

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN VANTAA MUNICIPALITY AND THE LET'S READ TOGETHER – NETWORK'S VOLUNTEERS

Research project report

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1 INTRODUCTION

We did our placement and project for the municipality of Vantaa. The aim of the project was to study and develop the co-operation between the municipality of Vantaa and the volunteers of Let's read together network.

This assignment presents the results, process and evaluation of our project. The project report will be used to develop the co-operation and benefit the volunteers of Let's read together network.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The idea for our project came from our placement supervisor in Osaava vanhempi – project of the Vantaa municipality. Our supervisor is also in charge of the project. She asked us to conduct a study about the co-operation between the municipality of Vantaa and the volunteers of the Let's read together network and how it could be developed. The main aspects in the study are the cooperation and communication between the municipality and the volunteers, and the support from the municipality and other authorities for the volunteers. Other themes are volunteer's expectations and needs and if there are enough service users participating in the services provided by the Let's read together – network.

Our project is a research project because we are studying how to develop the co-operation through conducting focus group interviews. The results of our project and the final report will be used to develop the cooperation and communication between Vantaa municipality and the volunteers in the Let's read together – network. The results will also be used in the final report of Osaava vanhempi – project and to show the importance of cooperation in immigrant work. Our project results will be included as a part of the final evaluation of Osaava vanhemp- project which will be acknowledged in the Ministry of Employment and the Economy.

We conducted our project for the Vantaa municipality's Osaava vanhempi - project which is a part of the nationwide project Osallisen Suomessa. The Osallisen Suomessa – project was founded to develop the integration of immigrants in all aspects. The partners of the project are the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Finnish Cultural Foundation, the Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities. The pro-

ject term is from 22.3.2010-30.6.2013. (Pihlaja, Pöyhönen, Tarnanen, Vehviläinen, Virtanen 2010, 11.)

The Vantaa municipality's Osaava vanhempi – project belongs to social- and healthcare of Vantaa, its Adult Social Work and Immigrant Work. The project term is from 1.4.2011-30.6.2013. The focus of the project is in the integration of immigrants who need special support and developing services and integration education model for them. The focus group is immigrant parents who are home with their children under the age of three. (Vantaa's Osaava vanhempi – project 2012.)

The Osaava vanhempi - project provides for example Finnish language teaching in groups and group activities that support the learning of the language in cooperation with other actors. There exists a possibility for childcare in the language groups which means that the service users can bring their children to the facility and the children are taken care of while the parents are studying. The project also provides functional group activities where and children join together to develop their everyday skills and knowledge, Finnish language vocabulary as well as societal and cultural knowledge. In functional group activities the learning happens by doing. Social advice services are available when needed. (Vantaa's Osaava vanhempi – project 2012.)

Through the Osaava vanhempi – project and other cooperative partners, the immigrants can also participate in the Let's read together network's Finnish language teaching groups. The network supports immigrant women in integrating into the Finnish society. The network consists of Finnish women volunteers who are mostly retired. They provide tuition in literacy and in the Finnish language for immigrant women in various locations in Finland. There are some 50 Let's read together study groups and approximately 800-900 students in Finland. The services provided by the Let's read together network are important for the immigrant women because many of them suffer from illiteracy. Illiteracy creates obstacles in their lives such as not knowing how to monitor their children's schoolwork and progress, not knowing how to tell the doctor what is their prob-

lem and not knowing how to run everyday errands, for example grocery shopping, because not knowing even the alphabets. Even though some immigrant women seem to speak Finnish fluently, they often still need support in their studies and its vocabulary. (Let's read together - network.)

The Let's read together – network is coordinated by the Finnish Federation of University Women. The aim of the Finnish Federation of University Women is to strengthen the position of academically educated women by influencing actively in the development of the society and by promoting the networking between women (The Finnish Federation of University Women).

