

THESIS

**Outdoor and Adventure Education in
Youth Employment Workshops**

Study of Impact & Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT

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Youth exclusion is a social phenomenon with numerous negative consequences. One way to prevent exclusion is through employment workshop activities that aim to support young people in finding their own professional path. Another significant goal is to promote essential life skills and overall well-being of young people. The potential of incorporating outdoor activities and nature in these workshops has been acknowledged in the field.

This thesis is commissioned by Retkikunta Kuukkeli, a youth employment workshop in Tampere. Workshop activities are based on outdoor and adventure education and often take place in natural settings. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the impact and effectiveness of the workshop by gathering experiences from youths who have previously participated in it. The thesis aims to collect feedback and provide recommendations for improvement.

In the theoretical framework, I examine the concepts of Outdoor & Adventure Education, Social Empowerment, the Learning Zone Model, and the Self-Determination Theory.

Research was conducted by interviewing eight individuals who had participated in the workshop. The interviews were qualitative and semi-structured. They were conducted either face-to-face or through video calls and were recorded. The gathered data was analyzed following the principles of thematic analysis.

The concrete output of this thesis is an evaluative report on the impact and effectiveness of the commissioners' workshop project, which is based on the experiences of previous participants. Results from the interviews show that the youths had very positive experiences from participating in the workshop. Youths expressed development in all areas of social empowerment and participation helped them discover a future path. The right amount of challenge, youth's involvement in the planning processes, and formation of a safe group dynamic were considered effective attributes. Incorporating adventurous activities and operating in natural environments were perceived as meaningful. Research results validate the effectiveness of utilizing outdoor and adventure educational methods in youth employment workshop activities.

Keywords: employment workshop, adventure education, social empowerment, youth work

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1 INTRODUCTION

According to a report by the Ministry of Interior, there are around 64 000 marginalized young people in Finland. Around 350 000 children and young people are at higher risk of exclusion than usual (Pyykkönen 2023, 7). Social exclusion refers to being left out from social activities, such as education and employment, and the feeling of being marginalized from the society. Youth exclusion causes significant economic losses to society and, most importantly, leads to problems and suffering at the individual level. Risk factors for exclusion include low education, long-term unemployment, economic problems, mental health problems, and substance abuse, (Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare).

In 2022, the youth unemployment rate in Finland was 16.1% (Finland's National Statistical Institute 2023). Research shows that up to 25% of young people in Finland experience some form of mental health problems. Demand for mental health services for young people has been increasing throughout the 2010s, and due to the pandemic, the need has become even more significant (Karlsson 2022). It is therefore important to find solutions on how to support at-risk youth.

Youth employment workshops are established by Youth Act (2016/1285), which aims to enhance the social well-being of young individuals and contribute to the implementation of the youth guarantee. Workshops aim to prevent the exclusion of young people by supporting them in finding their own path. They offer a wide range of activities and training, along with individual coaching and peer support, to enhance essential skills and attributes in young people. These include intra- and interpersonal skills, as well as skills related to life management, studies and working life. Workshops usually take place in a group, led by a facilitator. Youth workshops are targeted at unemployed individuals under the age of 29 years old (Intory). The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture awards annual grants for the organization of workshop activities (Youth Act 2016/1285 §21).

Outdoor and adventure education is based on experiential and activity-based learning. It is a holistic pedagogical approach in which learners are provided with experiences that promote human growth through adventure. Using these methods in natural environments, along with a sense of community, can be successful in preventing social exclusion and unemployment. (Rautiainen, 278-279). The concept and methods can be used to promote intrapersonal skills, such as

self-confidence, courage, and self-leadership, as well as social skills like teamwork, communication, and trust.

This thesis presents a qualitative research study on the impact and effectiveness of an outdoor and adventure educational youth employment workshop. The purpose is to determine the potential impacts that the workshop had on the participants' lives and assess whether the workshop goals were achieved. Research aims to find out how participants developed during the workshop, where they have been directed afterwards, and whether participating helped them in their everyday lives. Gathering feedback from participants aims to help the commissioner further develop its operations.

The working life commissioner of my thesis is a workshop project called Retkikunta Kuukkeli, which translates to "Expedition Siberian Jay." I will refer to the commissioner's workshop as RKK later in this thesis. RKK is a three-month-long youth employment workshop in Tampere. RKK utilizes outdoor and adventure education, the natural environment, experiential learning, community and peer support, and individual coaching as methods to achieve its goals.

The concrete output of this thesis is an evaluative report on the impact and effectiveness of the commissioner's workshop project, which is based on authentic experiences of youths. According to the results, participants' experiences of the workshop were generally very positive. Interviewees reported that they got support in finding a future path, enhanced their self-confidence and social skills during the program. All participants had been directed to education or employment after completing RKK. Half of them evaluated their mental health as improved compared to the time before RKK. Incorporating outdoor adventure educational methods and utilizing natural surroundings was experienced as meaningful and unique. Features which work particularly well are the elements of challenge, involvement, and safe group dynamics. The results of this thesis support the conclusion that adventure and nature-based workshop activities, such as RKK, are beneficial and achieve the objectives.

2 YOUTH EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOPS

In this chapter, I will provide an overview of youth employment workshops in Finland, beginning with their historical background. I will describe different types of workshops organized for young people, their main goals, and the methods used to achieve them. In the final chapter, I present some previous research on the effectiveness of these workshops.

2.1 About youth employment workshops

The history of youth employment workshops can be traced back to the 1980s when they were established to prevent the exclusion of young people from labor market. These workshops combined the goals and methods of youth work and labor administration. During the recession of the 1990s, the importance of youth work decreased, and workshop activities became one of the primary methods in Finnish labor policy targeting young people. As we entered the 21st century, the primary mission of workshops shifted towards providing workplace learning, individual coaching, and rehabilitation services. Alongside traditional vocational training, individual coaching has emerged, and matters related to education and personal development have gained prominence. Workshop activities have undergone a significant process of specialization, with a focus on enhancing the professional skills of coaches and striving to provide high-quality workshop services. This includes considering a more diverse target audience (Finnish Youth Research Society 2008).

Today, youth workshop activities are available in over 90% of the municipalities in mainland Finland. Various entities, such as municipalities, associations, and foundations, organize youth workshop activities in Finland, according to the Ministry of Education and Culture. Youth workshops in Finland are dedicated to unemployed young people under the age of 29 years old.

Youth can apply to a workshop through several different institutions, such as local employment offices, social welfare offices, KELA, outreach youth work, schools, or the Ohjaamo guidance service. One can also apply directly to a workshop (Finnish youth work statistics).

In 2022, there were a total of 236 workshops in Finland with 12,144 young participants. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of workshop participants seems to have decreased by approximately 2000 participants annually (Finnish Youth Work Statistics 2022).

2.2 Goals and methods

According to the Youth Act, the aim of youth workshops is to improve young people's ability to enter and complete educational programs and access the open labor market or other needed service. Goal is to improve youths' life management skills and to promote their growth, independence, and societal inclusion. The young people engage in workshop activities according to their own abilities, following their individual coaching plans (Youth Act 2016/1285 §13).

