



LAUREA
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Prime Mover

Working Model and Good Practices at Kivenkolo: An Ethnographic Study

De Giovanni Hoppu, Paula

Poinha Bittencourt, Janaina

2011 Otaniemi

Laurea University of Applied Sciences
Otaniemi- Active Life Village

Working Model and Good Practices at Kivenkolo: An Ethnographic Study

DeGiovanni Hoppu Paula
Poinha Bittencourt Janaina
Thesis
November, 2011

Paula De Giovanni Hoppu and Janaina Bittencourt Poinha

Working Model and Good Practices at Kivenkolo: An Ethnographic Study

Year: 2011

73 pages

The aim of this study was to identify a working model of social services at Kivenkolo resident's space (asukastila) to make good practices visible and to implement a study that would produce knowledge for developing client work.

Ethnographic Research was the qualitative method chosen for this study. It was implemented through participant observation. Narrative analysis was used to transcribe the data collected from audiotaping, semi-structured interviews, naturally occurring talk and written observations. The group, which participated in this study, was the seniors, immigrants, workers and us, the researchers, over a period of seven months.

We based our study on significant themes in good social work practice with an emphasis on human behaviour, tacit knowledge and professionalism. Using these themes as a framework and acting as participant observers we were able to identify that Kivenkolo worked using a family -oriented approach, with elements of Family Systems Theory and empowerment.

This study has provided much food for thought in terms of future developments in the adult services provided by the municipality of Espoo. Furthermore, the findings imply that Kivenkolo is more significant to the seniors in terms of their productivity and longevity. Alternatively, failures and gaps in service provision also came to light as a new immigrant client group was identified. These findings lay the foundations towards defining new needs and developing the services provided, for the benefit of service users in Espoo.

Keywords: Ethnography, Kivenkolo, Immigrants, Tacit Knowledge

Contents:

1	Introduction.....	6
2	Background of the thesis	7
3	History of Kivenkolo	8
4	The theoretical background.....	9
4.1	Tacit knowledge	12
4.2	Professionalism	13
4.3	Group processes	13
5	Implementing the study	15
5.1	The purpose of the study	15
5.2	Research methods and methodology.....	16
5.3	Data collection	17
5.3.1	Participant observation	17
5.3.2	Observations	18
5.3.3	Written observations.....	18
5.3.4	Audiotapes.....	19
5.3.5	Semi-structured interviews.....	19
5.4	Gaining access	19
5.5	Sample group	20
5.6	Methods of analyzing data.....	21
6	Findings.....	22
6.1	Human behaviour.....	23
6.1.1	Personality traits and motivation.....	25
6.1.2	Attitudes.....	26
6.2	Tacit knowledge	28
6.2.1	Identifying good work practices	30
6.2.2	The role of a social welfare worker in Finland.....	32
6.3	Professionalism	37
6.3.1	Managerial leadership skills	41
6.3.2	Group formation and dynamics	45

7	Discussion	50
7.1	Recommendations.....	57
7.2	Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness	59
	References	62
	Figures	66
	Appendices	67
	Appendix 1	67
	Appendix 2	68
	Appendix 3	69
	Appendix 4	71

1 Introduction

Finland is globally renowned for its innovative and progressive welfare state, which has been founded on equality, social justice and widespread services for those members of society in need. Finland belongs to a group of social-democratic Nordic countries and is seen as a role model, with its universal healthcare, public school system, generous social-safety net, and a nation of predominantly content people in terms of social welfare. Even in the media, according to Newsweek magazine, Finland was recently proclaimed to be the best country to live in and this opinion is based on the fact that there is little poverty, education is considered a universal right sponsored by progressive taxation, and the government is still able to provide financial aid to meet the needs of marginalised groups. However, all of these factors considered, there are many challenges the Finnish society is facing in the near future that should not be overlooked. A primary concern is how to successfully integrate the ever-increasing influx of immigrants and how to take care of and improve the services available to senior citizens in a rapidly aging populace. The Finnish welfare system works well when service users are able to adjust to the way the system works and fulfil the criteria required in order to receive support. However those who do not adjust or fit in these criteria “fall through the net” and are in danger of becoming marginalised.

These challenges need to be addressed by social service providers throughout Finland and this thesis work undertakes an exploration of working life and daily interactions between workers and seniors, immigrants and other service users who frequent the resident activity centre Kivenkolo in Espoo, Southern Finland. The purpose of this study is to identify a working model at Kivenkolo and make good social work practices visible. Additionally, this study aims at emphasising the role of a multicultural social worker in Finland.

Working life and work practices are indications as to how efficient the services, provided to users are. In the Finnish work environment, employees are rule oriented. In our opinion, conscientiousness, ingenuity and individuality are attributes that are highly regarded in the workplace. Human behaviour encompassing personal experiences, motivation and group processes have a profound effect on the daily working life and interactions between workers and service users. In this thesis we aim to investigate if there is a relationship between a closed-oriented society with a relatively small population and behaviour in terms of motivation, emotions, attitudes, reticence and preconceptions in the work environment. Additionally, we hope to find out what it is about Kivenkolo that attracts clients to come and seek help.

In light of recent events, the Board of Espoo City (Johtokunta) was forced to reassess expenditure on services provided by the municipality. Consequently, economic challenges resulted in the closure of Laituri and Veturi activity centres which catered to the

multicultural communities in Matinkylä and Espoo Centre respectively. We hope that the findings will provide evidence to substantiate Kivenkolo's significance to the community it serves. From this study, we hope to expose the needs of seniors and immigrants so that their voices and opinions are heard. The research methodology conducted in this thesis consists of an ethnographic study facilitated by participant observation, as ethnography is the work of describing the social interactions within a group. The aim of the study is to describe and learn from working life at Kivenkolo. Participant observation is used as a strategy for both listening and watching people in natural situations and settings. Participant observation has the potential to uncover spontaneous, honest data which may otherwise be inaccessible. In simple terms, it is when researchers actively participate in the environment that they are learning from.

The theoretical background was carefully chosen to complement the ethnographic study at Kivenkolo to observe how workers empower the clients who use the services. Therefore a combination of theories of empowerment and work psychology with an emphasis on human behaviour, tacit knowledge and professionalism were enlisted in this study.

Elements of Family Systems Theory and empowerment emerged from the narratives collected through naturally occurring talk and semi-structured interviews. Previously, Kivenkolo appeared to be more significant to the immigrant clients. However, this study provided a new perspective in which seniors are the major client group that rely on Kivenkolo for their social life and well-being. Furthermore, there were differences in working methods between workers, which complimented the family-oriented atmosphere. By being family-oriented, clients and workers exhibited traits of personality and behaviour that would not be seen otherwise in a more institutional-oriented environment.

2 Background of the thesis

The opportunity to conduct this study at Kivenkolo became possible when in 2009 Laurea Otaniemi collaborated with Espoo City and began an R&D-project with the aim of developing social services for adults in Espoo. Social services for adults in Espoo include counseling services, economic support, rehabilitative work, reception and integration of refugees and asylum seekers and other service users. Kivenkolo also assists in providing jobs that facilitate clients with mental health issues to reintegrate back into working life.

As part of our studies and thesis work we chose Kivenkolo to implement a study that would produce knowledge for developing client work. Since other multicultural activity centres namely Veturi and Laituri have recently been discontinued, the fact that only Alma and Kivenkolo remain is cause for concern.

The relevance of this study is to provide evidence, which reflects the importance of Kivenkolo to the clients and community where it is situated. Our studies in multiculturalism and immigration at Laurea have emphasised the current issues that challenge Finland today. As a result, these challenges have provided the impetus in motivating our interest in carrying out a study at Kivenkolo, one of the few places that remain active in serving immigrants and other marginalised groups in the vicinity of Espoo.

3 History of Kivenkolo

Kivenkolo's residential space and immigrant service history began in 1991. At that time, it was called Merisaapas and mainly provided a playing area for children and clubs for adults. In 1992, Kivenkolo began leisure time activities for children and adults, the unemployed and provided a space for a variety of clubs. They also provided meals for the region's pensioners and people with disabilities. The services provided were based on the choice and needs of the clients (Länsiväylä 1992) and (Kiviset 1992).

For a short time from 1993-1994 a youth group participated in Kivenkolo activities. However, in 1994, priority was given to increasing the level of the resident's enjoyment and participation as well as developing cooperation among different groups. For example, one issue was to raise awareness of substance abuse and a campaign was held called the 'anti-intoxication campaign' (Länsiväylä 1994). In 1995, the first employee was hired at Kivenkolo and was responsible for organising games and crafts for children at weekends. That same year, clubs were provided for youths, as well as afternoon clubs for children of primary school age. In 2000, family work began and a nanny was employed to provide an open care service to families, and to organise meetings and activities for the local community of Kivenlahti. In 2005, Kivenkolo expanded with the establishment of the immigrant service, which continues today. The principal mission has been to provide low threshold services to immigrants, implement family work and Child Protection services and equally important, to provide a meeting point for seniors, so they have a space to socialise, have a good meal and to spend time. All activities available today including computer courses and handicrafts clubs are open and available to everyone and are funded by the Kivenlahti Stensvik Association. (Balea 2007)

The Partners of Kivenkolo include Espoo City, Diakoniasäätiö and Kivenlahti Stensvik. Espoo City provides multicultural and child protection services as well as funding for the Finnish language and fitness classes for immigrant women. Diakoniasäätiö sponsors individuals with health issues to reintegrate back into working life. The Kivenlahti Stensvik association was established in 1972. It is a local group of residents who work to improve the quality of life for the residents of Kivenlahti and financially support the activities implemented at Kivenkolo through membership subscriptions and funding from Espoo City. Figure 1 represents the role of each partner in the daily activities at Kivenkolo.

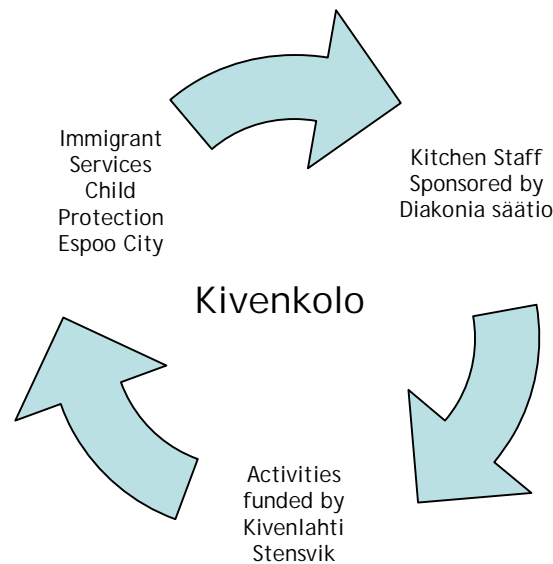


Fig. 1 Partners of Kivenkolo.

4 The theoretical background

The general theoretical framework for the thesis project is empowerment. The concept of empowerment refers to the approach in which clients are helped to gain more control over their lives, become aware of and use their personal resources, overcome obstacles in meeting their needs and aspirations, have their voice heard in decision making and be able to challenge situations where they experience inequality and oppression. (Payne 2005, 286)

However, we are not working with the aim of testing theories, but to identify features that come from theories. For example, what elements of empowerment are visible? How are the seniors, rehabilitation workers and immigrants empowered through interaction with workers and activities? We hope that a theoretical perspective will help us to notice more interesting details.

Determining a theoretical framework for the thesis work at Kivenkolo was an on-going process, as our task was to identify a working model and good practices in the workplace. It was based on observations made on the daily interactions between workers, clients and the knowledge which we had acquired from literature review. The literature was carefully chosen to encompass all the phenomena that occur in daily working life. We brainstormed ideas about the themes, which could have high relevance to our study. The main sources of literature were subject specific books, field reports, introductory texts, academic journals, articles, and electronic databases and theses.

Figure 2 depicts the elements of working life, which play significant roles in good social work practice, based on previous studies, experience and literature. These elements can be explained by theories and concepts to be covered in the study. This chart also represents an

initial set of ideas that were defined later as the key concepts of professionalism, human behaviour and tacit knowledge.

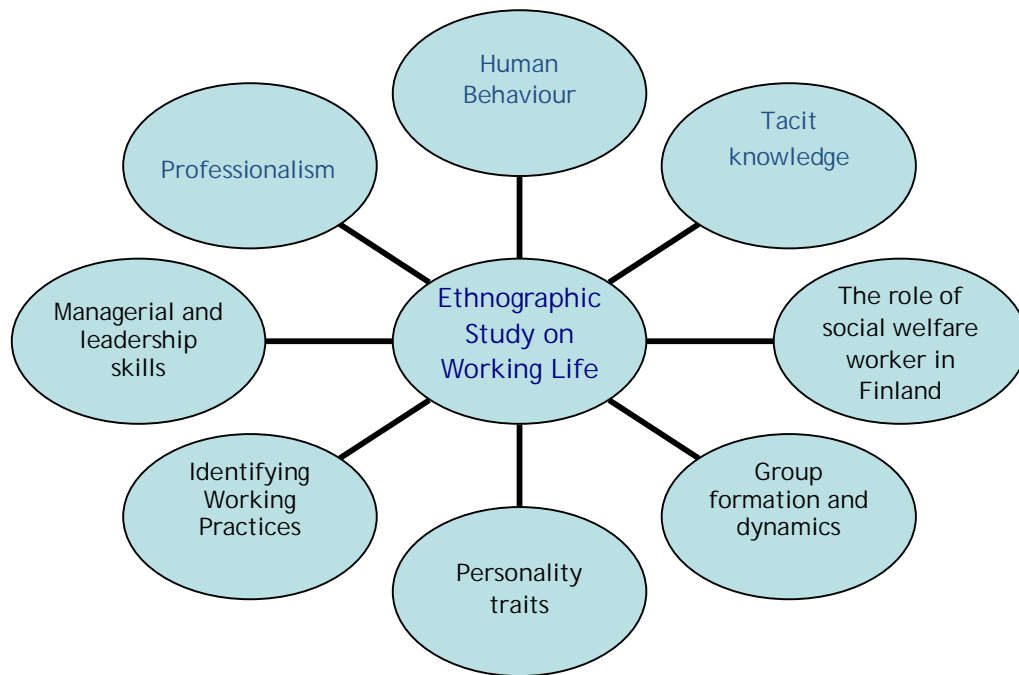


Fig.2 Key concepts and their relevance to the thesis.

The way in which humans perceive and interact with one another is quite often influenced by prior expectations. According to Levi, social perception is the process of combining and interpreting information about others (Levi 2007, 223). According to Srull & Wyer (1988) as cited in Levi (2007), the primary reason people categorize others is to simplify the world. Dividing people into categories or groups makes it possible to predict what they are like. It is this simplification, often not very accurate, but an unavoidable component of human perception. Furthermore, perceiving the causes of events involving people, demands that Individuals are able to reflect on his/her own perceptions about others as well as seeing the perspectives of others in context. This skill enables individuals to understand and perform well in both personal and working life situations. In a nutshell, in the field of social services, it is important to observe and perceive other people's behaviour, emotions, body language and ways of communicating, which can give unspoken messages that are relevant in daily interactions in a working environment. Social workers often draw upon human behaviour to guide the next course of action in working with a client and to manage difficult situations with skill.

Personality traits are also important determinants of human behaviour. Eysenck (1970) as cited in Arnold (2004, 117) argued that basic building blocks for personality can be represented by a small number of basic characteristics (types) that have been identified through a large number of personality questionnaires asking people how they behave and feel in various

situations. Two major characteristics emerging consistently from the analysis of the studies conducted by Eysenck were extroversion and neuroticism. Extroverts are lively, sociable, excitable people and neurotics are characterised by high levels of anxiety and tension. Two important points should be considered in these characteristics. The first is that both are continuous and most people are not extreme in either extroversion or neuroticism. The second point is that these characteristics are independent; in other words, someone's position on one characteristic bears no relationship to his or her position on the other.

Motivation and personality traits are also significant aspects of a working environment. Arnold explains that the word "motivation" using a mechanical analogy, means the motive force that gets a machine started and keeps it going. In legal terms, the motive is a person's reason for doing "something" (Arnold 2004, 309). In other words, motivation concerns the factors that push or pull us to behave in certain ways. There is a strong connection between personality and motivation. Some people are just naturally driven to achieve goals more than others. Some people are satisfied in just going to work every day and performing only necessary tasks without seeking any challenges or having ambitions in life, while other people are always looking for new tasks, innovative ways of working, and have numerous ambitions for the future. Some individuals have a pessimistic way of looking at life, although they might harbour ambitions, they do not possess the motivation to achieve their full potential.

Another component of working life is attitude. Attitudes were defined by Secord and Backman (1969) as cited in Arnold (2004) as 'certain regularities of an individual's feelings, thoughts and predispositions to act toward some aspect of his environment'. Feelings represent the affective component of an attitude; thoughts signify the cognitive component and predispositions to act on the behavioural component. The concept of attitude refers to certain regularities of an individual's feelings, thoughts, and predispositions to act toward some aspects of his environment (Arnold 2004, 241). Furthermore, Warr (2002) claims that attitudes are usually viewed as evaluative tendencies (favourable or unfavourable) towards a person, thing, event or process. An attitude towards a particular object is thus a bias predisposing a person towards evaluative responses that are positive or negative. Basically, it does not matter what culture, values or race an individual belongs to, but the attitude this individual presents that will determine the response received from others. An individual's role within the society or environment is also important in working environment interactions. Throughout the study conducted at Kivenkolo, aspects of personality, motivation and attitude are going to be crucial in analysing the dynamics of daily interactions between workers and clients.