2.1. Theoretical framework

For the well-being of immigrants and functionality of the Finnish society, it is important that immigrants integrate as well as possible into the new environment. A good integration also requires adaptation from the native population as well as from the immigrants themselves. (Jasinkaja-Lahti & Perhoniemi 2006, 13.) Even the Let's read together network's volunteers have highlighted the fact that many Finnish people do not know the reality concerning immigrants' situation and that volunteers themselves have learnt a great deal about the different cultures and the immigrants' situation (Let's read together network's volunteers' interviews).

According to the integration law, the concept integration means the individual development of an immigrant, aiming to participate into society and working life while maintaining native language and culture. (Aarnitaival 2012, 26.) The volunteers of the Let's read together network help the immigrants to adapt into the Finnish society while giving them the chance to also maintain their own identity. The volunteers have stated that some of them invite immigrants to their homes or different activities such as berry- and mushroom picking. This way the immigrants get to experience the Finnish culture and lifestyle in family environment. (Let's read together network's volunteers' interviews.)

Immigration is a phenomenon that has been increasing in the past decades. There are various reasons for immigration. Increasing mobility and access from one country to another has enabled growing immigration. According to predictions the amount of immigrants will increase up to 500 000 by the year 2030 (Työ ja Elinkeinoministeriö 2012, 5). Immigrants might move to Finland for employment, family ties, marriage, as a refugee, asylum seeker, migrant or returning immigrant. Immigration can be defined in many ways. An immigrant is a person who lives permanently in some other country than country of origin. (Räty 2002, 11.)

There is a continuously growing need for immigrant services and especially volunteers working in the field. Professionals are essential in the work but volunteers are very important in many ways because they have time and personal interest that are not strictly limited by office working hours, professional boundaries and work description.

The volunteers we interviewed have informed us that in many areas of Vantaa, there are still immigrants who do not participate in any provided activities and are not part of services in their area. These include also Finnish language teaching and advising in general. There exists a major problem that there are immigrant women who have been in Finland for years, some even for decades, and still they do not have the Finnish language skills. Volunteers are essential in reaching out for these immigrants, and even the Let's read together network was established by three women who got the first students by going from door to door looking for immigrant women. (Interviews 1-3.)

2.2. The aims and objectives of the project

In order to define the aims and objectives of a project, it is benefitting to remember a letter combination SMART, which presents the areas to consider when setting clear goals for a project. The letters stand for specific (clearly defined), measurable (you know when they are achieved), achievable (within the

current environment and the skills available), realistic (not trying to achieve the impossible) and time bound (limited by a completion date). (Martin 2002, 15.)

The aim of our research project was to conduct three focus group interviews with the volunteers of the Let's read together network. The results are evaluated and analyzed in this report and used to develop the co-operation between the volunteers and the Vantaa municipality.

The target group of our research project is the volunteers of the Let's read together network. Two of the interview groups included three interviewees and one group included two interviewees. We chose the interviewees together with our placement supervisor. The volunteers we chose to interview are responsible of their areas' the Let's read together groups.

Our interview questions were:

1. Tell about your volunteer's work tasks.
2. Tell about the service users; how many are there?
3. What kind of support do you get from the Vantaa municipality and other authorities?
4. What kind of expectations, wishes and needs do you have? What kind of support would you want? What kind of support do you get for service users' issues and what do you hope for?
5. How does the information sharing work and what do you hope for?

2.3. Methods

In our research project we used qualitative methods. According to Silverman (2004) qualitative research can define the social, cultural and structural contexts linked to organizational complications and issues (Silverman 2004, 332). In a qualitative research the data is collected by using different people's life stories or interview answers as the source of information (Haralambos & Holborn 2004, 197).

As the main method to reach our objective, we decided to use semi-structured focus group interview. The interview questions were based on the aims of our project which were to study the cooperation between the Vantaa municipality and the Let's read together network's volunteers and how to develop it. The interviews were not strictly "question - answer" model but open discussion about the themes was encouraged which made the interviews semi-structured. After completing the interviews, we transcribed them and will analyze the interviews in this report.

