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# DESIGNING A WELLBEING PARK

Outdoors pole dance, acrobatics and leisure

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Tiivistelmä

Tämä opinnäytetyö sai alkunsa kirjoittajan omasta harrastuneisuudesta ja innostuksesta tankotanssiin ja ilma-akrobatiaan, minkä lisäksi luonnon ja viheralueiden tarjoamat terveydelliset hyödyt ja mahdollisuudet liikunnan harjoittamiseen tarjosivat lisää näkökulmia aiheen ympärille. Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli kerätä tietoa, joka mahdollistaisi hyvinvointipuistojen suunnittelua siten, että puistot aktivoisivat erityisesti tyttöjä ja naisia terveelliseen ja motivoivaan liikkumiseen tanssin ja akrobatian kautta. Puiston ohella toimiva liikuntavälinepalvelu suunniteltiin osaksi puistokonseptia mahdollistamaan monipuolisia ja tasaarvoisia mahdollisuuksia liikunnan harrastamiseen sosio-ekonomisista tekijöistä riippumatta.

Puiston suunnittelun pohjaksi tietoja käyttäjäryhmästä ja sen preferensseistä kerättiin käyttämällä kvalitatiivisia tutkimusmetodeja, kuten teemahaastattelua, havainnointia ja autoetnografiaa.

Tämän opinnäytetyön lopputuloksena syntyi ehdotuksia, teemoja ja malleja, joita voidaan hyödyntää hyvinvointipuiston aktiviteetteja ja esteettisiä ominaisuuksia suunniteltaessa ja toteutettaessa. Niin ikään opinnäytetyö tuotti mallipiirustuksen ulkotankotanssitangon prototyypin valmistukseen. Opinnäytetyön tutkimusosion tulosten mukaan viheralueet monimuotoisine kasveineen, vesielementit, erilaiset tapahtumat sekä puitteet liikunnan harjoittamiseen ja sosiaalisen elämän viettämiseen ovat ominaisuuksia, joita pidettiin viehättävän puiston tunnusmerkkeinä.

#### Asiasanat

puisto, viheralue, hyvinvointi, liikunta, konseptimuotoilu, käyttäjälähtöisyys, tankotanssi, akrobatia, tanssi, terveys, kaupunki



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#### Abstract

This study was inspired by the author's own enthusiasm towards pole dance and other aerial acrobatics. Moreover, the health benefits provided by nature and greenspace as well as regular physical exercise worked as a motivation and offered different points of view to this study. The aim of this study was to gather information for designing a wellbeing park or a part of a park that would activate especially girls and women to healthy and fun physical exercise by dance and acrobatics. A service for borrowing and using acrobatics equipment in the park was suggested as a part of the concept.

Qualitative research methods, such as semi-structured interviews, observation and autoethnography were used to collect background information for the design project.

The outcome of this study was a set of design suggestions as activities in a wellbeing park. A design for an outdoors pole dance pole system was outlined and sent to the manufacturer for possible future production of a protype. According to the results of the qualitative research part of the study the presence of blue and greenspace, events and facilities for sports and social interaction are qualities of a park that appeal to people.

#### Keywords

park, greenspace, wellbeing, physical exercise, concept design, user-oriented design, pole dance, acrobatics, dance, health, city, bluespace

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#### LIST OF DEFINITIONS

**Acroyoga:** A physical practice, which combines yoga and acrobatics. "Base" is the individual, who has the most points of contact with the ground and "Flyer" is the individual, who is elevated off the ground by the "Base".

**Aerial acrobatics:** Acrobatics aided by an apparatus such as a trapeze, aerial silk, aerial hoop, rope or corde lisse.

**Aerial hoop/lyra:** A circular steel apparatus (resembling a hula hoop) suspended from the ceiling, on which artists may perform aerial acrobatics.

**Aerial silk:** A type of performance in which one or more artists perform aerial acrobatics while hanging on a fabric.

Aerial yoga: Yoga aided by a hammock/acrobatics' silk.

**Autoethnography:** A form of self-reflection and writing that explores the researcher's personal experience connecting this autobiographical story to wider cultural, political, and social contexts.

**Ethnography:** Systematic study of people and cultures. It explores cultural phenomena where the researcher observes society from the point of view of the subject of the study.

**Instagram:** An online mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing, and social networking service that enables the users to take pictures and videos and share them either publicly or privately through the application, or through a variety of other social networking platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.

**Muscle Beach:** The most famous Muscle Beach was established on the beach area south of the Santa Monica Pier in 1933 as part of a beachfront movement of gymnasts, acrobats and many other talented athletes who converged on a small section of the Santa Monica coastline. Now the location is the most famous outdoor gym in the world.

Parkour: A sport in which the practitioners aim to get from one point to

another in the fastest and most efficient way possible. Parkour includes

running, climbing, swinging, vaulting, jumping, rolling and quadrupedal

movement.

Pole dance: A form of performance art, which combines dance and

acrobatics on a vertical pole.

Semi-structured interview: A qualitative research method in which the

interview is open, and new ideas can be brought up during the interview as a

result of the interviewee's answers. There is usually a group of topics and

questions to guide the conversational interview.

Service design: A form of conceptual design which involves the activity of

planning and organizing people, infrastructure, communication and material

components of a service in order to improve its quality and the interaction

between a service provider and customers.

Spotter: An individual who has an objective view of the partner and whose

responsibility is to make sure that the training partner doing a move lands

safely in case of any slips. The spotter can also make recommendations to

improve the partner's alignements.

**SUP yoga:** Doing yoga on a paddleboard floating on the water.

**Yogi:** A practitioner of yoga.

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

The idea to my thesis – designing a park that enhances overall wellbeing – emerged a couple of years ago when – while taking my daily walk in the neighbourhood – I found an old, deteriorated tennis court in the scrubby, forested park of the local, historical milieu of Voikkaa Virtakivi, and I was thinking that it would be a place for activity and recreation for the children and families of the neighbourhood. However, as good as the idea and the aesthetics of the location were, the realities of accessibility and the fact that the park was still owned by UPM – not the City of Kouvola – made me rethink the location of the park.

Later on it was agreed with the authorities of the City of Kouvola authorities that Rantapuisto Park in Kuusankoski would be a suitable location for a wellbeing park. In addition, the Katariina Seaside Park in Kotka was selected as a spot for another outdoors pole dance location. Lappset Group worked as a mentor and commissioner in this work. My task was to collect information about the user group and create a theme for their new concept of taking pole dance and aerial acrobatics outdoors.

My personal interest in pole dance and acrobatics played an important part in this work. I started pole dance in 2013, at the age of 31. My new hobby changed my life in a number of ways – it can be considered a small-scale epiphany: I adopted a new, healthier and more active lifestyle. I started to accept my body as it is; I felt strong and my self-esteem rose. It also marked the beginning of new friendships and I noticed that coping in daily life and work became easier. I have heard and read about similar experiences to mine from my friends and peers on social media and in magazine interviews. Among people with acrobatics or pole dance as a hobby there seems to be spirit of encouragement and trust.

My nine year-old daughter goes to circus school, and it feels good to watch the older girls work as assisting teachers and help out smaller hobbyists. The trust and courage grow when a friend spots you in frightening tricks in case of falling. Spotting for a friend also teaches taking responsibility. In circus summer camps children and youngsters learn social skills and independence in a safe group of peers.

In the research part of this thesis I interviewed five physically active women in order to get information that would help me design the concept of the wellbeing park to better match the user group's needs. In addition to that I also wanted to hear how the interviewees perceive of themselves. The self-image of girls and young women is a cause for concern often nowadays: the media with its photo shopped images and starlets who have gone through plastic surgery feed a twisted body-image. In pole dance and acrobatics you see a wide range of girls and women with different body types and weights; it seems that the focus moves from outside pressures to look like a Barbie doll to appreciate a functional, strong and capable body. Realizing how much courage and strength you find in yourself not only boosts your self-esteem but also gives an adrenaline kick and makes you challenge yourself more.

The ideological premise of this study is the equal right to healthy life and wellbeing regardless of factors such as social background and prosperity. The differences in income are growing and children's hobbies are becoming more expensive which leads to a situation in which not every family can afford their children to do sports as their hobbies (Valtion liikuntaneuvosto, 2014, 6). Public parks as a training place option, the possibility to borrow city-provided equipment and cooperation between the city and the instructors would make it possible for disadvantaged children and youngsters to test and practise pole dance and acrobatics, too; practising versatile physical exercise is important in the development of a child's motoric skills (ibid: 9). Furthermore, a large portion of children and youngsters exercise independently with their circle of friends and do not get registered as members of organized activities, and these ways to create communities should be taken into account when making decisions on the use of public finances (ibid: 7).

According to Valtion liikuntaneuvosto (2014, 7) physical exercise plays important part in children's wellbeing, health and academic success. The problems caused by sedentary lifestyle have been recognized for a long time, but successful solutions have not been found (ibid: 6). Families living in apartment buildings may have very little room for exercise at home and the yard may not always be very child friendly or encourage children to physical play. Many children spend long periods of time playing videogames and

socializing on the Internet via computers or smartphones. As a result here may not be enough time for playing outdoors and getting fresh air and exercise. The development of society and technology make daily life physically easy, which means that hardly anyone moves enough for their health and wellbeing (ibid: 5).

Using parks and other greenspace in a more efficient way in promoting physical exercise along park culture – which is not very well rich in Finland – and social life might increase the amount of exercising in daily life among both children and adults. It seems that the outdoors sport facilities and especially jogging trails in Kouvola are mostly dreary, remote and isolated, which are qualities that especially women and girls may find uninviting and even scary. Many playgrounds are plain and worn-out and they do not offer any entertainment to the parents or babysitters, as if adults were supposed to just sit there passively – if there is even a bench – and watch their children play.

Nature and green space – forests and parks – have been reported as stress relieving (Roe et al. 2013, 4096) and health promoting environments (Maas et al. 2006, 589). Moreover, Carter and Horwitz (2014, 331) suggest that specific aspects of green space quality and access – such as proximity to nearby play and social places, retention of green space and bushland and usability – are associated with self-reported physical and mental health and that while proximity to green space can be important, it is not enough; understanding, what constitutes usable green space may be critical in order to achieve better health outcomes. According to Barton et al. (2012, 94–95) combining restorative nature and green space contacts with physical exercise and social inclusion may play an important role in mental healthcare and promotion.

Because of the health benefits of green space and nature it would be ideal if indoor activities and sports could be practised outdoors in summertime. The climate change can lengthen the season for outdoor activities as well, but whether or not, Finnish summer is still short, and it would make sense to make most of it by spending time out of the doors as much as possible.

Cohen at al. (2010, S9, S11) studied a diverse sample of parks in Southern California and discovered that parks with organized activities appeared to attract most people, including spectators of sporting events. In addition investments in programming and unique park features seem to be associated

with higher use (ibid), as well as developing programs and activities that will draw adults and entire families to the park is necessary (ibid: S12). The wellbeing park would combine parks, physical exercise, culture and social life as park culture that happens in a spacious, public, aesthetically appealing "outdoor living room". The practitioners of different sports, activities and arts would enjoy the facilities of an open-air studio and had a place to perform their skills to an audience. For different disciplines outdoor practise would provide a free of charge training space and creative and low cost ways of advertising, getting publicity and new hobbyists. Training impressing sports, such as aerial silks, pole dance and lyra would offer entertainment to the park visitors. Various events – competitions, concerts, shows, markets and plays – would draw people to the park even from further away. Yogis could practise park yoga and meditate surrounded by fresh air, sounds of nature and greenness.

Outdoor facilities for relatively new sports already exist, such as skateboarding and parkour, which are still mainly dominated by boys and men, even if there are girls and women among the hobbyists as well. The purpose of this study is to gather ideas for creating a concept for inspiring surroundings that encourage women and girls to become more active and visible members of urban outdoors and street sports and at the same time to motivate them for a healthy, happy and fun lifestyle.

#### 2 PHASES AND METHODS OF THE STUDY

The ethnographic research of the topic and familiarisation with the subject began in autumn 2013 when I started pole dance as a hobby (Figure 1). While taking part in the pole dance classes I could not help but observing the other dancers, the instructor, the culture around the pole dance and aerial fitness and social relationships between the girls and women. Furthermore, I started to follow Instagram pages of other aerialists, yogis and dancers. The intention was not to spy on anybody or observe people in a scientific sense; this group of people and how they behave and communicate just purely fascinated me. Of course I wanted to learn new tricks and pole moves from them and get tips to my own practise at the same time. My questions about my pole dance friends' experiences and preferences can be seen as unplanned interviews.

TIMETABLE

2013 - AUTUMN 2015 WINTER 2015 - 2016 SPRING 2016

ideas, dreams concepts sketches. decisions finished concept

PHASES

user information, getting familiar with the subject, testing the idea

collaboration with the clients and getting mentored

METHODS

ethnographic methods: inspirations observations scenarios scenarios autoethnography moodboards interviews storyboards interviews interpretting interviews design suggestions

# THE PHASES AND METHODS OF THE DESIGN PROCESS IN THE WELLBEING PARK PROJECT

Figure 1. The phases and the methods of the design process in the wellbeing park project. The idea for the timeline is an adaption of the one presented in the book "Designing Services with Innovative Methods" in the chapter "Service design as a tool for innovation leadership" (Miettinen & Koivisto 2009, 186)

expert evaluation

Innovative service design methods were agreed to be a suitable approach in this study because of the nature of the project: designing experience – such as a pleasant day in a park – means designing conditions that lead to experience, and service design aims to ensure that service interfaces are useful, usable and desirable from the user's point of view (Mager 2009, 34–35). As Miettinen (2009, 14) lists, it is important in the service design process to understand the users, and this can be achieved by observing, profiling and creating empathy for the users when – at the same time – including the users to the process of creating ideas, prototypes, evaluations and improvements. In this sense this study had a strong user-oriented basis from the beginning of the design project.

Ethnography – one of the qualitative research strategies – is a proper tool to a designer, because it shows the ways users interact with products in their daily lives. Ethnographic fieldworks methods observation and documentation help identifying, discovering and understanding the context and users. (Miettinen 2009, 20)

Ethnography is learning by experiencing. In ethnography a researcher lives in the society she or he is studying. The goal is to learn the culture, way of thinking and course of actions from the inside. The idea is to be part of the society and learn by listening, asking questions and watching. Unlike

quantitative methods ethnography does not break the entirety into variables, but it tries to understand the situation in a holistic way, which at the same time makes ethnography scientifically problematic: the research can be based on impressions and subjectivity. (Eskola & Suoranta 1999, 106)

Furthermore, ethnographic methods provide information about customer needs. Information is acquired by observing people in their everyday lives. This generates new ideas. A sociological approach takes the designer to where the services actually take place, which provide first-hand information on the values that are important in that particular design project. (Hämäläinen & Lammi 2009, 187)

In addition to observation expert theme interviews were used as an ethnographic data collecting method in this study. Five adult women between ages 26–40 were interviewed, and the interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interviews are discussed in Chapter 6.2. The interviewees were selected on the basis of their professional expertize in the field of physical exercise. Therefore their opinions and preferences can be considered valuable in the design process of a wellbeing park project. As Miettinen (2009, 65) states, in a design process, data collection and understanding the user needs to start with interviews. Three children were briefly interviewed as well in order to form an idea of what children like to do and in what kind of environment. At the same time they were asked to draw a picture of them doing their favourite hobby in a dream place. The drawings and the interviews are discussed in Chapter 6.3. Moreover, a representative of one of the two local circus schools was interviewed to obtain useful design hints from the circus's point of view.

Alongside ethnography, autoethnography was also used as a research method in this work. The excerpts of my autoethnographic diary are discussed in Chapter 6.1. Autoethnography produces autoethnographic stories which are artistic and analytic demonstrations of how we come to know, name and interpret personal and cultural experiences (Adams et al. 2015, 1). Since I am a pole dancer, woman and mother – an example of a target group member – it seems natural to explore a method that uses a researcher's personal experience to describe practises and experiences of the studied group and acknowledges and values a researcher's relationship with the other group

members (ibid). Furthermore, autoethnography has a strive for social justice and to make life better (ibid: 2), which are ideas that go hand in hand with the position of this work, which is, that a chance to healthy physical exercise in a pleasant environment, wellbeing and happiness are aspects that should belong to everybody. Again, the personal approach illustrates the investment a researcher has in his or her research, since by being personally, emotionally, aesthetically and narratively connected to a group or experience, an autoethnographer may take more responsibility for representing him or her and others (ibid: 18–19).