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, goals of youth workshops are to support participants' overall well-being, recognize and enhance their skills in different areas, and provide guidance in finding a future path. Workshops provide functional, work-oriented, and collaborative learning environments (Ministry of Education and Culture, n.d.).

Individual coaching is a commonly used method in employment workshops in Finland. It is a future-oriented and goal-directed support method that aligns with the individual's needs (Intory). The role of the coach includes supporting the individual's functional ability, everyday life management skills, work-life skills, and helping them plan their future path (Kinnunen 2016, 16). In most workshops, a personalized, future-oriented plan is created with every client. The plan includes recognizing their existing strengths and skills, as well as identifying areas for development and setting personal goals.

In Finland, workshop pedagogy is practiced in youth employment workshops. The concept refers to coaching that is tailored to individuals' needs and emphasizes community, goal orientation, and experiential learning. Workshop pedagogy takes place in flexible learning environments (Hämäläinen & Palo 2014).

There are various types of employment workshops in Finland that utilize a wide range of activities in their operations. Among these are workshops that implement art, handcrafts, sports, drama, music, and writing, to provide a few examples. Some workshops closely collaborate with the working field, such as cafeterias and bike repair workshops (Helsinki Vocational College & Adult Institute, n.d.). Workshops often offer hands-on activities that engage participants in practical and meaningful work.

In recent years, several youth workshop organizers have implemented nature and outdoor activities into their operations. Amongst these are Silta-coaching and Nature trail-workshop in Tampere, Green Care center in Jyväskylä and Valo-coaching project in Kuopio & Joensuu.

2.3 Previous research

According to Kuure (2010, 3), studying youth workshops is important because it allows us to gain a broader perspective on a situation that is connected to the entire society and the ongoing cultural change. Youth workshops provide information that we can use to understand the changes and challenges that young people are facing in our society. Workshops serve as a platform for formal learning, non-formal learning, and the labor market, connecting youth cultures to societal institutions. Also, according to the Youth Act, youth workshops must monitor the results of its activities (2016/1285 §13).

The Regional State Administrative Agency produces reports and statistics related to youth employment workshops and publishes them on the Finnish Youth Work Statistics website. The website contains information on workshop attendance, workshop methods and services, and the effectiveness of the workshops.

A study conducted in 2004 in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture examined the effectiveness of youth employment workshops in terms of the social support they provide. In this context, social support refers to a purposeful and intentional process aimed at enhancing the overall well-being of young people and improving their life situations. The results show that investing in workshops is worthwhile for society, considering the benefits they provide. It is estimated that approximately half of the young people who participate in the workshops are directed towards social activities, such as education or employment, after completing the workshops. Around one-third of them return to unemployment. According to the study, the strengths of the workshops lie in providing effective mentoring experiences and successful social support (Leinonen & Pekkala 2004).

The audit report published in 2020 by the National Audit Office examined the effectiveness and achievement of the objectives of the youth workshops from 2013 to 2016. This report also concluded that approximately half of the young people were directed to social activities after attending workshops. However, no direct link was found between the workshops and improved employment outcomes. Young people were primarily directed towards education, which was beneficial, particularly given that 60% of the youth who took part in workshop activities between 2013 and 2016 did not have a secondary education. The audit report shows that youth workshops have, on average, a clear positive impact on the target group in terms of education and study skills (National Audit Office report, 2/2020).

The Social Empowerment Measure provides information on the impact and quality of workshop operations from the perspective of its clients. It is used to collect valuable feedback from young people in order to improve workshop services. Data is produced annually at national, regional, and service unit levels. The measure is operated by Into Ry (Association for Outreach Youth Work and Workshop Activities), and offered to all employment workshops in Finland, but its use is voluntary. The Social Empowerment Measure is a web survey that clients are asked to fill out at the end of their workshop period. Clients respond to several statements related to their development and experiences on a scale of one to five. In 2022, 5,800 youths who engaged in workshop activities answered the survey. A more detailed description of the areas covered by the social empowerment measure will be provided in the next chapter "Theoretical Framework."

The impacts of nature-based workshops seem promising. A qualitative research study examined the effectiveness of nature-based youth workshops in Finland during the Mun Juttu project, which ended in 2017. According to the results, these workshops were generally experienced as very positive. Youths perceived the group activities and the benefits they received from them as particularly helpful. Additionally, nature-based workshops had a positive impact on their self-esteem, overall well-being, and ability to take responsibility (Heinonen et al. 2017, 59-63).

A study conducted by Riikka Puhakka in 2023 explored the impact of participating in outdoor adventures on the perceived well-being and nature connection of adolescents. The findings indicate that engaging in these activities positively influenced the mood, restoration, and overall life satisfaction of the participants. Participants highlighted the positive effects of social relationships and group cohesion. Moreover, the adventures increased participants' curiosity towards nature and their motivation to actively engage with the natural environment (Puhakka 2023, 3).

2.4 Commissioner & need for thesis

"The main goal is to create outdoor adventures that foster participants' connection with nature, enhance their well-being, and help them in finding a future path. During the workshops, participants are offered support and coaching that is suitable for their individual life situations"(Translation from Retkikunta Kuukkeli website).

As mentioned before, the commissioner of my thesis is Retkikunta Kuukkeli (RKK), a youth workshop aimed at unemployed individuals under the age of 29 years. Each workshop lasts for

three months and is held twice a year. The first one started in autumn 2020, and since then, 32 individuals in six groups have successfully completed the workshop. Groups typically consist of 5-8 youths. RKK operates under Etappi Ry, a regional organization that provides a diverse range of employment services in Tampere area in Finland. RKK is primarily funded (80%) by The Regional State Administrative Agency. The rest of the funding comes from Etappi ry and Tampere municipality.

The workshop focuses on utilizing outdoor and adventure education, as well as natural environments, in its operations. It also emphasizes the importance of community, peer support, and individual coaching. The workshop aims to enhance participants' skills in various areas, including self-knowledge, social skills, life management, and study and work-related skills. Additionally, it assists participants in finding their future professional path. The content of workshops varies each time because participants are actively involved in the planning processes. Included are, for example, day trips, different adventurous outdoor activities, work-life projects, Nuotta coaching, multi-day trips, and camp activities. Exercises aimed at improving group dynamics and reflective sessions are fundamental parts of each workshop.

The idea for this thesis started to develop from a discussion with the commissioner in April 2023. At that time, the 6th group was finishing their workshop since the project started in 2020. The workshop appeared to have had a positive impact on the participants, based on survey results and the instructor's observations. Noticeably, 100% of the participants who started the workshop also completed it. Additionally, most of them had applied to join the workshop independently. These observations indicate that something is functioning effectively within this project.

