

Integration Stories of Immigrant Women in Finland –

A product thesis in collaboration with Nicehearts

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Thesis, Fall 2016

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Degree Programme in Social Services

Bachelor of Social Services focus in Community Development

ABSTRACT

Rönkkö, Joanna. *Integration Stories of Immigrant Women in Language: English*. Helsinki, Fall 2016. 49 pages. Language: English. Diaconia University of Applied Sciences. Degree Programme in Social Services, focus on Community Development. Degree: Bachelor of Social Services.

The aim of the thesis was to document the process of integrating into Finnish society, based on the experiences of five immigrant woman from different backgrounds. It is written in a book format and was conducted in collaboration with Nicehearts. The specific target group was narrowed down to five clients from Nicehearts, who have come to Nicehearts at different times.

The book is a combination of both social service practice and book art in a form of life stories. It is applicable for social workers working with immigrant women, or anyone interested in life stories or immigration. This report follows the process of introducing the procedure of going through concepts linked to this project, introducing the context the process, and follows the development with the help of ethical considerations and theory about writing a book.

Key words: migration, narrative life story, empowerment, acculturation

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1 INTRODUCTION

This is a product-oriented thesis that was implemented in cooperation with a non-government organization Nicehearts. It is an organization that supports migrant women's integration in Finland through participation in Nicehearts. The product is a book consisting five stories of immigrant women about the era before moving to Finland and after having lived in Finland. This book intends to illustrate the combination of both the practice of social services and art (in a form of writing a book/novel). Through that combination it targets to bring knowledge about integration of women immigrants in an accessible form and empower the women it represents.

I chose to write my product Thesis for Nicehearts as a result of my rich learning experiences during my work placement there in fall 2014. I worked in the Qutomo project, which was a project that had its main objective in developing and creating an innovative integration path for immigrants. It was done through cooperation with different sectors of society. Qutomo arranged four Cooperation Forums' that enabled a face-to-face dialogue between the different sectors and immigrants. (Qutomo project, 2013.)

During the placement, I attended Helsinki University seminars, I also participated in transcribing training, updated contacts on computer, planned a workshop, send e-mails, updated Social Media and attended meetings. My biggest task was to write blog, to which my supervisor Meg Sakilayan-Latvala. In the blog I interviewed professionals and wrote about it. I also raised questions about women, integration and immigrants. I received good feedback about the blog from both Sakilayan-Latvala and other Nicehearts staff. It was in that placement I learned to interview and transcribe, in other words write down simultaneously what the other person says. After my placement I continued writing a blog for them for a year, around that time they asked if I would be interested in writing a book for them as my product Thesis.

The idea was to create a captivating book that could be read as a novel, biography, or a book that tells about the impact of Nicehearts in the life of five immigrant women. The book would benefit the work done with immigrant women. It would help professionals, volunteers and students by shedding light into stories and voices that would not be heard otherwise. Officials are not always able to recognize factors such as a threat of violence, or experiences of it impacting an immigrant's integration. Misreading a client can happen, if she is not met with a culture sensitivity. In that sensitivity, organizations have an important role to reach to missing immigrants and guide them to integration services. (Hiltunen, 2012, 24.) The book is needed because the five stories would partly prove the importance of women resource centers in Finland and hopefully support their existence.

According to Meg Sakilayan-Latvala (pers.comm. 28.10.2016) social workers need help in understanding the perspectives and experiences of their clients when doing their work. As a student of Social Services focus in Community Work, doing a product that raises awareness about organizations helping women integrate to Finland is important. Often times reading a text is a simpler and powerful method than statistics and academic literature: media is a very influential tool in raising awareness.

There exists some similar publications already. There was a workshop in Malmö that gathered immigrant women to talk about their living experiences in Malmö. Some comments from the workshop by the women were published in a newsletter. (Ardalan, Chukri 2013.) In addition to the newsletter, there is for example a book about immigrant women telling their stories in the USA. (Berger, 2004.) There is not however a book about the integration stories of immigrant women who are clients of women resource centers in Finland.

My personal interest lies in immigration, women and empowerment and biographies. This project combining all of those was a natural shift forward. I personally hope the book will challenge the attitudes and misconceptions of people about immigrants and integration what would lead into healthy communities and

be linked to my studies in community development. All women are individuals and therefore their integration stories are personalized. The women I interviewed have different backgrounds: countries they are from, education, families, but also different reasons to come to Finland. The women are from Armenia, South-Sudan, Pakistan, Iran and the Philippines. The interviews were executed both in English and Finnish, and translated into Finnish for the book. The book will be published in Finnish.

2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The participants in the book migrated to Finland and experienced the role of an immigrant, in this chapter I go through what the term means and what the reasons for the migration of the women were. When migrating, they experienced acculturation, which not only shaped the, but the people they were with in Finland. Acculturation, the change in between groups happened through a culture shock, which was a preparation stage for them to adjust into the culture. The book told the integration, migration stories via narrative life stories, which also are explained. Life course perspective was one of the methods I used within the interviews to receive versatile information about their past, present and the future. Finally, empowerment was chosen one of the aims for this project, since participating the women in the process and giving them a voice is empowerment.

2.1 Migration

Migration stands for moving to a new country for work, study, re-joining a family, or finding a safe place to start a new life. The most modern reasons for moving to a new place are retiring in places with summer climates, commuting across borders to work, younger people staying for a holiday for a longer time working at the same time, or moving back to the country of origin (Spencer 2011, 7.) The women of the book moved to Finland for different reasons, three of them came to re-unite their families and two for safety reasons. Some of them were asylum seekers, some came voluntarily.

A foreigner is whoever, who is not a Finnish citizen. An immigrant is a foreigner staying in Finland for good. A refugee is a person who applies for protection from another country. An asylum seeker receives a refugee status, if he/she is given an asylum. Finally, an emigrant means someone who has roots in a country, and moves back to his roots (Finnish immigration service, Accessed 3.11.2016.)

2.2 Narrative Life Story

Narration is the act of telling a story, in some type of chronological order, of fictional or real events. Integrated life stories are stories, where people tell about their whole stories with the help of several events. (Westbya, Culattab 2016, 2.) Life story means a narrative research, which could also be called as “life narratives”, studying lives and personal history. Life story signifies a method that looks at life as a whole and carries out an in-depth study of individual lives. (Atkinson, 2012, 116). Life story is the main key to understand individual’s lives in detail, and how the main party, the individual plays several different roles in the society. (Kim, 2016, 10.)

