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ACTIVITIES FOR ALL -  
INCREASING ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS THROUGH GOLF

Degree Programme in Physiotherapy

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The purpose of this thesis was to describe changes in the level of accessibility awareness in Yyteri Golf Links during Sataesteetön –project and to study whether accessibility awareness can be increased through activities for all. In addition the environmental factors affecting inclusion and equal participation were explored. The thesis is part of Sataesteetön –project organised by Satakunta University of Applied Sciences aiming to increase accessibility awareness and equal participation in the region through seminars, courses and cooperation.

The research methods used in this thesis were interview and observation. The data collection for the thesis took place in late spring and summer 2011. The interviews were executed in late spring 2011 with personnel of Yyteri Golf Links. Observation was done during golf course for all in August 2011 organised by Yyteri Golf Links in cooperation with Sataesteetön –project and the city of Pori. The interview topics related to the cooperation with Sataesteetön –project whereas the observation focused on the environmental factors affecting inclusion and participation.

The research results of this thesis found changes in the level of accessibility awareness among Yyteri Golf Links personnel. Established practices had been changed to increase the accessibility of services provided and the social dimension of accessibility had been understood. Accessibility nevertheless was perceived separately from the general aims of the club and investments in accessibility were considered to limit the core golf services provided.

Increasing accessibility awareness through activities for all provides practical experiences in inclusion, adapted physical activities and accessibility. Professional support received from the project and availability of assistants created a positive learning situation for the service provider and for participants. Concrete examples and positive experiences promote changes in attitudinal environment which further improves the accessibility and availability of participation opportunities. Attitudes can be viewed as a major environmental factor for inclusion and participation, and increasing awareness and knowledge direct the development of attitudinal environment.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Developing accessibility, whether on individual or societal level, requires changes in the level of awareness. During recent years the Finnish society has become more open for differences; nevertheless actions are needed to further increase the development of accessible environments and services to ensure equal participation opportunities for all. (Haarni 2006, 44)

Sataesteetön –project and its subproject Yyteri for All aimed to increase accessibility awareness and equal participation through activities for all organised in cooperation with physical activity service providers around Yyteri area (Satakunta University of Applied Sciences 2011). This thesis aims to describe the changes in accessibility awareness in Yyteri Golf Links during Sataesteetön –project and the effects of organising activities for all on accessibility awareness. Additionally environmental factors affecting equal participation and inclusion are studied.

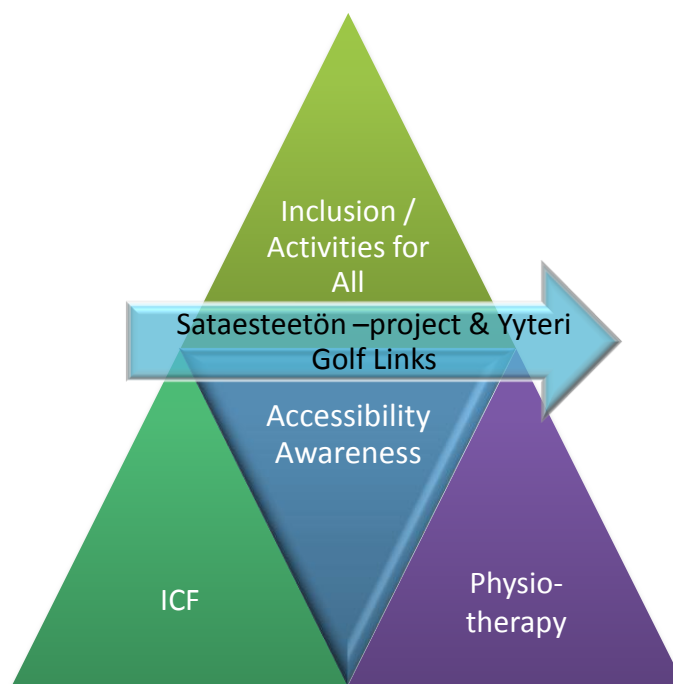


Figure 1. The interaction between main concepts of the thesis

This thesis approaches accessibility awareness through three main concepts shown in figure 1. Regular physical activity improves health and quality of life, maintains functional ability and supports the development of motor skills. Additionally it pro-

notes social interaction and mental well-being. (Mälkiä & Rintala 2002, 6) Activities for all and inclusion refer to physical activity which includes everyone regardless of functional ability level. The aim is to modify the activity to enable equal participation, thus adapting the activity to promote accessibility. (Saari 2005a, 9)

Accessibility is a versatile concept that does not only focus on the physical surroundings, but includes social and mental aspects as well (website of ESKE Esteettömyyskeskus 2010). Similarly the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) approaches health condition from holistic point of view. In addition to individual factors the ICF acknowledges the effect of environmental factors on health. Thus health and disability occur from the interaction between the individual and surrounding environment and the society. (World Health Organization 2002, 9) ICF can be used in clinical physiotherapy to evaluate the current health status of a rehabilitee, to describe the changes in functional ability during therapy and to assess the effectiveness of the therapy. Physiotherapy aims to affect functional ability by changing the relationship between the individual and the environment. (Karppi 2007, 25-26) Through health promotion activities a physiotherapist can affect not only on the individual level but on the environmental level as well by providing knowledge on accessibility and equal participation opportunities (website of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy 2011).

## 2 ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS

When accessibility is discussed, it is often considered in terms of physical accessibility, for example whether a building is accessible with a wheelchair or can a visually impaired person navigate in public transport. But accessibility is much more than the physical surroundings. It is a wide term including physical, mental and social environment, and information technology and communication. (Website of ESKE Esteettömyyskeskus 2010)

Environmental obstacles, whether concrete or abstract, affect goal-oriented activity, and removal of such obstacles increases participation possibilities in a society. Thus accessibility promotes equality and non-discrimination as all members of the society possess similar possibility to actively participate in the society regardless of their individual differences. (Kemppainen 2008, 11) Physical environment can be considered accessible when it is functional, safe, easy to use and logical for all users, and provides easy access to all spaces. Mental and social environment refers to availability of services, possibilities for participating in work, culture, studies, hobbies and decision-making, and general attitudes, expectations and opinions. (Website of ESKE Esteettömyyskeskus 2010) Terms universal design and design for all are used in context with accessibility (Kemppainen 2008, 15).