Together with the commissioner, we concluded that it would be beneficial to interview previous workshop participants to determine the most significant impacts that RKK has had on their lives. The aim was to evaluate how workshop goals were achieved and to find out where participants had been directed later. The goal was also to collect feedback from participants in order to evaluate which features work particularly well and identify areas for further development. This could provide valuable insights not only to the commissioner but potentially also to the funding parties, the field of youth work, and other employment workshops as well.

As mentioned, the commissioner has incorporated the Social Empowerment Measure tool in its operations since 2020, and the results indicate that the objectives are being successfully achieved. The survey provides nationally comparable quantitative data, but it does not allow for in-depth answers like interviews possibly can. Also, since the data is collected immediately at the end of each workshop, the results are limited to the duration of the workshop period. To obtain data that would provide insights into the actual impacts of the workshop, it is beneficial to collect data after the participants have completed the workshop. This way, it is possible to determine where they have been directed and whether they have derived any benefits that have had an impact on their lives after completing the workshop. Over time, participants may be able to review their workshop experiences from a new perspective, which can help the reflection process. These aspects justify the benefits of conducting a qualitative study timed after workshops periods.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I will present the theoretical framework of this thesis by briefly describing the concept of Outdoor and Adventure Education and explain its characteristics and common goals. I will introduce two theories, The Learning Zone Model and The Self-Determination Theory. Last, I will take a closer look at the areas of Social Empowerment Measure, a tool used to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of youth work in Finland.

3.1 Outdoor and Adventure Education

*“You cannot stay on the summit forever:
You have to come down again . . .
So why bother in the first place?
Just this: What is above know what is below,
But what is below does not know what is above.
One climbs, one sees, one descends, one sees no longer.
But one has seen.
There is an art of conducting oneself in the lower regions by
The memory of what one has seen higher up.
When one can no longer see, one can at least still know.”*
Rene Daumal – Mount Analogue

Throughout the 21st century, experiential education has gained a foothold alongside traditional teaching. It has its roots in and is translated from the German concept of *Erlebnispädagogik*, which arrived in Finnish education system in the early 1990s. At that time, the term Outdoor and Adventure Education (OAE) also became a widespread term used alongside, or even as a synonym for experiential education (Sutinen 2007, 83). The concept includes three dimensions: the element of adventure, outdoor settings, and education. (Sutinen 2007, 85). Using methods of OAE has become increasingly popular not only in education but also in therapy & youth work.

To understand what Outdoor and Adventure Education is, we need to take a closer look at the term “adventure”. The Oxford English Dictionary defines adventure as “*Adventurous activity; the action or fact of seeking or encountering risks; participation in perilous, remarkable, or exciting events or experiences.*” While adventure does involve exposing oneself to the possibility of risks, it does not necessarily need to be limited to what is considered extreme sports, such as scaling a remote mountain peak. Simply put, adventure can be anything that differs from everyday life, such as learning new skills or collaborating with a new group of people.

Any new experience includes the risk of not working out and is therefore an adventure (Ritson 2016, 3).

Outdoor and Adventure Education is a pedagogical approach in which adventurous methods and practices are utilized to foster the growth, learning, and well-being of individuals (Ulvinen 2020, 83). Priest describes that using activities that incorporate elements of risk and surprise is intended to have a positive impact on people's emotions, thinking, and actions, which can ultimately lead to transform communities (Priest 1999, xiii). Despite its inherent elements of challenge, uncertainty, risk, and surprise, OAE should always be goal-oriented, well-planned, and pedagogically justified. Only then does it become conscious, intentional education and guided experiential learning focused on developing and educating the individual (Uljens 1997, as cited Karppinen 2020, 102).

The learning potential that facing a challenge offer is one of the main characteristics of outdoor adventure education. What feels challenging is very individual. What one person may think is the end of the world, another person may find easy. How we face challenges is a result of our life experiences, attitudes, and perhaps even how we have observed others around us approaching challenges. What may initially feel like a challenge can, over time and practice, become less daunting as our skills improve. Being exposed to the right level of challenge helps participants cope with uncertainty and improve their resilience. In outdoor adventure educational activities, it is beneficial for individuals to examine their own boundaries and abilities, so that the level of challenge can be adjusted to their specific needs (Beams & Brown 2016, 106-107).

An important method in outdoor & adventure education is reflection, which promotes the learning and development of individuals. Through self-reflection, participants can cultivate self-awareness and identify the links between their actions and the resulting consequences. During the guided reflective sessions led by the educator or instructor, students can explore the connections between their recent experiences and their everyday lives. This process motivates individuals to embrace new perspectives and behaviours, allowing them to transfer and apply their newfound insights to different contexts in their personal lives. Adventure education is a holistic learning method that can be used to develop physical, mental, and socioemotional aspects. It can be applied to several different fields, including, but not limited to, schools, youth engagement, social work, and therapeutic settings (Finnish Youth Centres).

3.2 The Learning Zone Model

In the modern world, it is easy for us to avoid unpleasant feelings and discomfort. When faced with challenges, we have various strategies to modify or escape the situation and return to comfort and security. Today's technology makes life easier in many ways, but it also provides a convenient distraction from situations or thoughts, that feel uncomfortable. However, facing challenges could potentially lead to significant personal growth. As mentioned in the previous chapter, in OAE, challenges are not viewed as something to be avoided. When we come face to face with challenges, we can learn not only how to overcome them but also how to grow from them (Outward Bound).

The Learning Zone Model is popularized by German psychologist Tom Senninger, who based it on "The Zone of Proximal Development" by Lev Vygotsky, a psychologist from Belarus. The fundamental idea behind the model suggests that in order to learn and develop, we need challenges and stimulation. The key is finding the right balance. If we are not sufficiently challenged, the likelihood of stepping outside our comfort zone is minimal. On the other hand, if the challenges are too intense, there is a risk of feeling overwhelmed and panicking. In both scenarios, a lack of balance leads to limited learning (Manolica et al. 2022, 2). The Learning Zone Model divides the areas in which a learner operates into three zones.

1. The comfort zone is a familiar place of safety, where actions are effortless and do not require help or support from the outside. This is a place where a person can spend unlimited time without any issues, but the opportunities for learning are very limited or nonexistent.
2. In the growth zone, we are faced with challenges and need to stretch our abilities. We may need help and support from outside. This is the zone with best learning potential, but staying there for too long periods is draining.
3. In the panic zone, doing is beyond our abilities. The focus is on anxiety and fear rather than on learning. For efficient learning, this zone should be avoided.