4.1 Tacit knowledge

Knowledge plays a key role in the information revolution. Major challenges are to select the “right” information from numerous sources and transform it into useful knowledge. Tacit knowledge based on common sense, and explicit knowledge based on academic accomplishment, are both under-utilised methods (Smith 2001, 311-321). Hence, the knowledge acquired from life experience, coupled with education, generates professionalism.

Tacit knowledge is rooted in experience. It is often referred to as “practical wisdom” (Zeira and Rosen 2000, 103) in other words a combination of “common sense” and intuition, which accumulates through life experience. It is said that social work is a ‘calling’ from the heart rather than simply a chosen profession. When an individual faces challenging situations, the way in which they handle the issue and its outcome, contributes to an increase of tacit knowledge as reflected in “the knowledge that is bound up in the activity and effort that produced it” Horvath (1999) as cited in Sternberg and Horvath (1999, ix).

Furthermore, Polanyi (1967, 6) identified the philosophical framework of tacit knowledge. He argued that it is not the activity of spontaneous perception, but the outcome of the “active shaping of experience performed in the pursuit of knowledge”. This concept can be used in all fields of work, particularly social work, where professionals deal with life experiences and emotions that require finely tuned social skills and an ability to always use intuition and common sense to handle unexpected situations. Although tacit knowledge is a term generally attributed to Polanyi, his argument is partially built on the arguments cited in Ryle (1949) in Denzin and Lincoln (2005, 50). Ryle created a more fruitful concept than Polanyi’s “tacit knowing” by introducing the notion of “knowing how”, which instills knowledge in actions. Putting knowledge into actions is a way of identifying tacit knowing. Therefore, knowing how seems a more direct anchor to use.

Tacit knowledge, when used as a basis of effective management can be observed as converting skillful actions into routines or working models in the workplace. Skillful actions are derived from tacit knowledge and therefore their efficiency is clearly reinforced. However as routines become automatic and when discrepancies in tacit knowledge occur, they are often overlooked or fail to be critically assessed owing to the fact that the individuals concerned feel threatened or embarrassed about their apparent lack of expertise. In such circumstances inefficient and inconsistent practices are more likely to prevail (Sternberg and Horvath 1999, 123). Therefore, in order to promote good social work practice, tacit knowledge should be built upon theoretical background. The pursuit of tacit knowledge in practice was part of our study at Kivenkolo.

4.2 Professionalism

A professional is required to have a set of attitudes and personal values that add to the experiences and the knowledge acquired through education. A professional is able to separate his or her own private issues from the working environment. A professional is also able to take criticism and interpret it as a constructive means of self-development. Commitment, mutual respect and positive attitude reflect professionalism. Social workers must make a commitment to observe confidentiality and maintain a code of ethics, while attempting to remain unbiased.

In social work we should aim for professionalism that is anti-discriminatory in practice in terms of gender, age, disability, sexuality, race or ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion and social status, while at the same time upholding principles of professional reflexivity, making oppression visible, empowering clients and working towards social justice. The Nordic model of social work is set up in a way where clients have to adjust to the system. The workers rely on the guidelines of a universal welfare system where everyone in need of services receives them. For this reason, the system controls the distribution of services so that those who are most in need get the services. In Finland's taxation system, the individuals who earn more pay higher taxes and therefore maintain a reasonable level of equality within the population.

4.3 Group processes

A group is more than just a collection of people. It exists for a reason or purpose and has a goal that is shared by the group members. The people in a group are connected to one another. They recognize this connection, and it binds them together, so they collectively share what happens to one another (Levi 2007, 4).

Throughout the study at Kivenkolo group processes and its dynamics were under scrutiny. An individual's roles, behaviours, professional and personal interactions are all important elements to consider when identifying good practices in the working environment.

Furthermore, group work theories among individuals within a group are crucial in identifying what the true role of workers and clients at Kivenkolo should be.

Leadership styles and managerial practices are significant in assessing the positive and negative aspects of the group. During our studies a great deal of emphasis has been placed on group work and the theories behind it. Schutz (1958) developed his model of Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientation (FIRO) which attempts to explain the interpersonal behaviour in terms of the individual's orientation towards others, taking into account three interpersonal needs of inclusion, control and affection. According to Schutz, groups develop in response to these dynamics in predictable stages that repeat in a recurring cycle during the group's time together.

Furthermore, Schutz emphasises that inclusion is a term that refers to the beginning of group life, when all members are primarily concerned with fitting in and being accepted. *Control* occurs when issues of inclusion have been resolved. Members with a high need for expressed control tend to compete for airtime, assume positions of authority and try to influence other's opinions. Finally, in the *affection* phase, group members become concerned with building emotional attachments among members. Members with a high need for affection will demonstrate concern about the personal lives of others, are accommodating and listen carefully to others. FIRO-B (Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behaviour) was developed from Schutz's FIRO theory and is a useful tool for management and leadership development.

In addition, the dimensions of behaviour within a group dictate its purposes and successful outcomes. Bion (1961) as cited in Rioch (1970) in Warner, Dale, Lake and Waymire (2009, 467) states in his theory, that in every group, two groups exist: the work group and the basic assumption group. Idealistically, the work group functions with the primary task or work of the whole group. Members are mature and aware of the group's purpose and can define their task. Group members work cooperatively once they have willingly chosen to belong in the group and are able to identify with the interests of the group. The basic assumption group is at play when groups employ ineffective and self -contradicting behaviour that lessens the effectiveness of the group. Bion suggests that the basic assumption group can be understood "as if" group, meaning that the group behaves "as if" certain tacit assumptions were held by the members. These assumptions are hidden in the group subconscious, outside the awareness of group members. Bion identified the type of basic assumption group called the dependency group. The primary goal of the dependency group is to have members protected by one individual, usually the leader. The group's behaviour implies that the leader is all- knowing and all-powerful, and that group members are ignorant, inadequate and immature. The intelligence and power of the leader are never questioned or tested by the group (Rioch 1970, 56-66).

Within Kivenkolo's group dynamics, power issues are under scrutiny during this ethnographic study. Power is strongly related to leadership within a group. Power can be defined as the capacity or ability to change the beliefs, attitudes, or behaviour of others (Levi 2007, 128). The use of power changes the dynamics of the group functioning. Unequal power changes the way a leader treats other team members and the way members communicate with one another (Levi 2007, 133). A group should aim at empowering all members in a way in which members are given power and authority over the group's dynamics. Individuals should be equally heard and given an equal chance to cooperate within a group. Learning how to cooperate proactively rather than passively or aggressively promotes open communication, improves group members motivation and self-esteem, creating a more positive and goal-oriented environment.

Figure 3 demonstrates how the key concepts interconnect with the elements previously mentioned, forming the theoretical framework of this study.

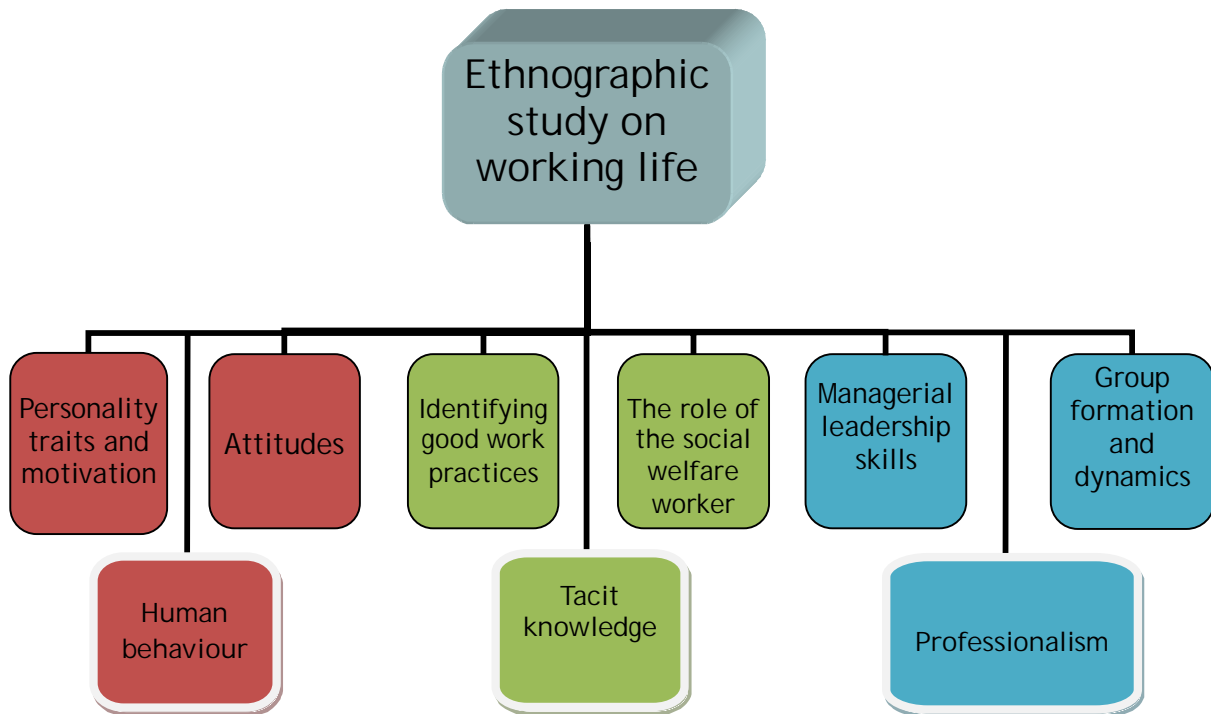


Fig.3 Evolution of key concepts.

5 Implementing the study

This study was conducted as a requirement for the Bachelor's Degree of Social Services at Laurea University of Applied Sciences. Kivenkolo is a working-life partner of Laurea and both maintain a relationship of mutual benefit, where Laurea is able to implement research and development projects (R&D) in the social work field. Kivenkolo is part of a project in social services called "Empowering Work Research and Development Path" where it aims to improve its services by providing the students with the target group and implementation environment for the study. In a research-oriented thesis, one pays special attention to the justification of the sample or participants' selection.

5.1 The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to work towards development. By implementing this study we generate new knowledge with the aim of improving the adult services at Kivenkolo for the benefit of the Kivenlahti community situated in Espoo City.

The purpose of the study is to identify a working model at Kivenkolo and make good practices visible. A working model is based on a set of guidelines, theoretical background and human

behaviour in a working environment that dictate a basis for professionalism and successful outcomes in a particular organisation. Furthermore the goal of this study is to justify the relevance of Kivenkolo to the Kivenlahti community as well as to provide the tools for further development to improve the adult services available to senior citizens and immigrants in the City of Espoo.

The Ethnographic approach is a form of qualitative research, which is frequent in the field of social sciences. According to the online dictionary of references the word itself, derives from a combination of the Greek words "ethnos" meaning people, and "graphia" a combining form, denoting a process or form of drawing, writing, representing, recording, describing and so on. In other words, writing observations about people in a particular environment.

5.2 Research methods and methodology

The Ethnographic method of research was chosen in the tutorial meetings relating to the research process at Kivenkolo. While ethnography is a distinctive approach, there is no one design for an ethnographic study. Moreover, it is a method of discovery that is particularly useful in gaining insight into a culture or social process, including those of organisations and institutions (Punch 2004, 162). Therefore, it was deemed the best method to gather data concerning the topic of identifying the working model and practices because in order to understand people's behaviour within a particular context, we needed to observe their interactions and behaviour for a longer period of time, describing in detail everything within that particular context. Questionnaires do not always give a true picture because they are not based on spontaneous response and behaviour. Participants have time to choose carefully and contemplate how they want to answer in a questionnaire therefore research findings might not be as trustworthy as data gathered during naturally occurring dialogue. In social sciences research it is important to observe all social interactions within the environment. Verbal and non-verbal communication, as well as sights, sounds and smells tell a researcher much more than answers in a questionnaire, as we subsequently discovered.

The objective of this study was not to test any theories but to learn from the experiences, daily situations and interactions of the participants at Kivenkolo. Usually, ethnographic research is carried out overseas, where researchers immerse themselves in a culture so they can fully experience the subject of study. Nevertheless it is possible to carry out a form of micro-ethnography, as cited in Wolcott (1990) in Bryman (2008, 403) which involves focusing on a particular aspect of a topic. For example, this research, on the working life and interactions at Kivenkolo, was a form of micro-ethnography. The data was gathered through a variety of channels in order to obtain as much of a holistic view as possible of the working life at Kivenkolo. As participant observers we were able to systematically gather data by using a full range of senses. We saw, we heard, we felt, we smelt and we tasted the environment.

5.3 Data collection

5.3.1 Participant observation

An important element of ethnography is the role of researchers as participants in every aspect of the study. The term “participant observation” implies that the researcher is just observing the phenomenon, but as participant observers we did so much more than simply observe. There are versions of participant observation in which the participation element is rather different. In this sense, participation means ‘being there’ and in the “middle of action” (Denscombe 2004, 202).

We gathered data through observation, interviews and the collection of written documents such as field notes, reports, statistics and the use of audiotapes. The implementation of participant observation passed through three stages during this study. The first stage was the descriptive observation that was obtained during the orientation at Kivenkolo. The second stage was the focus observation, whereby perspectives became increasingly narrowed in terms of social interactions, human behaviour and theories connected to the social field. The final phase, known as selective observation, was implemented towards the end of data collection, where focus was given to specific examples of dialogues and practices that were found in the second phase (Spradley 1980, 34). Figure 4 represents Gold’s (1958) classification of the role of the ethnographer and the level of participation in the research:

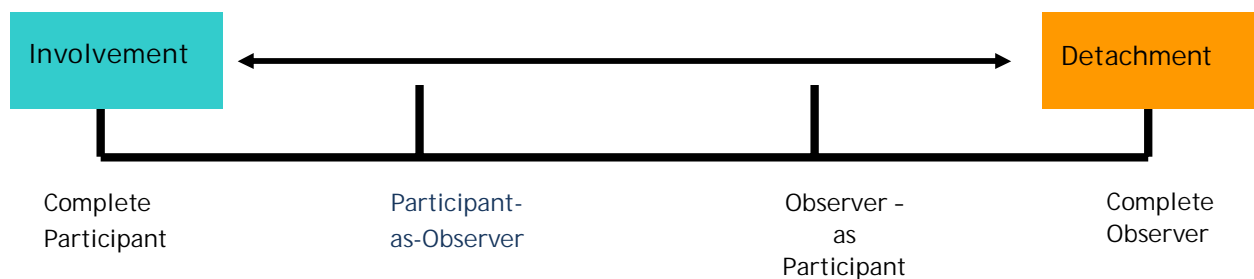


Fig. 4 Gold's classification of the ethnographer's role in the research (Bryman 2008, 411)

In this study, we undertook the role of “participant-as-observer” which according to Gold is a role that is virtually the same as the complete participant, but members of the sample group are aware of the researchers’ status as researchers. As ethnographers, we engaged in regular interaction with clients and workers at Kivenkolo, and participated in their daily lives. However, according to Gold, the participant-observer role does carry the risk of over-identification in terms of getting too close to the group observed; this is termed as “going native”. In other words, the researchers’ analytical judgment might be compromised once they become part of the group they are researching. Nevertheless it also poses other

advantages where the researcher's identity as a researcher is openly recognised and allows for the possibility to 'shadow' a person or group through normal life, witnessing first hand and in intimate detail, events of interest (Denscombe 2004, 203). We discovered that after the first few observation periods at Kivenkolo and when the initial curiosity wore off our presence did not interfere with interactions between the clients. Moreover we were able to participate in conversations naturally and still maintain our roles as researchers.

5.3.2 Observations

Observation offers the social researcher a unique way of collecting data. It does not rely on what people say they do or what they say they think. It is more direct than that. Instead it focuses on first hand evidence that can only be acquired through the eyes of the observer. The direct observation that is carried out in fieldwork or in other words, actions that occur in situations which would have occurred whether or not the research had taken place give the researcher a truer picture of the group dynamics (Denscombe 2004, 192-193).

Observations can be recorded in various ways. They are extremely important for the researchers as evidence for all the work carried out within the research. They provide proof or disproof of a phenomenon. They also serve as guidance for the researcher to understand and reflect on the observations. The participants in this study were observed at Kivenkolo by both researchers at intervals over a period of seven months from February until August 2011. Field notes were kept throughout the research to remind us of our purpose in the environment, and to avoid overlooking relevant facts. Furthermore, information can become distorted over the passage of time. Therefore, photographs, and tape recordings were also used as well as field notes to ensure that the whole environment and interactions at Kivenkolo would be reported in detail and with as little bias as possible. We noticed that data collection became saturated when themes and words were clearly evident as they become increasingly repetitive.