## 2.1 The Concept of Accessibility Awareness

Problems encountered by persons with disabilities in their daily life often derive from environment's inability to consider their individual needs. Considering such special needs requires diverse awareness which covers all sectors of the society while noting perspectives of different users. Persons with disabilities should not be categorised as one, homogenous group; the environmental and societal requirements depend on individual differences such as the type of disability and life situation and status. Accessibility aims for development of products, services and environment that can be adapted to various and changing needs and functional limitations of all people, thus creating a society which is convenient and suitable for all. (Haarni 2006, 30)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities imposes requirements for awareness-raising. It promotes respect for and awareness-raising of the rights of people with disabilities throughout the society while promoting their capabilities and contribution as full members of the society. Additionally the Convention directs actions for eliminating prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination. Measures to increase awareness include campaigns to promote accurate perceptions and knowledge, highlighting the rights of persons with disabilities, and recognition of the abilities and contributions of persons with disabilities. Children should be educated to recognise the rights of persons with disabilities and media representation

should follow the positive promotional aspects of the convention. (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol 2006)

Accessibility does not occur without awareness. Attitudes and opinions direct the accessibility development as the needs and requirements of persons with disabilities must be considered in all planning, decision-making and social settings. (Haarni 2006, 31, 44) Negative attitudes are viewed to be related to lack of knowledge which then leads to practices promoting inequality and disregard. Thus increase in knowledge and awareness leads to changes in established practices and promotes equality in the society. In an ideal situation accessibility is automatically included in planning and realisation rather than being a separate aspect to be remembered during planning processes. To promote accessibility one must focus on increasing awareness concerning accessibility through interaction and experiences. (Pietilä 2008, 3, 23-25)

## 2.2 Promotion of Accessibility Awareness

Finland's Disability Policy Programme 2010-2015 lists increasing awareness as one of the activities that support the implementation of disability policy as increased awareness enhances societal participation and equality of persons with disabilities. In practice such activities include campaigns, media material, publications, articles and interviews. (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö 2010, 168-169)

Projects aiming to increase accessibility awareness in various settings have gained positive results. Outcomes reported from such projects include increase in participants' experienced accessibility awareness and understanding accessibility concept in wider perspective. Knowledge gained was perceived supportive and important for development of accessibility and equality, and a comprehensive approach towards accessibility and equality had been adopted. Participating parties have additionally taken steps to consider accessibility and equality in strategies, quality assessment and guidance. (ESOK project; Säkjärvi 2008, 40; Valtion liikuntaneuvosto 2011, 10)

The result of any project depends on the input of each participant, thus accessibility should represent a joint goal for all parties involved in the process in order it to be

achieved. An accessible physical environment for example requires understanding, knowledge and attitudes not only from planners, but from the construction company, builders, building supervisors and the maintenance company. (Lukkarinen 2011)

### 2.3 Increasing Accessibility Awareness through Sataesteetön –project

Satakunta University of Applied Sciences (SAMK) initiated Sataesteetön –project in 2009, and the project continued until the end of 2011. The project aimed to develop accessible, user-oriented home and leisure time products and services in cooperation and interaction between professionals and students in SAMK and a vast business network. The value base for the project has been equality, non-discrimination and tolerance. The essence of the project is to provide services equally for all and to enable full participation of persons with disabilities through inclusive physical and social environment.

Part of Sataesteetön –project was Yyteri for All –project which aimed to describe and promote accessibility awareness in the region, provide professional assistance with regards to accessibility evaluation, promote accessible water and nature activities, and acquire and develop assistive and functional devices. Yyteri is a unique nature region in Pori housing a variety of service providers including accommodation, restaurants and sport facilities. Its sandy beach and dunes provide unique settings for outdoor activities but simultaneously represent a rough and difficult environment for persons with disabilities.

Yyteri for All –project has organised variety of activities to promote accessibility awareness, such as seminars, accessibility audits, events and training. The project has supported service providers in arranging activities for all and altering their services and equipment to meet the needs of all clients. Emphasis has been on providing accurate and adequate information, support and tools for the service providers to enable them to continue providing activities for all independently after the project finished. Thus the activities aimed to assure the continuum of the established development in the region.



The project targeted to enable participation and inclusion in all activities provided in the region. All parties gained benefits from the project; service providers gained information and knowledge concerning accessibility and instructional requirements of special groups, students who have participated in the activities gained experiences of adapted physical activities and adapted sport equipment while working in a multi-professional teams, and service users have been able to try variety of sports and activities that previously might have not been available, such as windsurfing, golf, sailing and canoeing. (Satakunta University of Applied Sciences 2011; Karinharju 2011)

#### 2.4 Yyteri Golf Links Participating in Sataesteetön –project

The cooperation between Sataesteetön –project and Yyteri Golf Links begun in the spring 2010. Based on the initial contact from the project to Yyteri Golf Links it was established that there was not any adapted golf activities organised and accessibility had not been considered or discussed previously. During the summer 2010 two golf courses for all were organised by the project with one junior coach from Yyteri Golf ry participating in the activities. In the autumn 2010 a meeting and feedback session was held concerning the golf courses for all and the future activities. During 2010 an accessibility audit of the physical surroundings of Yyteri Golf Links was additionally drafted as part of the project cooperation. Table 1 presents the cooperation process.

2010	2010	2010	2010 (fall)	2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial contact from Sataesteetön –project to Yyteri Golf Links</li> <li>• No experiences of activities for all</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 golf courses for all</li> <li>• Organised by Sataesteetön –project</li> <li>• One member of junior committee participating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility audit executed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from courses and accessibility audit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 golf courses for all</li> <li>• Organised by Yyteri Golf Links</li> <li>• Sataesteetön –project and city of Pori assisting</li> </ul>

Table 1. The cooperation between Sataesteetön –project and Yyteri Golf Links.

### 3 PROMOTING ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS THROUGH ACTIVITIES FOR ALL

Activities for all refer to individual's ability to participate according to one's own desires regardless of individual differences. In the field of physical activity it translates as availability of services and ability to participate in any level of sport, from physical education in schools to world-class sports. (Website of Kaikille Avoin – ohjelma 2006-2010) Inclusion can be viewed as the process for developing activities for all, where individual differences are viewed as a natural part of the entity and environment and practices are modified to meet the needs of all (Laasonen & Saari 2006, 21).

