinki 2016).

Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers is a smaller project from Vamos of Deaconess Institute that took place between 2016 and 2018 in cooperation with Finnish Red Cross Metropolitan Support Unit Area and reception centres and funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). (Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers 2016). The aim was to increase the well-being of the young asylum seekers during the period of the asylum procedure, with an accent on empowering and enhancing social participation.

The clients of Vamos were the youth with an immigrant background aged between 16 and 29 and living in reception centres. Joronen (2005) compiles multiple definitions of the concept of well-being: from a psychological perspective as a balance between negative and positive effect to a perspective of happiness, satisfaction and perceptions of existential challenges in life. According to the same author, well-being has critical dimensions such as “self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth.” (Joronen 2005, 22).

The psycho-educational model used by Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers was a holistic approach towards young people aimed at strengthening their social skills, life management and ability to function. “The three-year project is

funded by the European Social Fund, and it aims to reach 720 youth with an immigrant background to strengthen their social involvement. Later this year, a brand new Vamos project for young asylum seekers will be started. The two-year project will be funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). The project aims to activate at least 140 young asylum seekers while they are waiting for a decision.” (Eurodiaconia 2016.)

These categories may be divided into the following levels of stakeholders: primary and secondary. Another criterion is the interest of each stakeholder in this project’s objectives, the likely impact of the project (marked with + for positive, - for negative, +/- for possible positive and negative effects and ? for uncertain). Lastly, another criterion is the priority of each stakeholder using a scale from 1 to 5, where the first position indicates the highest priority.

TABLE 1. Stakeholder analysis – Primary stakeholders

STAKEHOLDERS	INTERESTS	LIKELY IMPACT	PRIORITY
PRIMARY Asylum seekers	Participation, expressing own needs.	+	1
Vamos	The photovoice project involves their clients and supports the work methods.	+	2
Sello Library	Collaboration and hosting a public event where anyone can attend. Media visibility, multicultural promotion	+	2
Student	Professional development is essential for a future community worker and coordinator of the project.	+	2

By analysing the interest in the project, the primary or secondary stake of the beneficiaries was identified, as well as the benefit of achieving the goals and objectives would bring for these stakeholders. The impact and level of influence on the project were also analysed.

TABLE 2. Stakeholder analysis – Secondary stakeholders

STAKEHOLDERS	INTERESTS	LIKELY IMPACT	PRIORITY
SECONDARY			
Diak University	Project workers and teacher that supervise the planning, implementation and evaluation.	+	3
Deaconess Institute	Involvement of the Institute's workers in a project with asylum seekers.	+	3
Local community	Better understanding and acceptance of migrants.	+	3
Migri	The asylum seekers are in the process of obtaining international protection	?	4
Social services	Some asylum seekers are clients of social services in Finland. Decision makers.	?	4
Universities of Social Services	Other students can use this model and apply it to different target groups.	+	4

(Blackman 2002, 22)

Another stakeholder that had a low impact on the project is the Finnish Red Cross. This organisation was organising the main services inside the reception centres where the young asylum seekers lived. During the period when I acted as a volunteer while visiting the reception centres from the capital area, I interacted briefly with some workers of the Finnish Red Cross. They were informed about the aim of creating a photo exhibition, but no formal contact was made at that time.

4 NEED OF THE PROJECT

In this section I describe the justification of the need for a photovoice project with young asylum seekers from the reception centres from the capital area.

During the studies in Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, I had been volunteered with Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers from January to August 2017, continuing from September 2017 with the practical placement for ten weeks until the kick-off of the "Home Away from Home" project. While volunteering, the identification of the general need had appeared to be necessary. The initial reason for becoming a volunteer worker with the asylum seekers was the stringent need of different organisations of professionals that could handle the high demand for services offered to those in need of protection.

Volunteering with young asylum seekers gave me the opportunity to listen to them talking about their feelings, struggles and fears in adapting to the new reality in Finland. Many of them had traumatic experiences and felt disappointed with the outcome of their journey. While having to deal with the loss of their loved ones, their homes and their culture, young asylum seekers must face a lot of bureaucratic procedures right from the beginning of their stay in Finland. Sometimes, a simple gesture of seeing, again and again, the same pictures of what it used to be their home, brings some comfort to the young people.

During the period I was a volunteer worker in Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers, I witnessed several times different situations in which individuals were trying to find a way of expressing their feelings and their expectations. Due to the lack of a common language, many were using their mobile devices to communicate, for example using an online translator or showing me a picture. On several occasions, young people were willing to share photos of something meaningful for them.

Following the group dynamics and individual behaviours, I noticed that there was the need for an opportunity for these individuals to express themselves

easily, creatively and to feel the protagonists of their development. It became more evident that a method such photovoice could supply both the opportunity and the means to increase the social involvement of the users and develop their sense of belonging. As Blackman (2003, 10) suggests the need for a project that could fulfil those requirements was identified and generated a project cycle, from determining the needs to reflection and design of a new project, that can answer the needs assessment.

5 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This chapter will present the main goals and objectives of the photovoice project, describing in detail the objectives using a SMART analysis.

According to Blackman (2003), every project needs to clarify its goals and objectives. In the context of project management, “goal refers to the overall problem we are trying to address. It is sometimes referred to the wider development objective.” In project management literature goals are also seen as the vision of the entire project hinting to prospects in a more extended period. Goals are defined as broader achievements that are developed on a longer term: “It is a desired state where a need or problem no longer exists or is significantly improved. The project will contribute towards this long-term impact but will not achieve itself. The goal could be the same for a number of projects and some organisations.” (Blackman 2003, 40-42.)

While the goal of this project became explicit from the very beginning, the objectives were clarified during the planning phase. Martin (2002) suggests that “Identifying your aims is not enough. The aim describes what you want to achieve in relation to a particular need, but it does not indicate how you are going to achieve it, when are you going to do it or how will you know that you have been successful in doing it. So, you need to convert the aims into objectives” (Martin 2002, 32.)

The focus of the goals and objectives of this project was on the clients need to increase their level of participation. While the goal has a more idealistic form, the objectives are consistent and help to clarify the expected results. The “Home Away from Home” project had as a goal to give voice to young asylum seekers, to encourage them to express their views over their new home and to increase their social involvement and participation. “Home Away from Home” is a small-scale project thus, the goal will not be achieved entirely during the implementation.

To achieve the broader goals, there is the need to define the smaller and concrete objectives to be achieved. Therefore, a SMART analysis was used to determine the exact objectives expected to be fulfilled by the end of the project. The objectives of this project according to the SMART analysis are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.

As Martin (2002) suggest: "Objectives need to be as precise as possible. This means that they should have some particular characteristics. An easy way to remember these characteristics is to think of them as SMART". (Martin 2002, 32). where S means specific, M states for measurable, A for achievable, R for realistic and finally T states for timeliness. Following are the objectives in detail designed for this project.

The specific (S) objective was to create a photovoice exhibition compiling pictures and captions of young asylum seekers from reception centres in Finland representing their view about the concept of home. Another specific objective was to involve the participants from the beginning of the project.

The measurable (M) objectives were to include five to ten participants, both men and women, aged between 16 and 29 with an immigrant background, who would produce between three and ten pictures having "home" as a theme.

The achievable (A) part of the objectives was represented by the fact that the project plan and implementation were previously discussed and approved by the partner organisation and by the teachers from the university. The activities followed the working plan agreed with the supervisors and were monitored and modified according to recommendations and timeline.

The planned objectives were realistic (R), meaning that the activities and the events were to take place as expected, within in the time frame, resources and budget available.

Finally, the project stages were planned in a precise work plan and timeline (T). Therefore the start-up, the implementation, the event and final evaluation of the project would take place between September and December 2017.

Having a clear list of objectives is vital for good project management. Clear objective influence positively the implementation and serve as a tool for project evaluation (see Chapter 10)

5.1 Photovoice as a method of achieving the goals and objectives

This section discusses photovoice as a highly participative method, the different projects that had this method as a main tool of implementation and about how photovoice can make a significant impact at the community level.

Taking a photo allows us to stop time and captures certain moments in one's history. Photographs far from just pieces of paper or collections of digital pixels can bring light in the darkness, turning unfamiliar into familiar, the forgotten to memorable. Taking a photograph is a moment of choice and adding your own words and explain its meaning makes it a powerful tool. Charlotte Cotton in the introduction of the "New Londoners" (2008, 4) suggests that "Photography has the power to shape and enrich our experiences and Photovoice constructs ways for this power to be profound".

