



ONBOARDING PROGRAM FOR RECENT IMMIGRANT NEWCOMERS

An opportunity for the organization to learn

Authors

Carina Gustafsson 750626

Marie Mattsson 740312

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Abstract

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Purpose: The aim of this master thesis is to study how organizations learn from onboarding of recent immigrant newcomers.

Theory: The theory of organizational learning is applied. A learning process framework of 4 i: s is utilized; intuiting, interpreting, integrating and institutionalizing. The framework describes organizational learning as a process through these four stages. By applying the findings according to these stages, an analysis of how organizations learn occur.

Method: A two-case study of two organizations is conducted, employing qualitative research methodology. The empirical data is based on semi structured interviews of managers and representants of the onboarding programs. Secondary data is also collected.

Result: The result show findings of learning on all 4i processes. However, the organizations need to be active to create opportunities for the institutional process so that the organizational learning can occur. Findings show that the organizational features are one of the reasons that some learning stays on individual level. Communication and information are essential concepts for the learning process to proceed between the different levels, both forward and feedback for continuous improvement and development at organizations.

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Abbreviations used in this thesis

LMIS – Labour Market Integration Support (In Swedish; Arbetsmarknadsåtgärd)

NCC – Nordic Construction Company

Nystart – Program for non-native Swedes with a degree in engineering

PLUS – Program for learning and development in Swedish healthcare for foreign-trained personnel

RIN – Recent Immigrant Newcomers

SPES – Swedish Public Employment Service (In Swedish; Arbetsförmedlingen)

VGR – Western Götaland Region

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1. Introduction

The Swedish economy is currently reported to be strong, however Swedish organizations report limitations in their potential growth (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2019). One challenge that the Swedish labour market face is the difficulty of filling vacant positions (ibid). Recruitment needs are reported to be considerable in several industries and according to the Swedish Business Recruitment survey for 2018, 69 percent of the organizations have tried but found it hard to recruit employees over the past six months (Skövde Nyheter, 2018). Several employers are looking for future talents and need competent personal to fill their vacancies. The answer to the workforce problem can partly be solved by employing recent immigrants newcomers (RINs) and some organizations offer the RINs an adapted onboarding program.

Onboarding is a contemporary subject that this master thesis wants to explore. While there is a lot of literature on onboarding, how organizations learn as part of these efforts has not been explored. Therefore, this master thesis aims to study the onboarding programs with the theory of organizational learning. Learning is claimed to be important to gain competitive advantages, since organizations need to constantly change in order to respond to changes in their environment and survive (Ying, 2010). Organizations that strive to change to adapt to the context by developing and establishing new routines, gain an opportunity to become innovative and learn (Ellström, 2010). Hence, learning can occur in several situations and onboarding programs of RINs offers such an opportunity.

The competition to attract qualified employees seems hard at a first glance at the figures; The unemployment rate for native Swedes holding a degree above high school level is low, only 2,3 percent (Ekonomifakta, 2019b). However, out of Sweden's population of just above 10 million people, almost 2 million people are non-native Swedes (SCB, 2018). There is a large group of non-native Swedes with low level of education living in Sweden (Ekonomifakta, 2019a). However, there is also a large group of non-native Swedes with high education, and they are in proportion with native Swedes (ibid). The unemployment rate for non-native Swedes with a degree above high school is 9,5 percent, compared to the 2,3 percent for native Swedes (Ekonomifakta, 2019b), which makes the non-native Swedes a significant potential to fill some of the needs on the labour market for qualified positions.

The organizations that recruit, develop and retain RINs can by doing so, gain a solution of the organization's workforce problem and give the organizations a competitive advantage (Malik & Manroop, 2017) However, it has been argued that a diverse workforce means that the employer needs to adjust their socialization and integration process. New employees with

another socio-demographic background than the existing employees are said to need to be socialized to the workforce in another way (ibid), and there is now an increased interest in offering onboarding programs aimed for foreigners (Dagens arbete, 2019). Organizations normally offers onboarding programs to attract employees, increase the retention due to first good impression and help integrate the employees (Dai & de Meuse 2007). Onboarding programs are also activities organizations can use to facilitate labour market integration. The idea is that by these onboarding activities, the individual gets socialized in to the organization (Klein, Polin, Leigh & Sutton 2015). Onboarding is not a quick fix (Dai, De Meuse & Gaeddert, 2011), the organizations need to adopt to the context and the onboarding activities cannot be the same for different professions and situations (ibid). Some organizations become partners with the authorities and sets up a Labour Market Integration Support (LMIS).

In this study we are investigating the onboarding phenomenon when offered as a way to integrate foreigners to the organization. Two cases have been chosen within industries that lack sufficient qualified employees; the healthcare sector and the construction industry. The construction industry and the healthcare sector are amongst the top 10 industries reporting deficient employees as a hindrance for growth (Ekonomifakta, 2018b).

The employment of RINs can be beneficial for several reasons. For organizations, it is an increased possibility to find employees. Having the right number of employees with the required competence is a presumption for survival of the organization. Thus, the ability to recruit and retain the required number of suitable employees is crucial for all organizations to be able to meet demands from their customers and for growth (Boxall & Purcell, 2016). For the immigrants themselves, an employment can affect life positively in various ways, while being excluded from the labour market can lead to disadvantages with negative consequences such as less income, harder to integrate in the Swedish society and negative self-image (Sparrhoff & Fejes, 2016). The negative effects of unemployed non-native Swedes do not end with the impact on the organization and the individual, the Swedish society also suffers as it leads to alienation and increased costs (ibid). The National Institute of Economic Research (Konjunkturinstitutet) reports that the cost, due to the high number of unemployment amongst non-native Swedes, is now on such high level that Sweden will have to rise the taxes if nothing changes (SVT Nyheter, 2018).

To summarize, a two-faced picture of the Swedish labour market exists, with vacancies to fill on one hand side and unemployed, qualified, RINs on the other. A solution where these two pictures can meet would create a cost-effectiveness on both individual, organizational and societal level, as well as personal satisfaction and a less split society.

Onboarding programs can serve as one of the tools for integration, thus onboarding programs are important to examine in various ways. The potential organizational learnings from conducting onboarding programs rarely occurs in previous research and this thesis aim to contribute in this research field.

1.2 Purpose and research question

This study departs from onboarding of recent immigrant newcomers (RINs), with the objective to explore the effects that onboarding program have on the organizations that offers them. Since money, time and commitment is invested, this study wants to find out how the organization learn by doing these efforts. Through the onboarding programs, the organizations have opportunity to learn, even though the organizations have not expressed the learning as an aim. Therefore, this study is focusing on the role of onboarding programs in organizational learning. The study takes the perspective on organizational level, which have seldom been in focus in previous research of onboarding programs (Klein et al, 2015).

This thesis can contribute to the research gap by providing new insight from a learning perspective. Furthermore, to gain a deeper insight, this study also compares two cases. The research question for this master thesis is:

How do organizations learn from onboarding of recent immigrant newcomers?

1.3 Disposition of the thesis

This master thesis next section is the second section and provides a background of labour market integration. The third section starts with previous research, covering onboarding and labour market integration, and limitations of previous research is also presented. Section four presents the theory organizational learning, which serves as theoretical framework in this study. The fifth section provides an explanation of the method used in this qualitative case study. In section six the empirical findings are logically structured and presented in accordance with the purpose and research question stated in the introduction. The empirical findings are analyzed and connected to theory, then the results are elaborated through the lens of the theoretical frameworks. Section six also includes discussion. Finally, section seven provides a summary of the findings and description of how the thesis contributes to research and ends with suggestions for further research.

1. Background

The following section will shortly describe the backdrop against which these onboarding programs unfold – the history and current situation in Sweden, regarding immigration and labour market integration.

2.1 Labour market integration

Sweden has over the past four decades gone from labour immigration to refugee integration. The history shows that during post-war period, the labour immigration to Sweden was considerable high. Sweden flourished financially and needed foreign workforce (Nilsson, 2004). The labour immigration consisted mainly of Scandinavian immigrants with only a small proportion from other continents (Migrationsinfo, 2016; SCB, 2018). In the 1960s, the economic situation in Sweden had deteriorated and the need for labour decreased. Since then, immigration has changed character from labour immigration to increased refugee- and family migration (ibid; Nilsson, 2004; Rydgren, 2004) The number of immigrants from countries outside the Nordic countries and EU has increased. In 2015 there was an unprecedented immigration due to the huge amount of asylum seekers from mainly Syria and Afghanistan (SCB, 2018).

Immigrants tend to move to bigger cities, which is said to create a demographic challenge for smaller regions when there is a shortage of labour force there (Bevekander & Irastorza, 2016). Bigger regions and municipalities that already have a high concentration of immigrants seem to have an attraction force when more immigrants move to larger cities (ibid). Fellow citizen men, who are already established in Sweden, can give RINs a perception of security which is one of the reasons why people from the same native countries move to the same city (ibid).

For those born abroad, it usually takes time to become fully integrated into the Swedish labour market, it can take more than a decade to gain the same employment conditions and salary as a native Swede (Ekberg and Hammarstedt, 2002; Alden & Hammarstedt, 2016; Hooper, Desiderioa and Salant, 2017). Effective integration is said to involve the inclusion of foreign-born people in the labour market, it has been argued that their skills can contribute to the organizations' competence (European Commission, 2019). Integration can be viewed as a strategic process for the organization (Diaz, 1997), and Svenskt Näringsliv (2019) writes that a well implemented integration process can bring economic growth for both companies and society.

In search for answers concerning the differentiation between natives and immigrants at the labour market, the labour market in the EU has been researched (Hooper et al, 2017). The findings indicate that governments often delegate responsibility for integration to municipalities and cities. Possible obstacles for an effective labour market integration were identified, which included discrepancy in how the municipalities prioritizes (ibid; Migration Policy center, 2016). Too many actors on the labour market involved without sufficient communication could lead to lack of a coherent strategy (Hooper et al, 2017).

A study from Migration Policy center (2016) covers the activities that different EU Member States use to facilitate labour market integration for RIN. Immigrants generally wants to be involved in activities to be able to improve their possibilities to be employed (Knocke, 2000). Activities such as language and cultural training, validation of existing knowledge and introductory programs are essential for successful integration (Migration Policy center, 2016). The authors also believe that it is not possible to draw conclusions about policy practice because several countries have no follow-ups or evaluations concerning the effectiveness of these activities.

The economic situation in the country plays an important role in integration into the labour market, a recession can delay the establishment of foreign-educated people (Statistiska centralbyrån, 2017). Having a job is not equal to a complete integration but can contribute to being able to feel part of the society (Segendorf & Teljosuo 2011).

The social network is said to affect success in the labour market (Sjögren & Zenou, 2007). Other factors believed to be critical are previous experiences and knowledge that the people who lives in the same context have. The social norms and group pressure can hinder the integration (ibid).

It has been suggested that the Swedish labour market today is constantly changing and that it has led to other demands on employees. The nature of work has changed, and education has become increasingly valued at the labour market (Nilsson, 2004). New competencies and higher educated personnel are required, as the labour market has gone from manufacturing to service (Östh, Niedomysl, Amcoff, Ander & Hedberg, 2011). When comparing immigrants and native Swedes with corresponding level of education (academic degrees), different labour market outcomes in favour for native Swedes become visible (Rydberg 2004; SCB 2018). The evaluation of the quality of academic studies conducted abroad can be perceived as a problem (ibid: Segendorf & Teljosuo, 2011). Previous research has, however, shown problems when it comes to identifying foreign skills and competences (Diedrich, 2017). In order to strengthen the integration of foreign-born people into the labour market, a solution could be to simplify

the process of validating their existing skills (Segendorf & Teljosuo, 2011). There is an uncertainty amongst employers regarding how the qualifications should be verified and compared with Swedish education, thus the non-native Swedes risk becoming excluded in the recruitment process (ibid).

As previously described, a plethora of actors in Sweden today all have an interest in integrating foreign educated people into the labour market (Diedrich & Hellgren, 2018).