#### 3.1 Inclusion and Activities for All

Inclusion bases to the idea of any individual's possibility to fully participate and to be a full and active member in the society throughout the course of life. By supporting the equality and protection of human rights for all individuals it promotes the formation of a humane society with a sense of togetherness. (Naukkarinen, Saloviita & Murto 2001, 199) Inclusion refers to activities for all, activities in which no one is excluded due to disability. According to inclusion concept everyone in the society is entitled for equal services, and support mechanisms enabling equal participation should be available. Inclusion ideology aims to reduction of environmental, situational and strategic hindrances for participation. (Saari 2005a, 9)

Inclusion concept was first introduced in the school world when the discussion of right for education for persons with disabilities was going on in the 1970s. In educational settings the concept refers to situation where children with and without disabilities are learning together and benefitting from the shared setting. (Biklen 2001, 56) Thus inclusion can be seen as modification of teaching goals, methods and content to meet the environmental requirements in order to enable flexible, equal and respectful education that considers the needs of each learner. (Väyrynen 2001, 18)

The central aspect of equality in physical activity is the possibility to decide in which activities to engage in. Additionally there should be opportunity to choose when, how, with whom and where to participate. Accessible environment and inclusive practices ensure that the activity is suitable for all. (Website of Kaikille Avoin – ohjelma 2006-2010) Inclusion aims for empowerment of persons with disabilities and enables full participation in physical activity (Saari 2005a, 9). The diversity between individuals is viewed as possibility for learning and developing, and changes in the settings to promote inclusion benefits all parties (Saari 2005b, 52).

Legislation governs non-discrimination in sports and physical activity. Non-discrimination and equality clause binds sports associations as employers and service providers. Problems encountered by persons with disabilities concerning equal physical activity opportunities frame around professional instructing, assistance and transport services and accessibility of sports facilities. Availability of sports services depend on the level of disability, with more severe and rare conditions decreasing the possibilities. Additionally the geographical region has crucial effect on availability of services as smaller municipalities often have fewer options available. (Aaltonen, Joronen & Villa 2009, 139)

### 3.2 The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health does not solely focus on the physical abilities but involves environmental and personal factors when evaluating the functional ability of an individual. It represents factors which enable or disable individual's ability to cope with daily living. Thus ICF depicts strengths and weaknesses of individual's functional ability. Changes in environmental factors have an extensive impact on individual's functioning. A supportive environment can minimise the disability caused by bodily impairment, whereas unsupportive environment can further increase the effects of a body impairment causing disability. (Karppi 2007, 26)

ICF is published by the World Health Organization for development of health policies, improvement of public well-being and enhancement of cost-effectiveness of

health systems. It describes a health status from functional ability point of view and classifies health and health-related factors in a universally coherent manner with a common terminology. ICF organises the health information in a usable and applicable way, not classifying individuals, but their health situation within the health-related factors while noting the environmental and personal factors. (World Health Organization 2001, 3, 7; World Health Organization 2002, 5)

In clinical physiotherapy ICF provides a tool to describe the client's status, to set common goals, and to support multi-professional teamwork. Additionally it can be used for evaluating the need for and the effectiveness of the therapy. As ICF provides a common terminology it enables comparison between services, fields, time frames and countries. It however is not a measuring tool to determine the functional ability; it provides a frame to classify factors affecting or preventing the performance of daily activities. (Karppi 2007, 25-26)

The classification is divided in two parts: functioning and disability, and contextual factors. Both parts are further divided in two separate components. Functioning and disability is divided to body functions and structures component, and to activity and participation component, whereas the contextual factors comprise from environmental and personal factors. Figure 2 presents the structure of the classification. (World Health Organization 2001, 7-8)

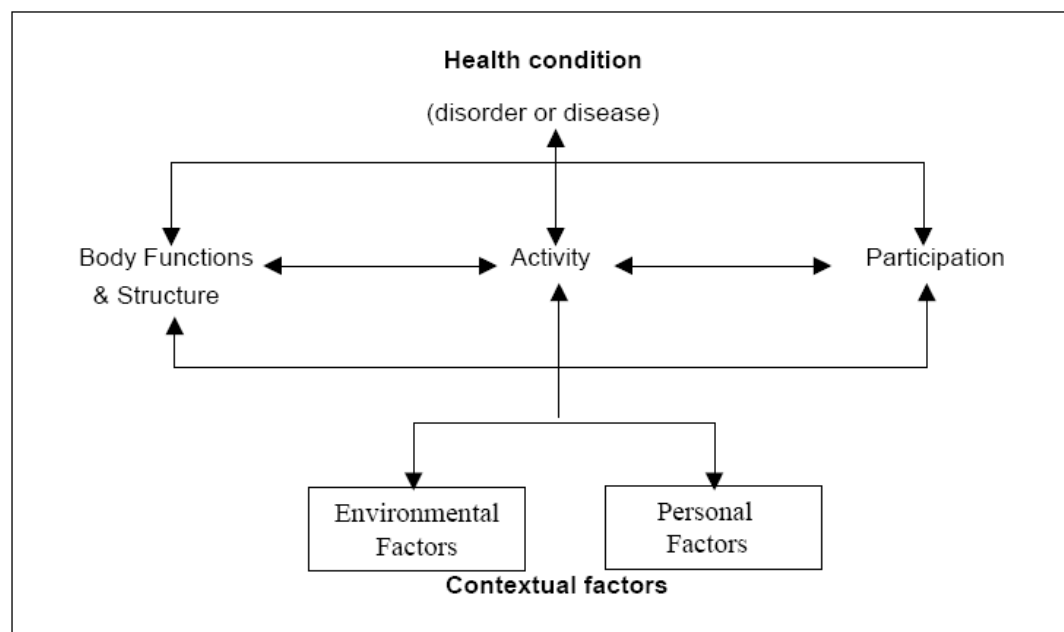


Figure 2. ICF model of disability (World Health Organization 2002, 9)

Body functions and structures represent the anatomical parts of the body, physiological functions of bodily systems and their impairments. Activity represents the performance of a task or activity and activity limitations represent the difficulties performing tasks. Participation focuses on involvement in situations of life and problems experienced in participation are called participation restrictions. Environmental factors comprises of physical, attitudinal, social and legal environment. Personal factors are not classified in ICF due to the wide variety based on society and culture, but are nevertheless included in the contextual factors. (World Health Organization 2001, 8, 10)

The activities and participation component includes a section concerning recreation and leisure which defines the individuals possibility to engage in sports, play, culture, arts, hobbies, travelling and socialising. Additionally the component includes a section for enjoyment of human rights. Environmental factors include chapters concerning physical and emotional support and relationships, external attitudes, and provided services, administrative systems and established policies. Thus all these environmental factors have an impact on the individual's health status either as a facilitator or a barrier for the individual's functioning. (World Health Organization 2001, 168-171, 187-207)

### 3.2.1 Physiotherapist Increasing Accessibility Awareness

Physiotherapy profession can be described as client-oriented, independent and evidence-based expertise. The core of the physiotherapy science is health and functional ability in relation to movement and function. (Website of the Finnish Association of Physiotherapists 2010) Functional ability does not refer only to the physical capacity but includes mental and social aspects as well.