" Participatory photography is a method where participants take or bring photos into an interview, and then comment and share about them with an interviewer. Along with a wider range of visual methods, participatory photography has been extensively used in studies with marginalised populations and is renowned for it allows the interviewer (and the reader) to have a deeper understanding on a topic." (Gomez, Vannini 2015, 325.)

The benefits of the photovoice method according to Gomez and Vannini (2015, 326) are the fact the participants are empowered by reflecting and speaking out about their experiences. Also, the participants do not feel pressured by outside decisions, and they are free to decide what to reveal in their pictures. The use of photographs is challenging the prejudice that one may have when it is analysed from a different perspective. Lastly, photovoice combines the pictures with the stories behind them thus giving a deeper meaning. Photovoice is a highly participative method, and it was chosen as the primary

method for this project with the purpose of increasing the social involvement of the participants.

"Participation may take on various forms and occur in varying intensities depending on the nature of the activity and the roles and responsibilities of the people and groups involved. Community members or groups may simply be required to contribute labour or some cash inputs, or be represented on a management committee, or take on full management and decision-making responsibilities and authority." (European Commission 2004, 119.)

The nature, scale and scope of the project will influence the level of participation that is practical and possible, as will a realistic assessment of skills and capacity among participating communities and groups. Building such capacity is often a specific objective of participatory approaches.

5.2 Concept of home

The core theme of the project is home. A concept described widely by various terms and standards as Päällysaho (2016) debates regarding the multiple definitions of home:

"But what is home? A number of disciplines such as anthropology, architecture, home economics, cultural geography, and recently also social sciences, have generated an abundant amount of research into the topic. Despite the growing research interest in the home, there is no single shared understanding of the theoretical definition of the term. Suffice to say it here home refers firstly to spatial and physical aspects, to a particular kind of physical space. (Porteus and Smith 2001, Vilkkö 1998), that is, to a house or an apartment where one permanently lives." (Päällysaho 2016, 138)

According to Riukulehto & Rinne-Koski, the main theories regarding the "home" concept research are the general housing and household research, socialist traditions in-home research, the feminist theory and the humanist and

experiential home research. (Riukulehto & Rinne-Koski 2016, 4). A similar interconnection is defined in the concept of Heimat by Applegate in “A Nation of Provincials” where the “sociologists and social psychologists have explained Heimat as a basic human need, comparable to eating or sleeping”, also quoting Willhem Brepohl “to be known, to be recognized, and to be accepted.” (Applegate 1990, 5).

Päällysaho (2016) suggests that the concept of home that it “refers to the strong attachments people create to their homes. A home is, therefore, a concrete place that has been shaped, that carries with itself the feeling of “at homeness” and “being at home” (Päällysaho 2016, 138). For this reason, a home cannot be duplicated or assigned. It is the emotions and experiences of the people inhabiting it that make it as a home. It is also a subjective concept: it is only home for them. They will always remember this place as their home, despite its flaws and possible bad memories attached to it. Riukulehto & Rinne-Koski expand the concept of home to include different interpretations of it:

“In discussions about home, one can easily distinguish several meanings and ways to talk about home. Sometimes home refers to a building, but it can also describe the place of birth, human relations, or a combination of space and time. The same people talk about home in various meanings. The meanings are not contradictory but complementary. Home is perceived as a building, an environment, but as objects and human relations. Home is a place and an idea, where the decisive point is that you feel it is your home.” (Riukulehto & Rinne-Koski 2016, 4 – 5.)

Therefore, home is never just a physical place nor just one place, but a place of serenity and comfort which depends on each person to establish many times throughout a lifetime, enforcing the significance of home. People can be assigned a form of housing, but not a home per se. This can turn into home as people live there, have shared memories and go through difficult or otherwise memorable moments in life. In time, it also becomes a safe location, a place where it is nice to retreat for example after a stressful day.

According to Atkinson & Jacobs, the typologies of home are described on two levels. One is the ideational level, which is determined by the experiences and the representations of the inhabitants. These are personal reflections that are

represented throughout media or cultural imagining of the home. On the other hand, there is the material level of a home. The connections to this level are the material represented by a dwelling, as physical shelter, its place, its location in the community and the practices of homemaking, such as cooking. (Atkinson & Jacobs 2016, 40.) Riukulehto & Rinne-Koski also underlined the significance of experience. “The world around us (both spatial and temporal) needs to be experienced. A certain point in space will become specific when it is infused with meaning. It thus becomes a place.” (Riukulehto & Rinne-Koski 2015, 116.)

The asylum seekers, once settled, to begin a new process of establishing their home. Naturally, it takes time as it involves getting adjusted to a new culture, a new language and different kind of society. Home is such a profound concept that this process can take up a very long time, yet it is a vital and sometimes overlooked stage of the asylum seekers’ settling into the new environment. This should be supported by the government, enabling people to grow roots, build a home and fully integrate into their new country. Integration has mutual benefits, for the individual as well as for society.

The concept of home is related to different experiences and connections people develop over time and finding a home is an ongoing process. “Home, in this sense, is understood not as something fixed and necessarily rooted in territories or localities but, instead, as constituting a continuous process across time and space that involves a task of actively constructing a sense of home.” (Toivanen 2014, 35).

The young asylum seekers participating in this project described their departure as “a loss” of their homes. Some suffered the destruction of their homes or neighbourhoods. In the literature, when we talk about the intentional destruction of the home, we talk about the domicide, from the Latin “Domus” meaning house. The term of domicide is a new word-concept, underlined by Porteus and Smith in 2001 expressing the “deliberate destruction of home against the will of the home dweller, we call it domicide. Briefly, domicide is the murder of home.” (Porteus & Smith 2001, 3.)

For asylum seekers “home” is a delicate issue, as many of them had to leave their homes and home countries. It can trigger longing, bad memories and even traumas. These can also be brought on by certain images, sounds or smells that remind them of home. This shows what a vital place home is for them. In the light of different theories mentioned previously, this suggests that home is not a fixed term defining only a particular place, but it is instead an experimented feeling connected with various events in the life of each person.

Thus, for some people home may undoubtedly be a place, for others the idea of home is instead a town or neighbourhood, nature, a person or the whole family. For migrants, the meanings of home are fluctuating between “home” as a place where they had their roots and “home” as a need to belong in a new environment. A refugee might take different routes to find a safer destination, but the aim is always the same, getting a new home and growing new roots.

6 RESOURCES

This section will present the resource analyses used to determine the resources needed for this project.

The required resources in this project are labelled in this chapter. There are many resources involved in a project. "Means are physical and non-physical resources (often referred to as "Inputs") that are necessary to carry out the planned Activities and manage the project. A distinction can be drawn between human resources and material resources." (European Commission 2004, 142.)

A resource analysis was performed to assess the resources available as well as those needed for the accomplishment of the objectives as it can be observed in resource analysis in Table 3:

TABLE 3. Resource analysis

Type of resources	Available	To be acquired
Human	Project manager Partner organization	Participants
Material	Staff time	Supplies (magazines, scissors, carton, glue, paper, markers. Venue (exhibition wall, stage and seats)
Technical	Cell phones Recorder Laptop Social media services	Photo editing skills Event management skills. Devices from the venue projector, microphones.
Financial	Travel expenses Internet expenses	Posters printing costs Budget for refreshments

According to Lyrintzis (n.d., 24), the resources needed in a photovoice project are the facilitation supplies, photography supplies, information supplies and the venue. In this project, resources may be divided into human resources (the participants, project manager, partners, audience and other, material, technical and finally financial resources. I will describe in detail each category of resources used in this project.

Facilitation supplies included display board to record different ideas, carton boards, magazines, pencils, scissors, glue, icebreaking games, postcards representing landscapes, laptop, instant messaging services (WhatsApp), electronic mail, internet connection and voice recorder.

Photography supplies included the digital cameras integrated into the participants own cell phones, posters and carton frames used in the exhibition, and the photo software used for poster editing and printing. The software was provided online free of charge by the printing company.

Information supplies included a synopsis of the project in a digital form shared within the invitation shared publicly and in the printed form attached next to the exhibition with an explanatory role. Other materials were the consent forms for the participants and the printed brochures handed to the public during the event.