After identifying the group of study – pole dancers, dancers, aerialists, circus hobbyists and yogis – and finding out the right research methods I needed to find the commissioners and mentors to the study. In order to present the idea of my thesis understandably to the people, who are not that familiar with aerial acrobatics and dance I had to visualize my ideas on paper. I wrote texts which introduced the idea and the sports to the reader. First I made a mood board/user board – a collage of photographs and texts in a composition – to convey the atmosphere of the park and present the target group of the park users. Since the park does not exist yet, visual presentations enable discussing and evaluating the idea (Hämäläinen & Lammi 2009, 189). The mood board/user board is discussed in Chapter 2.1.

I also presented some YouTube-videos of pole dance, aerial yoga and aerial hoop/lyra to the commissioners to give them a short introduction to these sports. Furthermore, the aesthetic videos work as an inspiration. I also drafted one storyboard, a cartoon-like story that works as a scenario. As Miettinen (2009, 70) presents, the idea of using the scenario storyboard was to visualize the main concept to the client: scenarios are effective tools in narrating and visualizing a user-oriented story. The scenario was also shown to the interviewees to test the idea and the concept among the target group members. The scenario is discussed in Chapter 6.2.

I created a mind-map that aims to explain why circus would be a good theme for a new concept. The mind-map presented the different aged target groups and told little stories about the members of the group. The goal of the mind-map was to help Lappset Group in their product design process. The mind-map is discussed in Chapter 7. Lappset Group's contact person was used for

expert evaluation – comments and critiques – in this work, and the expertise of the company as a top quality outdoors gym and playground designer and manufacturer provided valuable information about the realities of designing equipment for outdoors physical activity in Nordic weather conditions.

For the Cities of Kouvola and Kotka, I created theme charts of the activities and aesthetic suggestions of the wellbeing park. In addition, Kotka was interested in testing a prototype of the outdoors pole dance pole, so drawing a simple sketch of the pole dance system that could be used in Katariina Seaside Park represents a part of this thesis as well. Both the theme charts and the pole sketch are discussed in Chapter 7.

After interviewing the group of experts, having conversations with the commissioners and testing the idea with the interviewees and the Cities of Kotka and Kouvola by using the scenario and other visual material mentioned it was time to draw the lines for decision making by starting to convert opinions and preferences provided by the interview material into design suggestions and priorities. The interview interpretations are discussed in Chapters 6.2 and 8.

For the theoretical part of the study literature about suitable research methods was consulted while doing the design the project. Moreover, scientific studies and articles were examined in order to find information about physical exercise, health, greenspace and parks. This data was also considered while outlining the design suggestions and explaining the priorities.

The finished concept of the wellbeing park consists of this bachelor's thesis together with presentations, storyboards and other visual material, design suggestions and sketches.

# 2.1 Outlining the target group

The target group for the wellbeing park's gym solution was outlined by creating a user and mood board (Figure 2). The pictures for the collage were found on the Internet. The board attempts to intermediate the atmosphere and the spirit of the park being fresh, friendly, challenging, exciting while encouraging playfulness, free-spirited natures, strong attitudes and exciting

experiences. The pictures of the people presented in the user board aim to visually describe the features of the users that are listed below.

The first user group represents active and sporty young girls and women, who are colourful personalities that enjoy showing themselves and are not afraid of showing their tricks and stunts to the public. They may be enthusiast of activities such as circus, acrobatics, dance or cheerleading. These girls and young women like to take photos and shoot videos of their training sessions and share the material on social media later in order to get likes and maybe some tips and hints for the moves. They also use social media to learn new tricks and communicate with their "tribe" by commenting and encouraging each other.

The second group of park users is a nature loving hippyish woman, who is a practitioner of for instance yoga or meditation. She might also be an enthusiastic gardener. She comes to the park to read a book or a magazine, do a little stroll during the lunch break or even have her lunch while enjoying the fresh air and landscape at the same time as she watches the other people in the park around her.

The third group comprises mothers of young children. These active mothers want to join their children's play by taking a climb or a joyful swing. They might also have a goal to lose the baby weight and get fit again. They rather stretch their bodies or do a little yoga session than just sit passively on the bench.

The fourth user group is primary school aged children who are experts of schoolyard jungle gyms. After the school day, the play continues in the park.

The fifth group consist of families who come to the park for an ice cream and leisure. They socialize with other families, take part in the events and concerts, arrange picnics and just relax.

Finally, the sixth group includes schools, kindergartens, clubs, sport clubs and associations.

With Lappset it was mutually agreed that in this service design project and study the primary focus would be on the first three user groups. Consequently, they are considered as the main target group.



Figure 2. A mood and user board that aims to visually describe the target user group and the spirit of the park (Source of pictures: Internet. The Internet sources for the pictures are listed in the References.)

#### 3 WELLBEING PARK IN KOUVOLA

Kouvola is a city and regional centre in Northern Kymenlaakso, Southeast Finland with about 86,000 inhabitants. Kouvola is situated along Highways 6 and 15. The journey from Kouvola to the Helsinki region takes 1.5 hour by car. The new Kouvola, established on January 1, 2009, was created by merging Anjalankoski, Elimäki, Jaala, Kuusankoski, Valkeala and Kouvola.

Kouvola region is characterized by lakes and forests which make Kouvola one of the most popular leisure housing places: as there are over 7,000 summer cabins within the boundaries of the city. The Kymi River provides the local population and tourists with a setting for recreation, serves local forest industry companies and creates a unique landscape.

Although the region's forest industry has declined drastically in recent years, industry is still a major employer in Kouvola. Kouvola is also well known for its railway station, which is the western terminal of the Trans-Siberian Railway that goes from Europe to Asia, as well as being a significant junction in Finland. (City of Kouvola)

# 3.1 City-provided sports solutions in Kouvola

While designing a new park for sport activities in the City of Kouvola it seemed important to find out what kind of solutions the city already offers. The website of the City of Kouvola, www.kouvola.fi, was used as a main source of information.

According to the website "Every adult person should practise moderately heavy physical exercise several times a week and preferably 30 minutes per day in one or several periods in order to maintain good health and performance" (City of Kouvola). Free of charge and affordable services for physical activities provided by the city were chosen for this study, because they are available for all socioeconomic groups and therefore promote equal opportunities for physical activity and for reaching the recommended daily dose of exercise. The private sector's gyms and other businesses as well as sports clubs offering physical activities were excluded from this inventory.

Kouvola community college offers dance, sport and gym activities and opportunities for physical exercise mainly to the working age population, but also to the senior citizens. The selection of courses available varies largely between different areas in Kouvola (Kouvola center, Kuusankoski, Valkeala, Elimäki and Jaala) being the widest near the center of the city. For example adult ballet, Zumba, couple dance, Turkish belly dance and Lavis® are found in the performing dance arts category in the curriculum for autumn 2015. Other activities are various gym classes, yoga, relaxation classes, fitness boxing, water running and Pilates. (Kouvolan kansalaisopisto)

The City of Kouvola city offers adjusted activities for adult and children groups with special needs. In addition, there are groups for wellbeing and health promotion for senior citizens (City of Kouvola). According to the City of Kouvola's brochure of physical exercise and health promotion (2015) there are special courses for intellectually disabled, gym for people with neurological conditions and mental health rehabilitees, group for children with problems of motor skills, adjusted gym for obese people and various physical activities for senior citizens. For children and youth the year-round activities are mainly emphasized to physical exercise for people with special needs, and the activities for all the children are scheduled to the holiday seasons being autumn and winter holiday and summertime (City of Kouvola).

There are several places for physical exercise provided by the City of Kouvola. The four ice rinks offer free of charge shifts weekly, and in Kuusankoski ice rink it also is possible to ice skate in summertime. The City of Kouvola has fourteen gyms available for its residents. In addition, the City of Kouvola owns five public swimming pools. (City of Kouvola)

The health promotion work of the City of Kouvola arranges fitness tests, such as Cooper's test, 1 kilometre walking test, UKK walking test (City of Kouvola) and opportunities to try out sports, such as water running and gymnastics, kettle bell, gym, yoga and body fitness – activities that are presented in the City of Kouvola's brochure of physical exercise and health promotion (2015). Moreover, there are campaigns and projects, which encourage people to healthy lifestyles: commute biking campaign, "Maali" (a project that aims to educate immigrants to work as sport instructors) and "Sähköistä liikettä", which is a virtual service that promotes an active lifestyle via social media in the periphery of Kouvola. In addition, it is possible to receive free of charge personal training program and counselling of physical exercise and health. (City of Kouvola)

In Kouvola there are several outdoor activities to enjoy especially in summertime: road and cross-country biking, golf, canoeing and kayaking and fishing. Wintertime activities include snowshoe hiking and tour skating. There are twenty public beaches for swimming and two locations for ice swimming. (City of Kouvola) For short hikes and enjoying nature there are 14 nature trails in Kouvola, and especially Niivermäki nature reserve area is located in the middle of the population centre and therefore easily attainable for quick refreshing in nature (Kouvola map service 2016). Repovesi National Park offers beautiful sceneries for hiking and a natural, unique climbing wall. Kouvola has a total of 250 kilometres of ski trail, and in summertime they serve the citizens as fitness trails. (City of Kouvola) In addition, there are four skate parks and a skateboarding hall in Kouvola, so skateboarding and rollerblading is possible in wintertime as well (Kouvolan Sanomat 2013 & 2014).

The City of Kouvola also rents facilities such as public swimming pools, saunas, ball game halls, soccer fields, stadiums, tennis fields and indoor ice

rinks to businesses, associations and private people for physical activities. (Timmi)

There are three libraries in Kouvola which lend sport equipment, such as pedometers, Gymsticks, hula-hoops, kettlebells, poles for Nordic walking, balance boards, badminton sets and instruction DVD's for gymnastics (City of Kouvola). The service makes it easier to test out different sports or ways to physical exercise without making wrong investments. Furthermore, thanks to services such as these the opportunities of staying fit and healthy are equal and accessible to everyone. It might be interesting to find out if the city would be willing to widen the selection of equipment and also lend or rent pole dance poles and trapezes.

For example in one of the schools in Kempele there is a storage of gym equipment to which the parents can acquire a key. The storage was created to activate families to exercise together and enhance equal possibilities to physical exercise. (Valtion liikuntaneuvosto 2014, 77) In Pori the city rents even tents, bikes and canoes (ibid: 81). Therefore, a service renting larger-scale equipment for gym, sports and outdoors activities is not a new idea.

## 3.2 The Rantapuisto Park in Kuusankoski – A location with both blue and greenscape

With the local authorities it was agreed that Kuusankoski (Figure 3) – a neighbourhood of the City of Kouvola – would be an ideal location for a wellbeing park.

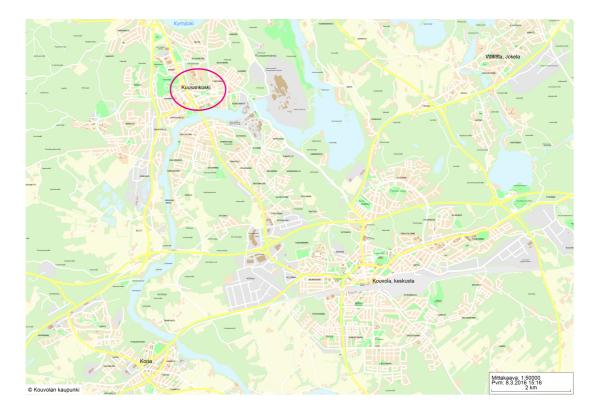


Figure 3. The location of Kuusankoski center area is outlined on the map with red colour. The distance between the centers of Kouvola and Kuusankoski is approximately seven kilometres (Map: City of Kouvola)

According to the plans the aerial acrobatics spot of the park will be built in Kuusankoski by the river Kymi and behind Sommelo hotel (Figure 4). Furthermore, near the location stands Kuusankoskitalo, which is a hall of culture with including a music hall, theatre, conference rooms, a ballet and fitness studio, restaurant, gallery and amphitheatre (City of Kouvola). In addition, there is a library next to Kuusankoskitalo. There is an idyllic, approximately one-kilometre long walk with flowerbeds and trees following the riverbank starting from Kuusankoski Pallokenttä and continuing behind hotel Sommelo, Kuusankoskitalo, the library and the health centre all the way down to Koskenranta, which is a former residential district with unique architecturally outstanding villas built for the paper factory's management (Museovirasto 2009).

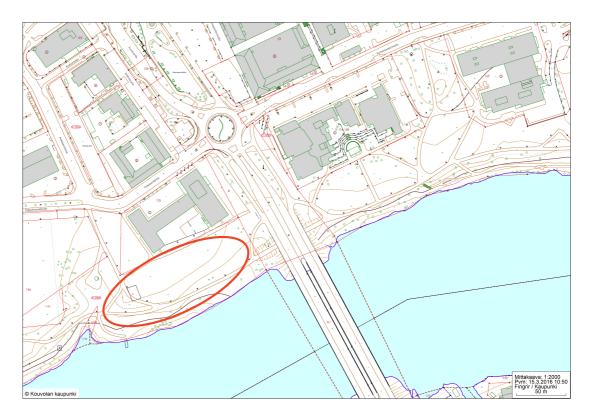


Figure 4. The red ellipse on the map shows the planned possible location area for the aerial acrobatics section of the wellbeing park (Map: City of Kouvola)

# 4 KOTKA CITY AND THE PARKS OF KOTKA – A SEASIDE POLE DANCE LOCATION

Kotka is the second largest city in Kymenlaakso located on the coast of Gulf of Finland at the estuary of the Kymi River, 130 kilometres east of Helsinki. Kotka is known especially for its port, industry and maritime festivals. Kotka was founded in 1879. The population is about 55,000. (City of Kotka)

Green areas in Kotka total 1,400 hectares, and about 170 hectares are actual parks. The Parks and Ground Department is responsible for the planning, construction and maintenance of green area – parks, green areas of traffic routes, urban forests, beaches, playgrounds, neighbourhood sports grounds and nature trails. During the past couple of decades Kotka has become a significant town of parks. The parks of Kotka are shown on the map (Figure 5). (City of Kotka)

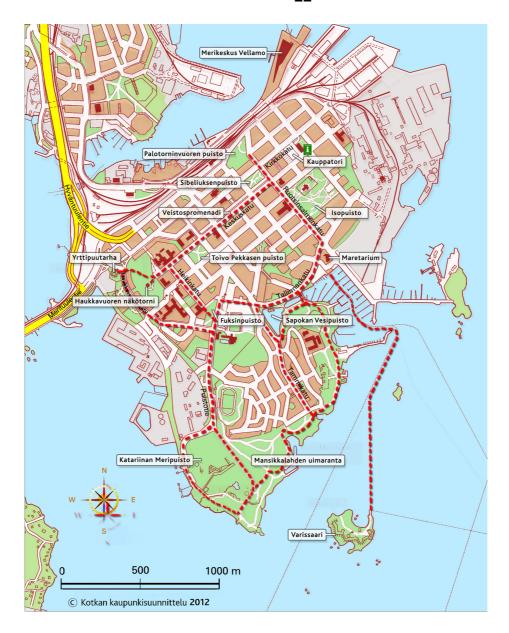


Figure 5. The map of the parks in Kotka (Map: Kotka City Planning)

## 4.1 The Katariina Seaside Park

The Katariina Seaside Park – a 20-hectare park and recreational area – is located at the southernmost tip of Kotkansaari Island (Figure 5). After the harbour operations ended at the beginning of this millennium, the former tank areas were cleaned and landscaping work commenced in 2004. The Katariina Seaside Park received the International Trend Award 2012 Prize by the European Landscape Contractors Association (ELCA). (City of Kotka)

There are many activities to do and things to see in the Katariina Seaside Park, such as cliffs and seascapes. A large lawn can be used for sunbathing, ball games or flying a kite. There is a brook that is surrounded by a "Secret Garden" with planted areas. There are also numerous pieces of playing and exercise equipment in the park, and even a skate ramp. There is an anchor islet at the southern tip of the cape, which serves as an official place for scattering the ashes of the deceased. There is also a meditation labyrinth where the walking distance to the centre and back is 1,050 metres. The park has several picnic sites with barbecue facilities and granite tables, and the largest of the tables consists of seven different granite types and there are seats for up to 50 people. (City of Kotka)

On the eastern side of the open park there is an alder grove that represents the natural environment typical of the Eastern Gulf of Finland. The area was protected in 1964 by a decision of the Executive Board of Kotka. There is a rich flora and fauna in the park, especially the bird life. The grove holds history, too: there are house structures that belonged to the Ruotsinsalmi fortress system, such as the foundations of a gunpowder magazine and the footing of brick barracks. (City of Kotka)

The Katariina Seaside Park would be an ideal location for outdoors pole dance activity. Beautiful seaside landscapes are traditional locations for muscle beaches, which are "beach playgrounds" that celebrate physical culture with acrobatics and bodybuilding. The Katariina Seaside Park would create a stunning backdrop to the pole dance and acrobatics photography and videos (Figure 7). Furthermore, as a recreational environment the park would make a refreshing summertime outdoor dance studio, where the hobbyists could gather to relax, have some variety to the training, arrange meetings and picnics and maybe organize shows and competitions. The Katariina Seaside Park is also a place for various happenings, which would make it a suitable place for dance school and studios to make gigs, get publicity and inspire new people to the sport and maybe become new hobbyists.