Physical dimension of functional ability refers to individual's ability to cope with daily operations requiring physical activity, such as work, chores and hobbies. Ability to perform daily activities is affected by needs of the individual, the assistance received and environmental factors and restrictions. Mental aspect of functional ability refers to the ability to use mental resources, skills and capacity in everyday life.

Additionally it includes the ability to alter perceptions and associations to support current life situation. Social functional ability represents individual's possibilities and resources and ability to function in changing social environment. It evolves from the interaction between the individual and the society. (Talvitie, Karppi & Mansikkamäki 2006, 38-42)

Physiotherapy process is based on the active interaction between the therapist and the client. The client actively participates in the process and has the right and ability to present own perceptions concerning the therapy and one's own abilities, restrictions and possibilities. (Talvitie et al. 2006, 9) The client thus has ability to affect the physiotherapy process and has the responsibility for one's own health and rehabilitation. This social dimension widens the physiotherapy process to include the environment and the society, and rehabilitation can be viewed as a change in the relationship between the individual and the environment. (Talvitie et al. 2006, 16; website of the Finnish Association of Physiotherapists 2010)

Physiotherapy aims to develop, maintain and restore functional ability in changing circumstances during the whole course of life through promotion, prevention, treatment, habilitation and rehabilitation. In addition physiotherapists are providing knowledge and expertise in various other settings such as developing public health strategies and policies, teaching, managing and research. Physiotherapists interact and cooperate with the client, families, other health care professionals in multi-professional teams, care givers, communities, administrations and governments and continuously educate themselves concerning new evolving knowledge in the field. (Website of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy 2011)

Physiotherapists engage in health promotion activities in the societal level in various ways. The focus of such activities is to enable individuals regain and maintain their quality of life and optimal function regardless of their individual differences. The policy statement on community based rehabilitation by the World Confederation for Physical Therapy defines the role of physiotherapists in empowering persons with disabilities to optimise their physical, mental and social function. Community based rehabilitation aims to provide rehabilitation, equal opportunities and participation for persons with disabilities. Physiotherapists provide their knowledge for developing

and promoting activities that support community based rehabilitation to improve the recognition of rights of persons with disabilities. (Website of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy 2011)

Physiotherapy education in Satakunta University of Applied Sciences includes studies on adapted physical activity. Competences obtained include ability to modify physical activity according to various needs, versatile instructional skills to meet clients' requirements and ability to promote and develop adapted physical activity services. The studies are carried out in cooperation with variety of service providers in different fields and students actively interact with organisations and service providers. (Satakunta University of Applied Sciences 2008)

### 3.2.2 Adapted Physical Activity and Golf

Physical activity in its core is one of the basic human functions; movement resulting from contracting muscles. In wide perspective it includes all daily functions: bathing, working, commuting and leisure time activities. In individual level regular physical activity affects functional ability, fitness and health in various ways. In societal level physical activity promotes public health and functional ability leading to financial savings, improvement of societal well-being and development of environment usability. (Vuori 2004, 14, 16, 20)

Adapted physical activity science focuses on persons requiring adaptations in physical activity to enable participation. It does not solely concentrate on persons with disabilities but anyone whose participation is restricted in non-adapted physical activity. Modifications in equipment, task criteria, instructing, environment and rules are ways to adapt the physical activity in order to meet the requirements of all users. The aim is to personalise the activity, whether physical education, leisure time activity, rehabilitation or competitive activity, according to individual needs to enable full participation according to personal interest, abilities and appropriateness. (Website of the International Federation of Adapted Physical Activity)

Golf is considered a sport into which all people can engage in, regardless of their age, gender, fitness level, physiological impairment or activity restriction. It promotes the health of participants, thus being an excellent choice as health enhancing physical activity. Additionally golf is viewed as a low injury risk sport, thus enhancing its suitability for persons of all ages.

Adapted golf can be viewed from various standpoints: it is a suitable form of physical activity for persons with disabilities; it can be used as rehabilitative activity; it is a physical activity hobby; it can improve fitness level; or for some it is a competitive sport. Depending of the participant the aims of the sport are modified to meet the individual needs, requirements and hopes. Adaptations to swing techniques, range of movements and rules of the game support the adaptation of golf and enable persons with disabilities participate equally and compete with able-bodied counterparts. (Matikka 2007, 3, 5; All for Sport for All Project 2010-2011, 1)

Adapted golf as rehabilitative physical activity aims to improve participant's functional ability in everyday life. It affects balance, body control and stiffness and facilitates the use of all extremities. In addition to physical gains, therapy golf supports the mental and social habilitation and rehabilitation by providing calm environment together with social interaction with other players. Moral and cognitive development is supported by adapted golf activities whereas the sporty nature and game-like setting can increase the motivation towards the activity. (Mänty-Aho 2007; Matikka 2007, 7)

#### 4 THE PURPOSE OF THE THESIS

The thesis aims to describe and increase accessibility awareness among the participating service providers through activities for all. Additionally it aims to establish issues that affect equal participation possibilities, either as facilitators or barriers for participation. The idea for this thesis was first discussed during physical education course in spring 2010 when indoor golf was introduced. The subject was more



closely discussed during the beginning of 2011 and the purpose of the study and the schedule for the thesis process were drafted during early spring 2011. The thesis is part of the Yyteri for All –project and represents a project-based work.

The thesis is a qualitative research and material is collected during actual situations through qualitative methods to establish individual views and opinions of the selected, appropriate target group. Qualitative research supports the aims of the research as it represents the actual life situations and aims to discover real-life facts. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 161, 164)

Thesis research questions are:

- How has accessibility awareness among the personnel of Yyteri Golf Links changed during Sataesteetön –project?
- Can accessibility awareness be increased through activities for all?
- Which factors affect inclusion and equal participation?