Our interviews can be defined as focus group interviews because of the following facts and similarities between the definition of focus group and our interviews. Focus groups are group discussions concentrating on specific issues. The group is involved in some kind of collective activity and focused in it. In our case it was the debating of a certain set of questions. Focus groups can be distinguished from other group interviews because focus groups use great amount of group interaction which generates more data for the researchers. In focus group interviews, participants are encouraged to communicate with each other by sharing opinions, anecdotes and experiences. This way the interviewees create an audience for each other. (Barbour & Kitzinger 1999, 4.) In our case, we have also encouraged the interviewees to talk freely and exchange ideas and thoughts.

The use of focus groups is most benefitting when researching people's experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns. The method enables the interviewees to

form their own questions, frames and concepts as well. Focus groups help the researchers to study people's different perspectives as part of a social network. (Barbour & Kitzinger 1999, 5.) Our study has gained crucial information because of the shared opinions and wishes in the focus group interviews. The interaction between the interviewees has brought even broader understanding of the studied subject.

The benefits of focus group interviews are better insights into how interviewees think and deeper understanding of the phenomena that is studied. Through focus group interviews the researcher can capture deeper information more efficiently than through individual interviews. Other benefits of focus group interviews are group interaction and non-verbal communication. Group interaction may bring new aspects to the discussion and encourage participants to make connections to various concepts. This also enables a more comprehensive understanding of the studied subject. (Nagle & Williams, 2.)

The data collecting was conducted by using semi-structured interview method. Some aspects of a typical semi-structured interview are the same but not all. According to Eskola & Suoranta (1998) in a semi-structured interview the questions are the same for each interviewee and the interviewees are able to answer in their own words. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 47.)

2.3. Participants of the project

There were many stakeholders in our project. The main stakeholder is the Vantaa municipality and the project coordinator of Osaava vanhempi project. The idea of our project came from her because there is a need for the study of the subject and its development. Her role was to give us information about other stakeholders and help to contact them. She helped us to plan our schedule by giving information about the Let's read together groups' location and timetable. She also introduced us to most of the volunteers. She will use our final place-

ment report in the final evaluation of Osaava vanhempi project. We have been informing her and kept her updated about our process.

The other main stakeholders are the Let's read together network's volunteers and their coordinator. The role of the coordinator was to give more information about the network by giving us an interview. The role of the volunteers was to participate in the focus group interviews and in that way contribute to our project by sharing their own point of views, opinions and experiences.

We have created the contract for our project ourselves. The contract has been signed by us, our placement supervisor from Osaava vanhempi – project and the coordinator from the Let's read together – network. We have also created a contract for the interviewees where they give permission that their interviews can be used in our project "Cooperation between the Vantaa municipality and the Let's read together – network".

The cooperation and networking was easy because we got a lot of help from the coordinator of Osaava vanhempi project. The project's network was already clear and formed when our project started because the Osaava vanhempi project and the Let's read together network have been functioning before. We did not have to find the people and form the network by ourselves. Most of the stakeholders in our network knew each other beforehand so the cooperation was easy and trustful.

Our task in designing the cooperation and forming it was to get the volunteers of Let's read together network responsible of their groups, together in three focus group interviews and arrange the coordinator's interview. We had to plan the dates and locations for the interviews. The options for the interview locations and contact information were given by the coordinator of Osaava vanhempi project early on. She also suggested the certain division of the volunteers into three groups. Still, there were some changes within the groups. It was not difficult to reach the interviewees because we were given their contact information and they were aware of our research project.

2.4. Resources and budget

The resources used in our research project were quite small and the nature of the project did not require so much resources. We used human resources since there were many people participating in the project. We used a lot of time for planning, implementing and evaluating the project. Other resources were space which was provided by the Vantaa municipality. Different premises were used to conduct the focus group interviews.

The costs of our project were minor. We agreed with our placement supervisor that the coffee and snacks we provided for the interviewees are paid from the Osaava vanhempi – project's budget. Other costs such as telephone use were included in our monthly payment contracts. For minimizing the use of telephone, we communicated also via electronic mail. We had to print two papers in the library and buy two stamps for mailing the project contracts for the partners. We also used our university's free printing possibility.