3. Previous research

3.1 Onboarding

There is no absolute definition of what the term onboarding means or what onboarding activities should include, different authors give different definitions (Klein, Polin & Sutton, 2015; Byford et al, 2017). Bauer (2010:1) define onboarding as... “*the process of helping new hires adjust to social and performance aspects of their new jobs*”. Klein & Polin (2012:268) describes it as ... ‘*formal and informal practices, programs, and policies enacted or engaged in by an organization or its agents to facilitate newcomer adjustment*’.

Onboarding is close to other introduction activities that take place in the beginning of a new employment and there is not always a sharp line between them in the research literature. There are orientation programs as well (Graybill, Carpenter, Offord, Piorun & Shaffer, 2013). These, however, tend to focus on documents and the standard information about the company that the new employee receives, whereas onboarding programs focus on the socialization process. Mentorship is yet another activity that a new employee might be offered, which focuses on personal growth (ibid) and the new employees’ adjustment to the new employment (Saks, 2007). All of these more or less related activities are the underlying reason for the growing interest to implement an onboarding process at organizations (Dai & de Meuse, 2007; Klein & Polin, 2012).

A search for onboarding research reveals that much focus is placed on managers and their onboarding into an organization (Dai & De Meuse, 2007). The gap in previous research of onboarding also show that little research exist that indicates which onboarding activities lead to the assumed outcomes (Klein et al, 2015). Instead the research has been focused on onboarding and its positive effects as a whole and not on details (ibid). Klein et al (2015) also

says that the size of the organization and its strategic responses may influence the onboarding process.

3.1.1 Reasons to offer onboarding practices

Onboarding has gained an increased focus as it is presumed to have a positive impact on employee retention (Ganzel, 1998). And, as the first six months are assumed to be crucial for whether the employee will remain or leave (Dai & De Meuse, 2007) organizations are urged to use the first time well (ibid). Onboarding programs are therefore assumed to be of high interest to anyone working with recruitment (Dai & De Meuse, 2007) and a key part of a successful talent management strategy (Bauer, 2010). Since the cost of recruitment and the actual process of inducting someone to an organization is high and that there are both visible and invisible costs that must be taken into account (Johanson & Johrén, 2011), the organizations do not want to lose the employees that they have invested in (Bauer, 2010).

The aim with onboarding is to support both the employee and the employer (Kumar & Pandey, 2017). For the employee it is said to be helpful since it guides the employee in the role and facilitates an understanding of what is expected of him/her (Bauer, 2010), and to go from simply working at an organization to become a member of the organization (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012). For the organization, three things are repeatedly mentioned that an onboarding program will improve (Dai & De Meuse 2007; Bauer 2010; Graybill et al, 2013). First, onboarding programs make the employee productive faster. Second, such programs make the employee feel more satisfied and hence more engaged in the work. And, third, the increased engagement leads to less unwanted employee turnover (ibid).

The idea is that through the onboarding activities, the individual gets socialized in to the organization (Klein, Polin & Sutton, 2015). Socialization is about getting new employees to become organizational members with the behaviours and knowledge that the organization requires. (Dai & De Meuse, 2007). The differences between onboarding and socialization are seen to be that onboarding is the activities that organizations use to teach the employee to adapt and socialization is something that happens inside the employee (Klein & Polin, 2012). The socialization continues even after the onboarding is completed (Klein et al, 2015).

Criticism of onboarding has highlighted that it is too focused on the organization's culture and that employee risks losing the individual identity (Cable, Gino & Staats, 2013) The organization can then control its employees, but it is not long-term sustainable, instead the organization should do an onboarding activity around the individual's identity (ibid). Furthermore, even though more organizations recognize the importance with a structured and

well- organized onboarding, there are organizations that do not see the benefits (Klein & Polin, 2012). One obstacle could be that managers do not see onboarding in terms of being a strategic initiative and therefore treat it as less important (Dai & De Meuse, 2007). Another obstacle mentioned is the cost that onboarding brings along for the organization (ibid: Johanson & Johrén, 2011).

3.1.2 Onboarding tactics

Klein et al (2015) have conducted a study of 10 organizations regarding what onboarding tactics that are most efficient for socializing employees into the workplace. The study of onboarding tactics was done by a survey answered by a HR-manager from each organization and in total 373 new employees. The conclusions from the study indicates that an onboarding with more tactics is better than fewer tactics. The way the onboarding tactics are offered to the employee also affects the result. If the employer communicates that the onboarding tactics are necessary and offered formally to the new employee, the tactics will lead to better socialization effect than if offered as a suggesting and informally. Another tactic that was proven helpful was if the new employee had an opportunity to observe a colleague and to be assigned a colleague as a 'buddy' for a period (ibid).

According to Malik and Manroop (2017), previous research has largely neglected the socialization into the workplace of RINs specifically, neither concerning what tactics the organization should use or how the RIN should act. Malik and Manroop (2017) therefore conducted a study, which indicates an advantage when the organization offers customized socialization tactics for RINs. Their research shows that RINs have to adapt themselves to receive acceptance from the native employees, since the native employees lack of understanding of cultural differences (ibid). The RINs are also said to lack in understanding of the workplace culture. Hence, one of the tactics that organizations should employ, according to Malik and Manroop (2017) is to include all employees, not just the RINs, in cultural intelligence training.

One important tool to integrate RINs is Labour Market Integration Support (LMIS). Sweden has a long history of using Labour Market Integration Support (Calmfors, Forslund & Hemström, 2002). During 1940-1950, LMISs like mobility-enhancing measures and re-training were used to relieve labour shortage in different sectors and was a way for the jobseeker to get a possibility to be employed somewhere else. In the early 1970s, it became more important to create job programs to hold down the unemployment which also dominated during the 1990s when Sweden had a deep recession with high unemployment rate. In the 90s,

more than 5 percent of the labour force were involved in different LMIS activities (Calmfors et al, 2002). A definition of a LMIS is that it consists of “...*job broking activities with the aim of improving the matching between vacancies and unemployed*” (Calmfors et al 2002:5). The ability to match employer and employee, which a LMIS might provide, has made LMIS become regarded as an important tool to counteract unemployment (Anxo & Ericson, 2015). The programs have developed during the years from vocational training programs to more general education programs (Anxo & Ericson, 2015). Some programs and content have been special measures for the disabled, work experience, youth programs, preparatory actions and activations, labour market education and start-up jobs (ibid).

The Swedish Public Employment Service (SPES) has a central task, as SPES has a mission to prepare job seekers with the necessary support to be able to enter the Swedish labour market (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2019). A labour market report by the SPES from 2018 found that the employers demand for competence and the job seekers competence do not fully match, with the outcome that the latter facing problems and risks staying unemployed (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2018). The same report argues that establishment on the labour market for refugees could take several years and means that other measures such as training, and education are required. SPES believes that they, in combination with other policy areas such as the educational system, plays an important role in the matching of competence and recruitment needs (ibid).

Calmfors et al (2002) says that involvement in an LMIS might make the individual more competitive on the labour market and can be seen as more attractive for an employer than an openly unemployed individual. The same authors argue that the use of LMIS might have reduced the unemployment number, but the regular employment has also been reduced in number. There are also indications that participation in a LMIS arranged in collaboration with the private sector and employment with wage contributions, has a significant positive effect on the probability to become employed (Bevelander, Emilsson, & Martin, 2016).

Several studies describe the integration of immigrants into the labour market, even though there are certain gaps in previous research. Few studies explore and demonstrates the effectiveness of different labour market programs (Bevelander et al, 2016). Another gap is the lack of theoretical framework or explanation of which processes or specific LMIS-activities that lead to better integration into the labour market (ibid). Several immigrants are involved in more than one activity, which makes it difficult to evaluate which activity gives the best results. Previous studies cover research on LMIS offered to immigrants in the USA, Canada

and Australia and the results can only partially claim to be relevant in the European context (ibid).

3.2 Organizational learning

To investigate how organizations, learn from onboarding programs for RINs, the theory of *organizational learning* is chosen, as the theory explains how learning in organizations is possible. Organizational learning covers a large variety of aspects and we found it necessary to narrow the theoretical focus within the theory. A framework that explains the process of organizational learning is therefore applied, called the 4i-framework, constructed by Crossan, Lane and White (1999). Crossan et al (1999) encourage studies of how different parts of organizational learning effects each other and says that the framework of 4i can be used as a map to do so. We argue that the framework is suitable for our study as it offers a way to first structure the findings into different learning processes which is the departure for our discussion. The following section describes the theory more thoroughly.

The meaning of learning has changed over time and has been influenced by many disciplines (Nilsson, 2011). First, learning was equal to the visible change in one's *behaviour*. Learning then developed into the *cognitive* aspect, with memory and mental processes. The cognitive view was challenged in the 1980s by the view that all learning is not only happening inside the individual but is dependent on a *context*. The cognitive and contextual perspectives have then been the most prevailing (ibid).

Through the organization's culture and norms, lessons can be passed on to others, which has been the essence of *organizational learning* (OL) (Fiol & Lyles, 1985). The idea that not only individuals but also organizations can learn can be traced back to the 1960s (Crossan et al, 1999). In the 1990's the concept organizational learning was increasingly highlighted as central to survival in a globalizing world with an increased competition in the labour market (Nilsson, 2011).

In 1991, Senge wrote the book "The Fifth Discipline" and became a big influence in the field of organizational learning (Harris, 1990). Senge puts the focus on change; when the environment changes, the organizations also need to change. Senge claims that the leader's task is to motivate and direct the employees so that they can adapt to the new circumstances. The adaptation should be in relation to new technology as well as diversity within the workforce (ibid).

Even though organizational learning is not a new theory, there still is no consensus of what it means (Wang & Ellinger, 2011). Easterby-Smith and Lyles (2011) writes that organizational learning is a field that has changed over the years and that it is still evolving. According to Huber (1991) it is important that the concept stays wide to open for useful findings. Örtenblad (2001) has made makes a distinction between “old” and “new” organizational learning. In short, the “old” means that the individual learn as an agent for the organization and then stored in the memory of the organization by rules, routines, procedures and culture. The “new” means that the collective rather than individual learn, and that learning is situated, not something that can be stored without adapting to the new situation. Other researchers have made attempts to differentiate the learning into a learning process. Huber (1991) for instance, has divided learning into four processes; knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation and organizational memory. Crossan et al (1999) has in a similar way divided the learning into processes. They suggest that organizational learning is strategic renewal of an enterprise. They have constructed a framework (see figure 1, p 15) that will be used in this study to analyze the data collected and will be described in the next section.

Learning organization is another concept and is easily confused with organizational learning. Just as with organizational learning, there is not one single definition of this concept either, but it is common to distinguish between organizational learning as the learning process, while learning organization is a form of organization (Örtenblad, 2001).

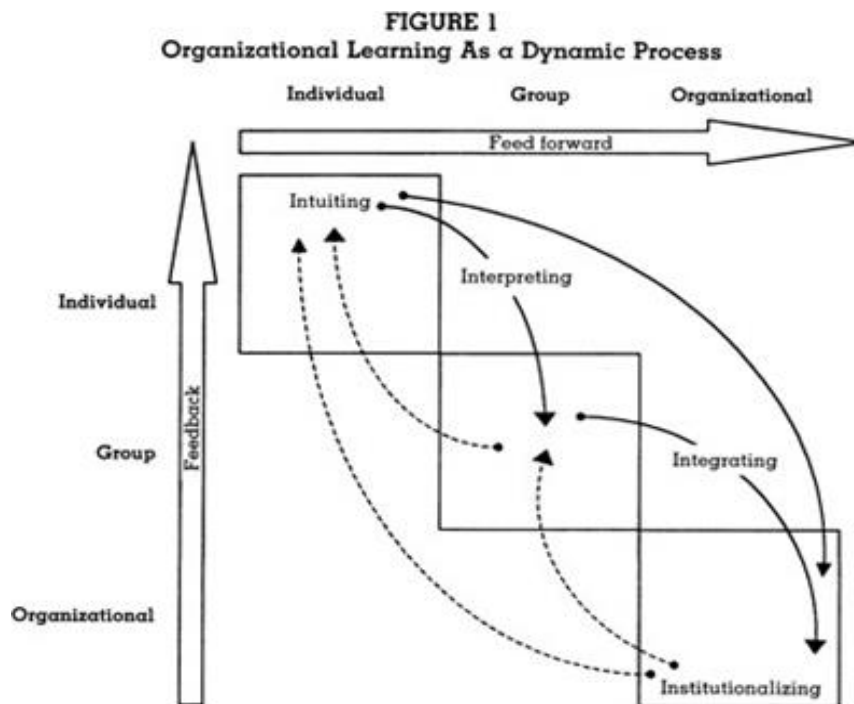
There is also a concept of unlearning, which can be a conscious action when a knowledge is outdated and misleading (Huber, 1991). The unlearning can lead to temporary being inactive since the well-known knowledge is idle and cause feelings of aversiveness. However, unlearning also creates a possibility for new learning to take place (ibid). Huber (1991) says that a seldom occasion of unlearning can occur when a new employee is socialized into the organization, then the organization does not get access to the knowledge that the employee possessed upon entry (ibid).