## 5 RESEARCH METHODS

Qualitative research can be seen as interaction between the researcher and the target, as the researcher is actively participating in the creation of the research results. It aims for interpreting and understanding perceptions and meanings from a participatory point of view. The interest is on several factors which simultaneously affect to the end result. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 22-25)

### 5.1 Interview and Observation as Research Methods

Research methods in this thesis were selected according to the qualitative nature and the aim of the research. Interview as a research method collects data from cooperation between the interviewee and the interviewer. It is a method which allows the interviewee to present own ideas as freely as possible, thus enabling an active role for the interviewee. Additionally interview enables wider and complex answers and pro-

vides means for clarifying and deepening of the answers.(Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 205, 208-210, 212-213)

The interview types can be divided into three categories: structured interview, theme interview and open interview. In this thesis theme interview type was selected as it enables a free flow of discussion around a set subject. The opinions, attitudes and perceptions are represented during the conversation while the interviewer maintains the focus on the set subject. Interview can be performed either individually, in pairs or in groups.(Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 205, 208-210, 212-213)

Another research method used in this thesis was observation. While interview and discussion represent the opinions and attitudes, observation depicts the actual functioning in real life situations. Observation provides direct information of performance and actions of individuals and organisations. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 205, 208-210, 212-213) Observation methods used in this research are participatory observation and active participatory observation. In both methods the researcher is participating in the activity whilst aiming to understand the subject of research. In active participatory observation the researcher additionally aims to change or modify the subject of research. (Vilkka 2006, 46) In this thesis observation complements the research material gathered from interviews.

## 5.2 Data Collection for the Thesis

The thesis implementation was conducted in the late spring and summer 2011. One part of the implementation was interviews with the personnel at Yyteri Golf Links. The other part of the implementation was participation in golf courses for all during the summer 2011. The courses were organised by Yyteri Golf Links in cooperation with the city of Pori and Yyteri for all –project. The interviews with the personnel were executed during late spring 2011 and the two-day golf courses for all were planned to be held in June and August 2011. Observation for thesis purpose was conducted during the golf courses.

Due to lack of participants the two-day course in June was cancelled, whereas the course in August was held with some participants participating on both days and some only for one day. The course lasted four hours per day including a lunch break. Participants were introduced to golf equipment, instructed different swings and were able to try the techniques in the driving range and putting greens. Additionally the participants could take an adapted green card test at the end of the course.

### 5.2.1 Interview

Yyteri Golf ry (association) and Yyteri Golf Links Oy (limited company) are the two parties operating the golf course in Yyteri. The limited company is responsible for the physical environment in the area whereas the association organises the activities. The different input of each party to the end service governed the selection of interviewees for the thesis as both parties have an important role in providing services for all. The managing director represents the limited company in matters of executive management (Limited Liability Companies Act 624/2006, chapter 6, section 17, 25), thus being an appropriate interviewee for the thesis by presenting viewpoints of the company. The managing director had additionally been participating in the initial negotiations with Yyteri for All –project.

Interviewees (2 persons) selected from the association were members of the junior committee which focuses on junior coaching in the association. Other interviewee had participated in golf courses for all in previous year. By selecting interviewee who was familiar with the activities for all it was possible to gather information concerning experiences, opinions and future plans whereas the less experienced interviewee could present expectations and anticipations for the activities. Additionally the changes in the level of accessibility awareness could be discussed. The interview with the managing director was an individual interview whereas the two members of the junior committee were interviewed together to enable more in-depth reflection.

The interview themes were categorised in three topics: 1) the general activities and aims of the company / association and junior committee, 2) expectations and anticipations, and 3) experiences gained and future considerations. Starting the interview

with discussing the overall activities and aims was planned to gather baseline information and to provide an easy start for the discussion. The aims of the activities executed and services provided by the company and the junior committee were additionally considered important as they could reveal current topics and attitudinal aspects of each party.

Discussed topics related to golf courses for all included reflecting the process of engaging into the activities, the earlier expectations for the cooperation, the experiences gained, and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the activities. The aim of these discussions was to represent the possible alterations in the attitudinal environment towards accessibility and activities for all, to discover any changes in level of knowledge concerning accessibility and inclusion, and to map the understanding for the creation of equal participation possibilities.

The last part of the interview concerned the future plans and aspirations. It aimed to map the level of engagement for accessibility in the future, evaluate the possibility to independently continue providing activities for all, to further promote inclusion and equal participation, and to consider the possibilities and threats for future development.

The interviews were structured as a continuing process, beginning in the general considerations of overall activities not directly connected to the actual topics and then narrowing it down to the concepts of focus: accessibility awareness, inclusion, and equal participation opportunities. It promotes the reflection of answers, ideas and attitudes, thus enabling deeper understanding of the issues behind the concepts (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 205).

### 5.2.2 Observation

Observation was conducted during the golf course for all in the summer 2011. The focus of the observation was on environmental factors, excluding the built environment, which were functioning either as facilitators or barriers for participation and inclusion with the ICF as the frame for the observation. The observation was con-

ducted by the thesis author during the course while taking an active role in the activities. It represented a complimentary data collection method for deepening and emphasising the interview results. The observational findings were categorised according to modified ICF environmental factor classification: 1) equipment, functional devices and assistive aids, 2) natural environment, 3) support and relationships, 4) attitudes, and 5) services and policies. (World Health Organization 2002, 16)

## 6 RESULTS

Analysing qualitative research material is a two-step intertwined process: the material is classified and simplified, and the results are analysed. Simplification and classification aim to group the findings and forming them into cues based on which the analysis is drafted. Understanding findings is the key for analysing the qualitative research and understanding is achieved through interaction between the researcher, the theory and the findings. (Vilkka 2006, 81, 86-87) Figure 3 represents the process of the research in this thesis. In this chapter the interview answers and observational findings are represented and in chapter 7 the results are analysed based on the research questions.



Figure 3. The process of the research.

## 6.1 Interview

Interview results are represented following the interview structure, starting from the general activities provided at Yyteri Golf Links together with aims of the general activities. Second aspect under analysis is expectations and anticipations of activities for all, and thirdly the experiences gained are discussed together with future considerations.

### 6.1.1 General Activities and Aims

The practice facilities at Yyteri Golf Links are open for everyone. Thus anyone can go and practice swings at the driving range or putting on the practice greens. Range balls are provided with exchange to a small payment and clubs can be borrowed for free from the caddie master's office. By offering such unlimited practice facilities the threshold for engaging into the sport has been lowered and the service made more accessible.