5.3.3 Written observations

The arduous task of note taking can be divided into three categories as suggested by Lofland and Lofland (1995) and Sanjek (1990) cited in Bryman (2008, 420). Firstly, *mental notes* are used when it is inappropriate to take notes. For instance during coffee breaks, people might find it offensive that notes are being taken during recreational periods at work or during leisure time. Secondly, *jotted notes* are brief notes that are written to remind the researcher about a certain event or part of a conversation. They are usually key words, phrases or mind-maps. Thirdly, *full field notes* are detailed descriptions of everything seen and heard. They often become the main source of data and can include initial ideas, impressions and feelings.

They also need to be written as soon as possible, while information is still fresh (Bryman 2008, 420).

As many of the interactions observed between seniors and clients occurred during naturally occurring talk and during lunch, it was more appropriate and polite to occasionally jot down brief notes opposed to the physical act of switching on a tape recorder. Furthermore, we noticed that keeping written notes helped us to focus on the task at hand and some clients appeared to feel less threatened and self-conscious by note taking compared to having their dialogues recorded on audio-tape.

5.3.4 Audiotapes

Audiotapes were used at all times to record naturally occurring talk of both clients and workers, counselling sessions and semi-structured interviews. This ensured that all interactions were documented from beginning to conclusion with the added advantage of being able to play back the recordings as often as necessary during the transcription process.

5.3.5 Semi-structured interviews

In ethnography, key informant interviewing is important because people differ also in their cultural sensitivity and therefore in their ability to contribute culturally meaningful data. Additionally, life history interviewing can greatly facilitate the understanding how the social context is played out in individual lives. Consequently, the data that is derived from this kind of interview helps to obtain a deeper understanding of the participant's view of the world, Fetterman (1989) cited in Punch (2004, 189-190).

During this study, some individuals who were especially active in daily life at Kivenkolo were selected to provide more detailed information about their lives and why Kivenkolo was important to them. These individuals were chosen because we, as participant observers saw that they stood out from the daily interactions, due to their personalities, habits and attitudes. All interviews were carried out at Kivenkolo and were conducted in Finnish and /or English.

5.4 Gaining access

Gaining access to the place of research in participant observation requires negotiations with 'gatekeepers' or key informants. They help to smooth access for the ethnographers during the course of the study and so become particularly important in the data gathering process. The key informant(s) helps to direct the researchers to situations, events and people likely to be helpful to the progress and development of the study (Bryman 2008, 409). In order to avoid bias, researchers need to bear in mind that they cannot always rely on information relayed by

the key informant as they may come to see the situation only from their viewpoint rather than in an objective way.

The gatekeeper at Kivenkolo helped us to identify which individuals would be willing to participate in a semi-structured interview. These individuals were strongly connected to Kivenkolo on a daily basis for different reasons. The gatekeeper also facilitated the whole study in terms of informing all participants of the purpose of our being there with them every day during the study period.

There are two types of ethnographic study concerning access to the social setting. It is possible for an ethnographer to conduct fieldwork without people knowing that they have a researcher in their midst. This is known as covert ethnographic research in which the researcher does not disclose the fact that he/she is carrying out a research on a particular environment. Although this method has the advantage of preserving the naturalness of the setting, it also has the downside of deliberately sidestepping ethical considerations, Humphreys (1970) cited in Denscombe (2004, 91).

Alternatively, overt ethnographic research, allows the researcher to be transparent and maintain social work ethics about the research he/she is going to undertake. We carried out an overt ethnographic study at Kivenkolo after obtaining the informed consent of all relevant parties in the study.

5.5 Sample group

The sampling in this ethnographic study is termed as 'handpicked or purposive sampling' that involves the selection of a sample with a particular purpose in mind. For example, Kivenkolo is a closed-oriented environment where workers and clients interact. Our purpose was to observe those interactions. Therefore, by choosing to conduct a research at Kivenkolo the individuals participating on a daily basis in this environment were handpicked for the research (O'Leary 2004, 110).

Furthermore, in purposive sampling, organisations and people within sites are selected because of their relevance to understanding a particular social phenomenon. The participants in this sample group included the workers (a total of five), senior citizens, immigrant women who attended the Finnish language course and gym classes and clients who came to seek counselling. Some clients were regular and came to Kivenkolo daily, while others came only once.

5.6 Methods of analyzing data

Narrative analysis was the method employed to analyse the data gathered at Kivenkolo. It covered a wide variety of approaches that are concerned with this study and analysis of the stories that people use to understand their lives and the world around them. Riessman (2004) cited in Bryman (2008, 553) distinguishes four models of narrative analysis: Firstly, *thematic analysis* is one of the most common approaches of qualitative data analysis that emphasises “what is said rather than how it is said”. We used this approach to analyse naturally occurring dialogue between individuals in the main living room. Spontaneous dialogues were recorded on audiotape and required hours of translation followed by transcription in order to obtain the common themes.

Secondly, *structural analysis* explores the way in which stories are related. It focuses on things that people say and the way they say it. We applied this method of analysis to interpret the narratives that we received from the independent semi-structured interviews, which comprised of open-ended questions which inevitably required the need to provide follow-up questions in order to stimulate the flow of details and impressions as emphasised by Riessman (2004) cited in Bryman (2008,557). The interviews were carried out with specific members of the study group. There were six interviewees, three workers (two female and one male), two seniors (one male and one female) and one immigrant client (female). Five out of the six interviews were conducted in Finnish.

Thirdly, *interactional analysis* focuses on the dialogue between the storyteller and the listener and was implemented during extended (Finnish) dialogues between a senior (male) and the researchers. This particular senior was recommended by the key informant as a reliable source of information regarding the daily interactions of the establishment. He has attended Kivenkolo for many years and has become almost part of the fixtures and fittings and was very willing to contribute his thoughts and ideas on everyday life at Kivenkolo.

Lastly, *performative analysis* examines the use of words and gestures to communicate the story and was used as a means of interpreting both the verbal and non-verbal communication used by individuals when divulging information. These elements play an important part in cross-cultural communication and often reflect attitudes and personality traits, as we discovered during the counselling sessions conducted by the multicultural worker.

Narrative analysis and all its components mentioned above were enlisted as a framework to guide us through the lengthy process of transcription and to analyse the data that arose from it (Bryman 2008, 553).

The process of transcribing audiotapes, reading written observations, viewing photographs and examining written documents and statistics was time consuming and wearisome. This was

due to the fact that we had a variety of data to analyse and interpret. The different methods of analysis required to achieve a holistic result, was a challenge in terms of separating objectivity and subjectivity. Therefore, it was demanding to distinguish between the uncertainty of our personal observations and perceptions of the facts that we could see, and not to be overly influenced by our personal thoughts, feelings and interpretations when witnessing daily situations. Figure 5 shows the components of narrative analysis that we used to analyse the data retrieved from recorded dialogues.

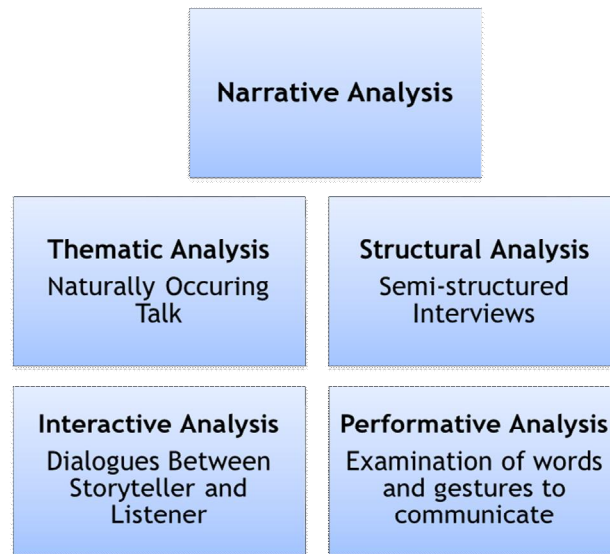


Fig 5. The components of narrative analysis.

6 Findings

This section presents the findings of the data analysis of the ethnographic study that was carried out at Kivenkolo from February until August 2011. We found that Ethnography was useful in the study of human services because service provision is a process, occurring in open systems where circumstances, variables and experiences cannot be controlled (Gray and Webb 2009, 155). During the planning stage of the thesis and in choosing a theoretical framework, we identified elements of working life, which were later narrowed down into the themes of professionalism, tacit knowledge and human behaviour. We used this framework to guide data collection during participant observation, as part of ethnographic study. The data was also collected from other sources through the examination of documents, audio taping and written observations and owing to the varied nature of the data, four models of narrative analysis was used to interpret it. The aim of the thesis was to identify a working model and make good practices visible at Kivenkolo, in order to improve and develop adult services in Espoo. Our study therefore, was an attempt to explore these themes and gather evidence to justify their importance with the overall aim of providing evidence, to show that Kivenkolo upholds a significant role as part of adult services in Espoo.

6.1 Human behaviour

Everyday life consists of the human behaviour that manipulates actions, thoughts and ideas. It is not only the things that are said verbally but also the emotions and thoughts that are communicated through non-verbal communication. It is easier to deceive with words than with body language. There are also particular behaviours that are characteristic of certain people that can give a more accurate picture obtained by the observation of a sequence of behavioural patterns. All individuals maintain behavioural patterns that become recognisable in that person over time.

First impressions are often lasting impressions and are vital when entering into a working relationship between counsellor and client. From the first meeting eye contact is essential. Eye contact should be direct, and the expression interested, for example, by raising the eyebrows, to show the person that they are welcome. Following the initial "hello", eye contact should be maintained to avoid creating an atmosphere of anxiety or tension. Smiling, being and looking friendly, will also contribute to forming a more relaxed environment. During the first meeting, it is also important to look carefully at the other person. The social interactions that transpire between worker and client are often a reflection of the other's behaviour. At Kivenkolo the multicultural worker, which in this study will be referred to as (MCW), is often the first person the newcomer meets and therefore gives the first impression of the place.

The MCW's open and friendly personality helps to make an individual feel welcome from the outset and therefore facilitates the counselling relationship which will follow. We observed that the MCW greets all clients in the same way, with cheerful words, positive gestures and a big smile. Potential clients responded in the same way towards her. It was interesting to observe those first encounters and subsequent meetings, and to compare the similarities and differences, which occurred as the working relationships progressed. We noticed that the personality and temperament of both the MCW and the client, and how they interacted with each other, often determined the outcome of the session. For example, we observed that when the client proceeded in an aggressive manner towards the worker, the MCW was more likely to respond in a defensive and similarly aggressive manner as illustrated in the following narrative, which was carried out in English.

Client: No!! I really don't know!

MCW: How many times I prove it to you, what I say, you must follow it?

Client: Every time. I will not go there if it is six months! But if it is only three months, I will go!!

MCW: Don't fuck with my brain! I will kill you! You wanted this course so you go. If you don't go to this course I will kill you and I won't help you anymore!!

In this situation the MCW had gone to extremes to help this client get a place on a Finnish language course specifically for immigrants wanting to apply for Finnish citizenship. Unfortunately, the client was not taking it seriously and did not respect the fact that MCW had arranged everything using her networking contacts, in order to get this client a place on the course. The attitude of the client caused a conflict between them both. The interaction was reminiscent of a conflict that might arise between mother and daughter. Interestingly enough, worker and client were from a similar cultural background and this may have been a reason why their interaction was so intense; emotions and temperaments ran high. However, there were no hard feelings and after shouting at each other they went outside to smoke a cigarette together.

In direct contrast to this behaviour the following excerpt illustrates a completely different interaction with another client of immigrant background who had asked for help with internet banking and matters which had arisen from some recent decisions made by The Social Insurance Institution of Finland (KELA Kansaneläkelaitos).

MCW: Do you get extra money to buy the children's clothes?

Client: No

MCW: How often are the children with you?

Client: It's no problem. The four children come to me almost every weekend. In June, all the children are at home.

MCW: Do you have a holiday. Do you want to go with children or alone? I was discussing in a meeting that there is a two day camp for children and fathers, it's free. Let's see how I can help.

Client: Client listens quietly without verbally responding.

MCW: You should have a holiday if you want to. Once a year without children, you can go to a spa, even to Stockholm if you want. You have the right to have a holiday, every person needs a holiday. So you come then, next week at two o'clock.

Client: The client smiles and remains passive.

MCW: We can get a bicycle for one of your childs. It doesn't cost anything. I will give you a paper and you fetch it from there. Biltema is too expensive, you can have for free.

Client: The client smiles broadly, thanks the counsellor and leaves. He is a regular client.

The MCW spoke in Finnish and used a soft, gentle voice. She expressed concern for his wellbeing, helped him to apply for extra support when caring for his children and explained where he could get a free bicycle for one of them. During this particular session the MCW exuded warmth and compassion towards the client. The client was unthreatening and undemanding, hence the MCW reciprocated the behaviour.

6.1.1 Personality traits and motivation

Personality traits were under scrutiny in Kivenkolo. As a family oriented group, the importance of each individual's personality became evident throughout the ethnographic study. Personality is also closely linked to motivation and attitude, in a way that dictates how an individual reacts within their environment and how they perceive other people.

Personality traits had an immense influence on the working model at Kivenkolo and it clearly demonstrated the differences between both workers. The MCW was an extrovert, very energetic, motivated and showed many signs of strength. Her non-verbal communication was also authoritative. Within the Finnish working life context, where emotions are not expressed so openly, the MCW was at an advantage to introduce her ideas of Kivenkolo as an extended home environment. Therefore, caring and nurturing clients was the main priority above many issues concerning professionalism. In other words, individuals are more relaxed and uninhibited when they are at home, subsequently, if an individual feels 'at home' why would she act professionally?

The Child Protection Worker, which in this study will be referred to as CPW, was more reserved, less expressive in her body language and her speech was monotone. The CPW interacted with the seniors well. She entertained them by playing the piano in the afternoons, with songs they had requested. Nevertheless, her personality was more reserved and introverted.

Motivation also became evident as one of the main factors that differentiated worker's behaviours and attitudes. The CPW is a Finnish woman who is professional in her work; she applied theoretical knowledge in her practice with clients. However, due to her reserved nature, she was seen as not as motivated as the MCW in her work. From our observations, the CPW saw Kivenkolo as a job, and therefore she performed exactly what was required of her expertise, maintaining a professional distance, unlike the MCW, who behaved as if she was in her own family environment. However, both workers were empathetic towards everyone.

Throughout this study, it was possible to notice how much professionalism in social work can be interpreted in different ways. On one hand, clients favoured the highly extroverted MCW

of immigrant background whereas the introverted Finnish CPW did not receive the same attention. The clients saw the CPW as a worker and the MCW as a family member because she spent more time interacting with them, sharing her personal thoughts and private life with them.

The narrative below occurred between a senior citizen and the MCW in the presence of the researchers. The senior, was concerned about the MCW, because the CPW did not come to work in the morning and the MCW had to do all the tasks by herself. It was lunch time at Kivenkolo. Researchers were sitting with the senior when the MCW burst into the room and sat down at the same table.

Senior Citizen: Oh nice!

MCW: Hah hah hah ha, I guessed you were going to say that. I must eat quickly and leave!

Senior: Why?

MCW: I must leave. I have to be at Espoo centre soon.

Senior: Why didn't the CPW come today?

MCW: I: She came, she came, but she is held up somewhere.

Senior: But in the morning she didn't come.

MCW: "She didn't come here, in the morning, but she will come this afternoon.

Afterwards, MCW left to go to her meeting and the senior commented to us:

"MCW has difficult work. She has so many cultures, that's why she does all the work"

The client made this comment because on that particular day, the cook was on holiday and the MCW had made lunch, received clients and took care of other matters alone. The CPW was not there in the morning. This is an example of how motivated the MCW is and her ability to multi-task. She took care of all matters, and ensured that the senior clients would have their daily warm meal. At the same time she managed to counsel multicultural clients who came to seek help.

6.1.2 Attitudes

The following narrative was taken from a life story of a woman's experiences as a regular senior at Kivenkolo. She is a Finland- Swede and her positive attitude to life is exemplary. She is in reasonably good health and comes to Kivenkolo daily and makes a special effort with her appearance. She is always dressed impeccably, with make-up, perfume and lots of jewelry.

Senior 'I like people! Both men and women! I have been coming to Kivenkolo for twenty years. I come here every day to eat lunch and every Thursday I attend the Kaveri -Kammeri meetings. I play the piano and mandolin on Fridays for everyone. When my mother and my twin brothers died, and then my husband died, there were four funerals in my family. It was very hard. But, I came here and this was my therapy. Here are so many friends, we are like a big family with many members' (Laughs out loudly)

The senior explains how she spends her time when she is not at Kivenkolo.

'I usually go for a walk if the weather is good. Then when I arrive at home I play the mandolin and then do some cross -stitch. It is my hobby. I never take money for it, because it's my hobby. I have made angels in different colours and the woman on the bicycle. I thought that maybe I could get in the Guinness book of records, but there is one lady that has made many more than I did. I also like to watch television quite a lot, especially detective and police series such as CSI and Law and Order. I also enjoy Hercules Poirot and Derrick. Nowadays I have even been watching Gossip Girl that comes in the evenings around six o'clock'. (Huge laugh) My grandmother used to listen to the mass on Sundays and I do the same in her memory. Dear girls! I love you both because Jesus said that we should love one another. I like to read something spiritual every day, I have a book at home, which I read and each day there is a prayer, it helps me'.