Figure 7. The Katariina Seaside Park would be a suitable location for an outdoors pole dance "studio" (Photo: Anne Vilkki-Lanu)

#### 5 LAPPSET GROUP LTD.

Lappset is a visionary company that creates equipment for playgrounds, outdoor sport areas and furniture for parks.

Antero Ikäheimo, who had a vision of warm and soft playing environment for children, established Lappset in 1970 in the Finnish Lapland. He wanted to manufacture wooden playing racks, which would encourage children to climb and test their balance by exploring different ways to move themselves. While playing the children would develop their sense of balance and strength. Moreover, Ikäheimo saw the importance of creating meeting places where different generations of people could interact and find wellbeing in play.

Lappset soon became known all over Finland, and by the 1970s they made sales calls in Scandinavia, the Benelux countries and Japan. At that time Lappset focused on developing new solutions and investing in product and business development which led to the use of innovative groove cutting technique, which makes it possible to control the natural wood splitting.

Furthermore, in the 1980s Lappset was the first company in the industry that took the step towards computer-aided design (CAD).

The Lappset Company has grown rapidly, now having subsidiaries in five countries. Over 70 percent of the turnover comes from abroad and Lappset exports to more than 40 countries.

Lappset wants to expand the idea of playing and make playing possible everywhere. Moreover, everybody should be allowed to play, regardless of the age or the location. Playing and learning go together. Moreover, playing serves many purposes, such as relaxation, learning and physical exercise. As their values Lappset lists: "Growth is our passion. Sustainability is in our DNA. We respect and motivate people. Success is our pleasure."

Lappset believes in "Play Evolution", which means finding new perspectives for life by promoting natural playfulness. While playing, people of all ages can feel sensations of success and inspiration. In addition, physical play has same health benefits as physical exercise, but without the stress usually associated with exercising.

Design, environment and safety are issues that Lappset takes seriously. Equipment must adapt to the needs of the user and be durable. Even a challenging play must be safe – the products are always in conformance with the safety standards. The equipment is designed to support social and motor development (Figure 8). By manufacturing long-lasting products Lappset saves environment: the minimum estimated life of a product is fifteen years. In addition, the manufacturing, packing and delivery are done with the smallest environmental burden possible. The products are mainly made with certified Finnish wood, which is a renewable resource. The Lappset has received several awards, such as Reward of the Green Spaces in 2007, Award of the Finnish Exercise Act of the year 2007, The best exercise product of the year 2010 (Parkour concept) just to name a few. (Lappset)



Figure 8. Two young girls are having fun and learning social skills while playing and developing their motor abilities (Picture: Lappset Mediabank)

## 6 RESULTS

This section is divided into four parts in order to facilitate examining the results and to help in organizing the visualization of the results.

# 6.1 Autoethnographic diary

Autoethnography is a qualitative method which provides specific knowledge about particular lives, experiences and relationships (Adams et al. 2015, 21). Since I am a pole dancer, woman and the mother of a daughter, it makes sense to include my own experience and relationships in this work. In addition, my own passion to dance and nature made me choose this topic for my bachelor's thesis: our ideas for research projects are often guided by the experiences and questions we have in our lives (ibid: 26). Autoethnography shows how and why particular experiences are challenging, important or transformative (ibid: 27). Autoethnography as a research method works fine in a user-oriented project such as this, because it offers insight into social experiences that cannot be observed directly, because they occur in their own

time (ibid: 32). I dare to claim that it is not possible to know exactly what it means being a pole dancer, if you are not a pole dancer yourself.

Autoethnographies often begin as diary entries, narratives, poetry or blogs in which the writer explores his or her experience with the goal of understanding that experience (Adams et al. 2015, 68). I wrote my autoethnographic diary for 39 days: what I did during the day, how I felt, whom I met and what time I woke up and went to bed. For the analysis I picked up excerpts that I consider the most relevant to this study. Furthermore, I was looking for clues which can be repeated images, phrases and experiences (ibid: 77).

Monday, 7 December 2015. I woke my daughter up and made some coffee. I browsed through the new pictures on Instagram. It gives me inspiration for the day... I told my friend about my thesis topic. She offered me another point of view to think about: one motivation to physical exercise might be that women want to be strong and capable to defence themselves. And she agreed that dancing plays is a big part when talking about moving women and girls.

Not all my friends are pole dances or into physical activity at all, but I still like to share my ideas, hear opinions and receive feedback. In addition, I often use Instagram to learn new pole and yoga moves and get inspired by other dancers, yogis and artists. Furthermore, the encouraging atmosphere and the willingness to share tips and hints on Instagram appeals to me. Autoethnographers also examine other relevant personal and cultural texts, such as photos, diaries and blogs to use these sources of information to determine how their experiences contribute to others' experiences by either complementing or contrasting them (Adams et al. 2015, 49).

Tuesday, 8 December 2015. I have so many ideas in my head that I decided to take it easy this morning and take a walk, since it's fair outside. I'll let my thoughts settle a bit and continue writing my thesis after that.

If I have too many things in my head it is very hard to concentrate on working. Taking long walks clears my mind and gives me an energy boost and creativity.

Wednesday, 9 December 2015: I was 40 minutes ahead of time in the studio for my ballet class, so I had time to stretch while I was watching the teacher practising the choreography of the day. I love to watch people doing what

they're good at... My ex-colleague also goes to the same ballet class. It's nice to see her once a week and share thoughts and news.

As a studying and working mother most of the time my life is very busy. I do not have time to meet my friends over a coffee or visit them very often. Mostly I meet my friends in my hobbies, which I enjoy. I am an active person, so I am not that interested in just sitting and talking anyways. I rather do things with my friends.

Thursday, 10 December 2015: At the pole dance class we stretched in new ways, talked and laughed with the girls. We practised spins and an Ayesha with an elbow grip, which is a very scary move. I even got a bruise into my elbow. After the class I chatted with my friends, shot a video of them and just wandered around the studio, because I've had lost my car keys into the pocket of my hoodie.

Stretching at the beginning and in end of the class is the time to share thoughts and joke around. Sometimes we stretch in pairs, when the weight or assistance of the partner helps to intensify and deepen the stretch. That is also a nice moment for bonding. I think everybody has certain moves that feel especially scary. One move that is easy for one person can be difficult and frightening to someone else. A good pole dance instructor is empathetic and takes fears seriously and offers spotting, when the student struggles with new or scary moves. In addition, shooting videos and taking photos are very common in pole dance. It helps you analyse your alignments and poses and therefore become a better dancer.

Friday, 11 December 2015: I have done yin yoga once before, last summer at the beach and after it started to rain, we went into a goahti and did yoga around the crackling fire pit. So, my expectations were high... One and half hours of Yin yoga was relaxing, but also painful, and that's why I don't really bother doing it home. A certain kind of surroundings and atmosphere are needed in order to be able to enjoy the ritual and get all the benefits. In the end, during the relaxation, our nice and funny yoga teacher came and pulled our heads and pushed down our chests with her peppermint scented hands. The scent reminded me of spa holidays with my husband. As I drove home I felt relaxed, joyful and a bit light-headed.

Monday, 14 December 2015: My mother called if I could visit her and see if the yoga bolster she sews for me is right sized. I walked to my parent's house, because they live only a kilometre away from us. The bolster looked and felt really good. While walking back home I listened to music on my phone. I have a playlist full of inspiring music and I think of nice spins and other choreographies when I take my walks.

Tuesday, 15 December 2015: The pole dance class was so much fun and I was able to try out all the moves I had on my wish list for today. Though, none of them was a big success. I had chosen tricky moves, even though they looked easy to me.

There are people who think that pole dance is easy and that pole dance is not a sport. They even may think that a pole dancer is the same thing as a stripper. However, the truth is that pole dance is a difficult sport which demands muscle, flexibility and some stamina. The moves may look easy when they are performed by a skilled and experienced dancer.

Wednesday, 16 December 2015: I keep noticing that when I practise yoga, pole dance or ballet I really don't think about anything else. You must stay very concentrated while practising those sports, so your mind wont wander to work or study issues or you don't worry about your family's financial circumstances. Moreover, while practising yoga I get my best ideas about life and myself: I feel that things are going to go as they're meant to. I feel good, I feel that I am enough and I can let go of excessive control.

Thursday, 17 December 2015: We were practising pair acrobatics and basic tricks, such as handstand in the pole class. I'm so scared of handstand! Luckily my pole dance friends are nice and they always spot and support, so I wont fall. Two hours of pole dance and other tricks was so much fun.

Friday, 1 January 2016: I stretched my back a bit and took some photos of the progress. I tested out my new yoga bolster and different ways to target the stretch to my upper back and shoulders by using a gym ball and mats.

It is useful to photograph the moves and stretching, since it will allow keeping track on the progress by comparing old and new photographs.

Friday, 8 January 2016: I managed to get a little bit of work done before my friend arrived. First we had tea and ate some dark chocolate with ginger I bought today: I read somewhere that dark chocolate enhances calorie burning. We started out the training session with stretching. We looked for pole dance moves on Instagram. The pole didn't warm up properly, and both Elisa and I were stiff from the cold weather and the crossfit class we went to yesterday, so dancing was very difficult. I took some photos of Elisa practising jade split move. In the end we got excited about stretching. We practised splits and a yoga asana called king pigeon, which is a position I thought I would never – or at least in near future – be able to bend my back into.

It feels great to be surprised by your own body and its capacity. That feeling motivates to continue difficult and sometimes even painful sports such as pole dance. It is almost like getting hooked on the feeling of progress.

Tuesday, 12 January 2016: We used both a pole and an aerial hoop to practise challenging moves, which demand both strength and flexibility. On aerial hoop I managed to do a move called machine gun, but on the pole it was much more difficult.

Sometimes pole dancers have periods of bad pole days, when all the progress stops, nothing works out and even the old, familiar moves feel difficult. Then it is good to try other equipment, like aerial hoop or silks instead of trying to force the body to those moves on the pole. Even if dance is hard sometimes, it should still be fun.

Pole dance path can be very emotional. It is a sport of highs from success and excelling oneself, frustration because of the advanced moves that demand strength and flexibility that you may now have in your body yet. It is a sport of pain and bruises, but even the bruises are seen as something we are proud of: they are called "pole kisses" – pieces of evidence of our passion and hard work. By pole dancing it is possible to test your physical and mental limits and maybe find new ways of being who you are. To me pole dance has been an empowering project. I never knew that I was this strong and had so much courage. Often research projects begin with events – epiphanies – that turn our thinking, feelings, sense of self and the other world inside out (Adams et al. 2015, 47).

# 6.2 Expert interviews

Five adult women with various professional expertize in the field of physical exercise between ages 26–40 were interviewed. The semi-structured interviews were recorded and after that transcribed. The frames of questions both in English and Finnish are attached to this thesis (Appendix 1). The purpose of the interviews was to gain valuable information by trying to understand the target user-group by taking a people-centred, empathetic approach and see the users not only from an observational perspective, but also as essential sources of innovation and creativity (Ojasalo 2009, 102).

There were five different themes with twenty questions and for three of the interviewees – those with children – there was a sixth theme with five questions concerning children and physical exercise (Chapter 6.3). Furthermore, various questions tailored to match the field of expertize of the interviewee were asked and discussed. The interview consisted of both closed and open-ended questions. Open-ended questions provide text, sentences and stories (Kananen 2014, 25), and it was especially notable that mostly the interviewees did not only answer the question, but also told a story or two relating to the question, which was merely positive: encouraging people to storytelling reveals much more than basic facts (Samalionis 2009, 126).

A semi-structured interview offers the researcher a chance to understand the differences between different people and groups by making many people to have a conversation about the same subject, and both differences and similarities in answers can be under interest (Kananen 2014, 86). I chose not to code the interviews after transcribing, because I did not want to lose any information. I looked for the parts that were most relevant to the study and the questions asked and arranged the English translations in Excel tables. In the analysis I aimed to find similarities and patterns in the different interviewees answers, but I was interested in single opinions and point of views as well. I also wanted to see if the answers correlated with the ideas and expectations of mine based on the information I had acquired by observing people, doing autoethnography and reading articles and studies about the subjects relevant to my study.

The professional information of the interviewees in presented in Table 1. Pinja works as a yoga teacher and is an owner of a yoga studio and therefore she is a good source of the information about the expectations and needs of yogis. Sini's experience as a pole dance and acrobatics teacher offers important insight into the world of acrobatics. In addition, as a wellbeing coach she can speak out on the idea of wellbeing. Elisa is a physiotherapist and her expertize in functional human body provides a valuable aspect to this work. Sanna is a class teacher, but also a gymnastic instructor. Her experience in moving both children and women offers interesting points of view to the conversation. Milja is a classical ballet teacher and a Rope Work Supervisor. Her ideas of dance, aesthetics and activities in nature are fascinating and incisive.

Table 1. The occupational information of the interviewees

Question	Pinja	Sini	Elisa	Sanna	Milja
1) Your name, occupation and what do you do for a living?	Yoga teacher	Hairstylist pole dance and aerial acrobatics teacher and well- being coach	Physiotherapist	Group gymnastics	MFA (textile industry) Teacher Classical ballet teacher Rope Work Supervisor

The habits of the physical exercise of the five women interviewed are listed in Table 2. Four of the interviews considered themselves as sporty personalities. Only Sanna thought otherwise: she said she used to be much more active than she is nowadays. Yoga was among the favourite ways to exercise with Pinja, Sini and Elisa. Sini and Elisa also liked pole dance. Sanna liked gym and group exercises and Milja's favourite was dance. Other sports mentioned were acrobatics in general, snowboarding and jogging. The favourite sports were described as "versatile" and "challenging". The motivation to practise them was that "it feels good" or that it "resets your mind". Milja found dance as a "natural way to express things" and for Pinja yoga represented freedom. Both group exercise and practising alone were fine with all the five women. Sanna found group pressure motivating. Pinja, Sini and Sanna preferred exercising outdoors: fresh air and nature were considered appealing. Milja and Elisa liked to practise both in and outdoors. The Finnish climate was regarded as challenging for the outdoor activities.

Opinions about the selection of physical activities in Kouvola were asked, and two of the women did not find the selection wide enough: the lack of possibilities to practise parkour in wintertime and learn adult acrobatics were mentioned. On the other hand the places for outdoor activities in Kouvola were considered versatile, for example jogging and ski trails, skating-rinks and Repovesi were mentioned by the interviewees.

The women were also asked to describe the surroundings they find appealing for physical exercising. Harmonic and beautiful, earthy colour scheme, uncluttered, clean and functional, lightness and feeling of space, comfortable floor, cosiness, right temperature, no echoing, windows, easy access, welcoming atmosphere and more than one activity in one place were the features the interviewees found important and attractive while exercising indoors. Nature, trees and grass, water elements, open space and absence of heavy traffic, noise and pollution were among the things that appealed the women in places for outdoor activities.