Yyteri Golf Links provides variety of activities for its members through different committees, such as senior, lady and junior committees. The activities aim to provide additional benefits for the members to complement basic golf services. A change in clientele structure has been noticed with not only members ageing but increasing amount of new senior members engaging into the activities. This imposes new requirements for the services provided and the physical environment. To meet such new requirements actions have been taken: for example earlier for renting a golf cart a medical certificate was required whereas nowadays such certificate is no longer needed, thus anyone can rent the golf cart. The change was done in order to promote the senior golfers' ability to continue their hobby regardless of changes in their physical condition. Such alteration to prevailing practice decreases the threshold for the use of assistive device and increases accessibility and participation.

In long-term perspective the current change in clientele structure predicts future challenges. Attracting families into starting golf helps maintaining positive membership development. The importance of junior activities is thus emphasised in order to meet

the requirements of families and to make the sport more attractive for children as well. On the other hand, well-organised junior activities can promote parents' engagement to the sport. Yyteri Golf Links offers junior training for free regardless whether the parents or children are members, thus encouraging children into trying the sport. This in turn increases participation opportunities as parents are not forced to pay membership fees or equipment.

#### 6.1.2 Expectations and Anticipations

After the initial contact from Yyteri for All –project Yyteri Golf Links was eager to participate in the project. Participation to the project was expected to serve as a mean to attract completely new client group. Persons with disabilities and their families could have a joint hobby with everyone being able to equally participate in the sport.

Increased media visibility was expected to bring added value through the project. Persons taking part in organising the project were additionally likely to promote the services provided by Yyteri Golf Links thus additionally increasing the visibility of Yyteri Golf Links in various settings. The project's established network of service providers in the area was expected to increase cooperation and promotion of each other's services.

Lack of experiences in the field of adapted physical activity and providing services for persons with disabilities raised questions over responsibilities and abilities. Arranging activities for all was perceived to require high degree of commitment and requiring taking the responsibility over the organisation of such activities. Not being familiar with instructing adapted physical activities was considered to hinder the ability to provide services for all independently without support from the project. The role of Finnish Golf Union in promoting adapted golf was considered to be fairly vague with no clear picture of the services or activities provided by the union to its members.

### 6.1.3 Experiences Gained and Future Considerations

The most concrete result from the participation in the project has been the accessibility audit which was concluded in 2010. The physical facilities were assessed based on the guidelines for accessible building construction. Additionally suggestions were given how to improve the accessibility in the premises. Results received were considered important, informative and positive, and activities to increase accessibility had been taken. Additionally the audit increased the knowledge of accessibility issues among the personnel.

The cooperation network was mentioned as another gain from the participation. Interaction and cooperation with other service providers in the area was perceived as a competitive advantage and overall the project was considered to strengthen the image of the whole Yyteri area. Visibility gains in terms of increased memberships had not been measured or reported.

The golf courses for all were found to create a positive atmosphere in the club. Joy of participating and trying the sport was clearly observed by the personnel, and members of the golf club had given solely positive feedback from the activities. Overall the whole experience of participating in the project and golf courses for all was considered very positive and the personnel were pleased with the arrangements and organisation of the activities.

Organising golf courses for all in the future was perceived possible; nevertheless assistance to support with organisation and instruction was considered vital. Activities arranged by the association are dependent on volunteer work, and arranging golf course for all was perceived to require high degree of commitment and dedication thus leading to uncertainty of ability to cope with a seemingly high demand task. By developing junior activities more inclusive approaches could be adopted, though such development depends on individuals volunteering to that particular committee.



## 6.2 Observation

The observation focused on environmental factors which either facilitate or hinder participation and inclusion. Focus was on social factors while physical environment was mostly excluded as it exceeded the scope of this thesis, and physical accessibility was assessed in the accessibility audit executed by Sataesteetön –project in 2010.

### 6.2.1 Equipment, Functional Devices and Assistive Aids

Only one personal assistive device was observed during the golf courses, which was a walker. On uneven surfaces such aid provides additional support and improves the participatory abilities as majority of areas at the golf course can be accessed. The nature-like environment imposes some requirements for walking aids, for example wheels should be big enough so that the walker would move smoothly on uneven surfaces.

Clubs can either facilitate the participation or hinder it. The availability of children's clubs promotes the participation of children but also person's using wheelchair or persons with short stature can benefit from availability of shorter clubs. Clubs hinder participation when appropriate clubs are not provided. Availability of left sided clubs was limited, thus leading to situation where the person should have modified one's behaviour due to lack of proper equipment. Additionally there were not adaptations to clubs available. For person with decreased hand function a thicker hand grip or additional strap would assist in holding the club.

Anyone can for free lend clubs from the caddie master's office. This in turn increases participation as a person does not need to purchase own clubs which can be quite expensive and can still practice the sport. The downside of lending clubs from the caddie master is that the clubs available are not necessary of the best quality. Most of the clubs are fairly old and as they are either donated or forgotten to the course the selection might not be appropriate.

### 6.2.2 Natural Environment

Natural environment is something people do not have much control over. For example temperature can either hinder or facilitate participation; for some it is not possible to function in chilly weather whereas warm summer days can facilitate the functioning. Temperature additionally affects the length of the season in Finland. During winter months persons should be able to continue their practices in indoor facilities to keep up the skills and maintain positive health gains from the hobby.

In addition to temperature changes weather can affect the participation in multiple ways. Rain can hinder the ability to participate, as it for example can make club grips too slippery to hold onto. In the driving range there are few swing places covered which would provide possibility to practice regardless of the rain. Weather affects the light intensity and quality as well. Direct sunlight can affect vision; similarly heavy clouds, evening dim or fog can negatively affect the participation.

As golf is an outdoor sport great concern should be given to instructing. Hearing instructions in outdoor setting can be challenging and other service users can distract the participants. Thus positioning of the participants during instructing is vital for optimal learning. Safety additionally requires great care of positioning; risk of hitting someone during practicing swings should be decreased as low as possible. Clearly marked practice places in the driving range would increase the safety aspect.

### 6.2.3 Support and Relationships

The amount of support received from the family, friends and care givers can greatly affect the participation. Support can be provided in variety of means; for example by providing information, transportation, financial assistance or actually assisting in the activities. Support received can additionally increase motivation and willingness to participate. In addition to family and friends, personal assistants and, health and other professionals can further support persons with disabilities. Health professional can provide support in modifying the equipment, golf instructor can assist in modifying swing techniques, and personal assistant can assist in moving around the course.