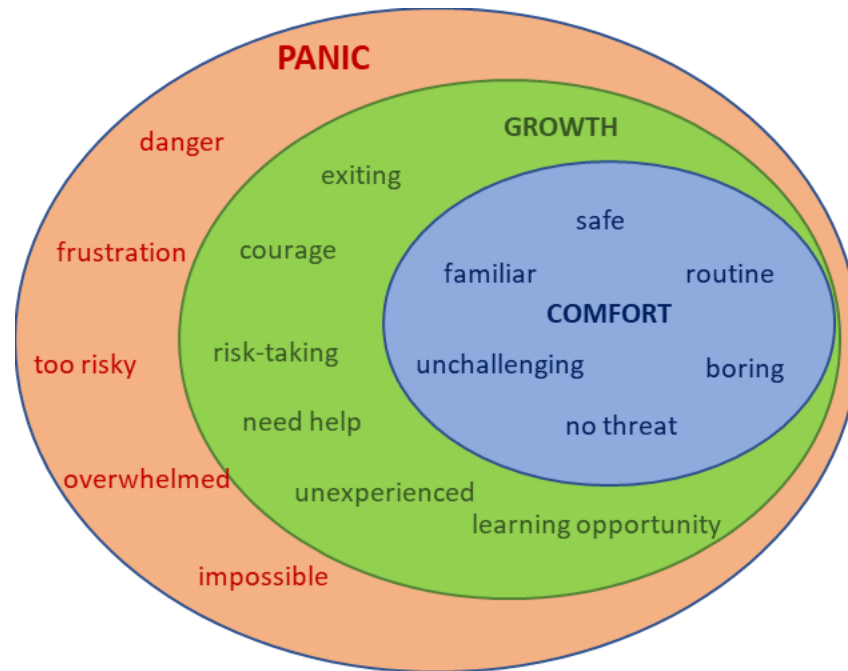


Figure 2: Learning Zone Model re-created (Senninger 2000)

To create optimal conditions for learning and growth, it is important to find a balance by moving between the two inner learning zones. We must exit our comfort zone in order to grow, but it is important not to stay in the growth zone for too long either. Pro-longed periods in the growth zone could result in exhaustion or drifting into the panic zone, which should be avoided. The ideal is to move between the comfort and growth zones to ensure restoration, which is crucial for effective learning (Manolica et al. 2022, 3).

3.3 Self-Determination Theory & Intrinsic Motivation

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, focuses on the nature of motivation. The theory distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, rather than quantifying the level of motivation as high or low. Intrinsic motivation is defined as deriving satisfaction from engaging in a behavior for its inherent value, rather than for external rewards or outcomes. According to SDT, external rewards, such as threats, deadlines, and imposed goals, weaken intrinsic motivation (Flannery 2017, 155-156). SDT is based on the understanding that all humans have three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Fostering an individual's experience of these needs is connected to increased intrinsic motivation, together with improved performance, and a sense of fulfillment (Noble 2016, 24).

Autonomy refers to the fundamental human need to have control over the direction and choices in our lives, and to make our own decisions without being controlled by others. Supporting autonomy involves employing strategies such as offering choices, recognizing and validating emotions, and enabling individuals to independently determine their preferred behaviors. (Flannery 2017, 155-156).

Competence refers to our ability to effectively engage in a behavior, and a sense of improvement in one's capabilities. It includes a subjective experience of self-efficacy. Competence needs to be accompanied by autonomy for motivation to be intrinsic (Flannery 2017, 156).

Last, relatedness refers to the human need to form close personal relationships and experience social security. The third need is not considered essential because some behaviors occur independently and are still intrinsically motivating, such as writing. However, empirical studies suggest that individuals who experience a sense of relatedness are more likely to have intrinsic motivation (Flannery 2017, 156).

3.4 Social empowerment

Social empowerment is a widely used concept for setting goal and measuring the effectiveness of youth work in Finland. Social empowerment includes self-knowledge, social functioning, communication skills, life management, and participation (Kuure 2014). Strengthening these resources builds the foundation of youth employment workshops and outreach youthwork (Kinnunen 2016, 19). The goal is to enhance an individual's ability to function and adapt in social situations, establish relationships with others, and foster active participation and interaction within their social circles, communities, and society. Social empowerment enhances individuals' opportunities to influence the trajectory of their own lives (Kinnunen 2016, 6).

Social empowerment is measured using a tool called the Social Empowerment Measure, which assesses development in five areas: self-knowledge, social skills, daily tasks management, study and work life skills, and life management. Next, I will briefly describe these areas, which also align with the objectives of youth employment workshops in Finland.

Individuals with good self-knowledge have a realistic understanding of their skills and attributes. They can recognize their strengths and weaknesses. They possess a sense of self-worth and can accept both success and failure. They are able to trust in their capability to cope with

different, even challenging situations. Good self-knowledge is necessary to maintain healthy and equitable relationships and to express one's own views (Keltikangas-Järvinen 1994, as cited in Kinnunen 2016, 20).

Social skills include accepting differences in others and their opinions, as well as the ability to engage in constructive interactions. Also, the abilities to trust others and to be loyal to them are included in social skills. Belonging to a community promotes health and well-being. A positive and safe atmosphere helps to build trust between individuals and thrive towards achieving set goals (Kinnunen 2016, 20).

Strengthening the ability to manage daily tasks is considered important in the field of youth work. It includes, for example, incorporating a daily rhythm, committing to schedules, the ability to use needed services, economic management, and minimizing substance misuse (Kinnunen 2016, 20).

Study and work life skills is a key aspect of social empowerment, and strengthening these skills is particularly important in youth employment workshops. Mapping out potential study programs, enhancing job search skills, and educating about workplace etiquette are some of the strategies to foster growth in this area. A key measure to assess the effectiveness of employment workshops is, of course, to monitor the progress of participants who are directed to further studies or employment after engaging in workshop activities. However, it is also important to consider the progress in studying and working life skills of those clients who do not directly progress into studies or employment. They may still have gained interest and knowledge in this area, along with resilience (Kinnunen 2016, 21).

Life management refers to the sense of coherence and integrity that empower individuals to navigate through life successfully, even when facing challenging situations. The ability to face challenges and adapt to changes is called resilience, which is closely linked to effective life management. An individual with good life management skills understands the relationship between actions and outcomes and believes that they are in control of their own life. They can recognize their own resources, accept help, and support from others and believe that they have opportunities and goals to strive for in life (Kinnunen 2016, 21).

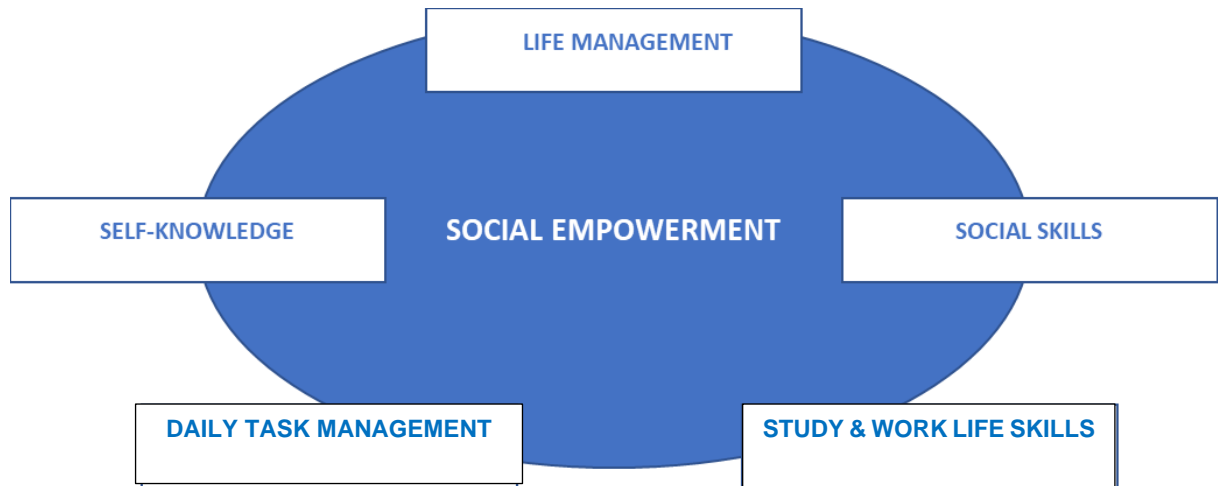


Figure 2: Areas of Social Empowerment (Kinnunen 2014)

