Employment of people with intellectual disabilities in the hotel industry - A Case Study

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2019
Abstract:

The research aims to explore the employment situation of people with intellectual disabilities (ID) through a case study. The study focuses on a project, Tekijätori, which aims to support the employment of people with ID through organizing apprenticeships in their partner companies. The purpose is to study the employment process for employees with ID, employer and employee experiences and employee integration to companies.

The methodology used in this study is of qualitative nature and utilizes semi-structured interviews within a case study. I chose this methodology to gain comprehensive understanding of the employment process from all viewpoints.

This case study suggests that employing a person with ID requires individualized support and accommodated work, as well as commitment from the employer. Furthermore the new way of connecting companies, educational institutions and people with ID seemed to benefit the employment, as all the key stakeholders were connected and managed by the same project, Tekijätori. The study further suggests that integration to work community was successful and outcomes for the company were more beneficial when the employment was part of high management agenda. With a successful employment process employees with ID can reach their full potential at work.

This study enlightens the elements related to the employment of people with ID in salaried work, and suggest the best practices for companies aiming at integrating diverse workforce. As the topic is rarely studied, this study suggests practical implications for companies and policy-makers regarding the employment of people with intellectual disabilities.

Keywords: diversity management, diverse workforce, intellectual disabilities, employment of people with intellectual disabilities
**Department of:** Management and Organisation  
**Type of work:** Master’s Thesis  
**Author:** Silja Lehti  
**Date:** 31.7.2019  
**Title of thesis:** Employment of people with intellectual disabilities in the hotel industry - A Case Study

**Abstrakt:**


Denna fallstudie föreslår att anställning av en person med IF kräver individualiserat stöd, anpassade arbetsuppgifter, samt högt engagemang av arbetsgivaren. Detta nya sätt att skapa kontakt mellan företag, skolor och arbetstagare med IF stöder anställandet vidare, när nyckelintressenten hanteras och koordineras av Tekijätori. Denna studie föreslår vidare att integration i arbetsgemenskapen var framgångsrik och att resultat för företaget är mera värda då anställningen är en del av ledningens agenda. Genom en framgångsrik anställningsprocess, kan arbetstagare med IF nå sin fulla potential i arbetet.

Denna studie belyser elementen relaterade till anställning av personer med IF vid betalt arbete och föreslår fungerande praxis för företag som syftar till att integrera diverse arbetskraft. Eftersom ämnet är sällan utforskat, föreslår studien även praktiska implikationer för företag och beslutsfattare i frågor gällande anställning av personer med intellektuell funktionsnedsättning.
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1 INTRODUCTION

People with intellectual disabilities and employment is a topic rarely studied (Thanem, 2008). The Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (FAIDD) defines intellectual disability as following, “Intellectual disability can be defined as a difficulty to learn and understand new things. Intellectual disabilities can have various effects on an individual’s life, the level of disability can vary on anything from mild to severe” (Kehitysvammaliitto 1). People with intellectual disabilities (ID) are facing great barriers when trying to enter the labour market, and to find salaried work (Kela, 2018). One of the major hurdles that people with ID face is the prevailing attitude and prejudice (Vesala et al., 2016). Lack of salaried work, in turn, leads to exclusion from society, and as part of that, lack of independence and increased risk of poverty (Kehitysvammaliitto 3). How we as society consider and treat people with intellectual disabilities, has a major impact on their status in society. Disability can also be considered from a different angle, “disability is not primarily an individual’s characteristic but it’s describing the harmful social and societal consequences that people with a disability meet in society that is designed to be based on the needs of non-disabled people” (Ekholm and Teittinen, 2014, p.9). We, as society, should question the prevailing attitudes towards the people with intellectual disabilities. People with ID are not a homogenous group, but the needs within the group of people vary substantially (Kela, 2018). This makes it hard to compare people with ID to any other discriminated group, and even to find a single solution to their challenging position. The problem is that existing service models and support are not accommodated according to their individual needs, and won’t improve their situation.

One of the reasons why I find this topic interesting is that I have a family member with an intellectual disability and thus, I have had a chance to follow his education path and start of career from the beginning. Things like continuing studies after primary school or advancing in their career are quite self-evident for anyone else, but for a person with ID these are privileges and something to fight for. I believe that my personal experience will bring additional value to my research, as I have a deeper understanding of the everyday life of a person with ID. Another reason for finding this topic highly interesting, is that the employment of people with ID has not been widely researched. Within research people with ID are often considered as passive objects, instead of being in an active role. They are often completely ignored even in diversity management research, whereas groups like women and people from different ethnic backgrounds are widely studied (Thanem, 2008). An additional issue related to this point is that people with ID don’t
have the same capabilities to defend their rights and study themselves, as in case of women and many other groups. People with ID are more dependent on the interest and understanding of other people.

The question of employment is relevant because work has a great impact on an individual’s position in society. Regular salaried work has many benefits as it provides a purpose of an individuals’ existence, promotes inclusion in society, and social life in general. Furthermore, regular salaried work provides one with an opportunity to financial autonomy and a sense of control over one’s life. (Ellenkamp et al., 2015) People with ID are more dependent on the interest and understanding of other people. People with ID are more dependent on the interest and understanding of other people. People with ID are easily excluded from society by hindering their possibilities to get salaried work (Vesala, Klem and Ahlstén, 2015). The question is not about their willingness to participate in regular paid employment, but rather about the lack of opportunities. People with ID experience discrimination already when applying for work, which leads to exclusion from the labour market. Lack of work furthermore leads to increased risk of poverty. (Kehitysvammaliitto 3) A common solution for people with ID in Finland is communal work and work centres. Even if the intentions behind these solutions are good, in reality work centres and communal work are not improving the situation of people with ID. The issue with work centres and communal work is that they are neither supporting the transition to salaried work nor improving the societal status of people with ID. Work centres are excluding the people with ID from society, as in the centres people with ID are not among other people. Whereas communal work is done in real workplaces, but instead of receiving salary the people are getting a day allowance, which is circa seven euros per day. (Kela, 2018) Additionally, when observing the situation on society level, a huge potential and resources are lost when people who are capable of working, are instead excluded from work life. In this case, the potential tax payers are receiving many kind of subsidies from the government (Vesala et al., 2015).

When discussing the employment of people with ID, employers are in a key role. Employers should be made acquainted with the potential of the people with ID as employees, and the benefits of a diverse workforce. There are several reasons, why employers might experience it challenging to employ a person with ID. The major reasons are the prevailing attitudes and prejudices, but also lack of information about people with ID. (Vesala et al., 2016) During my interviews I recognized that some employers might not know what an intellectual disability is, and what a person with ID is capable of doing. Furthermore, I recognized that NGO’s are in a key role in acting as gatekeepers between the individuals and companies. NGO’s have the possibility to
spread information, bring people together, as well as use their know-how to support the parties. In my understanding, there is an increasing interest towards such diversity projects and attempts to hire people with intellectual disabilities. However, the change of mindset could happen a lot faster, and NGO's are in a key role of enabling it.

In this thesis I’m studying the employment situation of people with ID, especially through an organization called Me Osalliset – Vi Delaktiga. More precisely I’m focusing on a project they founded, Tekijätori –Aktörstorget. Tekijätori is a free service, aiming at supporting people with ID to find an apprenticeship that would further support their career paths. The ultimate goal with the apprenticeships is that they would improve the possibility to get salaried work. Unique with the service model of Tekijätori is that it aims to connect the people with ID, educational institutions and companies in a way that supports the employment and benefits the career development of the people with ID. Tekijätori manages the network of companies and educational institutions, which wish to offer possibilities for people with ID. (Tekijätori webpage) In Finland there is no similar kind of service available, which makes this study even more unique and the research topic relevant.

The hotel chain Oktogon, the case company, is one of the companies participating in the Tekijätori network. I will refer the case company as hotel chain Oktogon in this thesis, in order for them to remain anonymous. Oktogon is a remarkable hotel chain in the Nordics and I concentrate on three of their branches, case branches A, B and C. Branch A, B and C are hotels located in Finland. Branch A participated in the project for the first time during the beginning of 2018, and after that branch B had an apprenticeship in cooperation with Tekijätori. Branch C has also conducted apprenticeships for students with intellectual disability, but without the cooperation with Tekijätori.

1.1 Me Osalliset – Vi delaktiga

Me Osalliset – Vi Delaktiga is an organization that aims at a wider inclusion of people with disabilities in all sectors of society. One of their major goals is to promote the fulfilment of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the United Nations (CRPD) that came into effect in 2016. They aim at developing more diverse possibilities for education and employment for people with ID, in a way that their personal skills are taken into account instead of focusing on the diagnosis. Me Osalliset was founded by the active parents of children and young adults with different kind of disabilities. The organization is run by volunteers, no one gets paid for the work they do.
During the first two years the organization has been growing exponentially, which reflects the huge need for such an organization. Additionally, Me Osalliset provides information about the inclusion of people with ID and people with special needs. Besides this, they provide information, networks and a possibility to develop more inclusive service systems for professionals in relevant areas. They also offer different kind of inclusive free time activities for people with disabilities. (Me Osalliset 1)

1.2 Tekijätori – Aktörstorget

In March 2018 Me Osalliset founded Tekijätori – Aktörstorget. Tekijätori employs two persons, a project coordinator and a counsellor, who is mostly doing fieldwork. Tekijätori is a free service, offering help to find apprenticeships for people with special needs in ages 15-29. Tekijätori is creating connections between the different stakeholders; the person looking for apprenticeship, employer, school and the family of the person. The service enables better cooperation and supports the person with ID in his/her entry to labour market and career development. Companies and schools can join the Tekijätori network, and be part of the project. Tekijätori was created to support the inclusion of people with disabilities by improving their possibilities to be employed. (Tekijätori 2)

1.3 Research problem

The purpose of my thesis is to explore the employment process of young people with intellectual disabilities (15-29 years old). Furthermore, I explore what the employment processes look like, how it is experienced and how the employment situation could be developed. I aim to analyse, what the apprenticeships require from companies and organizations when they are employing people with ID.

1.4 Purpose of the thesis

The aim of the thesis is to research the current situation in the employment of people with intellectual disabilities (ID), and especially young people, aged 15-29. I concentrate on the first steps of their careers, apprenticeships that are aimed to support their career paths. I will research the topic through a case study, Tekijätori –Aktörstorget and its partner organizations. When studying the topic, it’s central to keep in mind, the impact of the project on the inclusion of people with ID. The topic will be discussed as a case study, considering the impacts for all of the parties involved. In my thesis I focus on the following questions:
1. How is the employment process conducted for people with intellectual disabilities?

2. How are the employers and employees experiencing the process?

3. How is the process supporting the integration of people with intellectual disabilities in the workplace?

1.5 Delimitations

In this thesis I concentrate especially on people with intellectual disabilities of varying grade, and not e.g. physically disabled people because the organization that is my reference, is focusing on people with intellectual disabilities. For the same reason I won’t study the employment situation for older or middle aged people, as the target group of Tekijätori is 15-29 years old people. Furthermore, I find young people to be the most relevant group for this kind of research, as they are in the beginning of their careers. In respect to this, they might have better possibilities to affect their future by studying and working, than older people. Additionally, the study will be done on a grass root level, and I’m not e.g. exploring the situation on society level, or in the whole Finland. This is because the organization, Tekijätori, is active in the Helsinki Metropolitan area.

Employment of people with ID is a wide topic and I chose to research it through a case study. A case study might provide more interesting information, as it enables to gain deeper understanding from a certain phenome or case (Yin, 2003), than a research done on a more general level. Due to the time limit and the nature of a master thesis, I wouldn’t have time and resources to conduct, for example, a longitudinal study focusing on several companies.

1.6 Definitions

**Intellectual disability** is a difficulty to learn and understand new things. Intellectual disabilities can have a various effects on an individual’s life, and the level of disability can vary on anything from mild to severe. A person with mild ID can live relatively independently and only needs support in a few areas of life. Whereas a person with severe ID needs help and support continuously with most of the everyday activities. A cause for an intellectual disability can be genetic, an accident in a young age or, for example, lack of oxygen during the birth. In Finland there are approximately 40 000 persons with some level of intellectual disability. (Kehitysvammaliitto 1)
A **disabled person** is defined as following, a person who has remarkable challenges in performing in the everyday life in long-term, due to a disability or a disease (THL webpage). A disability is not primarily an individual’s property but it’s describing the harmful social and societal consequences that people with a disability meet in society that is designed for the needs of non-disabled people. (Ekholm and Teittinen, 2014, p.9)

A **person with special needs** (Finn. erityisen tuen tarve) is a wide definition for anyone who needs more support in different areas of life, compared to people in general. The support can be provided for example, for a person who has challenges in following a tight schedule, understanding complicated instructions or doing things that require fine motor skills. (Eskola, 2018)

**Accommodation of working conditions** refers to the adjustment of work tools, services and the environment that the employer will use at work and that need to be adjusted in a way that also a partially disabled is able to use them. This can in practice mean, for example, support tools or a personal assistant at work. (Työterveyslaitos, 2011) Accommodations shall not cause unreasonable burden for the organizer but they enable the person with a disability to use all the human rights equally with others. (United Nations, 2016)

**Exclusion** means that a person is left outside the social, economic and cultural structures and everyday activities of society that usually makes a person a member of society. With other words, the person is not a fully member of society. (Haaste, 2006)

**Inclusion** describes the idea that society should be open for everyone, regardless the level of disability. The idea is that the support and help a person with a disability needs, will be arranged where the person wishes to be. In practice, people with disability have the right to receive the support they need among other people, for example at school and at a workplace. (Saloviita, 2012)

**Communal work** (Finn. Avotyö) is a form of employment organized by the local municipalities. People participating don’t receive salary, but a day allowance. The aim of communal work is to support the transition of people to salaried work. Unfortunately, it often becomes a permanent solution for the people, instead of moving forward on their careers. Circa 2000 people were participating in communal work in Finland 2013. (Vesala, Klem and Ahlstén, 2015)
**Work centres** are part of the social services that local municipalities are arranging as support for people who have difficulties to find a job on the free labour market, and need for daily activities and support. The daily activities can consist of, for example, woodwork, textile work or different small tasks that are outsourced by companies. Work centres are supposed to support the employment of the persons who take part in the activities. (Verneri 2)

1.7 **Structure of the thesis**

The structure of the thesis will be following, I have already presented the introduction, purpose and delimitations of the study. In the second part I’ll go through the relevant literature and theories. In the third part I’ll present the methodology of the thesis, including research process, research methods and data analysis. In the fourth part I will present the findings from the interviews. Finally, in the fifth part, I discuss the findings in relation to the theory, present the conclusions, as well as describe the suggestions for future research and limitations of the study.
2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the Literature review I will present the relevant theory for the topic. Even if the topic, employment of people with ID, is not widely studied, I aim to provide a broad picture of the current situation as a background for my findings. Firstly, I will shortly present the legislation regarding discrimination in Finland. Secondly, the current employment situation of people with ID, Finnish disability policies and the global situation will be presented. Even the existing support systems and hinders for employment will be discussed. I also give an insight about the concept of diverse workforce, and how “people with disabilities” are noticed in diversity management. Finally, I discuss the employer and employee experiences about the employment.

2.1 A Person with an Intellectual Disability

A disability or a person with a disability is a very wide concept as it includes anything from a physical disability to an intellectual disability. Additionally, the level of disability varies from person to person, so the diagnosis doesn’t actually tell that much about the individual skills or features. (Kehitysvammaliitto 1). In respect to this, Winance (2016) states that disability results from the practices of exclusion, discrimination and oppression to which “disabled people” are subjected. These excluding practices in society should be questioned. Winance (2016) continues that every individual should have the right to care for him/herself and have the right to live independently. However, this is often not possible for people with ID as their chances to get salaried work are limited. (Winance, 2016)

2.2 Non-discrimination Act

In this chapter the legislation regarding discrimination will be presented. It is important to be aware of the legislation, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the position of people with ID in our society.

Equality and prohibition to discriminate is described in the Finnish legislation. In this chapter the Non-discrimination Act (1325/2014) will be shortly described in order to gain a deeper understanding of the situation in Finland, and how the legislation impacts the people with ID. This law applies to both private and public actors. The purpose of the law is described as following,

“The purpose of this [Non-discrimination] Act is to promote equality and prevent discrimination as well as to enhance the protection provided by law to those who have been discriminated against.” (1325/2014, Chapter 1, 1)
In the Act it is described, how authorities, education providers and employers shall evaluate the realisation of equality in their activities and take necessary acts to promote the realisation of equality. Furthermore, it is pointed out that these measures shall be effective, expedient and proportionate, taking into account the operating environment, resources and other circumstances. (1325/2014, Chapter 2)

Besides the actions mentioned above, the parties, except the Authorities, have specific duties. Education providers and the educational institution maintained by it, must ensure that the educational institute has a plan for the necessary measures for promotion of equality. Additionally, they must reserve an opportunity for the pupils and their guardians as well as students and their representatives to be heard on the fostering measures. Employers must besides evaluation, develop the working conditions and the methods complied with in the selection of personnel and in making decisions concerning the personnel. Additionally, an employer who regularly employs at least 30 persons must have a plan for the necessary measures for the promotion of equality. These measures and the effectiveness of them, must be discussed with the personnel or their representatives. (1325/2014, Chapter 2)

In the Non-discrimination Act (1325/2014) it is also stressed that direct and indirect discrimination is prohibited on the basis of disability or any other personal characteristics. Discrimination is prohibited, regardless of whether it is based on a fact or assumption concerning the person. Whereas positive action that aims to promote equality, or to prevent or remove the disadvantages attributable to discrimination, is not considered as discrimination and it is not prohibited. (1325/2014, Chapter 3)

Some justifications for different treatment in certain situations are also mentioned in the Act. In case of employing personnel it is defined as following,

“Different treatment in employment relationships and service relationships under public law, as well as work experience placements and other equivalent activity and also when employing or engaging into service, is justified if the treatment is founded on genuine and determining requirements concerning the type of occupational tasks and their performance, and the treatment is proportionate to achieve the legitimate objective” (Non-discrimination Act 1325/2014 Chapter 3, 12)

The Act also mentions accommodations to realise equality of persons with disabilities. These accommodations are aiming to support the situation of people with disabilities in all sectors of life. According to the Act, these people should be able to advance their careers and be part of everyday activities in society. Additionally, it is stated that when
assessing the reasonableness of these accommodations, the needs of the person with disabilities, the size, financial position, nature and extent of the operations of an actor shall be taken into consideration, as well as the estimated cost of the accommodations and the support available. (1325/2014 Chapter 3, 15)

“An authority, education provider, employer or provider of goods and services has to make due and appropriate accommodations necessary in each situation for a person with disabilities to be able, equally with others, to deal with the authorities and gain access to education, work and generally available goods and services, as well as to manage their work tasks and to advance their career.” (Non-discrimination Act 1325/2014 Chapter 3, 15)

One statement, mentioned in the Act, is quite interesting. “When advertising an open position, public service office or post, an employer may not unlawfully require that applicants have the personal characteristics or qualities referred to in this Act” (1325/2014 Chapter 3, 17). This means that an employer can’t announce an open position targeted only for people with disabilities, which prevents the employers from gaining advantage from e.g. lower payment, on purpose. This statement is meant to protect the people who are in a weaker position. At the same time, it hinders employers, who are acting ethically, from offering possibilities for people who might have a hard time in finding a suitable position.

2.3 The current employment situation

Ekholm and Teittinen (2014) use the concept work life citizenship to describe the economic and social bond that work creates between an individual and society. Through work life citizenship an individual receives wage, and has a right to receive various support and services that are offered for employees, amongst others, occupational health service, vacation and work pension. They also point out that the work life citizenship of people with ID is strongly questioned in our society. The structure of the services that are offered to people with ID, almost automatically transfers them to disability pension and in that way hinders their possibility to work life citizenship. (Ekholm and Teittinen, 2014)

2.3.1 Employment situation in Finland

In Finland the employment situation of people with ID has not been followed on regular basis. The only group of people being followed is people who are visually impaired, their situation has been followed with five years frequency. The latest research in Finland is from the years 2013-2014 (Vesala, Klem and Ahlstén, 2015), and the previous research from that is conducted ten years before. (Vesala et al., 2015) Ekholm and Teittinen (2014) also point out that young people with disabilities are not widely researched, and
especially their employment experiences are a blind spot in academic research. There are two major organizations charting the situation in Finland: Kehitysvammaliitto (Eng. The Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities - FAIDD), which is one of the major NGO’s in Finland promoting the rights of people with ID; and Kela (Eng. The Social Insurance Institution of Finland).

There are approximately 40 000 persons with some kind of intellectual disability in Finland, which covers 0.8% of the whole population. Approximately 25 000 of them are in working age, if assuming that the age distribution is same as in the whole population. (Vesala et al., 2015) Based on the research by Vesala et al. (2015), in 2013 there were circa 400-500 persons with ID in salaried work, circa 2000 persons in communal work and 6000 in work centres.

The employment situation has a severe impact on the financial independence and status of the people with ID. According to research conducted by FAIDD (Kehitysvammaliitto 3), roughly 60% of people with disabilities, in working age, had experienced poverty. Among the whole population, the respective number was 11.5%. The poverty among people with disabilities was common not only among people who were unemployed, but also among people who had a job. (Kehitysvammaliitto 3)

In their research Vesala et al. (2015), also noticed that there are huge geographical differences in the employment in salaried work. They recognized that most of the workplaces are located in the Helsinki Metropolitan area. According to research by Kela (Kela, 2018), the provided service systems, economic situation and availability of local work coaches also influences the employment of people with ID. Additionally, they noted that people who are employed in salaried work are, in average, younger and more independent and they also in most of the cases have some type of vocational education. (Vesala et al., 2015)

2.3.2 Disability policies in Finland

A major advancement for the position of people with ID was The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the United Nations (CRPD), which finally came into effect in 2016 in Finland. (Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö, 2016) The CRPD (2016) was expected to have a major influence in the position of people with ID, as it would have an impact in the changes made in the legislation, according to the special case of people with disabilities (23.6.1977/519). These changes were made in order to achieve the UN standard in Finland, as it had not been reached before. The central changes were
referring to the supporting of self-determination and decreasing the use of restrictive measures in special care. (Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö, 2016)

Another important policy is the Disability Policy Program (Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö, 2016), where the concerning issues regarding people with disabilities in all sectors of society, and measures to solve them were stated. The program aims to support the human rights of people with disabilities, and to bring the questions concerning them into the public discussion. Besides this, a concerning issue presented in the Program is to support the socio-economic status and reduce poverty. Furthermore, it is stated that salaried work shall be a primary means of solving these issues. However, in cases when work is not possible, a sufficient social security shall enable a decent life. “It is not reasonable for anyone to live their lives without the possibility of improving their living conditions” (Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö, 2016, p. 13).