Criticism for learning processes within organizational literature shows that the institutional factors, such as laws and norms effects on learning in a certain situation, are rarely mentioned (Müllern & Östergren, 1995). It is claimed that learning does not have to be visible, learning can become a cognitive understanding. However, organizational learning is more than just personal insights, it should be more of a common stance and that learning should be linked to the organization's activities (ibid). Previous studies show a gap in research to describe learning in a concrete situation. Specific conditions are even more unusual in previous studies

of learning, since different organizations have different contexts (ibid). Despite the interest in organizational learning (Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Easterby-Smith, 1997; Ellström, 2010) it is still an area that has been limited researched, possibly because research on learning processes takes time (Easterby-Smith, 1997).

3.2.1 The 4i framework of Organizational Learning

Crossan et al (1999) approached organizational learning and strategic renewal by constructing a processual framework of learning as taking place on multiple levels and involving four different processes. First the learning is divided on different learning levels; individual, group and organization. Thereafter in processes; intuiting, interpreting, integrating and institutionalizing. The processes have given name to the framework, the 4i framework.



(Crossan et al,1999)

The figure 1 shows the flow of learning processes in the framework. Learning begins on the individual level with intuition. The interpreting process also begins at individual level but continues to the group level, whereas the process integration starts at group level and continues to organizational level. For the interpreting and integrating processes it is not possible to decide where the processes starts and ends, and the other takeover, since that they

are active on different levels. The last process is institutionalizing which is only present on organizational level. The smaller arrows show how the learning can develop to different levels through the process in both directions.

The long arrows show two types of learning. *Feed forward* is the arrow that shows the assimilation of new learning. Feed forward goes from intuiting, via interpreting and integrating and ends at institutionalizing. It is especially hard to go from interpreting to integrating as it requires a shift of level from individual learning to group, there is a need to develop a shared understanding in the group. For this shared understanding to happen, the communication is essential. However, communication is not enough for shared understanding, since all communication is subject for interpretation and different people can interpret the same message differently. If there is a coherent action in a group, it is a proof that this level is reached.

The other arrow, leaping back from institutionalizing to intuiting but also via integrating and interpreting, is the *feedback* arrow. The learning in this direction is showing how the learning that has already been learned goes back from the organization to groups and individual and affects how they act and think. According to Crossan et al (1999) there is a tension between these two arrows; learning new and utilize learned knowledge.

3.2.2 The four processes of the 4i framework

The model highlights that *intuiting* takes place only at the individual level as it is a human attribute, which organization do not have. The unconscious processes in our interior plays a role in how we perceive and recognize patterns. Intuition is the start of a new learning process. With experience, the person become safer and do not need to plan the actions taken to the same extent. An intricate pattern makes it difficult for the individual to explain why one does in a certain way, the individual just act. According to this model, it explains why it is difficult to bring knowledge and replicate it further because it is deeply rooted in the subconscious. Characteristic inputs/outcomes for intuiting are experiences, images and metaphors.

Interpreting is about developing insights, and this can be done both as an individual and in a working group. Shared understanding and cognitive maps can be elaborated and are based on the context and the environment. Earlier life experience and its importance makes the individual interpret differently which can complicate learnings. The language is an important factor when to develop and analyse different meanings, it means that a working group can

discuss and start sharing mutual understandings. Characteristic inputs/outcomes for interpreting is language, cognitive map and conversation/dialogue

Integrating in a group means discussion with other people in a shared context. A constant dialogue is needed so that the group can reach common goals and gain an understanding of what needs to be planned and which activities are involved within an organization. Dialogue and communication are required to evaluate the goals, plans and activities and also change the common learnings. Storytelling in a learning process is of important matter where new insights can be developed to solve a problem. Characteristics inputs/outputs for integrating is shared understandings, mutual adjustment and interactive systems.

The last process describes that if an activity or project become permanent and embedded in the organization, it becomes *institutionalized*. Learning can occur in all processes, but it is not considered as organizational learning until it reaches this level and becomes institutionalized. This framework describes that the organizational learning does not disappear from the organization if some personnel leaves their employment. There are inhabitual processes, structures and activities in an organization memory that remains. For older organizations this could be a disadvantage because the lack of spontaneous interaction when every action is formalized and institutionalized. This institutionalization guides the employees in how to act in different activities. If a process proves to be successful, it often becomes a routine for the organization and the routine itself needs to be known in the organization. Characteristic inputs/outcomes for institutionalizing is routines, diagnostic systems and rules and procedures.

The framework also describes that ongoing learning between the levels and between the processes takes time. Our environment is constantly changing and the learnings. The embedded institutional learning and the need to evaluate and re-learn is a challenge for the organizations (Crossan et al, 1999). By analyzing the collected data according to this, the study of this research proposal hopes to gain an understanding of the process from individual to organizational learning.

4. Methodology

In this section, the choice of method, selection, approach for collecting empirical data is described and the processing of data. Finally, the reliability, validity and ethics of this study are described.

4.1 Research design

This study aims to explore how organizations are learning from onboarding programs for RINs. The methods to collect data derives from a qualitative research method in order to gain understanding (Wolcott, 1994), rather than measure quantitative data. This is done by interviewing managers and other professions as representatives of the learnings from onboarding programs (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). By interviewing we will get the respondents individual truth according to their experiences (Hakim, 2000). This method enables us to perceive and interpret the intended meaning behind human actions (Höglund-Nielsen & Granskär, 2017).

The method used is a case study of two onboarding programs. Since the onboarding programs are social phenomenon that cannot be controlled by us and they are contemporary, it makes a case study suitable (Yin, 2014). Two cases were chosen since a multiple case study or even a two-case study has the possibility to give stronger insights than a single case study (ibid). However, the disadvantage could be that two cases cannot be studied to the same extent as one because of the limitation of time. The idea for this study is that the two cases can enlighten each other's specific features. Even though there cannot be a statistical generalization, it can still lead to analytic generalization (ibid).

4.2 The cases

We are interested in how organizations learn by offering onboarding programs to RINs. The different onboarding programs were selected since they both are aimed for RINs and the organizations requires competent personal. The onboarding programs have common streaks which we assume will facilitate comparison; if the organizations have similar or different learnings from the onboarding programs, thus also a reason to choose these specific programs. However, the two organizations way of organizing those onboarding programs differ. One of the onboarding programs that we study is offered to employees after employment with the aim to integrate in to their organization, the other onboarding program is a LMIS. The difference is that the participants of the LMIS onboarding program are not ensured an employment at the

organization and the goal is said to be integrated towards the labour market rather than the organization. We regard both programs as onboarding programs. The settings for the study are within the public healthcare sector, versus a private construction organization in a Swedish context.

4.3 Selection of respondents

As this study aims to explore the role of onboarding programs in organizational learning, respondents have been selected in accordance to this. Interviews has been conducted with program directors, managers and tutors who has experiences from the onboarding programs. The managers were chosen as they are involved in working with the RIN and the others in the team, as well as having contact with the onboarding program, being part of the management team and has a responsibility to work in line with the goal for the organization. According to Nilsson (2011), as the managers have the authority to decide and set the agenda for the organization, they can have a big impact on the organizations learning. The managers important role for organizational learning is especially evident when it comes to the fourth step in the framework by Crossan et al (1999), institutionalizing, in the process of organizational learning (ibid). Therefore, we argue that managers are the right target for this study. Representants for the onboarding programs were also interviewed to gain an understanding of the programs and the relation to the organization and for their perspectives. RINs have not been interviewed, as is discussed under the headline 4.5. Limitations.

The contact persons at both organizations had profound insights into the organization and they assisted us with identifying managers and tutors willing to participate in this study. Two suggested possible respondents were rejected, because one of the authors had connections to them since working in one of the organizations.

There was a mix of ages from 28 to 72, 12 were women and nine were men. The respondents from both organizations were interviewed in a mixed order according to their availability. All Respondents received an email with information about the purpose of the study and that it was voluntary with possibility to discontinue at any time. We interviewed 21 respondents in total, 11 from VGR and 10 from NCC as this gave us enough data and nothing new occurred (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

4.4 Data collection

4.4.1 Interviews

The most significant data and the main source of information was expected to derive from the respondents. Interviews were conducted with the objective to map the learnings and experiences from the onboarding programs; How did the organizations organize their onboarding operation; how did they learn to integrate the RINs and what was the effect? The last interviews did not expose any new findings; hence no more interviews were conducted.

For this thesis, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The interview questions were formulated and departed from the research question. An interview template, with quite defined themes, was prepared and was carefully analysed and designed to reduce risk to lose spontaneous answers from the respondents. Before we conducted the interviews, we begun with a pilot interview to test the interview template and if the questions measured what we aimed to investigate. After the pilot interview, the interview template stayed unchanged but was later slightly adjusted according to the answers we received during the rest of the interviews. The interview template was designed in 3 different versions (see appendix 1 for translated versions) to suit the respective respondent and profession and were supplemented with follow-up questions.

The interviews were recorded so they could be listened to several times and minimize the potential risk of losing special words or phrases (Bryman 2011). During the interviews one of the authors was responsible for moderating the interview and the other was responsible for taking notes.

4.4.2 Secondary data

Secondary data was collected, to get an understanding of the driving forces and the motives behind the initiatives to set up the onboarding programs. This included business goals, leaflets, protocols and written decisions regarding the onboarding programs. The secondary data was dependent on the access through our contact persons at both organization, who have knowledge and connections that made it possible to conduct this study. We also collected material from the organizations own web pages and articles.

4.4.3 Result of the implementation

The respondents working in Gothenburg could choose where they wanted to perform the interviews and were carried out via personal meetings at their workplaces. Ten of the interviews

were conducted through Skype or telephone meeting due to long travel distance. When Skype/ telephone interviews were conducted, a speaker was used. The respondents were informed about their right to anonymity and volunteerism, and that the interviews would be recorded to facilitate transliteration. The duration time of the interviews were between 35 to 65 minutes, all the respondents answered all the questions. Both conductors participated at all interviews.

4.5 Limitations

Whether or not to interview the onboarding programs participants was discussed. However, we ended up choosing to only interview middle managers and onboarding representatives. Several studies already cover the participants experiences and learnings from onboarding programs, the aim was to conduct a study from a new perspective. Choosing to study onboarding programs from the view of organizational learning does not exclude interviewing RINs since they are a part of the learning process. Nevertheless, we believe the managers have a perspective and knowledge of how the organization was shaped before the onboarding programs started and can see how/if the organization has changed. Also, as described before, the managers, being authorities, can have an impact on organizational learning (Nilsson, 2011). The managers have insight at different levels of the organization. Furthermore, the limitation in time and studying two organizations, the RINs were not possible to interview even if it could had strengthened this thesis validity. The fact that most of the RINs that participated at Nystart no longer work at NCC was also an issue, making the possible respondents limited in number as well as difficult to keep anonymous

Another limitation is that it is possible that the respondents who agreed to participate in this study were people who had a positive view of the program. However, this thesis does not do an evaluation of the organizations or the onboarding programs, which can make the potentially biased views less significant for the result for this study.

The respondents - managers and onboarding program representatives - expresses their own subjective views in this study.