4 RESEARCH METHODS

In this chapter, I will explain the research process of this thesis. The idea for my thesis topic began to take shape during a discussion with my commissioner in April 2023. Already in the first discussion, it became quite clear that data would be gathered by interviewing people who had previously undergone RKK. The research started in September 2023, and the interviews were conducted in October 2023. Interviews were semi-structured, with open-ended questions. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or through Zoom video call. Recorded interviews were first transcribed and then analyzed following the principles of thematic analysis. After that, I continued the writing process from October to November 2023.

4.1 Data Gathering Method and Interview Questions

Qualitative research encompasses a wide range of traditions, approaches, and methods. Common to the spectrum of qualitative research is the study of lived experience. Data-driven research (induction) is often associated with qualitative research, while theory-driven research (deduction) is related to quantitative research. However, the distinction is not as simple as commonly thought, and studies are rarely purely data- or theory-based (Puusniekka & Saaranen-Kauppinen 2009, 14).

In qualitative research, different interview styles are the most commonly used data gathering methods. An interview can be understood as a conversation with a planned intention. It is important to remember that interviews are interactive, and that the parties involved (interviewer & interviewee) always influence each other. In contrast, a quantitative research style assumes that the subject of the research is independent of the researcher (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2022, 15). A qualitative interview's purpose is to gather relevant data from which the researcher can draw credible conclusions related to the topic. To draw credible conclusions from interviews, it is necessary to record them (Juuti & Puusa 2020).

I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews with questions that were presented to each interviewee in the same order and format. In a semi-structured interviewing style, the questions are open-ended, while in a structured interview, the interviewees are provided with predefined answer options to choose from. The semi-structured interviewing style allows interviewees to describe their experiences in their own words. Additionally, interviewees have more freedom

to discuss themes they perceive as important in relation to the questions they are asked. Experienced qualitative research practitioners Alasuutari, Koskinen, and Peltonen have stated that interviewing is often the only relevant method for gathering data on the meanings and interpretations that people have on different matters. (Juuti & Puusa 2020).

I chose this method because I wanted to obtain more comprehensive answers from participants, as the aim of the thesis was to investigate the impact and effectiveness of RKK based on youth's personal experiences. I believed that conducting interviews would yield more engaging and insightful information. I anticipated that the interviewees would have the opportunity to reflect on their experiences in a more meaningful way compared to other data gathering methods. Conducting surveys or questionnaires would have required a larger sample size, but the resources would not have allowed me to concentrate on the individual experiences as profoundly, as with semi-structured interviews.

An important part of the research was planning the framework for the interview questions. As mentioned before, I wanted to keep the questions open and see what comes up with the interviewees, instead of feeding them my own pre-determined thoughts or themes. Therefore, I did not use questions such as "How did your social skills develop during the workshop?", but instead, I asked questions such as "In which ways did you develop during the workshop?".

In the beginning of the interviews, basic information such as age, gender, and place of residence was gathered. I divided the rest of the questions into three different sections: time before RKK, time while in RKK, and time after RKK. Because the purpose of the thesis was to investigate the impact and effectiveness of undergoing RKK, I focused on questions that examined participants' life situations before and after participating in RKK. Other important focal points were how and in which areas participants developed during RKK, what new skills they gained, and how participating impacted their lives. Also, I wanted to gather information about what is working well in the project, as well as any suggestions for changes or improvements to the operations of RKK. Interview question framework can be found at the end of this thesis (see Appendix2).

4.2 Target Group

In total, eight individuals who had completed RKK were chosen for the interviews. The commissioner contacted all previous participants for whom they had contact information, and the final interviewees were randomly selected from the volunteers who responded affirmatively to the invitation. At the time of the interviews, the ages of the interviewees ranged from 24 to 32 years old. Five of them were females and three were males, and all interviewees had undergone RKK between the years 2020 and 2023. Since the first RKK started in autumn 2020, there have been a total of six groups, and out of these, five groups were represented in the interviews.

Five of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, and three of them were conducted through Zoom video calls. Interviews lasted between 40 and 60 minutes. All interviews were recorded for later analysis.

4.3 Data Analysis & Research Ethics

After conducting all the interviews, I transcribed the recordings using a transcription tool. I went through the transcriptions, marking different themes that I could recognize in the answers. I used the five areas of the Social Empowerment Measure as a guideline to identify different themes and color-coding, for example, all parts that were related to social skills, with one specific color. I collected all the relevant sections from the interviews and categorized them under different themes in a separate Word document. I also used an Excel spreadsheet to list the impacts participants experienced under different themes. This way, I could identify the recurring themes that emerged from the interviews.

Humak ethical guidelines for good scientific practices include informing the subjects and requesting their consent. Before the interviews, the interviewees received a participation information sheet by mail, which they were asked to read prior to the interviews. Interviewees were asked to present any questions they had beforehand, but time for questions was also reserved before every interview. Every interviewee also signed a participation consent form, either on paper or a digital platform.

I transcribed the recordings using the Word transcription tool. After that, I read through each transcription, correcting spelling mistakes while simultaneously listening to the recording in question. When saving transcriptions, I left out identifiable information about the interviewees,

such as their names, in order to protect their anonymity. I used the recordings during data analysis to verify the accuracy of direct quotations. After completing the data analysis, I deleted the recordings.

4.4 Limitations

As with all research methods, there are problems and limitations associated with interviews. It is necessary to be aware of these issues during the planning process in order to conduct competent research. First, the analysis of qualitative data always involves the researcher's interpretation, which is influenced by their perspectives and viewpoints. It can be challenging to draw scientifically credible conclusions from qualitative data. It is necessary to carefully plan research questions and ensure that the gathered data is relevant. Qualitative data is often rich and nuanced, and its analysis requires a systematic, transparent, verifiable, and justifiable approach. It is also important to remember that the issues raised by the interviewee are always the interviewee's interpretation. (Juuti & Puusa 2020, Chapter 6).