In partnership with Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers and Me-talo Espoo, the location hosting the workshops and photo collection were obtained free of charge. The local public library Sello from Leppävaara, Espoo that hosted the event and the photo exhibition, was the venue of the final event. For the occasion, several devices were used such as projector, panel, laptop, microphones, stage and chairs. During the event, food and beverages were offered to all guests and participants.

7 BUDGET

This chapter discusses the budget management, as well as the sources of funding and the costs of the project.

In the project management literature, the project budget can be defined as "a quantitative expression of a plan for a defined period. It may include planned sales volumes and revenues, resource quantities, costs and expenses, assets, liabilities and cash flows. It expresses strategic plans of business units, organisations, activities or events in measurable terms. A budget is the sum of money allocated for a particular purpose and the summary of intended expenditures along with proposals for how to meet them." (Fowler 2017, 44).

After the resource assessment was made the budget statement plan. Generally, when applying for funding, there is a need to demonstrate the usefulness and flow of resources. Below is the table of the budget statement showing the estimated costs defined in the planning phase and the actual costs registered at the end of the project.

TABLE 4. Budget statement

ITEM	ESTIMATE	ACTUAL COST
Equipment	Free	Free
Services (internet and mobile connection)	25	25
Materials	35	30
Venue	Free	Free
Photo printing	120	180
Leaflets	10	12
Refreshments	80	135
Transport	30	48
Total	300	430

Even though some resources were free of cost (for example, the venue, the location for the meetings and workshops), other resources required a higher budget than predicted. The lack of a sufficient budget is a risk to be considered in any project, as it will be discussed in the following chapter. (See Chapter 9)

8 RISKS

This chapter explores the different risks that must be considered when designing a photographic project with asylum seekers, the strategies to overcome the possible risks, followed by an explanation of the risks that occurred and what measures were put in place to overcome them.

The project management literature suggests that a successful project needs a risk assessment. "In social work risk management is commonplace. Working with vulnerable people requires keen surveillance of risk to health and well-being, so we have an understanding of the complexity and significance of risk assessment." (Spolander & Martin 2012, 123.) To assess the risk, several variables must be considered such as the probability of happening and the impact of the project as is shown in the following table:

TABLE 5. IMPACT PROBABILITY MATRIX*

		IMPACT		
		LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
PROBABILITY	LOW	6	5	8
	MEDIUM		3, 4	2
	HIGH		7	1

*The risks are marked with one number as it follows: 1 – Not being able to reach the target group; 2 – Lack of interest of the participants; 3 – the The cultural difference; 4 – Quality of the pictures; 5 – Language barriers; 6 – Budget; 7 – Venue; 8 – Authorization. (Blackman 2003, 46.)

When dealing with the risks, Lock (2007) suggests two methods. One is to avoid the risk entirely even if that requires not starting the project at all, and the second is to prepare a plan to prevent or reduce the impact. (Lock 2007, 105). Since the first method was not the answer for this project, I approached

the second method and provided the risk assessment with a contingency plan in case of obstacles.

The planning period for this project spanned over several months. It involved several stakeholders, and each one of them increased the risk level. "Project risk management (and much of mainstream project management) is concerned with attempting to identify all the foreseeable risks, assessing the chance and severity of those risks, and then deciding what might be done to reduce their possible impact on the project or avoid them altogether." (Lock 2007, 99)

The analyses must include all the probable risks, the impact of those events over the implementation as well as backup strategies in the likelihood of those risks to happen. "The achievement of project objectives is always subject to influences beyond the project manager's direct control (assumptions and risks). It is therefore important to monitor this 'external' environment to identify whether or not the assumptions that have already been made are likely to hold true, what new risks may be emerging, and to take action to manage or mitigate these risks where possible." (European Commission 2004, 103).

A project management strategy must address the probability of risk and the impact on the target group, stakeholders and the implementation of the project. Following tables show the risks assumed in the developing stage, the potential influence over the project, the risk management to be adopted in case the risk would present itself and lastly who were the people responsible for dealing with that risk.

The following tables explain the risks assumed in the developing stage, the potential impact over the project, the risk management strategy to be adopted in case the risk would present itself and, lastly, who were the people responsible for dealing with that risk. The risks were divided in three categories high, medium and low risk based on the possible impact on the project.

TABLE 6. Risk Assessment Strategies – High Risks

RISKS	POTENTIAL ADVERSE IMPACT	RISK LEVEL (H/M/L)	RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY
The difficulty of accessing the target group in the reception centres.	The project could be delayed or cancelled	H	Creating a more extensive network of cooperation with organisations that have as clients the asylum seekers. Planning meetings outside the reception centres.	The project coordinator, project partners
Lack of interest and motivation from the participants	The project could not have the impact expected in the designed phase.	H	Involving the target group from the initial phase of the project, as the leading actors.	The project coordinator, participants
Cultural difference	Cultural biases and group inter ethnic difference may interfere with the planned activities and the result.	H	Good knowledge of the cultural background of the persons involved, a sensitive approach and attention to the group dynamics. Work experience with the target group achieved through 90 hours of voluntary work before the beginning of the project	Project coordinator

In this table are explained the part of risks assessed in the risk analyses. The risks that scored the highest on the scale of the probability of happening and the impact over the project were considered too high risks. The backup strategies had been discussed with the supervisors of Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers.

Below in Table 7 are explained the risks considered to have a medium impact on the implementation of the project:

TABLE 7. Risk assessment – Medium risks

RISKS	POTENTIAL ADVERSE IMPACT	RISK LEVEL (H/M/L)	RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY
Quality of the pictures or not enough pictures for an exhibition	If the photo quality is of a low resolution or if there is not enough material, the exhibition will have low or no impact.	M	The target number of pictures from each participant is 3. However, they will have to produce ten pictures to ensure sufficient qualitative material. Also, the participants will be instructed on how to take good pictures during the workshops.	Participants Project coordinator
Language barriers	Difficulty in explaining the goals, objectives and tasks	M	Finding interpreters; One worker from the partner project is also a Farsi speaker and offered his services. Use of online translators; Ask some of the participants to facilitate the translations for other participants.	Project coordinator Project partners (Vamos workers)

The language barrier was a noticeable risk from the beginning of the project since the participants speak at least four different languages. These were Farsi for the participants from Iran, Dari and Urdu (spoken mainly by the participants from Afghanistan.) and Arabic, spoken by the participants from Iraq and Syria. However, most of the participants spoke Farsi or Arabic. Also, some spoke English.

Another risk was the quality of the pictures provided by the asylum seekers. The cell phone digital cameras have different resolutions, and I assumed that the asylum seekers would not have the latest technology for taking pictures. For this reason, it was requested that they take as many pictures as they want

up to ten, to ensure that at least some of them could be used for the exhibition. This strategy was adequate, and 44 pictures were used for compiling the posters. Following in Table 8, there is the detailed description of the risks considered to have a low impact on the implementation of the project:

TABLE 8. Risk Assessment – Low risks

RISKS	POTENTIAL ADVERSE IMPACT	RISK LEVEL (H/M/L)	RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY
Obtaining the budget, respecting the projected expenditure	A low budget can affect the quality of the product and the general presentation during the activities and the final event	L	Realistic expenditure plan, preparing different options, applying in good time for funds in collaboration with the project partners.	Project coordinator Partners
Finding the right venue	Without a venue, the whole exhibition can be compromised	L	Flexibility in choosing different locations, having at least three open possibilities for the selected dates.	Project coordinator Partners
Delayed authorisation	The timetable may suffer significant changes, affecting the schedule and the implementation	L	Prepare the forms and apply to obtain the clearance at least two months before, allowing possible delays.	Project coordinator Ethical Committee of the Deaconess Institute

(H=High, M=Medium, L=Low)

(European Commission 2004, 104)

The risk management was effective. In the evaluation stage (see Chapter 10) the risk assessment had been analysed, and the main risks that occurred were the lack of a common language and difficulties in finding a professional interpreter for three different languages, the digital quality of the pictures collected from the participants and the budget expenditure.

Several measures were taken to manage these risks. The translation from Farsi to English had been done by one of the participants from the project, who was fluent in both languages. This strategy has proven to be effective on two levels. On the one hand, the impressions and explanations from the participants were achieved, and on the other hand, the interpreter had felt highly motivated and participated actively. For his effort, during the final event, he had been granted a certificate on stage, that stated his contribution to this project. He expressed his feeling of being proud of his achievement in front of the public present at the ceremony.