Although this senior lives alone, she keeps herself busy by making daily visits to Kivenkolo to socialise and eat lunch, alternatively, she gets pleasure from her hobbies and her faith keeps her going. She has managed to maintain a productive life, which is a great achievement in old age. According to the MacArthur studies on Successful Aging, there are three main factors that are seen to promote productivity in later life. Firstly, health and overall ability to function of course play a significant part in allowing an individual to participate to the full. Secondly, friendship and other social relations instill a feeling of belonging, and lastly, personality, education and a positive outlook on life help to maintain a belief in one's own ability to manage whatever life throws at you (Rowe and Kahn 1998, 173). Taking all of these factors into account and applying them to the seniors that attend Kivenkolo we saw at first hand the differences among the level of productivity and participation of individuals in relation to these factors.

In contrast to the senior women mentioned above, there is an 83 year old senior man who lives alone in an apartment close to Kivenkolo. He usually arrives around eight in the morning and sits in the MCW'S office chatting about this and that. He enjoys the one to one attention before the other seniors and clients start to filter in. He spends the morning reading the newspaper and observing the environment. He usually did not speak to the other seniors but enjoyed chatting to the students on practice and to the researchers during data collection. He also has a regular place to sit in the living room and we interacted with him on several occasions.

S: "old age is not nice! Every day I wake up in the morning and I am aching all over! Nobody ever comes to visit"

"I, myself don't feel old, I don't have a rich life that's why I want to speak with young people. I like this, this is my medicine. I can't sit around those tables, they (the other seniors) talk about what happened yesterday, and then tomorrow they talk about the same thing....."

An old person does not understand. They are stupid! My life is rich in Kivenkolo.

We noticed the connection between relating to others and wellbeing at Kivenkolo where many of its senior members have been attending religiously for many years and going there to eat and socialise is central to their day. There are an equal amount of men and women in the group the majority being Finnish and they are more or less around the same age. Continuing relations with others is important for wellbeing and contributes to the feeling of belonging somewhere, having a place within a group; this in turn increases the opportunity to engage in productive activities. Some of the members also belong to the Kaveri-Kammeri group who hold their meetings on Thursdays. During these meetings the seniors share news about their lives and recent events.

Attitude is easily reflected in the ways that people interact with one another and is related to health and wellbeing. The power of positive thinking has become an ethos nowadays for some, but not for all, and it is fairly obvious to spot individuals who possess a positive attitude towards life or otherwise. This was equally visible at Kivenkolo when observing the seniors in their social interactions.

6.2 Tacit knowledge

Tacit knowledge in professional work can be defined as knowledge or skills which are communicated between experts through personal interactions but cannot be or has not been passed through formal statements, diagrams, verbal descriptions or instructions for action. This knowledge is often perceived as 'common sense' knowledge and is the kind of knowledge

that individuals acquire without even realising it, as they are actions, judgements and decisions made that occur spontaneously. According to Altheide and Johnson (1994) as cited in Denzin and Lincoln (2000, 624,674) 'tacit knowledge exists in that time when action is taken that is not understood, when understanding is offered without articulation, and when conclusions are apprehended without an argument.' Hence, tacit knowledge is the know-how that somewhat naturally occurs in everyday situations in life and it is often the skills that are repeated and happen automatically and therefore individuals take for granted. If this is the case, all individuals possess tacit knowledge in some form or other that has been gained from experience. In the social work context other forms of knowledge have been identified, for example, Thomas Schwandt (1997) cited in Gray and Webb (2009,187) describes that there is a difference between theoretical knowledge ('knowing that') craft or skill knowledge (knowing how) and practical-moral knowledge (knowing from) and when working with clients, all three forms of knowledge come in to play. In applying these different forms of knowledge, theoretical knowledge refers to a social work model that is utilised as a tool that informs how (skill knowledge) to carry out an action, practical-moral knowledge refers to the knowledge from within that requires an understanding which aims to motivate individuals to act rather than offering ideas in which to only ponder over.

When interviews were carried out with both counsellors at Kivenkolo both integrated tacit knowledge in their working methods. This became increasingly obvious to us as observers because both workers have extensive work experience and implement their work in such a way that can only stem from comprehensive life and work experience.

MCW "In 2005, Espoo town opened a new workplace, and I was offered a job, as advisor for immigrants. I was surprised I got the job because I don't have any social education"

The narrative demonstrates that MCW bases her working methods with clients through tacit knowledge, as she has mentioned about not having any education in Social Work.

Furthermore, during informal discussions, we asked about Espoo City's role in educating workers:

MCW "All the time I learn something more. I have all the forms here and I have developed my work myself. I have basic social work knowledge and I have learned about medicines and mental health problems. Personality helps! I am curious, and I want to know more! I don't tell the client I don't know! I look it and find it myself, and then I tell the client the next meeting. I do it on my own. I am sure about myself... I have received some training and työnohjaus (work guidance)"

The phone rings and the MCW say: "It's S again! (S is a social counsellor in another organisation in Espoo, who constantly calls the MCW for advice and what should be the next course of action in her work)

MCW was asked about how many people she has helped during her time at Kivenkolo and she answered:

"I don't know how many people I have helped and I don't care! "

From this discourse we understood that Espoo City is not providing enough training for those workers who really need it. The tacit knowledge that the MCW has acquired, coupled with her own enthusiasm for the work has enabled her to provide a service to the best of her ability in the way she knows how.

6.2.1 Identifying good work practices

Throughout this study we could identify from the vast pool of Social Work theories, that the Kivenkolo methodology of working is closely related to Systems Theory. The emergence of Systems and Ecological Theories occurred in the 1970s with the work of Gitterman and Germain (1976), Pincus and Minahan (1973), Siporin (1975) and Vickery (1974). The theory explains the connections between the personal and environmental aspects of practice, as well as finding a unifying framework of practice for the social work profession (Reid 2002). Pincus and Minahan's book (1973) cited Payne (1997, 139 -147) as being widely used and influential, was one of the early attempts at applying ideas and concepts from systems theory to general social work practice. Their approach included the recognition of the influence of systems in the life of people and the identification of three kinds of systems that contributes to people's wellbeing, namely informal or natural systems. Firstly, the informal and natural system encompasses family, friends, neighbours, colleagues. Secondly, the formal systems include community organizations, unions, and professional associations. Lastly, the societal systems refer to government departments, hospitals and schools.

Kivenkolo has based its practices more specifically within the informal Family Systems Theory. Even the term "asukastila" (residential space) evokes the idea of home. Moreover, the MCW who partakes the role as manager, has made Kivenkolo into a home environment, because as she would say, Kivenkolo is like her extended family, based on her view of how a family should be, taking into account her cultural background.

The elements of empowerment that were observed at Kivenkolo were related in the most part, to the productivity of the seniors that frequent the establishment on a day-to-day basis. The ritual of beginning the day with morning coffee, discussing current affairs in the newspapers and sharing a meal together helps to connect the seniors so that their feelings of loneliness are reduced.

Seniors with particular skills and talents are given the opportunity to lend a hand or entertain their peers. For example one senior regularly plays piano and mandolin to the delight of all who have the pleasure of listening. Another senior is a wonderful tailor and has used his talent to make the physical environment of the living room at Kivenkolo cosier. Kivenkolo provides a space for the Kaveri-Kammeri members to hold their weekly meetings. This not only encourages social interaction, but also acts as a peer support group. Members discuss the week's events, sing together and give each other relaxing massage. It is a time set aside for sharing and caring. In this way good social work practice can empower older people to raise their self-esteem, and take and maintain control of their lives (Crawford and Walker 2005, 159).

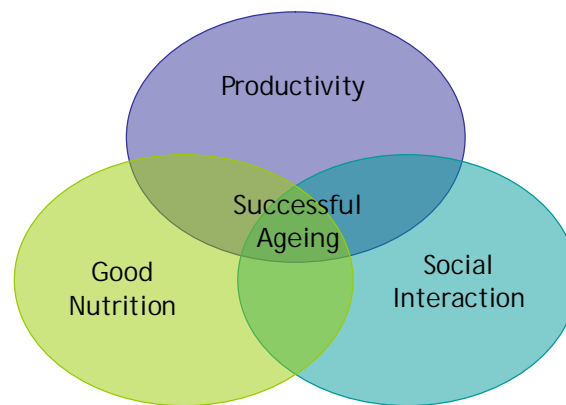


Fig.6 a Venn diagram showing how seniors are empowered at Kivenkolo.

Furthermore, other groups at Kivenkolo, which are being empowered, include the kitchen staff that is sponsored by Diakonia Säätiö with the aim of reintegrating individuals back into working life. By having the opportunity to work in the kitchen at Kivenkolo with the support and encouragement of the MCW, they are empowered to rehabilitate and work at their own pace. When working with the seniors they are able to socialise and feel they are doing something worthwhile.

Additionally, immigrant clients who require assistance in handling their financial affairs are empowered by the MCW to manage their banking via Internet and they are informed of all the benefits in which they are entitled to apply for.

Lastly, through participation in activities such as Finnish language lessons and exercise classes provided by Kivenkolo and with the added possibility of bringing their babies along, immigrant women are empowered to integrate and acculturate into Finnish society.

6.2.2 The role of a social welfare worker in Finland

Professionalism and competences required to work with vulnerable groups within society is seriously undermined, owing to the fact that the work and training of social welfare workers is relatively unknown, and therefore needs to be discussed. For example, in Finland there are three main professional, qualified groups that work in this field and who all contribute to open and community-based services as well as in residential services. Their work encompasses both preventive work and social rehabilitation work, which is organised in residential settings or at an individual's home.

Firstly, practical nurses have vocational education spanning 2.5 years that is provided by healthcare and social services institutions and entry to education is possible for those individuals who have completed basic secondary school education. Practical nurses can work in children's day care centres, playgrounds and hospitals. Also within early intervention as family workers and in child welfare services, residential settings as nurses and child care workers.

Secondly, social welfare workers or Socionoms are educated at Universities of Applied Sciences formerly known as polytechnics and a Bachelor's Degree in Social Services is obtained on the completion of 3.5 years of study. The scope of Bachelor Level education is supposed to be more practical and orientated towards work compared to a more theoretically based qualification at Masters Level. Nevertheless, students are equipped with skills of critical reflection and analysis of all relevant human and social phenomena. Socionoms work at all levels of administration as well as in client work, in private and public services, and in Non-governmental organisations.

Lastly, social workers are educated in universities. A Master's Degree in Social Work is required for a qualified social worker. In child protection they are in charge of the social work processes of the service users as well as for development work. As elsewhere, for example in Britain, the scope of social work research has risen in prestige since social work education was elevated to university level in the 1980s. Therefore, nowadays, employers have ultimate choice in recruitment drives, although in the public sector there are strict regulations based on legislation for educational qualification requirements in child protection services. To work as a social counselor, advisor or supervisor in municipalities' open services, you need to have a Bachelor's Degree in Social Services. Therefore, in order to understand and apply learnt theories in practice, it is not only important to *know* that something is the case but also *how* to do something. It is commonly assumed that anyone can do social work, however there are various forms of knowledge in social work that ought to be comprehended, critically analysed, evaluated and applied in order to implement practice effectively: Firstly, understanding the legal, social, economic and ecological context of social work, secondly, knowing the context

of social work practice in the particular area one works in, as it varies from one place to another. Thirdly, values and ethics must be upheld. Finally, the social work theories, models and methods provide the framework to guide the work. (Gray and Webb 2009, 185)

The application of knowledge becomes increasingly complicated when multicultural issues need to be considered when carrying out social work. Multiculturalism affects the way in which we interact with one another. The method of social work changes depending on the client and therefore social workers today need to be 'culturally competent' if they hope to meet the needs of their multicultural clients. In other words, workers need to increase self-awareness, knowledge and skills in working with members of diverse groups Williams (2006), Yan and Wong (2005) cited in Gray and Webb (2009, 104). A strong sense of self-awareness requires that workers acknowledge that they possess particular biases, values and beliefs that are based on their own culture which are undoubtedly reflected in their work with clients. Culturally competent social workers therefore need to reflect on how their own cultural background affects their interactions with clients belonging to diverse groups. Moreover, social work practice with refugees and immigrants requires specialised knowledge of the unique issues of these populations. It also requires specialised adaptations and applications of mainstream services and interventions (Potocky-Tripodi 2002, 3).

As an immigrant herself, the MCW had strong opinions on the immigrant dilemma in Finland in terms of the attitudes of the immigrants she has helped through client work at Kivenkolo. During a counseling session, a Finnish client presented to the MCW that her immigrant (former) daughter-in-law was unable to raise her grand-daughter in a way that she thought to be correct. She was deeply concerned about the child's wellbeing.

Client: 'I have noticed that she has no idea how to even dress the child. Yesterday, for example, it was a warm and sunny day and she dressed the child in a long sleeved top, leggings and a fur-lined jacket, far too many clothes for such warm weather. The food that she makes has too many spices and is not healthy for a young child. In the evenings, she leaves the child crying in her bed while she talks to her friends and family on the Internet, the whole night! She has been in Finland over three years already and still cannot speak Finnish. I think it's all about intelligence, that why she has not learnt yet. There have been many times when I have heard her crying in her room, this is not the right way to raise a child'

This client had never personally experienced the process of migration and was unable to interpret her daughter-in-law's behaviour or empathise with her difficulties to adapt to Finland and the Finnish culture.

MCW responded *'She is clearly depressed and needs to get some therapy and counselling. The divorce was very messy and it is never easy in the beginning in a new country. I know how it is I am an immigrant myself. Also she is so young and does not have the knowledge how to look after her daughter she can get some help and advice from the family clinic (perheenneuvola) about nutrition, and setting routines for sleeping, and the importance spending time outside etc. I can also contact the Family Federation they can help a lot. Once the child has a place in kindergarten, then she has time to start to learn Finnish, everything takes time, but slowly things will progress and the situation will improve for all of you. Life is different here in Finland, compared to her home country. When immigrants move to Finland they have challenges to adapt to the new society depending on the reason for migration in the first place. Can I ask how did they meet each other what was the reason for the marriage in the first place?*

Client 'They met at work and got married far too quickly. I told him that he is asking for trouble marrying someone with such a different cultural background, and this is what happened, just like I said'

The narrative above is an example of how the MCW was able to use her personal experience of migration and acculturation to Finland to explain to the client why her daughter-in-law was experiencing difficulties and unable to cope with the challenges of motherhood and homesickness.

Acculturation is a process by which an individual adapts to the culture and way of life of another dominant group (Potocky-Tripodi 2002, 127). It is more than learning a new language but also understanding the history, traditions and customs of the country. Acculturation is the integration of a country's cultural aspects into the lives and customs of migrants. While it is important that the cultural practices of the immigrant community are preserved, it is imperative that immigrants learn the culture and traditions of the host country in order to become part of the society. In learning traditions and customs, migrants have a means by which to make contact with those around them and form new friendships.

However, an important factor to consider in determining the success of the acculturation process is dependent on the reason for migration in the first place. There is often confusion in distinguishing between an immigrant and a refugee. (Potocky-Tripodi 2002,4) defines immigrants as people entering a country to settle there and have left their home country voluntarily, often in search of better economic opportunities. Whereas refugees are forced out of their countries because of human rights violations against them. Hence, the ability to acculturate is seriously affected by the circumstances in which it occurs. In addition, the

matriarch plays a vital role in the successful integration of the whole family when adapting to a new society. When families migrate the mental and physical wellbeing of the mother is paramount to the success of the integration process in terms of having the capacity to hold the family together, at the beginning and throughout the acculturation process. This can be observed in all cultures regardless of a woman's place in society. Even in developing countries where women often adopt subservient roles they discreetly form the backbone of many societies in their ability to maintain families and manage daily lives with little input from their male counterparts.

A significant finding from the counselling work was the dependency of clients towards the multicultural counsellor. Throughout the period of observation and data gathering there were at least five clients who came to seek advice and assistance on more than two occasions. Many of the clients are usually long-term and therefore a chain of dependency occurs. The reasons varied but the behaviour of these clients was consistent with individuals searching for acceptance, seeking attention and yearning for some kind of maternal connection. This was specifically characterised by the behaviour of all the parties involved, including the counsellor "This is like my big family". There was a sense of mutual dependency the worker yearns for a surrogate family, the family being all the members of the Kivenkolo community, of the Kivenkolo family.

During sessions with the multicultural clients the worker always encouraged them to come back if they had any queries or problems. The narrative below is an example of a dependent client who was at the Kela office and called the MCW on the phone, so she could talk to the Kela worker on his behalf and explain his situation. This narrative also demonstrates her frustrations with the Finnish authorities as a multicultural counselor when advocating for her clients.

MCW is talking on the phone about a client who does not have all the necessary permits to work in Finland:

MCW: 'I have a client, he is in Kela, and he wants that I speak with them ... She is not talking with me; she is talking with somebody else... Aff, I kill them! I hate Kela and unemployment office...

Researchers: How is it possible, the same person, same day with three different decisions?'

MCW: 'They say, first one is not good, but which one is good?'

The telephone rings...

MCW: 'Maahanmuuttaja palvelu hei! But wait..! I will explain that he has done an integration plan. The Employment Office has given him a statement that he has done the integration plan that he has not got anything.... how is it so...