Table 2. The habits of physical exercise of the interviewees

Question	Pinja	Sini	Elisa	Sanna	Milja
2) Habits of physical exercise					
a) Would you describe yourself as a sporty personality and why?	Yes, I've always been doing many many kinds of sports.	Yes, nowadays. I'm interested in wellbeing and doing physical exercise cured me.	Yes, every day I exercise in one way or another.	Nowadays, no. I used to exercise much more.	Yes. Doing different kind of physical exercise has always been my hobby and also a part of my work.
b) What is your favourite way to exercise?	Yoga	Every kind of acro- batics: pole dance, lyra, aerial silks. Also snowboarding and yoga.	Pole dance, yoga and jogging.	Gym/group exercise	Dance.
c) Describe your favourite way to exercise. Why do you like it so much?	It is versatile. It makes me feel good. It affects you deeper than just a sport. It's a lifestyle, it's freedom.	All the cool tricks! You can keep challenging yourself and overcome your fears. You can see the progress. You wont get bored. And it feels good.	They challenge the body comprehensively, both strength and flexibility are needed. The challenge and the opportunity to always learn something new, which motivates.	The difficult choreographies are a great way to reset your mind, because all you can think is what you're doing right now! And at the same time you do physical exercise!	It is very versatile. The artistic expression. It's a state of mind. For me it's a natural way to express things.
d) Would you rather exercise in a group or alone? Why?	Even if you do yoga in a group, you're alone on your mat, in your yoga practise. But I can't really tell which one I prefer.	I used to exercise alone and I thought I hate group exercise! Pole dance is kind of individual exercise in a group.	I used to exercise alone, but nowadays it's nice to exercise with people I know. But exercising alone is fine too.	I'd rather exercise in a group. The group pressure is motivating. But I also like to run alone.	I like to teach groups.
e) Would you rather exercise indoors or outdoors? Why?	Absolutely outside: fresh air, nature sounds, the view. It's easier to be a part of nature outdoors. Here in North it may be challenging though.	Outside, if I'm wearing enough clothes. But rather indoors, - if it's cold outside. I don't like being cold.	Both in and outdoors. If I work indoors it's nice to exercise outdoors. In wintertime the nature of these sports drives us indoors, but in summertime you can do yoga outdoors, too.	Outside. Walking the dog in the forest is the best. The fresh air and the relaxing nature.	I can't tell which one I prefer. If it's cold and sleeting I'd rather stay indoors!
f) - What do you think about the selection of physical exercise activities in your city (Kouvola)? Is it wide enough?	Now when we have this yoga studio - yes. In Kouvola we have sport clubs, nature and even a ski centre in Mielakka.	No, it's not. That's why I moved away. There's no place for adult's acrobatics.	Yes. Better than in the cities and towns I used to live earlier.		
g) What do you think about the Kouvola's outdoor activities and the places for outdoor recreation?	We have a lot of nature, many skating- rinks and very good ski trails.	In Kouvola we have jogging trails and some those even have old, fun fitness racks I like. The playgrounds I find quite bland.	The jogging trails are good. You can also walk your dog there and let it run free, too. In summertime I play tennis, and often the courts are already reserved. I find the booking system difficult to use.	In Valkeala sport centre there are many activities, such as ski trails, fitness trails, skating-rinks, football fields and frisbee tracks. But I rarely use them because I like to walk my dog in the forest.	smaller nice places closer home. There is a good jogging trail right next to my home.
find attractive?	If you think about yoga the space should be harmonic and uncultured, a place where it's easy to relax and feel light. The colour scheme in this studio of mine is earthy. Outdoors: nature, no traffic close, trees, grass and sand. Water is a strong element!	Green and open space. Water elements and fun racks to climb. Indoors: old, high, maybe industrial buildings and milieus like Ruukinkinportti in Kuusankoski/	Indoors: lightness and feeling of space. Windows to draw natural light in to the room. In pole dance height of the room is important. The right temperature, it's not nice to be cold. And outdoors: open, big enough space to move, no big roads nearby, no noise or pollution. A place close to the nature and neighbourhood.	right places, so you don't have to waste time looking for them. In Valkeala-talo I like it how there are several	functional. The floor should be nice and feel comfortable. No echoing. A cozy place, not a huge, bleak hall. Easy access and a welcoming

The third theme was wellbeing (Table 3). The first question was about the definition of wellbeing and what wellbeing meant to the interviewees. Wellbeing was seen as a proper way of taking care of oneself: sleeping enough, eating well and exercising regularly. There was an agreement that mental health plays an important part in wellbeing: accepting who you are,

having healthy social life and relationships with other people, engaging in activities that make you happy and working enough, but not too long hours.

I was also curious to know how the interviewees perceived themselves. Every interviewee considered herself healthy, happy and basically well-being, but there are also swings in those feelings and desires to be fitter and more capable. Looks are a very sensitive subject to women and girls, and I considered whether or not I was going to make a question about it. The media creates unreasonable expectations for women's looks and roles. I started to accept my body and create a better self-image when I started pole dance, and that is why I wanted to know what these five women with physically active lifestyles think about themselves and their appearance. None of the women admitted being *perfectly* happy with their looks and with who they are. The common idea seemed to be that it is almost impossible for anybody to be fully satisfied with his or her own appearance and ways of being - especially for women. However, none of the interviewees seemed to be insecure about who they are and how they look: "Nowadays I trust my own opinions, and my looks, well, I wouldn't pay money to fix it!" or "But basically I don't worry about those kind of things." And as Pinja says: "We should see ourselves through someone else's eyes. No one else sees your little flaws like you do."

Table 3. The interviewees' ideas of wellbeing

Question	Pinja	Sini	Elisa	Sanna	Milja
3) Wellbeing and health					
a) What wellbeing consists of? What do you think a word wellbeing means? What it means to you?	It's a very vide concept! How you treat yourself - physically and mentally. How you talk to yourself and how you think about yourself. It's accepting who you are. It's also what you eat and how you move. It's doing things that make you truly happy.	things that you like to	yourself: physical exercise, sleep and right nutrition. Also the social relation- ships and doing things you enjoy doing. Treating your body	Wellbeing means, that you feel good in your body mentally and physically. Just all the basic things: sleep, eat well and move. Simple!	Wellbeing means feeling comfortable being who you are. It's having life in your own hands. And if there are things you can't change, you can accept them. It's feeling good physically and mentally. What you eat and how you exercise affect on you phyiscally. Though, physical exercise also gives you a rhythm and routine and strains and challenges you and maybe distracts your mind from worrying.
b) Do you find yourself being healthy and well being?	Yes, at least at this moment! It goes in periods, but that's my goal. Sometimes I feel like devouring French fries and a whole chocolate bar and after doing that I don't feel that great, but life goes on. You can always take a new direction, a fresh start. Dwelling on things is unhealthy.	I feel healthier and better than ever before! I made a decision to work only on three days a week. Even if those days are long I still have time for my hobbies and to develop my skills. I have less money, but I noticed, that I don't need that much money after all. I still have to learn to rest more!	I feel that I'm healthy, because I can move and I can do things I enjoy doing. My body doesn't hurt either. Of course I can always develop myself and challenging myself makes me feel good mentally, too.	It keeps changing At the moment I feel that I'm not as fit as I'd like to be. But other than that I feel good. Now in my forties I've started noticing little pains here and there. You also face your physical limits. I should change my ways of excercise from rough sports to softer ones.	Yep, yes I do.
c) Do you find yourself happy?	Yes. I love this work and I love to teach.	Yes. Pole dance gave me an opportunity to have this kind of situation and lifestyle that makes me happy.	Yes. Basically I'm happy and satisfied. I have nothing to complain.	Yes.	Yes, I am happy!
d) Are you happy with your looks and with who you are?	I'm still learning every day how to love myself as I am. Especially us, women, tend to criticise ourselves so much. When I feel good I'm happy with who I am, but in my weak moments I lash myself. We should see ourselves with someone else's eyes. No one else sees your little flaws like you do.	body is happy with his or her own looks, but it's something you'll learn when you get older. To appreciate yourself. Nowadays I trust my own opinions, and my looks, well I	As a woman you look in the mirror with a critical eye But basically I'm satisfied. But you could tighten up here and there and be more flexible and more bendy.	I think women never are. I should get rid of the extra kilos here and there. It frustrates me that I used to be in a better shape. Now I can't run as far without getting out of breath. I'm not flexible anymore. I'm not as strong as I used to be. If I want to do a handstand I need to warm up a crazily long time.	basically I don't worry about those kind of

The fourth theme was nature and environment (Table 4). The interviewees felt very strongly about nature and its importance: "Nature means life", "Without it we wouldn't exist either" and "I really appreciate untouched nature and its beauty." Nature was regarded as a refreshing place to relax and unwind. It is a place to take a dog for a walk. Nature was seen as powerful, but also as something that needs to be protected and conserved. Furthermore, all the five women spent time in nature often, or at least tried to go there as often as possible. The words for the feelings they reported to experience in nature were peace, freedom, calmness and feelings of being leisured, present and observing.

Since the topic of this work is park design, I thought it would be useful to find out if the interviewees even spend time in parks and if they had any opinions of Kouvola's existing parks. According to the answers the women were not used to spending time in parks. For example Sanna and Milja rather went to a forest. Elisa went to the park to play Frisbee golf and to socialize with her friends in summertime. Sini would like to go to parks more often, but she was not happy with the intoxicated people – the only people in Kouvola's parks in her experience. Opinions of the sizes of Kouvola's parks varied from decent sized to small. Kirkkopuisto Park in Kuusankoski and Urheilupuisto Park in Kouvola were considered fine and pretty. In Pinja's opinion there are not enough benches in the parks, the parks are plain and there should be more events.

Because one of my dreams is to make people spend more time in parks and make the park culture break through in Kouvola I needed to know what characteristics would attract the interviewees to visit parks. I also asked them to describe their dream parks to me. According to the answers a reasonable size, abundance of trees, water elements, flowers, benches and shady places to sit in, sand roads and meandering paths, green grass areas and bushes, activities for children, atmospheric surroundings, presence of people, equipment for fitness and acrobatics and coffee shops, market stands and ice-cream kiosks are attributes to an alluring park.

Table 4. The questions and answers about nature and environment

Question	Pinja	Sini	Elisa	Sanna	Milja
4) Nature and environment					
a) What does nature mean to you?	It's Mother Nature. Without it we wouldn't exist either. It's extremely important. It's powerful and it rules the Earth, not the humankind. It's us who have to adjust.	Nature means life. As long as we have something green growing here the things are quite all right. Somehow I also find old building as a part of nature. Nature refreshes you and keeps you sane.	It's a place to unwind. When I take a walk in natur I enjoy silence and prefer not to have my cell-phone around. Also, it's a place to walk my dog. In summertime I like to go to our cottage. I like water.	It's a place to relax and rest. I have a dog, and when I take him for a walk into the forest, that's My Moment.	It means very, very much to me. I really appreciate untouched nature and it's beauty. I enjoy nature. It's a resource we must not waste or loose, instead we must protect, conserve and respect it.
b) Do you often go to nature? How does it feel?	It's like a "my soul rests" kind of experience. I feel peace and freedom, kind of like when I practise yoga. I try to spend time in nature as often as possible. I'm just a small human being in the middle of nature.	It feels good! It's great when you snowboard in wintertime and you look at the view from the top of the hill and everything looks so small. I also love fresh snow! In summer I like all the scents and all the green. In spring I like earth worms. I like to bike or take my morning walks to the lake. I may stop, sit down and drink coffee in my thermos. It's calming to look at water, greennes and old buildings.	Yes, every day. I take my dog to the places where he can run out of leash.	Yes I do, and it feels good. For example the hiking trips to Repovesi last autumn gave me nice memories and I enjoyed it so very much. Just walking and eating a packed lunch	
c) Do you spend time in parks? When and how?	I can't say that I spend a lot of time in parks, but I appreciate it that cities have parks.	Yes, in summer I like just sit there with my friends or hang up trapezes to the trees. I'd like to spend more time in the parks here, but for example in the Keskuspuisto in Kouvola the only people there are the winos who just get drunk there.		No, I don't spend time in parks. I prefer a forest. I don't go to playgrounds either, even if I have a young child.	No, I don't spend time in parks. If I make time for outdoor activities I rather go to the forest. Though, it would be nice to spot old and interesting trees in parks and photograph them!
d) What is your opinion of the parks in Kouvola?	It's nice that we have some parks in the Kouvola centrum, too, and that the 're decent sized. I think our parks aren't the worst possible examples, but there are things to improve: there are no benches to sit. There should be more happenings! The parks could be more pleasant and not so plain.	See the answer to the previous question.	I think Kouvola's Urheilupuisto is quite pretty: there's a little bit of a water element represented, some flowerbeds and places to sunbathe. Other parks here I don't really know that well.	Because I like nature and greenness I think that parks are important fresh oases in the middle of the cities and that they're necessary.	They're small. That Kirkkopuisto in Kuusankoski looks good and fine. And the one in Kettumäki with the museum houses is nice and quite big. I don't know if it's a park or forest, though.
a) What kind of park would please you?  Describe your dream park.	Esplanadin puisto in Helsinki is wonderful! There're market stands, lot of benches to sit down and a nice atmosphere. In summer there are different kinds of flowers. It's like a hangout! There're enough trees, too. You can look at people and relax. The of course Central Park in New York is fantastic! They have water and everything there.	My dream park is almost like Koskipuisto in Tampere, but there should be more green and flat areas where I could stand my pole stage on. I like Koskipuisto, because there are water, trees, grass and a sand road. I also like the "love bridge" and the padlocks there! The trees are some exotic species. And there're always people there. It's nice to meet people in a park.	and different kinds of flowerbeds and a water element, maybe a fountain. There would be a lot of light, but also shady sitting places. Some equipment for acrobatics would be	There would be water and the paths would go near that water, too. Big trees and groups of bushes. Benches to sit down. Swinging, climbing and digging for kids. The park should be big enough and there would be enough paths to walk.	

The fifth theme addressed safety and privacy (Table 5). According to the answers every interviewee felt safe while exercising outdoors and social fears

were not a restrictive factor to outdoor sports: "I don't think that kind of people hang around in the same places with me." The familiar neighbourhood was found safe, even though darkness was admitted as being somewhat frightening.

Because of the idea of a wellbeing park being an outdoor gym and dance studio and the presence of other people is inevitable it seemed important to examine how the interviewees felt about their privacy: is it bothering, if you are watched while you exercise? The overall feeling was rather positive: "I think it's nice if my example inspires other people to try acrobatics too!" or "...it's like free advertising!" Only harassing behaviour was regarded as unpleasant.

Table 5. The interviewees' impressions about safety and privacy

Question	Pinia	Sini	Elisa	Sanna	Milia
5) Safety and privacy	i nija	Oiiii	Liidu	Gainia	Milya
,					
a) Do you feel safe while exercising outdoors?	Yes, I feel safe.	Yes, I feel safe. Long ago I was afraid that a junkie or something would attack me, but not anymore. I don't think that kind of people hang around in the same places with me.	I feel safe. I haven't had any troubles with my safety.	Yes, I feel safe when I move in my own, familiar neighbourhood where I know the paths. Darkness can be a bit scary, but if there's enough light I'm not afraid.	Yes, I feel safe in Kouvola.
b) Do you mind if by-passers look at you exercising?	I don't mind at all! One great thing with the central location and the big windows of this studio is that when I practise here people can see me, so it's like free advertasing!. Also, when I do yoga I'm so concentrated that I don't even notice the people around me.	No, I don't mind. I think it's nice if my example inspires other people to try acrobatics too! I haven't got any negative feedback when doing acrobatics in public places.	I don't mind. Maybe they want to try the tricks themselves, too? Or maybe they're just admiring! I have also taken part to park gymnastics.	It depends on how they look at mel If they just walk by I don't mind. But if they stop and start talking to me or buzz around me That I don't like.	No, I don't mind. I'd love to instruct park gymnastics! I took par to park gymnastics in Helsinki. It was so common and frequent there that no-one found it weird.

