LEARNING IN PROJECT-BASED ORGANISATIONS

A case study of a labour market integration project

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Study abstract

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Purpose:

This study aims to improve the understanding of the challenges and opportunities to develop new competencies and implement new learnings in project-based organisations for the labour market integration of foreign-born unemployed citizens. The thesis is informed by the case of Landa integration and R&D, an ESF-founded integration project anchored in Finsam Gothenburg.

Theory: Transformative learning, single-loop and double-loop learning

Method: Qualitative, semi-structured interviews and observations.

Result: The results show that learning has occurred both on an individual and organisational level. However, the extent and degree vary. The challenges and opportunities refer to time and institutional structure. Depending on their relationship they could either enable or hinder learning.

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Abstract

The study examines the challenges and opportunities to develop and implement new competencies and learnings in project-based organisations working for the labour market integration for foreign-born unemployed citizens. The thesis is informed by the case of Landa integration and R&D, a European Social Found (ESF) founded integration project anchored in Finsam Gothenburg. This study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) What are the learning implications for staff? (2) What challenges and opportunities are experienced by the staff, managers and R&D facilitator in the project-based organisation? (3) What are the learning implications for the project-based organisation?

The ESF project touches upon several important topics. First and foremost, the individual ability of the staff to implement new labour market integration methods that contribute to getting participants to work or education. The project successfully develops a novel human rights-based labour market integration method that renders structural challenges and institutionalised behaviours visible. Methodologically, the study is based on interviews with the employees and actors involved in the project, meeting observations and participants' diaries. Theoretically, it builds upon a combination of transformative learning and single-loop and double learning models, which were applied to the collected data.

The results show that the staff experienced the program as something positive and meaningful. The project has also resulted in frustration, self-awareness, confidence, confusion, and awareness. The challenges and opportunities experienced in this project-based organisation connect to two factors, time and institutional structure. Depending on how the two are shaped and managed, they can result in opportunities for organisational learning but also challenges. The study showed that awareness of institutional structures constraining the staff's capacity to help people get to work or studies, resulted first in frustration that later turned into a transformation of mind according to Mezirow's (1978) four forms of learning. The project has not developed any method to change the institutional arrangements that constrain the staff's agency neither to ensure that the organisation's learnings remain. Therefore, double-loop learning is not observed at an organisational level, according to Argyris & Schön (1996) definition. However, an ongoing discussion along those lines are observed, as the project moves toward its final phase.

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1. Introduction

In today's fast-moving society, more pressure is directed on the individual ability to learn (Senge, 1995). The process of learning is a highly relevant topic to study since it increases the knowledge and understanding of the underlying factors required for successful learning. Developing new competencies, making sense of new knowledge, and integrating it into practice have proven essential in the learning process. No matter the context, the learning process looks more or less the same; for learning to occur, individuals need to understand what is meant to be learned (Weick, 1995). There are many different ways of conducting and structuring learning, one of which is explored in this study. One common thing in learning is that much emphasis is directed toward the individual; for learning to happen, the individual needs to learn (Weick, 1995). One could argue that there is always a need for learning; however, the actual "need" is often discovered when realising that the old way is no longer beneficial or when presented with a new situation (Hoyrup, 2004, Czarniawska, 2015).

Albert Einstein is believed to have said that "insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results". Despite this, some individuals, companies and organisations fall victims to reproducing unsuccessful structures. Many of these 'failing-to-learn' initiatives have been reported to be in the field of labour market integration of foreign-born, primarily organised in project forms (Diedrich & Hellgren, 2021).

There is currently an ongoing local initiative in Gothenburg conducted by Finsam with the ambition to change this trend. Landa is a European Social Found funded (ESF) project that aims to develop and try new methods for unemployed foreign-born citizens. All ESF funded projects must involve some development aspect, and Landa integration is no exception. However, one new thing for the region is that instead of using a traditional evaluation approach, Landa has chosen to use a research and development program (R&D). Compared to the usual approach where an external evaluation firm comes in and provides a report, the R&D facilitator actively interacts, coaches and trains the Landa staff. This program and approach have never been used before in the local context. The Landa and R&D program touches upon several important topics. First and foremost, it aims at shaping the individual ability of the staff to implement a new way of working that contributes to addressing long-term unemployment for foreign-born citizens. Second, to get participants to work, education or transfer closer to work or education. And finally, to work more human rights-based, but also elements of making

constraining structures and behaviours of individuals visible to reach a sustainable change in the field of labour integration for foreign-born citizens.

Previous literature in the field of labour market integration projects has criticised the field for re-producing unsuccessful methods (Diedrich & Hellgren, 2021, Brorström & Diedrich, 2018). However, there is a novelty in trying new methods in the Landa project, for example, the region has never previously used an R&D program, applied service design or used a human rights approach based on the horizontal principles. The combination of these factors is rare in previous literature and therefore needs further examination. By studying how the methods in project Landa either contribute to or hinder learning, this study seeks to contribute to the understanding of the opportunities and challenges and to the field of project-based learning.

2. Background

"In order for organisational learning to occur, learning agents' discoveries, inventions, and evaluations must be embedded in organisational memory. They must be encoded in the individual images and the shared maps of organisational theory-in-use from which individual members will subsequently act. If this encoding does not occur, individuals will have learned, but the organisation will not have done so" (Argyris & Schön, 1978, s. 19).

Learning is a continuous process that requires both skills and resources at the individual and the organisational level (Morin et al., 2015). Learning from an organisational perspective is often connected to competence development. Competence does not exist as a stand-alone concept but rather in relation to a given situation (Dilschmann et al., 2000). Competence is the ability to perform or execute a task and is highly connected to knowledge (Axelsson, 1996, Drejer, 2000). Competence development refers to increasing one's ability and is often related to a particular outcome or goal. From an organisational perspective, such purposes could, for example, be described as a competitive advantage but also as a means to reach the desired outcome (Zahra et al., 1999, Drejer, 2000).

The emphasis on the importance of individual ability for organisational success is mentioned frequently in organisational literature (Wernerfelt, 1995, Zahra et al., 1999, Grey, 2009, Sandberg & Targama, 1998, Wang & Ahmed, 2003). Grey (2009), for example, states that an organisation without individuals is just an empty shell and Wang and Ahmed (2003) that learning starts from individuals. The importance of individuals has led to an increased dependence on human competence, concretised as knowledge and skills in various respects such as ability and qualifications (Sandberg & Targama, 1998).

There is no doubt that having the "right" competencies and competence development is crucial for organisations (Grey, 2009, Zahra et al., 1999). However, one shall not forget that competence development is only a tiny part of organisational learning (Drejer, 2000), borrowed and developed from the individual learning process (Wang & Ahmed, 2003). The increased emphasis and discourse on learning are not new but rather ongoing and present in our society (Ackermann, 2015: Illeris, 2015). The high priority of learning in research and policy contexts has contributed to its spread, making lifelong learning a natural part of society. A learning society shapes learning individuals who are actors in lifelong learning (Faure et al., 1972). Learning becomes one norm and practice where individuals have to constantly develop their

learning as responsible citizens in a learning society (Edwards, 2001). Lifelong learning is seen in research as a strategy to involve all individuals in society, where each individual is an active player in the development of learning (Faure et al., 1972). Many studies have previously explored the topic of learning. Marsick & Watkins (1993), for example, showed that learning takes place as a result of critical reflection on one's own experiences rather than as a result of formal training, such as remembering and memorisation of theories. Scholars such as Weick (1995, 2000) and Säljö (2002) have primarily focused on the individual's sensemaking process when it comes to learning, which has shown that the ability to understand, re-considered and re-evaluate is beneficial when it comes to learning.

Just as there are many different types of learning, there are also many ways of structuring learning. Leaders can facilitate employee learning and contribute to personal development through the structure of learning (Wilhelmson, 2006). In recent years the tendency to organise and use projects has increased (Sjöblom. et al., 2015, Pettigrew et al., 2003). However, previous studies on learning in projects have shown that there is difficulty in transferring knowledge and that project-based learning is challenging to succeed with (Argote & Ingram, 2000. Backlund & Chronèer, 2015). Complexity in facilitating, sharing and implementing learning amongst actors within the project is one part of the explanation (Brorström & Diedrich, 2018. Argote & Ingram, 2000). Despite the challenges, project-based initiatives are still used to solve complex issues, stimulate learning, develop innovation and try new methods (Sjöblom. et al., 2015).
The public sector has not been an exception. In the last years, due to New Public Management, budget cuts, and increasing outsourcing of services, project-based organisations have turned into a standard form of welfare provision (Lundin, 2016). The development of multi-level governance processes, e.g., supported by European Union directives and programs, has also contributed to multiplying and normalising their presence (Norbäck & Zapata, 2022). Notably, in the field of labour market integration, project-based organisations have increasingly been the taken-for-granted form to solve unemployment amongst foreign-born citizens (Diedrich & Hellgren, 2021). A group where a need for action has been identified in terms of competence development and support measures according to the Labour Market Forecast for Västra Götaland Region 2019–2020.

Unemployment is expected to increase both for domestic and foreign-born, but mainly for the latter group (Svenskt näringsliv, 2021). The number of registered unemployed individuals with an unemployment period of twelve months or more has increased (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2019).

Long-term unemployment lowers the competitiveness in the labour market and thus makes the way out into the labour market longer. Unemployment rises more for women than for men, according to the Labour Market Forecast for 2019-2020. The same trend is also noticeable in Gothenburg. The Gothenburg Coordinating Association notices increased difficulties among the residents and participants in various activities to establish themselves in the labour market and achieve self-sufficiency. Prejudice against the target groups in combination with mental illness, disabilities, lack of education, lack of networks, and together with a slowdown in the economy and savings in labour market initiatives have proven to make it increasingly difficult for these groups to establish themselves in the labour market (Khosravi, 2012, Karlsson & Tibayev, 2014).

Critique towards labour market integration initiatives, often organised in the form of project-based organisations, has focused on the fact that there has been an overflow of projects (Sjöblom et al., 2013, Ludin et al., 2015). Despite multiple efforts, the projects do not lead to actual or sustainable change (Diedrich & Hellgren, 2021). Moving from plan to action has proven challenging (Brorström, 2018), and further critique refers to ambitious plans loosely anchored to reality (Brorström & Styhre, 2021). Long-term unemployment is a challenging issue to solve due to its complexity (ibid). Grand challenges, such as unemployment, are "grand" because of their construction and uncertainty (Ferraro et al., 2015). Furthermore, nothing is constant; it is contextual, complex and intertwined (Boute & Drucker, 2019), and there is no one simple reason behind or easy way to deal with the matter (Karlsson & Tibayev, 2014, Lundborg, 2013). Despite the challenges of solving long-term unemployment, the costs of not trying can be a high price to pay. From a macro perspective, long-term unemployment leads to lower productivity, reduced tax revenue and increased social costs in grants, not to mention the waste of resources (Erikson et al., 2007). From a micro perspective, factors such as increased mental illness, separation and depression have been shown (Wanberg, 2012, McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). A country's ability to integrate its residents is essential for social, economic, and individual welfare. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of project-based learning by focusing on the challenges and opportunities to develop and implement learnings in project-based organisations. This study also aims to contribute to the labour market integration literature by examining how challenges and opportunities affect project-based and individual learning.