Life stories are autobiographical memories. In order to create a life story, it requires binding the experiences into a unified, consisted whole. When telling life stories, the tellers need to choose appropriate aspects of the experiences in order to communicate one account that makes sense both to them and to the audience; this means that they need to incorporate all their present concerns, future goals and the past events (Westbya, Culattab 2016, 267-268.) The book’s women told their stories and created a uniform story out of singular experiences, some of them said they have told the story so many times “telling it, does not raise feelings anymore.” The women opened up about their past, present and the future.

Life stories give an individual sense of identity. This identity portrays through the story in the settings, scenes, characters, plots and the theme of the story. Through life stories the self is integrated both synchronically and diachronically (Westbya, Culattab 2016, 267-268.)

2.3 Life Course Perspective

One of the methods I used with one of the ladies in the book was life line, and life events, feeling line on the paper. Life course perspective looks at how chronolog-

ical age, relationships, common life transitions, and social change blueprint people's lives from their birth to death. The point of life course perspective is to try to envision a person through the development process via different periods of life. Life Course starts looking at a person with event history, and then moves on to experiences, and transitions in one's life. One way to look at Life Course Perspective is trying to understand a person by looking how he has synchronized his family with his life. Another way to look at LCP, is to see how culture and social institutions shape the pattern of individual lives (Hutchison, 2001, 8)

The basic concepts of Life Course include several things. One is cohort, it means a group of people who were born at a same time period, and experienced same social changes (for example a war). A transition stands for change in roles and statuses. Trajectory implies stability and change that has took place in a long-term pattern, requiring multiple transitions. Life events abides an abrupt change that could potentially produce serious and long-lasting effects. To end with, a turning point is a life event or transition that produces a long-lasting shift in the trajectory of life (Hutchison, 2001, 12)

2.4 Empowerment

Social work takes place with groups, but before groups can work effectively, individuals in them need to be empowered first. The social worker needs ways to create methods that allow the empowerment process. (Adams, 2003, 60.) Therefore, concentrating on individuals, taking into account a few stories in the book instead of dozens, can still have a great impact on bigger groups.

The goal of empowerment is the sociopolitical liberation of marginalized communities that the marginalized communities would have a say in governing their communities. Empowerment means having the process of increasing one's personal, interpersonal, or say politics, which all of this would lead to individuals, families and communities who are able to take action to improve their situations.(Hipilito-Delgado, Carlos P & Lee, Courtland C, 2007.) Empowering practice does not only

aim to change via winning power, but also bringing it to the ones who have been oppressed. Empowerment consists of different parts and areas. Those areas are reflexivity and criticality, meaning that empowerment needs to be self-empowered and self-advocated. Also, raising consciousness about the social context of the group's problems and addressing them. Acting from the bases of the user is crucial that users have control over the services provided for them. Handing out control is radical, which is what social work should be, political experiment. It aims to anti-oppressive practice and grasps hold on postmodernism by taking the new chances in politics and economy into consideration, which include democratization, giving people a voice and power. (Adams, 2003, 9-13.)

Personal empowerment withholds ridding oneself of racism to achieve a healthy identity. Empowering means taking a stand toward the liberation of oppressed communities, which includes development of consciousness, positive identity and taking social action (Hipilito-Delgado, Carlos P & Lee, Courtland C, 2007.)

2.5 Culture Shock

Getting into a new culture means an adjustment process. How the process goes depends fully on certain things: What was the starting point, did one need to leave when forced, or voluntarily. How was the culture the person left behind, was it similar to the culture the person moved into. How is the new environment, does the mover feel himself welcome. And lastly the personality of the person moving, does he have an open personality, easily adoptable or not? (Räty 2002, 21)

Culture Shock includes four main stages: Honeymoon stage, refusing step, searching for balance and mastering several cultures. The person moving into a new country might be really stressed at first and therefore independent and clinging on to others, claiming that all the difficulties are due to the environment and denying all losses and difficulties. The problems of an immigrant are often a tangle, where the facts are difficult to change. Depression, anxiety and different psychosomatic symptoms are typical ways to let out the stress that integration

causes. Other symptoms are headache, pain ache and insomnia (Räty 2002, 121-123.)

All the women in the book experienced culture shock, but the reasons for them to experience were different. Anlyn tells that the most difficult thing about coming to Finland was the language: "Even if social workers were able to speak English, they quickly start talking Finnish." For Maria, too, the Finnish language caused difficulties, and she also felt discouraged by using the public transportation, because she did not know where everything is, or how it works. Nargis said that she did not feel part of the group, "everybody in Finland belonged to a group, and I was in none." Sara stated that for her the hardest part about coming to Finland was that there were so few immigrants in the beginning of 1990. On the other hand, all of these women stayed in Finland and decided to go through the culture shock stages. Urartuhi tells that she likes "all the Finnish services, because customer is always right. Life in Finland is easy when you speak the language." She also saw the difficulties, but as in culture shock theory, she now masters her own, and the Finnish culture and has also found good sides of her new country that make her content and happy.

2.6 Acculturation

Acculturation theory means two or more autonomous groups' clash and the change that happens then. The change happens in both groups, but more to the stronger group to the weaker one. If one's identity and culture is being preserved and not be able to connect to the surrounding society, it means separation. Assimilation means that one tries to adapt to the society, and act like them (Räty 2002, 125-126.) One of the women, Maria in the book said that Nicehearts was an important place for her especially in the beginning of her integration process, there she got her friends. She says that looking herself back to what she was ten years ago, she was shy, but nowadays outgoing. For her case, finding a community, made her change. A definition by Redfield, Linton and Herskovits in 1936 explains that acculturation means those phenomena that happen when groups of

individuals with different cultures come together. Those phenomena are the changes that happen of either or both groups. (Berry & Sam 2006.)

3 THE CONTEXT OF THE PRODUCT

3.1 Integration

According to the Ministry of Interior, integration is a process where immigrants adapt themselves to the Finnish society and at the same time acquire new skills, competences and practices that help them to participate better. Integration is a process in which some immigrants should be supported more and devoted more time. To integrate to Finland, one needs information about Finnish society and some knowledge in Finnish or Swedish. Central government and municipalities are the biggest actors dealing with the integration of immigrants. Their duty is to help immigrants know their rights and duties, and make them feel welcome (Ministry of the Interior, 2016.)