3 THE PROCESS OF THE PROJECT AND THE RESULTS

Our research project was implemented in the spring 2013 during our placement. After the meeting on 22.1.2013 with our placement supervisor and making a mapping of our project, we contacted the Let's read together – network's coordinator and agreed on an interview with her. The interview took place on 6.2.2013. On 8.2.2013, we also took part in a meeting between the Osaava vanhempi – project, the Let's read together volunteers and network's coordinator and workers from Multi-service Office for Immigrants where we introduced ourselves and our project.

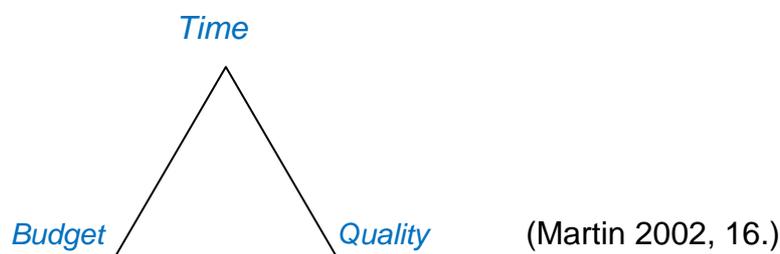
In order to gain wider understanding of the Let's read together – network and its working methods and activities, we contacted the groups' responsible volunteers in Vantaa and agreed on dates to visit four groups for observation. On the

29th of January, we visited the Let's read together – group in Silkinportti and on the 18th of February the group in Hakunila. The other two visits took place on the 11th of March in Koivukylä and on the 18th of March in Myyrmäki.

The first focus group interview took place on the 15th of March in Tikkurila. The second focus group interview took place on the 22nd of March in Myyrmäki. The third interview took place on the 17th of April in Tikkurila. The plan was to conduct a focus group interview with two responsible volunteers but we did not manage to arrange a suitable meeting date with both of them. We consulted our supervisor concerning what we should do and recommended us to do an individual interview with one responsible volunteer. We thought that it was important to at least get an individual interview and more information.

Within the two last weeks of our placement period, we wrote our project report and results of the interviews. We analyzed the process of the project and how the project plan worked out in reality. We also analyzed the interview results and sent the report to the different stakeholders as agreed.

There are three key concepts to manage a balanced project successfully. These are: time, budget and quality. A successful project would be finished on time, within the budget and having accomplished the quality requirements. These three aspects must be kept in balance in order to achieve a successful outcome for the project. The balance of project dimensions:



These three dimensions are good to keep in mind through the whole process of a project because changes in one or another can cause an impact to the balance of all the concepts and the whole project (Martin 2002, 16). For example in our project, the timetable had to be change few times and that could have af-

affected the quality of the project. But because of our flexibility with the schedule, we could rearrange days to meet each other and conduct interviews as well as write the report. Since our budget was so small and not in an essential role in our project, there was no unbalance in that area. Also we have been able to reach the quality requirements in this research project.

3.1. Principles and ethical issues

As in every kind of study where the focus is on humans, ethical issues have to be taken into consideration. For focus groups, ethical considerations are the same as for the majority of other methods of social research (Homan 1991). Researchers must give all the information concerning the purpose and uses of the project. Researchers must be honest and keep participants informed at all times and not put pressure on the participants. Especially tricky in focus group interviews is the fact that there is more than one person being interviewed at once. Handling of sensitive material and confidentiality are important facts to be considered in order not to threaten one's privacy. There has to be equal possibility for everyone to contribute and speak out. Participants have to engage themselves to keep confidential about the discussions during the interviews. The researchers also have the responsibility to keep the data anonymous. (Gibbs 1997.)

We conducted our process according to the ethical principles and guidelines. We kept the data anonymous, we have given the interviewees all the possible information concerning the purpose and uses of the project and during the interviewees every interviewee has had equal possibilities to contribute and share their opinions. We made the contracts about the project as well the interview permission by ourselves. Every stakeholder signed the contracts and each interviewee signed permission paper that we can use the information from the interviews in our research project.