From the viewpoint of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, it would be desirable that the people participating in the communal work would transfer to salaried work. This statement reflects that the issue with communal work being a poor support system has been recognized on a higher level of society. It should be recognized, that there have been several projects and programs aiming to support the employment, but recognizing the impacts of such projects takes time. (Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö, 2016) To give an example of such programs and projects, in the Disability Policy Program it was mentioned that a project for supporting the employment of people with a lower ability to work (Osku prorgam) was performed during 2013-2015. The Osku program was offering support and tools in form of legislative changes and concrete solutions for keeping up with the ability to work. Second example is the Work Bank project (Fin. Työpankki), which was aiming to employ people who had challenges to get employed and were in an unfavourable position in the labour market. (Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö, 2016) A challenge with such projects and programs is that they only last a few years, so the long term benefits might remain poor. Additionally, the field of employment projects may remain confusing for employers, as there is no cooperation between the actors behind the projects. (Kehitysvammaliitto 3) However, majority of the people with ID would benefit from the support from an external organization, when entering labour market. (Ekholm and Teittinen, 2014)
2.3.3 Employment situation globally

The challenges people with ID face when trying to enter the labour market in Finland are common even in global context (Ekholm and Teittinen, 2014). A study made in EU (Greve, 2009) also found out that the economic development in the labour market has a huge impact on the employment situation of people with disabilities, as the integration was more successful during the times when the labour demand was increasing. Furthermore, the findings of Greve (2009) indicated that there’s a strong correlation between disability, employment and education, and additionally, that age seemed to have a remarkable impact on the employment, as the employment rate was higher for young people. Furthermore, Greve (2009) found out that the participation in the labour market was higher among people with a higher education level. These findings are in line with research made in Finland as well (Vesala et al., 2015). Furthermore, Greve (2009) found out that sheltered employment, for example work in work centres, had been decreasing in Sweden, Poland and UK, whereas it had been increasing in several countries, Finland being one of them. However, Greve (2009) mentions that the situation has been changing. “There is some evidence of a shift from the discourse of sheltered employment towards supported employment (e.g. Finland)” (Greve, 2009, p. 15). Nevertheless, it’s remarkable that only 10 years ago sheltered employment was the most common way of working for people with disabilities in Europe. Finally, as mentioned earlier, the charting of the employment situation was done poorly in Finland (Vesala et al., 2015) but the same problem existed in many countries in Europe as well. Many of the countries in EU were lacking up-to-date information about the development of the employment situation among people with disabilities. (Greve, 2009)

The employment situation seems to be relatively similar also in the US. Schur, Kruse, Blasi and Blanch (2009) found out in their study conducted in US that disability is linked to lower average pay, job security and less training, as well as participation in decision making at work. Although the difference in payment level is partly explained with the fact that people with disabilities often work part-time, it’s not the only explanation. “Lower pay may be in part due to impairments and health problems that limit productivity, it also appears to be due to employer discrimination and other attitudinal and physical barriers, or lack of adjustments and training”, they state in the article (Schur et al., 2009, p. 382). They also found out that employees with disabilities are less likely to receive benefits, such as employer provided health and other insurance. This may be partly leading to the fact, that employees with disabilities are more likely to work part time or temporary. (Schur et al., 2009)
2.4 Hurdles for inclusion

Inclusion in working life can support and develop the performance in everyday activities of a person with ID, as well as strengthen the sense of meaningfulness and increase the quality of living and inclusion in different areas of society (Kela, 2018). Also in the Disability Policy Program (Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö, 2016) it is stated that tools for creating inclusion and participation are, for example, accessibility in the human made environment, accessibility and functionality of services offered as well as modern information and communication technology. New kind of technological services are one way to support the accessibility of people with disabilities, for example an application system on the internet to an education provides an easier access to it for a person with a disability and in a way, makes secondary education to more equal. (Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö, 2016)

2.4.1 Work centres

Traditionally, there has been two options available for people with ID: supported employment and different day service providers. As Kilby and Beyer (1996) point out in their study, traditional adult training centres for people with intellectual disabilities aim to support people to develop their skills, as well as to create social networks outside the centres. Despite the good intentions, the centres have been criticized for excluding the people living there and creating a “separate community” in a way that the residents hardly met anyone outside the centres. (Kilby and Beyer, 1996) Similar kinds of work centres are common in Finland, and they aim to provide daily activities for the participants and to develop their skills. The problem with work centres is that it doesn’t lead anywhere and the skills practiced won’t support e.g. the employment of the participants. Additionally, the participants are not creating social networks to the community outside. (Vesala et al., 2016) The work centres don’t have any set employment goals and they are not obligated to support the transition to open labour market. Because of this, work centres often became a permanent solution instead of being a gate to salaried work. (Kela, 2018) As noted, the work centres in Finland are criticized for similar problems as the previous adult training centres presented in the study by Kilby and Beyer (1996).

2.4.2 Communal work

Another option is communal work which became common during the 90’s in Finland. A person participating in communal work is doing regular work tasks at a workplace but
the person is not receiving a salary for the work, but instead is receiving a day allowance. The day allowance is between 0-12 € per day and it’s paid by the local municipality. (Kehitysvammaliitto 2) According to Kehitysvammaliitto, the average day allowance paid is 7 euros and according to another service (Verneri 1), the average amount is 5 euros per day. Work centres and the organization behind it decide the amount of day allowance, so it varies depending on the region and organization. On average 2000 persons with an intellectual disability are participating in the communal work. The communal work is organized through a work centres. People with intellectual disabilities who are working in work centres can choose to participate in communal work. It is recommended because it aims to develop their work life skills and participation in the labour market. The employer can pay a compensation of the work to the work centres, so not straight to the employees. (Verneri 1) As in the case of work centres, communal work at companies seldom leads to salaried work even though the idea behind it is to support the transition to it. (Kela, 2018)

2.5 Diversity and Companies

Diversity can be defined as following, “acknowledging, understanding, accepting, valuing, and celebrating differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, spiritual practice, and public assistance status” (Green et al., 2002, p. 1). Green et al. (2002) argue in their study that the increasing globalization requires more diversity and interaction among different people in the workplaces. Diversity at workplace is one way to create more creative organizations that are also open for change. Diversity might be a crucial for maximizing the revenues and being able to answer the global competition. (Green et al., 2002)

“Companies need to focus on diversity and look for ways to become totally inclusive organizations because diversity has the potential of yielding greater productivity and competitive advantages” (Green et al., 2002, p. 1)

2.5.1 Disability recognized by companies

In order to understand the employment of people with ID, it’s important to gain insights, how companies are or aren’t recognizing the concept of disability. Ball et al. (2005) did investigate the publicly available workforce and supplier diversity policies of the Fortune 100 companies. They found out that a significant portion of the companies did recognize the role of people with disabilities, all in all 42 % of the companies did explicitly name disability in their statements. At the same time, many companies fail to include people with disabilities in their definition of diversity and in the statement. In the study (Ball et al. 2005) categorize the companies as following; inclusive companies, non-committal
companies and disability absent companies. Inclusive companies did include people with disabilities on their diversity statements, and also show that diverse people are included in practice. Non-committal companies did not define diversity in terms of which groups of diverse workforce they included, but they might have shown other evidence of the commitment to employing people with disabilities. Other evidence could be e.g. their webpage or targeted recruitment. The final group was disability-absent companies, including circa 10% of the Fortune 100 companies. This group defined diversity in terms that seem to exclude people with disabilities, they might take into account e.g. race and gender but did not mention people with disabilities. (Ball et al., 2005) Somehow one can recognize similarities in this categorization and the categorization by Ellenkamp et al. (2015), as will be described later. Ellenkamp et al. (2015) made a categorization according to the employer attitudes towards hiring people with ID, where one can recognize the three groups with positive attitude, positive but passive reaction, and negative attitude towards the recruitment.

Many of the companies that did not define their understanding of diversity, did participate in different kind of scholarships for minority groups or they supported minorities in other ways. Unfortunately, it has been found out that these kind of supports directed to all kind of minority groups don’t often reach or benefit people with disabilities. Furthermore, Ball et al. (2005) mention that many companies on the Fortune 100 list have supportive elements targeted for people with disabilities, as networking opportunities, mentoring or college recruiting. However, there’s still a lot of room for improvement in promoting the people with disabilities. (Ball et al., 2005)

In their study (Ball et al., 2005) further argues that the rate of people with disabilities in the workforce is expected to increase because of the aging population in US, as well as other Western countries. As the amount of more diverse workforce increases, companies have problems to solve. It is pointed out that it is difficult to study diversity in organizations, as companies are not willing to let researchers examine their successes and failures because of the sensitiveness of the topic. This might lead to the point where companies are not able to manage the diverse workforce in an effective way, and they need to develop their systems for evaluating and tracing the impact of their diversity strategies. (Ball et al., 2005) Diversity management will be more precisely discussed in the next chapters.
2.5.2 Diverse workforce

A diverse workforce is claimed to have several advantages. Diverse teams do not only bring different ideas and viewpoints to the team but they also support the understanding of diverse customer groups (Green et al., 2012). Louvrier (2013) has also come to this conclusion, “A well-managed diverse workforce has been suggested as being more productive, innovative and flexible than a homogeneous one” (Louvrier, 2013, p. 18). Ball et al. (2005) even point out that many of the Fortune 100 companies have recognized that a diverse workforce benefits their business, and they are capable of noticing the needs of the diverse customers. “Companies that fail to include people with disabilities within their definition of diversity may not be reaping the benefits of a diverse workforce” (Ball et al., 2005, p. 115). Actually, in their study, Houtenville and Kalargyrou (2011) state specifically that for the hotel industry hiring, and including employees with disabilities brings advantages because likewise their customer base is so diverse. They continue that in general the food-service segment would be suitable for diverse employees with diverse needs, as the variety of different jobs is high. (Houtenville and Kalargyrou, 2011) Whereas Spataro (2005) lifts up the customer benefits, as she claims that a diverse company will attract even customers with disabilities, since they perceive the company to reflect their values. Furthermore, diversity may have a positive impact on the company’s reputation, which attracts the most qualified candidates from all identity groups, and this way may affect positively the whole workforce. (Spataro, 2005) Also, Houtenville and Kalargyrou (2011) highlight the point that even though hiring people with disabilities can be considered as corporate responsibility element, it can also be a source of competitive advantage.

Green et al. (2002) continues that organizations need to develop further their diversity management in order to create a successful diverse workforce that includes everyone. In inclusive workplaces not only the employees with ID, but all employees, would benefit from the attention for specific support. Factors such as flexibility, sense of belonging, supervision and team building are in an important role in diverse teams and supporting employees with special needs, but they are relevant for other employees as well. (Ellenkamp et al., 2015)

2.5.3 Diversity management approach

The starting point for discussion about diversity management is how we define the concept of “differences”. In her study, Louvrier (2013) presents two perspectives, the essentialist and constructionist. The essentialist perspective considers differences as
individual’s inner characteristics, and differences and identities rather stable and fixed. As differences are seen as internal to the person, they precede action. The essentialist viewpoint highlights differences between groups, but considers the groups internally homogenous, whereas the constructionist perspective considers differences as constructed in interaction with the environment. This means, rather than existing by itself, differences are produced in social context where discourses shape the way that people are categorized as different. By constructionist perspective, differences are related to power relationships in society. Unlike the essentialist, the constructionist perspective enables one to see the variation within groups. (Louvrier, 2013) The latter perspective is in line with Winance’s (2016) argument presented earlier, that disability results from the practices of exclusion, rather than person’s attributes. These perspectives on differences give a rather different bases for diversity management, as Louvrier (2013) points out in her study. In this thesis I have a more of a constructionist perspective on differences, as it takes better into consideration the various differences and needs of people with intellectual disabilities.

2.5.4 Equality and diversity management

A majority of the diversity management research available, focuses on diversity questions related to women’s and ethnical minorities’ equal position. I found it relatively challenging to find relevant research about diversity management and people with intellectual disabilities and their position in respect to others. A central concern in diversity management is how to aim for equality between different organizational members. In the core of this discussion is a questions about achieving equality, should everyone be treated the same, or should differences be taken into account and be accommodated. This questions is called the similarity-difference debate. (Louvrier, 2013) It is a relevant question when considering the accommodations for employees with disabilities. However, Thanem (2008) points out in his study that if disability is discussed, diversity management research tends to focus more on issues of management and organizations than on disability and people with disabilities. Additionally, as was pointed out earlier, we try to fit all people with disabilities in the same service models, the same issue can be seen in research. In most of the cases, the difference between disability and an intellectual disability is not distinguished but “people with disabilities” are considered as a homogenous group. (Kela, 2018) However, a person with a visual impairment and a person with Down syndrome have quite different needs of support. Louvrier (2013) presents another argument for taking differences into account in diversity management, when organizations are structured around male model, which is
considered as a neutral model, women in the organization will remain in a disadvantageous position (Louvrier, 2013). Similarly, when employees with ID have the same requirements and model as other employees, they are in a disadvantageous position.

### 2.5.5 Diversity management initiatives

“The focus on diversity management is to create an organization where individuals with different differences will be able to contribute to their full potential, not needing to hide their differences”, Louvrier (2013, p. 7) states in her study. Diversity management was created to respond to the change of workforce demographics, as companies would need to get used to manage the workforce in a new way for attaining their business goals on the increasingly diverse markets. The aim is to not only recruit diverse workforce, but also create an atmosphere where all individuals can perform to their best potential. (Louvrier, 2013)

Diversity management initiatives can include diversity training, mentoring and discussing. There are various opinions on the suitable initiatives, as will be presented. Furthermore, Louvrier (2013) suggests focusing recruitment on underprivileged groups, mentoring and creating minority networks. Whereas in his study, Thanem (2008), encourages organizations and diversity management researches to investigate, how different people with different disabilities are affected by and experience the attempts to accommodate the disabilities. Hence, he claims that it is useful to study, how disabilities are understood, for example, by managers in the organization, as this affects the diversity management and used initiatives. (Thanem, 2008) In their study, Woodhams and Danieli (2000), recommend group initiatives targeted to the people with disabilities, and even individual initiatives, like adapted selection tests and premises in order to support the employment of people with disabilities. However, they further point out that these initiatives may not suit to all cases, and in a way they are against the diversity management approach, as these initiatives are not beneficial for the organization as a whole but only for some individuals. (Woodhams and Danieli, 2000) Whereas company policies about flexibility and caring about individual needs can be seen as beneficial for all employees (Ellenkamp et al., 2015).

In order to support the diversity of a workplace, it’s central to create an organizational culture and system that welcomes employees with disabilities (Spataro, 2005). Shaping attitudes of the majority by educating and sharing information, is one diversity
management practice used to impact the atmosphere in an organization. It is based on a hypothesis that assumes that increasing knowledge about the people who are different, will change the prejudices and attitudes. (Louvrier, 2013) Furthermore, Woodhams and Danieli (2000) thought in their study that increasing the awareness about disability and employees with disabilities would improve the employments opportunities of people with disabilities. However, it should be taken into consideration that achieving a cultural change in an organization is a long-term process, and many diversity programs fail to do so. (Louvrier, 2013) Even Green et al. (2002) point out that creating a diverse workforce is a continuous project and might require training and dialog on a regular basis. This is necessary as changing the prevailing attitudes and people’s behaviour may take a lot of time. (Green et al., 2002)

Finally, Green et al. (2002) found out that especially managers are in a key role for managing the diversity, and encouraging the change towards a more diverse workplace. When aiming for a diverse workplace, it’s required that managers understand the concept of discrimination as well as they become aware of their own biases and prejudices. Without managers being involved the process, it’s hardly communicated to other levels of the organization. (Green et al., 2002) Also, Spataro (2005) supports the idea of managers being in a key role when aiming for a cultural change. A manager’s core task is to encourage to such an organizational culture that values diversity, and the contributions of employees with disabilities (Spataro, 2005).

2.5.6 Challenges within diversity management

Shaping the attitudes by educating was considered one of the ways to change the organizational culture, but this can also have downsides. Louvrier (2013) had evidence that if the educating is not done carefully, it can in turn strengthen the stereotypes and generalisations about the differences. In her study Louvrier (2013) used as an example immigrants being part of a Finnish organization, but this thought could be adapted to the case with employees with ID as well. However, the stereotypes are most effectively impacted through increased contact and lived experiences. (Louvrier, 2013)

Another challenge to be pointed out is that the accommodations and specific practices, touching only the ones perceived to be different, may even reinforce discrimination (Louvrier, 2013). Louvrier (2013) claims that when someone is presented to be different, the employer automatically asserts that the stereotypical image of those who’re different, is accurate as they need special support in order to perform better. However, as Louvrier
(2013) concentrates on immigrants in her study, it’s hard to say if the parallel can fully be drawn with people with ID. In respect to this, Thanem (2008) argues in his study, that even though all initiatives and accommodations are not problem free, this doesn’t mean that organizations should not do any kind of accommodations. He further points out that organizations shall actively involve people with disabilities to deal with the problems, and even involve employees at all level of the organization in the discussion. (Thanem, 2008)

Thanem (2008) further criticizes the diversity management research in his study and lifts up a challenge within the research. He points out, that in research, disability and people with disabilities are often considered by the social model, which defines disability as social oppression caused by social and material barriers in the environment. Furthermore, the social model assumes that by removing the barriers, disability can be resolved. However, this perspective tends to ignore the experiences of people with disabilities, and considers them as passive victims. (Thanem, 2008)

### 2.6 Supportive elements for the employment

In order to gain a coherent image of the employment situation, some of the supportive elements for employment will be presented. According to Ekholm and Teittinen (2014), elements that are supporting the employment of people with ID are, for example, good education, relevant apprenticeships, the persons own activity and courage as well as offered services that exist for supporting the employment. These kinds of services are, for example different kinds of organizations and subsidized salaries. Furthermore, work coaches are experienced as an effective form of support, especially in the beginning of the employment process. During the last years there has been a few political programs that aim to improve the labour market position of people with a disability. Their situation has also been affected with a support of changes in legislation. (Ekholm and Teittinen, 2014)

#### 2.6.1 General elements

According to the research conducted by Kela (Kela, 2018), high school or vocational studies (studies after primary school) and services related to them, as well as apprenticeships, lead to employment in free labour market for 22-76 % of students with ID. Additionally, 21-60 % of people with ID would get employed in the free labour market with the support of supported work. According to Kela (2018), effective ways to increase the transition to the labour market were different supported work programs, including
work coaches, work monitoring and social support offered for families. Especially work coaches could provide valuable support in finding a suitable workplace, as well as getting to know the principles of working life and practicing the work tasks. The work coach could even support the employer in questions according to the accommodations of the tasks, or other things related to the employment. The workmanship of the work coach had a great influence on the independency and self-determination of the person with ID. (Kela, 2018) The concept of work coaches will be more closely discussed in the following chapter.

Additional general supportive factors were, for example, the person’s activity and support from the family as well as support from the employer and the work community. Also development of the working environment had positive impacts on the employment. Kela (2018) point out that all the elements would have a more remarkable influence if they were offered early enough. An optimal age to start offering the different supportive services was at 14 years old, so at the end of the primary school but before the start of the career. When the needed actions are offered earlier, the person with ID has already created contacts to the working life, once it's more relevant. (Kela, 2018) Furthermore, Kela (2018) point out that especially vocational studies, apprenticeships and learning at work increased the transfer to the free labour markets. In this case also, the effect was bigger if the contact was created younger.

2.6.2 Work Coach service

The right to the accommodation of working conditions is mentioned in the UN Convention (United Nations, 2016) where it’s stated that a person with disability has a right to the same human rights as others and these need to be enabled with decent accommodations that don’t cause an unreasonable burden (United Nations, 2016). However, employers may lack the knowledge of how to arrange such accommodation. In order to support the employers, many municipalities in Finland offer a work coach service.

The concept of “supported employment” and work coaches was originally founded in US in 1980’s from where it spread to other countries. This concept became “trendy” in Finland during the 1990’s. The idea behind supported employment is that a work coach is supporting with the employment process, especially with the entrance to the workforce. (E llenkamp et al., 2015) According to studies, work coaching is an effective way to support the employment of people with ID (Kela, 2018). A work coach is a person
that personally helps people to find a job. They support one to find and bring out the skills and strengths at the labour market. Work coaching can be received maximum 50 hours per year. (TE Office 3) Many local municipalities in Finland offer local work coaching service. However, in this thesis, services offered by the City of Helsinki are most relevant as the case project, Tekijätori, is operating in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. In Helsinki there are 12 work coaches, who participate in the employment process according to the individual needs and agreement. A work coach can participate in a job interview, assist the accommodation of the work tasks, as well as support in the introduction of new tasks. Work coaches can also assist in questions according to the contract of employment, and employment in general. (The City of Helsinki)

Before the cooperation starts, an employee, an employer and a work coach agree on the content of the coaching, and discuss the needs of the coaching. A work coach can support the service user even when he/she is advancing in the career, changing workplace, employment is ending or when work tasks are changing. A work coach visits the workplace on regular basis and ensures that the work is going smoothly and both the employer and employee are satisfied. (The City of Helsinki) Work coaches have an important role in the development of the employability of employees, as they have a great impact in the first phases of training and entry to the workforce and the labour market (Ellenkamp et al., 2015).

According to FAIDD, a majority of people with disabilities are employed with the support of work coaches (Kehitysvammaliitto 2). However, at the moment there are not enough work coaches available for all the people in need of them. Furthermore, not all municipalities in Finland offer this service, which leads to a situation where regional differences in availability are huge. (Kela, 2018) Also Ellenkamp et al. (2015) pointed out in their study that lack of resources harms the use of the work coach service.

**2.6.3 Support for work conditions**

According to OECD 2008, all public places and even private working places should be reachable for everyone. Ensuring the accessibility is crucial for the equality between disabled and able-bodied people. (Kela, 2018) For an employer it’s even possible to receive financial subsidies, when employing a person with special needs. Support for working conditions is aiming to support especially the work conditions of people with limited working ability, and make the workplace more accessible for them. (Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö, 2016) An employer can receive the support in case an employee’s
disability or illness requires new working tools or furniture; any kind or renovation, e.g. making doorways wider for a wheelchair; or continuous support or help at work from another employee. (TE Office 2)

As part of this support, an employer can announce for the need of work coach service, which was described above. An employee with a disability might need continuous support from other employees, and the employer can receive support for covering some of these costs. In this case the work coach service can be used to evaluate the need of support, as the work coaches have a better ability to do that, compared to the employer. This support can be received for a maximum of 18 months and for 20 hours per month. The TE office is aiding the grants and these grants are not meant to cover all the costs for the employer, but the employer needs to participate in the costs with a reasonable amount. (TE Office 2)

2.6.4 Subsidized salary

Subsidized salary is another form of financial support that employers can receive in order to employ someone. It is always considered on individual basis and according to individual needs. (TE Office 1) It is defined as following on the TE Office webpage.