Another risk was the budget. The estimation of the total cost did not cover the expenditure. As Spolander and Martin (2012) state "Managing costs is a key role for project managers, and success of this task increases the likelihood that the project is both viable and a worthwhile undertaking. Financial risk is a key area of risk in any project." (Spolander & Martin 2012, 59.) A better consultation of the pricing on the market would have been more efficient in the calculation of the budget. The estimative budget covered the costs partly. The rest of the expenditure was covered from own resources.

9 PROCESS DESCRIPTION

This section will present the description of the process, the meetings and documentation. It will also discuss in detail the work plan, the photovoice method, the recruiting process, details about the venue and promotion of the exhibition, workshops and photo collection. Also, a discussion regarding Ethical considerations has been included in this chapter.

“A project is a series of activities aimed at bringing about clearly specified objectives within a defined period and with a defined budget” (European Commission 2004, 8). Regarding the implementation of the project, there are clear steps that must be followed to achieve the objectives. As suggested by Fowler (2017):

”Good project management is an important factor for the success of a project. A project may be thought of as a collection of activities and tasks designed to achieve a specific goal of the organisation, with specific performance or quality requirements while meeting any subject time and cost constraints. Project management refers to managing the activities that lead to the successful completion of a project. Furthermore, it focuses on finite deadlines and objectives. A number of tools may be used to assist with this as well as with assessment”. (Fowler 2017, 32.)

Richman (2002, 143) describes the process as follows: “A project is like a journey, and project plans (such as work breakdown structures, schedules, and cost reports) serve as roadmaps to help team members measure their precise location.”)

9.1 Implementation

This subchapter describes all the steps of the project, explaining the importance and the role of documenting each stage of a project and the central meetings that had vital importance for the development of the project.

9.1.1 Documentation

This part of the chapter will describe the purpose for documenting different stages of the process. For this project, the following elements were recorded: the minutes of the meetings kept with the project partners and supervisor teacher, the project plan and all the appendices, the voice recorders and the photographs collection and the final written report.

"Documents that confirm all the contractual obligations were completed are kept along with project plans, budgets and relevant staff records. The minutes of all major minutes are kept so that agreements that were made can be reviewed to relate to the changes made." (Martin 2002, 149). It is vital for the good development of any project to document the activities consistently, thus ensuring that the planned events are followed, keeping track of any changes. Simultaneously, documenting help reflecting upon actions to be taken, different challenges and finally to produce a valid report. Spolander and Martin (2002) suggest that "keeping formal records which documents the process, although time-consuming, is viewed as critical in project management regardless of the framework you use, as it helps to ensure clarity, transparency, accountability and quality in delivery." (Spolander & Martin 2012, 18).

During this project, nine voice recordings were made during the photo collection session. These recordings served as material for the captions for the photovoice exhibition. Every participant explained the content of the pictures with a voice recorder. The recordings had been transcribed into text, and part of it was used as captions for individual images. The interviews were confidential, and neither part of the recordings or text were made available to other participants except the parts agreed with the interviewees.

The nine participants produced a total of 60 pictures from which, 44 were used to compile 24 posters for the "Home Away from Home" exhibition. The photos were gathered individually and only those agreed upon, were shown to the other participants and the public. Not all the material was used for several reasons. Some pictures had a low resolution, and the quality did not permit the

printing of a larger format. Also, some images had been chosen by the participants themselves not to be shared with the public. After the editing of the text and pictures, all the remaining digital material was destroyed, and the physical posters were given to the participants that expressed their wish of owning them after the end of the exhibition.

This project and the results were monitored and described in a final thesis document that includes an introduction, target group, stakeholders, goals and objectives, documentation of the project, evaluation (information about the process, type of evaluation, period and results) and a section regarding professional development. Presentations and reflections were made during seminars at Diaconia University premises. The summary of the project information was presented to the audience during a publication seminar. The final form of this thesis is published in Theseus the Open Repository of the Universities of Applied Sciences.

9.1.2 Meetings

Another project management tool is keeping the minutes of meetings at different stages. Documenting the meetings means offering a tool to monitor the development of the project, it provides background information in the evaluation stage and supports the report content. During this project, I had kept a professional diary keeping track of the meetings, planned activities and scheduled events. The documentation was vital on the one hand because of the extended period of implementation of the project, and on the other hand for a better monitoring process during the feedback sessions together with the supervisors. There had been seven essential meetings and sessions, including the three workshops and final event, starting in August 2017 and ending in December 2017, as it is explained in the following table:

TABLE 9. Significant meetings during the project

DATE	TIME	CONTENT OF THE MEETING
18.8.2017	10:00 – 12:00	I met the workers from Vamos for Young Asylum seekers and discussed the thesis idea. We developed the draft for the practical placement of 10 weeks followed by the photovoice project involving their clients. We talked about the vision of the project, and we merged its goals and objectives in a convergent direction.
29.8.2017	14:00 – 15:00	Meeting with the supervisor teacher from the Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, to discuss details about thesis idea and project management guidelines.
21.11.2017	10:00 – 11:00	The first meeting with the group of young people regarding the project had taken place and the screening of those interested in participation had been realised.
22.11.2017	10:00 – 12:00	This meeting had as a purpose the recruitment of the participants and the introduction of the theme of the photovoice” home”. It also represented, the start-up of the project.
29.11.2017	10:00 – 13:00	The goal of this meeting was to collect the photographs, from the participants and to interview them individually.
13.12.2017	10:30 – 13:30	The event day took place, attended by the participants, some of the stakeholders and the general public in Sello Library
20.12.2017	10:00 – 13:00	I met the participants a week after the event, to hear their opinions and feedback. In the same meeting, I had an evaluation session with the workers from Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers.

The content of the implementation stage, workshops and the photographic exhibition event are explained in detail in the following in subchapters 9.2 and 9.4.

9.2 Work plan

"Scheduling involves decisions about timing and sequence. The full costs of the project, both in financial terms and in staffing effort, cannot be estimated until the time to complete the full project outcomes is identified." (Martin 2002, 85.) Following table describes the stages of this project from the design to the evaluation stage:

Table 10. Work plan

Stages / Events	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Nov-18
Designing the project						
Formal agreement with Vamos						
Ethical Committee statement						
Recruiting the participants						
Search for interpreters						
Finding the location						
First workshop						
Second workshop						
Third workshop/interviews						
Photo editing and printing						
Photovoice exhibition						
Feedback from the participants						
Evaluation of the project						
Reporting and publication						

This work plan table shows the critical events of the project and when it was planned to take place. The initial plan was followed, with no significant modifications. Creating a work plan proved to be an excellent way to monitor the progress of each stage.

9.2.1 Recruiting the participants

The participants to this project were selected among the clients of the partner project "Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers" as explained previously in Chapter 3. The initial screening was made a month before the implementation, to investigate the interest to participate in a photographic project. This measure was taken to overcome the risk of not having enough people interested in the topic, as discussed above in the risk assessment section. The screening took place on 15th of September 2017 at the beginning of the practical placement,

followed by the first workshop that consisted in introducing the theme of “home” and presenting the content of the project.

During the project kick-off, the vast majority of the group seemed interested in the project, and this fact positively affected the implementation of the working plan. Further information, such the next date of our meeting and the goals of the project, were disclosed to the group.

Out of 12 young people present at the meeting, 10 expressed the wish to participate and showed real interest. Although ten participants signed the agreement, only nine took part actively in the project. The participants were three women and six men, aged between 16 and 29, with an immigrant background. They were originally from Syria, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan.

9.2.2 Venue and promotion of the exhibition

Choosing the appropriate venue for this exhibition proved a challenging task. The site had to suit the target group’s interest and be a convenient place for the audience. Simultaneously, it had to be affordable, with excellent transport connections and meaningful for the participants.

Finding the right location for a Photovoice exhibition is vital for achieving the objectives proposed and reaching the stakeholders, community and those in decision-making positions. “Home Away from Home” had to be located in a meaningful location for the participants, that was accessible and of public interest.

Several locations were considered and under the advice of the workers of the partner project “Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers”, the selection was narrowed to two choices: the public libraries in Espoo and Leppävaara. Several reasons suggested such an option. One of them was the fact that the participants were users of these libraries and many of their activities (such as participating in language classes and job research workshops) were taking place there.