Integration means both in academic and public discussion two things; it means the process of an immigrant finding his place in the society. It also can be seen as development, where an immigrant partly adapts himself to the country and its customs, but preserves his own ethnic or cultural identity and the practice that comes from there, like language or religion. Integration looks different depending on the focus it is seen from. The focus can lie in legal and political system, or in economic and social system. Cultural integration, in other words adapting the customs, values, language and behavior are often mentioned when talking about integration. More to integration is spiritual integration, which refers to identifying to the society and its culture (Saukkonen 2013, 65-66.)

3.2 Integration Policy in Finland

In the book women tell their personal integration stories to Finland from their own angle. To understand the stories deeper, it is crucial to build knowledge about integration as a phenomenon and also on a policy level. Integration policy indicates political administrative work that aims to promote immigrants' participation and wellbeing in the society (Saukkonen 2013, 65.) Finland's integration policy,

or its birth took place in the 1990s'. Before integration policy took place in Finland, Finland had two state advisory boards; advisory board for refugees, and an advisory board for both refugees and migrants. In 1994 the advisory boards created the first alignment; normal service principle. Organizations for immigrants were hoped not to be permanent, but immigrants were to be part of the society that they could be taken care of on the side of officials' normal work. (Saukkonen 2013, 86.) In 1997 Finland decided to set an aim to integrate all immigrants effectively to Finland and its working life.

The law to receive asylum seekers and support immigrants' integration (493/1999) measures happened in May 1999. Then immigrants were to participate to working life and to society preserving their own cultures and languages at the same time. Finland's policy reflects a thought of a two-polar integration; integration to new circumstances was not only for immigrants, but also to the Finnish people. (Saukkonen 2013, 87.)

Immigrants had a right to be taught to their own religion. Other responsibilities such as this, were taken care by the municipalities, who have rights to choose how they take care of their areas. The integration law in 1999 ordered municipalities to write their own integration programs and follow the execution and effects it had. At this point there were already a lot more immigrants and Finland therefore needed to renew the integration law. That law (1386/2010) took place in 2011. The aim of the law was to bring all integration services to all immigrants regardless of their stay in Finland. All people coming to Finland were inquired to learn about Finland and the services. (Saukkonen 2013, 88-89.)

The newest act is the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration. The purpose of the law is to support and promote integration, and the immigrants' participation in Finnish society. The law aims to foster equality and parity between different groups in the society. (1386/2010 Finlex.) Other laws regarding immigrants are Decree on Social Assistance (1997/1412), The Constitution of Finland (1999/731), the Aliens Act (2004/301), Act on Public Employment and Business

Service (916/2012), Residence Act of Municipality (1994/201), and Unemployment Security Act (2002/1290) (Finlex, mentioned above.)

Council of state made an in-principle about the integration program of the society (VALKO I) 7.6.2012. In the years 2016-2019, the integration program of the society will emphasize four areas: 1. Bringing immigrants' cultural competences to strengthen Finland's innovation ability. 2. Intensify integration cross-administratively. 3. Increase cooperation between the state and the municipality in receiving immigrants. 4. Encouragement of open discussion about immigration policies, without racism (Council of state, 2016.)

3.3 History of the Integration of Immigrants in Finland

Before 1995 most of the immigrants in Finland were men, but nowadays (2007) due to family reunions, marriages and repatriations half of the immigrants are women. (Martikainen & Tiilikainen, 2007, 16.) In the government immigration policy program (2006) emphasis was put especially on the importance of work-related migration, which meant the growth of immigrant women in Finland regardless of the reasons coming here such as education, work or family reunion. (Tiilikainen, 2008, 9)

Many theories, angles and researches about immigrants are largely based on men immigrants' circumstances and experiences, since the research in the 1960's and 1970's about work-related immigration was researched only as men's immigration. It was more difficult to get interviews from women, since it was men who were in public places easily accessible. Women spend more time at home, taking care of the household and children and therefore more challenging to get access to. The role of immigrant women was more investigated in the late 1990's when Refugee and Migration Advisory Board decided to set a task force to look into the matter more carefully. (Martikainen & Tiilikainen, 2007, 16-17.)

Finland shifted slowly from a country of emigration to an immigration country. First Finnish people moved to other countries, such as Sweden, the USA and Australia. But then in the 1970 to 1980 Finland started receiving citizens from other countries, like Chile and Vietnam. In the early 1990s' Somalis started moving to Finland. After people from Chile, Vietnam and Somalia came, Finnish Inkeri people repatriated from Russia and Estonia to Finland. Then closer to year 2000, asylum seekers from Kosovo came. (Vartia, Bergbom, Giorgiani, Rintala-Rasmus, Riala & Salminen, 2007, 16)

The number of immigrants has increased in Finland in statistics too. According to statistics in Figure 1, year 1993 was the point when immigrants started to come to Finland rapidly, and the growth has remained the same apart from a few drops along the way. The number of immigrants grew from the early 90s from 10 000 to 30 000 in the year 2011.

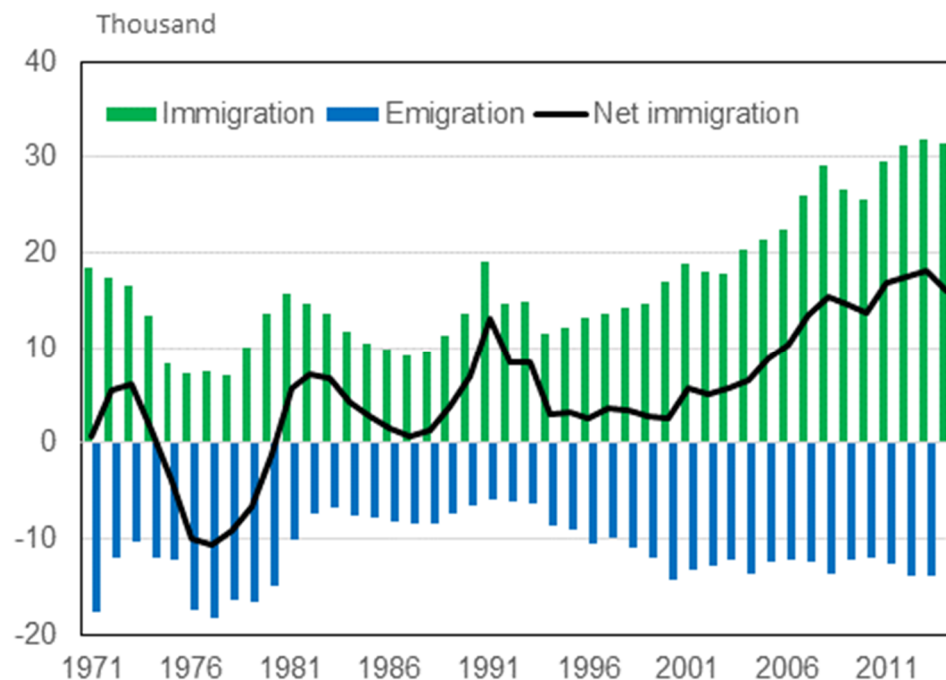


FIGURE.1 Immigration, emigration and net immigration in 1971–2014 (Source: Population and Justice Statistics. Statistics Finland)