2.2. Aim

The following study aims to improve the understanding of the challenges and opportunities to develop new competencies and implement new learnings in project-based organisations in labour market integration for foreign-born unemployed citizens. The thesis is informed by the case of Landa integration and R&D, an ESF-founded integration project anchored in Finsam Gothenburg.

2.3 Research questions

- What are the learning implications for the staff in Landa?
- What challenges and opportunities are experienced by the staff, managers and R&D facilitator in the project-based organisation?
- What are the learning implications for the project-based organisation?

2.4 Disposition

The following chapter introduces previous research related to learning in projects. The theory is outlined in *chapter four*, and *chapter five* provides the study's methodological approach. *Chapter six* consists of empirical material from the Landa R&D project collected through interviews and observations analysed in *chapter seven*. In conclusion, *chapter eight* summarises the thesis' results, findings, and knowledge contributions and gives suggestions for further research in the field.

3. Previous research

The following section discusses project-based learning from a general perspective and a labour market integration viewpoint. The section also addresses the factors that have shown to be important to succeed with project-based learning, that is culture and leadership.

3.1 Knowledge transformation in projects

Although learning is a central concept within the sampled literature on knowledge transformation in projects, the literature reveals significant challenges in successfully transferring knowledge. For example, Argote and Ingram (2000) present a framework to show why knowledge transfer can be challenging to identify and put into practice. The framework shows difficulties in transferring knowledge related to interactions between people, tasks, and tools, explaining that they are less likely to fit into a new context. Previous literature on projects shows that individuals from different groups and professional backgrounds are common (Jamshed & Majeed, 2019, Backlund & Chronèer, 2015, Brorström & Diedrich, 2018). Argote and Ingram (2000) emphasise the challenges with individuals from different networks, such as compatibility across contexts, with the explanation that involving people from other subnetworks is problematic because people are likely to vary more across contexts than tools or tools tasks. According to the authors, compatibility is crucial for knowledge transfer to be successful, both in terms of compatibility amongst individuals and compatibility with individuals and tools.

The positive benefits of succeeding with project-based learning are emphasised in previous literature (Goswami & Argawai, 2019, Backlund & Chronèer, 2015). For example, Backlund & Chronèer (2015) explore how an organisational-wide project learning process within Swedish project-based organisations could improve the prerequisites for learning. The authors argue that project-based learning is essential but challenging due to the complexity of implementing and transferring knowledge across boundaries. Similar results are presented by Argote and Ingram (2000). The results exemplify the statement, which showed that none of the studied organisations arranged and managed an organisation-wide learning process. According to the authors, the issue is grounded in a lack of a holistic perspective. To create a learning organisation, Backlund and Chronèer (2015) argue that it is essential that all employees work towards a shared vision and goal. A systematic learning process is required for the organisation to succeed. This view is also shared by Argote and Ingram (2000), who propose a framework

model that emphasises process thinking, seeing the project and the learning aspect more as an ongoing process.

3.2 Labour integration projects

In a report by Diedrich and Hellgren (2021), the authors present an extensive compilation of integration projects in public, private and non-profit organisations for foreign-born citizens in Gothenburg. When it comes to implementing project-based learning, the report shows a great challenge to move from project form to the organisation of origin and that few projects get fully implemented. Similar results are also demonstrated by Brorström and Diedrich (2018) in the case of project Askimsviken, which aimed to integrate newly arrived foreign-born citizens by including various collaborating partners to remove boundaries between different instances. The collaborating partners later shut the project down because the goal was not reached.

When it comes to integration projects, a collaboration between multiple actors is commonplace, and partnerships appear to be a standard solution for many problems (Diedrich & Hellgren, 2021). Collaboration across borders can be tricky. Brorström and Diedrich (2018) showed that in the case of Askimsviken, new obstacles were created instead of removed due to cross-sectoral collaborations. Labour market integration projects are often temporary and short-termed and according to Diedrich and Hellgren (2021), expecting fast delivery results in a long-term problem. Although few projects get fully implemented, some activities and learnings do survive. For example, Diedrich and Hellgren (2021) showed that surviving learnings consisted of project staff's understandings, such as insights, experiences, and new knowledge. A common misconception is however that project staff learns by simply being a part of a project (Brorström and Diedrich 2018). According to the authors, that is not the case, and they continue by stating that the issue is that many projects do not have the time or resources to use the competencies. As a result, the competencies within the project group are lost, and learning is not accomplished to the extent that it could be.

3.3 Culture and leadership

Project culture and leadership are central concepts within the literature on organisational learning and are often described as two factors that increase the chances of success (Galvin et al., 2008, Backlund and Chronèer, 2015, Notgrass, 2014). For example, Backlund and Chronèer (2015) showed that the desire to share knowledge depends on the quality of the relationships between the project participants. The importance of team culture when it comes

to learning is also emphasised by Jamshed and Majeed (2019). They showed that culture is good for learning since it stimulates the understanding of other members' feelings, leading to a more effective group performance. The study's results also indicate that knowledge transfer has a positive connection when employees feel they receive support from each other and a negative link when conflicts are experienced in the team.

The importance of leadership and psychological security, which by Maslow (1942) is defined as *"a feeling of confidence, safety, and freedom that separates from fear and anxiety, and especially the feeling of satisfying one's needs now,* is emphasised by Galvin et al. (2008). The authors showed that leaders who use and are optimistic about alternative perspectives could inspire the employees in the project group to express different thoughts and ideas. According to Galvin et al. (2008), psychological security can contribute to learning between employees by taking different views and encouraging and giving time for reflection (ibid). Similar results are found by Goswami and Argawai (2019), who showed that common goals strengthen the expectations and trust among participants, which has led to an increase in the individual's motivation.

There are many different types of leadership and styles in project-based organisations. One of many is transformative leadership, which aims to increase the employee's awareness of the value of the results and how to achieve that results (Goswami & Argawai (2019). Notgrass (2014), for example, showed that transformative leadership led to a higher degree of motivation and morality, similar to the result found by Goswami and Argawai (2019). Notgrass (2014) also showed that a leader who uses transformational leadership could influence the individual's interests to become the same as the interests of the team and the organisation. Scholars from a more critical approach have previously pointed out that the projects may, in practice, be used to obtain legitimacy for the organisation to show that it is modern. That there is a commitment to fundamental societal problems, a way of financing business, increasing governance and control, and participating in and influencing change (Sahlin, 1996; Meeuwisse, 1996; Lundin and Steint hórsson 2003).

3.4 Summary previous literature

The literature above states that project-based learning can be hard to succeed with due to the complexity of involving multiple actors. The literature also shows a tendency to re-produce structures and methods without considering if they are beneficial. However, it is possible to

succeed with project-based learning, if learning is viewed more from a process perspective, where knowledge is allowed to emerge. A holistic view has also proven beneficial, where multiple factors are considered. Creating trust between participants and the managers or leaders has also shown to have an essential impact on the outcome of learning.

4. Theoretical framework

The following section outlines the theoretical departure of the study and intends to equip it with analytical tools to explain individual and project-based learning. The transformative learning theory was used to study individual learning. The choice to use transformative learning was based on the fact that data showed indications of a transformation process; where assumptions and opinions were shifted as a result of participating in the project. The single and double-loop learning theory were applied to complement the transformative learning, by providing an organisational perspective. By adding single and double-loop learning a more fine-grinded tool for understanding the implications for project-based learning was developed. Additionally, the theory also added a further perspective to individual learning.

4.1 Transformational learning

When it comes to learning, goals for knowledge or skills are typically acquired and usually accompanied by measurement and assessment such as grades or evaluation (Boström et al., 2018). However, the learning process can bring about other changes in the person who learns. Changes that are not expressed in any syllabus or plan and, therefore, are not usually measured but are essential for personal development (Mezirows, 1991). The Landa and R&D program focuses on measurable and unmeasurable goals. A significant emphasis is on the unmeasurable aspects such as personal development and increased awareness. Transformative learning helps the individual critically examine one's own and others' preconceived notions, which change meanings and the form by which definitions are created (Boström et al., 2018).

The concept of transformative learning is a theory developed by Jack Mezirow (1978), which describes the process that starts in childhood, where meaning is created to form a frame of reference. The structure helps the individual form perceptions and opinions that later guide the individual's decision-making. If the frame of reference does not match what we learn, dissonances or dilemmas arise; this can, in turn, lead to a transformation process, resulting in a change in the view of knowledge and sometimes even in one's identity (ibid). Important personal qualities such as the ability to reflect and rethink are developed or "learned" simultaneously as other concrete knowledge, such as self-confidence, responsibility, ability to work together, and flexibility (Illeris, 2015; Wilhelmson, 2006). The transformative process can also occur within existing institutions and social practices, and sometimes even transcend

them, indulging micro, meso, and macro levels (Boström et al., 2018). Learning becomes so-called transformative; it leads to more than just increased knowledge.

Mezirows (1991) introduces the concepts "meaning perspectives" and "meaning schemes", which provide an understanding of how the meaning-making process takes place. According to Mezirows (1991), it is through these processes that meaning is created. The concept provides an understanding through an overall meaning perspective that forms the mainframe of reference for the individual's meaning creation. According to Mezirow (1996), the meaning perspective aims at a system of rules of habitual expectations, while meaning schemes refer to knowledge, beliefs, values , and emotions that evoke a specific interpretation. Both influence how the individual defines, understands, and acts. The difference between the concepts is that meaning perspectives consist of deeply rooted notions while meaning schemes include more superficial and changing opinion groups. According to Mezirow (2003), it is vital to "name" one's reality and understands the differences that are otherwise so quickly taken for granted. It also becomes crucial that the individual learns to translate meaning, purpose and value critically and reflectively. Transformative learning can be understood as using previous perceptions to construct new or processed perceptions of experiences. Transformative learning initially focused on individual learning but has since developed to include organisational learning, groups, and organisations (Tyler, 2012). Critical thinking, group deliberation, and a need for learning to be anchored in practice are crucial for transformative learning (Hooks, 1994).

4.1.2 The four forms of transformative learning

Mezirow (1991) believes that there are four forms of learning (see model 1), where problem-solving is the central theme to all. The first form refers to learning within the existing frameworks of reference. A type of learning that leads to the development of preconceived sentence structures. The second form explains that learning new meaning schemes creates new meanings that agree with or reinforce existing perspectives. Learning through a transformation of opinion patterns is the third form of learning, which describes the individual reflecting process when previous assumptions are considered inappropriate. The fourth form is learning through the transformation of perspective. Thanks to critical reflection, the individual can become aware of the views that need to change or be dropped to succeed in a specific situation. By redefining the problem and understanding it differently, new solutions might take form, and new meanings can be created (Mezirow, 1991).

Elaborating existing frame of reference	→	Learning new frame of referance	→	Transforming habits of mind	→	Transforming points of views
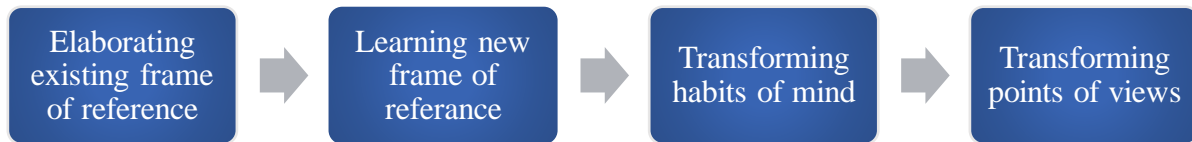
(*Model 1*).