*yes.... but he has... This means... that... integration money... then... ok!
Then it is an old issue...*

*MCW: Incredible...! Incredible...! One an half year, he is from EU, with
working contract, and he does not pay taxes here in Finland!*

Researchers: 'Was the employer Finnish?

*MCW: Yeahh!! There was this employer company, nobody tell it they need to
register after three months. The contract is permanent. Ookkkkkk! Why police
does not give him paper?*

*MCW: how is possible? Tell me! I do it twice! I do it twice! When he came
with permanent contract and he was thrown away!*

Researchers: Everybody says Finns are so correct!

*MCW: Think about it! The law has changed! No! No! They want him to go back
to his country! They do not give Kela card! The police don't give! They don't
give him the paper.*

*The police are not giving him the paper because he does not have working
contract. By the law unemployment office accepted his working contract, but
Kela does not accepted. How is possible in this civilised society! Do you know
how many job applications he has made? Thousands! Last week.... I had only
clients with big problems.... I started to get tired! All the clients want
everything and in this country so bureaucratic it takes time for everything!*

Phone rings again...

*MCW: I don't answer this, sorry! "Affff I complained it, last week I had only
clients with big problems and I feel... I ... I started to feel a little bit tired
with this Finnish system! They are so lazy! So bureaucratic! And also foreigners
are so energetic, they want quickly everything! Wait! They can't wait! The
Finnish system is lazy and bureaucratic.*

Researchers: Why he just doesn't go home? He does not want to go home...

MCW: We can't help everybody... It is sad! I feel sometimes so angry!

Researchers: it that phone your personal phone or kivenkolo's?

MCW: it is Espoo Town. I made a mistake; I gave my personal number...

Researchers: They going to call you all night!

MCW: All night... during vacation... And this (phone) I learned to close when I go away from here!! Now they leave messages... '

This narrative also demonstrates why the counsellor should always aim at empowering the client to make decisions about their own lives, otherwise a chain of dependency starts and clients are not able to act upon their situation. When clients are told what to do, or the counsellor makes the choices for them, they never critically reflect upon their situation and do not become aware of what is causing distress in their lives. Therefore, clients are not empowered to take the steps to make the change and solve the situation by themselves. Reflection and action facilitates change. "I cannot think for others, or without others, nor can others think for me. Even if people's thinking is superstitious or naive, it is only as they rethink their assumptions in action that they can change. Producing and acting upon their own ideas - not consuming those of others - must constitute that process. (Freire 2004, 108) The worker's role is to help the client become reflective in terms of clarifying situations so the client can see what options are available. The client chooses independently which path to take. It is important to mention that social services also play a part in the client's dependency. Clients often have difficulties in understanding official papers, forms, and decisions made by the government, as they are written in formal Finnish language that even native speakers have sometimes, difficulties to understand. Remarkably it was recently reported in the media that Kela wants to improve correspondence with clients by making letters less formal and more understandable by using clearer language. (Metro newspaper 2011, 04)

This reform came about as a result of feedback received through a client service questionnaire which was carried out last spring. It was found that every third respondent claimed that they were not able to understand the grounds of the decisions made by Kela. Therefore, immigrants seek help from the multicultural counsellor to fill out the forms and explain the decisions in a language that is understandable to them.

6.3 Professionalism

As mentioned previously, there are two professional Social work counsellors at Kivenkolo, the Child Protection Worker (CPW of Finnish background) and the Multicultural Counsellor (MCW of immigrant background). Both workers have distinct responsibilities. The CPW is responsible for family work and child protection and carries out fieldwork, making home visits, as well as receiving clients at Kivenkolo. The MCW assumes full responsibility for the other services provided by Kivenkolo, as well as counselling clients; she is responsible for monitoring senior wellbeing, supervision of kitchen workers and book-keeping. The CPW has been working in

childcare and family services for over twenty years and the MCW has a strong background in accounting and more recently she has worked in social services for Espoo City.

During this study we have discovered that Kivenkolo's Child Protection services are deeply rooted in theoretical foundations of professional social work. On the multicultural side, elements of empowerment and the family systems theory became more evident after the data was gathered and analysed. Empowerment was observed during the weekly voluntary meetings consisting of a group of seniors called "Kaveri-Kammeri" and by the Finnish lessons targeting immigrant women. In these Kaveri-Kammeri meetings, seniors had an opportunity to socialise and discuss issues of supporting less fortunate citizens within the Kivenlahti community. They were empowered by having a sense of self-worthiness, being useful members of the community where they lived. The Finnish lessons for immigrant women gave them an opportunity to bring their babies to the classroom. These mothers usually stayed at home the whole day. Kivenkolo thus provided them with the opportunity to learn Finnish as they were able to bring their babies along. This was empowering for these women, who had a chance to socialise with other mothers who shared similar experiences and also to initiate their process of integrating into the Finnish society by learning the language.

There were different styles between both professional approaches. The working methods and counselling techniques used by the CPW worker were based upon theoretical knowledge and the legislation on child protection. The body language, use of words and the non-verbal communication of the CPW worker had professional foundations derived from previous studies and accumulated knowledge from years of experience. On the other hand, the MCW had a completely different approach. Counselling was carried out using a combination of personality traits and tacit knowledge based on life experience.

The following narratives are taken from the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews with both, child protection worker (CPW) and multicultural counsellor (MCW). They describe what they think of Kivenkolo, their work history and how they feel about client issues. Both workers had strong opinions about what could be developed in the adult services that are provided by Espoo City. These suggestions were made during the semi-structured interviews and demonstrate how the interview process, gave the opportunity to workers, to reflect on their practice and identify ways to develop their work.

This was an interesting finding, as on deep reflection one worker was able to identify a new client group in need of child protection services. This issue is a serious dilemma and one that needs to be addressed in order to prevent it from escalating into a large-scale problem.

Child Protection Worker- CPW:

"This is a marvellous place (Kivenkolo), I like it so much. I began working for Espoo City in 1986 in a kindergarten, working with kids with special needs. It was interesting and I worked in co-operation with family clinic (Perheenneuvola) and social workers, which were part of a huge network partnership. It was good to develop our own area. Kivenkolo did not exist then, but later it began and it was the only place of its kind.

My clients are from the age of one year old up to over ninety. I have worked with all kinds of people. The social office works a lot with immigrants; I have a lot of experience from different workplaces. We look at the child's perspective and through this we see what needs to be done to help the child, and to support him or her. Some families have three cultures, that of the parents and the new culture of the child.

Women's rights are an issue and family issues are handled differently in Finland compared to their own countries. I worked with one mother who has lived here in Finland for twenty years and we had to help her to adapt to Finland in terms of language, culture etc. When families have moved from other countries that are experiencing civil wars, there are many problems arising from the traumas of war, when they relocate to Finland, in terms of integration. Also in my work, it has been noticed that we have to explain that physical punishment is not tolerated in Finland. We have to stress that this treatment is not right and this is forbidden. Even in Finnish families there is circle of violence and patterns of behaviour that passes over the generations such as domestic violence and alcohol abuse. It occurs in both types of families, Finnish and multicultural families.

I have always been curious about other cultures and often search websites to find out more about the backgrounds of the clients that I work with. I also ask the client to describe and explain about their backgrounds and culture. It helps to build the relationship. Small things make all the difference. For example an awareness of Ramadan and calls to prayer can affect the working relationship in a positive way. It doesn't matter if a client is Finnish or Immigrant; it is the issue that has to be managed.

But there have been certain issues that I have been concerned about. For example, since we have an open doors policy, when dealing with honour violence cases I have been very worried about family members coming to Kivenkolo and so many people being at risk, the seniors, us workers, clients, everyone. We have been trying to arrange meetings elsewhere to ensure the safety of clients and families. Another concern, well, as a matter of fact, I

have been wondering about the immigrant children growing up in Finland. Mothers are not equipped to help with education, follow who their kids are hanging out with, making rules and boundaries is almost impossible, as women in Muslim families do not have a strong hold over their children, especially the boys. This can have a detrimental effect on a child's development, especially when the child is involved in making adult decisions, interpreting for a parent, on issues that are clearly out of their realm of understanding. It is this group of youngsters that I am worried about. What is going to happen to them?

In general, I would say I have too many clients, especially now after the holidays. However, I am well-supported by child protection workers and although we have strict rules and guidelines to follow we have a lot of freedom 'työn vapaus' otherwise. We also have a really good boss"

The CPW possesses theoretical knowledge and she uses professional working methods to guide her work, as well as combining a fair amount of tacit knowledge that she has acquired over the many years working for Espoo City. Her attitude towards working with immigrant families is positive and empowering in the way she encourages clients to 'teach' her about their culture and habits. In this way the client feels both respected and valued, and allows for the worker and client to engage in a permanent dialogue characterised by the 'horizontal relationship' proposed by (Freire 2004, 79-80) which does not include unbalanced power based on different experiences and knowledge. It is a process that should take place in a cultural circle of trust so that individuals may become empowered.

The Multicultural worker (MCW)

"I have family in (.....) and here, this is my big family (referring to Kivenkolo)! When I came from holiday, everyone was here waiting for me (Kivenkolo workers and regulars). This is my second home or my biggest family, it feels like that. (Big smile) It makes me feel good, but also bit sad. I think about, what if I'm not here anymore. How can they manage without me?"

In the example above, the MCW has just returned from summer holiday and expresses her concern about the possibility that she may leave Kivenkolo. She has been offered a new job. The MCW was also asked her opinion on the services provided by Espoo City.

"I think Espoo town is very good. Espoo has developed very well compared to Helsinki and Vantaa and was the first to open these kind of places. I have many clients from Vantaa.

I heard that they will open asukastila like Kivenkolo in Matinkylä and at Alma in Leppävaara. However, health services are bad because now that services are being centralised, only the richest can move around and reach the services because they have cars. Health services are bad because immigrants don't know how to use them. Many times I have to help clients where to get health services, its big problem.

Another thing I noticed is that Finnish law is such, that many times workers are interpreting the law in their own way, everyone has their own work style, therefore services are not the same for everyone...."

In the narrative above the MCW had made very valid points in terms of highlighting gaps in the services that are currently being provided.

6.3.1 Managerial leadership skills

According to the oxford online dictionary, a service manager is any professional who manages an organisation that provides a service to customers or clients. The word service as a noun is defined firstly as an "act of helping or doing work for someone" and secondly, as a system supplying a public need, such as transport, communications, or utilities such as electricity and water. Therefore, the aim of a service manager in the social work field is to optimise the potential of the organisation through administrative implementation. The manager undertakes the function of organising, planning, staffing, directing and co-ordinating. These services are shaped according to the clients' needs. These needs can vary from medical assistance, housing, psychological treatment, advocacy, community work, to guidance of how to deal with daily life situations. A manager within the social services should exhibit characteristics of a professional social worker, such as fairness, honesty, ethics, neutrality, assertiveness and good social skills. These traits are essential if one has the responsibility to co-ordinate a team in the work environment.

Furthermore, it is important to clarify the difference between leadership and management. Bennis (2003) remarks that there is a profound difference between management and leadership, and both are important. To manage means to bring about, to accomplish, to have charge of, responsibility for and to conduct. Leading is influencing, guiding in a direction, course, action and opinion. The distinction is crucial. Warren created a set of distinct characteristics between a manager and a leader, which are:

The manager administers; the leader innovates. The manager is a copy; the leader is an original. The manager maintains; the leader develops. The manager focuses on systems and structure; the leader focuses on people. The manager relies on control; the leader inspires

trust. The manager accepts reality; the leader investigates it. The manager has a short-range view; the leader has a long-range perspective. The manager asks how and when; the leader asks what and why. Managers always have their eyes on the bottom line; leaders have their eyes on the horizon. To conclude, a good leader is also a manager but not every manager can be a leader (Bennis 2003, 41-42).

There are some traits that are evident in successful managers and leaders. First, self-motivation is the basis for a professional to become a good manager and an effective leader. An individual who is naturally motivated does not need any reward or supervision in order to work. These individuals usually have a very good work ethic and are driven by their sense of responsibility. The second trait is social skills. They are very important to a manager when dealing with workers, customers and clients. It is almost impossible to manage a group of people without social skills. Even more so, when difficult situations arise concerning clients; it is the manager who usually has the responsibility for solving the situation in the best way possible. All of the traits discussed above require an individual to possess emotional intelligence. Furthermore, emotional intelligence determines an individual's success as a leader, as emphasised by Goleman (2002) cited in West (2003, 69).

Emotional intelligence encompasses four elements: self-awareness, self-management (learning to control your impulses), social awareness (empathy), and managing relationships. At Kivenkolo, there is no designated manager in place; however there is clearly a leader who possesses all the qualities mentioned previously such as optimism, open and positive - mindedness and the right attitude. The MCW has a strong background in accounting and therefore has the skills in place to implement social accounting practices too. For example, accountants need to work systematically and have a full range of interchangeable skills such as computer and logic skills, strength, teamwork and interpersonal skills, management, leadership and networking skills. Although the MCW is not officially trained in social work, she is able to utilise her skills as an accountant to inform her interest and ability to deliver information to social services. The work comprises a significant amount of administration that requires an in depth knowledge and understanding of how the social system works in Finland. Being able to interpret the language on the numerous forms and applications from Kela requires skill and patience, especially when explaining the contents of correspondence to clients. Many clients came asking for help with paying bills and had difficulties in understanding papers from the tax office. The MCW's accounting skills were able to help the client understand and relay information in a comprehensible manner. She demonstrated in several situations that her previous work experience in accountancy served her well in becoming a competent administrator in the social work context.

Other accountancy-based skills that were observed at Kivenkolo included a keen sense of

business awareness. Accountants need to be aware of what is happening in the business environment around them and need to keep up-to-date with current issues and any changes in legislation. This is also an important factor in social work. The MCW exhibited extensive knowledge on the rules and regulations pertaining to the social sector. Many clients were unaware of their rights and the necessary procedures to be undertaken when applying for permits or benefits, the worker that is well-informed serves her clients best. Accountancy also acquires competency in preparing statistical and written reports, this skill is a must in social work, where information must be transparent and workers must account for and record all their actions on a municipal database called Effica.

Lastly, paying attention to detail, problem solving and analytical skills, which are characteristic when working with figures, are equally valuable when working with people. The ability to read between the lines and address what has not been said comes from the analytical mind and was evident in much of the working practices that were observed from the MCW.

In the following narrative the MCW uses her extensive accounting skills to help a client of immigrant background with limited language skills in Finnish to pay his bills via internet banking and explain letters from Kela.

MCW: "This paper you need to save it at home

Client: Yes.

MCW: You have a memory stick.

Client: It's difficult...

MCW: Life is difficult... here is the last decision. In June you need to apply again!

Client: Yes, ok...

MCW: Good. Have you noticed that you have more money than usual?

Client: No.

MCW: It's good... Is it a good place where you live now?

Client: Yes

MCW: Have you got your bank codes with you?

Client: Yes

MCW: Good! You have Sampo bank?

Client: Yes

MCW: You have been granted money from the social office!

Client: Good

MCW: Ok you have 600 e in your account. You received some money from Espoo Town yesterday and also from Kela so you have money in your account enough to pay your bills. Can you do this yourself?

Client: Not yet

MCW: Do you want me to show you?

Client: Yes.

MCW: Come and sit and do it yourself then it's easy to remember.

Client: Ok.

MCW: Good! "Now everything is paid, well done! You did it all by yourself"

She explains the whole process of paying bills via the Internet step by step in very simple and understandable language. She also explains about direct debit when paying bills and the importance of having enough money in his bank account. When transactions are completed and the client manages to pay the bills himself he is very happy and laughs out loudly. He leaves the office contentedly.

The second narrative demonstrates her organisational skills and motivation to create a home-like environment at Kivenkolo:

Researcher: Excuse me? (Worker is in her office)

MCW: Yeeess?

Researcher: Was it you who decorated the living room?

MCW: Yeah!

Researcher: It is really nice! I was sitting down and observing the place with the pictures on the wall and the plants in the corner...

MCW: Yes! Feeling like a home! This is my meaning! To feel like home! To have a living room like this! Home!

The MCW worker expresses her appreciation of the researcher actually noticing that the living room looked cosy and decorated according to her view of a home. It was important that her work environment resembled home. We noticed that the layout of the place also resembled a home. The MCW's office is situated at the back entrance to the building, adjacent to the

kitchen, so that on first entering, one is immediately greeted with the pungent aroma of food that is going to be served that day. The smell of food permeates the whole environment and this contributes to the feeling of being at home. In many cultures, people usually receive their friends, family members and acquaintances through the back door. This feature was completely emulated by the MCW who had her office purposely situated at the back of the building. In this way she is always the first person to greet clients when they enter the building. We observed that Kivenkolo also had a front entrance and another office at the front of the building, but, it was not used for the reasons that the MCW herself explained to us when she was asked about it. She mentioned that having her office situated at the back was easier to supervise and observe what was happening at Kivenkolo.