4 RESULTS OF OUR RESEARCH PROJECT

The results of our project are the interviews we conducted and the information we received from them. There were seven volunteers contributing to the interviews. The results of our project will be used to develop the co-operation between the Vantaa municipality and the volunteers of the Let's read together network.

4.1. Results and analysis of the interviews

The volunteers talked about the job description of a responsible volunteer of the Let's read together network. The descriptions were similar with some differences according to the amount of students and volunteers in the groups and the characteristics, for example Finnish language skills, age and life situation etc. of the clients. Volunteers' job description included planning the autumn and spring term teaching and timetable plans, planning the classes and possible visits with the students. (Interviews 1-3.)

The volunteers also arrange monthly gatherings to discuss about the students, how everything has went and what will happen next, taking part in events and seminars and informing the groups' other volunteers and students about the contents of the upcoming classes. They also follow the classes and how they go along for example that all students have a volunteer teacher, that new students are welcomed and find their place in the group according to their level of Finnish language and what they want to learn. One of the interviewees stated that each class and each student is different. (Interviews 1-3.)

The teaching is not only about the Finnish language but also about the Finnish culture and for example the women's rights in Finland. Some of the volunteers also interact with the students outside the classes for example by inviting the students to their homes, summer cottages, berry and mushroom picking and other activities. The volunteers stated that they want to show the students what

the real Finnish life and culture is all about. The volunteers want to give the students a good example of Finnish women and men as well. Some of the volunteers have become friends with their students. They feel that being a volunteer gives more than it takes and it is mutually benefitting. (Interviews 1-3.)

The volunteers also help the students to gain information about daycares, education possibilities and guide them forward in their life. In guiding the students, the volunteers emphasize in being sensitive in guiding the students. The volunteers offer options but the final decisions are made by the students. (Interview 2.)

The job description of the volunteers also depends on the amount of the students and how long the group has been functioning. One of the groups is still quite new that they do not have a teaching plan and not enough volunteers. (Interview 2.) Still, the majority of the interviewees agreed on that now the groups have good amount of students and volunteers but if the amount of students increases rapidly, there will be challenges to get more volunteers fast (Interviews 1-3).

All the interviewees agreed on that in their groups there is a good amount of students going regularly to study. Usually there are enough volunteers to teach the students. There are also groups of students who do not attend the classes regularly. The amount of students has varied from time to time. When groups have first started, some of them have had fewer students but the amount has increased over time. The location of the groups also affects the amount of students because it is easier to reach central places especially with small children. On the other hand, according to a volunteer, some students may find it disturbing to have children in the group while trying to study. This can be the reason why sometimes some students do not attend the classes with their children. (Interviews 1-3.)

One focus group mentioned that it is challenging to keep contact with the students outside of the class and some students come and go irregularly. There

are some ethnic groups that can completely stop attending classes during a period even though they need the service. A good idea would be to have some authority from their own culture or country of origin to speak about the importance of the service and Finnish language skills. (Interview 2.)

The support and assistance received from the municipality of Vantaa includes spaces in its premises for all the groups, which is agreed to be the best support. On the other hand, in one of the focus groups there exist concerns about the premises, because one of them is rented from a private source and other place will be demolished in the future. Some groups are uncertain about their future and location. The availability of the spaces can be uncertain and vary from time to time. Also one of the groups has to apply for their space each year. (Interviews 1-3.)

Other kinds of support include books from the network, some materials such as copies and equipments within the premises, locked cupboards, a space provided by a parish and discounts on bus tariffs. At least one of the volunteers received copying possibility and other materials through her husband's work. Some have used libraries for copying and even printed at their home. The volunteers have received assistance from the immigrant coordinators concerning students' issues and concerns. Through the coordinators some volunteers find themselves to have better access to the clients and to have cultural guidance. The volunteers highly appreciate the assistance and help they receive from organizations and professionals working in the same premises. The volunteers are invited to seminars twice a year and receive invitations to other events and happenings such as trainings, courses meetings and concerts throughout the year. The volunteers also like that their opinion is asked for example what kind of training they would like to have. (Interviews 1-3.)