“The purpose of salary subsidized through the salary subsidy is to advance the employment of jobseekers on the open labour market when they have shortcomings in their professional skills, or suffer from an injury or illness that affects the ability to cope at the work. Although a subsidized salary is granted and paid to the employer, the granting of the subsidy is always based on the unemployed jobseeker’s need for the service” (TE Office 1)

Subsidized salary is one of the regulations that were clarified in 2013 by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland. The clarification was implemented in a way that if a disability or illness of a person is hampering employment, subsidized salary can be granted for a period of time that seems appropriate, taking into account the lowered employment possibility and skills. Subsidized salary can be received for a maximum of 24 months, and then the need of the subsidy will be revaluated. It is required that the TE Office evaluates the disability or illness remarkably or permanently lowers the person’s ability work in a productive way in the offered work position. The amount of subsidized salary is maximum 50 % of the wage cost for the employer. (Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö, 2016)

Kesäseteli support (Eng. Summer Banknote) could be considered as additional form of subsidized salary. The idea with Kesäseteli is that the local municipality pays an employer a certain amount of money, when they employ a young person for summer job.
When applying for the Kesäseteli, the person already has to have a summer job, and there’s also some minimum requirements for example for the length of the employment, amount of working hours and minimum salary of the employee. Kesäseteli support is not targeted only for people with ID, but for all young people. (The City of Espoo 1) The requirements and age limits can vary depending on the local municipality. For example, both in the City of Helsinki and in the City of Espoo, Kesäseteli was worth 300 € per employer per youth. In Espoo the support is aimed for youth in age 15-19 years, and in Helsinki for children in age 14-15 years. (The City of Espoo 1; The City of Helsinki 2) In the City of Helsinki, Kesäseteli support has been available since the trial period in 2015-2016. According to a study (Juvonen, 2016), the Kesäseteli support is especially important for small sized employers, and it enabled the small enterprises to employ someone for summer. Hence Kesäseteli had a positive impact on the amount of summer jobs in the area. (Juvonen, 2016)

2.7 Hindering elements for the employment

The employment level of people with disabilities was approximately 20 % in 2009. Only salaried work is included to the statistics, so communal work or work centre activities are not part of it. However, the statistics of employment level are only estimates. The statistics of the socioeconomic information of people with ID are inadequate in Finland, and Finland has even got a notice from the United Nations that their situation should be followed more carefully. The lack of information is hindering the improvement of the socioeconomic status of the people with ID. (Ekholm and Teittinen, 2014)

2.7.1 Prejudices and prevailing attitudes

One of the most remarkable hurdles for employment are the prevailing attitudes and prejudices towards people with ID. We, as society, would rather see people with ID as an object receiving care, than as an active actor, who is for example working independently.

According to research by Vesala et al. (2016), 65 % of the employers, who had employed a persons with ID in salaried work, thought that the most remarkable hindering element was the prevailing attitudes. Employers consider a person with ID more as a burden than as a resource for an employer. Furthermore, employers are often afraid that people with ID would have more sick leaves and accidents than other employees. However, according to the study, they don’t have more of sick leaves or accidents than other employees. (Vesala et al., 2016)
People with ID are excluded from the labour market even before they enter them. Discrimination during the work application process is common, according to a questionnaire conducted by FAIDD. (Kehitysvammaliitto 3) Besides the negative attitudes of employers, even negative attitudes of work communities harm the employment, as well as over protective parents and important relationships in the work centres that might make the person feel more comfortable in the work centres compared to a new workplace (Kela, 2018).

The prevailing attitudes may further harm the integration and advancing in one’s career. Schur et al. (2009) came to conclusion that employees with disabilities receive less company-sponsored formal training as well as informal training from co-workers. This can have a negative influence on possibilities to get promoted and develop the career. Also, the informal training would be important, as a major part of the learning at workplace is through informal mentoring by the peers. The low level of informal training might be caused because of the prevailing negative attitudes that the colleagues have towards the employee with disabilities or because employees with disabilities are less likely to work as part of the team. (Schur et al., 2009)

2.7.2 System level hurdles

One of the system level hurdles for employment can be due to the education system and negative experiences during the primary school. According to a research conducted by Kela (Kela, 2018), discrimination in school, poor teaching, and lack of apprenticeships during the primary school were major hurdles to employment.

2.7.2.1 Lack of information

Municipalities offer a variety of support systems for employers to carry out the accommodation of working conditions. It’s however not done very widely. (Työterveyslaitos, 2011) A remarkable hurdle is that the support systems offered by municipalities don’t reach the employers. There are a lot of options and support that both employees and employers can receive, but it may be poorly communicated sometimes. According to research (Vesala et al., 2016), many employers experience that it’s hard to find information about the bureaucracies because the information is not centralized. It requires a lot of time from an employer to find information, which is provided from multiple sources. Furthermore, there are many overlapping systems about, for example the subsidies and disability pensions system, which cause confusion. (Vesala et al., 2016)
2.7.2.2 Inflexible support systems

Majority of the hurdles for employment may be caused when the service providers try to fit people with ID to the existing service models, even though they are against the personal needs of the people. The variety among people with disabilities is huge, and it’s challenging to find one universal service model that would suit everyone. (Kela, 2018). One of such inflexible systems causing problems is regarding the pensions system. The problem with the pensions is that with the disability pension and other subsidies, you can earn circa 730 € per month. In case you earn too much, you lose the whole pension and majority of the subsidies. To prove the point, in order to have the same income level as with the pension, you should earn 1700 € per month, which again requires a lot more work. It’s not simple to jump from, for example 900 € monthly salary to 1700 € at once, especially in case of a person with a limited working ability. Most of the people with ID are working part time and they might not be capable to work full time. Great amounts of people with ID are doomed to a low-income situation, which also is a hurdle for a more independent life. According to a questionnaire conducted by FAIDDD, nearly 60 % of working aged (25-64 years) people with disabilities had experienced poverty during the past two years (Kehitysvammaliitto 3). Solution for this problem would be to change the pension system to more flexible, so that the pensions would reduce linearly when the income level of the persons gets higher. It would enable more flexible working hours, without the sudden decrease of income. (Ekholm and Teittinen, 2014)

One final challenge for the employment in general is the lack of cooperation and coordination between the different employment programs and supportive systems. According to Ekholm and Teittinen (2014), traditionally there has been no remarkable cooperation between the third sector and companies. Even if there are several employment projects, they are often quite small and they don’t lead to long-term cooperation. As pointed out in the study, instead of short term projects there is need for long-term projects that would connect the different parties, like NGO’s and companies. (Ekholm and Teittinen, 2014)

2.8 Employment Experiences and Attitudes

As mentioned earlier, there’s not much research available regarding people with disabilities and employment (Ekholm and Teittinen, 2014). According to the study by Työterveyslaitos (2011), employees with a disability are remarkably more enthusiastic about their work, compared to other employees. Furthermore, Vesala et al. (2015) and Ellenkamp et al. (2015) found out that employees with disabilities were, in general,
extremely motivated at work. In contrast to this, employer attitudes were quite negative towards the employment of people with disabilities. The attitudes have seemed to be changing towards more positive during the last years, but the change is relatively slow. (Vesala et al., 2016)

2.8.1 Employer viewpoint

Vesala et al. (2016) noticed in their study that the employer attitudes towards employment tend to be more positive when the employer had previous experiences of employing a person with a disability. Ellenkamp et al. (2015) also came to a conclusion that employers who had experiences of hiring people with ID would have more positive attitudes towards the employment. These employers perceived more advantages and fewer disadvantages towards the employees with disabilities, in comparison to inexperienced employers. Ellenkamp et al. (2015) suggest that there are three types of employers, divided according to their attitudes: employers with a positive attitude towards people with disabilities as employees, and they have recruited people with disabilities. Secondly, employers who have positive attitudes but they haven’t recruited people with disabilities. Thirdly, employers with negative attitudes and who are not willing to recruit people with disabilities. For all of the three groups, it would be central to provide more information about recruiting the employees with a disability and also provide information about the subsidies and support that employers can receive. (Ellenkamp et al., 2015) Vesala et al. (2016) and Ellenkamp et al. (2015) event pointed out that the employers with positive attitudes would be relevant stakeholders when communicating and influencing the rest of the employers.

In the study (Vesala et al., 2016), all of the employers with experiences of employing a person with ID had noticed several things specific for the employment of a person with a disability. They noticed that the employees would need, for example, more time for performing their tasks and some of the employees would have some difficulties with e.g. social interaction, but these difficulties were not seen as hurdles for the employment. Many of the employers thought that the employees with ID would get well along with the other employees and they had a positive impact on the company image. (Vesala et al., 2016)

Accommodation of working conditions might be an essential part of the employment process, when employing a person with ID. For an employer it might be challenging if they lack the knowledge of how the accommodations should be done, and what are the
factors that are important to take into consideration. The accommodation can include everything from changes in the physical work environment to part-time work and a new way of organizing the work. (Ekholm and Teittinen, 2014) Employers participating in the study (Vesala et al., 2016), had found the support of a work coach especially useful. A work coach would personally support and give instructions for the employment process. A work coach would also be in a central role when accommodating the work tasks suitable for the employees. In general, the employers were satisfied with the support and subsidies they would receive. The major problems were mostly regarding the finding of the information about the different subsidies and support systems. (Vesala et al., 2016)

2.8.2 Employee viewpoint

As mentioned earlier, employees were often very motivated to do their work, but besides that they had some negative experiences. For example, many employees experienced that the employer was not treating them equally, compared with the other employees. Furthermore, employees with disabilities thought more often than other employees, that they didn’t receive enough of support from their colleagues and their superior. (Työterveyslaitos, 2011; Schur et al., 2009) Schur et al. (2009) even found out that employees with disabilities received less training and support than their non-disabled colleagues, both from the supervisors and informally from the colleagues.

In a questionnaire conducted by FAIDD (Kehitysvammaliitto 3), people with ID often reported that “discrimination had nothing to do with them”. However, a person with ID might not recognize discrimination in many situations because they are so used to it. An additional problem is that they don’t have the same possibilities to report the discrimination, and for example fight in court, if it’s not regarding very severe discrimination. (Kehitysvammaliitto 3) In contrast to the previous findings, Schur et al. (2009) came to the conclusion that employees with disabilities, compared with the non-disabled employees, report a greater average likelihood of turnover, less loyalty and willingness to work hard for the company as well as lower level of job satisfaction. However, an interesting factor in this study was that the differences between the disabled and non-disabled employees occur in the worksites with the lowest overall level of perceived fairness and there could be huge differences between the companies. “The results indicate that corporate cultures that are responsive to the needs of all employees are especially beneficial for employees with disabilities” (Schur et al., 2009, p. 381). In the companies that were perceived fair, there were no significant differences between employees with or without disabilities in questions of job satisfaction, loyalty and
willingness to work for the company. It can be concluded that the need for fair treatment is equally important for employees with and without disabilities. (Schur et al., 2009)

Työterveyslaitos (2010) found out that the work experiences among the people with ID could vary, depending on several factors. Younger employees felt more often that they got enough of support from their supervisors than the older employees. Also the size of the company seemed to have an impact on the experiences, employees with ID were more satisfied with the amount of support and the feeling of being equal in smaller companies than in the bigger ones. Further, the level of accommodations could vary and sometimes cause challenges for the employee. However, most of the employees were satisfied with the accommodations made at the workplace. In general, employees who felt that there were enough of accommodations, were more satisfied with all the remaining factors, like equality and support from the supervisors. When the working conditions are suitable and accommodated, the overall satisfaction is higher. (Työterveyslaitos, 2011)

Employee experiences about the employment process could vary a lot. As mentioned earlier, even the entry to the labour market can cause challenges in many cases (Kela, 2018). According to Ekholm and Teittinen (2014) recruitment situations are challenging for people with ID, as they need to be able to convince the interviewer with their skills and experience, whereas the interviewer might only concentrate on the disability. The know-how of a person with ID is not recognized as easily, because the focus remains on the diagnosis. Previous work experience is incredibly valuable in recruitment situations, as it proves the competences of the person. According to the study (Ekholm and Teittinen, 2014), young people with ID often benefit a lot from the support of an external NGO or other organization, which would help to build the trust between the employer and the person applying for the work. (Ekholm and Teittinen, 2014)

2.9 Summary

In the literature review I have presented relevant literature in order to give a coherent image of the current situation and a background for the case. As noticed during this chapter, people with intellectual disabilities are in an unfavourable position on the labour market, compared to the rest of the population. They would benefit from more flexible support systems and increased cooperation between the different stakeholders representing NGO’s, municipalities and employers. The major challenges are the prevailing negative attitudes towards the capabilities of people with ID, and the lack of individualized support and accommodation. Overall, the goal with the employment of
people with ID is to improve their status and economic situation, and include them more effectively as full members of society. In the next chapter the methodology of the thesis will be presented.
3 METHODOLOGY

In the following section I will present and justify the methodology selected for this research, data collection and data analysis. Furthermore, the case organizations and their members will be presented more precisely.

3.1 Research Design

The research design for this study is a case study. Yin (2003) defines a case study as following, “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003, p. 7). Case studies are suitable for supporting the researcher to focus on the interrelationships between all factors, such as people, groups and policies (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 1997). In my thesis, research questions are formed as “How?” questions, which additionally is likely to favour the use of case studies (Yin, 2003).

This study can be considered both exploratory and descriptive. The purpose of an exploratory study is to seek new insights and focus on exploring certain phenomena and finding new insights in them. Additionally, it can be claimed that all qualitative studies are in some way descriptive. Descriptive studies are used to describe characteristics of a population or phenomena being studied. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 1997)

My study will have elements from inductive case research. In inductive approach theory is understood “as a set of propositional statements linking the key concepts in the theory to one another”. This implies that theories can be tested and reflected after they are developed. (Bryman and Bell, 2015) I find this suitable in case of a case study and when there’s no strong theory that could be used to develop the hypothesis.

3.2 Research Method

I interviewed the three parties involved, representatives from Tekijätori and Hotel chain Oktogon, as well as the students with ID, who were conducting the apprenticeship. A case study was the most suitable research method for my thesis, as a case study allows one to retain a holistic and meaningful characteristics of events, as organizational processes and changes (Yin, 2003). I chose to do semi-structured interviews, as it enables the emergence of new questions during the conversation, and it’s not required to strictly follow the pre-formed order (Myers, 2009). I thought that I would gain more of valuable information by using this method in the face-to-face interviews that I
conducted. I formed the questions in a way that would be relevant for my research questions and also give a clear picture of the employment process as a whole, and describe the person’s experiences. It was relevant to have some sort of structure in the interviews, as this made it possible to compare the answers to each other’s, and also recognize differences between the interviewees.

The interviews were carried out over the time of four months, depending on the availability of the persons. I aimed to first interview the representatives of Tekijätori and the Hotel chain Oktogon, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the apprenticeships. This was useful for the latter interviews, as I could ask more detailed questions from the other interviewees. All the interviews were conducted in Finnish, as most of the interviewees spoke Finnish as their mother tongue. However, the head of the kitchen in the branch B had a limited understanding of Finnish, but she wished to conduct the interview in Finnish. The slight language barrier may have affected her understanding of the questions I asked during the interview. Sometimes it was challenging to evaluate, whether she understood the questions correctly or not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Coordinator</td>
<td>Manager of the Tekijätori project</td>
<td>Tekijätori</td>
<td>54:35 min</td>
<td>1.3.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>Counsellor resource in Tekijätori</td>
<td>Tekijätori</td>
<td>54:35 min</td>
<td>1.3.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR &amp; Training Manager</td>
<td>HR on the hotel chain level</td>
<td>Hotel chain Oktogon</td>
<td>20 min</td>
<td>6.3.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch A Manager</td>
<td>Manager of the branch A</td>
<td>Branch A</td>
<td>42:03 min</td>
<td>5.2.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor A</td>
<td>Supporting the student A</td>
<td>Branch A/ Primary school</td>
<td>23:13 min</td>
<td>7.3.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>Conducting the apprenticeship</td>
<td>Branch A</td>
<td>30:26 min</td>
<td>27.3.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of the Kitchen</td>
<td>Manager of the hotel kitchen in the branch B</td>
<td>Branch B</td>
<td>31 min</td>
<td>15.3.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of the Kitchen</td>
<td>Manager of the hotel kitchen in the branch C</td>
<td>Branch C</td>
<td>30:06 min</td>
<td>21.2.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>Conducting the apprenticeship</td>
<td>Branch C</td>
<td>12:48 min</td>
<td>2.3.2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Interviewees
3.3 The Research Process

As mentioned earlier, data collection was done through semi-structured interviews. As this is a case study, the interviews were carried out with all of the parties involved in the case. This refers to the representatives of Tekijätori (2), representatives of the case company Hotel chain Oktogon (4), as well as student's (2) conducting the apprenticeships, and finally, a counsellor (1) of a student. The total amount of interviews conducted was nine (9).

3.4 The Interviews

In the Figure 1 all the interviewees, their responsibilities and organizations are stated, as well as the duration and date of the interviews. There, one can see the order of interviews, and also the timeline for conducting the interviews.

I interviewed two representatives from Tekijätori, the Project Coordinator and the counsellor. They could provide insights of the project as a whole, and discuss the apprenticeships and employment process in general and the goals for the apprenticeships. From the Hotel chain Oktogon, I interviewed four persons; the HR manager of the Hotel chain Oktogon, and three representatives from the branches part of the hotel chain. I chose to interview the three representatives from the branches because they had been the supervisors of the apprenticeship. During the interviews, it turned out that two of the apprenticeships were conducted in cooperation with Tekijätori and one of them was conducted in cooperation with a local vocational school for students with intellectual disabilities or impairments. The branches who had an apprenticeship in cooperation with Tekijätori, will be referred as branch A and B. The branch that was cooperating with the local school I will refer as branch C. All of the branches had had one student conducting an apprenticeship, by the time of the interviews.

Case branch A consists of a branch A manager, student A who conducted the apprenticeship and her counsellor. Case branch B consist of the head of the kitchen of branch B. Finally, Case branch C consists of the head of the kitchen for branch C and the student who conducted the apprenticeship.

The students were not paid for the apprenticeships, as they were part of their studies. In the branch A and B the apprenticeship lasted two weeks, and in the branch C the apprenticeship lasted 2 months, as it was part of vocational studies and not primary school.
Below in the picture, the organizations and their relationships are presented. There one can see that Tekijätori is creating the connection between the Hotel chain Oktogon, representing the employer side, and the educational institutions. Tekijätori is part of Me Osalliset.

Figure 1  Relationships between different actors

3.4.1 Hotel chain Oktogon

Hotel chain Oktogon is a large hotel chain in the Nordics. They have a lot of branches around the Nordics and several one’s even in Finland. Branches A, B and C are hotels and part of the Hotel chain Oktogon. They are all located in Finland. The structure of the hotel chain can be seen in the figure 3 below. Hotel chain Oktogon was part of the Tekijätori company network.

I chose to study the interviews conducted in the branches of Hotel chain Oktogon, as I heard that they already have had an Accessibility program for customers, which implied that they would be interested about diversity related questions. It was also a great opportunity to compare the branches within the same company with each other’s. Due to the fact that branch A and B had conducted the apprenticeships in cooperation with Tekijätori, and branch C in cooperation with a local school, I could also analyse the possible differences in the apprenticeship process.
3.4.2 Anonymity

I refer to the case company as hotel chain Oktogon in this thesis. I chose keep the hotel chain Oktogon anonymous in order to protect the privacy of the students who conducted the apprenticeships. As there were only three persons, they might be easily recognized. Additionally, the topic can be quite sensitive, as the public might easily judge a company and its actions, but also individuals may feel ashamed if they lack information about people with ID as a topic. Anonymity of the parties hopefully encouraged the representatives from the Hotel chain Oktogon to talk more openly.

3.5 Data Analysis

After the data had been collected, documented and transcribed, I started to analyse it by adapting Goia’s Method (Goia, Corley and Hamilton, 2012). The Goia Method was suitable in this case, as it retains the potential for generating new concepts and ideas. According the method, the analysis begins with the 1st-order analysis, which aims to find categories from the material. The second phase is about seeking similarities and differences among the huge amount of categories, and aiming to reduce the number of 1st-order concepts. Goia et al. (2012) suggest to look for a deeper structure within the categories, and encourage to consider the themes on both theoretical and abstract levels in order to answer the question “What is going on here” (Goia et al., 2012, p. 20). Finally,
the 2nd-order analysis is supposed to help to describe and explain the phenomena we are exploring. 2nd-order themes are investigated, in order to further find Aggregate Dimensions. When having the full set of themes and dimensions, it allows us to build a data structure, which in turn can be used to visualize the process. (Goia et al., 2012)

In my adapted 1st-order analysis I was going through the interviews, and collecting interesting citations in order to find categories in the material. Further, in the 2nd-order analysis, I aimed to find similarities among the citations in order to create categories. Finally, I could continue the analysis and try to form Aggregate Dimensions from the 2nd-order themes. The data structure of my analysis is presented in the Figure 4. By presenting the data structure, I hope to even clarify the way I made the conclusions from the material. When presenting the findings, I provide more citations in order to support reliability of the statements I made (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 1997).
Figure 3  Data Analysis
3.6 Quality of the study

During the research process, I have aimed to consider carefully the three ethical issues, presented by Myers (2009). These ethical issues are related to confidentiality and privacy, representation of data, and finally, taking responsibility of my findings (Myers, 2009). Since I have a relation to the organization, Me Osalliset, which has founded Tekijätori, I already had quite good understanding of their activities and a relatively easy access to the interviewees. However, I had no relation to Tekijätori or the employees working there. Additionally, my family member is a person with an intellectual disability, so I have got the chance to follow his, and his friends with intellectual disabilities, career steps starting from primary school, until the first workplaces. Because of my experiences, I have a good understanding of the challenges that the person with ID may face when entering the educational institutions, and aiming towards a workplace. As an internal researcher, I’m aware that I must be conscious of possible pre-assumptions that I have (Saunders et al., 2016). When conducting the interviews and analysing the data, I have tried to be as objective as possible in order to ensure that my assumptions don’t falsify the conclusions. As Myers (2009) states in the ethical issues, I have done my best to report and analyse my data honestly. Additionally, during the interviews I have aimed to appear as neutral as possible, and have not judged answers of the interviewees, in order to make the interviewees to feel comfortable to share even critique or unpleasant experiences. I have emphasized that the answers are confidential, and I consider the privacy of the interviewees carefully, as Myers (2009) suggests. Furthermore, the independency of this research has been emphasized, as it’s not done for any of the organizations involved in the case study but only in cooperation with them. Finally, I’m prepared to stand behind my findings and bare responsibility of them (Myers, 2009).
4 FINDINGS

In this part the findings are presented. The chapter begins with the interview with Tekijätori, including the two persons working for Tekijätori. After that follows the Hotel chain Oktogon, representing the concern in Finland. The next three chapters are divided into the three local branches A, B and C and all the persons, students and counsellor, who were involved into the branches.