After themes 1–5 that were common to all the interviewees we moved on to theme seven (the sixth theme concerning children and physical exercise is discussed in Chapter 6.3): the questions tailored to match the interviewee's expertize. First I asked the women to read through the comic strip storyboard scenario (Figures 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13).



Figure 9. The first page of the storyboard scenario



Figure 10. The second page of the storyboard scenario



Figure 11. The third page of the storyboard scenario



Figure 12. The fourth page of the storyboard scenario

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Figure 13. The fifth and the last page of the storyboard scenario

After the interviewees had read the storyboard scenario I asked them to give me feedback (Table 6) on it, asking questions such as did you find the story realistic and logical? Are there any other activities you would like to add to the story? Did the scenario convey the idea of the wellbeing park properly? In addition, the interviewees commented on the planned location of the park.

The idea of the fruit stands and the fresh bread available to buy in the park were considered a nice idea. The suggestion of a band playing also received positive feedback, as did the circus practising. The storyboard gave Milja a communal feeling, and Sanna pointed out the part in which the little girl in the story sees the older girls playing with the aerial hoop; according to Sanna especially small children have a strong tendency to simulate the older ones. The planned location of the park – Rantapuisto Park in Kuusankoski – was found suitable for the purpose: "It is so pleasant to walk by the water. Water is a strong element that appeals to most of the people." Moreover, the location was perceived rather central. The park was seen as a beautiful and nice place that would attract every kind of people, not only dancers or acrobats.

The interviewees presented ideas for additional activities too: picnic, brunch and pop up restaurant days and events, equipment rental, growing up edible fruits and berries in the park, riverbank culture events, open-air theatre and concerts. Furthermore, people may bring their friends there. Someone can fall in love. There might be someone juggling or riding a unicycle. If there is a large amount of people in the park they may even build up a human pyramid. The park could be a place for spending freetime: an outdoors living room where you could make the most of the short Finnish summer.

The storyboard scenario also highlighted some valid points to think about, such as scheduled activities in the park: it was stated that a family from the center of Kouvola might go there by car and might need a special reason to go to the park, such as a band playing a gig or a scheduled yoga class. A proper channel for informing about the park and the events would be needed, and that channel could, for example, be a Facebook page with other social media.

Moreover, the time people have to spend in the park was questioned. "People buy a week's holiday away from here... But what if they could live a more active life right here?" Maas et al. (2008) found out that the link between physical activity and green space was the strongest for people under 25 years old, for elderly people and for people with lower education and income, which suggests that children, the elderly and lower socio-economic groups spend more time in the vicinity of there homes and are therefore more affected by

the design of their direct living environment. It is important to remember that not everybody can afford refreshing trips to spas or travel abroad to relax at the beach. Lack of a driver's licence or car prevents children and elderly people from driving to look for a sanctuary far from home. However, the part of society who is tied up to their own neighbourhood also needs relaxing and inspiring environments for mental and physical wellbeing. As Maas et al. (2006, 591) present, policy makers should take the amount of green space in the living area account when aiming to improve the health of the elderly, youth and lower socioeconomic groups in the cities. Therefore designing attractive parks for recreation and social life is an investment in common and equal wellbeing and health.

Table 6. Comments and feedback on the storyboard scenario

Question Answer

# 7) Extra questions to Pinja (tailored to match the expertize of the questionee's as a yoga teacher)

a) Do you have any comments on the comic strip scenario of the idea of the wellbeing park? (Would you like to add something there? Does it feel logical? Is there something you find unrealistic? Are there any other activities in your mind the characters of the story could do in the park? Does the scenario give you the idea of the park?) a) I like the fruit stands and the idea of buying fresh bread there. A park would be a nicer market place than for example Pedestrian street Manski. The family of the story probably lives near the park. A family from "old" Kouvola centrum would propably go there by car. They might need a special reason to go to the park, such as a band playing a gig or a scheduled yoga class. People taking random walks must be those who live near by. It's important to do the timing so that the food stands are open when there are happenings and people in the park. If you think about cities and town they're built around water systems, unlike Kouvola centrum. The Kymi would be an idyllic place for a city center. I think that the river is a big advantage to Kuusankoski. At least I find it so pleasant to walk by the water. Water is a strong element that appeals to most of the people. That's why the sea cities are popular summer cities as well. And Lappeenranta because of Saimaa. If the centrum of Kouvola was extending, I'd say it would go towards the beaches of The Kymi.

#### 7) Extra questions to Sini (tailored to match the expertize of the questionee's as a pole dance and acrobatics teacher)

a) Do you have any comments on the comic strip scenario of the idea of the wellbeing park? (Does it feel logical? Is there something you find unrealistic? As a pole dance and acrobatic teacher do you have something in your mind that you would like to add to the story?)

a) Well, you can find love there, in the park. A nice place like that park attract people - also those people, who aren't acrobats or dancers themselves, but like to look at people doing tricks. People may bring their friends with them, too, and then there're chances to fall in love with someone or find new friends. I also liked the idea of a band playing in the park. And the circus part... There might be someone juggling or riding a unicycle! And with lots of people even a human pyramid may happen! After spending time in the park you might continue your day with friends on a bar's terrace. And if it's a beautifu! Saturday or Sunday, you can go buy strawberries and other food to have with your friends while you're enjoying a brunch after a party night. Maybe you could even cook the food in the park. Restaurant days, such as those they arrange in Helsinki, could also happen in the park. People are interested in cooking nowadays: you could do a little bit of business at the same time, while launching your new innovation, an avocado burger! Having picnic days like that would become a tradition. People are so busy nowadays. I've clients, who gather once a month with their friends to do something fun. The park could be a hangout, so you don't always have to go to a restaurant or movies. Why wouldn't we make the most of the Finnish summer?

# 7) Extra questions to Elisa (tailored to match the expertize of the questionee's as a physiotherapist)

a) Do you have any comments on the comic strip scenario of the idea of the wellbeing park? (Would you like to add something there? Does it feel logical? Is there something you find unrealistic? Are there any other activities in your mind the characters of the story could do in the park?)

a) This sounds and looks like a nice idea. Also the location is good. I wonder if the water has to be still to SUP SUP boarding, so the flow wont take the board...? It would be nice if there were acro equipment for hire or to borrow, because they can be quite expensive, and not everybody can afford them. And a park like that can be used by every kind of people - not just acrobats. A pretty landscape is nice to look at and brings you peace of mind.

# 7) Extra questions to Sanna (tailored to match the expertize of the questionee's as a class teacher and gym instructor)

a) Do you have any comments on the comic strip scenario of the idea of the wellbeing park? (Would you like to add something there? Does it feel logical? Is there something you find unrealistic? Are there any other activities in your mind the characters of the story could do in the park?)

a) There's this part of the story when the girl watches the bigger girls doing tricks on aerial hoop. I go to ice skating with my daughter, and sometimes there're are figure skaters practising, too. It's amusing, how accurately a little person looks what the bigger ones are doing! So simulation really works - at least with smaller kids. They are so uninhibited, they don't think "Is it okay to try this?" yet. And this circus part: I think it's so great, that we have Tykkimäki circus school here and that they make appearances to happenings such as Kouvola Taiteiden Yö. People have chances to see, what kind of things it's possible to do here in Kouvola. Otherwise activities, like circus for example, are quite hidden here. So again, there're many kind of hobbies to do, but you must do some reaserch to find information about them. The location of this park is excellent. It's kind of central, too. There's potential in Kouvola. You just need to dig it up. You could build up every kind of beautiful trails, there, for example.

# 7) Extra questions to Milja (tailored to match the expertize of the questionee's as a classical ballet teacher)

a) Do you have any comments on the comic strip scenario of the idea of the wellbeing park? (As a ballet teacher would you like to add something to the story? Does it feel logical? Is there something you find unrealistic?)

a) This gives me a communal feeling. This is fun. In Pilkanmaa school they have berry bushes growing in the yard. I think it would be a nice idea to grow edible berries and fruits in parks. The idea of the park is nice, but I wonder how much people have time to spend? People buy a week's holiday away from here... But what if they could live more active life right here? There are nice areas here in Kouvola and Kuusankoski, but they're not very maintained. For example the riverbanks are not in recreational use. I think The Kymi is a great thing. When I moved here I found it so surprising, that no-one seemed to be interested in that river! I have my ateljee in Ruukinportti, in the old factory milieu. The riverbank there is all scrubby and decayed, but there're beautiful, old ruins and buildings made of red brick. And big, old trees, too. If they continue developing Taideruukki, that riverbank would make a nice place for culture happenings. There could be an open-air theater - for concerts for example - by the river. You can find all kind of cool things here if you just keep looking.

As mentioned earlier, Pinja works as a yoga teacher and owns a yoga studio in Kouvola. Therefore she is a good source of the information in order to find out what should be taken into account in park design from a yogi's point of view. I was also interested in possibilities to practise SUP yoga in Rantapuisto, and Pinja was interested in working as a teacher in case the

conditions allow SUP yoga in the river at that location. Pinja has already taught park yoga in previous summers. The challenges in the outdoors yoga practises she had faced were too high grass and other park activities, such as Frisbee golf. According to her, the ideal environment for yoga practise would be beautiful and free of traffic noise, but rich with nature sounds. Futhermore, in Pinja's opinion it is possible to practise aerial yoga outdoors as long as there are structures to hang up the silks. (Table 7)

Table 7. Extra questions to match Pinja's expertize as a yoga teacher

b) We talked about SUP yoga earlier today. Would you be interested in teaching SUP yoga if there were some boards and people, who are interested in it?

c) You've taught yoga outdoors as well - park yoga. Can you tell any experiences? What are the challenges while doing yoga outdoors? Is there anything that could be done to make make a yoga practice in a park even a better experience?

b) Yes, why not? Absolutely!

c) Mowing the lawn often enough is important, because if the grass is too high, the mat wont sit nicely on the ground. The lower the grass the better. The park in Kuusankoski near the river would be a nicer milieu than for example Urheilupuisto in Kouvola. In Urheilupuisto there is a Frisbee golf track, so there's a risk, that you can get hit by a Frisbee in the middle of your yoga practise. Also, the park in Kuusankoski is more beautiful. It would be nice the yoga place would be a bit further away from the traffic, so the noise wouldn't disturb your practise. Also, it would be good to hear nature sounds and make those the sounds you concentrate on in your practise.

yoga outdoors, too, if there were structures to hang the silks up?

d) What is your opinion, is it possible to practise aerial d) Yes, I like doing that! I have my own silk hung up on our terrace in summertime.

In Sini's opinion as a pole dance and acrobatics teacher the most important factors to consider in the design of the wellbeing park are the warnings of the weight-limits visible to all the users, the good quality equipment made of safe materials and regular safety inspections for both the equipment and the structures. In addition, the height where the user can climb up the equipment should be remained low enough. Sometimes there could be instructors in the park to teach people beginner's moves. (Table 8)

Table 8. Extra questions to match Sini's expertize as a pole dance and acrobatics teacher

are the things you need to consider while designing this kind of a park?

b) If you think about pole dance and acrobatics, what b) Those people, who pole dance or do acrobatics as their hobbies usually know, how to use the equipment safely. Outdoors you do those activities at your own risk, so you need to have common sense and be careful. If there are weight limits in the attachments, they should be announced in the way every user can see them. The poles should be made of materials, that don't cut a skin. The circus poles have rubbery surfaces, so you can do tricks on those poles in normal clothes. Of course the equipment and attachments should get checked up regularly, so that they are not broken or dangerous in other ways. If there are attachments for silks they shouldn't allow the user to climb up too high above the ground. And sometimes there could be instructors showing tricks and teaching some basic moves to the beginners.

In Elisa's case I wanted to hear professional opinions about pole dance and yoga as training disciplines (Table 9). As their main attribute Elisa mentioned development of coordination, strength and flexibility, which are abilities that are needed both in yoga and pole dance. Especially pole dance may appear risky to those who are not that committed to the sport. According to Elisa

injuries from falling or spraining can happen in other sports, too. Common sense is an important tool in avoiding accidents.

Elisa also described the most common troubles that women and girls have with their bodies. Women at their working age typically suffer back and neck problems, physically passive life and bad ergonomics being the main causes. Since inactive life is detrimental to the human body I asked for ways to encourage young girls to be more active. Encouraging trying different sports and finding your own way to move is important. Sporty friends can be a source of motivation. Parents should let their children try different sports, and find motivating ways to exercise as a family. Some enlightenment and education about the positive effects of regular physical exercise might work. Young children need a concrete meter and maybe a praising system to measure their development.

Table 9. Extra questions to match Elisa's expertize as a physiotherapist

attributes?

b) As a physiotherapist, how do you see pole dance b) Both in pole dance and in yoga it's important, that you can control your body and that you've coordination. In and yoga as physical exercises? What are their main order to be able to do moves in pole dance or yoga you need both strenght and flexibility. Pole dance and yoga also develop those two abilities, which is good! In voga it's important to know, how to control your deep core muscles in your middle. Same thing in pole dance. When you learn how to coordinate your muscles, you wont hurt - for example - your back that easily

c) How about the risks of injury in pole dance and yoga? Are there more risks or possibilities in doing these sports?

c) Injuries from falling or spraining can happen in any sport. I wouldn't profile pole dance or yoga as accidentprone sports. Of course you need to use common sense and make sure, that you have enough coordination to do the moves. You can always start slowly and go nice and easy. There're easier moves for beginners. It may happen, that you fall from the pole, and that's unfortunate, but again, use your common sense and don't climb too high. You can test a trick closer to the ground, too.

d) Can you – as a physiotherapist – name the most common troubles women and girls have with their

d) Women at their working age typically have problems with their backs and necks, mostly because of sitting in their desk work. There are problems in ergonomics. Also, people are often physically passive, some work long hours and they don't pay attention to their wellbeing. Of course that occurs in women and men. I have to teach people, how to fullfill the basic amount of physical exercise a human body needs in order to stay healthy. The sedentary lifestyle gives you weak muscles in your middle, when you're not strong enough to maintain a good posture. Then you sit in a bad position and get back problems.

exercise?

e) How would you encourage young girls to physical I would encourage them to be brave and go try different kind of sports. It's important, that everyone feels motivated in their hobbies. You can't force anyone to do anything she or he doesn't like to do. So, everybody should find a sport that feels "my thing". Usually children need some guidance. If the parents wont show her or him any hobbies or take the child there, there is a risk, that the child will grow up a passive adult. Also, there're many possibilities to exercise with the family, but I think, that most young people rather do sports with their friends. So, an active group of friends can be a key, too. Girls should get enlighten about the positive things a regular exercising does to your body and mind. Very young children might need a concrete "meter" to motivate them - maybe a notebook, where she or he gets a sticker for every session of physical exercise. But in my opinion adults should try different sports open-mindedly, too. There are prejudices about pole dance - for example - but you should just try to get rid of them and courageously go and try it!

Physical fitness and sedentary lifestyle of children are major concerns nowadays. According to Sanna there are children who do not move at all and then there are children who move a lot. Spontaneous moving without adult guidance is not that common anymore, and the reason might be computers, videogames and smart phones, which steal the time from the traditional outdoor games and plays. Furthermore, even athletic children may have a very narrow skill range. (Table 10)

I also wanted to know what kind of physical exercise girls usually like. Even if ball games are profiled as boys' sport, girls - especially when encouraged to play - like them as well, according to Sanna. And of course dance is a pleasant activity for girls: they enjoy creating choreographies, choosing the right music and performing.

I am interested in the possibilities of teaching acrobatics at Finnish schools, and I asked Sanna's opinion on teaching pole dance and aerial acrobatics at elementary school. According to Sanna's experience all sports that develop versatile physical abilities are good. In addition, children are very open to learning new skills.

During my school years we were not get taught artistic gymnastics or acrobatics in our gym lessons. Indoors physical education classes meant mainly ball games, such as floorball. According to Sanna artistic gymnastics are part of the teaching in schools. In those schools with skilled teachers the culture of gymnastics is strong. But it depends on the teacher how willing she or he is to introduce the equipment to the children. However, Sanna did not find teaching artistic gymnastics any more hazardous than other sports. As she said, the worst accident had happened in ball games. Following the rules and using crash mats are the keys to safe training.