The transformative learning process is no easy task, and it is a long-term, processual, and often tricky assignment (Taylor, 2018). There is also a critical dimension that the actors' learning enables the recognition of the structure of one's assumptions that form feelings, behaviour and cognitive patterns (Boström et al., 2018)

A critique of transformative learning focuses on the fact that the individual's emotions and ability to identify one's behaviour are central (Illeris, 2015). Critics say that individuals behave in a transformative process as the norm reads. A change in behaviour or emotions is not that simple because most people live in denial or are unaware of their behavioural and thought patterns. The contradiction is further linked to the fact that the individual becomes acquainted with a notion of how things "should be" (Illeris, 2015).

4.2 Single-loop & double-loop learning

Argyris and Schön have worked together to develop the theory of single-loop learning and double-loop learning based on their espoused theory of action and theories of use (Granberg & Ohlsson, 2009). In this study, the single-loop and double-loop learning theory will be used to complement transformative learning to analyse the organisational effect of the learning initiatives.

The meaning of single- and double-loop learning is explained in a model called Model II: theory-in-use. It describes the basic principle of action and shows that values, organisational or individual, determine whether there are conditions and grounds for self-correction. First, a deviation from a previously desired result is observed, and then possible corrections and an action strategy are designed. These actions are later implemented to give rise to a new outcome. The expected outcome can be re-evaluated to overcome these recurring problems, and new conditions can be identified to design new values (Argyris, 1982).

In single-loop learning, there is no dimension of behaviour change and metacognition. Single-loop learning is a more straightforward form of learning, where the learner builds on already

existing knowledge. It can, for example, be a manager who learns to delegate better or a chef who refines his recipe. The learning in single-loop is a instrumental learning which means a behaviour can be weakened or strengthened depending on the consequences. This type of learning has no inherent change value but is related to set strategies and values. Therefore, the norms and values themselves remain unchanged (Argyris & Schön, 1996).

Double-loop learning on the other hand changes current practice, strategies, and assumptions. Double-loop refers to two feedback loops that connect the observed effects of a particular behaviour with strategy and values based on the company's primary strategy. Or in this case project Landas aim and strategy. Strategies and assumptions may change simultaneously as, or as a consequence of value changes (see model 2).

Changes in values and norms do not necessarily have to be considered desirable. The desirability of the change is determined by situations where it has been tested and used. It is only in double-loop learning that individuals and organisations can address current practices' desirability; by questioning the reasonableness of current practices (Argyris & Schön, 1996). Double-loop learning can also be expressed through conflicting demands in organisations' operations. Double-loop learning can occur when members try to resolve these requirements by presenting various proposals for solutions that lead to higher understanding and new insights for the members. By creating a heightened awareness through communication about the origin of the question, conditions and consequences, which leads to new priorities and standards (Argyris & Schön, 1996). One example of double-loop learning in the workplace is when an employee discovers a need for change due to a problem. Learning takes place when the employee starts questioning how they have previously handled the situation and arriving at a more efficient way of dealing with it (Argyris & Schön, 1996).

Single-loop learning
The most common style of learning is just problem solving- improving the system as it exists.

| Assumptions -Why we do what we do | Strategies and techniques -What we do | Results -What we get |

Double-loop learning
More than just fixing the problem, this style of learning questions the underlying assumptions, and values behind what we do. Emphasis on formalising and capturing learnings.

Individual development is essential for learning; however, according to Argyris and Schön (1978), the organisation, too and not only the employees, must develop. According to the authors, there are many examples of organisations with talented individuals who know a lot, but the organisation knows comparatively little. They further mention that organisational learning arises when the individual in the organisation develops through the activities and choices. It is almost paradoxical. *"Organisations are not merely collections of individuals, yet there is no organisation without such collections. Similarly, organisational learning is not merely individual learning, yet organisations learn only through the experience and actions of individuals."* (Argyris & Schön, 1978) In short, experiences must be taken advantage of and captured with the help of an organisational change; otherwise, the lessons are of no use.

To summarise, single-loop learning is about how we can do things better, while double-loop learning is about why we do as we do (Agyris & Schön, 1996). Double-loop learning refers to an extra loop where the individual steps back and reflects on what and why things are done. The learner questions their own business and the approaches by which one solves one's task, leading to a changed mindset and a stronger belief in what one does.

5. Research design

5.1 Methodological starting point

The study presented in this study explores the challenges and opportunities to implement organisational learning in project-based organisations in labour market integration for foreign-born unemployed citizens. The choice to use a qualitative research approach was based on the fact that the method allows for a deeper examination of the study's purpose (Bryman, 2011). Landa is an ESF project conducted in a Swedish local context and anchored in Finsam. The involvement of the R&D program and the choice to apply rights-based service design is nothing new, not even the use of research in ESF-founded projects (ESF, n.d). However, in the region, the format is rare. An advantage of working with case studies is that it allows for a deeper understanding (Hyett et al., 2014). Due to the complexity of integration and learning in project-based organisations, more knowledge on the topic is desirable. By investigating the specific case, further understanding of organisational learning in projects can be achieved and thus contribute to the perception of reality (Justensen & Myer, 2011). In this study, the unit of analysis stems from an abductive approach, which means that induction and deduction co-occur. One benefit of using the abductive approach is that it offers a way of overcoming the limitations associated with an inductive or deductive positioning (Bell, et al., 2019). This study is thus based on an interaction between existing theory and collected data (Aspers, 2011).

5.2 Case introduction

Landa is an ESF project that started in September 2020 and ends in February 2023. The project aims to strengthen the labour supply among unemployed foreign-born women and men aged 18–64 and equip them for working life through individually tailored efforts. The project also aims to develop new collaboration methods in civil society's public and private businesses and organisations. To the project come participants who find it challenging to participate in the Swedish Public Employment Service's initiatives and the regular activities within the labour market and education administration in Gothenburg and are dependent on various grants for their livelihoods support.

Emerga is an institute that works to educate actors within the municipality and public sector on human rights. Emerga has been contracted to supervise, educate, and evaluate the Landa integration project. The Research and Development Program aims to develop new knowledge and new ways of working to increase integration in the labour market for people with a foreign

background. The aim is also to create consensus and develop joint competence to implement a rights-based approach throughout the project so that the business's capacity for improvement concerning human rights is strengthened, particularly the work with horizontal principles, which is one of the requirements for ESF-funded projects. Therefore, the R&D program aims to deepen and develop the project staff's knowledge and readiness for action for increased opportunity to develop each activity based on the human rights principles and legal requirements.

5.2.1 R&D structure

Two smaller groups with staff from the Landa program have been selected to be a part of a six-week R&D program to increase the knowledge of human rights-based principles. The two groups have identified challenges that should / can be developed and improved during four lead learning meetings focusing on participation, autonomy, and inclusion. The framework for identifying challenges was how can we guarantee that participants get their rights fulfilled in the Landa project. During the six weeks, Emerga had continuous conversations with the staff about what they do, their changes, and what they see in their daily work, and by using different tools, systematically studied the change that employees experience. The staff had the option to work in a group to solve a common challenge, but at the same time, each individual must make their journey where they reflect, keep a diary and analyse their way of working.

5.2.2 Project purpose & structure

The goal varies depending on which actor is asked. There are also formal and informal, individual and collective goals—long-term and short-term, such as integrating participants, educating staff and challenging institutional arrangements. The Landa project consists of layers of staff and decision levels. Among the respondents in this study, the staff are closest to the participant. The project leader is a bridge between the staff and the management team, and much of the responsibility falls on the project leader to inform the management team of the thoughts, questions and findings that the staff have. The development leader is in charge of the development process and is also a part of the management team. The management team consists of various actors such as the project owner, the council, and collaborating partners. The highest level consists of politicians.

5.3 Data collection

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with actors from the R&D program and with actors from the Landa integration project. The benefit of using a semi-structured approach is that it allowed for follow up questions, flexibility and while still providing a structure (Bell, et al., 2019). Access to collected data such as journal notes from both groups has also been supplied from the Landa R&D project and will thus be a part of the analytic process. Observations from four workshops and learning meetings also comprise part of the study's primary data.

5.3.1 Interviews

Contact details for the candidates were initially supplied by Emerga, the organisation in charge of the R&D program. All the eight candidates in the R&D program were informed about the study in an email sent out by Emerga. Respondents were later contacted with an interview request and an information letter (see appendix 1). All interview was scheduled for an hour and conducted over zoom. The interviewees consist partly of the eight candidates in the R&D program. These candidates are currently a part of the Landa integration project and have, in groups of two, been a part of the Landa R&D program. Group 1 finished in November 2021, and group 2 started in February and finished in late March 2022. One interview with the actor who facilitates the R&D project was conducted to create an overview of the project's structure. Three additional interviews were also conducted with managers from Landa integration to get a better understanding of the R&D programs' effects. The themes covered in the staff interviews consisted of; learning outcomes, actors, tools and practical changes. The interview themes for the R&D facilitator, project leader and the development manager, on the other hand, primary concerned; structure, learning implications and practical implementation. By investigating the three perspectives (R&D candidates', the actor in charge of the R&D and managers from the Landa integration), a greater understanding of the challenges and opportunities to implement knowledge processes in project-based organisations in labour market integration for foreign-born citizens was gained.

5.3.2 Respondent description

All respondents interviewed besides the R&D facilitator works on the project full time. Their employment in the Landa integration project is temporary, and there are currently on loan from

their original position. The respondents consist of six job coaches, two coordinators, one project leader, one development manager and one R&D facilitator (*see table 1*).

Respondent	Background
1	Job coach
2	Job coach
3	Job coach
4	Job coach
5	Job coach
6	Job coach
7	Health coordinator
8	Activity coordinator
9	Project leader
10	Development manager
11	R&D facilitator

(*Table 1*).

5.3.3 The journal

One of the assignments in the R&D program was that the staff should keep a journal for four weeks. Every week the individuals would identify a situation to reflect on and show how they had worked with their chosen principles (participation, inclusion or autonomy). The diary was based on four questions from which the employee could base the answers: *what happened in this situation? Describe the event as neutrally as possible. Am I happy with what happened based on your chosen topic? Do I want t it any other way next time? Does the participant want it any other way next time? What can I influence and control to change this situation?* An additional question was added for group 2: *How have I this week taken in comments from the participants that helped me/us develop the efforts in Landa?* Group 1 chose participation as a topic to reflect on. In group two, the employees individually chose a topic. However, the principle was the same, i.e., during the four weeks that the staff participated in the R&D project, they reflected on how they work, create and contribute based on their chosen topic. The extent to which the respondents used their journals varied; however, all respondents, besides two respondents, wrote every week.

5.3.4 Observations

Observations took place at Emergas office and were scheduled for 3 hours each. Four observations were made with group two: one introduction workshop and three learning meetings. The introduction workshop introduced the R&D program, the rights principles and the journal. Staff had the opportunity to ask questions and choose which principle to focus on. The first two learning meetings differed in character and focused more on the journal and what the staff experienced during the week. The staff were handed a paper with questions to reflect on and write down; the questions were: *what is your current situation right now? What is your desired location? What are your obstacles in reaching your desired location?* (potential obstacles, challenges?) *What do you need to get over your obstacles?* The answers were later shared with the group. The R&D facilitator asked questions during the sharing process, and the present staff could also ask and add questions and thoughts. The last learning meeting included the same structure and an additional part focusing on learning. The following questions were asked: *what have we learned? How has it affected how we think? How does it affect how we feel? How has it affected what we do? What has it added to the project, and what has it added to your professional role? What has it added to the project as a whole? What has this given your participants? How does it feel?* The staff wrote down the answers on post-it notes and

placed them on a whiteboard in the room. The staff later organised the post-it in different themes and were asked to describe their notes. The themes that emerged were challenges, opportunities, and learnings.