4.1 Tekijätori

Tekijätori project coordinator and counsellor are discussing the operating model of Tekijätori, what the purpose of the service is, what the role of the counsellor is and what kind of challenges they face.

4.1.1 Creating connections

The role of Tekijätori in the employment process is to be the facilitator and create connections between schools, companies and students. Students and schools can participate Tekijätori network and they’ll search for suitable companies where to conduct apprenticeships. The most important task of Tekijätori is to create connections and manage the relationships in order to ensure continuity. They enable new connections and apprenticeships that benefits the students with ID. Tekijätori is for the first time managing and creating long-term relationships between different actors in order to support the employment of people with ID, and that’s why it’s so unique and interesting project.

Project coordinator is the one that manages the network of companies, schools and students and contacts new schools and companies to join the network. Additionally, the project coordinator is looking for the apprenticeships for students according to their wishes and needs. She also supports schools and teachers and provides new possible places for conducting the apprenticeship. Tekijätori service is in this way a solutions to the scare resources of schools and teachers, who usually arrange the apprenticeships for their students. Because of the scare resources, schools might offer only one type of apprenticeships, e.g. work at the local grocery store. Tekijätori wants to offer apprenticeships according to the student’s personal interests and skills, and in various new places. In some cases the final agreements about the apprenticeship are done only between the school and the company, but when the company is participating for the first time, project coordinator is present at the meeting. Tekijätori ensures that the building of the relationship starts according to the plan, and everyone feels comfortable and is
well informed about apprenticeship. The first meetings are important for the continuity of the network and creating trust.

“We have quite important role when connecting the schools and companies. If a company has no experience about an employee with ID in the work community, we have already quite a lot of experience in how to start to build the cooperation.” (Project Coordinator Tekijätori 2019)

Tekijätori has got a lot of positive feedback, both from schools and employers. They can also see the long term benefit for the students participating in apprenticeships. Many of the schools have been surprised, how different workplaces Tekijätori can offer besides the typical ones, as grocery stores. Schools have commented that this kind of service is needed, and also Tekijätori has better possibilities to manage the network with companies and ensure that everyone are kept informed. Usually teachers need to find the places for apprenticeship, beside their regular work, and this can cause problems due to the limited resources and time.

“The good feedback has been, that students haven’t got any places for apprenticeship even though they have tried many things. And then they suddenly get an apprenticeship with our help, that’s what we aim for. It can be quite challenging to find the places, and this have come up with the feedback.” (Project Coordinator Tekijätori 2019)

Tekijätori has a special way to communicate and share information with all of the parties included, and they have got positive feedback from this. Information sharing is important as it enables a smooth communication and makes it possible to react to the changes or development during the apprenticeship. Information is shared on daily basis via WhatsApp, which makes it possible to follow the progress the student is making, parents, teachers and the student can even notice new interests, strengths and skills through the information sharing. This part of service differs the service from the apprenticeships organized by schools, as the information sharing is more dependent on single people as there might not be a structured system for it. Information sharing system makes Tekijätori to appear as a more professional, when managing the relationships with employers.

Below is presented the structure on an apprenticeship. Even though the length and many other actors may vary, the basic structure remains. Also the fact, if a company participates in an apprenticeship for a first time or not, impacts the structure sometimes. However, the first phase is about introduction to the service model, apprenticeship itself and what kind of student will be conducting the apprenticeship. Also the possible accommodations and work will be discussed in the first meeting before the apprenticeship. Second phase includes the whole apprenticeship, consisting of introduction and working. Also the role of the counsellor may change, if the role in the
first phase was active – in the second phase the role will change to more passive. Phase three is about feedback after the apprenticeship, all the parties involved will receive and give feedback about the apprenticeship.

### Structure of an apprenticeship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Planning</strong>: before the actual apprenticeship. Contains a first meeting, and a discussion about the students needs, his or her tasks, presence of a counsellor and other practicalities, as accommodations of the work tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Apprenticeship</strong>: introduction to work place and work itself. The accommodations of the work tasks can be conducted also during this phase, once the level of skills of the student is recognized in practice. During this phase the counsellor's role should be relatively passive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Feedback</strong>: both the employer and the student receives feedback from the apprenticeship. Employer will also give feedback to Tekijätori about their service.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4 Structure of an apprenticeship**

#### 4.1.2 The role of the Tekijätori counsellor

The counsellor of Tekijätori is supporting students during the apprenticeships, and at the same time, representing Tekijätori for the companies. Counsellor is being sort of a work coach for the students and ensures that the apprenticeships goes well and is a positive experience for the student. Counsellor from Tekijätori participates apprenticeships in case the school doesn’t have a chance to offer a personal counsellor for the student, in other cases the counsellors are from the schools. This kind of counsellor resource has gotten a lot of positive feedback from the schools, as often the resources for a counsellor might be very limited. Even though Tekijätori counsellor is participating the apprenticeships for supporting the student, she has a huge role in making the employers feel comfortable in the beginning. The counsellor is in a key role, ensuring that the cooperation with the employer starts well and the employers is continuing the cooperation after the first apprenticeship.
“You [the counsellor] are like a business card for Tekijätori, besides the student. Like representing us and encouraging the employers to join us, and message them, what are they benefiting from this” (Project Coordinator Tekijätori 2019)

In the first meeting with the employer and student, the counsellor is discussing the work tasks and encourages the employer in participating the apprenticeship. The counsellor has an important role in analysing the possible tasks and proposing for the company, what would be suitable for this student and what kind of accommodations should be done. Counsellor is sort of an expert or consultant for the company, she makes the suggestions and ensures that everything starts well, and the employer only needs to offer the place for apprenticeship and approve the proposals of the counsellor. This lowers the employers risk when participating the apprenticeship.

“The counsellor has an important role, when analysing the work and possible accommodations, she can suggest suitable tasks. The company doesn’t need to know anything in the beginning of the apprenticeship, which lowers the threshold to participate” (Project Coordinator Tekijätori 2019)

“It is good that the counsellor can scan the work tasks by him/herself, and when the employer is busy, they don’t need to be giving order all the time, but the trainee can work more independently.” (Project Coordinator Tekijätori 2019)

The counsellor is primarily supporting the student, and not the schools or companies. However, sometimes employers feel uncertain and are afraid of being alone with the student, even though the student manages everything independently. Companies might feel uncertain about how to handle the student with ID, including the introduction of work and coaching. In new cooperation’s, the counsellor is ensuring that the company feels satisfied and is not left alone. Tekijätori has more resources to support the companies compared to schools, as they are only responsible for the apprenticeships whereas at schools teachers are managing the apprenticeships besides their regular job. Additionally, Tekijätori seems to have a service oriented mindset towards, not only the student, but also the companies, as their service is aiming for long-term cooperation with the companies.

“The employer was stressing, as it’s very busy at the work, whether he has enough of time to supervise the student and if he’s left alone. So, I’m there and he’s not alone and I’ll ensure that the employer will get his work done as well. That’s why it’s good to have the counsellor resource, as it lowers the employer’s threshold to try the apprenticeship for the first time.” (Counsellor Tekijätori 2019)

“Even though the student might not need me, I’m still there, if it seems to be important for the employer. Especially when it’s a new cooperation, it hopefully leads to further cooperation.” (Counsellor Tekijätori 2019)

During the apprenticeship, counsellor is also keeping the school and possibly parents of the student informed. This means that the counsellor is reporting about the progress
during the apprenticeship, tasks and what the student has learnt and what are they going to practice. It’s even important that the employer is informed in case something happens, which is not always the case. The real time reporting and regular informing about the apprenticeship has got positive feedback and it has been useful for the student, as it’s possible to follow his/her progress.

“It’s [reporting about the apprenticeship] real time goal tracking. Sometimes there might come up surprising things, for example some skills they didn’t know at home – like, this would be important to practice at home and school, everything supports the apprenticeship.” (Counsellor Tekijätori 2019)

In relation to the student, counsellor’s role is passive. The counsellor shall support the student, if needed, but more important is to support and encourage the communication and the integration to the work community. One point of the apprenticeship is to get familiar with work life and learn how to be an independent member of the work community. By independent I mean, for example, that the student can ask for help from someone from the staff instead of the counsellor if he/she doesn’t know something. It is useful for the students that they recognize that they are able to work without the counsellor. The counsellor shouldn’t be the link in between the employer and the student, but encourage them to communicate and act like she wasn’t present. The counsellor only takes active role, if there are problems in communication or if the employer don’t know, e.g. how to teach something to the student. The situation might also be that the student could work independently and get a lot more responsibility but the employer is afraid of giving more challenging tasks. In this kind of cases the counsellor should encourage the employer to let the student show their skills and reach the full potential.

“It is important to remember that even the counsellor is present, the student should always ask for help from the personnel, if needed – as in any workplace. This way we train how to act in a work community” (Counsellor Tekijätori 2019).

In the beginning of the apprenticeship the final accommodation of the tasks are done, as the actual level of the student’s competences can be seen. They also make a timetable about the tasks for the student to support independent working, as the student can follow him/herself what to do next. The student’s independency and encouraging to it is important from the beginning as it’s a crucial skill in work life. The counsellor shall encourage the employer to trust in the student, and to ensure that the student work as independently as possible without the counsellor.

Even though the counsellor might have more active role towards the employer, she’s not an “extra employer”, but is there only for ensuring a successful apprenticeship. Tekijätori considers if the roles of the counsellor or work coach should be discussed more in details
with the different parties. The counsellor feels that some employers think that the counsellor is responsible for the student in all means instead of the employer, the apprenticeship is still a regular apprenticeship, so the employer is responsible for e.g. safety at work.

4.1.3 Facing the attitudes

The role of Tekijätori in the employment process is also about educating the employers, how to communicate and act with an employee with ID, and to encourage them to see people with ID as potential employees. The first phase in the apprenticeships for Tekijätori and the employers, is a meeting where Tekijätori is describing what kind of person is about to conduct the apprenticeship and what does this require in practice. The discussion is important as companies might not have knowledge about employing persons with ID. Sometimes there’s a need to even define “a person with an intellectual disability”, what it means and what is that person capable of doing, how the person learns in a best way, communicates and so on. Some employers have a very narrow picture of people with intellectual disabilities, as they have no experience of people with ID and they don’t understand that people with ID are not a homogenous group of people. They might have a certain picture of a person with ID, and they think that the company don’t have any suitable work for that kind of person. Tekijätori has an important role in informing the employers and educating them about the topic, and how heterogeneous group “people with ID” is, and what kind of different talents these people can have.

“In one company we were discussing about a “person with ID” and they were fine. But when this student with Down syndrome went to visit the company, they were chocked and they had not understood that it could mean that kind of person. I don’t know what they were expecting. Then we started the discussion again from the beginning. This all depends a lot of the employer’s personal experience.” (Project Coordinator Tekijätori 2019)

“At first there can be fears and prejudices, like there are no suitable tasks or the work environment is not suitable. Then we start to discuss, what the student is capable of doing and what kind of skills he/she already has” (Project Coordinator Tekijätori 2019)

Many of the employers who have been afraid before the apprenticeship, have changed their attitudes as everything has gone well and they have got support from Tekijätori. In general, all of the workplaces have had good attitudes and the work communities have been welcoming for the new project. After the apprenticeships, everyone so far have commented that they could consider employing a person with intellectual disability. However, it needs to be taken into account, that employers might not give negative feedback on that topic, as it’s quite sensitive.
“The work communities have been lovely, helpful and very welcoming. Even they had fears and challenges at first, we have succeeded in the end and they have been very pleased with the experience. It’s great to encourage employers who are uncertain in the beginning” (Project Coordinator Tekijätori 2019)

Tekijätori also commented the cooperation with Hotel chain Oktogon. They could especially recall that the branch A, being the first partner, had an open attitude and they were ready to try new things, even though they were not familiar with employing a person with ID. This reflects quite well, what the HR manager of the Hotel chain Oktogon commented, they value diversity and hotels are supported to participate in this kind of projects. The attitude of the manager always has a great influence in how the project is going to be implemented, and is it easy to find suitable tasks or not.

“The attitude of the work community was very welcoming and especially the attitude of the manager, which influences the attitude of the whole community in welcoming a person with ID to the workplace. No one was questioning, why this student would work there. It was also easy to find suitable tasks and it was easy to develop the cooperation, as they had a very positive attitude during the project”. (Project Coordinator Tekijätori 2019)

4.1.4 Long-term goals

Tekijätori apprenticeships aim to create long-term benefits for the student, but also for the employers. For the student, the benefits are about building a career path and being able to become an full member of society by earning own income. The employers and companies can through the project become more diverse and learn how to include diverse workforce.

Student’s gain when participating the apprenticeships, as it makes it easier to get further apprenticeships and hopefully also a salaried work or summer job. It’s important to begin to collect work experience and have a proper CV since a young age, as employers often have prejudices and fears towards employees with ID, it’s useful to be able to prove and show the concrete skills that the employee already has. This also gives the students new insights, what the student wants to do and also, what not. This is important when planning a future career, as the student can make decisions based on previous experience. During the apprenticeships the student may get an idea that differs from previous ideas for career, and maybe differs from the plans that parents have made. This way apprenticeships also support the independency of the student and enables decision making, as you can decide of your own life choices.

“Apprenticeships are valuable for the future workplaces. When applying for the apprenticeships, it’s highlighted, how important it is to have experience since the primary school. Then you can always refer to your previous experience and it’s easier to get the next job.” (Project Coordinator Tekijätori 2019)
Biggest challenges that Tekijätori seems to face, are the prevailing negative attitudes and prejudices towards people with ID in our society. This has a lot to do how we as society see people with ID and what we think is their role, and how are things usually done in e.g. working life. The main challenge is that employers might often be afraid of the risks and suitability of the work environment for a person with ID. Employers might also feel insecure, if they can handle an employer with ID and if there are bigger risks in the employment. Tekijätori has a crucial role in supporting employers and showing that they are not alone during the apprenticeship, this supports the change of mindset and instead gives a positive picture of people with ID as employees.

Tekijätori supports the employers to learn, how to be more diverse and how to manage a diverse employees as part of the workforce. Apprenticeships make the employers to recognize that people with intellectual disabilities can have a lot of skills and wide work experience, besides the diagnosis. This might in general give the employer a new perspective on them as an employer, as well as on the tasks and how they could be adjusted.

“One employer was very surprised as they didn’t recognize anything different in the student, and they were asking for the diagnosis of the student. Like they thought that the student was like everyone else and adapted so well at the workplace. Well, we don’t know the diagnosis, and the diagnosis should not define, what a person can do, and there are so many forms of support that may be needed. The skills the person has should define it, not the diagnosis.” (Project Coordinator Tekijätori 2019)

Tekijätori aims to change the mindset inside the companies, in a long term, as they wish that the apprenticeships will lead to a salaried work. This approach is differing Tekijätori from for example work centres and communal work, as these solutions don’t seem to be as ambitious in supporting the student’s careers. The key in the apprenticeships is that Tekijätori enables the apprenticeships, and companies only need to offer the possibility for a student with ID. As Tekijätori has expertise in the area, companies don’t need to have any competencies, like planning accommodation of the work. This aims to lower the threshold in offering a place for apprenticeship, and joining the network. The project coordinator also points out that it’s important that the companies can trust Tekijätori and have open communication both ways, so that everything works well with the apprenticeships and the experience is positive for all parties.

4.1.5 Development points

Tekijätori is a new service and developing and growing all the time. One development point for Tekijätori is to even more actively inform the existing partners of the cooperation and visit especially educational institutions several times, in order to
establish the cooperation with the whole school. They also feel that it’s important to develop and increase the company network but at the same time, they want to ensure the existence of the counsellor resource, even in the future. Managing the network and visiting schools is time consuming, so it might be relevant in the future to re-organize the roles at Tekijätori.

When asked, how Tekijätori motivates for the companies why they should participate or what do their gain from the project, they lift up reasons like social responsibility, ethical employment and also the benefits from a diverse workforce. The reasons to participate could be motivated even more clearly to the companies, and also Tekijätori could name more concrete reasons to participate. The benefits from diverse workforce could also be opened up for the companies or they could be educated of those benefits, if needed. At the moment they didn’t have really any motivations from the business perspective, and the ethical motivations might not be enough for everyone. This is a central issue when aiming for a salaried work, if it’s not economically sustainable, then companies might not be able to employ persons with ID.

“Many companies have realized that some consumers make choices based on ethical issues, and if they see that a company is socially responsible, like employing a person with ID, this could be a reason for a choice.” (Project Coordinator Tekijätori 2019)

Additionally, at least Hotel chain Oktogon did not publish on their social media that they had these trainees and cooperation with Tekijätori, and reason to this was that they thought that public would see it as “green washing”. However, Tekijätori considered it as something positive if companies’ would show that they are participating. This misunderstanding could also be discussed with the new employers, so that both parties are aware of each other’s opinion. This would also benefit Tekijätori, as the project would get publicity when companies would share more content on their social media channels, which might attract new companies to join the project.

4.2 Hotel chain Oktogon

In this chapter the interview with the HR manager of hotel chain Oktogon will be presented. The HR manager is representing a wider than branch level viewpoint, as she is not part of a local branch. She could even provide clearer picture about the concern level values.


4.2.1 Diversity and inclusion policies

Hotel chain Oktogon has their own Diversity and Inclusion Policy, as a subordinate to their Code of Conduct. The policy states that the company is, “committed to promoting a culture that actively values diversity and inclusion at all levels and gives all team members the same opportunities, to the benefit of team members themselves, guests and society where we operate” (Hotel chain Oktogon policy, 2019). These points even came up during the discussion with the HR manager. They further state on the policy that diversity and inclusion awareness training is included in the on boarding training for the team members, and this way actively communicated throughout the organization. In my opinion, the interviews with different representatives from the hotel chain Oktogon, reflected upon these values and the promotion of diversity. Additional point is that “disability” is named when describing, what diversity means for the company. Furthermore, as part of their inclusion policy is stated following, “accessibility is a crucial part of hotel chain Oktogons’ work to create a more inclusive company. Hotel chain Oktogon aims to be accessible for guests as well as team members by providing facilities and services that support special needs” (Hotel chain Oktogon policy, 2019).

Hotel chain Oktogon further has their own Accessibility Standard program, which aims at ensuring that all their hotels are accessible for people with diverse needs. This program was audited by an employee, who’s in a wheelchair, and nowadays the hotel chain provides a list of all their branches and describes the level of accessibility by 135 standards. With the help of the list, a guest can check in advance, is a branch having e.g. an accessible parking, ramp for wheelchair, cane holders at the reception disk or a hearing loop. Hotel chain Oktogon was among the first global hotel chains to provide this kind of listing for their guests, and this of course promotes also the accessibility of their employees.

4.2.2 HR viewpoint

The role of Human Resources department is to support all the branches and make it possible for the branches to participate in different kind of projects. The HR manager highlights that diversity and social responsibility are important values for them, and on a concern level they are actively executing these values. Hotel chain Oktogon has not had remarkable diversity programs for their employees, but they are encouraging local branches to participate and support projects that are in line with the company values.
One important motivations to cooperate with Me Osalliset and participate in the Tekijätori project was carrying out social and communal responsibility. HR manager even comments that they aim to keep the organization open for new ideas, and they aim to create such a framework for the organization that enables the executing of ideas. As an example, within the HR department they aim to plan the work tasks in a way that it’s possible to share the work into smaller pieces, which enables to do the work even with limited working conditions.

“We are in a situation, where we could all the time develop the system better for the people who have some restrictions or challenges with their working condition. Accessibility program for guests is a strong promise and it should affect us even as an employer” (HR Manager Oktogon, 2019)

Hotel chain Oktogon aims to inform all the branches of different kind of projects and possibilities, and those who experience them as something interesting, can join. Hotel chain Oktogon is not forcing the branches to participate in any projects, which even was pointed out during the other interviews. As hotel chain Oktogon seems to openly share internal news about possible interesting projects and encouraging their branches to participate, it’s surprising that the executed projects or actual participation are not really communicated and shared internally afterwards.

“Hotel chain Oktogon is encouraging branches to this kind of projects [like Tekijätori], but we won’t force them. One reason is that the experience and the apprenticeship needs to be a good and useful experience for both parties [branch and student] Additionally, most of the apprenticeships are very local and we don’t report about them for a wider public. ” (HR Manager Oktogon, 2019)

4.2.3 Communicating the values

Hotel chain Oktogon has for a longer time had a diversity program for their guests. The program includes auditing on regular basis, so that they can ensure that the hotels are accessible for all kind of guests. HR manager states that this has also influenced their idea of them as an employer managing diverse workforce. Diversity and inclusiveness are even one of the key points of the HR strategy within hotel chain Oktogon, and she states that diversity further is a strong value in recruitment. In my opinion these values could be seen even in the interviews within branches A, B and C. Maybe most clearly in the interview in branch A, due to the fact that I was interviewing the branch manager. He must be aware of the values and concern level strategy, and he had thought that the Tekijätori project is in line with the company values. However, the fact that both branch B and C were participating the apprenticeships, communicates that diversity is seen as a relevant and interesting topic, even though the persons I was interviewing might not be as aware of the values as a branch manager. This reflects that hotel chain Oktogon has communicated their values to different levels of the organization.
"We aim to find as talented and diverse personnel, for diverse needs. We aim to serve our clients as well as possible, so diversity is a value even in recruitment" (HR Manager Oktogon, 2019)

"In a way, the diversity among our personnel should reflect the diversity among our guests. The Accessibility program for our guests, for a long time we were the only hotel chain having that kind of program" (HR Manager Oktogon, 2019)

Hotel chain Oktogon aims to facilitate the framework for introduction of work for new employees to some extent, but mainly the local branches are responsible for executing introduction of work. The HR manager points out that new employees might have so different background and skill level that it’s better to execute the introduction based on individual needs. The local branches are not communicating their introduction practices for other branches, as the projects are very local and dependent on single key employees and organizations behind diversity projects.

"The scale of different people is huge, so you can’t prepare for everything. There’s often an organization behind the apprenticeship and they share information about the individuals for the supervisors." (HR Manager Oktogon, 2019)

4.2.4 Development points

Hotel chain Oktogon names some general development points for projects in all local branches. Before they have not shared information about single cases between the branches, and the best practices could be shared more effectively inside the hotel chain Oktogon. As it’s not possible to take many students at the same time for apprenticeship, the projects remain quite local and small. Due to this fact, single apprenticeships may not have a major impact in the branches. It might benefit hotel chain Oktogon, if the experiences from the apprenticeships and best practices of diversity management were shared internally. The lessons learnt in single branches would increase others knowledge as well, and encourage other branches to participate in such projects.