The volunteers hope for more material support such as pencils and copying possibilities so that they would not need to borrow from others in the premises. Some of them are using their own money for groups' materials such as pencils and copies. The majority of the volunteers stated that the books used in the

groups are not relevant and not appropriate for teaching and they were wondering if they could have some different teaching materials from the municipality. Some volunteers mentioned that they would need materials for students in different levels and phases of learning. (Interviews 1-3.)

In one focus group interview, the volunteers raised an issue concerning the parking spaces and payments and if the municipality provide a solution for this problem of not finding a parking space and having to pay a lot for it. Also the placing of prams causes headache for the women because there is no proper shelter for the prams outside. Also some of the premises are found to be too small compared to the amount of students and volunteers. The volunteers are puzzled why the municipality has empty premises that cannot be offered for the Let's read together network's groups to use. (Interview 1.)

Some of the volunteers would like to have assistance from the professionals concerning students' issues and where to guide and who will help them in different kind of problems. The volunteers would need more information about immigrant issues. They suggested that it would be good to have training or information session for example few times a year and that the immigrant coordinators could visit the groups. Knowledge about the social field would be appreciated also, but the majority agreed on that it is not necessary to have professional knowledge; it is enough to know where to guide the students in different situations. (Interview 1-2.)

Some of the volunteers stated that they can call to the immigrant coordinator about any concerns they have but others did not know who to contact concerning immigrant issues. Still, they have received some assistance from the Monika-Multicultural Women's Association. (Interview 2.)

The volunteers would like that the municipality of Vantaa would inform more actively and officially about the groups of the Let's read together network and their services through the professionals and authorities. The volunteers need the support in reaching out for the potential students because some of the vol-

unteers know that in their areas there are many immigrant women who would be potential students for the groups. Also it is important for the women to get the first Finnish language learning possibility. (Interview 2.) One of the main challenges in publicity is that the media such as the local newspapers are not really interested in advertising the Let's read together network's services (Interview 1).

Fortunately, the students actively share information about the Let's read together network's groups and classes with their friends and people they know. Because of the active information sharing between the immigrants and the fact that the municipality of Vantaa has put more effort in acknowledging and supporting the activities of the Let's read together network's groups within the last few years, the volunteers find that the groups are now more known. With the gained knowledge amongst the immigrants, the groups have better possibilities to offer their services to the ones who most need it and find the potential students. According to one of the interviews, the municipality has awakened to the fact that the work of the volunteers in the Let's read together network benefits not only the students but the municipality as well, because it reduces the professionals' work load. (Interview 3.)

5 EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Evaluation is an important tool in a project and can be defined as following:

“Evaluation is the systematic acquisition and assessment of information to provide useful feedback about some object.” (Trochim 2006).

The object of evaluation can refer to a program, policy, technology, person, need, activity etc. All evaluation work involves collecting and shifting through

data, making judgments about the validity of the information and studying the meaning of the results and the overall course of the process. (Trochim 2006.)

The general goal of evaluation is to provide useful feedback to different stakeholders and cooperation partners. One of the major goals of evaluation is to influence decision- and policy-making by the help of feedback. (Trochim 2006.) The goals of evaluation can differ according to the purpose and the nature of the research project.

In our project the purpose of evaluation is mostly in analyzing the results of the interviews and the needs of the cooperation. In our case the object of evaluation is our research project. We concentrate on the evaluation of the process; planning, implementing the interviews and analyzing them. In other words, how the work succeeded. Our evaluation is internal since we are the ones evaluating our own work. Nevertheless, there will be an external evaluation about our research project as a part of the final report of Osaava vanhempi- project.