When observing the group, notes were written down simultaneously as the meetings occurred. Notes varied from direct quotes to overall themes. One benefit of using observations is that the method allows for a more inductive approach to the data, where concepts and themes emerge. (Bell, et al., 2019). Using observations also made it possible to see the respondents learning process in action.

5.3.5 Summary data collection

In total, data were collected through interviews, workshops and diary notes. Table 2 provides an overview of the data collected. In the table first row, the quantity is described in numbers, and it refers to the number of interviews, workshops and diary notes collected. Row two refers to quantity in terms of minutes, hours and pages collected from the three sources.

Interviews	Workshops	Diary notes
11 respondents	4	From 8 respondents
490 minutes	12 hours	26 pages

(*Table 2*).

5.4 Data analysis

5.4.1 Grounded Theory

The analytical work is inspired by grounded theory framed by Charmaz (2006). The analysis started during the transcription phase, where initial observations and themes were written down. Furthermore, the data was approached in the frame of content analysis to code the empirical data by classifying words or expressions from the narratives of the participants into codes in order to organise the data. The approach helped the analytical direction and to detect possible biases (Charmaz, 2014). After the initial coding, some of the themes that emerged were *confusion, frustration, reflection, autonomy, awareness, purpose, impact, formal*

learning, informal learning, group dynamics, leadership, effects, implementation, time concerns, system errors and *structural challenges*. These were later reduced into the following main themes: *frustration, reflection, structural awareness, frustration, autonomy, changed work practices, leadership & group, project purpose, project influence & learning, time* and *system errors*. The categories used guided the theoretical assumptions through a comparative analysis of identified patterns (Charmaz, 2014). Enabling the identification of similarities and differences in the studied material and how they affected project-based learning.

5.5 Ethical considerations

In a research study, it is necessary to consider the ethical aspects that The Swedish Research Council (2002) recommends: the information requirement, consent requirement, confidentiality requirement, and utilisation requirement. Therefore, the study will use these requirements to form, conduct, and use collected data. However, one ethical aspect to consider is that full confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, since the Landa project is mentioned by name. The project gave permission to use the name, however, the respondents' names were not used, but their role in the project was. This means for some respondents, especially those who are alone in their position that they can be recognised by other employees in the project. All respondents were informed about the recognition possibility. Consent and permission to use the role description were given by all respondents.

The nature of this study which focuses on learning, was not considered sensitive or harmful to that the respondents. Harm can refer to physical harm, to participants development or self-esteem, stress, or to career prospects or future employment (Bell, et al., 2019). Acronyms and full anonymisation were therefore not considered necessary. Another consideration refers to the fact that observations were a part of the analytic data. To avoid bias and increase objectivity, the data has been written down exactly as candidates expressed it, and comments about the tone of voice and facial expressions were not included.

5.6 Limitations

The most significant limitations with the following study refer to the time involved in the project. The Landa project, which is running for two years had already started when the active engagement was initiated. This resulted in significant losses, for example, group one had already finished its active involvement in the R&D program. Therefore, only group two were

observed; this is a limitation since a lot of valuable data was gathered from the observations for group two. Another limitation concerns the end time of the project which is in January 2023. Meaning that the effects observed and seen when evaluating the program in January will not be a part of this study.

5.7 Quality of the study

In qualitative research, trustworthiness consists of four sub-criteria; credibility, transferability, reliability and an opportunity to strengthen and confirm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Criteria that have continuously been considered during the research process. Meaning that the study's data was collected, stored, and analysed according to the criteria. Follow up and clarification questions were asked, and transcripts were written down according to the recordings. Furthermore, all material was safely stored, and respondents were presented with the opportunity to read the interview transcripts. The goal of this study was not to produce a generalised result, however, in terms of transferability the study's result can be applied and beneficial to other project-based organisations as it contains valuable insights. Qualitative research has previously been criticised for being too subjective, unsystematic and impressionistic. By addressing the critique and by applying the criteria of trustworthiness, this study attempts to increase its credibility.

6. Results

Landa integration and the R&D project are closely intertwined, generating overlapping answers in some parts of the results. Separating these parts proved difficult, partly because they are ongoing simultaneously and because much of the focus of the R&D project is to strengthen the employees in their role in Landa integration by educating and arousing reflection. The goal of these efforts has been to create learning based on service design and human rights. To create better conditions for participants in Landa integration regarding participation, inclusion, autonomy and increase awareness amongst staff dealing with these questions. The results are presented following the structure of the research questions with additional sub-themes.

6.1 What are the learning implications for the individual?

6.1.1 Learning outcomes

In the six weeks that the staff were an active part of the R&D program, employees were frequently encouraged to reflect on their chosen topic. Participating in an R&D program was new for all the respondents. However, the way of thinking, e.g., human rights, was nothing new, but applying it in their work was for a majority. When asked what the staff has learned from the R&D program, increased reflection practice, practical tools, increased self-awareness, professional role safety and broader perspectives are some of the factors mentioned. Increased reflection is frequently mentioned, especially concerning the participants and the staff's own practise, behaviour, and biases. None of the interviewed respondents had previously been encouraged to reflect or set aside time for reflection during working hours. In the beginning, the new practice was met with concerns, and most of the respondents described their initial thoughts about the reflection practice as just another thing they were expected to make time for. This process is still ongoing for some staff, especially group two, who started later. The main difference between the two groups is that group one has had more time to reflect and make sense of the new practice and concepts introduced. As time passed, all besides one respondent expressed that the reflection practice has been a great source and tool for both their professional and private life. However, when asked if the staff will continue with the reflective practice, most respondents expressed that they will not be prioritising reflection.

"Once you sit down and write, you realise that I would not have come to this idea if it were not for the fact that I sat down and wrote now. Of course, it gives a lot. But I do not think I would

sit down and spend time on it if I did not have to. Then it is de-prioritised even if it gives something, unfortunately." (Respondent 5)

The respondents reported the outcomes of increased reflection and awareness differently, where some described frustration, others increased pressure, and others a greater understanding. Only two respondents expressed that they did not learn anything new in the R&D project, with the explanation that they previously worked with the perspectives and target group. However, they both agree that the topic and the initiatives are essential and that it has been a great reminder to have this part active. However, most of the respondents express that the R&D program has been a great source of learning. One respondent even expressed that the involvement of the R&D program has resulted in humanisation.

"I have not felt as institutionalised as I felt in my previous role and it has definitely affected my way of working. I really think I got back to humanity. At my previous workplace we were completely, or I was very overworked and had too much and then in the end you sort of adapt, because you have no choice. It sounds awful when you talk about it, but that's how I experienced it. I became dehumanised in some way, and now I have been humanised again. "(Respondent 1).

6.1.2 Institutional frustration & responsibility

In addition to the reflective practice, the staff were asked to apply the concept of human rights and the rights principles to their daily work. Applying human rights in practice led to increased awareness about institutional arrangements shaping their work, self-behaviour, and work practices. On a micro level, this resulted in a realisation that the participant is currently not as included in their integration process as they should or could be.

"It has become much more obvious that the participant does not feel included." (Respondent 4).

The realisation that participants are not included to the extent they could be led to frustration. A majority of the respondents expressed the complexity of the target group (long-term unemployed and foreign-born) and the experienced friction between the project's values (measured individual transfer to work or education and a human rights-based practice) to complicate matters.

"I really want to highlight again the complexity between soft values and a "we shape the project ourselves-based on the participants" feeling that at the same time meets hard values, lots of administrative work (which takes time from the participants) and method development where we lack/lose participant focus. I agree that neither can exclude the other to carry out a serious project, but it frustrates me to be thrown between these separate worlds. We must also take into account that the work efforts must be reasonable to perform" (Respondent 3)

The frustration concerning the project's goals and experienced pressure to shape the project and balance administrative work as emphasised above is recurrent in a majority of the staff. This frustration was expressed in the staff's journals and their statements and was visible and pronounced in the observation of group two. The frustration from the observations mainly related to the hardship in balancing the desire and possibility to help the participants in the project. It is also related to the staff's role and individual responsibility; that is, what responsibility does the role entail and what is the participant's responsibility. The frustration is not necessarily new, but the active use of reflective and awareness practice brought it back to life. A common denominator for the staff is that they all have a strong will to help the target group. Besides one, all have actively applied for their position, and everyone expressed a deep desire and motivation to help the target group. The staff's desire to help the participants resulted in various feelings, such as not being able to do enough and not being enough, but also a sense of empowerment. One other thing that became clear to the staff is that there is no one way to help the participants. By introducing the rights principles (inclusion, participation and autonomy), the ways and meaning of helping broaden.

"I have written about it several times and landed in some kind, that it may be to include that we are talking about at the last meeting. To inform is to include. I must have come to that conclusion. But I'm still struggling with it, but maybe I don't have to be so hard on myself." (Respondent 5).

Respondent 6 expresses it in the following way *"I have become tougher with it now, that I cannot take all the responsibility to make all calls, but it is the person in question who needs to do it. I pay more attention to it, even though I sometimes get stuck in old routines."*

6.1.3 Agency

One benefit highlighted amongst the staff is that the project nature allows for a more accessible structure to try and develop new methods. Most of the staff have a background in areas with

strict, formal and measurable goals and values. Project Landa also consists of formal and measurable goals, but it also subsists of goals beyond that which can be measured. From a micro-level, when asked whether the staff felt they have the autonomy to change and influence their role in the project, all besides one reported autonomy to a certain degree, e.g., in their role. The Landa project is an ESF-funded project, meaning certain expectations and requirements must be considered. Furthermore, the project falls under the Social Services Act. Total autonomy is therefore not possible. Despite this, the majority describes that the project's structure allows for changes and improvements. About half of the staff also stated that they never previously had the autonomy and freedom to express their opinions and suggestions for improvements.

"I feel much greater freedom in this project than I felt in my previous role. We have designed a lot together, produced new materials, and tried different activities. I have never done that in my previous role, where there were much stricter frameworks. (Respondent 1).

6.1.4 Changed work practice

All respondents express that they have changed how they conduct and organise their work by reframing their approach to the participant, with the rights principles in mind (inclusion, participation, and autonomy). When asked how this change takes form in practice, the respondents expressed that they now ask the participants instead of assuming that they know what the participant needs.

*"I have started to ask more open-ended questions during my conversations. I try to have a routine of asking what the participants bring with them at the end of my conversations. I also try to give feedback on the other activities they participate in to see how we as a whole can find more tools to include them." (*Respondent 5).

Another thing mentioned is that the staff have become more willing to step away from the initial plan and instead adjust after the participants. Respondent 7 expresses it the following way.

"Before when I held a workshop or lecture on a topic I read as much as I could about what the research says and based on that fixed a presentation. It may work well in many contexts, but now I feel more that I try to listen to what needs the participants or groups have and create opportunities after that and let them control the content more."

6.2 What challenges and opportunities are experienced?

The most substantial challenges mentioned in the respondents' interviews consist of time constraints and institutional arrangements (norms, routines, organisational structures, values, expectations) shaping their work. On the other hand, the opportunities refer to the Landa project structure and the method of including an R&D program.