"We could internally share more the best practices from the apprenticeships. We have not informed a lot about single cases internally. As it’s not possible to have many trainees simultaneously in the same branch, they [apprenticeships] remain quite small and local” (HR Manager Oktogon, 2019)

She points out that from the HR point of view, it’s important to keep hotel chain Oktogon as an organization flexible, and also challenge current attitudes towards work and be as open minded as possible. This enables flexible re-organizing of work tasks and gains diverse employees with different working conditions. In the long-term, hotel chain Oktogon aims to be proactive and develop their systems in order to support the diversity of their workforce. However, they won’t focus on a single group of people, but instead wish to engage multiple diverse groups. In general hotel chain Oktogon is aiming at
creating interest, understanding and possibilities to participate this kind of projects, like Tekijätori, among local branches.

4.3 Case Branch A

Case branch A consists of three interviews; a hotel manager from the branch A, student A and the counsellor A, who was joining the apprenticeship with the student. I have a most coherent picture of the apprenticeship conducted in the branch A, as I have received experiences from three different viewpoints. Branch A also worked as a pilot branch for Tekijätori project in hotel chain Oktogon.

4.3.1 Branch A

Branch A, as part of hotel chain Oktogon, was contacted first by Me Osalliset and they worked as a “pilot branch” for the other branches inside hotel chain Oktogon. Branch A wanted to participate in the first place, because of interest towards this new project, and because social responsibility is a strong value for them, according to the branch manager. The importance of social responsibility came up even during the interview with the hotel chain Oktogon HR Manager. Hence, it seems that hotel chain Oktogon has succeeded in communicating their values throughout the organization.

“It [apprenticeship] sounded like something we want to be part of. The hotel could support the young people to integrate, and I think this possibility is not given in many places. Hotel chain Oktogon has long traditions in wanting to be part of societal things. This project could benefit the student, Me Osalliset and hotel chain Oktogon. We were not forced to participate from the side of hotel chain Oktogon, even though all the branches are encouraged to take part in this kind of actions.” (Branch A manager, 2019)

4.3.1.1 The Apprenticeship and employment process

Branch A describes the cooperation with Tekijätori very easy and smooth. Hence, it was easy to build trust between them. Furthermore, the fact that they could contact Tekijätori or the student’s parents when needed, created a safe environment. In the first meeting with the project coordinator from Osalliset they discussed practicalities about the apprenticeship. Because the Branch A didn’t have any previous experience of employees with intellectual disabilities, they were discussing how to communicate with the person, how to teach new things in a best way, and also practical things about the work – what kind of tasks are possible and should the counsellor be present during the whole apprenticeship or not. In the end the counsellor from school was there for the two first days. The role of the counsellor was to ensure that the student was feeling safe and everything starts well according to the branch manager. The branch manager
experienced, that the counsellor would not be needed when the base work is done well, and they have met the student and got through everything. From their point of view, it was good that there was someone to bring the student to work and pick her up after work, as the student was under 18 during the apprenticeships and the branch was responsible for her. Even Branch A did not report of any bigger fears, it seemed to be important that they knew that if there would be any problems, there would be someone to help.

“We started the planning of the apprenticeship based on what Tekijäntori has told us, for example how the person learns best. We needed to understand that when the work environment is busy, we need to have time for explaining the student things carefully as she might not understand the instructions at the first time. This was also discussed with the other employees.” (Branch A manager 2019)

They also had a meeting with the student before the apprenticeship. In the meeting they discussed the personal goals and wishes of the student and had a job interview. The branch manager wanted to hold a job interview, so that the student would have a realistic experience about seeking for a job. He had asked about her goals for the apprenticeship and this had led to a discussion. Branch manager seemed to take the apprenticeship very seriously and was genuinely interested about offering a useful experience for the student.

“A 16 year old can already tell, what interests her. So that you can say by yourself what you want from the apprenticeship and it’s good for us to understand, what she wants. It was the first thing I asked her, what you want to gain from this apprenticeship. She couldn’t really answer at first, so then we got to discuss a bit what it could be, she wanted to have experience from work life and what could it be on this industry.” (Branch A manager, 2019)

The student conducted two apprenticeships and they both lasted two weeks. During the first apprenticeship the student was working in the dining room, during breakfast and lunch, and the other apprenticeship was conducted in housekeeping. They aimed to offer a valuable and wide experience for the student and show a lot of different tasks and interaction with different people. The branch manager seemed to really understand the motivation for the apprenticeship and what long-term effects it could have for the student and her personal career.

“Our primary goal was to show for the student, what is this work about and could it be something that she would like to do also in the future” (Branch A manager, 2019).

The branch manager seemed to find it important that the branch could offer the student the best possible experience, and they were not only interested about the work load she would do. As the work load was not the first priority, they could offer maybe a more versatile apprenticeship in terms of different tasks. Often this kind of possibilities might be challenging as the work in a hotel industry is hectic, but apparently it’s not impossible. The branch was still satisfied with the result of her work.
"The result of her work was good, even though she was quite slow, but one could see that the student is that kind of persons, who wants to do a good job. And of course it’s normal that a student worker is a bit slower, especially in a two weeks apprenticeship!" (Branch A manager, 2019)

Branch A considered the apprenticeship as a long term process, according to the branch manager. After the first apprenticeship the student had conducted another apprenticeship and also a week of summer work. This long term view on the apprenticeship differs Branch A from the Branch B and S. Even though Branch C wished to have more students for the apprenticeship, it was more from the work load point of view. Branch A seemed to think more about the benefits for both sides, also for the student and Tekijätori project in general in the branch A.

“It’s nice that there’s a long term point of view in the apprenticeships. Not like that you do a two week apprenticeship somewhere and then you do another apprenticeship in completely different area of work. More like, that the person is interested about the industry and the work what she is doing.” (Branch A manager, 2019)

Besides the long term benefits, Branch A was pleased with the results of the students work, even though she was not doing the work as fast as someone else would. They also recognized that the student was developing fast during the apprenticeships, and that she was interested to do her work well and she was motivated. For the Branch A it was important that the person was interested about the work, this was also mentioned by Branch B but not by hotel C. Branch A manager thought that the apprenticeship in the dining room was better for the student, as the work in housekeeping is extremely physical and though. They also experienced that in the dining room she could work more independently, which was important for the student and her benefit from the apprenticeship.

4.3.1.2 Challenges during the apprenticeship

Branch A experienced some challenges with the communication with the student in the beginning of the apprenticeship. They commented that a dialog required more concentrating and careful listening, and this could create additional stress in the hectic environment. On the other hand, they also got used to her way of speaking and as they got familiar with her, they could ask her to speak slowly in order to better understand if something was unclear.

“Understanding her, especially in the beginning, was challenging. A dialog required concentration and careful listening, and this can cause stress. On the other hand, we got used to it and with the time, we could also ask her to, for example, talk slowly if we didn’t understand something at first” (Branch A manager, 2019)

They also thought that the work was sometimes too though or days too long for the student and she got tired towards the end of the week. Especially the second
apprenticeship in housekeeping was physically though, and the five hour day seemed to be a bit too long. Branch A was the only hotel considering shorter work days as a possible option in the future. They also experienced that the first apprenticeship was more useful for the student and gained her more, as she could work independently in the dining room. The other two branches didn’t seem to have similar kind of interest in developing further their own practices. It might have an impact that the supervisor of the apprenticeship was the branch manager, as in his position it’s possible to involve the organization as a whole to the apprenticeship and observe the apprenticeship on a higher level than just a routine work tasks. He also has the power to include the apprenticeship as part of the branch’s long-term strategy.

4.3.1.3 Internal communication and integration

The branch manager describes that the planning of the apprenticeship might require a bit more effort than a ‘regular’ one, and also it was important to include the personnel in the planning phase. In Branch A the informing of the personnel about the upcoming apprenticeship was done in a discussion where they also included the personnel in planning of e.g. teaching methods for the student. The branch manager seemed to take it very seriously that everyone understands the special characters of the student and could behave in a right way, even when the work is hectic. Branch A was the only branch actively including the whole personnel to the planning and communicating about the student. Again, it can be that it’s because the branch manager was responsible for the apprenticeship and he had the possibility to ensure it and also he could understand that it’s important to communicate it.

"People might have some prejudices or attitudes about this person and that’s why we wanted to tell in advance, what kind of person is coming and what it might require from us. We also thought that it’s better to discuss through the things, so that there won’t be situations where someone don’t know how to act. We asked the responsible employees, what they thought that was a good way to act and planned this together" (Branch A manager, 2019)

Branch A also wanted that she would be treated equally with others and she would get the feeling of community. Branch A was the only hotel to name that it would be important that the student would feel like part of the community during the apprenticeship. Branch A seemed also to be the only hotel, which actively had supported the social inclusion. By active I mean that during the interview, the branch manager took this topic up and highlighted that it’s important for a student worker to be part of the work community.

"She felt like part of the community and we had good discussions with her. It is important that a trainee gets to be part of the community. The student also learnt to trust people and get to the community. She was social and happy." (Branch A manager, 2019)
The fact that the student was feeling as part of the work community came up even in the interviews with the student A and her counsellor. It might also have an impact that the student A didn’t have a counsellor after the first two days, so she needed to communicate with the personnel. Finally, the actions branch A did quite clearly communicates that the branch is willing to integrate diverse workers and it can succeed.

4.3.1.4 Long-term impact for the Branch A

Branch A thought that it would be possible to employ a person with intellectual disability after this experience, although it would be more realistic to employ someone who’s over 18 and maybe with relevant studies. Probably this apprenticeship had affected the positive attitude towards the employment and also gave a new perspective on the work tasks and how they can be adjusted. Most important in employment would be to find a suitable task with possible accommodations for the person’s individual needs.

“If the work tasks are too hard or too though, then you’re not able to do them in a long run. In our case, it’s important to be adult so that you can [legally] work also with customer service and at the bar side. I don’t see any problems there, we just would need to find a suitable task for the person [with ID].” (Branch A manager, 2019)

Branch A commented that this apprenticeship gave them a new perspective on their own work and they felt that they had learn a lot about themselves and people with ID in general. It was also something they came to think that people with ID might have a huge potential in some areas, even they might need extra support in other areas. Branch A thought that the experience did develop them as an employer, which was something they might not have thought when entering the project. It also made them to consider e.g. work and their procedures from a new viewpoint. It seems that also they as employer benefit most from the apprenticeship, compared to the other branches, because the whole organization was committed to the apprenticeship, and the apprenticeship was part of the high management agenda.

“We learnt something about ourselves and our attitudes towards people, and we could consider our work in a different way. One can reflect, what are we actually doing and what’s important, this develops us as an employer.” (Branch A manager, 2019)

For the branch manager it was important that the apprenticeship would be a positive experience for the student, and this could be seen in the apprenticeship. I got a picture that he had been thinking the apprenticeship and different factors related to it a lot. Branch A also seemed to think that it was important that the project was carried further to other branches in hotel chain Oktogon. Branch A got a lot of positive feedback from
the hotel chain Oktogon as they were the first ones to join this project, according to the branch manager.

“It is great that hotel chain Oktogon did join this project and we got also a lot of positive feedback for joining this. First step to join this kind of project, it may not be our area of expertise to handle people with special needs, and personally I might not at first know how to do it. I also learnt a lot of myself, which was great. I would definitely join the project again, and I hope for further cooperation.” (Branch A manager, 2019)

4.3.1.5 Development points

In general Branch A thought that everything had went so well that there was not much to develop. The branch A manager thought that maybe could have taught even more tasks during the dining room apprenticeship, as the student was so fast with her tasks. However, the apprenticeship lasted only two weeks so the time was quite limited. The branch manager had also thought, that the length of the work days could have been a bit shorter. For the future, he would consider very carefully, what kind of work enables holding breaks more flexibly. Work at restaurant and hotel industry is quite physical and heavy, however, there are lot of supportive work tasks, so it’s possible to adjust the work and break it into smaller pieces. Branch A was in a bit different position compared to Branch B and C, as they had had two apprenticeships and a summer job with a same student. Because of this Branch A had the possibility to do minor changes during the apprenticeships and develop their procedures. Branch A was also the only hotel who had done changes to e.g. work tasks. They had also thought more development points, compared to Branch B and C.

Branch manager’s development idea for Tekijätori was that they could discuss more with the students about their goals for the apprenticeship. He had discussed about that with the student during the interview, but he thought it would be useful for them to be aware of their personal goals even before the apprenticeship in order to benefit more from it. Then also the employer could take into account, what does the student want to learn and what are their goals. The hotel manager was not aware that they discuss about these things at school quite a lot, but on the other hand, the student was not aware of her personal goals in the job interview, which would be good in an interview.

“They could rather discuss that in advance, instead of us telling, what we have to offer for them. Maybe it would be easier for them to think, what they would like to learn [in the apprenticeship]. Of course we are going to teach our basic things here, but we could also teach those skills they wish to learn. Maybe they could even discuss more about these things at school.” (Branch A manager, 2019)
4.3.2 Student A

The student A had conducted two times a two weeks apprenticeships and also a week of summer job in the Branch A. The first apprenticeship was done in the dining room and it was part of the 10th class of secondary school. The second apprenticeship was conducted in housekeeping and it was part of vocational studies, the student did a competence demonstration in the end of the apprenticeship. The summer job was conducted in the dining room and the student was receiving same level of salary as other employees.

4.3.2.1 The Apprenticeship as an experience

The student A had a very positive picture of the both apprenticeships, she enjoyed especially the first apprenticeship conducted in the dining room. She experienced the tasks easy and the studies had supported the apprenticeships, as they had been practicing such a tasks at school. She enjoyed more the tasks in the first apprenticeship compared to the second one, even though she didn’t complain about the housekeeping tasks either. She did not comment or couldn’t recall if there was anything challenging or hard during the apprenticeship. What could be noticed in the interviews with both student A and C, they didn’t say anything negative and refused that the work would have been hard, or that they were tired and wanted more breaks.

Student A didn’t remember that much about the first meeting, as the first apprenticeship was two years ago. Only that they had asked her many questions and she was in the meeting with her teacher. She will be conducting another apprenticeship in the hotel C, shortly after the interview – now in cooperation with Tekijätori, and she could tell more about the meeting for this apprenticeship. She could recall to the meeting with a teacher, where they had discussed about the tasks and also had a tour in the workplace, and went through the tasks together. It seems that she had quite active role in the meetings, and she was not only listening passively. She did not remember which goals they would have discussed in the meeting or at school for a single apprenticeship. She was still aware that they had discussed about goals in the school and could list important things and skills to remember in the apprenticeship, as they had practiced them in school. During the first apprenticeship she was in primary school, and now in vocational school, which could influence that she was more aware about the skills and goals for the apprenticeship now.

“Before an apprenticeship we discuss all the things [goals of the apprenticeship], and also like good manners and how to dress. Also some things for the competence demonstration, like I have [done] for example mopping the floor, hoovering, and maintenance” (Student A, 2019)
She had liked the most the first apprenticeship in the dining room, compared to the second one in housekeeping. She would describe more the tasks in the dining room, and she named even her favourite tasks there. However, in housekeeping she was not commenting too much of the tasks, so I believe that she had felt housekeeping not as pleasant as the dining room. She would still comment that the employer, she was working with during the housekeeping apprenticeship, was very nice and helped her. When commenting the role of her counsellor, she said that the counsellor was only watching and helped her if she was asking for it. With other words, the counsellor's role was very passive, as it was supposed to be and the student was not expecting the counsellor to take active role in the apprenticeship.

In the end she had received very good feedback and as she had conducted two apprenticeships and short period of summer job, one could see that the Branch A was satisfied with her. During the summer job she had received salary for the work. Student experienced that she had developed during the apprenticeships, and it had shown at the summer job in the dining room.

"Well efficiency I guess [had developed], I needed to be hard working" (Student A, 2019)

4.3.2.2 Integration to the workplace

During the interview I got a picture that she had enjoyed her time, and had interacted quite much with the other employees. This could be a sign of successful integration from the side of the Branch A. The student A was also very happy with the workplace and commented that the hotel manager was super nice.

"I think there was a nice personnel. They were funny, nice and had a good sense of humour" (Student A, 2019)

4.3.2.3 Long-term impact for the student

She seemed to be independent and had worked without a counsellor, if she was not sure about something she would ask for the personnel. In general, student A seemed to have quite much career plans and she had already created a CV, and had worked with similar kind of tasks after this apprenticeship. She commented that she is interested to work in the hotel or restaurant branch even in the future and she would be happy to work in the same branch again. She didn’t have any critic for the branch A about the apprenticeship, or work itself.

Student A would do her next apprenticeship in the Branch C in housekeeping and she was looking forward to learn new areas of cleaning tasks. By the fact that she had gotten
a new apprenticeship place in the same hotel chain, it can be claimed that the first apprenticeship had benefit her career path. In the next apprenticeship she will have a counsellor during the whole time, because branch C was wishing for that. She has experience in those tasks and last time she didn’t have a counsellor, and her parents had informed the school that she could be working independently, and stressed the point that the counsellor should not do the student’s work. She seemed to be quite active and independent, and one could see that she was used to work independently and without a counsellor. It might have influenced that she had worked a lot without a counsellor even before and was used to interact with the personnel.

“I still ask for help if I need it” (Student A, 2019)

From this viewpoint it’s interesting that the branch C is still requiring a counsellor for her, as if they would not trust in her previous experience. Also, she has previous experience from the same hotel chain, so isn’t branch C aware of this and have they been in contact with branch A about her previous apprenticeships. It seems that a student with ID and relevant work experience is not trusted in a same way as other people, even though the employer in this case has experience from another student with ID.

### 4.3.3 Counsellor Branch A

The counsellor participated the student’s first apprenticeship in the Branch A. She joined the student in the first meeting with the employer, and also stayed for the first two days with the student. The counsellor worked in the student’s school of that time.

The counsellor stayed in the first apprenticeship conducted in the dining room for two days, mostly to see that everything starts well and to be able to support during the introduction. She participated in the meeting with the Branch A and student, and she highlighted the counsellor’s role in listening the instructions about the tasks and see if the student had understood them. Then she would break the message into smaller pieces, and then explain for the student again. The counsellor thought that her role was most important in the beginning, and helping the student to understand everything so that she could then work successfully. This way she was ensuring that the apprenticeship begins well, and both the employer and the student knows what to do and how to act.

“In general in apprenticeships with students who are independent and manage to work alone, it’s very important to listen the instructions in the beginning, as a counsellor, so that you can explain them. Often in the workplaces, who have not met people with ID, they give instructions very fast. They can’t take into account everything, and like the student maybe doesn’t understand everything at first.” (Counsellor branch A, 2019)
During the first day they were analysing, how long workdays should be and what are the actual tasks. She thinks that the student was doing well and developing fast in her tasks, even better than the branch might have expected. It is often needed that a professional counsellor is present in the beginning of the apprenticeship, if the companies have not had contact with employees with ID before.

“They did not guess that she was so skilled and competent. When you talk about people with intellectual disabilities, the variation can be huge. We needed to come up with some additional tasks for her [as she was so quick]” (Counsellor branch A, 2019)

The counsellor thought that important during the first day was to encourage the student to work even harder and send her to ask for additional tasks from the personnel, if she had conducted the previous ones. By doing this she was encouraging the student to be independent also letting her to interact with the personnel, instead of the counsellor being in-between the personnel and the student. During the second day, the counsellor was not giving instructions to her, but was just passively following her tasks. In general her role was very passive during the two days, only in the beginning she was more actively helping in case the student, for example, didn’t remember everything. As a professional, the counsellor was also pointing out, how important it is to remain passive and let the student be in the active role. The counsellor was the one evaluating, for how long she would be needed at the apprenticeship and evaluating, when the student would manage to stay there alone.

“At one point, I knew that she will manage everything independently. So she remembers what her tasks are and if she don’t know something, she can go and ask for help, so I knew she could be there on her own. There was also one employee who was responsible for her, and who could tell her what to do.” (Counsellor branch A, 2019)

There were no major challenges during the two first days, from the viewpoint of the counsellor. She commented that maybe the counsellor needed to encourage the student to work even harder during the first day, and maybe the work days were a bit too long and though for the student. In this she had similar thought as the branch A manager. But she also thought that the student also got used to the new work, so this was not a remarkable challenge.

4.3.3.1 Impact of the counsellor’s role

The role and behaviour of the counsellor has a big impact on the student’s experience in the apprenticeship. If the counsellor is taking too active role, the student’s role becomes more passive because the counsellor is taking the active role between the student and the personnel and workplace. This could even affect, how the students in Branch A and C...
had experienced the inclusion and feeling of community at work. Student in the Branch A felt that she was part of the community, and she commented that the best part of the apprenticeship, was the nice colleagues with sense of humour. This implicates that she has been interacting with the personnel quite much. Also her counsellor commented that it felt that they were immediately part of the community at the hotel A, and the personnel was welcoming. Whereas student in Branch C commented that the personnel was nice but he did not discuss with them that much, and he thought it was not important to even do that. This implicates that he was not feeling as part of the community, and one reason could be that the counsellor was with him all the time and also the counsellor was the one communicating with the personnel. Whereas, the counsellor in Branch A encouraged the student to, e.g. ask for help from the personnel if she didn’t know something. I did not interview the student from Branch B so it can’t be said, how he felt the relationship with the personnel. However, through the interview with the supervisor of the apprenticeship, one could get some kind of picture of the role of the counsellor.

“When the personnel was having a morning meeting, they invited us with them to the meeting as part of the personnel. In that kind of things I could recognize that they were not thinking like, ‘what are those guys doing here’, but instead they wanted us to join them” (Counsellor branch A, 2019)

4.3.3.2 Tekijätori experienced as a counsellor

In general she thought that Tekijätori was a good project as it was looking for different kind of work opportunities for student’s wit ID, and also presents these possibilities for the companies. She also commented that as the resources of a teacher are quite limited, it’s good that Tekijätori can support the teacher in finding places for apprenticeships. Tekijätori had also held a class about apprenticeships and personal career goals in the school where she’s working. According to the counsellor, they are discussing quite much about the future goals and goals of the apprenticeships in school, and about everyone’s personal career dreams, but it’s often hard to get proper answers from the students. Branch A had commented that the student didn’t know her personal goals for the apprenticeship, so it’s hard to say how much they are actively discussing in schools.

4.3.3.3 Long-term benefits

The counsellor thought that the apprenticeship was useful and would support the student in her future workplaces and career. She was especially impressed because of the versatility of the apprenticeship, as they were offering various tasks for the student. As she commented, it’s not always possible to get as fruitful apprenticeships for students because of the lack of resources at schools. The counsellor also experienced that the
Branch A had communicated everything well and the communication with the student was smooth and clear, and adjusted to her level.