Another reason was the multicultural environment of these venues and the vast number of events hosted in their lobby. The monetary reason was also a big factor since the sites were offered free of charge and lastly, the libraries are public places, opened to anyone almost daily, and easy to reach by public transport.

Direct inquiries were made to the staff of Entresse, Espoo and Sello Library in Leppävaara. The replies were both enthusiastic and different solutions were offered. After careful consideration, Sello Library was chosen because of the facilities and flexibility on the selected date of the exhibition. The event coordinator of Sello Library embraced the vision of the project.



We agreed that the posters would be displayed in the main lobby of the library on the first floor between December 13th and 30th, 2017. The stage and 30 seats would be reserved for one hour for the event. The venue and the use of the facilities were free of charge.

Social media was a tool to stay in contact with the participants of the project and to promote the event. I set up groups on WhatsApp and Facebook for them to send the images and captions. Also, I could provide tips, guidance and support for them when needed. I used social media also along with an email to promote the exhibition kick-off event. I contacted the national and local media, such as Metro, Yle, MTV3, Länsiväylä and Radio Helsinki. Although the invitations were sent out in good time, none of them attended the event.

The creation of a Facebook event helped me promote the event in social media. Similarly, I used the email to contact Diak students and social work professionals. The additional promotion was provided by the events calendar of Helsinki Metropolitan Area Libraries website Helmet.fi and the event page of the site of the city of Helsinki (www.hel.fi). I used a website called Eventbrite to create electronic tickets for the event. They were free of charge. It served

me as a way of estimating how many people would be attending the presentation. The distribution of electronic tickets was vital as I had a limited number of seats and also needed to provide refreshments to the audience.

9.2.3 Workshops

Next, I will explain the content of the three workshops, the timing and the objectives aimed to be achieved. The project was designed to involve the participants in different stages. The activities were developed during three different workshops, the event itself and a follow-up meeting for the evaluation. All stages were designed with a participative approach involving the participants in information sessions, consultation and dialogue, decision making and initiating action.

The goals and objectives of this project were focused on increasing the level of participation of the young asylum seekers. For this purpose, the youths were involved from the beginning of the implementation stage. "The highest level of participation is achieved when people take it on themselves to initiate new actions. To do so indicates a significant level of self-confidence and empowerment and the establishment of organisational and management capacity." (European Commission 2004, 119)

The first workshop was also the kick-off of the project, and it aimed to introduce the concept of home and the general information regarding the project to the participants. Also, during this meeting, the recruitment of the participants took place. The group was not newly formed, and there had been a previous experience between the youth and the facilitator. Therefore a mutual trust feeling was already established within the group. As previously mentioned, I had been volunteering and developed my practical placement before the beginning of this project. Knowing the participants was an advantage, and the atmosphere was relaxed, suitable for the workshop. An icebreaker was used to introduce

the concept of home and initiate the workshop. The participants were asked to share with others and to write on a board how “home” is translated in their native language or other languages they know. We filled up the word “home” in different languages, and the participants made multiple comments regarding how such a common word is pronounced and written so differently around the globe.



The 12 participants present in the location, were divided into three groups and they picked from a box a piece from a postcard. They had to find the others that held another part from the same postcard as them, and together to put the puzzle together to form a complete photograph. The postcard represented different types of houses from around the world. After completing the puzzle, each group had to explain what their photo was representing. During the discussion, some of the participants used the term of “home” instead of house or building, and it was the starting point for the following discussions.

It is essential that each person understands the purpose of the project. Briefly, the goal of “Home Away from Away” it was explained and why it was conceived. The voluntary participation was underlined and the fact that they were the main actors. At the same time, young people learnt about an opportunity of free expression of their thoughts, fears and hopes, things that need to be assessed in their lives in the form of photography.

Lastly, the group was informed about their privacy rights and the fact that participation in this project will not affect in any way their asylum procedure. At the end of the workshop, most of the participants were very positive regarding a possible collaboration. Those interested were asked to reflect and, if they wished to prepare for the next workshop, to bring one photo that illustrates what they call “home”.

During the second workshop, the participants brought one picture that represented a favourite place, something that brings out memories. This exercise

was implemented to help them get familiar with the photographic process and to give them the opportunity to explain why they took those pictures.

A discussion regarding hopes and expectations was initiated, and it had as a topic “Expectation about Finland before arrival”.

Many of the participants did not choose to come to Finland when they left their countries. They often used the term “being safe”. The young people explained how their home was before coming



to Finland, and how their lives changed after living in Finland for a while. In order to facilitate the expression of their opinions, a handcraft activity was used



to create two collages. These were created collectively cutting images from magazines and sticking them on carton boards. Using collage was an excellent choice with asylum seekers for two reasons. Images can overcome the language barrier and using a picture is more natural sometimes to express a feeling, rather than using the verbal language.

After creating different collages, the participants received clear instructions regarding ethical rules while taking pictures during the project. Simultaneously, technical details regarding basic photographic methods were explained. They were instructed regarding privacy issues and different situations that could jeopardise themselves or people around them. (Appendix 4).

Latz and Mulvihill (2017) offer some examples of essential points to remember. For example, keep the sunlight behind when photographing outside, to take pictures creatively, avoid putting your person or others in dangerous or embarrassing situations and always ask permission when taking pictures of someone else’s person, children or properties. (Latz & Mulvihill 2017, 173). The time for gathering the photographs was one week. They were requested to take up to ten pictures and bring them to the next meeting.

9.2.4 Photo collection and interviews

After one week the group of young people met with the workers of Vamos. Individually, during the parallel activity, they came to share their photos with me in a separate room. Because of the language barrier, some of the participants needed an interpreter.

Previously, requests had been made towards students from Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Bachelor's Degree in Interpretation, to facilitate the translations, but none was found to be available for the dates. As stated in the risk assessment, the backup plan was to use participants who spoke Farsi/Arabic and English to translate for other participants. Some Farsi speakers needed an interpreter, while others used English to explain their photos. The interviews had an informal character, and open-ended questions were used, to encourage the free expression of the participants. (Appendix 3)

As Latz and Mulvihill (2017) discuss regarding the photovoice research, it is clear that: "Using photographs in an interview provides the interviewer and interviewee with more than one symbolic means of expression: Language and image. Within photo elicitation, photographs are used to elicit responses from and excavate memories of the participants. Within photovoice, participants interact with and describe images they created, which is a keystone of photovoice" (Latz & Mulvihill 2017, 75.) The interviews and photo collection lasted about two hours for eight participants. One participant was not present, and he sends his comments and pictures by electronic mail.

9.3 Ethical considerations

An essential part of a project in social services regards the ethical base when working with service users. The ethical traits are applied to the process, but also, they imply an ethical behaviour from those involved directly or indirectly. "Many ethical problems or dilemmas faced by social workers do not have clear answers. One way in which they respond to this is by practising within the agency procedures; following the law or policy guidelines to the letter." (Akhtar

2013, 21) However, no matter how clear the guidelines are, there is always a grey space where common sense prevails. In this light, the emotional expressiveness and will of self-disclosure of each participant were given consideration.

9.3.1 Project authorisation

Since the idea of this project started, the main concern was to act accordingly to the norms and regulations required by Diaconia University of Applied Sciences and Deaconess Institute Helsinki, the partner organisation under the which umbrella Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers was implemented.

The approval of the thesis idea was obtained during the thesis seminar in Diaconia University of Applied sciences in May 2017. Deaconess Institute of Helsinki has a specific procedure to apply for an authorisation regarding any research or project involving their clients. The decisions are made by the Ethical Committee of the Deaconess Institute. The application must be completed at least a month before the meeting of the Ethical Committee, and it must include the following documents: thesis plan (including an abstract in Finnish language), a short description of the project regarding goals, target group, methods and time length, a written agreement between the supervisors of the thesis and participation consent forms. (Deaconess Institute Helsinki 2018). The cooperation with the supervisors and the decision of approval from the Ethical Committee was received in October 2017.

9.3.2 Considerations regarding working with the vulnerable group

The holistic approach was highly regarded during this project, focusing on the service users' needs. When working with refugees and asylum seekers, different issues must be considered. According to Woodcock-Ross (2011), consideration should be given to the service users' feelings, showing empathy towards the uncertainty of their status and cultural acceptance. (Woodcock

2011,152). During the months of volunteering, followed by the practical placement period, I felt an increasing mutual feeling of trust between participants and myself.