6.2.1 Time

The time framework in which the participants are a part of the project (6 months) and the staff time (available time dedicated to their duties) is mentioned repeatedly as one challenge in succeeding with the goals of Landa. The time concerns relate to the fact that everything takes time; helping someone that has been unemployed for the past 20 years in 6 months is no easy task. Often there are many reasons behind and creating trust and building a relationship takes time. The staff's time concern refers to the challenge of balancing the R&D tasks with their other work assignments. A majority of the respondents express that the R&D program has been time-consuming in terms of meetings, workshops, and weekly reflections. Despite the time aspect, most respondents express that the R&D initiatives have been helpful, resulting in increased focus and attention. However, when asked if the respondents will continue with the reflective practice, most expressed that it will not be a priority despite the value-added due to time concerns. This is described by the R&D facilitator and Landa project managers as a challenge and a significant loss. During the R&D program, the staff have been encouraged to reflect on their chosen topic. It has been emphasised that reflection is a part of their work tasks and should not be seen as an additional assignment.

"The question is if it is time pressure or priorities? Everyone in the project schedules their work. I put in 30 minutes every week to reflect, and I encourage the other project manager and management staff to take time to reflect. That is how we develop by giving time to reflect. I also see that some employees have not written during these four weeks, and they have had time to do it. I think it is a lot about just rethinking and prioritising. It is an investment in oneself that makes one a better worker. So there, I also have to push them to reflect, I do it myself." (Project leader).

"It's always this with how much time the staff have and if they understand that reflection is part of their daily work. it is not currently built-in at the micro- level as in the project or in the daily work that employees should reflect or set aside time for it." (R&D facilitator).

An additional time concern comes from the developmental manager, which refers to the implementation of learnings and the fact that change takes time.

"It is very special, 2 is too short I think for implementation it should be 3 years. When you have the most, and when you are in your learning process and really absorb it, the time aspect lies there all the time. Now there are only 8 months left. Now there are 7 months left and so on. What does it do with learning? It is a thought, and it is something that the project itself must raise. "

Time is as exemplified above described as a scarce resource, and the outcome and effects are dependent on how and what is prioritised. There are still many question marks regarding the effects of time, that are to be considered as the project moves towards its final phase.

6.2.2 Institutional arrangements

The perhaps trickiest challenge mentioned concerns the institutional arrangements shaping the respondent's nature of work and their roles. In the process of conscious reflection, increased awareness of institutional arrangements on a macro level, preventing and complicating "real" change, surfaced. The nature of the project and the system in which it operates, consists of laws and institutions on a macro-level, making are hard to change. Being aware of institutional arrangements but not being able to change them led to further frustration amongst the respondents. The frustration took shape as anger, sadness, feelings of hopelessness and tiredness.

"When you talk about it in a group and you lift it and you have it present in your work and it has also increased the knowledge and understanding of why it is so important and it also becomes a frustration that it is precisely about people do not get there for example human rights met, and the difficulties whit that, and also that we have a pretty tough assignment. It is incredibly difficult collaboration." (Respondent 3).

There is a great will to change and challenge institutional arrangements from all actors interviewed in this study. It is, however, easier said than done. The results show an ongoing discussion in both the workgroups and the steering group on dealing with institutional arrangements and the challenges that comes with that. The developmental manager in Landa expresses it in the following way.

"*We are hoping that our way of working, from a human rights perspective and service design, will prove to be successful. If it does, we are hoping to show the board that this way of working is beneficial to the participant and, by doing so, change the way the system is currently structured*".

The project leader presents similar statements. The R&D program has resulted in an increased awareness of how to work with the target group, however the experienced system errors makes it challenging.

"*The biggest challenge is that the R&D program shows how we should work and make us think about how we want to work. The challenge is that there are many system errors, that make us unable to work like that, which makes it difficult. And it is both positive that it is highlighted and that it is made visible so that you know what is wrong and what do not work, but it can also make it feel very discouraged, why do I do what I do when it makes no difference.*"

The R&D facilitator also expresses similar goals and thoughts about the experienced system errors, which makes change difficult to reach on a macro level.

"*My goal is for them to become aware and be able to influence system errors and that is much more difficult. At the individual level, I think there is a change, but at some kind of macro level, the project the whole structure, it is more difficult*".

6.2.3 Opportunities

The Landa project consists of various goals, some that are described in the project application, for example, to support the individual in coordinated rehabilitation and find new methods in collaboration with civil society and the public sector, and others that have arisen during the project. When asked what the project's purpose is, the formal goals (strengthen the labour supply among unemployed foreign-born women and men aged 18–64 and equip them for working life through individually tailored efforts) were initially mentioned by the development manager, project leader and the R&D facilitator. There is, however, a great optimism among all the actors that the project will lead to something more, what "more" refers to is not quite clear to all actors. The project leader expresses it the following way.

"The purpose feels more and more like it is something bigger, that it is something more. I definitely believe within the council because of the R&D aspect, that there will be something bigger."

The development managers on the other hand refer to the opportunity of the possible results that the program wishes to produce.

"Depending on what result we get we hope to challenge system errors by showing alternative ways of working that include and considerate the participants."

Furthermore, an additional opportunity expressed by the respondents in this study is the ability to try new methods and test new work practices. The project structure allows for more flexibility than most respondents are used to (see 6.1.3), and the participant focus is reoccurring when it comes to possible opportunities. Using the rights principles, especially the coaches expressed that it became easier to give back the responsibility to the participants and interact and change structures due to the new perspectives.

"When it comes to difficulties in work, it is possible to use the principles to strengthen work. For example, have I done everything I can base on the principles? If I lean toward them and feel I have done everything I can. I can lean on the principles and know that I have done what I can. "(Respondent 6).

The staff also expresses personal development and awareness of prejudices as one benefit and outcome of working on the project, especially with the R&D program.

"What has been positive, I think, is that you have to turn inside out. Things are not constant, but you get to work with the business from different perspectives, but also with yourself and your own prejudices and thoughts about human rights." (Respondent 1).

"How much you have in your spinal cord that you take for granted or that you attribute to other people. Different positions or different properties whether you want to or not and just try to reset. That I'll take that with me." (Respondent 5).

6.3 What are the learning implications for the project-based organisation?

6.3.1 Leadership and group effects

When asked which actor or task has contributed the most to the staff's learning process and therefore to the project, a significant majority of the staff expressed that the R&D facilitator has been an essential part of the knowledge development. The reason varies, but support, feedback, challenging questions, and new insights, are described. Respondent 6 describes it the following way.

"She has been able to specifically ask me questions that make me reflect in a different way, but also give me concrete tools. "Can you think like this?". I thought last time was great, I went there with low energy and left with lots of energy and felt that this was exactly what I needed right now. Concrete tools and approaches that I try to use partly myself but also in interaction with my colleagues".

A sense of appreciation and gratitude is also described and directed to the R&D facilitator, by the staff in Landa. About half of the respondents even express that they wish to continue to have the facilitator present as their coach or mentor. Even the project leader and the development manager express that the involvement of R&D facilitators' perspectives and presence has changed the project in a positive way. The R&D facilitator has introduced concepts and challenged ways of seeing and doing things by asking questions. To a varying degree, questions that all respondents describe have resulted in some change. The Landa project leader describes it the following way.

"It is a completely different dialogue now in the project group. Before it was very much that I think we, should have this activity and now we remind each other to actually ask the people who will be involved in the activities, is this something they want? The people we meet should be included. We have completely different reflections, completely different conversations. It's not us and them. We try all the time. It has led to a lot. It is noticeable in the conversations."

When asked what kind of result the R&D facilitator has experienced and seen so far, increased knowledge about service design, human rights and what it means to work with a rights-based perspective is mentioned. The ability to navigate amongst the concepts and apply different tools

are also mentioned. The R&D facilitator further describes the learning process amongst the staff in the following way.

"They have done specific exercises, such as the accessibility analysis. I see that they have gained an increased awareness of what they can change and do, and then it is like everything from how participants are addressed and how they talk about their participants, how group activities are designed, choices of pictures, words and texts, how they sit in the room and handle difficult conversations. Which comes out and how they handle participants who have different difficulties. Participants who are forced to project or participants who want to be part of the project. How the staff set aside time to reflect on what creates learning is a by-product of what we have done together."

Everyone besides one respondent described the R&D program as meaningful. The respondent with the deviant opinion stood out from the rest of the staff and was initially recruited for another task but ended up as a coach, resulting in frustration. The respondent also expressed that nothing qualitative came from the group because the perspective was not new. The respondent is no longer a part of the Landa project or the R&D program.

Only four of the initial fourteen employees in Landa are still a part of the project. When asked why this is, the project leader describes various reasons, such as parental leave, a new job and that three were in conversion. The project has also had two project leaders, where the development manager has stepped in as a temporary project leader two times. The first time before the recruitment of the first project leader and the second time, after the same project leader was terminated. The movement amongst the staff is described especially by the staff who has been a part of the project from the start as one challenge. Having close colleagues have, however, helped. Respondent 1 describes it the following way.

"I have had a colleague who has also been involved since the start. I'm really grateful that she's still there, and we've really supported each other, because it's not been easy during the journey. Many who have quit and there has been some drama and so on. It is probably she who has made me stay, because if I am to be completely honest, I have many times thought about whether I should stay."

When it comes to learning implications for the project, most staff expressed that listening to other colleagues and hearing their perspectives has increased their understanding and broadened their perspectives. Most of the respondents also expressed that interacting with the participants has been one of the most significant sources of learning. Many of the respondents share and express a mindset that one is never fully learned and that every situation can be a source of learning.

6.3.2 Implications for project-based learning

All respondents agree that the R&D program has impacted the project in a positive way. The question is how to sustain change, as there is currently no formal or stated method for making the best use of the learnings that have been seen so far. However, the Landa project has an ongoing discussion of how and what such methods would mean. Out of the respondents interviewed in this study, primarily the development manager and the project leader are responsible for structuring such methods. The steering group, of which the project leader and the development manager are a part, has the primary responsibility to take care of the project's learnings. The R&D program's main initiative has been directed toward educating and encouraging the staff to reflect on their work practice. The reflection practice has resulted in learning. The active phase of the R&D program has now ended, and the staff will no longer have learning meetings or workshops with Emerga. The R&D facilitator expresses concerns about what will happen with the staff's development now when the involvement ends.

"I think the biggest problem is that it is not built-in to take care of this perspective to keep it alive all the time. How do you build it into all the meetings in all kinds of collaboration to keep it alive? Throughout the work, how to build it into a project. "[...] skill development is very important, but it does not matter if there is no coaching there, it does not matter if they do not give themselves time to reflect on themselves, write it down and then talk about it. It does not matter if it does not continue continuously. For example, one coach came a long way during her process, but it stopped when the R&D program ended."

When asked how Landa will implement the learnings shown thus far and what such methods could be, the development manager expresses that it is still a question of what to implement.

"You can implement an entire project in a regular business, you can also think that you implement parts of it, a method, an approach and so on. I think those questions are relevant now because we are in the project's second year."

Collaboration is an essential part of the Landa project. Four collaborating partners own the Landa project. There is currently an ongoing dialogue with collaboration partners, instances and forums as one method to increase learning both within and across borders. Much inspiration comes from a sister project since they managed to show a positive result for the participants in the project. However, the question remains for the Landa project which approaches to choose when it comes to formalising the learnings. Some suggestions are a method manual or a report.