There is a lot of information and research done about immigrants. Saraleena (2012) researched about ways of acquiring knowledge about working life in the midst of Kurd and Russian women in Finland. Also in addition to knowledge about working life, there is there is a research about immigrant women aiming for working life who have exceeded official integration time. (Kilpeläinen, Keskinen 2013.) The angle of immigrant women's integration among mothers in Vantaa has been covered as well: Immigrant women have experienced being a housewife exhausting, and overall are in demanding situation, meaning they need a lot of help. The help should be offered in a form of housework and babysitting. They also need help in how to live in Finnish social service system (Kristo, 2012.)

Those who have come to Finland as spouses are in danger of staying outside of integration services, which complicates not only their own integration, but the integration of their children. Their unemployment rate is high, and most of them experience domestic violence. If the woman's partner does not support her participation in integration services and studies, she could be marginalized. Therefore integration programs concentrate on reaching women. (Hiltunen, 2012.)

3.4 Nicehearts

Nicehearts of Vantaa is a non-governmental organization that aims to support the community's self-reliance, equality and promote multicultural activities for both girls and women. All Nicehearts' activities target to create long-term networks and create a place where girls from different backgrounds can meet each other. Gender equality and women's active participation in the society are key values Nicehearts aims to achieve. (Nicehearts website, 2016.)

Nicehearts was founded in 2001 and since that time has participated both in national and international projects. Nicehearts is a low-threshold meeting place for women and a place that has targeted services for women. In addition to services, Nicehearts aims to function in society by promoting their clients issues by embracing social advocacy. The services and activities Nicehearts has are social

support activities, training, guidance and counselling. Those are arranged in target groups, open activities, peer support and coaching. All the functions are free of charge to clients (Vantaan Nicehearts, plan of action, 2016, 2.)

Johanna Sjöholm, the executive director of Nicehearts tells that Nicehearts stemmed from girls' nights, which was a success. The activities in the beginning were only for girls, but as they saw an arising need among women, they decided to concentrate primarily on women and make girls' activities volunteer. Nowadays girls's work "Culture and gender sensitive Girls' project" has received funding. Both womens' and girls' work is based on feminism and equality (Johanna Sjöholm, personal communication 7.10.2016.)

Nicehearts has other work beside girls' work. It has Kultsi project, which develops culture and gender sensitivity in work activity models. The project aims to help the women who are at a risk of exclusion from society. In the project workers from Nicehearts provide individual service and communal group activities especially for immigrant women. Another project they have is Kasvukutsu (eng. A call to growth), it targets to improve women immigrants employment and entrepreneurship. In addition to these projects Nicehearts had Qutomo project that created new integration path and tried to get the third world citizens' voice heard. After Qutomo project, Nicehearts has neighbourhood mothers that creates a model where the immigrants own citizens help each other. (Vantaan Nicehearts, plan of action, 2016, 2-3.)

Nicehearts' jobs and functions intend to support immigrant women's integration processes to Finland, which according to Johanna happens through participating them into the functions. The girls and women can participate and in the long term also have an impact. Participatory method is based on the idea that everyone has a need to feel needed and significant. Nicehearts gives a sense of meaning to women that they are part of the community. Nicehearts educates migrants both in responsibilities and benefits. The organization avoids doing things for the others, but wants to teach women to do things themselves and be independent. The mission of Nicehearts is not only to integrate, but also to be integrated, since

integration goes two ways (Johanna Sjöholm, personal communication, 7.10.2016.)

The organization tries to make multicultural knowledge and skills more known in the Finnish society. The activities concentrate that all women, regardless of race or background or age, could learn from each other, this all happens through work done together. The key for Nicehearts was to establish a place where women could come as they are. This way the organization works straight from client's needs (Suomen Naisresurssikeskusten yhdistys ry 2011.)

Nicehearts' work is done with culture and gender sensitive work mode as prejudice free as possible, with a respect to an individual herself and to her background. The goal of all of Nicehearts' work is to empower women through better self-esteem and acknowledgement of their work skills. The mission has always been the willingness to gather together people, who have a chance to help other women and their families (Vantaan Nicehearts, plan of action, 2016, 2.)

4 WRITING A LIFE STORY

4.1 Conducting an Interview

The life of an individual and its meaning in a larger community is best understood through a story. The process of putting lives in a story form helps us understand our lives fully aware and conscious. A story gives us a context and a recognized meaning (Atkinson 1998, 7.)

Louhela (2002, 7 & 16) explains that writing one's life story gives life structure, direction and meaningfulness. The issues that may rise are where have I been, where am I now, and where am I going? Resource based writing means considering about experiences of success, the process of going there and the thoughts it rose.

Writing a life story, or an integration story requires looking at many aspects. Louhela (2002) encourages to concentrate on time, place, situation and participant. What were the highlights, or events, who were the people in your life then? What were your opinions about things, what were your dreams and fears? How did you make decisions?

When writing a story about one's life, it is crucial to look at the goal, one should avoid careful planning or being trapped by routines. It is good to "write quickly, but modify slowly". To keep the motivation to tell the story, the questions about life do not need to be from birth to the current state. Story can be clarified later and made simpler. To summon up memories, one can use photos, letters, cards or new articles. It is important to let the text flow, to listen to oneself and let the story go at its' own pace (Saarijärvi 2005, 20 & Saarijärvi 2011, 49-59.)