The young asylum seekers were first clients of Vamos. When I started volunteering, I was initially seen as an intruder. Slowly, however, the relationship evolved due to the activities and the number of hours spent together. Towards the end of my practical placement, I knew most of the stories of the participants because they wanted to share them with me. Some of the mothers, trusted me with their children, while they were taking part in the activities organised by the Vamos workers. I had met the participants on my own, helping them with bureaucratic issues such as filling up documents, searching for a job or sharing hobbies.

Even though I knew most of the participants before the project kick-off, some of them had reservations towards other participants in the group. This behaviour was noticed on the different occasion when some youth expressed their wish of not being added in the same group on social media since they did not want to exchange their contacts with others. On a different perspective, some participants were more active than others, and some knew each other from the reception centres. They seemed to have a common ground for discussion when they were sharing about similar issues that were stressing them. "The literature points to compounding a number of stressors experienced by asylum-seekers and those granted refugee status: isolation, insecurity, fear and a struggle to cope with unsettlement, often related to legal asylum process." (Woodcock 2011, 153).

When dealing with such a sensitive and vulnerable group, there are significant ethical considerations to be taken into account. When speaking about "home" there are different aspects to be considered, and for many, it might be too difficult to relate to the concept because of their traumatic experiences.

Project permits and authorisation from Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers headquarters and Ethical Committee of the Deaconess Institute Helsinki were obtained before the beginning of the project. The participants had been

informed of the goals of the projects, and they signed written consent for data treatment and privacy (APPENDIX 2). The semi-structured interviews included open-ended questions, in order not to lead to a predetermined or guided answer. (APPENDIX 3).

The participants will be the protagonists of the photovoice, but at the same time, they will have the total control over their privacy, themselves being the ones deciding what to reveal with their photos. During the workshops, the young people had been given clear instructions as regards the respect of ethical considerations, their own and the others privacy. (APPENDIX 4)

Some asylum seekers attended the event and talked about their experiences, explaining what makes Finland feel like “home”. All the pictures were printed and published only with the written consent of the young asylum seekers, and their identities were protected. Some of the participants wanted their name and country to be written under their pictures, while others decided that only their initials should be added to their pictures and captions. Although the participants agreed that the material they would provide to be presented to the public in the form of an exhibition, no agreement was taken regarding the data treatment of the underaged subjects of the pictures. Some participants decided to take pictures of their own children, and their wish was respected. However, even if the pictures were printed and used in the exhibition, the identity of the children is protected in the digital format presented in this paper, as explained in detail following in section 9.4.

Lastly, it was decided that all data and sensitive information obtained would be used exclusively for this project’s development thesis. The material collected was discarded upon the finalisation of the thesis, and no information could be passed to a third party with consent. However, even if most of these conditions were applied, the participants expressed in the last meeting post-event that they want their printed posters to be given to them. As a result, to meet youths wishes, after the end of the exhibition, the pictures returned” home” to the rightful owners.

Another aspect that was considered was the follow-up of the participants after the closure of the project. Due to the sensitive nature of the theme approached and also the state of uncertainty in which the youths were, it was necessary to provide support in case follow up was needed. The aspect of the "aftercare" support was taken into consideration. Because of limited resources and time management, one meeting was scheduled after the final event. However, the participants are still able to stay in contact in case they need support, or if they have other issues to be dealt with, using the same social media tools they used for sharing pictures and updates. Unplanned meetings took place as well after the event when I met some of the participants that frequented Sello library and surroundings.

9.4 The event

The opening photo exhibition "Home Away from Home" took place on December 13th at 12:00 in the lobby of Sello library. The guests were welcomed and offered pamphlets containing the main points of the event briefly.

The program started with the opening ceremony and an introduction of the photovoice exhibition "Home Away from Home", followed by the presentation of three participants. The young people volunteered to keep a speech on the stage and present themselves. They talked about their stay in Finland and about participating in this project. On the background, while the participants were interviewed, a slideshow of images was presented to the public. The pictures were showing different activities involving young asylum seekers, that I had gathered during the volunteer period and the practical placement. It aimed to offer a broader context to the public regarding the target group and how are they using their free time since they arrived in Finland. The images showcased the young people in different instances, for example, while cooking, learning the Finnish language, doing gardening or visiting retiring home for seniors.

Next, the supervisor teacher and one of the workers of the partner organisation addressed the audience in the lobby. Fifteen people had registered as present to this event. Also, six of the participants were present and three workers from

Vamos. Since this was a public event, clients of the library got interested and took place next to the young asylum seekers.

Following the presentations, the audience was invited to see the exhibition on the first floor of the library (Appendix 1). The participants had gathered near their pictures, and I could notice a different type of reactions. Some were ex-



pressing their enthusiasm loudly, while others were emotional. There were multiple gestures of affection such as holding hands or hugging each other. Some participants had been observed taking pictures of their pictures on the wall and

commenting them vividly. They were reading their own words and feeling emotional. Some of the posters had a definite impact on the audience, due to the emotional disclosure. (Appendix 6). Later, participants and guests were invited for discussion and



refreshments in the lobby. I took a few minutes for meeting every guest personally and hear the first reactions of what they had just witnessed.

9.5 Challenges

The main challenges were reflected at different stages during this project. Among these, the language barrier and a lack of professional interpreters was one challenge, as well as the fact that the event planning needed more people involved in the team. Lastly, the sensitivity of the topic and the vulnerability of the target group represented another major challenge.

While planning this project, it became clear from the initial stage that the language barrier would be an obstacle in achieving the objectives. Although backup solutions were prepared, sometimes communicating with the participants was not easy. In this case, the meaning of communication is not just limited to the verbal content, but especially to other aspects of communication,

such as body language. Belonging to a different culture can distort the meaning of communication. For example, a particular gesture may be considered offensive or have a different sense than in western society, thus special attention needed to be paid to all these aspects.

Event planning was also challenging mainly due to a lack of knowledge base in event management, but also a lack of extra hands to handle different tasks. While the event was enjoyable, the preparations in the location and the acquisition of the refreshments and other materials, took away many hours allocated to the project. Teamwork approach is advisable when developing this type of event.

Regarding the unique approach, while dealing with a vulnerable group, as discussed previously in ethical considerations (see subchapter 9.3), the extent of the implications was quite difficult to assess. Firstly, being an asylum seeker does not mean that the individual situations are similar. No youth is alike, and no story is the same. It takes time and patience in gathering information about each participant, about their journey, background and actual situation. Secondly, asylum seekers are no ordinary youth. Therefore they require sometimes different types of methodological approach. In this case, studying appropriate academic literature is vital as well as receiving advice from the working partners.

10 EVALUATION

This chapter will explain the assessment stage of the project, describing the evaluation indicators applied after the implementation stage. In this project the results are evaluated, the need for evaluation and the methods used and finally the publication of the results.

“Project evaluation is an accountability function. By evaluating a project, you monitor the process to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for completing the project on time, and you identify and measure the outcomes to ensure the effectiveness and achievements of the project. All these efforts make your organisation capable of reporting, answering all inquiries, and being accountable for its plans.” (Zarinpoush 2006, V.)

In the Project Cycle Management Guidelines, the evaluation purpose is described as making an “assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors”. (European Commission 2004, 49.)

The evaluation process has multiple perspectives based on the orientation of what is evaluated. Martin (2002) suggests that “many types of evaluation may take place at the end of a project. The most usual evaluation is to determine the extent to which the project outcomes have been achieved” while “a different type of evaluation may be held to review the process with the purpose of learning from experience.” (Martin 2002, 156). Therefore the evaluation may be ambivalent and can be process oriented or focused on results.

For assessing the results of “Home Away from Home”, there had been establishing different indicators. These were: reporting on project objectives,

reviews of the participants and partners and the overall impact of the project at the community level.

Table 11. Evaluation Criteria Used by the European Commission

RELEVANCE	The project objectives were appropriate to the need of the participants to increase their social participation. The planning and implementation were done coherently.
EFFICIENCY	The project was executed at a reasonable cost; the objectives were translated into action effectively regarding time management and quality. The resources were used wisely.
EFFECTIVENESS	The project has reached the objectives and partially the goal.
IMPACT	The effect of the project in the community had been noticeable, and the further results may contribute in the future to a broader policy. Participants increased their participation and felt empowered.
SUSTAINABILITY	A photovoice project has benefits for the participants and the stakeholders involved. It can be sustained with low cost and high achievements, with a low environmental impact, bringing under the same umbrella social aspects, vulnerable categories and policymakers.