5.1. Management of the process

Already in the beginning, we decided to do the research project together. We have shared the management and responsibility in every aspect and stage of the project. We have implemented the interviews together but divided tasks when contacting different stakeholders and reserving premises for the interviews. The division of tasks has been done according to what was the most reasonable way and fitted our timetables at the moment. We decided who contacts who, when needed. For the interviews and important meetings, we had a timetable and tried to stick to it. The timetable was created by ourselves together and we managed to follow it quite well. Even though there were challenges for example with the third interview, we managed to resolve the problem with the help of our supervisor and conclude the interviewing process.

In the interviews, we divided the tasks. One of us was responsible for asking the questions and the other one for taking notes even though there were no strict roles and we changed roles in different interviews. We are both happy about the management and our successful cooperation and teamwork. In the past we have been doing numerous assignments together which have made our teamwork stronger because we know our strengths, working habits and timetables.

5.2. Feedback

We knew that the research project would be needed and wanted because the idea came from our supervisor in Osaava vanhempia - project of Vantaa municipality. She has stated many times how actual and important this kind of study would be. She was also pleased with our research project plan and how we have been implementing it. It has also been encouraging to know that our research project is actually needed and we are not doing it in vain. The coordinator of the Let's read together network gave us positive feedback about conducting the project as well.

During the meeting between the Osaava vanhempia - project, volunteers of the Let's read together network and their coordinator and workers from Multi-service Office for Immigrants we introduced ourselves and got positive feedback on the idea of conducting the research project on the subject. All the stakeholders were happy about the idea and excited to participate in the process.

During the interviews the volunteers of the Let's read together network, have showed their excitement and positive thoughts and opinions about our research project and have agreed on the fact that it is needed to study the subject. The volunteers also said that they are content about the municipality's interest towards the cooperation between it and the volunteers.

All the feedback we received was oral and we could measure it as it came and it was easy for us to measure it as positive feedback. The opinions and thoughts about our research project were positive and encouraging from every stakeholder. This way it was easier for us to acknowledge that we were progressing as planned and wanted.

Also in our final evaluation of the research project, feedback was an important measurement tool. We could know that the project was successful because of the positive feedback. Also the fact that we mostly could implement the project according to the timetable we created makes the outcome ideal.

5.3. Challenges and changes

We have had some challenges but nothing we could not overcome. We encountered an unexpected incident already in the beginning when planning the interviews because a volunteer that we planned to interview did not find herself or the group, to be linked to the subject of our project. Her group's facilities are arranged in a different manner than the other Let's read together groups. Fortunately, we were flexible and prepared to solve possible problems and we managed to replace the volunteer with another one.

We had difficulties to arrange a day for the third focus group interview because the two last volunteers were busy so we had to change our plan about the interview day further on. As it turned out, we never received the final answer from one of the responsible volunteers and decided to conduct an individual interview instead of a focus group interview.

Few extra challenges came when we both got ill and had to change the schedule. For example we had to rearrange the meeting with our placement supervisor and responsible teacher.

We have learnt that arranging the interview dates as possible is important in order to make sure that the interviews can be conducted within the time limit. In

the beginning, we thought that it would be easier to arrange all the interviews, but as we learnt, there can be changes in the schedule because of for example illness or not fitting timetables with the interviewees. Since the interviews are an essential part of our report and without them we cannot complete it, it would have been easier to have started by conducting the interviews in the very beginning of the project. In the beginning, we were perhaps too confident about the time and we thought we would not have major problems arranging the interviews and conducting the whole process. As it turned out, we did have some challenges and changes after we both got sick which made us have almost two week break from our project work which created the situation where we are quite out of time with the days. It would have been important to do more in the beginning of the project and to really take into consideration our possible risk factors.

Overall, we are happy about the process of the project and that we started planning it early, already in January. It has been helpful to have a good plan and schedule as well as support and help from the placement supervisor. The interviews went well; the semi-structured approach was good and focus group method successful. All the interviewees had a lot of opinions to share and the information we got from the interviews came up to our expectations and were very informative as well as very much needed for the project. Despite of the challenges in the schedule, everything else in our project went as expected and the project was successful for all the stakeholders.

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