4.6. Analytical strategy

The interviews were transcribed and coded according to grounded theory (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). First initial coding, line by line was conducted. When searching for what it was an example of, 25 different codes emerged. The codes that had significance for the

research question were compiled into focus coding. Themes that emerged in the focus coding were for instance; “problems with language”, “culture and differences in way of working”, “ways of organizing the onboarding”, “personal insights” and “possible organizational learnings”. In this study, the interviews are presented through summarizes and selected quotes that give an impression of the content from the interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The overall presentation of the findings can be done in different ways and there are special options since it is a multiple case study. Yin (2014) has several suggestions and the chosen one in this study means reporting each case separately and then doing a comparison.

4.7 Validity and reliability

When conducting a case study, there are three types of validity as well as reliability that should be taken in to consideration (Yin, 2014). First, the constructive validity was ensured through the conduction of an interview template, attempting to ask the questions that could answer our research question (ibid). The use of a pilot interview also made it possible to make changes to make a better fit. This study also used a variety of written materials and the multiple sources served as a strain of evidence of the conclusion. There is also a definition of the central concept of learning and the data collection strives to match these concepts (Yin, 2014).

When analysing the data, the *internal validity* has been considered. As there is a risk of missing certain aspect and draw the wrong conclusions (Yin, 2014), the most possible has been done in order to avoid this. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) talks of the dialogical intersubjectivity where more than one person studies the phenomena and makes interpretations. Because of this, this study has made use of the fact of being two authors. Being two persons conducting this study has made it possible to code interviews separately and then compare the results and discuss conclusions. One implication that has been discussed continuously is the fact that one of the conductors work at VGR. In an attempt to avoid bias, the other conductor was initially in charge of those interviews and the respondents were, with two exceptions when it was not possible, unknown to the conductor working at VGR.

The third type of validity is the *external validity*. There is no attempt to gain statistical generalization, the study does not include a survey or sample that could be claimed as a relevant sample of the studied phenomena. There is a limited number of respondents and only two cases are compared, however, there could be an analytic generalization, a conclusion that goes beyond the case studied. Yin (2014) suggests in what way to view this: “*Rather than thinking of your case as a sample, you should think of it as the opportunity to shed empirical light about*

some theoretical concepts or principles...” (Yin 2014: 67-68) By applying the theory of organizational learning, this study has attempted to do so. RINs were not a part of our first-hand source and could possibly affect the validity.

Finally, *reliability* is the last part of importance for the quality of the research design. This study has dealt with reliability with case study database and case study protocol, as suggested by Yin (2014). The interviews were recorded and transcribed to get the exact phrasing. However, the interviews were conducted in Swedish and whenever referred to or quoted they need to be translated to English which might lead to a slight change of meaning. There was an estimated advantage of letting the respondents answer in their native language rather than English and in the end render a higher reliability.

4.8 Ethical reflections

Through interviews, the respondents shared their experiences and the data collection could be of a personal nature. Confidence in each other is a prerequisite for the researcher to gain access to the respondent's reflections and thoughts. If the respondent had any doubts about the situation, it could lead to a limited data collection (Malterud, 2014). One of the respondents expressed a bad experience of having been misquoted at an earlier interview for another thesis.

To ensure the relationship between the interviewer and the respondents, this study has been carried out according to ethical principles that are required: the information- and confidentiality requirement, the consent claim and the useful claim (Bryman, 2008). Before the interviews the respondents were informed, via email, (see appendix 2) of the purpose of the study so no deception was involved. The respondents were informed about their right to discontinue their participation at any point in time without having to give any reasons. They did not need to answer any question if they felt uncomfortable. All of this was repeated verbally before the actual interview begun and with an opportunity for clarifications if needed. Their privacy was considered, and no personal questions were asked that could cause discomfort. They were also informed that their participation would be as confidential as possible.

One of the authors is employed at one of the organizations in this study. That could be beneficial in terms of increasing the understanding, but it could also affect the objectivity (Bryman, 2008). There was an ongoing discussion about this during the data collection to achieve neutrality. All the respondent at the actual organization was informed about the

situation. Both VGR/PLUS and NCC/Kunskapsskolan has given us their written consent to be presented with the names of the organizations in this thesis.

5. Findings and discussion

In this section we present a summary of the empirical data. First, we present a descriptive information of the two organizations NCC and VGR and their connection to the onboarding programs, since their institutional contexts are of importance for the learning processes. The description is collected from secondary data when nothing else is stated. Second, the findings from the interviews are organized in a structure of the 4i framework (Crossan et al, 1999). Beneath each section of the framework - intuiting, interpreting, integrating and institutionalizing - the findings from both NCC and VGR are presented and discussed according to the theory of organizational learning. Each headline is also divided into subheadings according to input/outcomes that appears on a certain process. This thesis focuses on *how* organizations learn, but in order to describe that, it is inevitable to also report some of the findings of *what* the individual, group or organizations learned.

In order to keep the respondents anonymous, they have been assigned numbers; VGR 1, NCC 1, etcetera. The findings of the managers experiences presented in this thesis are the managers own words. The text shows the managers subjective thoughts and perspectives and is not to be viewed as facts.

5.1 The construction organization: NCC and Nystart

Nordic Construction Company (NCC) is an incorporated company operating in the Nordic countries and one of the largest actors within the construction market (NCC 2019a). NCC builds commercial buildings, private housings, offices, industrial premises, public buildings, roads and other infrastructures (NCC, 2019b). NCC started in 1988 as a merger between two construction companies and is now one of largest organizations within the construction market, holding 3 % of the market share in the Nordic countries market (NCC, 2018). In 2018, there was about 16.500 employees in the NCC group (NCC, 2019c).

Nystart, which means “new start” in English, is the name of NCCs onboarding program for non-native Swedes with a degree in engineering. Nystart in this case is a LMIS. It has been set up in collaboration with the Swedish Public Employment Service and the educational actor Kunskapsskolan, Kunskapsskolan is responsible for the arrangement and realization. After

the participants have completed the onboarding program, the objective is that NCC should offer them employment (NCC Nystart, 2017).

NCC runs several different internship programs, for instance for students at high school, university and higher vocational education (Yrkehögskolan) (NCC 3). According to the respondents, the personnel at the construction sites are used to having non-native colleagues. With Nystart, the purpose was to decrease unemployment, integrate RINs and to fill a recruitment gap (NCC Nystart för utrikesfödda ingenjörer, 2016), NCC identified a need to fill their positions of foremen. Kunskapsskolan and NCC have had previous collaborations so they turned to them for a joint initiative. Kunskapsskolan is a private actor running several schools offering education to children and youths on different levels throughout in Sweden. “Skilled” is the part of Kunskapsskolan that is directed towards labour market for adults, and hence was involved in this collaboration. Skilled tailors their program according to the needs of their business partner, in this case NCC.

The start of the setup for Nystart was in 2016 when a large number of refugees had arrived at Sweden. Subsequently, NCC saw the opportunity to solve their need of employees with the RINs competence in a government sponsored LMIS (NCC 2). The LMIS was set up as an onboarding program, Nystart. The first Nystart was given 2016 and the second in 2017. On both occasions the onboarding program has been conducted both in Stockholm and in Gothenburg.

The Swedish Public Employment Service (SPES) has also been involved in the program. SPES’ responsibility has been to undertake the first selection of possible participants. The participants needed to have completed their Swedish language education (SFI) and to be qualified engineers. Each time Nystart was about to start, SPES selected about 60 persons. After the first selection of possible participants, the managers at NCC had two interviews with the participants and the final number that was accepted were 18 persons each time (NCC 3).

NCC has been responsible for the cost for the program for payment to Kunskapsskolan and the indirect cost that an internship has entailed in supporting employees. The government paid the remuneration to the participating RINs. The RINs had an internship at the same workplace two periods during the program, for 7 and 9 weeks. During the rest of the time, the RINs attended the theoretical lectures at Kunskapsskolan. The lectures included Swedish language, culture and norms in Sweden and at work, and technical terms and laws. The financial compensation to the participants has been an arrangement through SPES, they have received unemployment compensation or social welfare.

The onboarding program resulted in 13 out of the 18 participants, or 73 %, ending up in employment during the first round, and 12 out of 18, or 66 %, during the second round. The construction industry is dependent on winning procurements and sensitive to the changes in the economy. A downturn in the economy during the time the programs were run affected some employees at NCC and included many of the RINs from the last round whose employment contracts were terminated. At the time of writing this thesis, NCC and Kunskapsskolan are open for a new start of the program but await the result of new procurements.

5.2 The healthcare sector: VGR and PLUS

Western Götaland Region (VGR) is responsible for, among other things, health and medical care, public transport, dance, theatre and other cultural activities (VGR, 2017). VGR is the largest employer in Western Götaland, with approximately 55 000 employees (VGR, 2019a). All administrations at VGR are led by a regional director. Within the administrations there are several units with a political board. Examples of units are hospitals and public dental care. Each unit is led by a director who manages the operative activities (ibid).

VGR has its own onboarding program within their organization and is called Program for learning and development in Swedish healthcare for foreign-trained personnel (PLUS). PLUS is aimed for healthcare employees educated abroad. The participants of PLUS might be offered to join the program after they have been employed by Western Götaland Region (VGR, 2018). PLUS is not an LMIS.

In 2011, the Regional Board took a political decision to investigate the conditions for starting a common regional introduction program for doctors educated abroad. PLUS was initiated as a result of the decision (Edgren, 2015). In 2013, doctors who were educated abroad accounted for over 50% of issued Swedish medical licenses (Läkartidningen, 2013).

In 2015, the political committee decided that PLUS would be an integrated part of VGR. Doctors were first among the professions aimed for participation at PLUS, but now it also includes other healthcare professional educated abroad; nurses, physiotherapists and dentists. The employees must have reached level B2 in Swedish language before they participate in PLUS, in order to grasp the content. After completed PLUS, one of the goals is that they should have reached level C1 in Swedish. Level C1 is a requirement to apply for Swedish licence to practice health care in Sweden (Socialstyrelsen, 2018). Participation in PLUS entails a cost for the hospitals departments and a production loss when

the employee is not at the regular work. The program is in Gothenburg, and the employee participates 1-2 days/week (VGR 2019c) with full salary. The department manager decides whether the employee may participate in the program or not (ibid). An employment at VGR does not mean that it is compulsory to participate, it is voluntary. Several new programs are planned to start during 2019.

5.3 The onboarding programs structure

Findings show difference in structure between the organizations. For example, in VGR, the employees are already employed (VGR, 2019b) but in NCC employment is a possibility at the end of completing the program (NCC, 2019d). The two different onboarding programs in this thesis also have some features in common; the programs run for approximately 40 weeks and the target group are professionals with a university degree. The aim for both onboarding programs is to contribute to gaining extended understanding of the applicable parts of the Swedish society, language and values (VGR, 2019b: NCC Nystart, 2017). The table below summarizes differences and similarities regarding the programs structure:

Table of onboarding programs structure

	PLUS	Nystart
Organization	VGR (Healthcare)	NCC (Construction Company)
Duration	40 weeks	40 Weeks, second time 30 weeks
Started	2013	2016
Content	Language, lectures, tutoring in groups	Language, lectures and individual coaching
Work / internship	Work at their workplace 3-4 days/week	Two periods of internships, 7 and 9 weeks
Employment	Before offered to participate	After successful completion if there is a vacancy
Number of participants	App 20 /group, app 350 since start in total	App 20/group (Stockholm and Gothenburg) 36 in total, has run twice
Profession	Healthcare personal with license	Engineers
Way of organizing	Permanent program within VGR	Offered when required, by Swedish Public Employment Service and NCC, conducted by Kunskapsskolan.

5.4 First process – intuiting

5.4.1 Individual experiences

According to the 4i framework, the learning process begins with intuiting (Crossan et al, 1999). Individual experiences are inputs and outcomes of intuiting (ibid) and the respondents at both organizations in this study gives several examples of individual experiences from onboarding the RINs, which will be presented in this section.

NCC respondents: When the NCC respondents reflect over how the RINs presence in the organization has made an impact, there is a common intuition that it has led to an increase openness. However, when asked follow up question regarding the openness, most respondents are unable to say in what way this openness is visible. It is claimed by several respondents that RINs can contribute with their perspectives and with other kind of knowledge and experience than native-born persons (or Swedish-born persons), but this is expressed in a vague way and without concrete example. There are not many specific actions taken to change things as a result of the experience of openness, but the openness seems to be an influencer on the attitudes in a positive way.