“This [apprenticeship] was different and versatile. Usually were are in some grocery store organizing the shelves, but here we had different tasks during the day. Even there were not many customers, we could still practice how to behave in customer situations, and also how to take care of hygiene”. (Counsellor branch A, 2019)

The counsellor thought that the student could be employed in this kind of job in the future, and she thought the apprenticeship had a long term value. According to her opinion, the student would fit well in supportive tasks, as helping with the dishes or cleaning the tables. This would be useful for the company, as then other employees could take care of other tasks.

“Yes, I think she would be useful in this kind of supportive tasks. Like if you think about the dining room, there are task like dishes, cleaning the tables and so on – so the other employees could do something else then.” (Counsellor branch A, 2019)

4.4 Case Branch B

Case Branch B was also cooperating with Tekijätori. In the case B I interviewed only a head of the kitchen from branch B, as she was the supervisor of the apprenticeship. Additionally, I got a comment from the branch B manager, regarding the employment of person with ID. Branch B had a counsellor from the student’s school, instead of Tekijätori.

4.4.1 The Branch B

4.4.1.1 The Apprenticeship and employment process

The employment process in the Branch B had started with a meeting between the branch manager and Tekijätori. The head of the kitchen had not participated this meeting, as she joined the project later on as a supervisor of the apprenticeship. The branch B manager did not have time for an interview, which might communicate that she was not as involved in the apprenticeships as in the case of branch A.

After the first meeting the student, counsellor and branch manager did come to the kitchen, where the student would conduct his apprenticeship. The head of the kitchen was the one deciding the tasks and discussing with the counsellor about the accommodations and other practicalities. The head of the kitchen was also introducing the tasks for the student, and his counsellor would only help them if needed. The student was immediately having an active role in the apprenticeship, and the counsellor was not acting as a link between the employer and the student. The role of the counsellor was in
general quiet passive, she was supporting the both parties only when needed. After the first week the counsellor was mostly spending time in different room than the student.

“The counsellor was needed sometimes for the introduction or to help, for example in teaching and how to give instructions or if something didn’t go right in the first time. The counsellor was present during the whole apprenticeship, but often waited somewhere else. I was looking after [the student]” (Head of the kitchen branch B, 2019)

During the apprenticeship, the tasks were adjusted according to the student’s skills and development. The head of the kitchen pointed out many times that the student was very hard working, and also eager to help and learn new things. He was actively asking for new tasks after he completed the first ones. Here one can see that the student was interacting with the personnel himself, and not ‘through’ the counsellor, as he was independently asking for new tasks.

“We were looking, what was easy for him and what was too hard. He would learn everything, even sometimes I would need to follow him and advise him again. If he didn’t understand something, I would show myself as an example. He was trying very hard, even if something would be challenging.” (Head of the kitchen branch B, 2019)

In the end the hotel had given positive feedback for the student and also the counsellor had given positive feedback for the branch B, they would continue the cooperation. In general, the Branch B was pleased with the student and his positive attitude, they were valuing his willingness to work hard. The head of the kitchen thought that even though she needed to follow sometimes, what the student was doing and he was not fully independent, he was still for help. She also noticed that the student had no previous experience of this kind of work, but after the apprenticeship he had learnt some basic level skills. In my opinion, the head of the kitchen had quite high requirements, and it’s hard to say if the head of the kitchen was comparing this skill level to other trainee level employees or to the fully professional employees. However, the head of the kitchen was not completely convinced, if the kitchen was the most suitable place for this kind of apprenticeships as the work there was very hectic. She would rather recommend e.g. cleaning or garage work, where the tempo is easier to adjust. In general she though that this kind of apprenticeships were important and it was valuable to support people with ID.

4.4.1.2 Challenges during the apprenticeship

There were no major challenges during the apprenticeship. Communication with the student was mostly smooth, but sometimes it caused stress for the employees. The counsellor had been for help, as the counsellor had advised the head of the kitchen that it’s good to talk a bit slower when explaining something, if the student doesn’t
understand something right away. The head of the kitchen though that it was good that the counsellor was present, as the counsellor could give professional tips. The head of the kitchen commented however, that sometimes the student did not want to communicate or he didn’t answer to something.

“It was not that hard to discuss with him, but you needed to talk slowly and sometimes wait for his answers. I understand well, how you need to discuss [with him]. If it [communication] was hard, I could call the counsellor who would then explain for the student.” (Head of the kitchen branch B, 2019)

“I’m not a professional or a teacher, so it can be hard to know, how you should communicate slower or repeat many times. I should have known beforehand better how to give instructions. But the counsellor gave advices, and the next week also went a lot better” (Head of the kitchen branch B, 2019)

There were some challenges regarding the fact that the student was insecure about his skills and also that he experienced the work though. The challenges that the head of the kitchen named were that there need to be someone advising him almost all the time. So the student was requiring a bit more resources than another trainee would. Here one should remember that he was doing only a two weeks apprenticeship, maybe he would have developed even more independent during a longer apprenticeship and according to the Branch B, he was already developing during the two weeks. The head of the kitchen also commented that sometimes he wanted to have more breaks between working, than was agreed on. The student also was sometimes afraid that he wouldn’t be able to do something that was part of his tasks. This sounds quite normal for someone who’s in for the first time in a new workplace, so I’m not considering this as a major challenge.

“He sometimes thought that he couldn’t do something, and then you need to encourage him to continue. He also wanted to have breaks — then I needed to say that we will have the breaks according to the timetable. He also sometimes was refusing to do something, when he was really tired.” (Head of the kitchen branch B, 2019)

Additionally, the head of the kitchen had been a bit afraid before the apprenticeship, if she would need to look after the student all the time. The fact that the counsellor was present during the beginning would relief her stress, as she knew that she would not be alone with the student. Both Branch A and B seemed to be happy that there were some experts giving advices, at least in the beginning of the apprenticeship, as none of the branches had experiences with employees with ID. Branch C did not need advices as the counsellor was taking care of the communication with the student C. It seems that the branch, as an employer, gained more when they were actively interacting with the student, while the counsellor was more passive. This way the head of the kitchen also got to analyse her ways of working and explaining things, and she learnt how to better communicate with different kind of employees.
4.4.1.3 Integration and internal communication

In the Branch B the social inclusion was successful with the student, even though the branch didn’t seem to plan it as purposefully as the Branch A did. It still seemed that it was important that he was working among the other employees, and the head of the kitchen had noticed that he became more social and talkative during the apprenticeship. If they didn’t pay attention to his communication, they would not have noticed this improvement. The head of the kitchen also recognized that the student was developing fast with the interaction with others. First week he didn’t discuss a lot with other employees, but during the second week he was more social. Probably also the fact that the counsellor was not present in the same room where the student was working, affected him being more proactive and interacting with others.

“He had developed during the second week, at first he was shy and quiet. During the second week he was more open and knew a lot more. He tried to help as best as he could, even though he had no experience of the tasks. He tried to ask all the time if he can help with something or what he can do next. He was interested about the work, and also hard working.” (Head of the kitchen branch B, 2019)

In the Branch B they had had a discussion with the personnel about the upcoming apprenticeship and what kind of student will be coming. The head of the kitchen seemed to think that it would be best for the student, if everyone knew that the student might be slower and also, the personnel could then better take him into account when working with him. Also, she always reminded the personnel to take him into consideration, if they would work with him when she was not present. Probably the advices from the counsellor and from the first meeting supported this behaviour, and they had ensured that the head of the kitchen would be aware of how to behave with this student and she could advise others as well.

“When there was a new team coming, for example, to dining room, I would say that take him with you and talk to him and advise him. The others said that he would help and follow them. It’s very busy at work, so there’s not much time to talk, but he was doing okay.” (Head of the kitchen branch B, 2019)

4.4.1.4 Long-term impact for the Branch B

The head of the kitchen was a bit sceptical towards the idea of employing a person with ID after this experience, at least on the kitchen side. She thought that the biggest problems would be that the employee must be very effective and fast, as the company don’t want to use extra money. She had a good point that often finding a suitable salary can be challenging. If the person is very slow at work, he can’t receive same but hourly salary as others, but what then is a decent salary for work. Salary questions are one of the many reasons, why we would need more flexibility to working policies on society
level. Also, it’s hard to say, if the head of the kitchen understood, because of a language barrio, that the question about employment was including people with ID in general, also adults with relevant education, and not only this exact person who was 16 and conducted the apprenticeship with no previous experience. After a while she added that maybe a person with ID could work in other kinds of tasks in the Branch B, for example with cleaning or supportive work, as it would be less hectic. However, she was very positive towards the idea that people with ID are employed in companies, and valued the fact that they are hardworking and willing to work. Later on I received a comment from the branch B manager for this question, and she was more positive towards the employment. The branch B manager probably better represents the branch level opinion about the employment, but I wouldn’t bypass the other opinion either. The branch manager might also want to give an answer that is nice and in line with the company values, whereas the other answer represents the realistic situation. However, branch B had continued with several similar kind of projects, by the time of the comment of the branch manager they had four students conducting an apprenticeship, and Tekijätori even after this apprenticeship, so they are willing to support the employment of people with ID.

“The company can’t use the money, even though I like him a lot [the student], you need to work really fast. He could fit somewhere else, where you can work in your own speed, you also need to find a suitable task. He was very talented, but the kitchen was not a right place. Maybe some cleaning or warehouse work.” (Head of the kitchen branch B, 2019)

“I don’t know if it’s [employment] is actual for now, but we absolutely do have work tasks that would be suitable for persons in need of special support. We are all different, and especially then the apprenticeships are important, so that we can see how everything works for the both parties [company and employee]. We have continued cooperation [with Tekijätori] and at the moment we are also having a project, where 4 youth in need of special support are doing an apprenticeship here at the breakfast with two teachers. It’s going great!” (Branch B manager, 2019)

4.4.1.5 Development points

The head of the kitchen underlined the importance of knowing the person’s qualifications and preferences. She thought that it’s central to be aware of the person’s strengths and interest, in order to have a valuable apprenticeship, and this also enables most efficient working. One should also be careful with the accommodations, so that the tasks are suitable for the person conducting the apprenticeship. Especially, in case of this apprenticeship, she thought that it’s important to understand, for example that he didn’t enjoy interacting with customers. When knowing this, the employer could take this into account and give tasks that required less of interaction with the customers. This was a valuable point about accommodating the work tasks according to the personal needs and skills, and choosing the tasks that are in line with the person’s own preferences. Before
doing the accommodations one should carefully find out the person’s preferences and skills, as the head of the kitchen pointed out.

4.5 Case Branch C

Within the case branch C I interviewed one person from the branch C and the student C. Branch C is represented by a head of the kitchen, who was the supervisor of the apprenticeship. Branch C had been cooperating with a local school instead of Tekijätori and Me Osalliset. This allows me to compare the apprenticeship practices within branch C in relation to the case branches A and B, which had cooperated with Tekijätori.

4.5.1 The Branch C

The process with the local school was still quite similar as in the cases cooperating with Tekijätori. The process started with a meeting between the teacher, student C and the head of the kitchen. In the first meeting they didn’t have an interview for the student, but the discussion was regarding mostly the tasks, what they the student will do and other practicalities. Additionally, the school had stressed the point that they wish that the student will be treated equally and he would be part of the community. They were also introducing the tasks for the counsellor of the student, so that the counsellor could introduce the tasks for the student when the apprenticeship starts.

The student had his own counsellor from the school supporting him during the whole apprenticeship. The role of the counsellors was quite active in the branch C, compared to the branch A and B. The counsellor was introducing the tasks for the student C, encouraging him and even doing some small tasks while the student was doing his own work. At one point the counsellor changed and after that, the counsellor did not do the work anymore. This seemed to disappoint the head of the kitchen as he had been pleased with the two new employees, even though he did not say it straight away. In contrast to this, I claim that the school had not communicated clearly, what is the role of the counsellor, and the counsellor is not supposed to work at the branch but is there to support the student.

“He [the student C] was for big help. Also the counsellor was super effective. At one point the counsellor changed and after that, the counsellor did not do the work anymore. This seemed to disappoint the head of the kitchen as he had been pleased with the two new employees, even though he did not say it straight away. In contrast to this, I claim that the school had not communicated clearly, what is the role of the counsellor, and the counsellor is not supposed to work at the branch but is there to support the student.” (Head of the kitchen branch C, 2019)

There were also differences in what kind of advices the branches received in the first meeting. The local school did not inform the branch C, how to conduct the introduction of work or how to communicate with the student. Branches A and B, who were
cooperating with Tekijätori, reported that they had received advices for the introduction and how to teach new things in a most effective way. The branch C did not receive this kind of advices, and the counsellor was responsible for the introduction of the work tasks. From the beginning, the idea was that the counsellor will introduce the work and guide the student instead of the personnel within branch C. Branch C was the only employer who did not introduce the work tasks by themselves.

Branch C had received a lot of positive feedback from the school, especially for taking the student Co well in consideration, according to the head of the kitchen. Also the student had given positive feedback for the apprenticeship. The head of the kitchen could not tell if the student had developed a lot in his daily tasks during the apprenticeship as he was not following his tasks that much, but he was pleased with the result of the work. They had not considered to add tasks or change them during the apprenticeship, as this was not discussed or part of the original plan.

The head of the kitchen thought that the apprenticeship was useful for the student as he had learned a lot about basic work tasks in the dining room. He commented furthermore, that the student C had developed to a more independent employee during the two months apprenticeship. The head of the kitchen could comment this, even though they had not followed the development that much. The head of the kitchen had also recognized that the student was motivated and interested to do the work. The student had a good attitude and he was ready to learn new tasks, and the result of his work was good. Branch C found it useful to get to know the local school and create a contact there.

“They [student and the counsellor] were for great help, there’s always need for some additional workers. Also the result of the work was good, he worked carefully” (Head of the kitchen branch C, 2019)

4.5.1.1 Integration and internal communication

Branch C had no clear plan for the integration of the student, and they did not actively try to integrate him, as in the branch B and A. Furthermore, the personnel was not either included in the planning or other phases of the apprenticeship. The head of the kitchen quickly informed the personnel about the upcoming apprenticeship and how to behave, but there was no further discussion about that. It seems that the personnel did not interact with the student that much, which is probably due to the lack of information and attempts to integrate the student C.
“It’s so hectic here [at work], so I just told in general that there will be coming a student from this school. I said that the student needs to be treated equally with everyone else working here.” (Head of the kitchen branch C, 2019)

Additional challenge for the integration was that the counsellor took a very active role and was taking care of the communication between the student and the employer. This hinders the student’s integration to the workplace, as the student had a passive role in relation to others.

Different compared to branch A and B was that there was no meeting with only the teacher and the branch C, even though this was a new cooperation partner for the school. One would think that the school wants to properly go through the practicalities and also the policies with apprenticeships. If there was this kind of meeting, the head of the kitchen was not aware of that. All in all, the beginning of the process seemed to be simpler and it was not discussed in the same way in the whole organization, as in the case of branch A. This might be because the supervisor of the apprenticeship was a head of the kitchen and not a hotel manager. The position of the supervisor seems to influence how the personnel was informed. A branch manager might have more insights about recruitment and also different kind of power to set a meeting, compared to a head of kitchen.

4.5.1.2 Challenges

The challenges reported, were mostly regarding the fact that the student was experiencing the work quite though, and he wanted to have more breaks. This seems to be in common with all of the case apprenticeships. The head of the kitchen thought that he would not have worked as much without the counsellor encouraging him, because the work was too tough. They did not consider shorter work days as a solution to this, but the head of the kitchen let them to take breaks more often. He didn’t experience any challenges with the communication with the student C, but at the same time, it’s hard to know if he did communicate with the student that much without the counsellor being present.

Before the apprenticeship the head of the kitchen had been a bit afraid, if the personnel would need to look after the student all the time, but the counsellor took an active role, which relieved the stress. It seems that both the branch B and C have been afraid, whether they have time to do their own work besides looking after the student. In general, the work in a restaurant kitchen is very hectic and requires a lot of attention, so
it might be better if someone else than the head of the kitchen was supervising the students.

“In the beginning I was a bit afraid if I need to be with the student all the time, but then I got to know that the counsellor will be present the whole time, so everything was okay. I was afraid if there would occur an accident, this work is quite hectic so I might not always have time. That’s why the counsellor also was there, in case something would happen” (Head of the kitchen branch C, 2019)

Additionally, there were problems with the communication between the school and the head of the kitchen, as the school did not communicate clearly if the student was absent or sick some days. The head of the kitchen said that some days the student just didn’t appear at work. The lack of communication is a major problem in this kind of cooperation, and it also harms the reputation of the student conducting the apprenticeship.

4.5.1.3 Development points

Branch C did not have any development points, as they thought that the first apprenticeship had went well enough. This opinion maybe reflects that they have not been analysing the apprenticeship very carefully, and they were mainly interested about the work load instead of the overall impact. Compared to the branch A and B, branch C seemed to think less about the student’s position and the student as part of the work community. The apprenticeship seemed to be more like a separate happening in the branch C, and not something that would have long term impact and benefits for the branch.

All in all, the branch C was very happy with the apprenticeship, and they wished to have more students from the local school, but the school was not contacting them after the apprenticeship as promised. This might be due to the lack of resources at school or a change of a teacher. Later on I was informed that now the branch C is also cooperating with Tekijätori. This points out that the work Tekijätori does might provide a solution for schools as they take care of managing the relationships with the companies.

4.5.1.4 Long-term effects

The head of the kitchen in the Branch C thought that it would be possible to employ a person with ID, based on this experience. Probably this apprenticeship had affected his opinion in a positive way. He also thought that it depends a lot about the person as the restaurant industry is quite though.
“Everything is possible [the employment], but the level of the intellectual disability needs to be taken into account, like is the person able to work independently. This industry and work includes a lot of independent work tasks, you need to be able to do fast decisions and also problem solving. Of course there are also tasks like, taking care of the dishes, cutting the vegetables etc., which could be possible.” (Head of the kitchen branch C, 2019)

In general, the branch C seemed to value more the work load and results, and not the long-term learning goals for themselves as an employer, like in the branch A. It could be that the branch C manager would have a different opinion but I never got a chance to interview the manager. This might reveal that the manager was not very involved into the apprenticeship, or didn’t consider it as important. Compared to the branch A, branch B and C had not thought the long term benefits, for the student and his career. This might be because of the position of the supervisors of the apprenticeship, a branch manager needs to think about long term goals at his work, whereas that’s not as relevant for a head of the kitchen. However, branch C later on started a cooperation with Tekijätori, so they were interested to support this kind of activity.

4.5.2 Student C

4.5.2.1 The Apprenticeship as an experience

Student C told that he had first visited the branch with his counsellor, but he did not recall any details from the meeting. This could implicate that his role in the meeting was quite passive and he did not need to concentrate on anything special, like a job interview or introduction of the tasks. The counsellor had mainly talked with the branch representative.

He could remember well all the tasks he had during the apprenticeship and even his favourite tasks. In my opinion it was positive that he could name some of his favourite tasks at work, as this tells that he had own opinions and preferences about the work. This again is important when choosing the next workplace, and thinking about the personal career path. He also commented that he was the one doing his tasks and the counsellor was only watching. He had not experienced anything especially challenging or anything he could not do. The counsellor or the branch had not suggested more tasks during the time, which might have been possible during such a long apprenticeship.

“Nothing felt too hard. There was something I needed to learn, but nothing special” (Student C, 2019).

“My favourite task was cleaning, and I was especially good at cleaning the tables” (Student C, 2019)

He did not either name any situations where he would have needed help from the personnel, so there probably were not much situations where the student would have
been asking for help from the personnel, but the counsellor was the one helping him when needed. This implicates that the counsellor had a quite active role during the apprenticeship as the student was not encouraged to interact with the personnel.

The student in Branch C seemed to feel pleased about the apprenticeship. He was describing even more positively the tasks and he had not experienced them though. Even some tasks were new, they didn’t feel too hard to learn. In the end he had received feedback from the head of the kitchen.

“In the end he [head of the kitchen] gave feedback. Quite good feedback and he praised me.”
(Student C, 2019)

4.5.2.2 Integration and communication

The student C felt that the personnel in branch C was nice and friendly, even it feels that he did not communicate with them that much. However, he didn’t think that it was too important to chat with other employees and he didn’t think that colleagues in general are something important at a workplace. This felt weird as the student is known to be quite social and socially talented in other contexts, and is good at making new friends. In my opinion this reflects that the branch C did not succeed in integration of the student as well as they could. Also the counsellor had not supported the integration in the best possible way.

4.5.2.3 Development points

Student C commented his apprenticeship that he could have worked without the counsellor being present all the time and having an active role. So the role of the counsellor could be more passive, this is something the school shall take into account when educating the counsellors. The student’s role remained more passive due to this, and he got not to try being more independent member of a work community, which should be one of the goals of an apprenticeship. Otherwise the student wouldn’t change anything, and he would be happy to work with similar tasks in the same hotel. He did not wish for more breaks or interaction with the personnel. Both of the students refused to say any development ideas or negative comments about the work. Would be interesting to know, if this is their real opinion or something they have learnt to avoid.

4.5.2.4 Long-term effects

One can state that the apprenticeship was useful for the student’s career and gained useful skills as the student has got a few more apprenticeships after the one in the branch
C. In the latter apprenticeships the student has had similar kind of cleaning tasks as in the branch C, and he has also done apprenticeships with a less support from a counsellor. All in all, the student would be happy to do another apprenticeship in the same place and he also got positive feedback from the head of the kitchen in the branch C. As the head of the kitchen also commented, he got to learn some useful basic skills. It’s hard to say if he was unhappy with anything with the apprenticeship, because he didn’t really comment on anything about that. Also, it was unclear if the student had discussed about his personal goals or wishes according to the apprenticeship, as he couldn’t recall them.

“In the future it’s important for me to get a new job and to get to different workplaces. Next I would like to do an apprenticeship in the same branch [C]” (Student C, 2019)

4.6 Summary

In this part all the results were presented. Key points of the interviews were already presented in the figure 3. Especially the 2nd Order Themes could be easily seen in the interviews with the interviewees. Based on the interviews, it seems clear that Tekijätori service is needed and benefits the people with ID, and also is a good and useful chance for employers to develop themselves.

Case branch A seemed to have most successful and fruitful experience with the apprenticeships, both for the employer and for the student. It seems that when the organization is fully committed to the apprenticeship and the apprenticeship was part of their high management agenda, the outcome were most beneficial for all parties. All of the three case apprenticeships were positive for the participants. The outcome level varied but at least the branches got additional work force, and the students learnt new work tasks and additional work experience to their CV.

In the next part the results are discussed referring to the relevant theory, presented earlier in the Literature review.
5 DISCUSSION

In the previous chapter the findings from the interviews were presented. The most central findings and themes were presented earlier in the Figure 3. In this chapter, I will analyse the findings further in relation to relevant theory in order to answer the research questions of my thesis. The research questions concern the employment process, employer and employee experiences and the integration of people with ID at workplace.