"Is it also a method manual, or is it another way we should work? I think we will get some final report from Emerga if I understood correctly where they can lift things. Then there are also all the tools that we can use, it can be things that Emerga has provided them with, which they will be able to continue using. But of course, we have not planned for someone to interview all employees to capture what they have done, but you can do that if we decide to have a method manual, for example, where they themselves write "you can do this". The project management also has a responsibility to capture and to describe it so that everyone can take part in it, in a report or whatever it may be." (Development manager).

6.4 Summary

The respondents in this study experienced the initiative of the R&D program as something positive and meaningful. However, the extent varies; besides two respondents, the rest express that the initiative has resulted in some form of learning. All respondents, however, express that they have changed the way they perform their work tasks due to their involvement in the R&D program. Instead of assuming what the participant wants, questions are now asked. An increased reflection and tendency to apply a more tailored fit approach are also seen. The R&D program has also resulted in frustration, self-awareness, confidence, confusion, and personal development. One of the most significant challenges the respondents expressed in the project is the institutional arrangements and time constraints. Awareness of system structures has resulted in frustration and a feeling of "we can challenge this mentality". However, the time framework makes it difficult, both in terms of the time the project is running, the time the

participants are in the program, and the time the staff has to balance tasks and participants. There is currently no finalised method to deal with institutional arrangements shaping their professional practice or to ensure that the learnings that have been seen so far continue. However, there is an ongoing discussion as the project moves toward its final phase.

7. Analysis and discussion

To answer the study's aim and research questions, the findings previously presented are analysed and discussed in the following chapter, with the help of previous literature (chapter 3) and selected theories (chapter 4). The chapter starts with the analysis and discussion of the case from the perspective of transformative learning and single and double-loop learning. Then, the results are discussed under the light of previous literature following the structure of the three research questions; What are the learning implications for the staff in Landa? What challenges and opportunities are experienced by the project-based organisation's staff, managers and R&D facilitator? What are the learning implications for the project-based organisation?
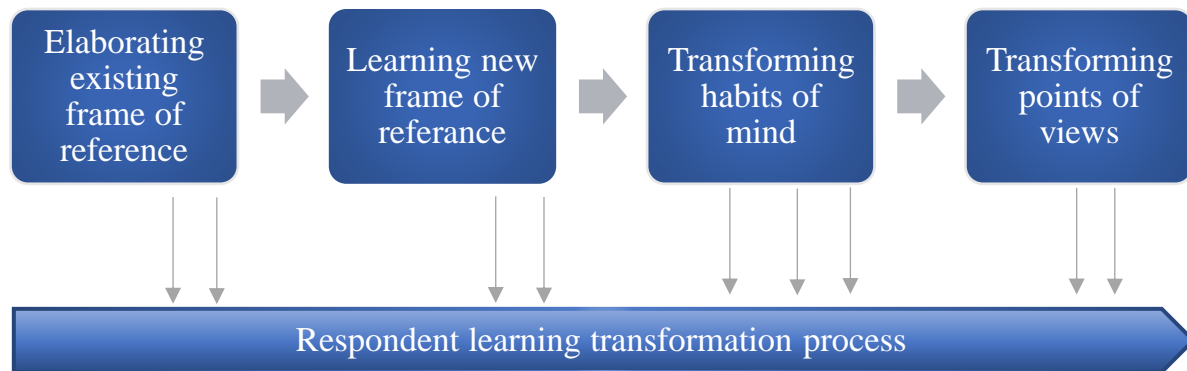
7.1 Learning theories

7.1.1 Transformative learning

Learning is often connected to a specific goal (Boström et al., 2018), and the Landa project is no exception; however, learning can lead to more than just increased knowledge (Mezirow, 1991). Individual learning has occurred in the Landa project, though it varies in form and extent. According to transformative learning presented by Mezirow (1978), the process in which the individual creates meaning is connected to a frame of reference, which later forms the individual's decision-making. If dilemmas arise, such as an awareness that the participant is not included in their integration process or that previous ways of working and structuring practices are no longer beneficial, a transformation process where the view is changed can occur. This process is seen in a majority of the respondents, where the use of reflection has made structures, behaviours and practices visible.

When analysing the learning through the four forms of transformative learning presented by Mezirow (1991), the staff's learning process varies from the first form to the fourth form (see model 3). Each arrow represents one learning transformation process. In the first form of learning, the staff who expressed that they did not learn anything new is found. The learning reinforced existing perspectives for the staff but did not move beyond what was already known. Most of the staff is found in the second and third forms, learning new reference frames and reflecting on previous patterns and assumptions. Only two are found in the fourth form, where perspectives of mind about practices and views about participants and self were transformed.

What can be seen from the figure below is that most respondents are found at the "edge" of each step, possibly indicating a move towards the next form. It is worth mentioning that the starting point for the respondent varied. For some respondents, a learning transformation process had already occurred and for some, it had not. Some respondents even express that they already apply frequent reflection, which previously have resulted in a transformation of habits and points of view.

Elaborating existing frame of reference	→	Learning new frame of referance	→	Transforming habits of mind	→	Transforming points of views

Respondent learning transformation process

(Model 3).

Transformative learning is complex and highly dependent on the individual's ability to re-evaluate and examine oneself objectively (Illeris, 2015). Transformative learning is about perceiving a dilemma and seeing new alternatives to move on in the reflection process (Mezirow, 1991). All respondents expressed that the R&D program has resulted in an increased reflection. However, it has just started for some, and for others, it has transformed their point of view. According to Mezirow (1991), reflection is crucial for learning; thus, through reflection, the individual becomes aware of the views that need to change or be dropped. A transformative process can bring up emotions and becoming aware of behaviours and patterns can be challenging (Mezirow, 1991), similar to what the respondents report back. The feelings that a transformative process awakens can result in a shutdown; thus, awareness becomes too overwhelming (ibid). The process of reflection has stirred up emotions, such as frustration, anger and self-awareness. However, what happens after the project ends and what effects it will have on individual learning still remains unclear.
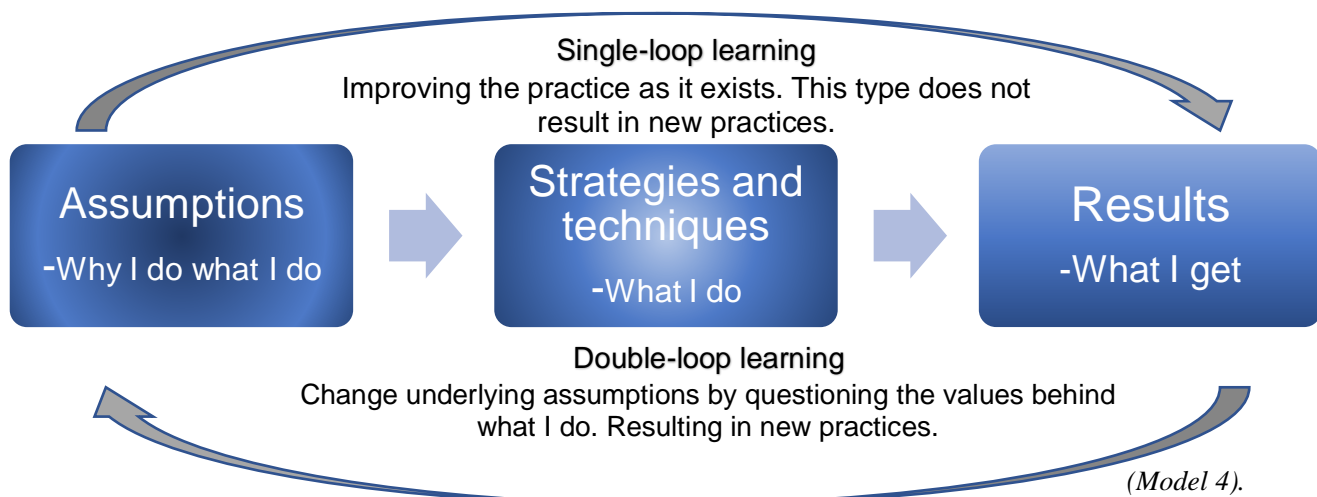
7.1.2 Single-loop and double-loop learning

Organisational learning is a process of detecting and correcting any feature of knowledge or knowing that inhibits learning (Argyris, 1977). When the organisation continues to carry on its present policies the process can be called single-loop learning (ibid). For double-loop learning

to occur, current practices, strategies, and assumptions are changed (Argyris & Schön, 1996). There are elements of change in practices and assumptions mentioned by all staff in project Landa, however, double-loop learning refers to more than individual learning. For double-loop learning to occur, learning must be incorporated into the organisation (Argyris & Schön, 1978). Otherwise, individuals have learned, but the organisation has not.

When analysing literature on single and double-loop learning, one easily gets the impression that there is one solution that fixes all organisations' problems. This is not the case in project Landa. There is furthermore no simple answer to which kind of learning has occurred. From one perspective, one could argue that the staff's learning can be categorised as double-loop learning. The staff has been actively encouraged to reflect on topics concerning practice and participants. The staff has brought up their insights in journals and learning meetings. According to Argyris & Schön (1996), double-loop learning can occur through communication and heightened awareness, leading to new priorities and standards. All respondents, even the two who stated that they did not learn anything new, agree that the R&D program has increased awareness of work practices and behaviours. Furthermore, assumptions and practices have changed, however to a varying degree. Examples, of such change, refers to moving away from assumptions to asking direct questions and restructuring work and task with the participant in focus. Resulting in changed structures and approaches between the staff and the participant.

The project leader, the development manager and the R&D facilitator confirm that the dialogue is different. The perspective of human rights and a rights-based approach are described as a natural part of the project, especially by the project leader and the development leader. However, underlying assumptions, values, and beliefs need to be identified, changed and formalised for double-loop learning to occur. The change and formalisation aspect of double-loop learning differentiates from single-loop learning which focuses on approving previous structures (Argyris & Schön, 1996). The Landa staff reports change, but whether it is a question of restructuring or improvement remains unclear. On the other hand, individuals do not need to formalise and capture individual bond knowledge and learning in order for it to change. Furthermore, assumptions, practices and values do not have to be written down. Therefore, when using the perspective of single and double-loop learning to analyse individual learning, the aspect of capturing and formalising learning seems unnecessary. The model below is a modification to the original model that considers the individual learning perspective in project

Landa. The main difference is that the formalisation and capture aspect is removed, and that learning is limited to the individual.

Single-loop learning
Improving the practice as it exists. This type does not result in new practices.

Assumptions
-Why I do what I do

Strategies and techniques
-What I do

Results
-What I get

Double-loop learning
Change underlying assumptions by questioning the values behind what I do. Resulting in new practices.

(Model 4).

From an organisational perspective, for double-loop learning to occur and for learning to move beyond the individual, the organisation must change the basic framework and norms (Argyris & Schön, 1996). Although staff mention that changes have occurred, the approach is not restructured and only somewhat improved from a project perspective. Approaches and practices have been re-evaluated from an individual perspective and new conditions have been identified. However, the question still remains whether single-loop or double-loop learning has occurred on a project level. There are indicators that Landa is moving toward double-loop learning, such as the ongoing dialogue on how to take care of the learning, and which method to apply. However, they are not there yet, since the learning is not formalised and captured.