4.2 Building Identity Through Story Telling

When telling a story, it is good to share memories and recollections as freely as possible, without analyzing them too much. Telling a life story and seeing what is written creates a possibility for increased self-knowledge. In addition to self-knowledge recalling things from the past builds up identity. An individual's personality is a result of her experiences in life so far. In identity work such as recalling past, a human gives a meaning to her life and herself. A story creates a picture for the individual about the experiences and events in life and the meaning given to them. Earlier experiences define the content of the following experience (Karjalainen 2004, 17, 25.)

4.3 Phenomenology

Karjalainen (2004) proposes the importance of phenomenology in life stories. The meanings, which under the reality opens up to a human are not congenital, but stem from the community, and are a part of common community's meanings' tradition. Investigating an individual always reveals something about the whole community. The text reaches depths and power, when the teller succeeds being herself and open about her life. If the writer consciously tries to write the story to a certain group, or include political, religious or ideological messages, the text automatically gives a picture of one-level, and purpose-driven text. That kind of text reaches and convinces nobody. An interesting part of recalling past is that even if it brought up negative emotions, it can still be experienced and meaningful, as if it was a challenging effort that the writer wants to do (Karjalainen 2004, 29, 45, 76.)

4.4 The Freedom for Women to Talk

It is important to let people tell their stories the way they choose to tell them. The most central part of the life story is how people see themselves and how they decide how others see them. Life story is a clear and ordered record of personal

truth, which combines both fact and fiction. This is really the most we can ask of a life story. The story is a personal explanation or justification in a very touching way, since it tells what people have done with their lives. Because life story interview is firstly an artful endeavor, so it should be treated as an art form as well (Karjalainen 2004, 9, 20.)

The motivation for people to tell their stories derives from the eagerness to tell their experiences, and the life they have lived, since their own stories are, what they know the best. Life story can be extremely transforming, if the interviewer just witnesses, really hears, understands and accepts without judging. Atkinson (1998) believes that for most people, sharing their life stories is something they really want to do. All people need is someone to listen and show interest in their stories. The core of what people find meaningful in their own lives is often shown through metaphors, comparisons and language they use when telling about their lives (Karjalainen 2004, 22, 25, 64.)

Narrativeness is not merely built on historical truth, because telling a story implies a unique point of view. The process is very subjective, still it is important that one part of the narrative does not contradict with another part that is why it is good to clarify and ask questions. It is a win-win situation to help the interviewee to tell her story in a new, clearer or more complete way that helps them to see their own lives a little differently (Karjalainen 2004, 62.)

4.5 Implementation

There are two ways to write; therapeutic and fictional. Life story is something in the between, it can smoothly move between fiction and therapy. A life story is an intimate text even when it is published, since everybody has difficult experiences. Under therapeutic and fictional style, there are several points in between where a life story can place itself. The first one withholds a research method; What does the writer write and emphasize, and why? What does she leave out the text? Does the truth change along those choices? (Enwald 2003, 45.)

Enwald talks about writing a life story yourself, but I apply the knowledge in writing somebody else's life story. In my product, the emphasis is on what the interviewee tells me, and how I interpret the story. A commentary on a life story can be added to provide missing information like historical, or cultural backgrounds, or it can be the researcher's own experience doing the interview, or the process of meeting the story teller. The researcher can tell about in what under circumstances they had the interview and what the overall experience of it was (Atkinson 1998, 55-58, 72.)

Another way according to Enwald (2003, 46), is to combine fact and fiction in the text. In the book as an author, I do not combine the stories with fiction, but write down what the interviewees say. It is their choice whether they used fiction in the stories or not. The third method is repairing story. It is based on actual events, but allows the teller to make feeling failure into a survival, and experienced injustices into success. The women in the book did not change their stories, but instead decided to embrace and accept their lives as they are, like Anlyn: "In the beginning it was difficult to integrate to Finland, but once I got a job and a got into a school, it all felt easier. Everything seems to be going well now."

The last method Enwald mentions is imagining a future story. In that, one imagines herself in one, five or ten years. The main point is to avoid negative thinking, and dream what life would be and what she had reached by that point. (Enwald, 2003, 46.) I decided to ask some of the women about their future wishes, for example Nargis ended her interview saying that she feels that Finland is now her country, since she has her friends and family here. The women were realistic and knew what fighting to live in a new country means, their stories reflected survival and the appreciation of mundane life, and believing in the better future.

After choosing how to write the story, the next phase was to plan how to carry out the why process, and prepare for the interview, it also means that you understand why a life story can be useful. The next step after understanding why a life story is useful, is to interview, and helping the person go through it while recording the story. Having interviewed, it is time to transcribe and interpret the interview. Then

there is time to leave questions and comments, and let the one being interviewed check, and make corrections. This all will lead you to a flowing life story in the words of the other person telling it. Atkinson (1998) comments that it is also important to explain properly what you are doing, since it is ethical. Permissions for recording and using real names should be asked (Atkinson 1998, 26, 28.)

To go deeper into the different phases of the interviewing process, let's start with preparations. Prepare by researching the background. In my case, it meant migration. The interview will be the smoother, the more the interviewee feels you know she is talking about. Second phase is creating the right setting: The more the one being interviewed feels needed and a part of the process, the easier it will go. Loosening up first may help you to tune to the right atmosphere. It is good to remember add dates, names and places. (Atkinson 1998, 29, 30.)

After introduction there is space for open-ended interview. It is beneficial to allow the interviewee to talk as long as she wants without interruption on a given topic, or a period in her life. Giving her space to talk freely gives her space for free associations to connect with thoughts and deeper responses. Specific questions should only be used when really necessary. When she stops talking, a direct and a simple question can be asked. The questions do not strictly need to follow an order, since an order easily encourages to touch only the surface of the topic. Also, an interview is not a conversation. (Atkinson 1998, 31-32.)

In that open-ended conversation "yes and no" questions should be avoided. Good questions to ask is to go in a chronological order, choosing the best questions that go with the interview. Additional techniques such as a timeline, or a collage with experiences, feelings, words, and images can be used. The interviewer should be aware whether he responds to the stories personally, professionally, subjectively or theoretically. (Atkinson 1998, 40-43,62.)

After questions, transcribing the stories is highly recommended. The reason it is recommended is because it adds accuracy, clarity and keeps similar contents together. After first time of transcribing, it can be listened again to check possible errors. (Atkinson 1998, 55-58.)