Without such support persons with disabilities would face difficulties in participating in the activities.

#### 6.2.4 Attitudes

Environmental attitudes play crucial role in enabling or disabling persons. Effects of attitudes are not limited to attitudes of close family and friends but they direct the formation of social norms, practices and ideologies as well. Negative attitudinal environment can significantly decrease the accessibility of a service regardless of well-planned physical accessibility. Similarly shortcomings of physical accessibility can be to some extent compensated by positive attitudes.

Positive attitudes of family members and friends facilitate participation and inclusion as they can gather information on services provided, increase motivation of their family member with disabilities and contact service providers to inquire possibility for participation. Health and other professionals can promote participation and inclusion by increasing knowledge among persons with disabilities, their family members, service providers, administrators and general public. Additionally health professionals can take part in organising possibilities for participation through projects and providing experiences of inclusive practices among operative parties.

Attitudes of service providers direct the quality and availability of the service. Enabling inclusion requires willingness to modify the activity, thus attitudinal environment should promote the change in established practices. Attitudinal environment of activities arranged by volunteers varies according to the persons involved, and differences in standpoints towards inclusion were observed among the staff members. Nevertheless in the practical situation inclusion was achieved with few participants which served as excellent learning experience for all actors, thus increasing understanding of the concept.

### 6.2.5 Services and Policies

The services provided by the association enabled the overall organisation of activities for all. Participation would be drastically limited if the association would not provide services in the golf course as then only shareholders would be able to use the course and utilise its services. In addition media visibility increased participation possibilities as through advertisements public was informed of the possibility for participating in the course.

Economical policies can be viewed as hindrance for participation. Golf is fairly expensive hobby and the financial support received from the government would not cover the expenses accrued from the membership fees, equipment and green fees. Thus a person is not able to actually play golf in the course if membership and green fees are not purchased, and the hobby would be limited to practicing techniques in the practice areas.

The location of the golf course requires availability of transportation. Public transport does not cover the area of the golf course, thus personal transportation is required to access the course. The Social Insurance Institution of Finland can cover some expenses accrued from personal transportation but the coverage is granted individually, thus not everyone are able to receive support for transportation from the government.

## 7 ANALYSIS

Research findings do not as such answer to the research questions, they only represent what interviewees said or what participants did. The research results are hidden in the research findings, and the research process aims to bring out those underlying phenomena. Analysis thus reveals the answers to the research questions. (Vilkkä 2006, 12, 81) The following chapters present the answers to research questions.

## 7.1 Changes in Accessibility Awareness during Sataesteetön–project

Changes in accessibility awareness on some level could be observed. Through interview it was reported that accessibility awareness and knowledge was increased based on the accessibility audit. Nevertheless accessibility was perceived as a separate issue to tackle, and it was questioned whether the club should invest in golf services or accessibility. Such statement shows that the importance and understanding of the accessibility ideology has not been fully adopted, as accessibility is considered an extra cost that would decrease the ability to provide services for shareholders and members.

Another indication of level of understanding accessibility concept is shown in the readiness of organising activities for all independently in the future. Some developmental ideas were presented, which indicates a change in the awareness and interest. Nevertheless the experiences gained did not motivate to development of independently organising activities for all; rather relying on project continuum was perceived as adequate contribution. The accessibility awareness had not reached the level that would promote acquiring additional knowledge in the field, for example to clarify the role of the Finnish Golf Union in adapted golf.

Changes in prevailing practices require changes in awareness. Such change could be observed in the golf cart renting policy that was altered to meet the needs of senior members, thus increasing accessibility. Additionally noting the social aspect of senior golf, where the activity is secondary goal and social interaction represents the primary function, can be seen as a step towards understanding the complexity of accessibility concept.

Personal differences in level of awareness indicate that the accessibility knowledge provided had not reached all persons participating in the project activities. Additionally the aims of the project itself might have remained unclear for some. The results highlight the importance of distributing information to all actors to achieve more consistent development. Promotion of accessibility requires devotion from all participants but it should not be viewed as burden but a possibility.

## 7.2 Increasing Accessibility Awareness through Activities for All

Arranging activities for all introduces accessibility concept through practical examples. Through organising such activities service providers are able to evaluate their practices and depict issues that could be developed. Practical examples support the understanding of broadness of the accessibility concept and provide on-site knowledge concerning modification possibilities.

Expertise support promotes the acquisition of knowledge as solutions in various situations can be achieved through cooperation and questions concerning relevant issues can be discussed. Cooperation between professionals can create new approaches to adaptations, inclusive practices and increased participation. Golf instructors can give guidance concerning the sport whereas adapted physical activity instructors can promote the development of didactic approaches.

When activities for all are organised it would be important to attract as many members of the personnel as possible. This way knowledge and awareness are spread through the organisation and more persons are able to gain from the experiences. Persons involved in activities for all are able to understand the benefits and the need for accessible services and observe the positive outcomes for participants. Wide knowledge and awareness base further promotes the continuity of the activities.

The process of arranging activities for all should be planned and structured appropriately in order to benefit from it fully. The goals of the sessions should be agreed beforehand and everyone participating should aim to achieve the set outcome. To support further development of the activities and to evaluate the session a feedback discussion could be held. Reflecting the experiences gained, discussing the success of the session and presenting the developmental issues would support the learning, understanding and increase in general level of awareness in the organisation.

### 7.3 Factors Affecting Participation Possibilities and Inclusion

The most influential factor affecting on participation and inclusion is the attitudinal environment. As the activities in the association are organised by volunteers, the attitudes represent individual viewpoints rather than a shared ideology among the personnel. Thus the attitudinal environment changes depending on who is in charge of particular session, following that person's experiences, aims and preferences. Changes in such personalised attitudinal environment can only be achieved by initiating discussion over the aspects of equal participation possibilities and providing information concerning inclusive practices.

The impact of attitudinal environment is further emphasised as the physical environment enables participation fairly well. Variety of equipment is available and the training areas can be used by anyone thus providing easily accessible training opportunities. Participation is not limited based on memberships or possession of shares and training areas can be accessed regardless of a use of assistive devices. In addition the junior training provided free of charge can be viewed as accessible service, as parents' are not required to make large investments. Promoting the accessible training areas and junior coaching among general public would increase participation opportunities as more people would be aware of such services.