Building trust and motivating the interviewees are important factors in reducing tension and promoting their engagement during the interview. It is important to keep in mind that interviewees tend to give socially acceptable answers, meaning they provide responses that they believe align with what is generally considered appropriate (Juuti & Puusa 2020, Chapter 6). Although it may be impossible to completely eliminate this, I made an effort to encourage honest answers by reminding each interviewee of the purpose of collecting authentic and realistic experiences, rather than seeking specific types of answers, such as only positive ones. Additionally, my position as an interviewer, completely independent of the commissioner's project, may have influenced the way in which interviewees decided to respond to the questions asked. Being unfamiliar with the interviewees likely emphasized the significance of my ability to motivate and establish trust with them. On the other hand, my neutral position may have encouraged interviewees to speak more openly about their experiences, even if they were negative, as opposed to someone directly involved in the project.

Misunderstandings can easily occur when questions are asked unclearly or when the interviewee is fully or partially unable to understand the language or terms used in the questions. Additionally, the interviewer may consciously or unconsciously influence the interviewee, for example, by presenting the questions in a specific manner (Juuti & Pusa 2020, Chapter 6).

Additionally, it should be kept in mind that since participation in the research was voluntary, the selection of interviewees may have favored those with the best experiences, potentially excluding those who had less positive or even negative experiences of the workshop. The results of the study pertain to a relatively small sample and cannot be generalized to all young people who have completed the workshop.

5 RESULTS

In this chapter, I will present the findings from the interviews. In the first chapter, I focus on the time before the workshop, by introducing background information about the interviewees, explaining how and why they were directed to RKK, and discussing their goals for the workshop period. In the second chapter, I will present how the interviewees experienced their time in the workshop in relation to their personal development, as well as the new skills they acquired. Positive and constructive feedback on RKK's operations is presented in separate chapters. The last chapter is dedicated to the time after RKK, discussing how the objectives were achieved according to the interviewees and where they have been directed.

Direct quotations from interviews are presented in the text in both the original language (Finnish) and in direct English translations. I find sharing quotations important because they provide realistic descriptions of individual experiences. Quotations have been edited by removing irrelevant expletives, but otherwise they remain unchanged in their original form. Personalized information, such as names, genders, and ages, is not displayed in the results to protect the respondent's anonymity. Instead, I may refer to interviewees with tags such as "Interviewee 5" or "I5".

5.1 Background information & before RKK

At the time of the interviews, the interviewees were between 24 and 32 years old, and all of them were currently living in Pirkanmaa area. Five interviewees were female, and three were male. They all participated in RKK between autumn 2020 and spring 2023. Seven interviewees were unemployed at the time they started RKK, except for 1 person who was a student. Six of the interviewees had previously completed secondary education, one had a comprehensive school background, and one had a bachelor's degree. Five interviewees had previous experience with employment workshops, and three of them had also participated in Etappi's nature trail workshop, either as participants or volunteers.

Four interviewees had discovered RKK through social media, either Facebook or Instagram. Other ways in which participants were directed to RKK were through other employment workshops (3) or the Job Market (1). All interviewees stated that they applied to RKK due to their personal interest in the workshop. When asked which features of RKK felt interesting or inviting, the most common answers were the concept of nature (6) and the opportunity to learn

camping and hiking skills (5). Small group size, relaxed atmosphere, positive energy, and a sense of challenge were also listed as appealing features by the interviewees before the application process. Three individuals mentioned that they perceived RKK as being noticeably different from the usual workshop activities, which are typically conducted in the same venue and at the same time each day. Differences perceived included that RKK offered more daily variation, inclusiveness, a close-knit group, and exciting and meaningful activities with greater challenge than typical workshops seemed to provide. Perceived differences were explained as positive.

Reasons why interviewees applied to RKK were described as feelings of being lost or stuck, experiencing difficulties in social situations, passivity, problems with life management and daily routine, dissatisfaction with their previous career or studies, a desire to try something new, and pure interest or excitement. Four interviewees mentioned that they had experienced mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, before applying. Additionally, one individual described their everyday life as dull and meaningless. Causes of these problems were related to the COVID-19 pandemic, personal life issues, a lack of personal resources, or the inability to recognize or manage them.

The goals that interviewees set for themselves during their workshop periods were very similar to the reasons for their application. Goals included finding a life direction, enhancing daily life management skills such as establishing a healthy routine and becoming more proactive, improving mental and physical well-being, exploring new opportunities in the professional field, and acquiring social skills, confidence, and self-awareness. Gaining technical skills related to camping, hiking, and other outdoor activities was also mentioned in several interviews.

5.2 Development during RKK

”Semmoista uutta perspektiiviä, että on myös eri asioita mihin keskittyä ja että hyvinvointia pystyy just hakee materian ja onnistumisien ulkopuolelta ihan niin yksinkertaisilla asioilla, et menee vaan sinne luontoon.” (Haastateltava 5)

“A new perspective on that there are also other things to focus on, and that wellbeing can be sought outside of material [possessions] and success, with such simple things, like just getting out into nature.” (Interviewee 5)

Participants gained or improved a wide range of skills during RKK. The most common skill mentioned by all interviewees was related to camping and outdoor life. This includes knowing

how to choose the right equipment and use it correctly, as well as how to plan a hike and which aspects to consider during the planning process of an expedition. Interviewees gained new technical skills and improved their existing skill set in outdoor activities such as kayaking, snowshoeing, rope activities, navigation, map reading, and outdoor cooking. Gaining knowledge related to nature includes learning about wildlife, plants, mushrooms, and weather conditions. Interviewees learned how to organize outdoor-related activities for customer groups in real working-life projects and gained knowledge of the various possibilities in the professional outdoor field, including education and career opportunities.

Three interviewees mentioned that they felt a stronger or deeper connection to nature during their time at RKK. Deeper nature connection had a positive effect on the health and well-being of participants. It was also described as reducing stress and being relaxing. Being out in nature was mentioned to bring positive contrast to daily life, which is otherwise often spent indoors (I8). During the workshop, participants realized that enjoying nature does not require a lot of effort. It was described that nature became a "living room" in everyday life, where one can simply exist, which felt significant (I1).

Five interviewees reported a strengthening of self-confidence during RKK, while three reported an improvement in self-knowledge. Interviewees reported gaining a greater understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses, personal values, and areas of interests. Several interviewees described how participating in RKK revealed positive attributes they did not realize they possessed before, such as leadership skills and resilience. One interviewee described their development in the following words:

”Tuli paljon onnistumisen tunteita retkien aikana ja oppi, että on paljon sitkeämpi ja voimakkaampi mitä oli alun perin kuvitellut.” (Haastateltava 1)

“During the trips, I experienced moments of success and learned that I am much more resilient and also stronger than I had imagined.” (Interviewee 1)

Half of the interviewees reported that they had gained a deeper understanding of their own personal boundaries and/or learned how to express them more effectively during RKK. This newfound knowledge has benefited them in various aspects of their lives, including social situations, studies, and work lives. Learning to express one's boundaries without worrying about hurting others was connected to improved self-confidence and a sense of self-worth according to Interviewee2.