Table 10. Extra questions to match Sanna's expertize as a class teacher and gymnastics intructor

teacher. Are children physically fit nowadays? What is your opinion?

b) You also teach gym classes in your work as a class b) There're lots of children, who don't move at all, and then there're lots of those, who move a lot. Also, there're children, who are members of sport clubs - ice hockey players for example - and who exercise and train like no tomorrow, but still they don't have enough energy to walk. They're kind of lazy. Spontaneous moving, a natural physical activity a child does without an adult guidance - such as street games and playing with the kids in the neighbourhood isn't the thing anymore. Maybe kids don't have time for play anymore, because there're smart phones, video games and Internet. It doesn't really happen, that a child would walk to the neighbour's house to ask "Can you come play with me?". They would rather make a call. Even those kids, who spend a lot of time in their athletic hobbies have a very narrow range in their skills.

c) What kind of physical exercise girls like? What are the means to encourage girls to move more?

c) Girls like to play ball games, too, even if it's still pretty common to think, that ball games are more like a boy's expertize. Girls just need chances to play and some encouragement. Once they succeed in a game, they dare to do it again. They gain more self-confidence. My gym class groups are mix groups, so there're both girls and boys in the same group. Over the years girls have realized, that they're not any weaker than boys. And of course dancing is something that girls like to do. There's some kind of dance hype going on. Girls like to create their own choreographies, bring their favourite music and also like to perform, which is great, because that's doing their own thing. So, dance is the biggest thing for most of the girls.

d) What is your opinion: would it be possible and okay to teach pole dance and other aerial acrobatics in elementary school if there were right equipment and teachers with knowhow?

d) Yes, it would be possible. All sports, that improve your physical abilities diversely are good. The wider the skill base, the easier it's to start any sport. And you can always start with the basics - even when it's something a bit more special, like pole dance. And children are open-minded, they like to try new, different things.

e) When I was in school we were never taught artistic gymnastics. Are artistic gymnastics and acrobatics taught in schools nowadays?

e) I've been working in schools with people, who had backgrounds in artistic gymnastics. The culture of that sport was very strong there. But when I came to work in my current workplace no-one had touched the racks or other equipment for ages. The smallest schools didn't even have gymnasiums. So, schools teach artistic gymnastics, but it's the teacher who has to be brave enough to dig up the equipment fot the kids to play

f) As a teacher you have a big responsibility for children's safety. Do you find teaching artistic gymnastic more hazardous than teaching other sports? For example, someone can fall from the rack.

f) The worst accidents have happened in ball games. Of course someone has fallen from the rack, too, but the rack is not dangerously high anyways. Also, I have clear rules: you don't go to the rack until you get my permission. And when you are on the rack you only do the trick that was planned. And when you start doing the trick, you will do it: no hesitating in the middle of the trick, because then it wont happen and you may get hurt. We also have crash mats, but of course we'd have use for more.

I asked Milja, if classical ballet could be danced outdoors (Table 11). In Milja's opinion outdoors balled would be possible, but the way of dancing should be adjusted to the conditions. She also considered dancing outdoors and in public places as a way of advertising ballet.

Table 11. Extra questions to match Milja's expertize as a classical ballet teacher

b) Would it be possible to dance ballet outdoors, for example in a park?

b) Yes, it would be possible. Of course the style of dance should be a bit different, not as disciplined and pure as when you dance indoors on a smooth floor. In my first spring as a community college classical ballet teacher I was thinking in my head, that it would be nice to go and dance outside. Those were the last lessons of the season. But we stayed in the studio after all. But dancing outdoors or maybe even in a mall would be a great marketing trick!

## 6.3 Children and physical exercise

The wellbeing park also serves as a recreational place for families. In order to be able to design a place where both adults and children can enjoy themselves, it seemed important to examine the ways active parents exercise with their children.

Three of the women I chose for my expert interviews are mothers. Pinja has a two-year-old son, while Sanna has a four-year-old daughter and Milja has two sons, aged eleven and fourteen, and a nine-year-old daughter (Table 12).

Pinja and Sanna walk their dogs and go ice-skating with their children. Other activities Pinja likes to do with her son include ice hockey, sledding, swimming and going to a ball game club. Sanna works as an adult and child artistic gymnastic instructor, and her daughter, Anni goes to those classes, too. Milja hikes and bikes with her children. Geocache is a hobby of their whole family. Milja also has the qualifications to work as a Rope Work Supervisor, and wall climbing is an activity they do as a family as well.

I asked the interviewees what kind of physical activities their children like and then describe the ways of their children's moving to me. Pinja's two-year-old son likes to move without any pressure to do it and Pinja describes the way of moving as "playful". Sanna's daughter, Anni, is happy while ice-skating or swimming: when she is pleased, she skips like Pippi Longstocking. Milja's children enjoy walks in the forest. They like to wander around and curiously find alternative paths. Her oldest one also likes to snowboard and he is interested in breakdance. The younger son likes football and the daughter dances classical ballet.

It seems that it is much easier to stay motivated to practise a sport as a family, if both parents and the child or children enjoy doing that particular sport. I asked the interviewees to tell me an example of a pleasant moment of physical exercise with a child or children. Pinja finds it especially cute, when her son tries to mimic her yoga asanas, but according to her, just simply spending time with the child is wonderful. Sanna wanted to share an example from her work life as a teacher: it feels good, when children do their best and encourage each other. Moreover, the moments of success are great. Milja enjoys exercise in which everybody is motivated – for example when they play ice hockey as a family.

I also wanted to hear opinions of the selection of sports the City of Kouvola offers to children: more specifically, if the selection is equal in terms of gender, a place of residence and wealth. Pinja found the question difficult to answer – she has always lived in Kouvola center, so she could not speak for those who life in the peripheries. Pinja appreciates the free of charge ice skating shifts, but water in the swim halls should be warmer for small children. However, Pinja thinks that there are numerous activities in Kouvola, but not everyone might be aware of them. Sanna finds some children's hobbies unreasonably expensive. Furthermore, she points out that the city provides hardly anything anymore – offering possibilities to physical exercise seems to be mostly a sport club's responsibility. In Milja's opinion the selection of sports could be wider in Kouvola. She also mentioned that poorly organized public transport may make it difficult for children to engage in hobbies. Kouvola's "small town mentality" frustrates Milja, too, and she wonders if a boy who would like to dance, would dare to go to ballet lessons in Kouvola.

Table 12. Questions and answers considering children and physical exercise

Question	Pinja	Sanna	Milja
6) Physical exercise and children a) Do you have children? A girl/girls or a boy/boys?	Yes, a son, two years old.	Yes, a daughter, four years old.	Yes. The oldest son is fourteen, the middle one, boy as well, is eleven and the youngest one, my daughter, she's nine.
b) Do you exercise together, you and your child? How? What do you do together?	We walk our dogs together, Ice- skating, ice hockey and sledding We even tried snowboarding. Then we go to ball game club and swimming.	Anni takes part to the child and adult artistic gymnastics class. We also walk our dog together. In wintertime we go ice-skating.	We go hiking to nature trails or to Repovesi. We bike and do bike trips. We go to geocache and do wall climbing.
c) What kind of physical exercise and moving your child enjoys? Describe her or his way of moving.	It's moving without stress or pressure. It's playful and driven by nice stimulus.		They like walking in the forest where they don't always follow the paths but want to snoop around. They like to ski, and the oldest one likes to snow-board. He's also interested in breakdance. The middle one plays football. My daughter dances classical ballet.
d) Describe a pleasant moment of physical exercise with your child.	My son likes to watch me doing yoga and he tries to do it, too, in his own style, and it's very cute. Sometimes we do acroyoga, too. Wonderful moments are those when you just do things with your child. It's quite easy to make a child happy: simply give your attention and time.	I tell an example of a succesful gym class: it feels good, when kids actully want to do things and make suggestions for activities. They try their best and encourage each other's. Also, it feels good to witness the moments, when someone exceeds him or heirself in – for examplearitistic gymnastics. There might be a scary trick, but finally, when you do it with a spotter and then alone, you're so happy and proud of yourself!	Those moments when we do things together and everybody is interested and motivated. It can be ice skating, for example. We - our family may go to the skating-rink and play hockey. It can be any kind of physical exercise and not just one specific sport.
e) Does Kouvola city offer enough opportunities to children's physical exercise? Does the selection meet the target group equally (sex, wealth and place of living)?	to the places have been short to me. But of course if you live in Elimäki for example it's a different situation. The ball game club I go to with my son is organized by Kouvot, so I don't know is the city is playing any part there.	I've been overhearing conversations of my friends about ice hockey and figure skating, which are hobbies of their children, and I'm shocked, how expensive those hobbies are! I wonder where all that money the parents pay really goes to? The city doesn't really offer anything anymore. Organizing possibilities to physical exercise seems like a sport clubs' responsibility nowadays. I also think, that there's a weid, but common way of thinking, that if a hobby is inexpensive, it can't be a good hobby. As if an expensive price tag would make one hobby better than the other!	The selection of different sports available could be wider. Because of the bad public transport the accessibility of the hobbies is not always good. If the parents can't drive the kids to the hobbies, how will they get there? Also, small town mentality makes it difficult to for example boys to go to classical ballet classes.

After hearing the mothers I was curious to know what the children had to say about their sporty hobbies. I asked Sanna and Milja to fill out a short questionnaire at home with their daughters. I also asked my daughter to take part in the study. The questionnaires in the Finnish language are attached to this thesis (Appendix 2).

Milja's daughter Inkeri, nine years old, likes to do visual arts, dance classical ballet and play the piano. My daughter, Smilla, eight years old, takes swimming classes and goes to circus school. Sanna's daughter, Anni, four years old, likes to ice-skate, do gymnastics and ski. Anni also goes to music school. (Figure 13)



Figure 13. Names, ages and the hobbies of the interviewed children

I also asked the girls to draw a picture of them practising their favourite (physical) hobby in a place of their dreams.

"In ballet I like most doing jumps and such. Those are really nicest. In art I like doing ceramics. In acting the nicest thing is performing. Playing piano it's nice to learn new songs, and then they sound nice when you know how to play them." Inkeri draw two pictures: her dancing classical ballet on the stage and another one in which she plays ball games (Figure 14).

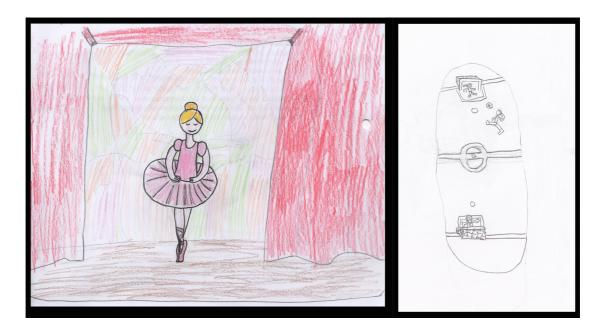


Figure 14. Inkeri drew herself in her favourite activities in pleasant surroundings

"In swim lessons the nicest thing is jumping into the water. In circus school doing volts is nicest." Smilla drew a picture in which she swims in a pool, the instructor is watching her swim and there is a man or a woman in the Jacuzzi.

There are palm trees, big windows and chandeliers in the swim hall of her dreams (Figure 15).



Figure 15. Smilla drew herself in her favourite activity in pleasant surroundings

"In ice skating taking twirls and going fast are the nicest things." Anni drew a picture in which she is skating in an ice rink with her whole family: mother, both older brothers and father, who is putting his skates on on the team bench (Figure 16).



Figure 16. Anni drew herself and her family in her favourite activity

# 6.4 Tykkimäki circus school – a short introduction and the interview results

Tykkimäki circus school is an association established in 2006 with approximately hundred circus hobbyists from ages five to sixteen. The association works on a voluntary base, and only the instructors – circus professionals – are paid for the work. In addition to circus training the circus school organizes summer camps, arranges occasional events and then and performs in Kuusankoskitalo in a big spring circus show and in summertime in Huvilavetti in Tykkimäki (Figure 17). The circus school practises in six different groups in Tornionmäki, Sippola and Brankkari (a former fire station in Kouvola center).



Figure 17. Tykkimäki circus school performing in Tykkimäki Huvilavetti in the summer 2015 (Photo: Jussi Mattila)

Tykkimäki circus school aims to do circus with good vibes. Their motto is that "If it doesn't work out today, let's try again next time!" Circus is a versatile hobby, which — according to Mika Vanhatalo (2016), the chairman of Tykkimäki circus school — makes it ideal for a lively child, because there are always new tricks to learn.

### The interview results

According to the original idea the wellbeing park is place for both physical and mental refreshment. It is a place where you can go to practise your sport or watch other people practise. The park is a place where sport, culture and art meet each other, and circus represents all three. In order to obtain useful design hints in the circus's point of view I chose a representative of one of the two local circus schools for the interview.

I wanted to know if Mika Vanhatalo had any comments on the storyboard scenario and if there was something else from the circus world he would like to add to the plot. We ended up having a conversation about the gender divide of the hobbyists in Tykkimäki circus school: only six of the hundred circus

students are boys. I also wanted to assure Vanhatalo that the park is open to everybody; I just wanted to design facilities to the sports that traditionally – at least in Kouvola – have been dominated by women and girls, which led me to study habits of women and girls. The outcome of this work has no sexist agenda; on the contrary, in Kouvola the pole dancers, dancers and circus enthusiasts hope that more boys and men will find those sports. In Vanhatalo's experience the right people and good networks and contacts are the keys to successful systems. In addition, it is important to keep everything as simple as possible.

Tykkimäki circus school already trains outdoors: in spring they arrange a unicycle parade in Kouvola center. Furthermore, most of their summertime events are arranged outdoors – markets, fairs and Kouvola Taiteiden Yö (an annual event of arts in Kouvola). Circus is a flexible art that could be practised almost anywhere, but aerial acrobatics may be challenging, because the structures to hang up the silks and trapezes are necessary.

The facilities that would ease up practising circus outdoors are – according to Vanhatalo – dressing rooms with lockable lockers. Other important qualities would be central location, grass or sand field and appealing atmosphere.

Tykkimäki circus school is already actively taking part in various events, so performing in the park would be a logical addition to their activities. As for the City of Kouvola purchasing circus equipment, Vanhatalo seemed to strongly underline the custom of the circus school being materially independent: if there is a need for new equipment, they purchase it.