“You also have to see the person behind this, why have they [the RINs] come here? When he [the RIN] told me, there were several times I just thought: my God! We need to hear other things too. We become a bit square, everyone lives in their boxes. We rise as an organization and get other input from another angle when the person comes with such a life experience, how construction work is conducted in another country. But also, the social part, like having some different events in life that makes you become in a certain way and it can be very positive for an organization, you look at a problem in a different way.” (NCC 9).

The respondents acknowledge that some of the RINs have a difficult life-history. To hear the life changing personal story affects the respondents. However, as experiences on intuiting level is often hard to verbalize, the findings are quite ambiguous. Several respondents said that hearing these stories gives them perspective and expands their own horizons. One of them said that it leads to being humbler. The respondents recognize that one of the effects of RIN leaving the native country, is losing the old network of contacts that facilitates the chances of getting an employment.

An example of when the intuiting level has matured is when the respondents have developed the insights and lead to self-reflection amongst the respondents of their actions. Some of the respondents think that the program could be improved further with higher priority and more time from their side. Also, to prepare oneself more and plan the internship more thoroughly is mentioned by a couple of respondents.

VGR respondents: The individual experiences from VGRs respondents show a similar picture to NCC: they see the benefits of diversity in the workforce, but have trouble putting their insights into words. The respondents say that we cannot afford to waste the skills that come to Sweden and it also gives other perspectives. The respondents cannot give examples of these other perspectives, instead the respondents mention that working with RIN is rewarding.

When asking the respondents from VGR about what they think the organization learned from PLUS, it is again difficult for the respondents to answer. The majority responded that they cannot evaluate any lessons learned but some respondents believe that the organization learned to take care of personnel in a good and structure manner.

“How should I say, that education pays off, I think. That they [VGR] understand the of having a good introduction and that it may cost a little bit in one end, but that you actually get it back in the other end” (VGR 2).

After some thought, one of the respondents gave the answer as seen in the quote above. This shows that some insight might occur when the respondent is interviewed and must put the insight in to words. The quote is an example of a respondent that has made a reflection.

5.4.2 Images

Another example of intuiting is images, which means the presumption of how one believes things to be. The respondent's images can be found in the way the respondents talk about perceived differences in how the work is conducted in Sweden, compared to in the RINs native home countries.

The NCC respondents express vague pictures of how construction work is conducted in other countries, but state believes that there might be differences from how it is conducted in Sweden. The respondent's express beliefs about work that can roughly be divided in two types; The first one is that there is assumed to be differences in the physical environment such as nature and weather, that the respondents believe affects how construction work is

conducted in various countries. The other type of assumed difference in work is dissimilarities in the organizational structure, such as rules and regulations, and some respondents talk about both issues.

“In the same way that we build in a certain way here, one must learn how to build another way there, because we have other soils and we have a lot of other building regulations. It is clear that it is always good to have knowledge of the context.”

(NCC 9)

The quote above shows an example of a respondent talking about his/her images of the assumed differences in working methods.

VGR respondents: The findings concerning images from respondents from VGR show that there are variations in what the respondents see in terms of RINs' knowledge when educated abroad.

“So, that it is not such a huge difference in terms of knowledge, in some situations they [the RINs] know much more than Swedish nurses - they also add something to us”. *(VGR 8).*

The quote above shows that even the same respondent can have a contractionary image concerning RINs' knowledge. The respondent says that there is not much difference and while there is a lot of difference, concerning knowledge between nurses from various countries. Other respondents have a clearer view that there are differences in terms of knowledge and education when educated abroad, and some do not share this image. The differences expressed by the respondents show a cognitive map that is not the result of a shared understanding. However, several respondents argue that RINs' competences is a resource for Swedish healthcare and working with foreign-trained personnel is necessary, because the Swedish healthcare needs the RINs as a workforce.

The respondents from VGR also express indications of being on the first step of the 4i process, intuiting, concerning work in various countries. The findings show that there is less coherence in the respondents' experiences than the findings from the NCC respondents, indicating that there is not yet a concordant cognitive map regarding difference in work methods.

The respondent from both VGR and NCC talks about “other countries” in a sweeping language without specifying which countries Sweden is compared to and show how he/she draw conclusion based on their own experiences.

5.4.3 Discussion of intuiting

Crossan et al (1999) say that the first process, intuiting, only exists on the individual level. Intuiting is something that is happening inside a person and is hard to verbalize for the individual him/herself (ibid). The fact that the person might not be fully able to express the insight or idea, makes the learning hard to research and capture in this process. Since it is not possible to find out about a person's thoughts, and especially a thought that the person has difficulties to verbalize, is a matter of interpretation. When a respondent has an opinion or experiences but has difficulties to express a clear statement, we interpret this as belonging to the intuiting process. There are findings showing experiences that are in the beginning of the intuition process, and other findings that are on their way to reach the interpreting process. The onboarding programs have given opportunities to learn in this process from experiences, and the finding shows examples of this.

An example of findings in the intuiting process is that respondents from VGR have difficulties to verbalize examples of personal insights in a thorough way. Findings show that there is not a shared understanding, the respondents have different experiences. The respondents of NCC are in general a bit more specific, saying that they have gotten personal insights from their experiences of working with RINs. Several respondents at NCC express that “hearing the RINs life stories is rewarding”, however most of them cannot clarify in what way it is rewarding and neither any actions taken as a result of this. Some of the NCC respondents express that it has led to a different attitude and themselves becoming more open, however they cannot express what that means in a more concrete way.

In short, the answers from both organizations show that the respondents have insights that has not yet developed from the first level in the 4i framework. Experiences, even when not verbalized and shared, are an important first step in the learning process and in line with previous research, all learning does not have to be visible (Müller & Östergren, 1995; Nilsson, 2011). According to the 4i framework, the learnings might stay on this level. The respondents from VGR have various experiences which indicates that there is a distance before reaching the next level, interpreting. NCC respondents show coherency when talking about how the life stories affects them, but it is hard for them to explain in what way this has had an effect. However, if the respondents find a way to articulate how the stories of others can affect, it can

be transferred to the next step of the process, interpreting. As mentioned above, there are findings that are on the verge to the next process, interpreting. After some reflection, he/she could interpret and develop the experience in to words.

There is also material that shows examples of the respondent's images. Some respondents from VGR talk about their knowledge about different healthcare education in Europe. The respondents give contradicting pictures of what education abroad means. The different images might cause uncertainty among managers and might also have an effect on integration in the Swedish labour market (Segendorf & Teljosuo, 2017). According to Crossan et al (1999) the intuiting process begins when the respondent's own images reflects their individual insights. Towards the end of the intuiting process, the respondents learning is something they can verbalize, for instance by describing their images. However, the images are not a shared understanding at the intuiting process, as there might be different images which is evident in the findings.

Another discovery is when respondents from NCC and VGR show sweeping descriptions of images concerning differences of work methods in different countries. There are no precise formulations about facts, such as what the concrete differences are, which countries the respondents are comparing with and to which extent they have knowledge about the working methods in other countries. The lack of preciseness can be interpreted as an image that the respondents have formed. Whether the respondents are right or wrong, this is an example of intuiting, a learning that has been formed on an individual level and is what the individual has come to see as the truth (Crossan et al, 1999). The respondents at NCC shows a more coherent image than VGR concerning images and is therefore closer to the next process in the learning framework. The findings show that there are some respondents at both organizations expressing appreciation of differences in the way to think about how work could be done. Nevertheless, the respondents also said that nothing had changed in the work methods. The experience of working and socializing with the RINs was affecting them on the individual level.

5.5 Second process – Interpreting

5.5.1 Language

The second learning process is interpreting, which means explanations both to oneself and the team. Language is a tool that enable someone to go from the individual understanding to dialogue and possible shared image of the reality (Crossan et al, 1999). In this section, we focus the findings concerning the Swedish language, since the lack of knowledge in Swedish language is reported as an obstacle for shared understanding and images of the team.

NCC respondents: In the interviews, no questions were asked about the RINs level of Swedish language. However, when asked about the obstacles, the lack of knowledge of Swedish language is by far the one issue that respondents regard as the largest holdback for the RINs to become integrated in the team. The lack of sufficient knowledge of Swedish language among RINs influences the workplace in various ways, according to the respondents. Several respondents at both organizations say that, what the respondents interpret to be lack of sufficient knowledge of Swedish, can make the person become retracted. The respondents mean that if the RIN becomes retracted, it makes it more difficult to be fully included in the team. The difficulties in the Swedish language sometimes has a negative effect on the rest of the team's ability to trust that the RIN has understood for instance given instructions or safety regulations. In NCC, the issue concerning trust connected to language is evident in for example the following quote:

“A feeling of uncertainty spread in the team when he/she [the RIN] did not feel that he could express himself as he/she wished. The colleagues in this project were unsure if he/she [the RIN] understood properly” (NCC 4).

The respondent view is that language can be an obstacle for the RINs to fully take part in the team. The RINs might not be given the responsibility they should had gotten otherwise, an outcome is that the RINs are given more simple tasks. The respondents express various ways to overcome or decrease the language obstruction. One respondent used English when he/she thought it was necessary. Another respondent tried to teach the RINs Swedish by giving work tasks in writing. The written tasks were an opportunity for the manager to help the RINs, to correct mistakes in order to learn Swedish.

Tests conducted by Kunskapsskolan show an improved level of Swedish language amongst all RINs from the beginning to the end of the program. The respondent also reported noticing that the RINs became more fluent in Swedish language during the year, something that affects the integration and the shared understanding, which is a feature of the interpreting process.

VGR respondents: As previously mentioned, the respondents from VGR also interpreted the language as a crucial factor for successful integration at work and into teams of colleagues. One respondent say that language obstacle is challenging for everyone at the workplace.

“It is very strenuous for them [the RINs] and it is also an enormous effort for the team to supervise, and throughout the time there is an uncertainty: did we misunderstand each other now? I think we [the team] say one thing and it seems that they [RINs] do something else. And having to check their colleagues or follow up and correct them [RINs] all the time. It is very strenuous for our existing team” (VGR 10).

The respondent’s insights have matured and can be communicated with others, the respondents share a cognitive map and mention the Swedish language as an obstacle for integration at the workplace. Examples of the believed importance of language is that one respondent thinks that the support for improved language skills is the only reason for employers to enroll participants to PLUS. Some respondents send the RINs they have employed to learn the specific healthcare language. However, there is not yet a shared image of how the language obstacle should be dealt with. One respondent explains that speaking English is not allowed in the workplace, in order to improve the RINs Swedish. Some respondents discuss that it is crucial to be able to read between the lines to understand what is *not* said in a meeting with a patient, in order to offer good care.

5.5.2 Cognitive map

Another example of interpreting is cognitive maps, which means that it is possible to communicate interpretations to others and to gain a feeling of shared understanding (Crossan et al, 1999).

NCC respondent: The NCC respondents interpretation of the purpose of the onboarding program at NCC is nearly unanimous; “NCC should reflect the Swedish society” and is a coherent view amongst the respondents as the reason why non-native (eg RINs)

Swedes should be included in the workforce at NCC. Several NCC respondents talk about the bad reputation that the construction market has had historically - not least when it comes to exclude women - but that the situation has changed to a more inclusive branch the last few years. NCC as employer is also seen as a good example of this by several respondents, but that there is still a way to go before fully inclusiveness and integration has occurred.

Further interpretations from the respondents to why this specific program Nystart has been implemented, is that the respondents believe that it attracts new groups to increase the competence for NCC. Also, to help integrate and to make RINs employable.

“Because at NCC, we need people as well, and they [RINs] have good knowledge from the start. And then we try to get them to find a place in the community” (NCC 4)

The purpose of the onboarding program for both NCC and the respondents correlate as they both say that employing RINS is one of the aims.

VGR respondents: A few VGR respondents say that the initial purpose of PLUS was to meet an attentive need, as there had been an increased number of people immigrating from other countries within the EU who had medical education. In Sweden, there was and still is a shortage of medical personnel. The respondents say that a structured introduction program and a better way to coordinate the efforts was discussed.