Development of social skills, including teamwork, communication, good dialogue skills, and assuming a role within the group, was mentioned by all eight interviewees. Five interviewees mentioned positive experiences of a safe and supportive group and emphasized its importance in RKK. Interviewees reported that, thanks to social safety, they were able to openly express even difficult emotions within the group. This not only enhanced the group dynamic but also fostered stronger connections and trust among the group members. Peer support and openness in the group were described as bringing hopefulness because they helped individuals realize that they are not alone in their concerns and challenges (18).

“Meillä oli tosi semmoinen, avoin ja turvallinen niin ilmapiiri siellä, että siellä pystyi puhumaan kaikista tosi henkilökohtaistakin asioista ja työstään niitä oman mielen asioita.” (Haastateltava3)

“We had a really open and safe atmosphere there, you could discuss even personal things and work on things that were on your mind.” (Interviewee3)

One question was about the most significant change participants have noticed in themselves after undergoing RKK. The responses included a number of different changes, but the most common one was that participating in RKK helped them discover a direction in their professional lives and/or studies (5). Three interviewees talked about realizing it is not necessarily beneficial to stick to one direction, but to be open to change and surprises along the way. Keeping an open mind and accepting the uncertainty of life were linked to resilience and effective life management. Other significant changes participants experienced included gaining self-knowledge (3) and developing the courage to try new things (3). One interviewee described the change in the following words:

”Oppi omista rajoista ja juuri ylipäättään tällaista oman hyvinvointinsa tuntemista ja omien olojensa jakamista. Hyvien ja huonojen aika hyvin avoimellakin tavalla.” (Haastateltava 8)

“Learned about my own boundaries and overall well-being and being able to share my emotions. The good and the bad in a very open way.” (Interviewee 8)

Seven interviewees described gaining positive experiences, personal growth, or both by facing challenges during their time at RKK. When I asked about their best moment during the workshop period, five participants described a situation that they found somewhat challenging. The

challenges experienced included rough weather conditions, exhaustion, fear of expressing personal boundaries, and performance pressure when instructing others. Overcoming a challenging situation brought the participants feelings of success, boosted their self-confidence, and strengthened their belief in themselves and their skills.

“Että sai tavallaan kokeilla, testaila ja epäonnistua niin se toi mulle ihan hirveän semmoisen vapauden tunteen siitä, et okei, mun ei tarvitse olla täydellinen heti ensimmäisenä kertaa, kun testaa jotain uutta.” (Haastateltava1)

"The fact that you could kind of try, test, and fail, it gave me a great sense of freedom, that okay, I don't have to be perfect the first time I try something new." (Interviewee1)

Seven interviewees expressed that involving the participants in the planning processes during the workshops was beneficial. Participants would, for example, plan their own hikes and other outdoor activities, as well as work on real-life projects and organizing activities for customers. The instructors would give participants a framework in which to operate and provide support when needed. Involvement motivated the participants, as they felt their own interests and preferences were valued (H2 & H4). Additionally, it brought a sense of freedom and inspiration (H1) and fostered teamwork and team spirit (H3). Involving participants in the planning processes seemed to increase their intrinsic motivation.

Additionally, five interviewees reported development related to daily task management skills. Participation promoted the formation of a daily routine, enhanced activation and increased resources needed to cope in everyday life.

5.3 Positive feedback

When asked about what works well in RKK, half of the interviewees mentioned that starting the day with communal breakfasts had positive effects. During breakfast, participants were encouraged to share their current feelings and thoughts with others. It supported the formation of a healthy group dynamic and promoted open communication within the group. Positive experiences included feeling seen and heard by other members of the group. Having breakfast together strengthened the participants' motivation to wake up early to attend the common days. It was described as an easy and natural way to start the day.

Safe, healthy, and supportive group dynamics were pointed out by seven interviewees. When asked about the factors that contributed to the development of such dynamic, participants listed several reasons. Coming up with common rules together at the beginning of RKK was one of

them. According to the interviewees, small group sizes promoted trust and a positive atmosphere. However, it was also mentioned that a good group dynamic may not develop when the group size is too small either. The absence of hierarchy in the group made participants feel that everyone was equal. Additionally, the workshop instructors were described as open and easily approachable, which further promoted a healthy group dynamic.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the majority (7) Interviewees expressed that challenging moments are an important part of the workshop. Challenges occurred not only on physical but also on mental and social levels. When asked what helped overcoming challenges, the interviewees emphasized the significance of social safety and support, such as the possibility to share their experiences with others in the group. "Screwing up is a gift," a common principle promoted RKK groups, helped dealing with setbacks and accept possible failure. Instructors, being easily approachable, trustworthy, and supportive, were described as helpful. Additionally, instructors extensive outdoor experience promoted a safe environment to test personal limits. Three interviewees felt traditional or typical workshop activities did not offer enough challenge, like RKK did.

Overall, the use of outdoor adventure educational methods and incorporating nature was considered positive and efficient in workshop activities, according to all interviewees. Being out in nature was described as both exciting and relaxing. Sharing negative feelings was considered easier when done together in a forest or while sitting by a campfire. All eight participants would recommend RKK to their friends.

5.4 Constructive feedback

When asked how they would improve RKK, half of the interviewees suggested that the workshop could be extended to last beyond three months. Three respondents suggested increasing the number of workshop days in a week from 3-4 to 4-5. Three people mentioned that RKK's accessibility could be improved. Solutions for improving accessibility include implementing more efficient marketing strategies, organizing additional workshops throughout the year, and extending the Outdoor and Adventure Educational workshops to individuals beyond the current age limit as well. Three respondents mentioned that the selection of outdoor gear could be more comprehensive, including a broader range of sizes and higher quality equipment. However, this was considered a relatively minor issue by respondents.

5.5 After RKK

As mentioned earlier, the main goal of youth employment workshops is to prevent social exclusion by supporting young people in discovering a future path and directing them towards societal activities such as education and employment. Another important goal is to promote the overall well-being of young people.

Interviewees described how participating in RKK felt like a turning point in their lives. One interviewee described how participating in RKK opened a new chapter in their life, in which they began feeling a connection to their deeper self and inner child (H1). Another interviewee reflected on their workshop experience with the following words:

”Se oli ihanaa. -- mä oon miettinyt sitä jälkeenpäin, että se on ollut semmoinen käännteentekevä hetki ja mä oon reflektoinu taaksepäin, että siitä lähti vähän semmoinen uudenlainen ajanjakso.” (Haastateltava5)

"It was wonderful -- I've been thinking about it afterwards, that it was such a turning point and I've been reflecting back on it, that it started a new kind of era" (Interviewee5)

Interviewee5 continues that the courage gained during RKK helped them to start taking leaps into the unknown, like beginning in a new study program and considering participating in an exchange program during the studies.

Interviewees reported that they had gained new perspectives during RKK, which subsequently had positive impacts on their lives. Interviewee2 described having had a very fixed mindset regarding how their future should look, but during RKK, they realized the importance of being more open-minded towards other possibilities. This realization led the interviewee to study and work within a field that felt more suitable.

Six interviewees said that participating in RKK significantly supported them in planning their future paths. All interviewees reported that their workshop objectives were generally met.