Table 13. Questions presented to Mika Vanhatalo and Tykkimäki circus school

Questions to Mika     (tailored to match the expertize of the questionee's as the chairman of Tykkimäen sirkuskoulu )	
a) Do you have any comments on the comic strip scenario of the idea of the wellbeing park? (As the representative of Tykkimäki circus school would you like to add something to the story? Does the story feel realistic?)	a) Is this going to be a playground for girls? In Tykkimäki circus school we have 100 hobbyists and only six of them are boys. But if you go to Imatra, for example, there're are more boys than girls in their circus school. We have been wondering what are the reasons for the different gender ratios. But no-one knows why our school is profiled as girls' hobby. For four or five years in a row we only had female instructors. Now we have only male instructors Maybe some of the girls start thinking, that this can't be my hobby anymore, because the instructors are guys? This kind of a park is something new and different - at least here in Kouvola. If it's a good summer with nice weather and there're right people organizing shows and happenings there with good networks of coperation and contacts, you can build up pretty much anything out of that idea. And it's important to remember, that you should always keep simple things simple. There's no need to make things more complicated than they really are.
b) Would Tykkimäki circus school be interested in training circus outdoors?	b) That's what we already do! In April-May we'll arrange a unicycle parade that goes from Brankkari to Tornionmäki in Kouvola. Last spring we did that,too, and Kouvolan Sanomat wrote a story about it. We were happy to get some publicity! In summertime we make gigs: there're village markets and such. Most of those happenings are arranged outdoors. And if it's a warm day of summer, we would rather stay outdoors anyways! We've been performing in Kouvola Taiteiden Yô, and that happens outdoors, too. You can do circus almost anywhere. The ground doesn't have to be a floor. We also have mats we can bring with us to soften the ground. We are flexible people, we adapt! Of course -30 Celsius degrees sets some limitations to even our capacity!
c) What kind of circus tricks you can practise outdoors?	All the same tricks you can do indoors. Of course aerial acrobatics can be challenging, because you need to hang up the equipment somewhere. But if there're big trees with available branches, it would be doable, too!
d) If you think about practising circus outdoors, what are the things you need to consider while designing this kind of a park?	d) A dressing room with lockable lockers is one very important thing. We all have bags and smart phones we don't want to get stolen. Huvilavetti in Tykkimäki is a great example of a good stage with a dressing room. The milieu should be a nice, relaxed place. A place where it feels good to go to. Also the location should be somehow central. But nowadays - however - if you really enjoy doing something, ten kilometres here and there wont stop you. It's good to have enough room. The ideal ground material would be grass or sand. Asphalt is not that good - you can hurt yourself. It could be nice to juggle under an apple tree
e) If there were cultural or music happenings in the park in summertime would Tykkimäki circus school be interested in performing there?	e) Of course we would be interested in performing there! You just need to do the booking early enough. We have had nice projects. I think the biggest thing of the whole year are Lasten Kulttuuriviikot in Kouvola in February. We'll perform in the eight schools. So, we do many kind of things, so why wouldn't we be a part of this park project, too.
f) If Kouvola city had a small storage of equipment for acrobatics ("an equipment library"), is there any equipment that would be useful to the circus hobbyists? Maybe a circus pole? Or slack lines?	Our circus students take school's equipment to their summer holiday trips and every where. There're big balance balls, unicycles and juggling balls in any wich place, but we trust, that people will return them. And we haven't lost any item. And usually if we need new piece of equipment we will buy it. So, I really don't know what to answer to the question! And also the time is limited: if we had more user shifts for the gyms and therefore more practise time we could consider trying out new things and buying new equipment. But again, time is limited, and you can't try to do everything! Even if the kids would love to try it all, though!

### 7 THEME AND SKETCHES

The design part of the project started by deciding what would be a suitable theme for Lappset's new outdoor aerial acrobatics concept. Lappset have previously designed, for example, Angry Birds themed activity parks in Finland.

While designing sport equipment not only for children, but also for youngsters and adults, themes that base on cartoons or video games may not appeal to the whole target group. Furthermore, the life cycle of the trends can be limited.

Circus was suggested as a new theme, because circus is an old entertainment format that keeps fascinating generations after generations with its mysticism and extravaganza. It is a theme that is not likely to become dated any time soon. The mind map (Figure 18) presents ideas on how circus shows itself to different age groups.

Children are likely to see circus as a colourful and playful place with clowns and cute animals. The tricks seen in the show are something they may mimic in their own play. To youngsters, on the other hand, circus may represent something wild, rebellious and different to an average society. In circus a young person can find her or his circle of friends that may be different from mainstream. Circus may even offer a future career or at least ways to test one's own limits or find oneself. Adults – especially adult women – may find circus as an exotic world with mystically attuned atmosphere. In circus there are different female roles allowing the spectator to pick the one that appeals to her. Circus is also a place for foolery and quirky characters, such as the bearded lady. Colourful make-ups and decorative outfits delight adults as well, and circus can therefore offer an escape from daily life and ordinary roles.

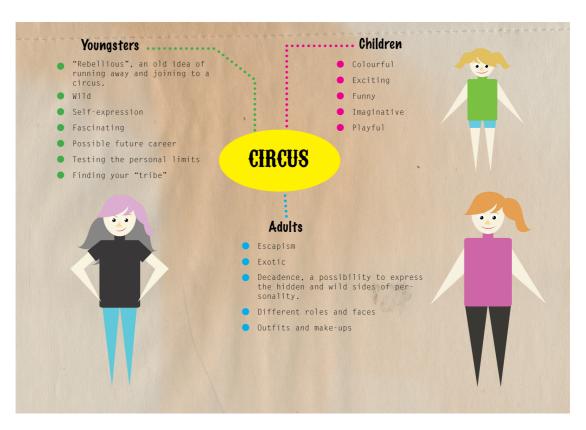


Figure 18. A mind map that explains circus as a theme that appeals to children, youngsters and adults

As one of the possible outdoor pole dance pole designs was suggested a system of three poles (Figure 19). The sketch was drawn according to the idea of Kotka's head gardener of the pole dance system that would fit into the landscape in the Katariina Seaside Park. Lappset already have the techniques and structures to safe ground installing, but what needs to be considered in

designing the poles are the materials being skin friendly and weather proof, the diameter of the poles suitable to the small hands of children and petite women as well as grown men, sufficient support to avoid excessive wobbling of the poles, height that is enough to allow a dancer to do tricks, but not too high to avoid serious falling injuries. In addition, it is important to leave a large enough space between the poles, allowing spins and more than one dancer to practising at the same time. A safe landing surface under the pole system is also a very important part of the design. The colours and other aesthetic parts of the design can be related to the circus theme or they can be designed to match the surroundings of the location.

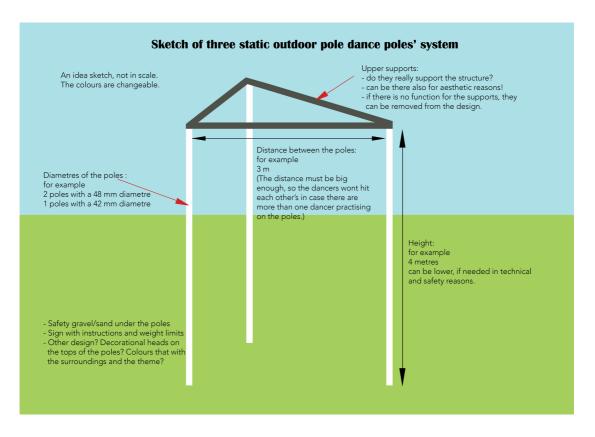


Figure 19. A sketch of an outdoor pole dance system

For the Rantapuisto wellbeing park in Kuusankoski, I drew up a list of activities and design suggestions suitable to the park. A multi-purpose pergola would provide structures and attachments to aerial yoga silks, lyras and pole dance poles (Figure 20). A pergola with a floor could be used for outdoor dance, gymnastics, acrobatics and yoga as well. The pergola could also house a ballet bar. As a public structure open facilities with roof are problematic, because they attract improper use and littering. Other important design point

is the height of the structure, so that there is room to practise on the equipment.



Figure 20. Multi-purpose pergola: the activities and the qualities to consider in the design

Aromatherapy Meditation Nest is an activity for restorative practises, such as meditation or yin yoga (Figure 21). A path of feet massaging pebbles would lead to a labyrinth made of scenting and herbs and flowers, such as lavender, thyme and mint and plants that attract butterflies. In the middle of the labyrinth there could be a small circle with a bench to sit on. The labyrinth could be a place for knitting, reading a book, having lunch, having a date or meeting a friend.

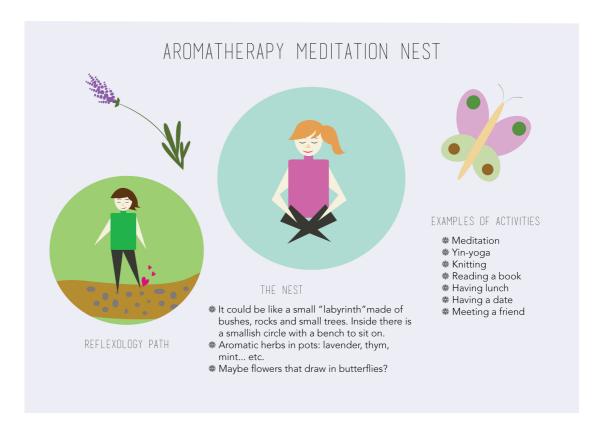


Figure 21. The aromatherapy meditation nest: the activities and design suggestions

Other suggested sport activities of the wellbeing park are a set of street workout equipment that could be used by, for example, hobbyists of crossfit. SUP yoga in the river might be an exciting experience. The dock to launch SUP boards, canoes and kayaks would be an idyllic sitting place as well. There could be decorative, fun or artistic posts on to attach slacklines for tightrope walking and tricks. (Figure 22)

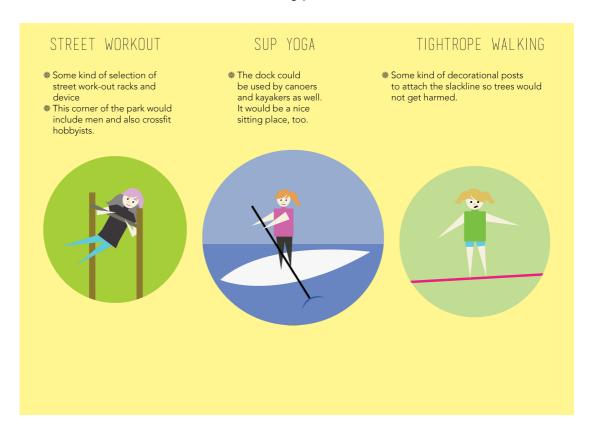


Figure 22. Street workout, SUP yoga and tightrope walking: the activities and design suggestions

A year-round pole dance pole and a trapeze rack are weather-proof and durable structures that can stand in place the whole year round. One design suggestion of each is presented in Figure 23.

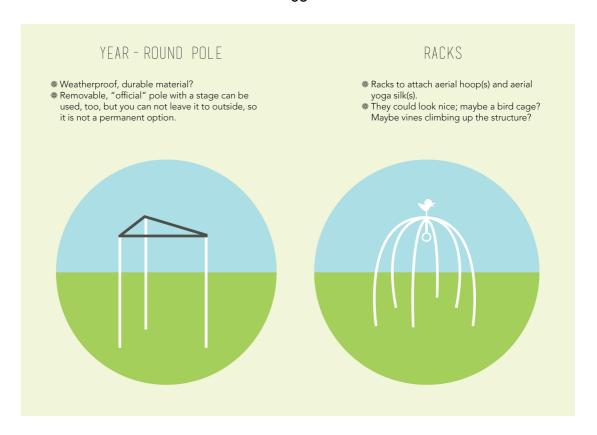


Figure 23. Design suggestions to a year-round pole and a structure for aerial silks and lyras

### 8 DISCUSSION

Based upon my own experience as a mother and physically active woman and autoethnographic study I generated a group of hypotheses for the qualitative research part – the interviews – of this study.

Hypothesis 1: The interviewee's motivations to exercise go deeper than simply staying fit and looking good. The interviewees mentioned that they liked to exercise, because their sports makes them feel good, it is challenging, it helps to reset your mind and it is a way of expressing yourself.

Hypothesis 2: The interviewees enjoy both practising individually and in a group. The interviewees found both ways suitable for their practise.

Hypothesis 3: The interviewees prefer exercising outdoors. Three of the interviewees preferred outdoors exercise, and two found both in and outdoors equally good options depending on the weather conditions and the season.

Hypothesis 4: The interviewees do not find the selection of physical exercise activities available in Kouvola versatile enough. Three of the interviewees

found the selection wide enough. Two interviewees said that in Kouvola there are no places for adult acrobatics or indoor hall for practising parkour.

Hypothesis 5: The interviewees appreciate the nature and traditional outdoor activities in Kouvola. The interviewees were especially satisfied with the facilities for winter sports, jogging trails and forests.

Hypothesis 6: The interviewees find aesthetics and the cleanness of surroundings for exercising important. Uncluttered and clean space, equipment that is unbroken and in the right places and air without pollution were important qualities in the interviewees' opinions. Adjectives such as harmonic, earthy, beautiful, open, functional, cosy and comfortable were used to describe the surroundings. Nature, grass, trees, water, racks to climb, big windows, several activities, easy access and welcoming atmosphere were also mentioned among the appealing features.

Hypothesis 7: Wellbeing plays a significant part in the interviewees' daily lives and it considers both physical and mental health. According to all the interviewees wellbeing meant right amounts of eating, sleeping and exercising, but also how you perceive yourself, engage in activities you enjoy doing, feel comfortable about who you are and have constructive social relationships.

Hypothesis 8: Most of the time the interviewees consider themselves wellbeing, healthy and happy. All the interviewees said that they were happy and healthy, even if there were occassional fluctuations.

Hypothesis 9: Because of their active lifestyles the interviewees are not insecure about their looks and, their attitudes towards their own bodies are realistic, healthy and mature. The interviewees admitted that they were not perfectly satisfied with their looks and that there is a strong tendency to be overly critical and find areas for improvement. However, none of them had a major crisis over who they are and what they look like, and perfectionism was considered as a typical characteristic for women.

Hypothesis 10: The interviewees consider nature as richness and a restorative place and spend time in nature. Nature was regarded as a refreshing place to unwind and relax. Nature was described as being extremely important, life providing and worth protecting and respecting. In nature the interviewees felt

peace, freedom presence and calmness and enjoyed the scents and greenness.

Hypothesis 11: The interviewees do not spend time in the parks, partly because the parks in Kouvola may not be considered as attractive or safe places. Three of the interviewees did not spend much or at all time in the parks, and two of them said that they prefer to go to the forest. Two interviewees visit parks sometimes in summertime. The parks in Kouvola were found decent-sized or small, plain and lacking events and taken over by bums. Urheilupuisto Park, Kirkkopuisto Park in Kuusankoski and Kettumäki museum area were regarded as pleasant places.

Hypothesis 12: The key factors in attracting people to the parks are organized events and beautiful surroundings with both green and blue space. Benches, colourful flowers, trees, bushes, water elements, open and flat areas of grass, shady sitting places, meandering paths, light, equipment for fitness, acrobatics and throwing a Frisbee, activities for children, presence of other people, coffee shops, ice-cream stands and park as a place for spending freetime, a place to socialize, were qualities to describe the park of the dreams.

Hypothesis 13: Most of the time adult women feel safe while exercising outdoors and social fears do not limit their ways of exercising. All interviewees felt safe exercising outdoors. Darkness in the forest or jogging trails was admitted as being somewhat scary.

Hypothesis 14: Since dance, aerial acrobatics, pole dance and circus arts are not only sports, but also performance arts, public exercise and by-passers watching are not considered as problems by the hobbyists. None of the interviewees considered the curious looks of the other people as a problem and the presence of audience was regarded as positive publicity to the sport.

Hypothesis 15: Pole dance and aerial acrobatics are safe to practise outdoors in public places. As long as the equipment, the hang-up structures and attachments are made of safe materials and subject to regular inspections, the weight-limits are visible to the users and the height of structures is limited, pole dance outdoors is no more hazardous than any other sport. Moreover, common sense and knowledge of one's own limits and skills play a significant part in every sport – not only in aerial acrobatics.

Hypothesis 16: A number of health problems are caused by a sedentary lifestyle. Physically passive life, deskwork and bad ergonomics lead to weak muscles, which causes bad posture and back and neck problems.

Hypothesis 17: Children do not spend enough time outdoors and get exercise by natural play anymore. Spontaneous moving such as street games and playing with other children in the neighbourhood is rare nowadays. There are children who engage in frequent physical activity, but also children who do not move at all. Even the children who are members of sport clubs, may have only a narrow range of skills and physical abilities.

Hypothesis 18: Most girls find dance as a fun and motivating way of physical exercise. Dance and all the hype around it are important for girls: creating choreographies, choosing the right music and performing. At the same time, girls like ball games as well.

Hypothesis 19: Physically active mothers exercise together with their child, too. All three mothers exercise with their children by walking a dog together, going ice-skating, doing bike trips or hikes, geocaching or taking part in organized sport activities, such as a ball game club and artistic gymnastic class.

Hypothesis 20: Young children enjoy playful and versatile exercise while spending time with their family. Moving without pressure, ice-skating, wandering in the forest, getting the mother's full attention while doing acroyoga are examples of pleasant moments of exercise for children.

Hypothesis 21: The city-provided opportunities to children's physical exercise do not reach the target groups equally in Kouvola. The people living far from Kouvola center area may have difficulties with accessibility. The city does not provide many activities for children, and the prices of hobbies in sports clubs can be unreasonably expensive. The selection of different sports available could be wider. Furthermore, the small-town mentality may prevent boys from practising dance, such as ballet.