7.2 Research questions

7.2.1 What are the learning implications for the individual?

This rapport aimed to improve the understanding of the challenges and opportunities to develop new competencies and implement new learnings in project-based organisations in labour market integration for foreign-born unemployed citizens. In summary, the results show that a majority of the respondents experienced the program as something positive and meaningful. Being a part of the project also led to frustration, self-awareness, confidence, confusion, and awareness of institutional structures. The results showed that the most significant challenge respondent experienced was the institutional arrangements facilitating and constraining the

staff's individual work, which resulted in frustration that later turned into a transformation of mind according to Mezirow's (1978) four forms of learning. According to the model presented by Mezirow (1978), most of the respondents have transferred on the scale, resulting in heightened awareness of practice and prejudice.

In project Landa, much of the responsibility to integrate and take care of learnings is directed toward the individual. Individuals' competence and ability are crucial for the project's success, similar to what was found by Drejer (2000). One downside of the particular emphasis on the individual is the critical dimension directed toward actors' learning ability (Boström et al., 2018). The importance of individuals has resulted in an increased dependency on human competence, similar to what Sandberg and Targama (1998) found. One could argue that organisations are always dependent on human competence since organisations without individuals are just empty shells (Grey, 2009). However, the conditions in which the individuals are expected to produce learning can vary, and for learning to happen, it has to be captured with the help of organisational change (Argyris & Schön, 1978). Meaning that for learning to be of use, there have to be structures and methods that take care of the learnings; otherwise, the individuals will have learned, but the organisation have not.

In the case of Landa, the learnings vary amongst the staff and are still an ongoing process, similar to what Edwards (2001) presents on lifelong learning where learning is constant. Seeing learning as a continuous process with no beginning nor end (Edwards, 2001) has proven beneficial in the case of Landa since many respondents expressed that there are always new things to learn. According to (Weick, 1995), having an open mindset to revaluating what one believes is true helps learning and personal development. The open structure and mentality of the project, in agreement with Weick (1995), led to most respondents experiencing personal development due to their participation in the project.

7.2.2 What are the challenges and opportunities?

Labour market integration projects are often temporary and short-termed, expecting fast delivery results in a long-term problem (Diedrich & Hellgren, 2021). Similar findings are shown in the case of Landa, and the time frame is frequently mentioned as a challenge. Time complexity refers to the project, staff, and the participants' time. The project aims to produce a transition to get participants to work, education, or transfer closer to work or education. Besides

requirements, such as working with horizontal principles and development, it is up to the project to figure out the "how". That is how to succeed with the transfer. The relationship with time is essential since it provides the premises on which learning can occur. However, changing mindsets, incorporating learning and building structures takes time (Taylor, 2018). There is a great ambition that the project will produce a result that shows an alternative way of working with the target group in focus. Having ambitious plans can be helpful but moving from plan to action can be challenging (Brorström, 2018). A plan that is not formulated and broken down into execution provides flexibility, but also more pressure to figure out the next move as the process progress (Brorström & Styhre, 2021). There is currently no formulated plan to take care of the learnings, and much is still to be figured out in the case of project Landa.

The flexibility that the project offers brings about both challenges and opportunities. As Brorström and Styhre (2021) mention, a plan that is not strictly formulated provides flexibility, which is mentioned as one of the benefits by the respondents in project Landa. The agency to try new methods and change processes along the way has been highly appreciated, especially by the staff. However, the challenge arises when the learning is to be captured and reproduced. Without coherent, aligned implementation, even the most superior strategy is useless (Altonen & Kavalko, 2002). There are currently about six months left of the project, and it is of the essence that the project captures learning. However, there is many ways to produce, structure or capture learning, which makes it complex. When choosing methods, one also has to consider that nothing is constant; rather it is contextual, complex and affected by multiple actors (Boute & Drucker, 2019).

Besides time, the perhaps trickiest challenge mentioned concerns institutional arrangements. Dealing with grand challenges, such as integration and unemployment, entails complexity due to the uncertainty and multiple layers (Ferraro et al., 2015). The respondents describe institutional structures as preventing and complicating "real" change due to the complexity of multiple layers, laws and institutions. One way in which the project hopes to challenge institutional arrangements is by showing alternative ways of working with a participant focus. An honourable goal, however, possibly problematic. Dealing with challenges such as labour market integration of foreign-born is no easy task. However, viewing the process from a processual perspective while keeping a holistic mindset might be beneficial to start addressing a part of this grand challenge by facilitating organizational learning (Backlund & Chronèer, 2015. Argote and Ingram, 2000). The view in which the project structures, frames, and captures

the learning can provide both challenges and opportunities, that either hinder or enables learning, which must be considered further.

7.2.3 What are the learning implications for the project-based organisation?

One of the most common critiques addressing labour market integration projects relates to the similarities of the initiatives and the lack of actual or sustainable change (Diedrich & Hellgren (2021). The Landa project, however, involves novel approaches for the Gothenburg region. For one involving an R&D program, two having the R&D actor actively engage with the staff and three applying service design with a rights-based approach. It is still too early to say whether the approach has resulted in a sustainable change since it is still ongoing. However, the method used in the R&D program that focuses on reflection, self-awareness, and feedback through questions and group conversations has shown effects. Similar to what was found by Marsick and Watkins (1993), learning took place as a result of critical reflection.

Few projects get fully implemented, even though some learnings and activities survive (Argote & Ingram, 2000). In the study by Diedrich and Hellgren (2021), survived learnings consisted of the project staff's understandings, new knowledge, insights, and experiences. Like Diedrich and Hellgren (2021) found, the Landa project's learnings currently consists of primarily individual bound knowledge, as no formal method, report, or strategy exists to take care of the knowledge. According to Brorström and Diedrich (2018), many projects do not have the time or resources to use the competencies, and valuable insight is therefore lost. For learnings to go beyond the individual, there must be structures that ensure that valuable insight is captured (ibid).

The steering group has a current dialogue on how to implement and incorporate the learnings shown thus far formally. One such suggestion is a methods handbook, a video or a report that illustrates the new way of working, with a participant focus. If such methods are implemented this could be one step closer to a basic framework and norm change, as mentioned in double-loop learning by Argyris and Schön (1996). There is also an ongoing collaboration with similar projects and collaborating partners in other settings for sharing and taking part in knowledge in similar projects. Although collaboration across borders can be challenging due to different interests and aims (Brorström & Diedrich, 2018), the interviewed actors in the project Landa

do not report this. Collaboration is instead expressed as a great strength, both when it comes to learning and sharing knowledge. However, the question remains whether the learning effects are short-term or long-term and to what extent the learnings will be implemented.

The project-based organisation has been shown to help tackle challenging and complex issues (Sjöblom et al., 2015). Similar findings are shown in project Landa. The respondents expressed that they have increased their knowledge and understanding due to the nature of the project. Together with the help of colleagues, participants, actors from Landa and the R&D facilitator, the staff expressed that they have gained an increased insight and awareness of the target group. To continue the learning, a systematic learning process where learning is seen as an ongoing process is required (Backlund and Chronèer, 2015).

Group culture and leadership have proven essential for learning (Galvin et al., 2008). As previously described there has been some turbulence within the project, with only four of the initial fourteen employees still present on the project. The high staff turnover within the project resulted in increased pressure on the remaining staff. However, in terms of this study, all respondents besides one is still a part of the project. Sharing the same goals and vision has proven to increase the chances of organisation learning (Backlund & Chronèer, 2015). There is a vision of unity amongst the respondents interviewed in this study, where a deep motivation and will to help improve the conditions of the targeted group and the participants in the project is expressed.

When it comes to leadership, the R&D facilitator is specially mentioned to have impacted the process by having an open mind, asking explorative questions, and by encouraging the staff. Having an open mindset as a leader can increase the degree of motivation (Notgrass, 2014), which is seen in the Landa project. The introspective element of the R&D program encouraged the staff to view themselves and their practice in a more nuanced and objective manner. Challenging previous assumptions by bringing them to light can be a challenging and uncomfortable task (Mezirow, 1991), which is confirmed by the respondents. However, by creating an environment of psychological security the leader can help the process (Galvin et al., 2008). One could argue that there are elements of psychological security in the Landa project, as a majority of the respondents expressed that they wish to continue to have the R&D facilitator present, as their coach and mentor. Furthermore, the R&D involvement is described to have resulted in valuable insights, both on a personal and overall level.

8. Conclusion

This article aimed to improve the understanding of the challenges and opportunities to develop new competencies and implement new learnings in project-based organisations in labour market integration for foreign-born unemployed citizens. In this chapter, the research questions are first answered and resumed. Then, the aim of this thesis will be explained with the help of the research questions through the elaboration of a model (see model 5). The implications of the study, the use of the theories and how they contributed to project-based learning, and labour market integration and beyond will then be discussed. Recommendations to the Landa project along with further discussions of the study's transferability, limitations and future research will then be presented.

8.1 Research questions

The first research question is "what are the learning implications for the staff in Landa?". The study showed that individual learning has occurred. However, the extent and degree of individual learning vary. Most of the respondents are found in the second and third forms of learning according to Mezirow's' (1978) four step-model, meaning that new frames of reference and reflection on previous patterns and assumptions have occurred. The starting point for the respondent however varied. For some respondents, a learning transformation process had already occurred and for some, it had not, which could be one factor that affected the learning outcome. Like transformative learning, viewing single and double-loop learning from an individual learning perspective differs in extent and degree.

All staff describe that they have changed their professional practice due to their involvement in the R&D program. The extent varies, where some change can be categorised as an improvement rather than a restructuration and norm change, which is emphasised in double-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1996). However, one respondent explicitly expressed that the program has resulted in a humanisation, where the feeling of being institutionalised in a system with no agency or power to change has disappeared. Another realisation is that most of the staff has realised that the participant has previously not been included in their own integration process. The realisation has resulted in a change of work practice, where instead of assuming and guessing, the staff now ask the participants what they want or need. As a result of changing the approach to the participant, positive outcomes such as giving back the responsibility to the participant to be in charge of their own process were mentioned.

In the second research question "what challenges and opportunities are experienced by the staff, managers and R&D facilitator?" findings showed that the challenges and opportunities experienced in project-based organisations are shaped by two factors, time and institutional arrangements (norms, routines, organisational structures, values, expectations). Depending on how the two are structured and managed, it could result in opportunities for organisational learning or challenges in creating and capturing learning. The project's learning implications primarily connect to institutional arrangements; such as the project structure and routines, thus, it proved essential for individual learning. Learning does not just happen, it has to be fostered and considered (Diedrich & Hellgren, 2021). On the other hand, the time frame provides the premises in which structure and routines can be created. Time and institutional arrangements are thus closely intertwined, providing both challenges and opportunities.

The third research question "what are the learning implications for the project-based organisation?" showed a novelty of new practices, approaches and learnings within the project. Some approaches, such as rights-based work and service design was a part of the project's application. However, double-loop learning has not been observed, as the new professional practices and learnings that have occurred during the project have not yet been formalised. Therefore, the learning implications for the project depend on whether the project group succeed in producing methods to capture and formalise the new learnings.