(European Commission 2004, 47.)

To ensure a successful project, the evaluation process was conducted on two levels. On one level the project was monitored by the student during feedback sessions. These were kept periodically with the supervisors from Vamos, one meeting and regular email correspondence with the supervisor teacher. The constant feedback and exchange of information ensured that the project implementation was going in the right direction. "Monitoring is done continuously to ensure the project is on track." (Blackman, 66).

The evaluation was carried out using different indicators to measure the effectiveness and the results of this project. "Indicators are targets that show progress towards achieving objectives. Indicators help us to monitor, review and evaluate the project." (Blackman 2006, 51). The indicators used for the evaluation of this project are reporting on the project objectives, the reviews and feedback of the participants and other stakeholders and the general impact of the project.

Reaching the goals of this project was partly evaluated, as Blackman (2006) suggests "the indicators at goal level may reach beyond the end of the project" (Blackman 2006, 55) therefore the results may be measured in the future. The objectives were designed using a SMART analysis. In correlation with the objectives of the final evaluation session from December 20th, 2017 conducted with the supervisors from Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers, had underlined the level of accomplishment of the objectives. The project outputs were relevant for the young asylum seekers and responded to a real need. It was conducted efficiently, respecting all the guidelines, code of ethics, budget and timeliness. The supervisors suggested that this project was in line with goals of "Vamos for the Young Asylum Seekers" supporting the holistic approach of the project. Thus, "Home Away from Home" was beneficial for the clients of Vamos as well as for the whole organisation.

The final event took place as planned with no significant changes and it gathered photovoice posters presented by the participants. The impact of the photovoice project had been remarkable since this was a public exhibition on display seven days a week in a location with high interest for the community such a library. The young asylum seekers were the main actors during the event, and they could express freely and use their photos to bring in spotlight their realities. " People work best when they know how they are progressing toward the goal. Feedback helps people stay committed and motivated. People thrive on constructive feedback." (Richman 2002, 143.)

After the opening of the photo exhibition the opinion and feedback of the participants, guests and stakeholders were collected and documented using dif-

ferent tools such as guestbook, email and oral feedback. The guest book registered 13 entries, for example, the next one: “The exhibition was great! Thank you for inviting me here. For me, it was very interesting to read and see photos of people I have had a chance to get to know. Now I understand them a lot more.” During the period the exhibition was open to the public between 13th and 30th of December 2017, I had received four inquiries via electronic mail from which two were students from other universities in the capital area, and two were sent by people who had seen the exhibition in the library. The general questions reflected the interest in the used method and more specific questions regarding the situation of “those people from the pictures”. The senders of the emails seemed concerned about the life situation of the asylum seekers and the outcome of their journey. No sensitive details were revealed, but more information about the type of project was given.

On 20th of December 2017, the final meeting with the supervisors and participants took place into a festive environment. I had received positive feedback from the supervisors, and the project was evaluated as stated above in this chapter. I received the feedback from seven participants out of nine. Almost unanimously they expressed positively, using words as “great”, “emotional”, “very beautiful”. One participant felt extremely proud of had been presenting himself on the stage saying about himself “Now I am famous!”. Other participant had said “I feel more confident to speak in public because I am very shy” or “I was very proud to see my pictures on the wall. Many people were looking at my children, so I didn’t feel so alone anymore.”

Generally, the women involved in the project had produced pictures that represented their family, or some event related to the family. For example, this group picture: “We wanted to take a picture with all kids at my daughter’s birthday, but there wasn’t any place big enough, so we all put them on the window ledge so they all could be together.” When asked about things that makes Finland feel like home, one participant answered “I feel like home everywhere, as long as I have my family near me. When we sit and eat together, we laugh, and we talk, then we feel like home”. Even though all the participants agreed



that their pictures would be used for a photo exhibition, some took pictures of their own children. The young people had been informed in the written consent that some of the pictures are going to be used in a digital format and included in this project report. For the purpose of protecting the interests of the minors involved in this project, their faces are blurred and no information regarding name, age or nationality has been disclosed in this paper.

On a different perspective, most of the pictures taken by men represented places rather than family members. Some of the pictures were selfies, and the interviews suggested that the photographers wanted to appear situated in a location that felt somewhat “homely”. For example, this participant had used a photo editing program to overlay his image over the images that were meaningful for himself. “I made these photos in an artistic way. And because I like



the snow and I like things that make me fascinated, I remember how I walked in my city, and that’s why I created this situation. I wanted my picture inside the picture of Iran to say that I miss Iran. This is my city, and I wanted to show

how much I miss it. I just wanted to say that I feel I am in Teheran, even if I’m somewhere else.” Other participants said they felt “important”, while one participant wanted to know why there weren’t exposed all the pictures provided. I explained that the resources were limited, and I had used the pictures agreed upon with each participant.

An overall evaluation had identified the satisfaction level of the participants. They suggested that it was a pleasant feeling to see their pictures on the wall, to be able to speak and present themselves on the stage, and taking the photos was a pleasant experience. Some explained that sometimes it brought back good memories sometimes not so good memories. For example, in the relation of this picture the participant felt is relevant to show it but the only comment about it was: “This the reception centre, it brings bad memories, and I



don’t want to talk about it.” Several times it was brought up the concept of

“hope”. “I hope that by next year I will be out the reception centre and in my new home.”, “I really like living here. I hope I can stay”.

11 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Becoming a worker in social services it has always been both a goal for me as an individual. This profession has the potential of combining more sides of my personality, such as my will of being helpful, my creativity and desire to breaking down the walls of prejudice. Embarking on this journey, required reflection and took out most of my personal and professional skills.

During the thesis process, I related to the core competencies requirements for Bachelor of Social Services. Among these are the ethical competence, customer work competence, social service system competence, critical and participatory societal competence, development and innovation competence and finally workplace and leadership competence. (Diak 2018)

In detail, the ethical competence was developed while building trust with the young asylum seekers. Sometimes challenging, I had to examine my feelings and to balance the amount of empathy I showed during the project. I worked according to the international and Finnish legislation, prioritising the equality and the non-discrimination. The project itself was designed as a tool for advocating for a vulnerable group.

In customer work competence, professional communication was developed while dealing with cultural sensitivity and promoting intercultural interaction in a participatory manner. During this project, the customers were involved from the beginning, and their participation was encouraged.

The social service system competence was developed during the intensive research and study of academic literature regarding the refugee crisis, the asylum process, statistics and general information regarding the challenges that asylum seekers are facing upon their arrival in Finland.

Simultaneously, the critical and participatory societal ability was improved. When the idea of a participatory project had risen at the midway of my studies, I started to look out for advocacy methods that promote citizen participation.

Participatory photography is involving the participants in the primary role calling for action from the decision makers.

The innovation competence of this project was enhanced mainly using Photovoice as a method of enactment. Even if it is not a new method, during the last years Photovoice has to earn acknowledgement amount participatory research methods.

The leadership and workplace competence were developed during this project, while different skills were learned in project management courses. Carrying out a major project that involves several stakeholders and vulnerable participants demand a high level of responsibility, and it is a factor of stress. "Stress is very real and, if left unattended, will over time, lead to burnout. This is described as a type of prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressor on the job, that includes emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment." (Akhtar 2013, 74).

It was beneficial to take part in debriefing sessions with the workers of Vamos and with the supervisor teacher. During this project, I had maintained a detached attitude, and I had been able to have an objective view of the different stages of the implementation. I had learnt from the challenges I had encountered during this project. Some examples could be the fact that I self-taught a fast track of event management skills. Previously, I had never organised such a large-scale event, but hosting the photo exhibition and the reception, made me more confident to arrange others in the future. Another challenge was the language barrier. For this reason, I used different tools for interpretation and body language observations to guide me through the process. Lastly, I improved my skills in photo-editing since I edited and printed the posters myself.

Ideating a project involving photography and asylum seekers it is meaningful since it is possible to combine the academic knowledge as well as other skills while becoming a social work professional — this project sprouted the opportunity to develop the ability of leadership starting from an idea that fulfilled the aims and marked a significant stage in the lives of the participants.