As mentioned in the background information chapter, seven interviewees were unemployed before attending RKK. At the time of the interviews in October 2023, seven of them had started studying after completing RKK, and five were currently enrolled as students. Two interviewees had already completed their studies when the interviews were conducted. Studies were either in secondary education (6) or in higher education (1).

A total of six interviewees had been employed, at least part-time, after completing RKK. At the time of the interviews, three persons were currently employed. Half of the interviewees mentioned that their current mental health is better compared to before participating in RKK.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this thesis was to research the impact and effectiveness of the RKK workshop from the perspective of individuals who have participated in it. The aim was to determine the participants' perceived benefits from the workshop, the impact it had on their lives, the alignment between the workshop's goals and its actual impact, areas for potential development or improvement, and the participants' views on the necessity of activities like RKK.

First, I familiarized myself with the concept and goals of employment workshops in Finland, as well as the existing research conducted in the field. I collected a knowledge base related to the topic, consisting of Outdoor and Adventure Education and its associated characteristics. Related theories were The Learning Zone Model and Self-Determination Theory. I studied the concept of social empowerment measure, which is a tool used to evaluate workshop activities, and the five areas of development that it encompasses.

I constructed the interview framework with the assistance of social empowerment measure, discussions with my commissioner and by evaluating the types of questions that were relevant in terms of the aims. I kept the interview questions open-ended so that participants could freely express their own experiences and thoughts. Research was conducted by conducting interviews with eight youths who had participated in the workshop in previous years.

Results from the interviews show that, in general, youth had very positive experiences from the workshop that impacted them and their lives in beneficial ways. They gained new skills and experiences, and development took place all areas of the social empowerment measure: self-knowledge, social skills, daily task management, study and work life skills and life management. Youths learned practical skills related to the outdoors, such as camping skills and knowledge of nature. Participating in the workshop improved their intrapersonal skills, such as self-confidence and courage. Participants learned to recognize their strengths and weaknesses. Nature connection was deepened or discovered in some cases. Improved interpersonal skills included communication and teamwork skills. Participants learned about their own boundaries and how to better communicate them to others.

A particularly good feature of commissioners' operations is that it offers participants experiences, in which they are exposed to sufficient levels of challenge. Almost all participants stated that this is an important feature in the workshop's operations. Overcoming a challenging situation was linked to feelings of success, boosted self-confidence, and self-efficacy. According to

the Learning Zone Model by Senninger, learning and personal growth occur outside of one's comfort zone, in the area of growth. However, to ensure effective growth, facilitators must be careful individuals are not pushed too far from security, to prevent them from getting exhausted or drifting into the panic zone. Additionally, the formation of safe group dynamics was considered beneficial and helpful, particularly in overcoming challenges. Small group sizes were considered positive.

In terms of providing workshop activities that efficiently meet the objectives, it is important to purposefully promote the intrinsic motivation in the participants. All interviewees had applied to RKK based on their own interests, since they found the content appealing in various ways. Outdoor and adventure educational methods and spending time in nature was experienced meaningful by participants and the concept seemed to promote their intrinsic motivation. No one expressed having lack of motivation or thoughts about quitting during their workshop periods. Half of the interviewees even wished workshop period would have been longer.

Involving participants in the planning processes and allowing them to create the program based on their wishes and interests foster their sense of autonomy. Instructors can support the sense of competence in participants by giving them a framework in which they can operate. Sufficient level of challenge and feelings of success promote youth's self-efficacy, which further fosters competence. Building social security and closeness within the group enhances feeling of relatedness.

Recommendations for development include increasing the number of workshop activity days per week, extending the duration of the three-month workshop, and expanding participation to include individuals above the current age limit. Room for improvement would be in marketing strategies, equipment, and gear selection.

Most interviewees felt that, during the workshop time, they received significant support in finding a future path. All participants had been directed to either work, education, or both after completing the workshop. Half of the participants stated that their mental health is better today compared to the time before the workshop.

Overall, interviewees thought that the type of Outdoor and Adventure educational workshops represented by my commissioner meet the objectives and are meaningful and unique. All participants would recommend RKK to their friends.

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APPENDIES

Appendix 1: Interview questions (Finnish)

Ikä + sukupuoli + asuinpaikka?

Ennen Kuukkelia:

Milloin osallistuit Retkikunta Kuukkeliin?

Mitä kautta ohjauduit Kuukkeliin?

Mikä/mitkä asiat työpajassa houkuttelivat hakemaan mukaan?

Millainen elämäntilanteesi oli ennen Retkikunta Kuukkelia? (aiempi koulutus, työpajat, työ)

Mitä odotuksia sinulla oli ennen työpajajaksoa?

Mitä tavoitteita asetit itsellesi jakson ajalle?

Kuukkelin aikana:

Millaisena yleisesti koit luonto- ja seikkailupainotteisen työpajan?

Mitä uutta opit työpajajakson aikana?

Millä tavoin koet kehittyneesi pajan aikana?

Mikä oli paras hetkesi pajan aikana? Miksi?

Entä oliko jokin haasteellinen hetki? Opiteko siitä jotain, mitä?

Kuukkelin jälkeen:

Mitä teit Retkikunta Kuukkelin loputtua?

Auttoiko osallistuminen Kuukkeliin sinua tulevaisuuden suunnittelussa? Miten?

Koetko, että osallistuminen on auttanut sinua arjessa, työssä ja/tai opinnoissa? Miten?

Mikä on merkittävin muutos, jonka huomasit itsessäsi pajaan osallistuttuasi?

Mitä erityisen hyvää Kuukkelin toiminnassa sinusta on?

Mitä Kuukkelin toiminnassa muuttaisit tai kehittäisit?

Miten koet retkikuntaan osallistumisen täyttäneen tavoitteesi ja odotuksesi?

Millainen elämäntilanteesi on tällä hetkellä?

Suosittelisitko Kuukkelia kaverille? Miksi?

Sana vapaa?

Appendix 2: Interview questions (English)

Age + gender + place of residence?

Before RKK:

When did you participate in RKK?

How were you directed to RKK?

What/which features of the workshop attracted you to apply?

How was your life situation before RKK? (previous education, workshops, employment)

What were your expectations before the workshop?

What goals did you set yourself for the workshop period?

During RKK:

How did you experience outdoor and adventure educational workshop in general?

What new things did you learn during the workshop?

In what ways did you develop during the workshop?

What was your best moment during the workshop? Why?

Was there a challenging moment? Did you learn anything from it, what?

After RKK:

What did you do after the workshop ended?

Did participating to RKK help you to plan your future? How?

Do you feel that participating to RKK has helped you in your daily life, work and/or studies?
How?

What is the most significant change that you have noticed in yourself since participating to RKK?

What do you find particularly good about RKK?

How would you change or improve about RKKs operations?

How do you feel that your participation in RKK has met your goals and expectations you set to yourself?

How is your life situation now?

Would you recommend RKK to a friend? Why?

Free word?