The model below outlines the main conclusions of this study in explaining its aim, showing the complexity of project-based learning. The model shows how all factors are closely connected and dependent on the relationship between each other. For project learning to occur, individuals first have to learn, but for individuals to learn, institutional arrangements and structures needs to be arranged in a way that fosters and captures learning. Agency for example proved to be one important factor for the staff learning process, that is to be able to create and try new methods. Furthermore, the time aspect is essential since it provides the frame in which structure can be created and changed. Depending on how well the project succeeds in managing the following factors, it could both result in opportunities for learning and challenges. A holistic view that takes into account the complexity is therefore recommended.
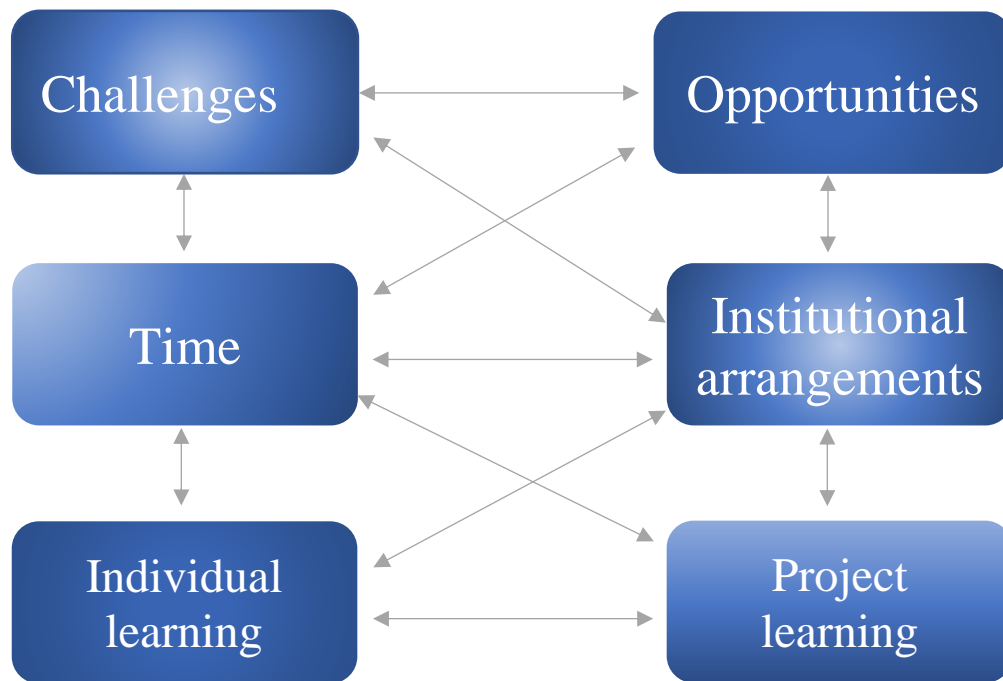
(Model 5).

8.2 Theory implications

The use of transformational learning and single and double-loop learning proved to be beneficial since it allowed similar yet different perspectives on learning to complement each other. The transformative learning allowed for a deeper examination of the individual learning implications and the single and double-loop learning for both the individual with some modifications, but mainly the project learning outcomes. In sense of usefulness, one could probably modify and apply the transformative learning perspective to organisational learning too. However, this was not done since the primary focus regarding transformative learning was directed to the individual perspective and not the project. One downside of the chosen theories is that they do not provide a framework to assess the history of the process that occurred previous to the project. History adds value; however, this was not the study's aim, but it could provide valuable insight and context to the learning that has or is currently happening.

There are as mentioned and explained in this study different types of learning and theories to study learning. In this case, much of the learning focuses on rather abstract concepts; that is the ability to adjust and adapt, this type of learning put high pressure on the individual ability to rethink and drop assumptions that are no longer beneficial. However, essential individual learning is, it needs to be captured from an organisational perspective. Otherwise, the individual will have learned, but the organisation has not (Argyris & Schön, 1978).

The use of the two theories contributes to project-based learning and to the labour market integration field; by putting the individuals learning in focus and studying how the organisation takes care of and implements the learnings. The models used, that is, the four forms of transformative learning and single and double-loop learning allowed a greater understanding of the process and steps in which individual learning occurs. And for what is necessary for organisational learning to take place. The single and double-loop model was modified fit to individual learning, which added an additional perspective. However, the transformative model is probably more suited to explain individual learning; since it gives a more elaborated explanation of the steps of learning, the modified version of the single and double-loop model gives more of an overview. In future studies of project-based learning and organisational learning, the models could be further elaborated by including time frame and institutional arrangements since they proved to be essential for learning. The theories complement each other by allowing learning to be viewed from an individual and organisational perspective, providing a more holistic approach.

8.2.1 Labour market integration literature implications

Project-based organisations have been located as one solution to solve unemployment for foreign-born citizens. However, earlier studies of integration projects have primarily shown that similar structures and results are reproduced, and sustainable change is hard to produce. Change is nothing that happens from one day to another, but project Landa is creating a new method to work with a continuous evaluation connected to learning. If they succeed in replicating, it could lead to institutional change.

The study contributes to the literature on labour market integration by showing alternatives way of working, but also the importance of formalising learning for it to sustain. The emphasis on reflection and introspection is rare within the field but proved to be of great importance for learning to occur. Future projects could therefore benefit from applying reflection, and future studies could continue to focus on the role of reflection in the field of labour market integration.

8.3 Recommendations

In the case of project Landa, it is clear that learning has occurred. However, the question remains whether the learnings will sustain and on what level it has happened and whether it will be possible to transfer beyond the project's borders. Some factors speak for possible

success; first, there is great motivation from all actors involved and in charge of the project. Secondly, there are currently collaborating partners and forums for sharing and receiving knowledge. The project's structure allows for a more assessable form, increasing the opportunity to test new methods and practices. However, to improve the outcome for a successful project that moves beyond individual learning, the project group needs to create structures that capture personal knowledge (Argyris & Schön, 1996). To further increase the chances of success, the time frame needs to be considered, both in terms of the time the participants are a part of the project and the project's running length. One also has to consider that changes take time. The nature of change and its complexity, such as challenging institutional arrangements or integrating someone who has been unemployed for several years, also has to be taken into account.

Another aspect of time that could be considered is the disposition and prioritising of time. The staff reported that reflection was a great source of awareness and learning; despite this, most expressed that they would not continue with the practice due to time constraints. One suggestion is to implement formal structures that set aside time for reflection to keep valuable insights and for learning to continue. This could be done by systemising the learning and benefits of reflection by materialising it in tools such as a report or video. For the learnings to go beyond the project-based organisation and to normalise reflection practices, the project could also organise a conference or a digital initiative where the benefits of reflection are shared with other practitioners within the field.

8.4 Transferability

This study was conducted in a local setting in Sweden but could be transferred and used by other welfare states. The study showed that reflection practices were of great importance for learning, similar to what was found by Marsick and Watkins (1993). Reflection was not the only tool used. The project also applied service design, where the participants are in focus and a rights-based approach, which proved to be beneficial, for learning and agency. The findings can be applied to other labour market integration projects and projects dealing with difficult and complex challenges with multi-layer aspects. Furthermore, projects that deal with individual relief efforts could also benefit from using the approach and developing it further. Additionally, many organisations and projects could benefit from applying a participant focus and instead of assuming, asking what the client needs. Reflection of practices and praxis is one

method that can be used in most situations. Becoming more aware of how and why things are done, allows for a more objective and nuanced approach, which can result in better-informed decisions of which methods to drop and which to keep.

From a human resource perspective, this study can be fruitful for managers and HR professionals, especially those handling competence development and work training. The study showed that reflection was a great source of learning. However, reflection practices will not be prioritised due to time shortages and institutional arrangements. Surrounding factors, such as time frames and arrangements, need to be considered for learning to sustain. Another essential aspect for managers and HR professionals to consider is to formalising learning. For learning to occur and move beyond the individual the organisation needs to capture it. Therefore, this study can be a great reminder of the importance of structure and methods that formalise learning.

8.5 Limitations and future research

One limitation to the following study is that the engagement with the project did not start from the beginning and ended before the project did. This study therefore only examinates a small sequence of an ongoing process. A longitudinal study would be preferable in order to capture the context and evaluation of the project as it progressed. Considering the nature of this thesis, and the time disposed, a longitudinal study was unfortunately not possible. Although the project is still ongoing, and even if the project only examined a small part of the project, there are valuable findings. There is a novelty in trying new methods, such as using an R&D program and applying service design. The methods have as demonstrated in the study's result and analysis culminated in learning effects.

The two most important factors in this study referred to institutional arrangements and time. In a future study, elaborating and deepening the research of these factors could further increase the knowledge of project-based learning. In conclusion, this study contributes to the field of project-based organisations and organisational learning as it increases the understanding of the processes of learning. By studying the actors involved in the Landa project, the aim to improve the understanding of the challenges and opportunities to develop new competencies and implement new learnings in project-based organisations is fulfilled.

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Appendix 1. Information letter

20220124

Hello!

My name is Johanna Thim, and as part of my education in the master's program Strategic Human Resources and Labour Relations at the University of Gothenburg, I am now entering the final phase; namely the course PV2500 V22 Degree Project for the master's program in Strategic Personnel Wo k and Labour Market Relations. This means an essay that will form the basis for a degree in the program and provide access to further studies.

Studying learning and the ability to integrate knowledge into practice is an essential part of societal development and increase understanding of the processes that promote learning. The purpose of my involvement in the R&D project is to study learning and the processes that underlie learning. This will mainly be done through observations and interviews with you who have been part of the Landa R & R&D program.

All material will be handled following the Swedish Research Association's recommendations: the information requirement, consent requirement, confidentiality requirement, and use requirement, which means that all material will be anonymised and not distributed to an unauthorised party.

The study results will be available to the participants in the study if desired.

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact: johannathim@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,

Johanna Thim

Appendix 2. Interview guide project staff

Background questions

- How come you entered the R&D project?

- What were your expectations of the R&D?

- How did you experience the actual project?

Learning

- From a broader perspective, if you would <u>like</u> to finish the sentence with the first word that comes up: My involvement in the R&D project has resulted/ led to? Could you elaborate on that?

- Have you learned something new as a result of being in the project? If yes, in what way? If not, why do you think that is?

Knowledge transformation

- How would you say that the group has either contributed or not contributed to your knowledge development?

- How would you describe the leader's role in your knowledge development? e.g., support?

- How would you describe your role when it comes to knowledge development? e.g., autonomy, ability to contribute

- If you reflect on the project, is there any particular moment or factor contributing to your learning development?

Practical implementation

- Have you changed your way of working due to being a part of the project? If yes, in what way? If not, why do you think that is?

- Has being a part of this project led to any shift in your perspective or opinion? If yes- in what way? If not, why do you think that is?

- What do you take with you from the project?

- Has your participation in the project contributed to any learning development? If yes? How, if not, why not?

- What worked well and what did not?

Finishing questions
- Is there something in the process that you have experienced that I have not asked that you would like to add?
- Can I contact you again if I need to follow up on something we have talked about today?

Appendix 3. Interview guide R&D facilitator

- How and why did you get into the Landa project?
- What is your role in Landa?
- What is the structure of the groups that have participated in R&D?
- What is the choice of layout based on?
- Has there been any difference between the groups in design?
- What is your goal?
- How do you ensure that the goals are achieved?
- What are the challenges in implementing these goals?
- In what way is the R&D project anchored in Landa?
- Have you seen any effects of the initiative?

Appendix 4. Interview guide manager and project leader Landa

- What is your role in Landa?
- Can you describe the overall purpose of Landa?
- Can you give concrete examples of how this is reflected in practice?
- What sets Landa apart from similar projects?
- What is Emergas role in Landa?
- How does Landa as a project ensure that the knowledge from R&D is implemented? Feel free to give examples.
- What challenges have you come across?