4.6 Conducting an Interview

The role of an interviewer is to be responsive and flexible, he is to be a guide and a follower in the process. Being a good guide means letting the interviewees know that what they said was clear, meaningful, and insightful, if it really was. A good follower listens well, and tries to be objective. Listening well makes the teller feel important, which makes the interviewer and an interviewee experience a connection, where there might be similar feelings and experiences shared. Listening creates a safe place and it means that you care, respect and honor the person's life and story. (Atkinson 1998, 33-35.)

If the interviewer does not understand something, he can ask about it, since it is likely that someone else will not understand it either. In addition to asking, it is good not to cut her off. New interesting topics can be embraced, with remembering going back to the original topic after that (Atkinson 1998, 32-33.)

Emotions such as sense of loss, shame and longing may emerge when the other person tells her story, and that is something not to be ashamed of. The interviewee will tell the interviewer if she does not want to tell something. If they pause while talking, it is since they need it. Give the interviewee support and respect in regards of boundaries. Furthermore, the interviewer should be grateful to the other person telling her story. Remember as an interviewer to say thank you. (Atkinson 1998, 35-36.)

There are some things that should be told to the interviewee. Those things include that you tell your aims and purpose writing the story. If plans change, it should be told. It is valuable to tell them that telling the story is voluntary and how long the

process will be and what the benefits of it will be. The story teller is also free to go through the story and make corrections. (Atkinson 1998, 38.)

4.7 Narrative Method and Listening Skills in Social Work

Narrative method, both interviewing and writing, and listening can also be used in social work, not only when writing a life story. Social work seeks to understand an individual from the context of his or her social, cultural and political context. From those bases a social worker can promote and encourage social change, individual empowerment and well-being in order to solve problems in relationships with other people. If social workers learn about the stories people tell, it is more effortless to intervene in those stories and their life situations. For example, if a worker knows that an individual feels himself vulnerable in certain situations, then the worker can avoid to put the man in those situations, until the right time when the worker can help him to address the issue. (Baldwin, 2013, 8.)

Further, narrative a way of understanding others but also ourselves. It is essential part of social work to self-reflect, and use the self. Social workers are part of their own stories, but also professional narratives and social work narrative environment. Stories help professionals understand groups since they have core stories that are typical to the group. The stories show how the group interacts internally and with other groups. (Baldwin, 2013, 8-9.)

Writing can be used as a method of self-care and a psychotherapeutic technique. There are plenty of life stories written in the world, which already prove the need for people to write their own stories and separate themselves from traumatic experiences. To set an example, Anne Frank did that. The line between therapeutic and creative writing is fine. Writing in psychotherapy can be an important way to deal with own emotions and thoughts. Professionals in mental health field feel that writing can be encouraged to clients as a method, when they need to express their emotions or map out the stress factors in the daily lives, and also clear out complicated life events. Writing in this sense can mean writing a diary, stories,

thoughts, poems, or sending letters. Writing can increase self-knowledge and help her get a new vaster angle on her own life. (Ihanus, 2006, 70.) I believe both writing and being interviewed help the client to understand herself better, and therefore be more equipped to empower and help herself.

6 DEVELOPING THE BOOK

6.1 The Aim

The goal of this Thesis was to plan a product, collect interviews and conduct material for a book, plus write a report of how it was planned, executed and evaluated. More precisely, the aim was to write a book where I interview five women who have moved to Finland and tell their stories in a way that my voice was heard as a narrator. "I understand in the middle of the conversation that Anlyn both studies and works in Finnish. Anlyn still says that she likes to speak English every now and then, since most time she speaks Finnish. We decided to stick to Finnish this time." (The product). Those women would answer open-ended questions about their childhood, integration to Finland, their message to Finnish people and how it was talking about their stories.

The intention of the product was to provide more information about the effectivity of women resource centers, such as Nicehearts, and immigrant women's integration in Finland. In addition to being a material providing insight into the integration of immigrant women, the product would be an interesting novel to be read even if one did not have interest in immigration. The book is to be used by Nicehearts to promote women's resource centers, since the chapters of the book would always end by telling about the role of the organization in the lives of the women. The book would hopefully also raise conversation on how the society integrates women.

For Nicehearts, this book meant a chance to spread the effective integration work Nicehearts and its' good practises. The book is a campaign for people to know Nicehearts more, so that media would notice the organization and that the work would therefore be seen and funded. Writing a book is one way to develop a sense of community. Nicehearts aims to have an impact, impact that starts from

the girls and reaches to the families and that way to the whole communities. Nicehearts strives for less inequality (Meg Sakilayan-Latvala, personal communication, 28.10.2016.)

The aim for Nicehearts in the book was to extend good practices to others. The stories provides a way of communicating to others the effectivity of Nicehearts' activities and services. This year is Nicehearts 15th anniversary, a milestone. The book documents the changes what has happened, it is their way to tell historically what they have done. (Meg Sakilayan-Latvala, personal communication, 28.10.2016.)

The book was also to serve my professional development in interviewing and writing skills and increase my knowledge about integration, so that I would be more equipped to work with immigrants in a multicultural environment.

6.2 Original plan

Originally I planned to execute participatory interview, where the women would tell their integration stories and discuss about them together with the other women. The idea was to challenge the traditional researcher-participant interviewing technique and instead try participatory interviewing, where the women would interview each other. Like in participatory action research, I wanted the people not to be a target, but participate in the process of creating a book. The aim was to include the women so that they could do the analysis of each other with me.

The book was to empower the participants see their life in a different way, through the photos, conversations and new gained friendships. The women would be empowered by giving a chance to participate, make a difference, and bring their opinions about issues regarding them. The most essential thing would be having the voices of immigrant women themselves, and that their voice would be the loudest. I planned that the book would be written in a novel kind of way, with

careful descriptions of people and places. Also, both Sakilayan-Latvala and I wanted to have pictures in the book, and we discussed that I could take pictures of them.

6.3 Challenges and Deviating from the Plan; Development

I aimed to challenge the typical power relations that happen in researches: a strong researcher and the participant who has only little to say. However, as I failed to participate the interviewees in the writing process and due to complex schedules of the women, I decided to interview each one individually. Even though I interviewed all the women one-on-one, I still managed to make them participate by telling their stories and correcting/editing them. I believe talking in private also helped them to open up easier, since there was not a pressure of a big group.

Also, I soon came into a realization that it was not possible for me to write a novel, as I had planned. A novel consists of careful descriptions of places and people, and with limited amount of interviews I was not able to achieve that. A blog I had written for Nicehearts for a year was always from my perspective, which is why I decided to use the same perspective for the book and changed the book's narrator from objective to a subjective narrator, me.