12 CONCLUSIONS

The project “Home Away from Home” proved to be a meaningful event in the lives of those involved. Originated from a simple idea common to all of us, “home” became the centre of this initiative and it embodied the vision of a group of people who were ripped away from the place where they felt they belonged.

Although the concept of home is somewhat a term of common knowledge, during this project, it had shown different facades depending on the perspective of perception of the participants. The viewpoints were subjective, indicating that “home” cannot be defined by a single definition, but it symbolises a connection between space and place, people, events and memories.

The project aimed not only to reach the results expected, but it meant to be a journey for the participants to discover those traits that can give a new meaning of home and feeling of belonging. The journey of the young asylum seekers was both physical, taking routes towards the new safer destination, and simultaneously a mental journey, searching for new roots in a foreign land.

Organising a large event that involved approximately 23 people in a public venue felt demanding. Without having followed any course of event management, the project was a learning process to develop the required skills.

As a future professional of social services, I focused on the specialisation of my degree, which is community development. “Home Away from Home” was designed embedding this orientation, as well as becoming one of the matching activities of “Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers” and its vision. At all stages, the principles of the Code of Ethics for Social Work valuing human rights were respected. At the heart of this project, it was the principle of upholding and the promotion of human dignity and well-being, respecting the right to self-determination — lastly, the project aimed to promote the right to participation of people “to empower in all decisions and actions affecting their lives” (British Association of Social Workers 2004).

Supporting young asylum seekers is both a duty and an investment. At some point, the asylum process will be over, ideally with an appropriate decision for every single case. In some cases, young people will become active residents in Finland and part of our community, in other cases, they will leave Finland.

Regardless of the output of their journey, youths are going to affect the lives of other people around them. The results of this participatory approach type of project will spread and influence others on a more extended period in a domino effect. The level of enthusiasm of the participants showed that the event was a decisive intervention. They felt becoming from a marginalised group to a central point where someone had listened to them, and their opinions mattered.

Photovoice can be used with low threshold and vulnerable individuals and does not require special skills. This type of project has a high level of applicability, requiring reduced budget and resources and can have a significant impact at the community level and decision makers.

However, some recommendations are to be considered in connection with the implementation of a photovoice project. The process is demanding and requires a wide range of skills not necessarily connected to social services. For example, graphics editing, or event management are some of those skills. It would be recommendable that the project should be carried out by a team of at least two or three people with a clear division of tasks.

Another recommendation would be high regard while approaching a vulnerable group such as asylum seekers, paying attention not only at details that can be seen but especially to those that cannot be seen.

Lastly, better negotiation skills are required while agreeing on timetables and work plan with the partners. Since the target group belong to the clients of Vamos, I had to negotiate the proper time for the workshops and meetings with

the project workers. Sometimes this was challenging due to the busy programme of their own. Better communication may ensure that the project is allocated enough time for implementation.

“Home Away from Home”, had an impact not only for the participants but also for other categories of stakeholders. Inquiries regarding the process and participants had been received and the results reported in this project are being included in a general report of Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers.

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APPENDIX 1. Photo of the exhibition "Home Away from Home"



APPENDIX 2. Consent for data treatment for the participants

Cristina Marcu student at Diaconia University of applied sciences Helsinki and Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers, implements a projected development thesis for a bachelor's degree. For this purpose, you will be required to produce photographs and give permission for the use of the material gathered into a photo exhibition. Communication material will also be collected from your interviews and added to your photography in different methods such as printed media or digital media (photovoice, leaflets, social media, PowerPoint)

You are participating in the project "Home away from Home" between September – November 2017. You will have the possibility to review the photographs prior to the usage. The right to use the photographs is exclusively binding to this project.

I am aware that taking part in the project is voluntary. I also acknowledge that my participation in the project does not cost anything to me, my identity will be protected, the material involving myself will only be used in the thesis project and the content will be destroyed or handed to participants after the conclusion of the project.

I agree that I will be interviewed (or observed) and the information I give in the interview will be used in the project. I also consent for the usage of photographs about myself and the interviews for the thesis project (photographs and parts of the interviews). I can cancel my participation at any time without a specific reason, and it will not affect the client/work relationship.

Your photos and interviews are only used as written above and they will not be given to a third party without your consent. Any other possible usage will be agreed separately.

Date and place

Signature

APPENDIX 3. Interview questions

The interview is semi-structured with an open conversational frame. Some examples of the questions:

1. How / what did you feel while taking the pictures? What was easy and what was difficult in this process?
2. Why did you choose to take a picture of this person/place/event? What does it mean to you?
3. What kind of memories does this photo bring to you?
4. Why do you want to share this picture with other people?

APPENDIX 4. Ethical behaviour for taking pictures

1. Always ask permission when taking pictures of people's faces. Ask the permission of parents or legal guardians if taking pictures of their children.
2. Do not take pictures that make you or someone else uncomfortable or embarrassed.
3. Do not take pictures of something that could get you or others in trouble, or pictures that show illegal activities or someone breaking the law.
4. You can delete the pictures you do not want to share.
5. If you are taking a picture outdoors, keep the sunlight behind you. You may take the pictures both horizontally or vertically. Be creative!

APPENDIX 5. Invitation to the exhibition



INVITATION TO THE PHOTOVOICE EXHIBITION

“HOME AWAY FROM HOME”

You are warmly invited to an exhibition of photographs that showcases the realities of asylum seekers in Finland. Using photo-voice, student Cristina Marcu, 3rd year student of Diaconia University of Applied Sciences Bachelor’s Degree of Social Services and Deaconess Institute Vamos for Young Asylum Seekers, has implemented the participatory photography project with youth from different reception centres from nearby Greater Helsinki region to give voice to the migrants in Finland. The exhibition is illustrating how “home” is perceived through the eyes of an asylum seeker.

Come to meet the people behind the cameras and hear the stories in their own words.

Venue: Sello Library Lobby

Leppävaarankatu 9

02600 Espoo

Wednesday 13th of December 2017 from 11:30 – 12:00

(Refreshments will be available)

Places are free but need to be booked in advance, no later than 11th of December 2017.

To book a place, please follow this link to the online registration:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/home-away-from-home-photography-exhibition-tickets-39739729601>

This event is developed in cooperation with
Vamos for Asylum Seekers of Deaconess Institute Helsinki
and
Sello Library, Leppävaara, Espoo



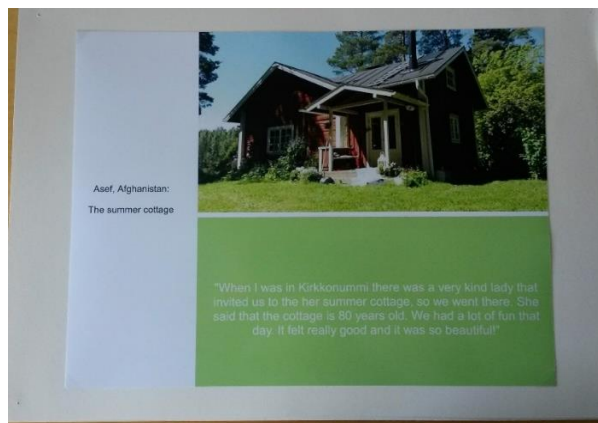
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APPENDIX 6. Examples of photovoice from the exhibition

PICTURE 1. Reception centre (left) and apartment building (right)



PICTURE 2. The summer cottage



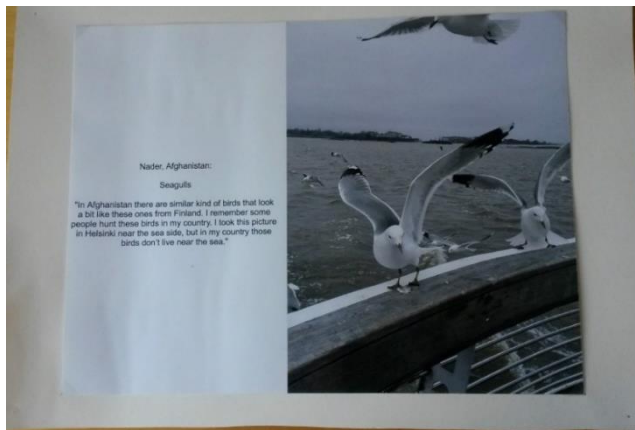
PICTURE 3. The daisy



PICTURE 4. Weekend (center) and Rainbow (left)



PICTURE 5. Seagulls



PICTURE 6. The candle