## 8 DISCUSSION

Finland's Disability Policy Programme 2010-2015 aims to ensure equality in all sectors of society through concrete corrective and developmental activities. Removing barriers, whether concrete or abstract, focuses on enabling social inclusion, self-determination and independency of persons with disabilities at all ages. Societal development is achieved through concrete measures aiming for empowerment, accessibility and attitudinal change. (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö 2010, 9, 18)

The subject of the thesis follows the ideology of the Disability Policy Programme, thus supporting the current discussion and development in the field. Recognising the human rights, enabling social inclusion and increasing equality in the society are current topics in national discussion. Several projects, researches and theses have been done which aim to describe and increase awareness and understanding of accessibility concept.

This thesis provides knowledge concerning the effectiveness of project-style promotion on accessibility awareness. In addition it represents factors that affect participation possibilities and inclusion. Without awareness accessibility will not happen. Lack of awareness and knowledge can lead to disregard or in some cases even to negative attitudes. Attitudes can be affected by increasing the awareness and knowledge of accessibility, inclusion and equal participation. Organising activities for all provides a mean to increase accessibility awareness through practical situations. With professional support a service provider can familiarise oneself with physical activity adaptations, understand the need for accessible services and gain experiences in inclusion. Positive experiences gained promote the change in attitudinal environment and increase the understanding of the importance of accessible services. Changes in attitudes and the level of understanding further affect the development of services and practices.

When increasing accessibility awareness through activities for all it would be important to involve as many persons from the organisation into the activities as possible. This way the spread of accessibility awareness in the organisation would be more thorough and changes in attitudinal environment would represent the whole organisation's views, not only the views of few persons participating in the activities. Wide-ranging accessibility awareness would further support the continuity of development of services.

As a future professional this thesis process increased my understanding of physiotherapist's role in promoting accessibility awareness. Physiotherapist can act as a link between service providers and clients. Providing specialist support for service providers to increase their accessibility awareness and to develop their services provided a physiotherapist can increase equal participation and inclusion opportunities.



Informing clients of accessible physical activity opportunities in turn supports social inclusion and can affect their functional ability. New equipment modifications and activity adaptations can be achieved with cooperation between service providers and clients with the physiotherapist providing expertise on function, ergonomics and rehabilitative practices. In addition physical activity can be incorporated to physiotherapy process to support the development of motor and social skills, motor control and overall functional ability.

The research results show that organising activities for all can increase accessibility awareness and professional assistance further ensures the success of the activities. Careful planning is vital and joint goals of the activities should be agreed beforehand. The challenge is how to ensure the continuity of the positive development in the organisation. Wide-spread awareness and thorough understanding of the need of accessible services support the continuity and prevent personalisation of the activities, where one person would be responsible for the whole organisation's accessibility development.

## 8.1 Evaluation of Research Methods

Interview as a research method can be seen as a flexible data collection method, which allows adaptation in the actual situation. Answers can be deepened, and underlying motives can be revealed. However, interview as a research method requires skills to direct the data collection in the actual situation without disturbing the interaction of interviewer and interviewee. It is a time-consuming data collection method and analysing and interpreting unstructured material can be problematic. Interview answers and findings may be affected by social environment, especially in cases where topic of the interview is perceived sensitive or difficult. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 34-35)

Observation depicts the real-life situations in natural environment, thus observational findings are not similarly influenced by societal expectations than interview results. Problem of observation is the active participation of the observer which can lead to situation where objectivity of the findings is decreased due to emotional commitment

of the observer to the issues being observed. Recording data in the actual situations can be difficult and the observer needs to rely on one's memory and record data after the observation has ended. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 213-214)

Interview situations felt open and encouraging and interviewees were able to present their own views, thoughts and ideas. Unstructured form of interview allowed the situation to develop towards discussion which additionally supported a free flow of thoughts. Using interview as a research method felt easy due to my previous experiences in client interview situations, and interview can be considered as the most important tool in physiotherapist's work. The interview results provided insight on the topic and provided valuable information for the research. The selection of interview as a research method can thus be considered valid and appropriate.

Another tool used by physiotherapists in their clinical client assessment and a selected research method for this thesis is observation. Observing the participants' performance during own active participation was challenging, thus utilising other instructors as assistive observers would have been beneficial. Additionally recording was not possible during the observation which increased the possibility of missing some details. In other hand observation provided findings which were not possible to reveal through interview and thus complemented the interview results.

Combining two different data collection methods can increase the quality of the research findings and provide wider viewpoints to the topics (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 38). In this research interview findings were somewhat supported by the findings revealed through observation. Observation provided more information on research topics than what was anticipated which increased the understanding of the research results. Analysing the research data was demanding and time-consuming; nevertheless selecting interview and observation as research methods served as the best choices for the purpose of this thesis.

## 8.2 Quality of the Research

The quality of research material influences the quality of the overall research. Well-established interview structure and reflection of additional questions to deepen the answers improve the quality of collected data. Analysing the data should be done as soon as possible after the collection and recording methods should be precise. Reliability of the research thus relates to the actions of the researcher, and not to the interview answers gathered. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 184-185, 189)

In this research the interview questions and topics were structured beforehand and possible additional questions were considered. During the interviews the structure allowed free discussion over the topics which served as a method to deepening the results. Observation findings were recorded after the activities, thus some findings could have been forgotten before recording. The data analysis was not done directly after the data collection, which can affect the quality of the research findings. Nevertheless recording of the interview and observation report supported the data analysis throughout the process.

Reflecting the research process depicts the periodicity of working. There were periods when the process was on standstill after which orienting back to work took fairly long time. A structured timetable would have supported the division of load and progression of writing would have been smoother. Unlike in most research processes the subject during this research became more interesting the further the research progressed. A subject which in start with felt slightly unrelated to my studies is now after this thesis process something I would be interested in developing as a professional in the future.

## 8.3 Suggestions for Further Research

As this thesis focused on particular members of the personnel, a quantitative research on more general level could reveal the effects of activities for all among the members of the golf club. Such research results could more easily be adapted to the general public thus providing knowledge can activities for all can affect the societal attitudi-

nal environment on wide perspective. Golf instructors or pros were not included in this research, thus their readiness of instructing persons with disabilities would provide additional knowledge in availability of services in Yyteri Golf Links.

Another interesting suggestion for research of related subject would concern how well persons with disabilities are aware of possibilities of participating in different sports. Increasing awareness of different physical activity possibilities among persons with disabilities would promote social inclusion and equity as well as overall well-being and functional ability in individual level.

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