MCW: "I want know everything that happens here"

6.3.2 Group formation and dynamics

Kivenkolo is a small community consisting of a compact group of workers, two counsellors, three kitchen staff, a group of seniors, a group of immigrant women, individual clients seeking counselling and students who choose Kivenkolo to do their practice placement. The most predominant group to frequent Kivenkolo was the seniors. At Kivenkolo, group dynamics evolved around the leader, the MCW worker. The whole group structure was based on her interactions and organisation of the place. As mentioned earlier, in the professionalism chapter, the MCW has created a home-like environment for the seniors, the kitchen staff and the multicultural clients. Therefore, from her perspective Kivenkolo is seen as a family group, creating a group norm that is called the Affective relationship. This norm consists of two types of relationship: one in which group members express their feelings openly towards each other, and another in which feelings are suppressed and controlled. At Kivenkolo feelings are expressed openly, the cook is always talking with everybody, and he jokes about all kinds of things. The MCW openly talks with the seniors both about matters concerning her own life and her work at Kivenkolo during lunch and smoking breaks. Exactly as it would happen in a family, in which the norm is to eat together, share personal experiences, being expressive with feelings, and vocally approving and disapproving of members. (Napier and Gershenfeld 1999, 117)

The MCW worked independently and was the one who made all the decisions concerning clients and other workers at Kivenkolo. The MCW'S strong personality and role as the matriarch and manager of the Kivenkolo family, was clearly present within the group formation and dynamics. Every single decision made by the kitchen staff, about the seniors and about the activities for immigrants at Kivenkolo had to be approved or discussed with the MCW beforehand. She was constantly aware of all the situations happening daily, like a mother would be with her children, watching over them in case there was something unexpected happening that needed her immediate support and attention.

Furthermore, there were group conflicts between seniors, immigrants and staff members. For example, individual perceptions about culture and inaccurate assumptions and stereotypical ideas about minority groups were a constant source of conflict in Kivenkolo's family-oriented group. Cultural factors profoundly affect how we think about groups and behave in them. When individuals enter a group, they do not understand and value the group dynamics as a whole, due to the fact that they cannot separate and leave apart their own culture, values and life experience (Napier and Gershenfeld 1999, 8). Every member at Kivenkolo had their own perception of reality. When a situation occurs, it is unlikely that two individuals would interpret the same situation in exactly the same way. They will perceive and interpret an occurring event according to their own individual experiences, culture, values, prejudices, personality traits, to name but a few. An individual's own perception of their environment generates inaccurate assumptions. We seek to affirm our personal construction of reality in any situation we fail to understand and control Hattrup and Ford, (1995) Festinger, (1950) and Loomis (1959) quoted by (Napier and Gershenfeld 1999, 8). For instance, when multicultural clients interacted with the seniors at Kivenkolo, conflicts arose because of the seniors own assumptions of immigrants behaviour and cultural differences. When a client, originally from Africa, arrived at Kivenkolo and greeted everyone, one of the seniors who was sitting in the living room chatting with us asked:

Senior: "What's her name again? I can't remember! They all look the same to me! "

This dialogue illustrates the senior's stereotypical idea of Africans physical features as being overall the same to the whole population. He is making a generalisation, which is a common inaccurate assumption that some individuals constantly make during social interactions. Moreover, the senior is a Finnish man who has spent most of his years living in Finland, a predominantly white country. Kivenkolo is one of the few places where he is able to interact with different nationalities and culture.

Consequently, no one in the Kivenkolo 'family' was immune to stereotypical ideas and assumptions about each other. An individual's stereotypes will therefore totally affect the group dynamics, especially if the group functions using a family-oriented approach. Stereotypes are basically preconceived notions of how individuals from certain groups think, feel, act and so forth (Napier and Gershenfeld 1999, 12). Depending on the stereotypes people have towards individuals, they can act friendly, threatened, avoidant, ignorant, angry and so on. The feeling of not knowing where to stand, when faced with an individual, whom we have pre-conceived ideas about, can seriously jeopardise the process of being accepted into a group.

The same senior mentioned above made comments during a naturally occurring talk about his views on minority groups in Finland. The senior felt comfortable in sharing his views with both of us, ironically, also immigrants living in Finland.

About the Roma people:

Senior: Do you know the Gypsies?

Researchers: Yes, they have a special costume?

Senior: Yes

Researchers: Yes, I know

Senior: They don't do any work!

Researchers: Is that true? That they do not do any work?

Senior: Yes! They steal from the shops!

Researchers: Really?

Senior: I know somebody who is Romanian, but she is not a Gypsy! Gypsies do not have a home and they are unemployed.

Researchers: But, they have been living for a long time and they speak Finnish language.

Senior: Yeah, nowadays! Then, they are not able to speak their own language.

It is a pity. The seniors can but not the young. You see... Gypsies, they do not take the children to school and the parents do not work... They steal from the shop! Horse Dealing! Do you know what horse dealing is?

Researchers: Yes

Senior: They buy and sell horses and cars! Then, when the horse dealing is over, they sell cars. But now, they do not do any work... Gypsies are really dirty, no home! The water in the rivers is very cold!

By this last comment, the senior explained to us that the Roma people do not wash because they would have to bathe in the river water which would be too cold.

The next group mentioned by the senior was the Somalians:

Senior: I do not like Somalians! They go swimming with all their clothes on! They also eat with their hands!"

Senior: Here there was a Somalian student, who was always praying...

Researchers: Yes, all the time, five times a day.

Senior: What did they do here? Nothing! Allah helps!... and... Somalis do not like anybody.

Researchers: Is that true?

Senior: Yes, just a minute... wait... what nationality... that was cleaning here in the mornings...

Researchers: Is it A? No it isn't

Senior: No. It was an Iranian, who was the cleaner... Tell me where it comes from, why do the Somalians do not like anybody??

Researchers: We know a Somalian who really likes England and wants to live there. I do not know, usually she speaks with everybody, but she keeps her distance.

Senior: Hesari (Helsingin Sanomat), it's really true. A Somalian with a long skirt was in a shop and stole things and hid them under her skirt.

Researchers: Is that true? Where did you hear that?

Senior: I read in the newspaper.

Researchers: Laughs. I heard the same about the Roma people.

Senior: It's all the same, you can find the same under the Gypsy's skirt. One time F (an acquaintance) went with some Somalians to swim at the swimming pool and they went swimming with all their clothes on and the sauna too.

Researchers: Laughs....All the clothes on?

Senior: And me too!

Researchers: That's not a good idea!!! I don't think so.

In this example, the senior is clearly influenced by what he reads in the newspaper or what he has been told by others about foreigners because he came from a generation of Finns that had no exposure to the diversity of cultures that live in Finland today. People also have a tendency of fearing the unknown. Therefore, what people do not understand about other cultures they tend to create stereotypical ideas and feel threatened by the notion of otherness.

Communication between workers is crucial for a successful group dynamic. In groups, all kinds of communication are meaningful, verbal and non-verbal communication and non-communication. There are many factors that influence communication, such as false assumptions about group members, language skills, individuals' backgrounds and attitudes. The communication between the seniors group and immigrants at Kivenkolo gave rise to misunderstandings due to their false assumptions about one another. As it was demonstrated previously, stereotypical ideas are a hindrance to communication. False assumptions also prevent good communication once we assume that we always know what people mean and that they know what we mean when communicating. Therefore, paraphrasing is important to ensure that the message sent was received in exactly the way it was meant to be.

Some individuals have difficulties in actively listening to others and therefore the message is not entirely conveyed. Misunderstandings between group members in a working environment are very common. Total accuracy in communication would require that two people have an identical history of shared experiences, along with identical perceptual abilities. Only then, could they perceive exactly the same meaning for a given message. Given the reality of

different life experiences, such a situation is impossible (Chartier 1976, 149,156). The communication at Kivenkolo was informal owing to the home-oriented nature of the environment, where individuals feel comfortable to freely discuss their feelings and frustrations.

The narrative below is a conversation between researcher (participant observer) and MCW during a naturally occurring talk. It illustrates a lack of communication between workers at Kivenkolo:

Researcher: I want to ask you about the Gym teacher... I remember when we came here there was a teacher...

MCW: No, because last year... like yesterday I had a meeting with her... I arranged everything for September, I said it to the CPW and I go it on vacation. And in a mean time when I was in vacation the Finnish teacher came to discuss with her and she forgot that I put it the jumppa and put it Finnish lessons at the same time with the jumppa lessons! It was a big mess! When I came from vacation, both classes on the same day, same time! Ok... after that I called my boss, I called everybody, because this teacher cannot change her program, cause then she needs to change it for the whole year... and also the Finnish teacher cannot change...

Researcher: Aha, ok

Another important fact in the group formation of Kivenkolo was individuals' roles within the group. Roles are one of the basic building blocks of successful group performance. A role is a set of behaviour typical of people in a certain social context (Levi 2007, 64). Each individual in a particular group has a role to fulfil. Every client and worker at Kivenkolo has made their own contribution to the Kivenkolo family.

The MCW and the CPW had distinct roles, but the MCW assumed the role of the manager due to her strong personality, motivation and expectations of others towards her. There was also a conflict between the roles of the CPW and the MCW. The CPW was a child protection worker and therefore she performed the role she was expected to perform i.e. child protection work. On the other hand, the MCW felt responsible for all the tasks as well as the multicultural counselling. Furthermore, the MCW saw her role as a "mother" therefore she delegated all the tasks and observed carefully the kitchen staff, the clients and everybody involved with Kivenkolo. The MCW'S assumed role as the manager and matriarchal figure was so strong that she believed that her presence was required to ensure the effective functioning of Kivenkolo.

The narrative below is an example of the conflicts between roles at Kivenkolo. The cook felt he could manage independently when MCW was not at Kivenkolo, but MCW did not have the same opinion.

The following narrative was taken from a semi-structured interview, where the cook is describing how he manages without MCW at Kivenkolo:

Researchers: You mentioned earlier that (MCW) was the spirit of Kivenkolo. How do you manage if she is on holiday or sick and is away from here for a while?

Cook: I manage really well, no problem. I can work independently and when need be the others help.

The following narrative was taken from a conversation between the multicultural counsellor (MCW) and the researchers;

MCW: When I was on vacation, kitchen was closed. In August I go away, the kitchen staff also takes their holidays at the same time. They feel insecure if I am not here. I am not their boss, I am here supporting them

The seniors have a close relationship with the cook and are attached to him. One of the seniors kept repeating many times what a professional cook he is and how when he was on holiday the food was not good. The cook is literally the heart and soul of the kitchen. He possesses a very positive attitude towards the seniors and a lively and humorous personality. Below he comments on why he thinks Kivenkolo is important:

Cook: It is really important for many reasons. It is an activity centre for the seniors and immigrants; it functions well and should be allowed to continue to do so. It is important that the seniors get a good, warm meal, drink coffee and keep each other company. It's important that they have fun and laugh; it helps them stay healthy and keep lively. I am like the mother of the house, taking care of my children

The above dialogue instills the feeling of family within the Kivenkolo community. As head cook the worker is concerned for the wellbeing of the seniors. He respects them and understands the importance of good nutrition and companionship in promoting longevity and a good quality of life.

7 Discussion

The purpose of this ethnographic study was to identify a working model and make good social work practices visible in Kivenkolo, with the intention of initiating future development in the services provided for adults in Espoo. Espoo City decided to close down similar places that had an emphasis on providing services for immigrants. Therefore in order to provide substantial evidence of the importance of Kivenkolo to the Kivenlahti community, we decided

to implement an Ethnographic study of the daily working life of Kivenkolo as participants' observers and throughout this study we discovered that Kivenkolo's working model is based on the family system theory. However, it was evident and also important to mention, that this method of working was not chosen purposively, but occurred naturally due to the fact that the multicultural worker (MCW) has come from a traditional, family-orientated culture. This was facilitated by the fact that she assumed the role of a manager owing to her strong personality and the expectations of clients towards her. Although Kivenkolo has always been a place for the elderly to congregate, we as researchers sensed that many seniors went to Kivenkolo because of the MCW'S warmth, compassion and maternal instinct.

Additionally, we discovered a new perspective of Kivenkolo's services in the way that it provides space for the seniors to socialise, have a warm meal and feel that they belong somewhere. The immigrant services are also important, but there are other ways of getting support within the immigrant services in Espoo City, whereas the seniors due to difficulties of mobility, speech and financial reasons are restricted to the small area of Kivenlahti. The immigrants and seniors attend Kivenkolo for different reasons. The immigrants go to seek support with official matters, form-filling, asking questions and so forth. However they do not stay there to socialise or have their daily meal. On the other hand the seniors intentionally come to Kivenkolo to spend their day. They sit down in the living room, read newspapers and discuss current events in the news. Furthermore, the seniors are filled with a sense of security that they would not have in their own home. Some seniors live by themselves and their social network is Kivenkolo. Furthermore, they are allowed to maintain their own rituals and mannerisms, such as sitting down in the same place, at the same table on the same chair every day. They are also free to continually complain about and repeat things that have marked their lives many times over.

Each senior fulfilled a role within the group, and that particular role was understood by all. We too as participant observers learnt to recognise the behaviours and rituals that characterised each individual. Although our presence at Kivenkolo had been explained prior to our arrival, we were regarded with suspicion at first. This was reflected in the way each senior would ask why we were there and what we were writing about. It felt at first as though we were invading their territory, especially when on one occasion we had mistakenly sat on the chairs of regular seniors!

Additionally, Kivenkolo's clients' needs and problems were very distinct from each other. We noticed that the seniors had a long-term problem: loneliness. Kivenkolo is a therapeutic place to avoid loneliness, and the therapy for seniors is provided by Kivenkolo in a long-term relationship and interaction, which they would come to think of as, a "second home" to have a meal and socialise. On the other hand, the immigrant clients do not spend much time at Kivenkolo, because their matters are target-oriented and more concrete. For instance,

questions relating to the welfare system, filling out forms and advice for education and language applications were short-term problems. Therefore, results were more obvious in terms of efficiency, in the multicultural work, than with the seniors. The seniors as we noticed were not considered clients anymore, as they were part of the daily routine. However, the workers approach towards the seniors was very important for the long-term therapeutic process against loneliness.

Ethnographic study was a profound research, in the way that we became completely immersed in the data. Every time we read the narratives we got different perspectives and new meanings, it felt as if the data would evolve perpetually. "Here in lies the impetus to return to data". Therefore, the more we view phenomena, the richer and more complex our understanding of what we observe (Andrews 2009, 87).

Professionalism in social work can be defined as conducting your work ethically with complete respect towards the feelings of your client. It is vital for a worker to understand the importance of being ethical, whether holding a leadership position or working directly with clients. With leadership comes power and with power comes ethical considerations. There is a strong demand for ethical leaders in our society today. Ethical leadership is defined as a process in which a good person acts in the right ways to accomplish worthy goals (Northhouse 2012, 244-245). Moreover, Northhouse claims there are six factors related to ethical leadership. Firstly, the character of the leader refers to the personality, in terms of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, caring, and citizenship. Secondly, the action of the leader refers to what a leader does to achieve the goals. Thirdly, the goals, which a leader selects, should be chosen for the benefit of the whole group and not for the self -benefit of the leader. Fourthly, the honesty of the leader relates to how he/she is able to strike a balance between openness and sensitivity to the feelings of others. Without honesty a leader cannot be ethical. Fifthly, the issue of power needs to be handled very carefully so that the leader uses power for the influence of the common good of the group.

Lastly, an ethical leader has strong values and aims to instill and promote positive values within his or her work. In this study, power was an overriding factor influencing the group, relating to leadership.

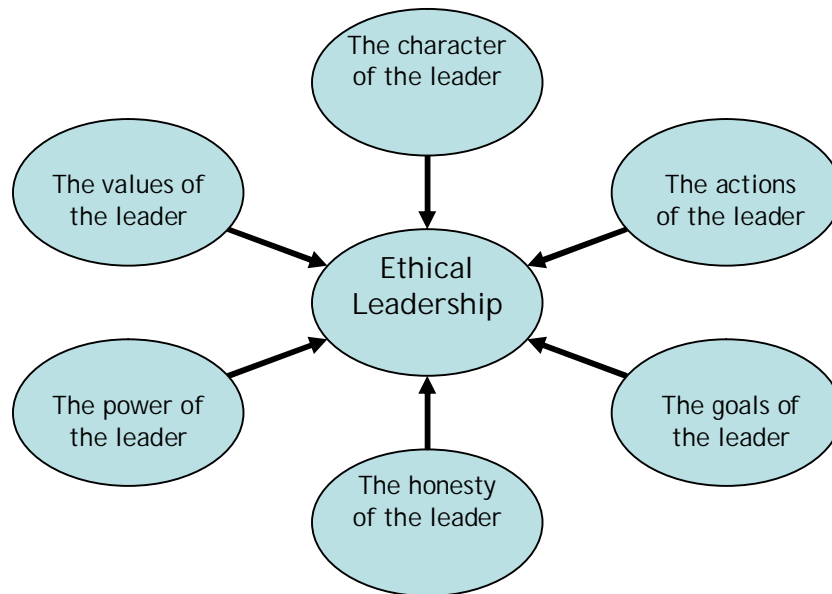


Fig. 7 Factors related to ethical leadership. (Northhouse 2012,230)

The worker should convey professionalism to every client, as mutual respect generates trust. Trust is the basis on which relationships flourish in personal lives and the same sentiment can also be applied to the working relationship. The seniors at Kivenkolo trust and respect the workers and vice versa. This was evident in the way they interacted with one another, sharing all kinds of information, both men and women alike. Everyone is included, everyone is important. Both counsellors at Kivenkolo have the ability to make the seniors feel important and this helps to promote the family atmosphere that makes Kivenkolo in a sense, unique. In a family, the members generally share and care for one another and the MCW has successfully transformed a place of work into an extension of her living room.