“Because we discussed that we needed a program, we had to take care of this [onboarding] more efficiently than that each manager who gets a foreign-trained employee does according to their best ability. And we also need to gather those who come, because it was huge volumes then and not just a few persons.” (VGR 6).

Before the PLUS program started it was the managers responsibility to introduce foreign educated personnel to the Swedish system. The magnitude and quality of the onboarding process differed between different operations, which VGR wanted to get adjusted. A group of employees, working full-time with an onboarding program, were believed to have better prerequisites to create an onboarding content with high quality, than single managers have. There is a shared understanding amongst the respondents at VGR that PLUS facilitates for them and is a good theoretical complement to the training on site.

“It [the onboarding program] facilitates, I have to say, it facilitates a lot. For the employer but above all for those who participate on the program.” (VGR 8)

It appears that respondents enrol participants for the program because they cannot provide the concept themselves, and because most respondents also have the image that the participants increase their network. Some respondents also share the image that other personnel at the department find it positive that RINs have participated at the program.

“Colleagues see an advantage that they [the RINs] have taken part in this program because otherwise it very much falls back on themselves [to organize the onboarding], when they are going to supervise as colleagues. It [the workload] gets a little heavier until they [the RINs] become more independent.” (VGR 8)

5.5.3 Discussion of interpreting

This discussion covers the findings that we interpret as belonging to the second process of the organizational learning process: interpreting (Crossan et al, 1999). The insights have developed and become more conscious and thus able to communicate to others, hence language is essential here and a shared understanding can be formed. The learning starts to move from individual level to group level (Crossan et al, 1999).

Language skills is said to be an important part of an effective integration (Migration Policy center, 2016). Respondents at both NCC and VGR express a coherent view that support this, as they emphasise the importance of knowledge in Swedish language. Amongst the respondents, “trust” is commonly alluded to in the talk about Swedish language. Since some RINs are regarded by the teams as not being able to fully express themselves because of their insufficient knowledge of Swedish language, the respondents say that their trust of the RINs knowledge is affected. A consequence of the lack of trust, is that the RINs are not given the full responsibility for various work tasks as they otherwise would had gotten. The respondents may interpret and develop shared understandings concerning the lack of trust because of these experiences.

Even though there is a shared language amongst the respondents concerning the RINs lack of sufficient Swedish language, the *action* to deal with the issue is not shared at either of the organizations. As we described in the findings, there are examples of trying to overcome the difficulties connected to Swedish language in various ways. Everything from extra

language training - by the respondent him/her self and others outside the organization - or switching to English, or avoidance of the “problem” giving the RIN less responsibility. This can be due to different previous understandings based on individual cognitive maps (Crossan et al, 1999).

NCC and VGR decided to start an onboarding program for partly the same reasons. The essence of onboarding is to integrate the employee in to the role (Bauer, 2010), and as such the onboarding fill one of the needs expressed by both organizations. NCC and VGR both have a problem to fill their vacancies. Starting an onboarding program is a way to act to integrate and make RINs employable. The inclusion of RINs competence in the Swedish labour market is, according to previous research, a way of achieving effective integration (European commission, 2019).

However, there is a discrepancy between VGR and NCC on this process, since the findings of NCC indicates a more coherent view of the purpose of the onboarding program, which indicates that their cognitive map is in tune (Crossan et al, 1999). The NCC respondents has a view that the reason behind Nystart is that “NCC should reflect the society”, indicating that there should be as big percentage of RINs working at NCC as are living in Sweden. The coherence can be interpreted as if there has been a dialogue and a cognitive map that matches. However, Crossan et al (1999) also raises the risk if a saying is just empty words with no substance. The expression must be filled with a meaning or there is a risk of group thinking, we have not investigated what the meaning behind the expression is.

The findings from the respondents from VGR regarding the purpose of the program show that the respondents differ in the answers. The interpreting process can be both on individual level and on group level, we interpret that the findings show an example of each of these levels. NCC, in the matter of purpose of the program, is on a group level, and the fact that the answers from the respondents from VGR are more spread, means that they seem to be more on an individual level of the interpreting process. However, both organizations can verbalize their insights hence they have moved from the intuiting process. Example of interpreted purpose is that “it is a necessity due to immigration” or “it is essential to support the language progress”. Our findings indicate that interpretation of the purpose of the program differ, and according to Crossan et al (1999) it can be explained due to the respondents having different cognitive maps, based on their previous experiences.

Since VGR is a large organization, the politicians saw the onboarding program as a way to facilitate the manifold of RINs entering the organization. The politician advocated a structured way of taking care of RINs and instead of letting each manager prepare and develop

own versions of an onboarding, the managers have the possibility to enrol the RINs to PLUS. This means that every RIN receives the same onboarding regardless of which hospital or health centre they are employed at. This can be argued as a way to give the RINs a coherent image and the same cognitive map as the rest of employees. One of the respondents would have appreciated a more specialized onboarding towards the own department but realized that it would not be possible due to the variety of participants and specialties. Even though it might not be possible in this case, a specialized onboarding could be an advantage according to previous research. Previous research says that there is a potential risk with a general onboarding, since the organization's culture might smother part of the individual mindset and could hinder a long-term employment (Cable et al, 2013).

How managers interpret PLUS, and its content is in line with previous research on onboarding (Kumar & Pandey, 2017), as they say that onboarding is of great help both for employer and participants concerning time. PLUS is marketing themselves as a facilitator of time, to release time for manager for another task. Another advantage is that all the RINs participating in the program receive the same information and knowledge of the organization. However, when it comes to learning, we see a risk of a disadvantage with PLUS as the managers might miss an opportunity to learn from the onboarding process.

The importance of sufficient Swedish language knowledge is experienced by the respondents from both organizations. Unlike other experience, the language is a concrete theme to talk about. The increase of the knowledge Swedish language is one of the purposes for the onboarding programs. This makes it possible to verbalize, hence, the level interpreting has been reached.

5.6 The third process – Integrating

5.6.1 Shared understanding

The third learning process is integrating, which means shared understanding in the team and is visible by studying the collective actions of the team members. The integrating process only appears on group level, not individual or organizational level (Crossan et al, 1999). Shared understanding is one of the inputs/outcomes in the integration process. Just as for the previous two processes, language is an important theme. In integrating, language is a way to preserve and change the collective minds (ibid).

NCC respondents: A theme that emerge from the findings, as an example of when there is a shared understanding, is when respondents refer to integration of RINs into the team. One of NCC respondent talks about hesitance from the team members because they did not know if the RIN would mean extra workload for the team members. The findings show that once the person is proven to be valuable for the organization, it also means a way to become integrated into the team.

“After that it went very well, when he [the RIN] had the opportunity to show what he could do, he [the RIN] was of course accepted in the group in a different way. He [the RIN] got to be more included.” (NCC 7)

Sometimes a hesitation to include someone into the team sometimes can occur. As the quote shows, if the RIN takes own action in performing work tasks, is something that the respondents in general express appreciation of. The RINs own initiative to approach and socialise with the other members of the team is also appreciated. One of the respondents talks about a RIN’s approach during “fika-pauses”.

“He [the RIN] sat there with the old chaps, he was not with the white colours, but he sat with the blue colours and talked and that is exactly what you should do. And that was probably why it [the integration into the team] was not a problem.” (NCC 9)

The findings show that the characteristic way of working at a construction site is working in a project. The members of the project work together during the duration of the project and then every second year, move to the next project and gain new colleagues. The working structure for projects and having trainees from various schools and programs is how NCC organize their work, which is mentioned by a respondent as why people at NCC are used to include new people.

VGR respondents: Several respondents mention that there is a need for tolerance from the team when the RINs do not fully master the language, otherwise the RINs face more difficulties getting integrated into the team. Respondents seems to address the issue of insufficient Swedish language by taking time to discuss with the team, inclusive the RIN, to prevent misunderstandings.

“Of course, people in the team have needed to change the way of working, but it is not anything that we have written down as a new routine: when we work together, we need to improve our way of talking to each other. (VGR 10).

The quote above is an example of when discussion in the team has resulted in shared understanding. Hence, a new collective way of working occurs and touches another input/outcome of integrating; mutual adjustment.

5.6.2 Mutual adjustment

Through conversations, differences and similarities are discovered. The language is used to amend the understanding and mutual adjustments can occur (Crossan et al, 1999). In the following section, findings of mutual adjustments are exemplified by the communication between the organizations and their onboarding programs.

NCC respondents: Before Nystart was set up there had been what both parts described as a tight communication between the persons responsible at NCC and Kunskapsskolan. NCC was the client and Kunskapsskolan aimed to deliver what was requested. But both parts describe an openness to listen to one another when it comes to their professional fields and made adjustments. For instance, Kunskapsskolan got NCC to lower their demands in level of mathematics knowledge for participation in the program.

Once the program was about to start, there was first a start-up meeting together with Kunskapsskolan. At the start-up meeting, expectations were discussed, and respondents met the participants. The communication between the respondents and the representatives at Kunskapsskolan proceeds through meetings, including the RIN, at the workplace during the internship.

“We had gathered all the supervising managers at NCC for an introduction, to discuss what was expected of us and what was expected of the RIN.” (NCC 1)

After the completion of the program, there has been evaluations. Kunskapsskolan did an evaluation of what the participants thought of the program, and at NCC the senior managers. A couple of the respondents request that they, as middle managers, would had been asked about their experiences as well.

VGR respondents: The majority of the respondents testify having good individual communications with representatives of PLUS organization and vice versa. The respondents receive information about prerequisites and the development for their employee either by mail, phone or by letter. In addition, PLUS organization offers the managers that enrol their employees to the program, to receive information about the arrangement and invite them to an open dialogue. The managers are also offered to participate on a group level, in managerial meetings about PLUS, however half of the respondents say that they do not attend at these meetings. One finding shows that the manager respondents scarcely discuss the PLUS organization and the content outside of these meetings with other colleagues. Therefore, communication and information the managers receive regarding PLUS, does not reach other departments. Only one respondent states that the content from the lectures in PLUS is addressed at the weekly meetings at his/her department, so that everyone in the team can discuss the different themes. Several respondents think that information about PLUS organization is unknown to most employees within the VGR because VGR is a large organization.

“VG region is such a gigantic ship so information in the line is, even if people think that the information line should be straight from the top to the bottom, it is not. Therefore, the information is not spread in a good way” (VGR 10)

Along with communication with participants and managers, PLUS has changed some of its program content in order to better match the expectations of the various departments. One example of a change is shortening the length of the work internship to reduce the absence from the regular work, according to requests from managers. Several respondents say, since VGR is a large organization with several departments that have different specialties, one cannot create a too narrow program but some adjustments in the lectures can be made.

Some respondents, both managers and PLUS representatives, talk about getting better at distributing information about PLUS.

“I think you would gain even more reliance and more cooperation from managers for example”” I think we could use PLUS more as a competitive advantage when we make recruitments from other countries.” (VGR 4)

There is a potential in improving the communication both internally and externally of VGR, that can in turn render good effects.

5.6.3 Discussion of integrating

This discussion covers the findings that we interpret as examples of the third process of the organizational learning process: integrating (Crossan et al, 1999). The learning process is on a group level. Through communication and conversations among the group members, learning has developed and become a deeper shared understanding and sometimes coherent action (ibid).

According to the NCC respondents there are a coherent perception of what characteristics identify a desirable employee, for instance being social and humble. The view of what is seen as positive attributes is mentioned repeatedly throughout the interviews. Findings shows that Nystart has only a small number of participants hence the learnings stated above might be a result from previous experiences of internships and employments besides Nystart. Even so, it is an example of the integrating process when a common view has developed. The fact that the respondents talk about desirables in a common way means that their individual learning has become coherent and a shared understanding has evolved.

According to the respondents from VGR, the RINs presence at the VGR has affected the teams shared understanding and actions. The RINs lack of sufficient Swedish knowledge has shaped a growing need for tolerance in the team. The team and the managers seem to have developed a shared understanding regarding the need to be patient and to allow time for the RINs to learn the Swedish way of working. Even though several respondents talk about patient, not all the respondents could exemplify how this is evident in any shared action. All the training is directed towards the RINs, not to the rest of the team. Previous research shows that, in general, native employees lack in insights of cultural differences (Malik & Manroop, 2017). Malik and Manroop (2017) suggests cultural training including all employees, not just the RINs, as a solution.