5.1 Aggregate Dimensions

While analysing the interviews, I identified four aggregate dimensions by adapting the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al. 2012). The four dimensions are: individuals with ID being active in questions concerning their life and future; on societal level, changing the stance towards people with ID; companies valuing and including diverse workforce, and finally, creating connections in new ways between NGO’s, schools and companies. All of these dimensions are considered more on a societal level, than on an individual or even on a company level. However, these dimensions affect the everyday life of people with ID as they are struggling with the consequences of these phenomena. Affecting these dimensions is a long-term process and cannot be done by one company, organization or person, but the change begins from the grass root level. This is the reason why the Tekijätori project is interesting as they are in the frontline of changing the current situation of people with ID.

Regarding my research questions, my findings cover information about the structure and nature of the employment process, as presented in the Findings. Furthermore, I have clarified how the employers and employees experience the employment process, and what kinds of elements affect their experience and opinions. I also discuss what kind of factors within the employer and Tekijätori service impact the integration to the workplace. Besides the findings relevant to my research questions, I made plenty of interesting notions, which I will discuss in the following chapters.

The 2nd Order Themes, presented in the Figure 4, are interesting as well because they are the tools for the change. They can be recognized and affected on an individual level, as in the case of branches A, B and C. In the next chapters, I will discuss further the Aggregate Dimensions, and some 2nd Order Themes related to them, as well as relevant theory from the literature review.
5.2 The active role of an individual

The first Aggregate Dimensions is “individuals with ID being active in questions concerning their life and future”. Central in the apprenticeships that Tekijätori arranges is that they support the student’s personal career path and provide tools for becoming an active member in relation to the work community. The apprenticeships are supportive factors for the student’s career path, as previous work experience supports the employment in salaried work. Even on this small scale, it could be seen that having a proper CV supports future employment. The students I interviewed had completed several apprenticeships, and they both had conducted several apprenticeships after the one in question and one of them even got a summer job. Salaried work is one of the factors enabling more independent life for an individual, as the individual is economically independent. It’s relevant, because people with ID may often lack control over their own lives, and their autonomy (Ellenkamp et al., 2015). Therefore, another important factor with Tekijätori apprenticeships is that they encourage the student to work independently, and to learn that he or she is capable of working without a counsellor. When students are working without a counsellor, the students are taking an active role and representing themselves.

5.2.1 Support for an individual

Tekijätori is ensuring that the apprenticeships are relevant for the student and the student receives individualized support when needed. The individual support is an important element in the service, as people with ID can have a huge variety of needs, which makes it impossible to fit them to a unified support system. This is relevant, as a huge problem in the current support systems offered by municipalities is that they don’t take into account the individual needs of people (Kela, 2018). Furthermore, an important point is that the apprenticeships are designed according to the student’s individual career path and they consider the student as an individual with own preferences and interests. The fact that people with ID have their own opinions like rest of people may often be forgotten. According to a research by Ekholm and Teittinen (2014), supportive elements for employment of people with ID are relevant apprenticeships, different kind of services including work coaches and subsidized salary. In this case as well, both of the students got another apprenticeships within the same industry after these apprenticeships, which signals that the apprenticeships were relevant. Considering all this, they seem to have realistic chances to get salaried work someday in the area of their studies.
As mentioned earlier, it is central with the apprenticeships that they support the student becoming a more independent member of a work community, and that the student feels that they can work without having a counsellor. However, I did not find any research or articles about, how to manage people with disabilities or intellectual disability as part of the work community, or how to develop their position. Also, research about diversity management is mostly concentrating on women or ethnical minorities and their position. As mentioned in the study by Ball et al. (2005), people with disabilities are mostly excluded or not mentioned in companies’ diversity policies, and it seems that they are excluded also from organizational research. This is an issue, as the same guidelines don’t apply for people with ID. Furthermore, it may be challenging to create coherent guidelines for people with ID, as they are such a heterogenous group with different needs and goals. When people with ID are considered as individuals, they have better possibilities to make decisions about their careers. Companies might lack the knowledge about making diversity management based on individual needs, as noted in the interview with Tekijätöri. In this respect Tekijätöri can advise companies, and support the position of employees with ID.

### 5.2.2 Student’s experiences

According to my findings, it isn’t uncommon that people with ID encounter prejudices and that their capability is questioned. In many cases the expertise of a counsellor plays a huge role, as the counsellor supports the student in proving his or hers capability and encourages interaction with the employer. The atmosphere and the company’s commitment to the apprenticeship also have a major influence in the experience. As argued in previous research (Vesala et al., 2016), people with ID encounter prevailing attitudes when trying to enter the labour market. The major negative experiences that came up were lack of trust in the capabilities of an employee with ID, as well as the counsellor of a student taking a too active role while the student remains in more of a passive role. Student A was experiencing lack of trust in her capability to work independently. She would conduct an apprenticeship in the branch C later on, and they were requiring her to have a counsellor present during the whole apprenticeship. It seems that a person with ID is less trustworthy as an employee, even though she has relevant experience. As noted in the case of student C, it is extremely important that a counsellor can provide suitable support and remains as passive as possible. A counsellor taking an active role hinders the student’s development towards being a more independent employee. Furthermore, it hinders the student’s integration to the work community, as could be recognised in case of branch C.
As noted in all of the interviews with the branches, the students had a very positive attitude towards work, and they were motivated and pleased with the work. The level of satisfaction seems to be related in the level of integration to the work community. According to the study (Työterveyslaitos, 2011; Vesala et al., 2016; Ellenkamp et al., 2015), employees with disability are very motivated and enthusiastic about their work. This seems to be in line even with the students in this case. Student A seemed to be even more pleased with the work community, compared to the student C. This could be due to the successful integration within branch A, which also indicates that when diversity management is part of high management agenda, even the employees benefit. The question is, how could this be communicated to employers in general, and would it make employees with ID more potential candidates. Motivated and loyal employees should be important and valuable for companies.

5.3 Society level stance

The second Aggregate Dimension is, “on societal level, changing the stance towards people with ID”. Winance (2016) notes that disability results from the practices of exclusion and discrimination, and not the person’s attributes. Therefore, intellectual disability is not a person’s attribute, but something that society around causes by discriminating and excluding the person. A person with intellectual disability is not disabled if society around creates possibilities and offers individual solutions for the person in order to live like other people around. In respect to these thoughts, it’s important to reflect upon and even question, how we as society consider and treat people with ID.

5.3.1 People with ID as a group

A major issue on the societal level is that the picture of people with ID is very narrow, and we consider them as a homogenous group of people. This leads to two problems: firstly, the support systems are not serving the individual needs because all the people are supposed to fit one support model (Kela, 2018). Secondly, because of the narrow mindset, we don’t see the possibilities, for example, in the companies for people with ID. Accordingly the Non-discrimination act (1325/2014) in Finland, authorities, education providers and employers shall evaluate the realisation of equality in their activities and take acts to promote the realisation, when necessary. I could claim that in many cases the Non-discrimination act is not being realized, and partly because we consider people with ID not as capable of being part of everyday activities, and because they usually are treated as objects of care. Considering how many hurdles people with ID face when
applying for jobs, I think there’s still a long way to go in order to achieve equality. As people with ID are not at all a homogenous group in terms of skills, needs and level of independency, it can be challenging for people who don’t know about intellectual disabilities to know, how to act and what to expect. This is noted even in the interviews, as Tekijätori commented that many of the employers have been surprised about the skills of someone and asked for a diagnosis. Also many of the employers, in the beginning of the cooperation with Tekijätori, don’t think that they can offer any kind of work for people with ID due to the lack of suitable tasks. This reflects, what a narrow picture many people have about people with ID, and how this picture hinders the people with ID from getting work. One of the most important outcomes of the Tekijätori service is that they are educating companies about people with ID, and showing the potential they have to offer for an employer. The apprenticeships have a great potential in influencing the attitudes of a huge amount of people, and making them more aware about people with ID. At the same time, employers can learn how to find suitable solutions for diverse employees within the company.

5.3.2 Prevailing attitudes and prejudices

My findings suggest that people with ID face hurdles because of prejudice and prevailing attitudes. In order to change attitudes, it’s central to provide more information for employers about people with ID. As studies claim (Vesala et al., 2016), employers are afraid that an employee with ID is more prone to accidents, have more sick leaves than others, and they also are easily left outside the work community. According to my findings, the importance of the counsellor is huge as they relieve the fears of an employer and the employer experiences the employment less risky. A counsellor further helps the employer to interact with the student, and to see the person and talent behind the diagnosis. Important is that the employer recognizes that an employee with ID has skills and knowhow, which makes him/her valuable for the employer.

It would be central to provide more information about the employees with ID to the employers, as this way their attitudes could be affected (Vesala et al., 2016). The apprenticeships in this case reflect that by learning about people with ID, the employer attitudes become more positive towards the employment of people with ID. Even though, none of the employers who participated Tekijätori had a negative attitude towards employees with ID before the experience, after the apprenticeship they became more open for the idea of employment. This is a concrete example of how Tekijätori is successfully affecting the employer attitudes and presenting people with ID as potential
candidates. In long-term, this kind of project may have a huge impact on the employment rate of people with ID. Even though one service provider has a small impact, the example might inspire and encourage others as well.

5.3.3 How work is considered

The idea of work and how it’s organized should become more flexible, so that diverse employees would be able to do it. Tekijätori apprenticeship may provide employers new insights about the idea of work, and educate them how to accommodate work in new ways. By affecting the big companies, it’s possible to change the standard for how is work considered, and who is considered to be capable of doing it. Winance’s (2016) thought about the concept of disability and exclusion can be adapted to the concept of work as well. Even Goffman (1963) has stated that people with disabilities suffer from a social stigma, because they fail to meet the norms of society. A person with ID can work if they are given the chance to do it, and the requirements are adapted to the individual. As even the branch A manager stated, the apprenticeships made them to reflect on their idea of work, and reconsider themselves as an employer and how the work is organized. Furthermore, the HR manager of Hotel chain Oktogon commented that they try to create such a frameworks that make it possible to organize work in a flexible way and adapt to more individual needs. When employers are open to try new ways of organizing work, people with different skill levels and needs are able to do it, and new possibilities are created for people with ID. Big actors, like Hotel chain Oktogon, have the power to act as examples in how the work is organized for the rest of the industry.

5.4 Companies and diversity

The third Aggregate Dimension is “companies valuing diversity and including diverse workforce”. In order to motivate employers to join, it is important that the Tekijätori apprenticeships provide some outcome for the employer as well. Accordingly the interviews, it seemed that when an organization was highly committed to the apprenticeship, the outcomes were more beneficial. The most remarkable outcome was to learn about diversity management, and get insight in how to develop the company policies in a way them to better adapt to the needs of diverse workforce.

5.4.1 Diversity management practices

Tekijätori is, through apprenticeships, giving employers a chance to revaluate and develop their diversity management practices, with a support of Tekijätori’s expertise. However, Tekijätori can only educate the employers and affect the apprenticeships, but
the employers by themselves need to actively develop their diversity management approach and company culture. Hotel chain Oktogon had succeeded in communicating the value of diversity throughout the organization, and actively executed their diversity policy in practice. The aim of diversity management is to create an organization where individuals with different needs and competences will be able to contribute to their full potential (Louvrier, 2013). Central for diversity management is to create an open culture, train and involve the organization in this, as well as decide about practices and accommodations. Studies (Louvrier, 2013; Spataro, 2005; Green et al., 2002) underline the importance of creating a culture that values and welcomes diversity. In the case of hotel chain Oktogon, Tekijätori and counsellor had a great impact in deciding about the work tasks for the students with ID, and what kind of accommodations should be done. However, Tekijätori or the counsellor could not influence the company’s involvement level, company culture or willingness to integrate the students. In these elements the biggest differences between the branches within hotel chain Oktogon could be seen.

Hotel chain Oktogon also has their own Diversity and Inclusion policy. In the policy they are naming “disability”, as one of the forms of diversity. Ball et al. (2005) recognized that a great amount of companies fail to include people with disabilities to their diversity statements, and might not define diversity in terms of disability. In their policy, hotel chain Oktogon even state that they want to create an inclusive company for both guests an employees, by ensuring accessibility. Additionally, they mention that they have inclusion awareness training, as part of the on boarding training for employees. Reflecting upon this, I claim that the Hotel chain Oktogon has made an attempt to include people with disabilities and the policy supports their diversity management. I could even recognize during the interviews, that they have succeeded in communicating these values and openness for diversity throughout the organization. Their policy is been realized at least to some extent, on a grass root level in the branches as they are participating in different kind of diversity projects.

5.4.2 Level of involvement

When a branch was highly committed, it seemed to benefit the student, as the apprenticeship and its effects were considered as a whole, and not only from the workload point of view. Furthermore, the learning outcome for the branch was more comprehensive when the apprenticeship was part of high management agenda, and considered as a long-term project. Compared with the two other branches, branch A was the most committed to the apprenticeship, starting from the branch manager level. The
apprenticeship seemed to be part of their high management agenda, also because the branch A manager was supervising the student. This is in line with the study by Thanem (2008), as he suggests that the whole organization on all levels should be involved in the discussion about diversity management and practices regarding it. In case of branch A, the commitment seemed to benefit the integration as the branch manager could prioritize the apprenticeship, and take into account the long-term strategy and goals for integration. As the branch manager was highly interested about the apprenticeship and the experience for the student, they could provide more versatile experience. The branch A manager could also take into account the long-term outcome for the branch, as development points for their management, and way of considering work. He experienced that the apprenticeship had developed them as an employer. In reflect to this, one can argue that when an employer is highly committed and sees the apprenticeship as a long-term investment or process, the outcomes from the Tekijätori apprenticeship is more remarkable, for example, in terms of learning about diversity management.

It seems that a lower level of organizational commitment leads to less remarkable outcomes. Branch B and C seemed to have a lower level involvement to the apprenticeships, and they couldn’t in a similar way point out the apprenticeships’ long-term effects for the branch. In the cases of branch B and C, the head of the kitchens were supervising the apprenticeships, and the higher level management didn’t seem to be as involved into the apprenticeships as in case of branch A. Branches B and C couldn’t in a same way evaluate the long-term outcomes for the organization as a whole because they had a more narrow focus on the apprenticeships, and they needed to stress more about the workload and efficiency in the kitchen. The position of the apprenticeship supervisor had an impact on the apprenticeship, as the head of the kitchen’s decision power may be limited to the kitchen and they need to prioritize other things over the apprenticeship. Branch B was involved in the introduction of work and training of the student, so they had a chance to learn how to handle accommodations, and how to communicate with an employee with ID. However, because of the more narrow focus on the apprenticeships, branch B didn’t have as far-reaching outcomes in terms of long term development points. Whereas branch C was not very involved in the apprenticeship, and they hardly did interact with the student without the counsellor. They didn’t recognize much of other outcome for the organization, but the workload of the student. Branch C didn’t seem to gain much on other measures but work load, and a new connection to the local school. The fact that branch C was least involved in the apprenticeship may be due to the fact that they were not cooperating with Tekijätori, but with the local school. However, this
doesn’t mean that the experience for the student would be bad or not useful at all. The outcome for the student may be more flat in terms of the social part, but in terms of work experience and addition to CV, the apprenticeships were equivalent.

### 5.4.3 Attempts to integrate

Integration of diverse workforce is a central part of diversity management. Central for successful integration was the upper manager level interest in involving the whole organization in the discussion about diversity, and company’s overall willingness to actively integrate diverse people. These two factors were even crucial for creating such a company culture, which is open for diverse employees. Additionally, the role of the counsellor had an impact on the integration level of the student. Interesting with the Hotel chain Oktogon was, how the three different branches were aiming to integrate the student and how they succeeded in this. For the branch A, integration seemed to be a high priority, and they wished that the student A felt like a part of the community. They also thought that the feeling of community is an important part of the experience for the student. The student herself had a positive picture of the personnel at branch A, and she seemed to know them well, which indicates that the integration had worked as planned. I suggest, based on my findings, that the integration was so successful because of the commitment of the branch A manager and his attempt to involve the whole personnel. Managers on different levels are in a key role, when creating a culture that values diversity and is inclusive (Spataro, 2005). In the case of branch A, it could be seen that the proactive attitude and willingness of the manager had supported the integration of the student.

Furthermore, the role of the counsellor made a difference in integration level. In branch A, the counsellor was encouraging the student to be active from the beginning, and after she left the student was on her own and the personnel needed to communicate only with her. Branch B seemed to be in between with their level of integration. Even the counsellor was more present during the beginning of the apprenticeship, the branch B personnel was interacting with him. Integration of the student was not part of the high management agenda in a same way as in branch A, but the counsellor could ensure that the student would be having an active role. Whereas branch C did not try to integrate the student proactively, and the counsellor had an active role as the counsellor was acting as a link between the employer and the student. The student had a quite neutral picture of the personnel, but it seemed that he didn’t have any kind of deeper relationship with the personnel, as in the case of student A. Even though the branches were dependent on the
professionalism of the counsellor, I recognized that the company’s willingness and effort to integrate the student made a difference. A central point is that the integration might not happen by itself, but the company must actively make an effort to make it happen on different levels, from high management level to the grass root level. Green et al. (2002) support this finding, as they pointed out that creating a diverse workforce and an open culture requires a lot of effort from the organization.

Integration in to a work community is also about the informal integration. The informal integration seemed to be most successful when the whole personnel was well informed about what kind of person will be arriving, and people would feel comfortable when interacting with the new student. Schur et al. (2009) noticed in their study that employees with disabilities receive less informal training from their co-workers, which would harm their careers. As the Tekijätori Project Coordinator mentioned, people might have a very limited picture of people with ID, and in that case they might feel unsure at first how to make contact and socialize with a new colleague. When people are well informed, it’s easier to include a new employee to the work community and create contact. Also Louvrier (2013) suggest in her study that information and real life experiences will most effectively affect stereotypes. In the interview with the branch A, the branch manager mentioned that people may have some attitudes or even fears about how to behave with a person with ID. Hence they thought that it’s good to discuss things through before the student arrived. By discussing with the personnel and telling what kind of person is coming and what it requires from them, they ensured that everyone would feel informed and comfortable. In case of branch A, the integration seemed to be most successful as student A also commented positively the work community. The interviews indicated that they had been having informal discussions and interaction, besides the work related interaction. Branch B was interacting with the student quite a lot, but it seemed that the interaction regarded mostly work related topics. Whereas branch C could not comment this part too much, as it seemed that they had not interacted with the student, but with the counsellor.

5.4.4 Company culture and diversity

Central for creating a diverse workforce is to create a company culture that values and welcomes diversity. Hotel chain Oktogon had succeed in creating such a culture, and communicating it throughout the whole organization. I could recognize the open attitude and interest towards diverse employees when interviewing the branch representatives. The company culture probably had impacted their willingness to participate in such
projects and consider employment of people with ID. If the company culture and atmosphere would not be accepting diverse employees, there’s not much what a service like Tekijätori could do about that. The company bears the responsibility for creating suitable atmosphere for the increased diversity. Louvrier (2013) and Spataro (2005) suggest in their studies that it’s important to create such a culture that values diversity and welcomes employees with disabilities. In my opinion, hotel chain Oktogon has succeeded in creating such a culture and even communicating it further in the organization. The values hotel chain Oktogon mentioned, diversity and social inclusiveness, were not only part of the policy but could also be seen in practice. All the persons I interviewed seemed to have a positive and open attitude towards diverse employees. Being able to communicate these kinds of values, is a good start for the concrete change of creating a diverse workforce. As several studies point out (Louvrier, 2013; Green et al., 2002), changes in the organizational culture, and creating an open culture, may require a lot of time and effort. In respect to this, hotel chain Oktogon had already created such a culture, and it could be seen in the branches. Spataro (2005) underlines the importance of managers, when communicating further the culture and the attitude, which values the contribution of employees with ID. In the case of hotel chain Oktogon, the managers must have already adopted the value of diversity. When interviewing the branches, value for diversity might have been communicated in several ways, but in all of the cases I could notice the positive attitude towards the students and diverse employees. This must have affected the fact, that all the branches were participating in such apprenticeships and they were also planning to continue the cooperation.

5.4.5 Long-term effects of diverse workforce

All of the branches were continuing with similar kinds of projects or with Tekijätori apprenticeships after the first apprenticeships. It seems that that they had positive experiences and the organizations had gained understanding of the value of diverse workforce. Through Tekijätori apprenticeships, the branches were able to learn how to manage diverse employees, how to adjust work in a new way and how to include the personnel in the process. When continuing with such a projects, the benefits of a diverse workforce may become even more remarkable. The Tekijätori service provides companies possibilities to learn about diversity management, with a low risk as the apprenticeships don’t require long term commitment or big investments from the companies. However, Tekijätori could inform the companies even more that the
companies are allowed to communicate about the apprenticeships, which could even positively impact their company image.

According to studies, many of the benefits from a diverse workforce can be recognized during a longer time period. These benefits are for example, better recognition of customer needs, attracting potential hires and bringing value to the company image. As the HR manager of hotel chain Oktogon mentioned, their employee diversity should reflect the diversity of the customer base. A diverse work force would increase their understanding of the needs of diverse customers. Since hotel chain Oktogon even has an accessibility program for customers, in order to make their branches accessible for diverse guests, it would seem as a natural next step to move towards a more diverse workforce as well. According to research (Spataro, 2005; Ball et al., 2005; Green et al., 2002), diverse workforces benefit the business as the company can better serve different customers and maximize their revenues. Diversity as a value itself is important, and hotel chain Oktogon have stated that it’s an important value for them when recruiting. Spataro (2005) suggests that a diverse workforce positively influences the company image, in the eyes of both customers and potential hires. From a business perspective, it’s important that the increased diversity at a workplace brings some benefits for the business as well. As Louvrier (2013, p. 66) points out, “business benefits are a big motivation behind investments made in diversity, and aiming for a diverse workforce”. According to these studies, diverse employees bring more value to the company in the long term, which should be a clear motivation to increase the diversity among the workforce. In this case as well, the branch A had experienced that the apprenticeships developed them as an employer, and this way bring the company value. Tekijätori could communicate more actively these benefits and how their service can support the companies in receiving the benefits. Also, besides the benefits for recognizing the recruitment, I believe that a diverse workforce and communicating about it would have a positive impact on their company image.

An additional long-term benefit for companies is that with the help of apprenticeships, they can create system for including diverse employees and this way prepare for the risk of lack of employees. In their study, Ball et al. (2005) claim that the amount of people with disabilities in the workforce will increase because of the aging population, and increasing need of workforce. They encourage companies to develop their systems for managing diverse employees, and to be prepared for the change, as it’s challenging to create a successful system in a short period of time. (Ball et al., 2005) The Tekijätori
service offers companies a possibility to develop these systems, with the help of their expertise in the area of managing different people. Furthermore, this lowers the risk of employing diverse employees, as the companies have gained some experience and found suitable systems for their organizations. However, it could be more effectively communicated to companies, what kind of benefits a diverse workforce may have and can these be researched thorough Tekijätori service.