Within the Family System Theory the therapeutic aspect that resembles the peer support therapy of anticipation dialogue is replicated informally in the living room at Kivenkolo. The layout of the environment is such that communication is almost unavoidable. The tables are all circular and seating is so, that all individuals have to face one another, encouraging and promoting participation. The workers indirectly act as facilitators in the discussions that transpire among the seniors. Informal daily debriefing sessions are indeed a source of comfort and support, as problem sharing also reduces the burden of an individual.

However, there are downsides to the interactions that exist between individuals who feel like family. For example, family members are more likely to be brutally honest, judgemental of one another as well as complacent, all of which, comes with over-familiarity. Within a family unit this behaviour may be tolerated because of the very fact that family members do tolerate one another, because they have to. But in the work environment, over-familiarity is no longer professional as the boundary between client and worker can easily be overstepped.

More worrisome is the fact that important issues like confidentiality and ethical conduct are in danger of being overlooked or forgotten altogether.

The MCW has assumed the role of group leader, matriarch and overall co-ordinator of Kivenkolo. A role is understood as a set of behaviours typical of people in certain social contexts. The roles people perform in a group may be a cause of stress; role ambiguity and role conflict cause the stress. Group members also perform several roles at the time according to conflict demand (Levi 2007, 64- 65).

We observed that, the importance of MCW's role and input in the effective functioning of Kivenkolo is ingrained so deeply that she is unable to take any time off to attend seminars, keep personal health appointments and leave her work at the office when she goes home in the evenings. It is generally understood that no one is indispensable yet the MCW is so dedicated to her work and feels completely responsible for the whole Kivenkolo community that she is unable to entertain the prospect of ever leaving the place. Good managers and group leaders are able to delegate responsibilities to subordinates and trust the other workers to carry out their jobs, and see that colleagues' skills and talents are being stretched to their potential. A good manager is supposed to share knowledge and be transparent with the workers. Conflicts between workers should also be addressed in a manner that they should have an open communication concerning conflicting issues. For instance, if a worker is having a conflict with another worker, the manager should facilitate conflict-solving by allowing both parties to discuss openly how they feel and why the conflict arose in the first place. However, at Kivenkolo, it was observed that a worker openly shared her thoughts and opinions about conflicting issues relating to work matters with the seniors. The seniors, after all, are clients, and should not be exposed to and informed of conflicts that occur in the working environment.

The MCW works efficiently with immigrants owing to her accumulated tacit knowledge. Her own cultural background and life experience have enabled her to deeply understand certain issues concerning clients of immigrant background that a native Finn worker would find more challenging. In other words, immigrant multicultural workers are often able to relate better to immigrant clients from similar countries where well- established welfare systems do not exist. Whereas Finnish workers that are accustomed to the welfare benefits of Finnish society with possibly limited first-hand experience of social problems such as crime, poverty, hunger and homelessness are less equipped to relate to the immigrant client who knows nothing else but a disadvantaged life.

However, tacit knowledge acquired throughout life experience and being emotionally intelligent are not the only tools required in a professional social worker. The theoretical knowledge, called explicit knowledge, guides and justifies the work done with clients. It is just as important. Social work is a profession; therefore it should have its theoretical

framework and professional approaches in order to provide a set of behaviours, conducts and ways of working that would be appropriate for professionals. It also safe -guards professionals against being accused of misconduct when conflict situations occur. Theoretical knowledge gives the worker more tools to understand client's situations and behaviour. It also gives the worker the ability to self-reflect and critically analyse the worker's own behaviour and working methods that might affect the work with clients. As in the words of Freire "Critical reflection upon one's situation and behaviour are the very condition of existence. Critical thinking by means of which people reflect upon their situation and access critically their own behaviour" (Freire 2006, 109).

Furthermore, tacit and explicit knowledge combined are essential for good management. Managerial skills come through experience and a good manager also should possess good social skills to delegate tasks and solve conflicts within the working environment. The managerial side of Kivenkolo had mainly characteristics of tacit knowledge with fewer elements of explicit knowledge. The manager also used her intuition, which forms the basis of tacit knowledge.

Another important fact we observed was the role of attitude and people's perception at Kivenkolo. People are always going to present attitudes that will be interpreted by others as either positive or negative. It is defined as "certain regularities of an individual's feelings, thoughts and predispositions to act towards some aspects of his environment." Secord and Beckman (1969) as cited in Arnold (2004, 24) stated that the way in which people perceive others and how one perceives his/her own environment dictates a positive or a negative attitude. For example some individuals adjust better to a new working environment than others owing to their attitudes of time management, organisational skills, and willingness to learn and get along with colleagues. Others might not find time keeping important and therefore might have a lot of conflicts in the working environment. These individuals, simply by the fact of not changing their attitude towards time keeping, might be perceived by colleagues as disrespectful. This is an example of how arriving late every day is seen as a negative attitude, especially in societies where time keeping is very important. Attitude is affected by an individual's personal values, culture and life experience. Additionally, attitude can be changed if individuals reflect upon their values and behaviour towards the environment they live in. It requires self-reflection and acknowledgement of one's own personal judgments and reasons for the attitude presented being perceived as negative.

During our Ethnographic study at Kivenkolo, attitudes of clients, workers and researchers were clearly exposed. The seniors were the group of clients who demonstrated a wider range of attitudes towards their environment. Some seniors expressed a negative attitude towards some minority groups; others expressed their negative attitudes towards other seniors and workers. Some seniors were very reluctant of changing their views and attitudes. For

instance, if the cook was absent, a particular senior complained and did not want to eat the food prepared by another worker at Kivenkolo. His negative attitude of previously thinking the worker was not capable of cooking a proper meal totally excluded the possibilities of him even trying the food. Therefore, this particular senior would never know if the worker was indeed a bad cook or a very good one, because he stubbornly refused to try the food in the first place. This is an example of a negative attitude. It was not about his nationality or culture, it was just the fact he had a totally negative attitude towards anybody who was not the regular cook. Another example of negativity was the attitudes of workers and seniors towards certain ethnic groups. Some seniors exhibited negative attitudes towards some foreigners who entered Kivenkolo. For instance, negative attitudes were clearly seen towards Somalians, Roma people and other foreigners. It was noted that one worker would display a different attitude towards individuals of certain nationalities with particular personalities. The MCW'S tone of voice and behaviour also changed depending on the nationality of the client. She was very calm and presented a positive attitude towards clients who were passive and acted the complete opposite when clients were argumentative. She did not like the fact that some clients doubted her counselling skills and advice, and her attitude would totally change towards them.

Attitude is also easily reflected in the ways that people interact with one another and is related to health and wellbeing. The power of positive thinking has become an ethos nowadays and it is fairly obvious to spot individuals who possess a positive attitude towards life or otherwise. This was equally visible at Kivenkolo when observing the seniors in their daily interactions and that those who presented a positive attitude towards aging, were healthier and happier. Others, who had a more negative attitude towards ageing, complaining about all kinds of things and disliking the fact of being old, were sick, more debilitated and very rarely smiled.

Participant observation allowed us to gain an insight into the working life at Kivenkolo, due to the fact that it allowed us to candidly observe the individual's real behaviour in their regular settings, when they are caught off guard. Individuals could not pretend or hide certain behaviours for such a long time, because we as active participants were immersed in their environment. Throughout the whole study process we saw how our presence became gradually accepted and we were able to participate within the community, being included in conversations, which allowed us to gain a deeper insight into the structure of relationships within Kivenkolo.

We were also able to observe certain behaviours by being participant observers that would not have been evident otherwise. For instance, we noticed how the MCW'S cultural background and personal experiences of being from a country that has negative connotations within the Finnish context, has affected her approach towards clients. She has mentioned

many times that people judge her by the fact that she is from a country in which there is corruption, theft and violence. People tend to make generalisations, due to lack of knowledge. For instance, people seem to remember and focus more on the negative events rather than the positive ones. If violence or corruption occurs in a country, people tend to assume that everybody from that country is violent or corrupt. People tend to base their assumptions on what they do not really understand or know about it.

The counselling sessions with immigrants were enlightening in terms of the huge scope of issues that were presented to the worker on a daily basis. The diversity of cultural backgrounds (see appendices 5, 6, 7) was equally surprising and the worker's ability to adapt her interpersonal skills to suit the client was admirable. Although language skills indeed aid the interaction between client and worker, more importantly, the attitude of the worker was observed as being the key to drawing the session to a productive conclusion.

Conducting semi-structured interviews using the Finnish language was both challenging and more informative. Using Finnish was imperative to obtaining the best responses to the questions, and all respondents appeared to be more relaxed and spontaneous.

To conclude, despite the differences in work ethic, personalities and working styles and methods of both counsellors, when their skills and talents are used in collaboration they have been able to maintain a consistent level of services to facilitate and enhance the lives of seniors and immigrants. In addition, Kivenkolo provides a framework and reference place for other upcoming residential spaces or 'asukastila' in the future.

7.1 Recommendations

This thesis has provided much food for thought in terms of future developments in the adult services provided by Espoo City. The recommendations we are presenting here have arisen from this study and others have come from the Kivenkolo social counsellors themselves.

The fact that Kivenkolo has been providing services to the residents of the Kivenlahti area for over twenty years is a proof of it having withstood the test of time. Nowadays clients come from further a field and there is certainly a demand for the caring service that the Kivenkolo workers provide. Espoo City has long promoted the idea of lifelong learning through the courses offered by the Adult Education Centre (Työväenopisto) that help to facilitate the productivity of all members of society. In our opinion, lifelong productivity is also an aim of Kivenkolo and although activities and opportunities have been accessible to immigrants and seniors in a general sense, Kivenkolo could develop its services even further by also offering activities or organising peer groups specifically for the male seniors and male immigrants who attend Kivenkolo.

The child protection worker presented a valid argument relating to the wellbeing of the children in immigrant families that are indirectly forced to take on the responsibilities of parenting owing to the absence of a father figure or owing to the fact that parents are unable to function as parents because of language and cultural barriers. These children are a new client group who need to be heard and supported, not only for their own wellbeing and development but also for the benefit of the next generation of new Finns that will form the backbone of Finnish society in the foreseeable future.

Kivenkolo forms part of the informal system for the senior citizens that use its services, owing to the fact that they lack family support and friends. Kivenkolo provides the family and friends support network. However, we are all living longer and that simple fact raises some huge issues for social services. Subsequently, the challenge is not only to meet the needs of those who cannot care for themselves but also to find ways of helping those who are active to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, in other words to increase their productivity.

Although many people can look forward to the prospect of a longer retirement, it is inevitable, that for some, retirement will be spent needing care and support from others. Organised care services can sometimes seem too bureaucratic and inflexible and unresponsive to the rising demands for personalisation and independence. Nevertheless, the positive aspects of an aging population include that people are in far better physical health with their advancing years and the possibilities for this group of people should be used to the advantage of the community. For example by developing the voluntary sector which could very well survive owing to the fact that retired people are able devote their time to it, would make many older people feel that they make a very valuable contribution to working life. Furthermore the idea of retirement has changed as many people are happy to continue working well into their sixties and seventies. Although there may be challenges to face with a population living longer than ever before there are also distinct advantages, not only for what can be achieved at ever increasing ages, but also working towards a more considered and collaborative approach to social work in general

Kivenkolo may create new problems when helping immigrant clients, when they become overly dependent on the counsellor instead of taking control of their lives. According to the system's theory, the welfare system in Finland which Kivenkolo belongs to, instigates dependency and oppression, because the client needs to adjust and assimilate to the system in order to receive the services.

Oppression occurs when the client is not able to adjust and falls through the net. Kivenkolo should aim towards working anti- oppressively where each client is seen as an individual with unique needs. We were told by the MCW that clients guide her work and that she works in the best interests of the clients, and in this way she is working towards achieving a client - centered approach. Therefore empowerment should come naturally when these needs are

addressed in such a way that the clients participate actively and can make informed decisions about their needs and life.

7.2 Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness

Throughout our studies we have been made well aware of the significance of ethical issues in social work and the same magnitude was applied when we considered the ethical issues when undertaking this ethnographic study. Furthermore as the nature of qualitative research requires the observation and interaction with groups, we as researchers were conscious of our ethical obligations before, during and after the study had been conducted.

According to O'Leary (2004) in qualitative research founded on principles of anti-discrimination, the issue of power in the way it structures the research relationship in social relations needs to be discussed. In doing so the researcher has a responsibility to the following. As researchers we need to have a strong self-awareness of the way we interact with others. By having a strong self-awareness of how we can influence the study, puts us in good stead when protecting the integrity of the research process and those being researched. When a study is conducted in a way that balances the biases and subjectivities of the researcher, it helps to protect the dignity and welfare of the sample group. We consistently reflected on our personal experiences and discussed many times among ourselves how we should keep looking at situations objectively.

The concept of informed consent was carefully considered before entering to this study. Participants can only give informed consent if they completely understand their involvement in the research work in terms of time-commitment and topics that will be covered. They should also be aware of any potential physical and emotional risks involved.

We designed a letter of informed consent and obtained all the signatures necessary, before the process of gathering data began. Throughout the whole study process, we maintained confidentiality and repeated many times our purpose for the study and assured clients that after we analysed the data everything would be destroyed. The confidentiality issues were also explained in Finnish to the clients who did not understand English. The names and cultural backgrounds of persons in the dialogues in the findings section have remained undisclosed to respect the privacy of the participants in this study. However, as there are only a few workers at Kivenkolo, we are aware that complete secrecy was not possible in their case.

From our perspective, we had to make sure that we were diplomatic and professional, so that the findings of our thesis work would be accepted in a constructive way by the workers in order to develop their working methods and practices. It was a challenge to observe situations in which we would have acted differently and maintain neutrality towards them.

It is important to acknowledge that each individual has a different perception of a phenomenon or the environment in which they live in. Perception is also affected by our personal life experiences, values and cultural backgrounds. Both of us, the researchers, come from different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, it is necessary to consider that our background might have affected the way we perceived and interpreted the facts at Kivenkolo. Another important factor to consider is the challenge of language. Most of the interactions were carried out using the Finnish language so the observations and transcriptions required far more concentration than would have been necessary if the common language had been English. Repeated hearings ensured that the dialogues had been interpreted correctly, however it has to be mentioned that in transcription the true meanings and nuances in language can sometimes be lost in translation. This was particularly true of the semi-structured interview dialogues.

Furthermore, during our academic studies, we implemented a project in the same place. The previous knowledge we had of Kivenkolo might have influenced in some ways our viewpoint. Even though we were aware of this fact, we tried to be as neutral and analytical as possible. On the other hand, many of the clients recognised us from the previous project work and this facilitated our interactions with clients as we were already acquainted with one another. Gender was also a factor to consider, both of us being female might have affected the way clients and workers behaved towards us. During the semi-structured interviews it was an advantage for us when interviewing clients with a Muslim background and seniors both male and female, as it was easy to make contact and chat without inhibitions.

The data collection was implemented over a period of seven months, during that time the information was collected by both researchers at the same time and also separately during different periods. Therefore, the work was shared equally. Both researchers got the opportunity to observe individually and collectively the same environment. The majority of the data was recorded using audiotaping, which allowed us to listen, interpret and reflect on the information as much as we wanted to and as much as was required. Each hearing facilitated clarification and also helped in translating and transcribing dialogues.

Another relevant point to raise was the reliability of the gatekeeper. We relied on information given by her on certain occasions, especially at the beginning of our study. There were sometimes contradictions between what we observed in the environment with what was said by the gatekeeper. The gatekeeper also introduced us to the Kivenkolo community and directed us towards potential clients to implement the semi-structured interviews. After getting to know the dynamics of Kivenkolo better, we felt that the gatekeeper purposively chose clients who would give a favourable impression of her as a worker and also about Kivenkolo. Later, we chose our own interviewees too, selecting those individuals who we felt

were important and qualified to give a true impression of the Kivenkolo community.

One interviewee's narrative was omitted from the findings owing to the unreliability and untrustworthiness of the information we received. We had spoken to this person on several occasions prior to the semi-structured interview and the facts of her 'story' had a habit of changing so we felt that it was necessary to omit the transcription altogether. Researchers are obligated to ensure that the data collected is reliable and accurate, and when appropriate kept up to date (Denscombe 2004, 142).

The choice of a thesis partner influences the experience of the entire thesis process because of the shared responsibility of the workload and the effort required in motivating each other. We found that having common areas of interest and objectives helped to lessen the risk of conflicts that may arise owing to too many differences of opinion.

Even though both of us had unexpected personal life situations and problems to solve, we managed to strictly adhere to the thesis timetable. Both of us were able to remain committed and motivated throughout the thesis process. The fact that we trusted one another and had a similar work ethic allowed the thesis process to run consistently, with few conflicts.

Additionally, a positive work ethic facilitates motivation. The thesis process in itself was a long and evolving process. We feel it was a thorough and reflective work, which took into account the feelings of those who participated, and who we respect with sincerest gratitude, the fact that they were willing to share parts of their lives, thoughts and feelings with us.