NCC and Kunskapsskolan arranges meetings for supervising managers and participants (RINs) before the onboarding programs begin. The aim with the meetings is to discuss expectations of Nystart and the managers' role as supervisors, thus form a mutual perception. Dialogue and shared action are said to be fundamental to gain a shared understanding (Crossan et al, 1999) and the meetings are interpreted as an attempt to achieve this. However, the

communication after the internships has not covered all managers experiences. Some managers experiences are not promoted, hence the learning do not go further to the next learning process. Certain information and experiences are not requested by the organization, this learning is not feed forward and cannot reach organizational level. If the information that the organization gathers is not exhaustive, it can affect the feedback. An example of when there is a lack in the communication is when the senior managers ordered the site managers to take interns and the latter did not see the possibility to offer a good placement. This example shows that learning does not proceed from interpreting to integrating since the supervising manager and the leading managers have different images. For the supervising manager this leads to questioning the purpose of the onboarding program.

According to one respondent from VGR (VGR 4) there is potential for improvement when it comes to communication and information both within PLUS organization and within VGR. We found several areas where the information could be expended. Many of the respondents have the opinion that PLUS is still too unknown within VGR and to some extent too secretive. The PLUS organization, as NCC and Kunskapsskolan, invites managers to meetings before a program starts to discuss content and expectations. However, the meetings are aimed at managers that have enrolled their employees to PLUS and not the managers that do not utilizes PLUS and therefore does not lead to distribute knowledge about PLUS in VGR. Moreover, according to some respondents, not all the invited managers attend, leading us to the conclusion that the knowledge about PLUS operation is not increased by these meetings.

Our findings show that respondents do not discuss PLUS in other existing networks. Respondents in this thesis come from both larger and smaller hospitals and care centres, which can lead to different experiences and interpretations, which can complicate learning (Crossan et al 1999), a shared understanding can be difficult to achieve. The learnings seem to end up in individual insights more than mutual understandings.

Another finding of communication of the onboarding program content is that one respondent requests a schedule of the lectures. The respondent utilizes the themes included in the schedule to discuss in weekly meetings with the whole team, leading to a mutual understanding of various subjects within his/her organization and consolidating knowledge for the RINs participating in PLUS. The respondent's tactic to include all employees in the team in the cultural training is in line with what previous research found to be helpful for integration (Malik & Manroop, 2017).

Within PLUS, there are ongoing dialogues about the content and further development of the onboarding program (VGR 4). In the process of development, the PLUS-representatives

have taken feedback from managers in to account. An example of listening to managers request is that auscultations have decreased in length. Through dialogue, the PLUS-representatives has gained an understanding of the difficulties that managers express concerning the RINs being absent from work due to the auscultation. Crossan et al (19991) says that adjustments can be the result of a dialogue when the same language is spoken.

The content in PLUS aims to socialize the participants into the organization (Klein et al 2015) and our findings show that onboarding activities that are focused on knowledge in specific specializations within healthcare, rather than general knowledge in healthcare, are requested by some respondents. It is important that the tools that the RINs receive is usable in their work, hence the onboarding activities should not be too general (Graybill et al, 2013).

5.7 The fourth process – Institutionalizing

5.7.1 Routines

The fourth and last learning process is institutionalizing. Institutionalizing only appears on organizational level and if the learning reaches this level it is organizational learning, meaning the learning can remain even if employees leave the organization because of changes in structure, routines and processes (Crossan et al, 1999).

NCC respondents: Kunskapsskolan has taken care of the contact with SPES to set up Nystart. It has been a bureaucratic and protracted process according to one of the respondents. An example of the challenges in setting up Nystart is when the manager in charge of the program at NCC contacted SPES, there was no formalized ways to get in contact with SPES. To contact SPES, the manager needed to call during telephone hours and was put in telephone que with no difference from employment seekers. Also, in other parts of the setup of the program it is a time-consuming process according to the respondent. Eventually Kunskapsskolan took on the responsibility to handle all arrangements with SPES, hence NCC now only need to have contact with Kunskapsskolan. One of the respondents means that the regulation for procurement is from the 80s and not suited for today's business. The program was first set up in Stockholm, however the bureaucratic process did start all over again when Nystart was set up in Gothenburg, according to the same respondent.

According to the respondents, NCC is used to having internships and has routines for the process. However, the RINs internship through the onboarding program at

Kunskapsskolan, is created in a different context. Unlike other internships, the RINs are said to often have insufficient knowledge in Swedish. Another difference is that Nystart is a LMIS with a potential employment at the end of the program. The different circumstances provide a need for new routines to develop. For instance, the internship is divided into two time periods and is the only time that the managers meet the RINs during their time at Nystart. The internship is the organizations possibility to socialize the RINs to a Swedish workplace, simultaneously, it is supposed to give the managers an opportunity to evaluate if the RIN meet the NCC expectations for a future possible employment. However, there was a shared picture amongst several respondents that the internship was too short to see the RINs potential. Several respondents also believe that there is a difference between how the organization regard the RIN-trainees compared to trainees from various schools and universities:

“You give things more chances and you have more patience. And you give more guidance and put more resources and time to get it to work...” (NCC 7)

The success of the placement is also dependent on the planning of the internship. This is left to the workplace to organize, by the manager in charge. The findings show that sometimes the structure is not optimal concerning how to organize the internship for the RINs. One of the respondents say:

“NCC need to have an idea of what the RINs should do on their internship, to just keep up with the supervisor and see how it works in a workplace is pretty bad... So, it's hard to do something sensible of I think.” (NCC 5)

VGR respondents: As previously described, each hospital and health center etc. in the VGR controls itself. The different departments are sovereign and therefore they can decide for themselves which operative activities and processes to follow. Within VGR, all departments are able to work differently. The senior managers at the department can therefore take own decision on using PLUS as an onboarding program or not. Hence, a consequence can be that different departments within VGR work with different embedded routines and strategies.

One respondent says that routines are sometimes questioned by RINs. However, there are obstacles to be creative in the way of conducting the work. Findings show that all respondents reasons that since Swedish health care is governed and regulated by legislation, it

is hard to amend existing routines and structures. The questioning of routines can sometimes lead to an open discussion in the workgroup. According to the same respondent, the questioning can be positive in order to remind the working group the existing way of working.

5.7.2 Diagnostic systems

NCC respondents: An example of diagnostic system - meaning an organized way to ensure that routines are being followed and amended if necessary - is the meeting between RINs, supervising manager and teacher from Kunskapsskolan. During the meetings the internship is discussed and evaluated.

VGR respondents: Findings on how the program is organized show that the PLUS organization consists of a program management team; one account program manager, one program leader and one group tutor for each program. The program leaders are the ones responsible for evaluation and development for each program. Any changes in the programs take place after dialogue within the program management team. The program management team have meetings every other week where they discuss for example problems, feedback from both managers and participants and future plans.

5.7.3 Rules and procedures

A finding that is identified, is the difference between the onboarding programs concerning the structure of the finance of the onboarding programs. The cost for Nystart is financed centrally by NCC concerning the fee to Kunskapsskolan for each participant. The worksite does not have costs because of the onboarding program other than indirectly, as time for supervising and supporting the RINs. Since Nystart is a LMIS, the participants receive their payment through subsidies from the SPES. The cost for the program is not an issue mentioned by the respondents at NCC. In contrast, almost every respondent from VGR discuss the finances and expenses in relations to PLUS. The different VGR-departments pay the RINs wages for their regular work even though they are participating in PLUS during some of the work hours. The different departments also pay for participation at the program, and most respondents report this as being challenging. Some respondents state that there is no room for doubtfulness concerning the employee's intention to retain in the employment, since the financial responsibility lies on individual departments.

“...Because they [the RINs] can attend PLUS and be gone two days a week which I pay salary for even though they are not contributing, since they do not see patients or do any other work.” (VGR 2)

Several respondents state as a solution to the burden of the cost for the department, that the onboarding program should be financed centrally and not locally. One respondent says that the employer might see participation in PLUS as a waste of time, because during the time at PLUS the RINs do not render production time.

“The managers or the organization thinks that they should prioritize being in place at the clinic. One does not really see the PLUS program as work, a necessary one” (VGR 1).

5.7.4 Discussion of Institutionalizing

This discussion includes findings that we interpret as examples of institutionalizing which is the fourth process in organizational learning (Crossan et al, 1999). The learning is embedded in structure and routines in an organizational memory to ensure consistent actions (ibid).

Both onboarding programs in themselves are examples of organizational learning, since they have gone through the four steps in the learning process. The start of the set up was the context with the lack of qualified workforce. There were individuals that had an insight that the recruitment problem needed to be solved, *intuiting*. A discussion led to *interpreting* how this could be solved through setting up an onboarding program, and led to shared action, *integrating*. The onboarding programs were set up with rules for instance regarding who can participate, what the program will contain and hence became *institutionalized*. In both organizations, key persons have left the organizations, however the onboarding programs were not affected due to the institutionalizing. Meetings, evaluations and managers communication with representatives at the onboarding programs has led to *feed forward* and amendments in the learning process. The structure has changed, for instance length of internship (NCC) or who can participate (other health professions than doctors, VGR), meaning *feedback* for the individuals to take into consideration.

Both VGR and NCC are well established in the Swedish labour market. When an organization has been established for a while, it usually means that there are routines and structures that are incorporated and institutionalized (Crossan et al, 1999). However, PLUS and Nystart are still young programs, hence may not have established or formalized in their

structures, there is still room for spontaneity and faster enhancement work, according to how Crossan et al (1999) describes new institutions. One difference between Nystart and PLUS is that Nystart is the result of cooperation between various actors on the labour market, including NCC, while PLUS is an integrated part of VGR. We see tendencies towards more structured communication at NCC which we interpret as needed since the communication is between different actors in the labour market. Examples of more structured communication at NCC is start-up meetings and meetings on site between Kunskapsskolan representative, RIN and supervisor. Findings from VGR show that there is more informal communication, like the manager taking contact directly with the PLUS-representatives, having the same employer might facilitate contact.

The onboarding programs are not the core business for either of the organizations, the operations of PLUS and Nystart serves as strategic initiative to meet the recruitment needs of the organizations and previous research shows that more organizations recognize the importance of structured onboarding (Klein & Polin, 2012). Depending on the context, concerning labour market and number of immigrants, the needs of PLUS and Nystart existence are affected. Just as the onboarding program started as a solution to a problem, we interpret that the onboarding programs might cease to exist if they are not considered as unnecessary for the organizations. For instance, NCC has no onboarding program running during 2019. As the RINs might become more integrated in Sweden as time passes, the content of programs also needs to change focus. The challenge for the organizations, since the onboarding programs has become institutionalized, is to meet the changed focus and learn new things. New learning means that the learning must again pass through the four processes before reaching organizational learning (Crossan et al, 1999). Evidence of need for, and accomplished, change has already been evident, for instance decreased demand for level of Swedish for participation (NCC) and change of content of lectures (VGR). We see this ability to adjust in accordance with the learning as crucial to fulfil the onboarding program purpose. Both programs offer quite a few different tactics (language training, lectures, individual coaching/tutoring). The tactics are given in a set onboarding program, which means that they are offered formally. Both these features are said to give a good socialization effect (Klein et al, 2015).

The Nystart onboarding program aims to increase the RINs chances to get an employment. Since the RINs in Nystart are not guaranteed employment at NCC and Nystart is also presented as a LMIS, the RINs are not socialized towards NCC specifically. There is previous research that indicates that individuals that are involved in an LMIS enhance the

chances to get employed (Calmfors et al, 2002). According to our respondents, there are some RINs that have received employment at other organizations than NCC. At PLUS, there is another situation since the RIN must be employed already in order to be offered to participate in a PLUS program.