I planned to take pictures of them myself, or have somebody take pictures of them. Instead due to lack of time I turned out asking the interviewees to send me pictures with explanations.

I thought a beneficial book for Nicehearts would be a book promoting its services and ensuring its future on the field of working with immigrants. The most important part of the book would be the stories of the book from the women who have used the services of Nicehearts. The stories should be interestingly written to people with all backgrounds and ages. The stories would avoid academic and tricky Finnish language. The readers of the book would be all who want to read the book,

clients and those who want to help Nicehearts, or know more about Nicehearts. In addition to the stories, the book would include the future aspect of Nicehearts told by the director of Nicehearts, Johanna Sjöholm.

I agreed with Meg Sakilayan-Latvala that the women would preferably be from different backgrounds, different countries and variety of integration stories. The idea was to take into an account succeeded immigrant women, that media tends to neglect.

6.4 Execution

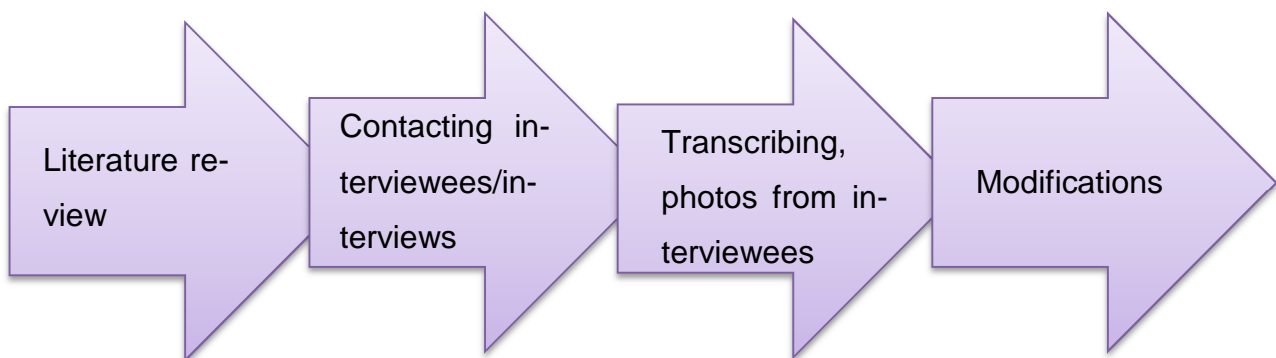


TABLE 1. The process of executing the book

The product started soon after my school internship in Nicehearts ry in the fall 2014 Planning the. The interviews took place 2014-2016 in random order. I received the photos from the women and modified and wrote the report of the process in the fall 2016.

Given instructions to write the integration stories of five immigrant women, I was given free hands as how to interview and how to write the stories. I planned where to hold the interviews and how to contact the women, and what to ask them. These women would preferably create a heterogeneous group of different countries and educational backgrounds, but they all had it in common that they had

once been clients of Nicehearts. The plan was to be ready with the product by December 2016, or before.

I started off by reading books about how to write biographies and planned writing a novel of stories. I also read biographies and books about how to interview people. Most books were about writing your own story, but I could apply the techniques in my book. I also had a look into other product Thesis that gave me an idea of the division between a report and the product.

Robert Atkinson (1998) advises to get the information to use yes-no questions only when the interviewer follows it by "why" or "how" questions. Also, the less structure a life story interview has, the more effective it will be. Good three topics for the interview are birth and family or origin, cultural setting and traditions, and social factors. When asking questions they could be asked in a chronological order or thematic (which means that you cover one topic or theme in depth at a time (Atkinson, Robert 1998, 39-45.)

I interviewed the women, recorded the interviews and transcribed them. Once that was done, I sent the written versions back to the interviewees to be corrected. I had an oral permission from all of them to publish their stories in a book published by Nicehearts. When Nicehearts commissioned me to write this book, they said they would arrange my interviewees and ask for their permissions. They also promised to be responsible for spell checking and publishing the book. In addition, Nicehearts took full responsibility over the ethical considerations regarding the book. Thesis contract between DIAK, Nicehearts and I the author was written on 21nd of November, 2016

The organization, Sakilayan-Latvala in specific, arranged my interviewees, who were clients of Nicehearts. When I was done with all the interviews and had written them, one of the women decided to back off the book due to her life situations and personal reasons. I had already transcribed, translated and sent her the story. I had to come up with a new interviewee with Meg and interview her in fall 2016, all of the other interviewees I had interviewed in spring 2016.

I decided to use open-ended questions that allowed the women to tell their stories. The idea was to give them the chance to talk freely about what they wanted, but I soon noticed that for the structure of the book I had to be intentional, so I asked all of them to tell their stories from childhood to future wishes, with an aspect of their message to Finnish people. When I interviewed them, I placed my phone as a recorder in front of them, and wrote everything they said. Later on when transcribing, I added my feelings and observations to the text about the location and the interviewee herself. Then I made sure that there are no spelling mistakes and I checked the order of the chapters, so that it mostly would be told in a chronological order. Other changes were not needed.

I chose Nicehearts for the interviewing location for four of them, because it was an environment that they already knew and felt comfortable at. I interviewed one of the participants in Espoo's Sello library, since she wanted to be interviewed there. I contacted them via phone calls, text messages and e-mails. I quickly noted that the best way to contact them was to call them in the evening, or in the weekend. Many of the women work, so the only free time they have is really rare due to their children. I interviewed each of them 1-2 times, if I had interviewed them for more times, I would have visited their homes to get a better idea of them and their cultures and customs.

I tried using alternative techniques besides traditional interviewing, but I came into a conclusion that talking was the best self-expression method for them. As an elective I completed a narrative methods course in DIAK (Diaconia University of Applied Sciences), to which I combined to my Thesis. According to the course instructions I asked them to bring photos, and tell me about the photos. I also asked few of them to use the Life Course method: to draw a line of their life and trajectories. It seemed that all of the women found talking to be their primary way of perceiving things. Integration for them was a story, to get a full picture of it, one had to observe the story teller and listen to every twist of the story. Some of the women spoke better English than Finnish, so some of the interviews were done in English instead of Finnish. I had to translate the stories into Finnish for the book.

When I had already interviewed a few of them, I came up with an idea to ask one of the ladies' message to Finnish people. Having done that, Meg suggested that I needed to get back to the other ladies and ask the same question. Another question I added was their feedback of the process of telling their stories. I also asked them to pick any photographs they would like to have published of their lives.