Hypothesis 22: When a child grows, she or he may also want to exercise in more organized ways, for example by becoming a member of a sports club or taking part in the dance classes. In this process the emphasis from exercising with his or her family moves to doing sports in peer groups. In addition to the

activities with the family, school aged children engage in activities such as ballet and swimming, go to circus school, play football and go snowboarding.

Mostly the answers supported the hypotheses that created the base of the idea of preferences, priorities and the lifestyle of the wellbeing park's target group. In addition, the interviews offered valuable new ideas for the activities in the park and expertize opinions in different points of view. The park was found – if properly equipped – as suitable training surroundings for yoga, ballet, circus, aerial acrobatics, SUP boarding and pole dance. Furthermore, the ideas of bands playing music and market stands selling bakery products and fruits were welcomed. Other activities suggested by the interviewees were growing fruits and berries in the park, arranging restaurant days, picnics and brunches and cultural events on an open-air theatre stage. The facilities of the wellbeing park could also encourage young girls to physical exercise by offering opportunities to see and try out new sports. Public practise of sports, such as pole dance – towards which people may have prejudices – would help make people aware of what the sport is really about – athletics, dance and art. Furthermore, these sports that develop physical abilities diversely could be part of schools' physical education.

#### 9 STRENGHTS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Validity means that the factors that are relevant to the study are examined by using the right method (Kananen 2014, 147). The data for the research part of this thesis was collected and analysed by using qualitative methods. Qualitative methods provide an opportunity to a profound understanding of a phenomenon (Kananen 2014, 17), and understanding the target group and their needs was important in order to design a park that would serve the users in the best possible way.

In qualitative research and its methods – such as ethnography – the researcher is the instrument of research who decides what will be asked, how much will be asked and to whom the questions will be presented. Since a number of factors depend on the researcher's consideration and choices, there is a considerable risk of subjectivity (Kananen 2014, 25).

Semi-structured interviews were used as a method of collecting information from the interviewees. As Kananen (2014, 85) points out, the way of choosing the themes and questions for the interview are not always objective. The themes and the questions were outlined with and approved by the thesis-instructing teacher of this study, but a subjective approach to the topic of this thesis is likely to lead to the situation in which the themes and questions reflect the interests of the author.

Furthermore, the presence of the interviewer and his or her interaction with the interviewee may lead to a situation in which the interviewee aims to provide answers that please the interviewer (Kananen 2015, 85). Because all the interviewees had an idea of the topic of the thesis and they knew the author and were aware of her hobbies, there was a risk of subjectivity. However, the details were held back from the interviewees until the interview was over, and the interview situation was kept as objective as possible and none of the interviewees was encouraged to give any specific answers, but answers that only base on their own honest opinions and experiences.

In qualitative research the minimum number of observational units is one, and there are no certain number of units that ensure the results are reliable: in qualitative research, it is the right qualities of the interviewees what is important, not their number (Kananen 2014, 95). Five women, three children and one man were interviewed in this study. The interviewees were selected to the research by their professional expertize in the field of physical exercise, and therefore they appeared as suitable sources of information to represent the target user group of the wellbeing park. In addition, while analysing their answers some saturation was observed. Three girls were briefly interviewed in order to gain a child's perspective to the design. In future studies it might be useful to interview a larger amount of children. The interview answers of the Tykkimäki chairman offered valuable opinions and points of view based on his experience in the circus school world. The interview results can therefore be considered rather reliable.

Evaluation autoethnography, which includes the experience of the researcher, is difficult (Adams et al. 2015, 99). Critics of the method do not consider autoethnography as a scientific method because of the personal, autobiographic and aesthetic nature of the approach and are concerned that

including storytelling and first-person narration in research sacrifices the analytic purpose of the study (ibid). So, autoethnography as a research method is criticised for being too artful and therefore not scientific (Ellis et al. 2011). The goal of the autoethnographic approach in this thesis was to enlighten the reader about pole dance as a sport by using narratives that base on real daily life experiences of hobbyists. Furthermore, the narratives can be compared to the similar or different experiences of other dancers: as Adams et al. (2015, 103) states, autoethnography is done to create understanding about identities, relationships and experiences and to share that knowledge with others.

This thesis contains thoughts and theories about the nature of pole dance and acrobatics community that are based on peer observation on social media and real life situations. Making these observations was not based on any scientific method and the observations were not made in any constructed way. Instead of basing the thoughts and theories on random daily-life experiences, memories and impressions it might be useful to gather information of that scene by using more organized methods.

Triangulation is one way to increase the reliability of a study and it is used for verification of results and interpretations (Kananen, 2014, 121). In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to test the theories that were based on observation and autoethnographic methods. Consistency between the interview results and hypothesis was observed, and therefore the research seems reliable.

However, the goal of this study was not to provide scientific or statistic data, but gather information and ideas for a design project.

### 10 CONCLUSIONS

Designing a park with activities for overall wellbeing requires knowledge of the target user group, which can be very wide, if the park consists of different sections of themes and purposes. Aerial acrobatics, acrobatics and dance can represent a part of the park where physical exercise meets art, culture and social life. In Kouvola there is no park culture yet, but the attitudes towards a lifestyle that would involve visiting parks more actively are positive: the

challenge is to invest in attractive features and events in order to draw people in the parks and make most of those. Presence of green and blue space, events and facilities for leisure, sports and social interaction seem to be key qualities for the delightful outdoors hangouts. In addition, the accessibility of the sports and gym equipment in the park and storage for borrowing them would enhance equal possibilities to versatile physical exercise and possibly strengthen the feeling for community and togetherness while public outdoors exercise and sport.

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### FRAMES OF QUESTIONS IN FINNISH AND IN ENGLISH

## TEEMAHAASTATTELU OPINNÄYTETYÖTÄ VARTEN

Haastateltava:		
Päivämäärä:		

### 1) Kuka olet? Ammatti ja mitä teet työksesi tällä hetkellä?

#### 2) Liikuntatottumukset ja tavat

- Kuvailisitko itseäsi liikunnalliseksi ihmiseksi? Miksi?
- Mikä on liikuntalajisi?
- Kuvaile lempilajiasi! Miksi se (ne) on lempilajisi?
- Liikutko mieluummin yksin vai ryhmässä? Miksi?
- Liikutko mieluummin ulkona vai sisällä? Miksi?
- Ovatko mielestäsi paikkakuntasi tarjoamat liikuntamahdollisuudet riittävät?
- Mitä mieltä olet paikkakuntasi ulkoilutarjonnasta ja ulkoilupaikoista?
- Kuvaile sinulle mieleistä ympäristöä liikunnan harjoittamiselle. Mikä on tärkeää? Mikä sinua ympäristössä viehättää?

### 3) Hyvinvointi (wellbeing) ja terveys

- Mistä mielestäsi hyvinvointi koostuu? Mitä se tarkoittaa? Mitä se sinulle merkitsee?
- Tunnetko itsesi terveeksi ja hyvinvoivaksi?
- Oletko mielestäsi onnellinen?
- Oletko tyytyväinen itseesi ja ulkonäköösi?

#### 4) Luonto ja ympäristö

- Mitä luonto sinulle merkitsee?
- Liikutko usein luonnossa? Jos, niin miltä se tuntuu?
- Vietätkö aikaa puistossa? Jos, niin miten ja milloin?
- Mitä mieltä olet paikkakuntasi puistoista?
- Millainen olisi sinun mieleisesi puisto?

## 5) Turvallisuus ja yksityisyys

- Tunnetko olosi turvalliseksi, kun harrastat liikuntaa ulkona?
- Haittaako sinua, jos ohikulkijat tai sivulliset katsovat treeniäsi?

#### 6) Liikunta ja lapset

- Onko sinulla lapsia? Tyttö(jä) vai poika (poikia)?
- Liikutko yhdessä lapsenne kanssa? Miten?
- Millaisesta liikkumisesta lapsenne nauttii? Kuvaile lapsenne liikkumista.
- Kuvaile antoisaa liikuntahetkeä lapsen kanssa.
- Tarjoaako paikkakuntanne riittävästi liikuntamahdollisuuksia lapsille? Onko tarjonta tasa-arvoista (sukupuoli, varallisuus, asuinsijainti)?
- Saako lastasi haastatella?

### 7) Mahdolliset listan ulkopuoliset kysymykset!

# 1) Your name, occupation and what do you do for a living?

#### 2) Habits of physical exercise

- a) Would you describe yourself as sporty personality and why?
- b) What is your favourite way to exercise?
- c) Describe your favourite way to exercise. Why do you like it so much?
- d) Would you rather exercise in a group or alone? Why?
- e) Would you rather exercise indoors or outdoors? Why?
- f) What do you think about the selection of physical exercise activities in your city (Kouvola)? Is it wide enough?
- g) What do you think about the outdoor activities and the places for outdoor recreation?
- h) Describe the appealing surroundings for doing physical exercise. What is important? What do you find attractive?

#### 3) Wellbeing and health

- a) What wellbeing consists of? What do you think a word wellbeing means? What wellbeing means to you?
- b) Do you find yourself being healthy and well being?
- c) Do you find yourself happy?
- d) Are you happy with your looks and with who you are?

### 4) Nature and environment

- a) What does nature mean to you?
- b) Do you often go to nature? How does it feel?
- c) Do you spend your time in parks? When and how?
- d) What is your opinion of the parks in Kouvola?
- e) What kind of park would please you? Describe your dream park.

#### 5) Safety and privacy

- a) Do you feel safe while exercising outdoors?
- b) Do you mind if by-passers look at you exercising?

# 6) Physical exercise and children

- a) Do you have children? A girl/girls or a boy/boys?
- b) Do you exercise together, you and your child? How? What do you do together?
- c) What kind of physical exercise and moving your child enjoys? Describe her or his way of moving.
- d) Describe a pleasant moment of physical exercise with your child.
- e) Does Kouvola city offer enough opportunities to children's physical exercise? Does the selection meet the target group equally (sex, wealth and place of living)?

### 7) Extra questions (tailored to match the expertize of the questionee)

### The questions to Pinja:

- a) Do you have any comments on the comic strip scenario of the idea of the wellbeing park? (Would you like to add something there? Does it feel logical? Is there something you find unrealistic? Are there any other activities in your mind the characters of the story could do in the park? Does the scenario give you the idea of the park?)
- b) We talked about SUP yoga earlier today. Would you be interested in teaching SUP yoga if there were some boards and people, who are interested in it?
- c) You've taught yoga outdoors, as well park yoga. Can you tell any experiences? What are the challenges while doing yoga outdoors? Is there anything that could be done to make a yoga practice in a park even a better experience?
- d) What is your opinion, is it possible to practise aerial yoga outdoors, too if there were structures to hang the silks up?

## The questions to Sini:

- a) Do you have any comments on the comic strip scenario of the idea of the wellbeing park? (Does it feel logical? Is there something you find unrealistic? As a pole dance and acrobatic teacher do you have something in your mind that you would like to add to the story?)
- b) If you think about pole dance and acrobatics, what are the things you need to consider while designing this kind of a park?

### The questions to Elisa:

- a) Do you have any comments on the comic strip scenario of the idea of the wellbeing park? (Would you like to add something there? Does it feel logical? Is there something you find unrealistic? Are there any other activities in your mind the characters of the story could do in the park?)
- b) As a physiotherapist, how do you see pole dance and yoga as physical exercise? What are their main attributes?
- c) How about the risks of injury in pole dance and yoga? Are there more risks or possibilities in doing these sports?
- d) Can you as a physiotherapist name the most common troubles women and girls have with their bodies?
- e) How would you encourage young girls to physical exercise?

### The questions to Sanna:

- a) Do you have any comments on the comic strip scenario of the idea of the wellbeing park? (Would you like to add something there? Does it feel logical? Is there something you find unrealistic? Are there any other activities in your mind the characters of the story could do in the park?)
- b) You also teach gym classes in your work as a class teacher. Are children physically fit nowadays? What is your opinion?
- c) What kind of physical exercise girls like? What are the means to encourage girls to move more?
- d) What is your opinion: would it be possible and okay to teach pole dance and other aerial sports in elementary school if there were right equipment and teachers with knowhow?
- e) When I was in school we were never taught artistic gymnastics. Are artistic gymnastics and acrobatics taught in schools nowadays?
- f) As a teacher you have a big responsibly for children's safety. Do you find teaching artistic gymnastic more hazardous than teaching other sports? For example, someone can fall from the rack.

### The questions to Milja:

- a) Do you have any comments on the comic strip scenario of the idea of the wellbeing park? (As a ballet teacher would you like to add something to the story? Does it feel logical? Is there something you find unrealistic?)
- b) Would it be possible to dance ballet outdoors, for example in a park?

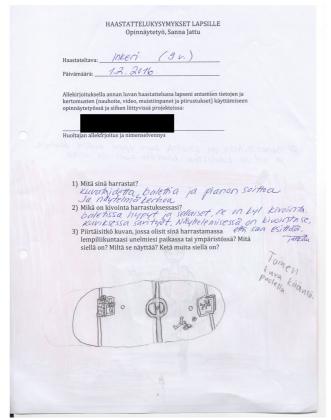
# The questions to Mika:

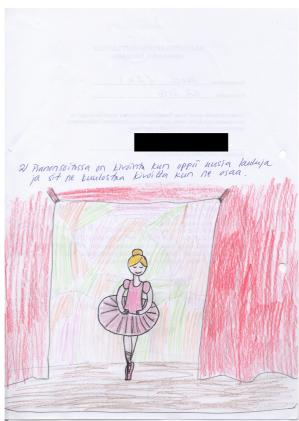
- a) Do you have any comments on the comic strip scenario of the idea of the wellbeing park? (As the representative of Tykkimäki circus school would you like to add something to the story? Does the story feel realistic?)
- b) Would Tykkimäki circus school be interested in training circus outdoors?
- c) What kind of circus tricks you can practise outdoors?
- d) If you think about practising circus outdoors, what are the things you need to consider while designing this kind of a park?
- e) If there were cultural or music happenings in the park in summertime would Tykkimäki circus school be interested in performing there?
- f) If Kouvola city had a small storage of equipment for acrobatics ("an equipment library"), is there any equipment that would be useful to the circus hobbyists? Maybe a circus pole? Or slack lines?

# The questions to the children:

- 1) What kind of hobbies do you have?
- 2) What is the nicest thing in you hobby?
- 3) Would you draw a picture in which you're doing your favourite hobby (physical exercise) in your dream place? What is there? How the place looks like? Who else is there with you?

### THE QUESTIONNAIRES TO CHILDREN IN FINNISH





Haastateltava: Smilg 8-V
Päivämäärä: 21.2.16

Allekirjoituksella annan luvan haastattelussa lapseni antamien tietojen ja kertomusten (nauhoite, video, muistiinpanot ja piirustukset) käyttämiseen opinnäytetyössä ja siihen liittyvissä projekteissa:

Huoltajan allekirjoitus ja nimenselvennys

1) Mitä sinä harrastat?
Umakkoulug, Si(ku skuulug.
2) Mikä on kivointa harrastuksessasi?
Udd, et voi hyppia. Si(kuskoulussa kivointa antamassa lempiliikuntaasi unelmiesi paikassa tai ympäristössä? Mitä siellä on? Miltä se näyttää? Ketä muita siellä on?

HAASTATTELUKYSYMYKSET LAPSILLE Opinnäytetyö, Sanna Jattu
Haastateltava: Sanna / Anni 4v.
Päivämäärä:
Allekirjoituksella annan luvan haastattelussa lapseni antamien tietojen ja kertomusten (nauhoite, video, muistiinpanot ja piirustukset) käyttämiseen opinnäytetyössä ja siihen liittyvissä projekteissa:
Huoltajan allekirjoitus ja nimenselvennys
( Ab I b) A
1) Mitā sinā harrastat? Luistelu jumppa , muskari ja hilhto Muskarissa olen yksin jumpassa air jin kanssa, nuissa on koko perke. 2) Mikā on kivonita harrastuksessas? Luistelu; pyörahtely ja kovaa meneminen on siina mukavinta. 3) Piirtäistikō kuvan, jossa olisit sinā harrastamassa lempiliikuntaasi unelmiesi paikassa tai ympāristossā? Mitā
siellä on? Miltä se näyttää? Ketä muita siellä on?