For Nystart, with three different actors involved (NCC, Kunskapsskolan and SEPS) the ability to communicate and to know how to collaborate is essential to formalize relationships and develop routines (Crossan et al, 1999). The rules for setting up an LMIS are, according to one respondent, very rigid. However, the execution of Nystart is flexible. Even though routines are established and there is previous embedded learning of how to onboard, there seem to exist spontaneous features. The context, with cyclically and winning or losing procurements, puts pressure on NCC to adjust their onboarding or even to offer an onboarding program at a certain time, or not. The importance of the economic situation for integration are also shown in previous research (Statistiska centralbyrån, 2017). The characteristics of construction work with temporary projects complicates planning ahead. For NCC, the process of feed forward and feedback needs to be quick to be able to renew itself and meet the demand of the context. NCC has, in comparison with VGR, a small onboarding program. Also, Nystart has only been running for two years, and both the smaller size and less fixed structure could be assumed to make it easier to be flexible.

VGR is a large organization and have experience of having employees educated abroad. The employees working at PLUS, have an overall picture of the healthcare operations because of their knowledge of VGR. VGR and PLUS have learned how to onboard and has expanded the onboarding program to include more professions from the initial one only including doctors, this is an example of organizational learning. The knowledge has formed a strategy on how to onboard. PLUS, has taken the roll to be experts on onboarding. However, the expert roll for PLUS might lead to that managers lose the possibility of new knowledge and learnings about how to onboard. The advantage for the manager is that PLUS is a time facilitator according to the respondents, and PLUS has the ability to focus on onboarding as its only mission.

Both organizations report lack of sufficient knowledge of Swedish language amongst the RINs as being an issue. As previous reported findings show, the lack of Swedish language knowledge sometimes lead to a number of consequences; insecurity for both the RIN and the rest of the team members, lack of trust from team members and manager and less qualified tasks for the RIN. At NCC, the findings show that there is no common way to address the issue of unsatisfying level of Swedish. Each supervising manager must come up with his/her

own solution, which means the learning how to deal with the issue of Swedish is handled on individual level at intuiting process. If the organization can learn how to develop routines, meaning the process of institutionalizing, that ensure a sufficient Swedish it can be beneficial. Institutionalised routines could support the individual manager how to solve the problem and contribute to trust in the team.

At VGR there is an embedded learning and structure how to manage the language issue. The embedded learning from the past has led to that VGR developed and institutionalized the process of language training, an example is extra language training at PLUS.

Our findings show another difference between NCC and VGR, concerning cost for the onboarding program. Whilst cost was not mentioned by respondents at NCC, the VGR respondents talked of participation at PLUS as a financial burden. Production loss, which is an indirect cost, is something that the respondents from VGR consider to be problematic. Previous research argues that cost is often an obstacle for onboarding activities to be approved by the organization (Dai & De Mues, 2007; Johansson & Johrén, 2011). The respondents in this thesis sees participation at PLUS as a routine for the RINs to receive the Swedish license to practice their profession. However, not all departments at VGR use PLUS. Since every department can decide its own operative actions, individual insights of PLUS seem to be the determined factor. Onboarding via PLUS might not be seen as a strategic initiative by the managers and previous research says that it is an obstacle if a strategy is seen as less important (Dai & De Muse, 2007). According to some respondents the knowledge of PLUS can be improved within VGR. Even though PLUS is an integrated part of VGR, the action of enrolling is not institutionalized.

A common feature for NCC and VGR is that they have a high degree of laws and regulations to relate to in their work. Health and safety issues are important to secure a safe work environment, both for the employees and their customers/patients. Many rules and regulations that is set up by Swedish laws cannot be changed by the organizations. At VGR, there are several professions that require license to practice. The license serves as a guarantee that the employee has sufficient knowledge required for the profession. That means that all knowledge from other countries might not apply in a new context. It is hard to change certain routines since they are setup in order to be in accordance with the laws.

6. Conclusion

This section consists of a summary of the study and highlight the main findings that answer the research questions. The main contributions and recommendations for future research will also be presented.

Crossan et al (1999) says that organizational learning is a process but is in this thesis presented in a static form in order to simplify and make sense of the findings. As a process means movement, we mean that this study's findings should be viewed as snapshot of the reality. There is no exact line that when one process ends and the next begins. The findings identified on the first stage of the process might stay there and never develop to organizational learning or is on its way to become institutionalized. If the learning does not move on through the process and back to intuiting (see figure 1, p 15) it is not institutional learning on organizational level but learning on individual level (ibid).

We wish to emphasize that learning that does not reach organizational learning is still valuable (Crossan et al, 1999). However, if the learning has reached organizational learning, the organization can benefit from the experiences regardless of whether an employee leaves the organization since the learning stays with the organization (ibid).

Both NCC and VGR learned to adapt to the context, hence they became innovative and set up onboarding programs, Nystart and PLUS, for RINs. NCC is particularly sensitive to economic fluctuation due to procurement that changes the prerequisites for the onboarding program and communication between levels of the organization is essential. VGR learned how to organize the onboarding program as the program became institutionalized. However, as VGR's onboarding program, PLUS, is new and their routines are still evolving it can be flexible. NCC has an even newer onboarding program, Nystart, and because of the structure of work at NCC, they need an even higher degree of flexibility. The context might require both changes and stability, too much of one or the other can cause dysfunction (Lyles & Fiol, 1985). It can be too little incentive to create change, but if things change too fast, the outcome can be that they who are supposed to learn things can have difficulties to interpret the environment, and only bring confusion.

Both organizations have learned to change their programs, VGR about managers feedback and NCC to better fit the overall structure of their operation. Both organizations have distinctive features of laws and regulations for health and safety reasons, that are complicating organizational learning, hence certain learning risk staying on individual level.

To conclude the finding of how organizations, learn from onboarding programs of RINs, we depart from the 4i framework. The respondents from both organizations reported various individual insights. The insights were extensive but not evolved, as is evident for the first process, *intuiting process*. The respondents of this study used words such as “rewarding” and “gaining new perspectives” to express their insights. The individual insights have in some cases formed into cognitive maps, as they moved to the *interpreting process*. One example of interpreting process was regarding the common view that some of the RINs knowledge of Swedish language was insufficient. The next process in the 4i framework is *integrating process*. In the integrating process, we saw that the respondents had found common views through communication and their individual cognitive maps transformed into shared understandings. For instance, the number of weeks of trainee was changed in both organization due to a developed shared understanding of what was an optimal length of time. The last process, *institutionalizing process*, was evident as rules and regulations has formed the structure for the onboarding programs.

Some of the learnings that were identified within the first three processes might be on their way to the next process of learning. Since this study does not cover learning over time but is rather a snapshot of the reality, it is not possible to know if the learning found will go further in the process or not. However, what can be said is that there is a need for *feed forward* for the learning to proceed and there are some indications of what could be improved at both organizations, in order to increase the chances of moving towards organizational learning.

At VGR, the strategy and channels for communication is something that we argue could benefit from reevaluation. We see communication as central since knowledge about PLUS is the presumption for the managers to decide if they see an advantage to utilize PLUS for onboarding of RINs. The need for onboarding should be the determining factor for enrolling, leading to equal terms for all RINs, help for the managers and can also serve as a perk when recruiting. The communication needs to transfer from institutional level to individual, described as feedback by Crossan et al (1999). NCC, on the other hand, could benefit from more communication in the *feed forward* process. A more covering evaluation process and ongoing communication between decision making manager and the executing department could be beneficial. The fact that the organization's structure with shorter projects and changing context might make a fixed structure of long onboarding program more complicated. If the context is constantly changing, the onboarding must be flexible to match.

6.1 Main contribution

The role of organizational learning in the context of onboarding of RINs has been neglected. This study shows that onboarding is not merely a tool to socialize RINs into an organization, onboarding is also an opportunity for learning for other members in the organization and for the organization itself. Comparing two different organizations gave us a better opportunity to get deeper insights, and findings from both organizations shows that rules and regulations constituted by the Swedish authorities affect learning and the learning opportunities. The findings also support previous findings which shows that learning to a large extent falls into personal insights and tacit knowledge rather than ending up in institutionalization and organizational learning (Crossan et al, 1999). However, findings in all processes were found and how the learning can develop through the processes. It also contributes with support to the 4i framework and the highlighting of communication as important for the learning evolve.

6.2 Future research

Our study has shown the learning process of the 4i which an organization's need to feedback and feedforward in order to reach organizational learning. It would be interesting for future research to take a deeper look at the communication process in feedback and feedforward. We believe that the research could include RINS experiences.

The level of spoken Swedish in the organizations and sectors seems to have effects on trust between colleagues, hence can influence a working group in different ways. It would be interesting if future research could investigate the language as a possible antecedence for trust in working teams.

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8. Appendix

8.1 Appendix 1

Interview template:

Program directors and HR -responsible at NCC, Kunskapsskolan and VGR

Background information:

Male/female, Age, Profession, Year of employment for the profession

What is PLUS/Nystart history and purpose?

What is the content of the program?

How and who decide what the program should contain?

How many have participated?

What do you do as program director/representative?

What do the managers do?

What do the supervisors do? (NCC) What do tutors do? (VGR)

How has the program changed from the start?

Who has initiated and pushed thorough the changes?

What future planned developments of the program are available?

What feedback do you get from managers at NCC/VGR?

How do you request feedback? How is it taken on?

What feedback have you revived from the participants of the program?

What do you think the organization has learned by using PLUS/Nystart?

Now that PLUS/Nystart has been running for a while, what challenges and opportunities do you see?

Do you have anything else to add: something that we have missed asking about or something you want to raise?

Additional questions to NCC/Kunskapsskolan:

How many have been offered a job?

What is the process to become a participant?

How do you appoint supervisors?

How do you communicate with NCC/Kunskapsskolan, before and during the program?

Interview template: Manager and tutor VGR

Background information:

Male/female, Age, Profession, Year of employment for the profession

Questions only to managers:

How many of your employees have participated in PLUS?

How does it work in practice when someone who has joined the program comes as a new employee to your department?

What made you enroll newly employed personal to PLUS?

What do you do?

How have you solved problems and challenges?

Tell us how your workplace has been affected by having used PLUS? How has the organizations in general been affected by having using PLUS?

What new thoughts and lessens have you got from working with foreign educated personnel? what changes has it led to?

What communication have you had with PLUS?

What has changed based on the communication?

What feedback have you received from the participants that have been relaunched?

What do you think the organization has learned through the program for foreign educated?

Now that PLUS has been running for a while, what challenges and opportunities do you see?

Do you have anything else to add: something that we have missed asking about or something you want to raise?

How do you communicate with NCC/Kunskapsskolan, before and during the program?

Interview template: Manager NCC

Background information:

Male/female, Age, Profession, Year of employment for the profession

What was your role within the project Nystart?

How many participants from Nystart have you employed?

How does it work in practice when someone who has joined the program comes as a new employee/intern to your department?

What do you do?

What made you become a supervisor?

How has you solved problems and challenges?

Would you be a supervisor again if you had the opportunity? What would you do differently?

Tell us how your workplace been affected by having using Nystart?

What new thoughts and lessens have you got from working with foreign educated personnel?

What changes has it led to?

How has NCC taken on this?

What communication have you had with Nystart?

What do you think the organization has learned through Nystart for foreign educated?

Now that Nystart has been running for a while, what challenges and opportunities do you see?

Do you have anything else to add: something that we have missed asking about or something you want to raise?

8.2 Appendix 2

Letter to possible participants

We are two students studying the final semester at the master program Strategic Human Resources Management and Labour Relations at the University of Gothenburg. Currently we are writing our master thesis. The reason for contacting you is that we hope you want to participate in an interview for the master thesis.

We will do a study of a private company (NCC) and a public organization (VGR) who both offer onboarding program that have some similarities (Nystart and PLUS). Our study focuses on organizations, what they gain and how they are affected by offering these programs to non-native Swedes.

We would like to interview you about your experiences from PLUS/Nystart and would appreciate if you agree to participate. Since we are in Gothenburg, the interview can be via Skype or telephone if you are not stationed in Gothenburg. The interview will take about one hour, both of us will be present and the interview will be recorded. The audio recording will be deleted when the thesis is finished. Your participation will be anonymous and may you are able to cancel your participation at any time without any explanations, if you wish to do so. You are welcome to contact us if you have any questions.

Best regards

Carina Gustafsson & Marie Mattsson