All in all the entire thesis process was a life-learning lesson for both of us in terms of commitment, integrity and professional growth.

References

- Andrews, M. & Squires, C. & Tamboukou, M. 2009. Doing Narrative Research. London. Sage Publications Ltd.
- Arnold, J. & Robertson, I.T. & Cooper, C.L. 2004. Work Psychology: Understanding Human Behaviour in work place. 4th ED. London. Pitman Publishing. (A Division of Longman Group UK Ltd.)
- Altheide & Jonhson. 1994. Criteria for assessing interpretive validity in qualitative research in Denzin & Lincoln 2000 (eds.). Handbook of Qualitative Methods. CA. Sage Publications.
- Balea, E. 2007. History of Kivenkolo. (Kivenkolon perehdytyskansio)
- Balea, E. 2012. Toimintakertomus - Kivenkolo's presentation of activities from 2011 Obtained from Kivenkolo's orientation folder in 26th of October of 2011
- Bennis, W. 2003. On Becoming a Leader: The leadership classic. 2nd Ed. USA. Perseus Publishing.
- Bion, W. R. 1961. Experiences in groups. New York: Basic Books.
- Bryman, A. 2008. Social Research Methods. 3rd Ed. New York. Oxford University Press.
- Chartier, M.R. 1976. "Clarity of expressions in interpersonal communication" Annual Handbook of Group Facilitators 149 -156.
- Crawford,k & Walker,J. 2005. Social Work with Older People. Great Britain.Learning Matters Ltd.
- Denscombe, M. 2004. The Good Research Guide. 2nd Ed. for small-scale social research projects. England. Open University Press
- Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, U.S.2000. Handbook of Qualitative Research. 2nd Edition. USA. Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, U.S.2005. Handbook of Qualitative Research. 3rd Edition. USA. Sage Publications.
- Eysenck, H.J. 1970. *The Structure of Human Personality*. London: Methuen.
- Festinger, L.1950. "Informal social communication" Psychological Review, 57, 271-282
- Fetterman, D.M. 1989. Ethnography Step by Step.CA. Sage Publications.
- Freire, P. 2004. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. 30th anniversary ed. New York. Continuum
- Gitterman, A. & Germain, C. 1976. Social Work Practice: A life Model. Social Service Review 50. Devember 601-610. Gold, R.L.1958. Roles in Sociological Field Work, Social Forces. pg 36: 217-223. in Social Research Methods by Bryman, A.
- Goleman, D. 2002. The New Leaders: Emotional Intelligence at Work. London. Little, Brown.
- Gray & Webb, 2009. Social work theories and Methods.GB. Sage Publications
- Hattrup, K. & Ford, J.K. 1995. "The roles of information characteristics and accountability in moderating stereotype-driven processes during social decision making", Organizational Behaviour and Human Decision Processess, 63, 1, 73-86

- Humphreys, L. 1970. *Tearoom Trade*. Chicago. Aldine
- Levi, D. 2007. *Group Dynamics for Teams*. 2nd Ed. London. Sage Publications
- Lofland & Lofland. 1995. *Analysing Social Settings: A guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*. 3rd Ed. California. Wadsworth
- Loomis, J. 1959. "Communication, the development of trust and cooperative behaviour". *Human Relations*, 12, 305.
- Napier, R. W & Gershenfeld, M.K. 1999. *Groups: Theory and Experience*. 6th Ed. USA. Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Napier, R. W. & Gershenfeld, M. K. 2004. *Groups: Theory and Experience*, 7th Ed. NY: Houghton Mifflin / Lahaska Press
- Nash, M., Munford, R. & Donoghue, K. 2005. *Social Work Theories in Action*. GBR. Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Northhouse, P.G. 2012. *Introduction to Leadership: Concepts and Practice*. 2nd Ed. USA. Sage publications Inc.
- O'Leary, Z. 2004. *The Essential Guide to Doing Research*. London. Sage Publications
- Payne, M. 1997. *Modern Social Work Theory*. 2nd Ed. London. Macmillan.
- Payne, M. 2005. *Modern Social Work Theory*. 3rd Ed. Great Britain. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pincus, A. and Minahan, A. 1973. *Social Work Practice: Model and Method*. Illinois. Peacock
- Polanyi, M. 1967. *The Tacit Dimension*. London. Rutledge
- Potocky-Tripodi. 2002. *Best Practices for Social Work with Refugees and Immigrants*. USA. Columbia University Press
- Punch, K, F. 2004. *Introduction to Social Research. Quantative and Qualitative Approaches*. London. Sage Publications
- Reid, W. 2002. Knowledge for direct social work practice: An analysis of trends.' *Social Service Review* 76, 1. (Article)
- Riessman, C.K. 1993. *Narrative Analysis*. Newbury Park. California. Sage Publications
- Rioch, M.J. 1970. The work of Wilfred Bion on Groups. *Journal for the Study Interpersonal Processes*, 1(33), 56-66
- Rosen, Proctor & Staudt. 1999. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 11, 247-266.
- Rowe, J.W. & Kahn, R.L. 1998. *Successful Aging*. Dell Publishing. New York
- Schutz, W.C .1958. *FIRO. A Three-dimensional Theory of Interpersonal behaviour*. New York: Holt, Rhineheart and Winston.
- Schwandt, T. 1997. *Evaluation as practical hermeneutics in Gray and Webb*. 2009. *Social work theories and Methods* .GB. Sage Publications
- Secord, P.F. and Backman, C.W. 1969. *Social Psychology*. New York. Mc Graw -Hill.
- Siporin, M. 1975. *Introduction to Social Work Practice*. New York. Macmillan

Smith, A. E. 2001. "The role of tacit and explicit knowledge in the workplace", *Journal of Knowledge Management* Vol. 5 Number 4. Pages 311-321. USA. MCB University Press. Accessed on 15th of October 2010

Spradley, J.P. 1980. *Participant Observation*. New York: Rinehart and Winston.

Srull T. & Wyer, R. 1988. *Advances in Social Cognition*. Hillsdale. Lawrence Erlbaum

Sternberg, R.J. & Horvath, J.A. 1999. *Tacit Knowledge and Professional Practice: Researcher and Practitioner Perspectives*. USA. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Turner, J. 1981. *Towards a Cognitive Redefinition of Social Group. Theory and Experience*.

Vickery, A. 1974. *A System Approach to Social Work Intervention.: Its uses for Work with Individuals and Families*. *British Journal of Social Work*. 4,4, 389-404

Warner Burke W., Dale G. Lake, J. & Waymire P. 2009. *Organization change: a comprehensive reader*. USA. Jossey-Bass

Warr, P. 2002. *Psychology at Work*. 5th Ed. Harmondsworth. Penguin.

West, A. M. 2004. *Effective Team Work: Practical lessons from Organizational Research*. 2nd Ed. USA. Blackwell Publishing

Williams, C. 2006. *The Epistemology of Cultural Competence: Families in society* in Gray & Webb, 2009. *Social work theories and Methods*. GB. Sage Publications

Yan, M. and Wong, Y. 2005. *Rethinking Self-Awareness and Cultural Competence: Toward a dialogic self in cross- cultural social work* in in Gray & Webb, 2009. *Social work theories and Methods*. GB. Sage Publications

Zeira, A. & Rosen, A. 2000. *Social Service Review*. Chicago. The University of Chicago Press.

Electronic Sources:

Dictionary.com - Word Origin & History: Ethnography
<http://dictionary.reference.com> Accessed on 5 February, 2011

Effica Municipal Database

<http://intra.espoo.fi> Accessed on 2 October 2011

Kivenlahti Stensvik -

<http://www.kivenlahti-stensvik.fi/?d=show&nav=0,189,361&t=s&l=ks> Accessed on 15 February, 2011

Knowledge Management, Vol. 5 Iss: 4, pp.311 - 321 (PDF Document)
<http://www.emerald-library.com/fts.htm> Accessed on 8 March, 2011

Newsweek magazine

<http://newsweek.com> Accessed on 5 of May, 2011

Oxford Dictionaries- Search of the word "service"

<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/service> Accessed on the 20th July, 2011

Zeira, A. & Rosen, A.2000. Unraveling Tacit Knowledge : What Social Workers Do and Why they Do It. <http://www.jstor.org/pss/30012739> Accessed on the 6th of February, 2011

Other Sources

Länsiväylä 1992, Kiviset 1992 in Kivenkolo Orientation Folder(Kivenkolan perehdytyskansio)
Obtained from the 9th of February, 2011.

Metro Newspaper read on 17/10/2011

Figures

Fig. 1: Partners of Kivenkolo	9
Fig. 2: Key concepts and their relevance to the thesis	10
Fig. 3: Evolution of key concepts	15
Fig. 4: Gold's classification of Ethnographer's role	17
Fig. 5: Components of Narrative Analysis	22
Fig. 6: Venn diagram showing how seniors are empowered at Kivenkolo	31
Fig. 7: Factors related to ethical leadership	53

Appendices

Appendix 1

INFORMED CONSENT I

Author/s of thesis: Janaina M. Bittencourt Poinha and Paula De Giovanni Hoppu
 Contact Details: janaina.poinha.bittencourt@laurea.fi, paula.de.giovanni.hoppu@laurea.fi
 Educational Institute: Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Metsäpoijankuja 3, Otaniemi-Espoo

Degree Programme of Social Services

Tutors of Thesis: Hillevi Ukkola and Ossi Salin

Contact details of Tutors: hillevi.ukkola@laurea.fi, ossi.salin@laurea.fi

Title of thesis: Working Model and Good Practices at Kivenkolo: An Ethnographic Study

Aims of thesis:

The thesis aims are to identify the working models at Kivenkolo recognizing good practices and other opportunities for improving its services. Additionally, the thesis aims at providing proof to Espoo City of Kivenkolo's importance for the community.

Materials and methods of investigation: The research method will be Ethnographic in which we, the researches will actively participate in Kivenkolo's daily activities with the staff members and service users. The interactions will be tape recorded, photographed and documented in a written form for the purpose of analysing the data and finding the results of the thesis. All data will be destroyed after analysis has been completed.

...../.....20.....

Place and date

.....
 Signature/s of thesis author/s

...../... 20.....

Place and date

.....
 Tutor's signatures

Working Life Partner's Signature

.....

Appendix 2

INFORMED CONSENT II

Name of Researchers: Janaina M. Bittencourt Poinha and Paula DeGiovanni Hoppu
 Contact information for Researcher: janaina.bittencourt.poinha@laurea.fi, paula.de.giovanni-
 .hoppu@laurea.fi

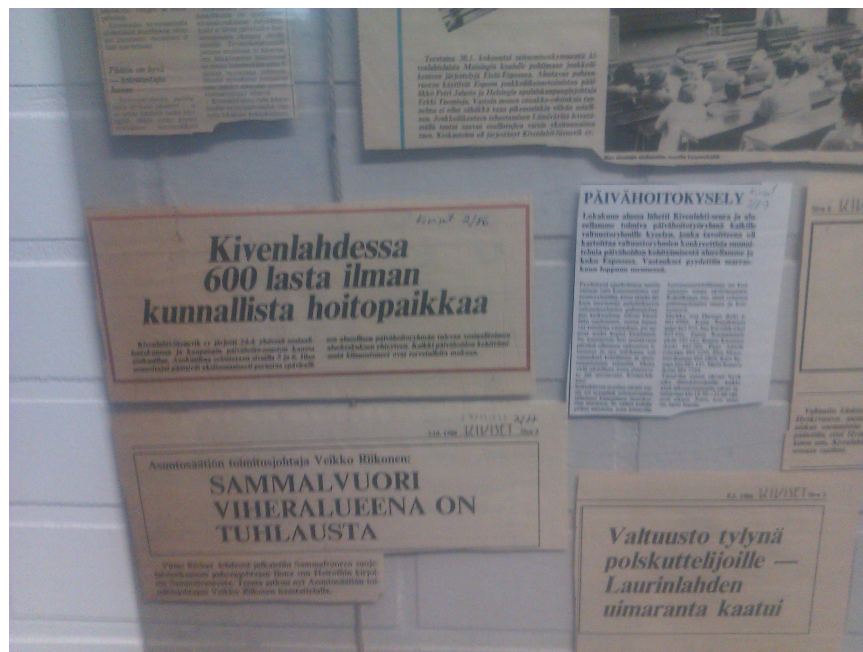
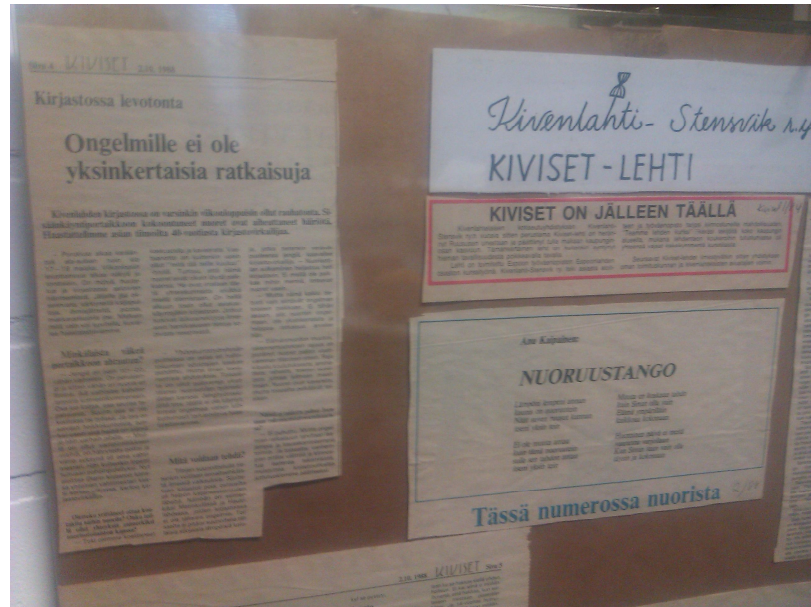
Iunderstand that I am being interviewed and recorded for an ethnographic research project conducted by Janaina Poinha and Paula Hoppu for thesis work of the Bachelor's Degree of Social Services at Laurea University of Applied Sciences taught by Hillevi Ukkola and Ossi Salin. I agree to let the researchers Janaina and Paula use the information gathered through taping recorder and written document to analyse and gather data for the thesis work. It will not be used for any other purpose. I have been informed that if I become uncomfortable at any time during the interview, I do not have to answer questions or I can ask to have the tape or video recorder (if used) turned off. I am aware that I can request that a pseudonym be used. I understand that by signing this form, I give permission for the interview to be used for the purposes stated above. I hereby understand that I take full responsibility for all participants in the ethnographic research carried out at Kivenkolo.

Signature

Date:

Appendix 3

Articles from Kiviset newspaper depicting the history of Kivenkolo





ESPOO

Infotilaisuudet, tutustumiskäynnit, koulutukset ja kulttuurijuhlat

KIVENKOLON ASUKASTILA

Päivämäärä	Tilaisuus	Kohderyhmä	nainen	mies	Yhteensä
05.05.2011	työhaku	romania		x	
- 11 -	päivähoito	somalia	x		
- 11 -	lasten sugelu + koulu	ethiopia	x		
- 11 -	talo valvonta	somalia		x	
- 11 -	perhe asiat	romania		x	
12.05.2011	lasten sugelu	ethiopia	x		
- 11 -	lasten koulu	somalia	x		
- 11 -	perhe asiat	somalia		x	
- 11 -	sosiaali	turkki	x		
- 11 -	ihmis kauppa	turkmenistan		x	
18.05.2011	asunto	tunisia		x	
	tifa	bulgaria	x		
	tifa	suomi		x	

Infotilaisuudet, tutustumiskäynit, koulutukset ja kulttuurijuhlat
KIVENKOLON ASUKASTILA

ESPOO

Päivämäärä	Tilaisuus	Kohderyhmä	Osallistujat			Yhteensä
			nainen	mies	lapset	
06.06.2011	lasten suojelu	Kina				
- 11 -	työttömyys		x			
- 11 -	työttömyys, kela papent	Somalia		x		
- 11 -	kela, sosiaali	Turkki	x			
- 11 -	koulu	Kurdi	x			
07.06.2011	polisi - kela; sosiaali - asuntotoimisto - sosiaali	Suomi	x			
- 11 -		somalia	x x x			
	elake, paperi	Ghana	x			
15.06.2011	kela - , maistraatti	Romania	x			
- 11 -	asunto asia töimeentulo	Venäjä		x		
- 11 -	Perhe	Viro	x	x		
- 11 -	vaikenne korvaus	Ukraina		x		
		Suomi		x		

Infotilaisuudet, tutustumiskäynnit, koulutukset ja kulttuurijuhlat
KIVENKOLON ASUKASTILA

ESPOO

Päivämäärä	Tilaisuus	Kohderyhmä	Osallistujat		Yhteensä
			nainen	mies	
17.06.2011	laskut	Somalia	x		
- 11 -	sosiaali	Irak		x	
- 11 -	terveys palvelut	Somalia	x		
- 11 -	koulutus, karrastukset	Somalia		x	
- 11 -	laskut	Suomi		x	
- 11 -	sosiaali	Ukraina		x	
- 11 -	sauna - vuoro	Maroko	x		