5.4.6 Company image

Companies might not communicate their participation in Tekijätori apprenticeships on social media, in fear of them being accused of being hypocritical. Tekijätori could communicate with their company network, that it’s allowed and even recommended to share content about the apprenticeships, as it would benefit not only themselves but also the people with ID. Sharing this kind of content would also, in a long run, normalize the idea of people with ID doing regular work, and being visible in society. Spataro (2005) pointed out in her study that a diverse workforce may have a positive impact on the company image, and this way it benefits business. Interestingly, none of the branches commented how the apprenticeships would affect their company image. Hotel chain Oktogon commented that they have not shared these apprenticeships internally, and I didn’t find anything externally shared either from their channels. Only branch A commented shortly, that they didn’t want extra attention for this apprenticeship. It seemed to me that they were afraid to share about the apprenticeship, as it would be considered hypocritical by the public. This was an interesting notion, as in my opinion, it would only be positive to gain attention for these kinds of projects, and it would benefit Tekijätori as well if their service would receive publicity. It would probably encourage other companies to try this service, if they would see that such a big actor is joining Tekijätori. Additionally, Tekijätori themselves is sharing pictures and videos about the apprenticeships, as they wish to encourage companies to join, but also wish to give an example for the young people with ID, what kind of possibilities there are.

5.4.7 Employer experiences

According to my findings, employer attitudes were somewhat in line with previous research (Vesala et al., 2016; Ellenkamp et al., 2015). Branches had somewhat neutral attitudes towards the employment before the apprenticeships, and more positive attitudes towards employment afterwards. Even though the employers noticed that the students were not as effective as other employees, they were pleased with the results of work and with the experience in general. Furthermore, all of the branches appreciated
the support and expertise of Tekijätori in arranging apprenticeships, and teaching how to deal with the practicalities. The support from Tekijätori also relieved their possible fears towards the apprenticeship with a student with ID. The Tekijätori service is providing an easy solution for companies, as they offer a centralized model for supporting the employers with the apprenticeships. Their model is effective for the employer, as the employer only needs to offer the place for apprenticeship and Tekijätori takes care for the rest.

Hotel chain Oktogon seemed to have a positive attitude towards employees with ID, but support from Tekijätori encouraged them to hire employees with ID for apprenticeships. The first step to hire employees with ID might be challenging, as it’s not easy to find coherent information and support from one place. However, hotel chain Oktogon or branches didn’t suffer from the lack of information, as Tekijätori was providing enough support. Ellenkamp et al. (2015) states in their research that it would be central to provide employers more information, about the employment of people with disabilities, as it might encourage them to hire these people. According to research (Vesala et al., 2016; Ellenkamp et al., 2015), a majority of employers have negative attitudes towards hiring people with disabilities, or even if they would have positive attitudes, they are not actively hiring.

An effective way to affect the fears and prejudices is to educate the employers and provide more information about people with ID. Thus the counsellor resource is important, as the counsellor can relieve the fears. Also, Tekijätori is educating the employers about employees with ID. Tekijätori had noticed that many of the employers were stressful about, if the apprenticeship would require a lot of their resources. A common fear was that the employer would be left alone with the employee with ID, and they would not able to make, for example, accommodations. These reactions were in line with the studies (Vesala et al., 2016). Branches A, B and C had some concerns regarding the apprenticeships before the experience, especially in case of branches B and C. Both of them thought that it was good to have a counsellor as a support if needed. Branch A as well thought it was useful for them to learn about people with ID, as they had no previous experience from hiring a person with ID. Vesala et al. (2015) had noticed in their study that the employer attitudes tend to be more positive if the employer had previous experience about employing such an employee, and the employer’s would consider hiring more advantageous. In case of branches A, B and C, they seemed to have rather positive attitude towards employees with ID, and they all even continued with such employment.
projects. In respect to this, it can be claimed that Tekijätori has a positive impact on the employer attitudes and the apprenticeships could relieve the stereotypes and fears about employees with ID.

Experiences of branches A, B and C were quite well in line with research (Vesala et al., 2016), as they had commented that the student’s would work slower than their colleagues, but still the result of the work was good. Additionally, branch A and B had commented that it was sometimes hard to communicate with the student or understand what the student was saying, but this got easier by time. However, all in all the branches were pleased with the student and they thought that the student would get well along with their colleagues. Especially the branches where the integration had been successful, would comment the student becoming part of the community.

5.4.8 Attitudes towards employment

All of the three branches reported afterwards that they could consider the employment of a person with ID, and they all had continued with this kind of projects. In general, even the employers had recognized that the employees wouldn’t be as effective as any other employee, they didn’t concern this as a hindering factor for employment. Most important, according to the branches, was to find suitable tasks for the person, so that they would perform their full capacity. In the study by Vesala et al. (2016), employers who had experiences about employing a person with ID, had noticed that the employee would have some special needs. However, this was not seen as a hurdle for employment, and many of the employers even thought that the employees with ID got well along with their colleagues and they had a positive effect on the company image. (Vesala et al., 2016)

Interesting was that I received two slightly conflicting answers from the branch B, as the head of the kitchen and the branch B manager gave slightly different answers. However, branch B had continued with such apprenticeships, which probably was because they experienced the apprenticeship as something positive and worth to continue. In the end, it’s hard to know if the branches would in reality hire a person with ID, as a permanent employee. As also came up in the study by Ellenkamp et al. (2015), there are employers who have a positive attitude towards the employment and they do hire people with ID, but there are also a great amount of employers who have positive attitudes and are not hiring people with ID. I would still argue that employing people with ID even for apprenticeships is a step towards employment and it positively affects the attitudes in an
organization and creates a culture of having a diverse workforce. In a long run, these kinds of projects encourage companies to hire people with ID.

5.5 Connecting the key actors

The fourth Aggregate Dimension is “creating connections in new ways between NGO’s, schools and companies”. In this case I refer especially to Tekijätori service and their network of companies and schools. As mentioned earlier, the Tekijätori service is totally unique and they are pioneering in creating such a network between people with ID, schools and companies. In Finland there is no other entity supporting the employment of people with ID in salaried work as actively, and with a connection to companies. Furthermore, I highlight the role of NGO’s in creating such connections and supporting the employment of people with ID. NGO’s can focus on the issues on another level than e.g. government and single companies.

Due to the lack of research, it’s impossible to reflect the Tekijätori service upon the relevant research. People with ID are poorly represented in research, even in the field of diversity management research (Thanem, 2008). Additionally, the service is relatively young, so they don’t have data to provide for a longitudinal study. However, the aspects in their service model can be compared with relevant research, as the importance of counsellor resource, effective information sharing and educating and encouraging the companies. On an individual level the service has seemed to be effective, as during a year they have created a constantly growing network of schools and companies, arranged over 80 apprenticeships, and some paid jobs. As the network is growing, they can enable an increasing amount of apprenticeships and workplaces. In light of this, Tekijätori may in few years have had a huge impact on how we in Finland consider people with ID.

5.5.1 Solving challenges with the service model

The key factor in the employment process, for the employer, is ensuring that the experience is smooth for the employer, and that they receive the support and information they need. In case of Tekijätori, the support and information sharing is centralized, which enables them to better react to the needs of the employer and the employee. Tekijätori is actively managing the relationships with the different parties, so that no one is left without support. One major challenge in apprenticeships and employment in general seems to be the lack of information (Vesala et al., 2016). Problems regarding the information sharing with schools, came up even during the interviews. Branch C commented that, at least the head of the kitchen, was not informed if student C was sick
or absent during the apprenticeship. This is one example of how the schools have a lack of resources and this can lead to confusions between the parties. In their model, Tekijätori is ensuring that everyone is informed.

In the study by Kela (Kela, 2018), it was found that the accommodation of work may often cause problems and hinder the employment, if done poorly. In their service, Tekijätori is ensuring that the employer will get support for the accommodations, and further, that the work tasks are suitable for the student, and in line with the students’ needs. Tekijätori even educates the employer, how to manage diverse employers and adjust the work according to diverse needs. The service is supposed to lower the employer’s risk for employment, as Tekijätori is supporting the employer and taking care of the crucial parts, as the accommodations of the work.

5.5.2 A Salaried work oriented viewpoint

The Tekijätori service differs from the other systems in Finland, as it actively supports the employment of people and aims to develop their career paths and provide tools for work life. One major problem with the current system in Finland is that there are no set employment goals for people with ID, and work centres are not obligated to support the transition to the labour market (Kela, 2018). Another option, communal work, has also some severe shortages, as the salary is only a few euros per day, which doesn’t enable financially independent life. The questions is, if there’s work to do, why would it not be worth to pay a decent salary? A person capable of doing communal work, would be capable of doing work with a real salary. Different from these two options, the Tekijätori service is actively supporting the transition to salaried work by arranging apprenticeships in companies, even if the apprenticeships are not often paid, as they are often part of vocational studies. This way Tekijätori is supporting the career path of a student. With proper work experience, it’s possible to get salaried work one day. Additionally, Tekijätori has arranged paid summer jobs for the students who have previously completed apprenticeships. Another differing point is that Tekijätori encourages the students with ID to be an active part in the employment relationship and gives guidance on how to be a member of a work community without a counsellor communicating and interacting for the student.

5.5.3 The Importance of the counsellor resource

According to my findings, the counsellor resource was a very important part of the Tekijätori apprenticeships. The counsellor would lower the risk of employment for the
employer, and most importantly, support the student with ID in many ways, as learning work life skills, support the integration to work community and inclusion to work life. However, the counsellor need to remain as passive role as possible during the apprenticeship in order to not hinder the students’ advancement.

Especially in case of new partner employers, it’s important that the employer receives enough of support from the counsellor in the beginning of the apprenticeship and during the planning phase. By creating positive experiences for employers, Tekijätori ensures that the cooperation continues. Even Ellenkamp et al. (2015) mentioned in their study that work coaches have an important role in supporting the employability of employees, and they have a huge impact in the training and the entry to workforce. The majority of employed people with disabilities are employed with the support of a work coach (Kehitysvammaliitto 2). This indicates that a work coach or counsellor resource is useful and actually supports the employment, as also in the case of Tekijätori. Unfortunately, the public work coach resource is very limited compared to the huge need of the service. Tekijätori replaces the scare resources by having their own counsellor resource.

The expertise of the counsellor is in a key role, when suggesting the accommodations of the work tasks for the employer. As a professional, the counsellor can better analyse the needs and the potential of the student. It’s important that the level of tasks is suitable, not too hard, but also not too easy as the goal is to learn something new. Furthermore, the employer is gaining from this as they learn how to better manage diverse employees, and what the employer could take into consideration if they are hiring a person with ID in the future. As mentioned earlier, the counsellor can help the employer to receive benefits that diverse workforce enables.

Most importantly, the counsellor is being present to support the student with ID. By offering the counsellor resource, the Tekijätori service ensures that apprenticeships support the development of skills, integration to work community, and the person will receive support based on individual needs. As also mentioned in the rapport of Kela (2018), the work centres are lacking the ability to develop skills needed in work life, and also people aren’t receiving support based on their individual needs. The counsellor shall enable students working as independently as possible, and learning skills that support them in advancing in their career. Furthermore, the counsellor is there to support the students’ inclusion to the work community during the apprenticeship. The counsellor aims to connect the employer and the student, and ensure that they can start to create a relationship without the counsellor being active and communicating for the student.
Thus, it’s crucial that the counsellor remains passive enough. Additionally, it can be stated, that in a long term the counsellor is supporting the student’s inclusion to work life in general, as the student is learning such skills in the apprenticeship.

5.6 Future research

When searching for relevant research for this thesis, I recognized the lack of research in the field related to people with ID and work. Within research, people with ID were often considered as objects, rather than active actors. Furthermore, focus of the studies was not on how to develop society for them, but instead what is the current situation and which elements are affecting their position. In this respect to this, there are plenty of suggestions for the future research, but I will discuss only the most relevant ones, from the viewpoint of my thesis.

Tekijätori was founded in the beginning of 2018, so the service model is relatively new and constantly developing. Hence it would be interesting for future research to study the service in a few years, with a bigger sampling of case companies. This kind of research could provide a deeper understanding of their service model, as well as give a possibility to compare several companies and their policies with each other. This could benefit the development of such service model, and provide useful information for companies. Furthermore, the long term effect of the service could be a potential research topic as well, for example, some student’s career development could be followed in order to see, if the apprenticeships had some impact on their career progression. A longitudinal study would gain the understanding of the possible change in the position of people with ID.

Secondly, from a company and even society viewpoint would be interesting to research, how a diverse workforce, including people with disabilities, affects the company image and the business. Research I found, was relatively old and I believe that the meaning of diversity is considered even more important today, than a few years ago. For this reason, it would be even beneficial for companies to study the impact of diversity for the business. Furthermore, Ball et al. (2005) argued that the rate of people with disabilities in workforce will increase because of the aging population in Western countries. This is a highly relevant topic in Western countries and also in Finland. It would be interesting to see if there has been any change in this matter. Also the impacts on the prevailing attitudes in our society could be studied, and if these kind of societal questions will change the attitudes, as people with disabilities would be seen as a solution to the problem of aging population.
Finally, there is a need to research diversity management in terms of people with intellectual disabilities. Diversity management could be studied from a more practical viewpoint, which would benefit the companies and the employees with ID. For example, the concept of counsellors could be adapted to companies and as a part of diversity management, and also the questions around accommodation of work tasks based on individual needs. This could be studies, for example, among the partner employers of Tekijätori. Such research could bring value even for society level integration of people with ID.

5.7 Implications for companies

Based on my findings I suggest for companies aiming to increase the diversity of their workforce to include the aim to their high management agenda. Additionally, the outcomes seems to be more applicable when the project is considered to bring long-term value and learnings. However, if a company is committed to a diversity project, there is a huge potential for both short and long-term outcome for the company. Thus, companies should ensure that the upper management is committed to the diversity project and they have the tools to support the project. As mentioned earlier, managers are in a key role when creating an open culture and including the personnel in the discussion. My findings further suggest that the integration is more successful if the personnel is included as well, and their concerns are discussed and not bypassed.

Furthermore, my findings suggest that accommodating suitable work tasks for diverse employees requires creativity, as well as a open and flexible attitude from the employer. As noted in this case, when there’s willingness to find suitable tasks, it is possible. In relation to this point, companies shall carefully consider who is suitable to be the supervisor of the apprenticeship. The results of the apprenticeship are most successful when a supervisor is in a position where they can consider the apprenticeship as a long-term investment, as well as communicate further their learnings, encourage the personnel to cooperate with the person.

5.8 Implications for policy-makers

Based on my findings, my suggestions for policy-makers are to further chart the potential of such employment projects as Tekijätori, and consider such projects as long-term investments. Furthermore, policy-makers shall note the benefits that cooperation with NGO’s and other parties bring and how NGO’s can have a remarkable role in supporting the employment of people with intellectual disabilities. The benefits from such
employment projects could be further studied, and their real value for society should be calculated in terms of total cost for society but also in terms of the improved position of people with ID in society.

5.9 Limitations

There are various factors to be considered as limitations in this thesis, relating to the sample and research execution in general.

The sample of the thesis was relatively small, as the hotel chain Oktogon had not been part of the Tekijätori network for so long and additionally, they only had had three students conducting the apprenticeships at the time of the interviews. Furthermore I chose to include only one company to the study, in order to receive more comparable material in terms of company culture and diversity policies. However, this limited the size of the sample. Additionally, I could not contact all the student’s personally, and not all the branch managers were willing to participate an interview as they were not supervising the students, which affected the size of the sample.

Secondly, it might have affected the answers of the persons from hotel chain Oktogon that they knew that I was closely cooperating with Tekijätori, and the interviews were not done anonymously. As the topic is sensitive, they may have been careful to give critical or negative toned answers, as it could have a negative impact on the company. An additional point is that some of the apprenticeships occurred over a year ago, and for some people it was challenging to recall all the details from the interviews. Especially in case of the students, who had had several apprenticeships event after the ones in branches A and C, it was sometimes hard to remember these apprenticeships. Thirdly, the project in this case was very local as Tekijätori mainly operates in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. The nature of the area needs to be taken into consideration when applying similar kind of employment project to other areas.
6 CONCLUSION

This study has reviewed the employment process for people with intellectual disabilities, the employer viewpoint and experiences as well as the integration of people with ID in companies. As the position of people with ID is relatively weak on the labour market and in terms of salaried work, it's meaningful to understand which factors would improve their position. In this thesis the employment project, Tekijätori, played a key role in supporting the employment of people with ID and studying their service model was of high relevance for my thesis.

The conclusions of this thesis are that individuals with ID benefit from the support of NGO's when entering the labour market and creating a more individualized employment process. The useful role of NGO's was even pointed out in previous research by Ekholm and Teittinen (2014). Furthermore the employer and employee experiences tend to be more positive when the employer was highly committed to integrate diverse employees and considered the employment as a long-term process. Finally, the integration of a person with ID is more successful when an employer considers the integration as high management agenda.

A crucial point related to the overall findings is, that individuals with intellectual disabilities shall be in active role concerning questions about their life and future, and in this case, especially their careers. The fact that people with ID have their right to own preferences, opinions and career plans shall not be bypassed, even though the more simple solution would be to fit all the people into a uniform service system. Due to the fact that people with ID are an extremely heterogeneous group of people, support systems and solutions shall take into consideration the individual character of people. The Tekijätori service model aims at providing individualized support and to create possibilities to work and develop within a suitable setting for an individual. Crucial with the ideology is that the diagnosis is not the issue, but what the person is capable of doing and how the person can be supported and progress in his/her career. When creating possibilities for apprenticeships, Tekijätori supports the socialization of the people with ID and development of their career path, which will lead to salaried work and more comprehensive membership of society. The apprenticeships, more precisely, are for learning work life skills, creating connections to companies and getting valuable work experience. Those factors are crucial for employment and supported by studies (Ekholm and Teittinen, 2014; Kela, 2018). However, Tekijätori also needs to avoid the risk of being too protective and active, which leads to the student not benefitting as much as possible.
My interviews reflect that in general people have a lot of prejudices towards people with ID, and they are not considered as fully capable to actively participate work life. This finding was in line with previous research (Vesala et al., 2016; Schur et al., 2009). The Tekijätori service is educating companies about people with ID, normalizing the idea of people with ID working in regular workplaces, and making them more visible in everyday life. By educating the employers, they are affecting the attitudes of employers, and in the long run, maybe even the wider public. Educating employers about diversity management is also part of creating a model, where people with varying work conditions can participate the everyday activities based on their own capability and needs.

The Tekijätori service further offers companies possibilities to develop their diversity management approach, and to create a more diverse workforce. The service benefits employers, as the apprenticeships with Tekijätori provide a way to hire diverse employees for a short term and with low risk. When offering apprenticeships for people with ID, companies are getting experiences of a diverse workforce, what it requires, and how it affects the business. Based on my findings, the inclusion of people with ID is most successful when the aim to include is part of high management agenda. Also, benefits and outcomes of the service for companies seemed to be more far-reaching when the upper management had committed to the project on a long term basis, instead of local level commitment. These findings are even supported by earlier findings of Green et al. (2002).

Finally, one of the unique elements in the Tekijätori service is to create connections between educational institutions, companies and people with ID. This network is created in order to support the employment of people with ID by connecting the relevant stakeholders. Before, there has not been such an attempt to cooperate between different stakeholders, in a continuous matter. The service oriented model that Tekijätori has in their service, is creating value to the people with ID and companies, as well as supporting the work of educational institutions. In the end, the exclusion of people with ID is wider than a company and NGO level issue, and changing the prevailing attitudes and prejudices requires society level change. This change further requires different actors cooperating and working towards the same goal.
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APPENDIX 1  INTERVIEW GUIDE

Information on interview length, audio recording, transcription, data handling, anonymity and confidentiality will be discussed in the beginning on every interview.

HR Manager

- What was the role of the HR department in the apprenticeships?
- Where did the idea to join Tekijätori come from?
- Do you have a diversity policy and how did it affect this case?
- Has the Accessibility program for customers somehow affected this case?
- Do you coordinate the integration of diverse employees in any ways?
- Are the apprenticeships or diversity practices communicated internally?
- Did you receive any comments from the branches regarding the apprenticeships?

Supervisors of the apprenticeships branch A, B and C

- How did you prepare for the apprenticeship beforehand?
- Did you prepare for the accommodations of work in advance?
- Did you meet the student before the apprenticeship?
- How did you communicate about the apprenticeship internally, did you prepare the personnel for the student?
- Did you receive support from Tekijätori before the apprenticeship?
- How was the student introduced to the work?
- What was the role of the counsellor during the apprenticeship, from your viewpoint?
- How independently was the student working?
- Did you change the work tasks during the apprenticeship?
- Did you encounter any challenges during the apprenticeship?
- How did the student experience the apprenticeship and work?
- Afterwards, would you change anything you did during the apprenticeship?
- Do you think the work was suitable for the student?
- Did you receive any feedback about the apprenticeship from your personnel?
- Did you receive any feedback from the student?
- Based on this experience, could you consider hiring an employee with special needs?
Tekijätori: Project coordinator and counsellor

- What is your role in the apprenticeships?
- How do you prepare new companies for apprenticeships?
- What do you expect from the educational institutes and companies?
- How do you prepare students and counsellors for apprenticeships?
- How do you choose a place for apprenticeship for a student?
- Do you discuss with the students about the apprenticeship and their goals for it in advance?
- How do you ensure that the work is suitable for the student?
- What kind of feedback have you received from students and companies?
- Have you encountered any challenges?
- How would you describe the outcome of the apprenticeships for students?
- What is the outcome for companies participating in apprenticeships?
- Is there anything you would develop within your service?

Counsellor branch A

- Could you describe your role during the apprenticeship?
- To what extent did you participate in the introduction of work?
- How did the case branch take care of the practical part?
- What were the expectations for you, from the branch?
- How were the personnel acting with the student?
- Were there any challenges during the apprenticeship?
- Did you receive any feedback from the branch or from the student?
- How would you evaluate the outcome of the apprenticeship for the student?
- Do you think the student could be employed in similar type of position?

Students

- What do you study?
- What kind of tasks did you have within the case branch?
- How did you experience the tasks?
- Was there anything hard with the apprenticeship?
- How did you like about the apprenticeship?
- Did you learn something new?
- Are you interested in working in hotel and restaurant industry?
- How were the other employees during your apprenticeship?
- How were the customers?
- What kind of feedback did you get from your supervisor?
- What do you wish from an apprenticeship?
- What do you want to learn during an apprenticeship?