Having interviewed all the women and transcribed and modified the stories according to their wishes, the order of the stories was to be decided. Nicehearts hoped that the stories would be placed according to Nicehearts timeline. First came girls' project, which is when Nargis got acquainted with Nicehearts. Then Kultsi project, which is when Paiman came, then Wahva Nainen, when Maria came. After that Nicehearts established the Qutomo project, which is when Urartuhi got to know Nicehearts and finally Neighbourhood mothers project, which is when Anlyn came. The stories were now in the book chronologically and therefore telling the story of Nicehearts at the same time. Based on Sakilayan-Latvala's words, the stories together show how Nicehearts has grown from a local level to a national level. Stories are one way to show how an organization has helped immigrant women with different backgrounds. The idea is to spread the word of the impact the organization has had on women: in this book, it is done through stories, instead of research.

6.5 Evaluation

Evaluation has two definitions: It is the systematic process of collecting and analyzing data to decide whether and to what stage objectives are being achieved. Or it is the systematic process where collecting and data analysis is done in order to make a decision. (Boulmetis & Dutwin 2011.)

At the end of every interview I asked the women for feedback. The feedback questions included topics about how it was for them to tell their integration stories. Also, if they found something new about themselves or if the story raised any

feelings. Some of the feedback is below, but also at the end of each chapter in the book.

It seemed that for the women surviving was the key factor coming to Finland: “I feel joy now, because I understand that I have gone through one difficult part of life path, called the integration. “ Two of the women hoped that their stories would help other people in their integration paths to fight for it. One of the key concepts of this book was to empower. In the process above the woman felt herself empowered enough to tell her own story and therefore encourage others to fight for their integration too.

On the other hand, one of the women said already sharing the story makes the burden easier to carry: “When I can tell my story to people, it feels like I’m not alone anymore.” For one of the women sharing her story was demanding, but drew her into the realization that it feels normal and telling it is completely normal.

Telling an integration story is empowering for someone who has undergone acculturation and success story. Telling a story is a way to influence people. For immigrant women to find a home, which is not your family, makes you feel part of the society. People often say Nicehearts is their second home, which was mentioned in the women’s comments in the book too. Integration is that you find your place in the society. And that is how one develops a community, by doing good and taking part, in the women took part in spreading word about Nicehearts, and telling their own stories to encourage others. That is the heart of Social Work, being an active citizen, so that a person feels at home (Personal Communication, Meg Sakilayan-Latvala, 1.11.2016)

I also received feedback on a regular bases from my supervisor Meg Sakilayan-Latvala from Nicehearts, director of Nicehearts Johanna Sjöholm, and my teacher Marianne Nylund from DIAK. Getting feedback from other students in Thesis seminars was also a crucial evaluation part of the process.

There are five evaluation models. The first is discrepancy model, developed by Malcom Provus (1971) which is used in situations where a program exists in an organizational structure. The aim in this model is not to prove cause-and-effect relationships but understand the evidence so that reasonable assumptions about cause and effect. This means that there is more interested in why something occurred rather than the fact that it did occur. The second model is a goal-free model, it was developed by Michael Scriven. Goal-free model tries to look at the program's actual effect on identified needs, meaning that the goals the program has are not the criteria basing the evaluation. This evaluation method looks at how and what the program is doing to address needs in the client population (Boulmetis, Dutwin 2011, 86-88.)

The third model, transaction model, developed by R.E.Stake (1975), created a model where the emphasis is in the middle of evaluator, participant, and the project staff. In the model there is a continuous feedback flow between the evaluator and staff. Moving onto the next model, decision-making model, developed by Daniel Stufflebeam (1983) is a model where decisions are made regarding the future use of the program. The present performing is less concerned, than the future (Boulmetis, Dutwin 2011, 89.)

The model I am using for my Thesis, is goal-based model, which is also called as the objective attainment model. This evaluation model is based on stated objectives or goals found. It is used in a proposals, brochures or other descriptions of the program (Boulmetis, Dutwin 2011, 90.) On below I will go through how I met my aims and goals.

One of the aims was to provide more information about the functionality of women resource centers and on how immigrant women integrate to Finland. The book tells five different stories and at the same time talks about the role of Nicehearts in their lives. It went through all the phases of Nicehearts. In addition to being informative, it is also novel-like, due to story-telling structure of the book, which was one of the aims too. The book ended up being short enough to keep the reader's interest.

In the book women openly talked about their integration process, which will hopefully raise conversation in the future, especially about the interest about hearing from immigrant themselves. In the book the women were not interested in the integration stories, but their life stories. One of my aims was personal growth, I truly feel I have improved my interviewing and writing skills and knowledge about integration. I now feel more equipped working with immigrants, which was laid as one of the aims earlier.

As for personal growth and challenges; I managed to carry out the process through, even though I did not stick to the original plan. To have been able to carry the original plan, I should have been more intentional with the timetable, and clarify the different phases of the process to myself better. On the other hand, open plan gave flexibility for changes along the process.

6.6 Suggestions for Development

Looking back, I would have rather combined the interviews with an activity already existing in Nicehearts, so that the women would have been in Nicehearts anyways, even if it had not been for my product. That way I could have arranged participatory group interviews. Also, it would have been interesting to concentrate more on their cultures than the Finnish culture, for example ask how their culture either helped or made it difficult to integrate, which factors had an impact in the process. Now that topic is left to think for the reader himself.

Also, since the women I interviewed enjoy talking, a video might have been one option. Video would have allowed their subjective point of views more than mine. In the future I would be intrigued to see a book or a video of women's' integration stories to different countries, not just to Finland. In that book/video Finnish women would integrate elsewhere, and other citizens to Finland, but also other countries. That comparison would shed light on the fact that Finnish people can be immigrants too.

I think this kind of thesis could easily be done in collaboration with another student. The other student could concentrate on photography for example, and include the women into the process of planning the photos.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 Ethics

Ethics mean the sub-discipline of philosophy that discusses what is right and wrong for individuals, groups, organizations and society. It aims to look at the nature of our well-being and happiness, good ways to prosperity, but at the same time our obligations and the rights we owe to each other. Ethics tell us how individuals, professionals, corporations and societies choose to interact with one another. Ethics should be considered on five levels: individual, team level, organization, society and the future generations (Haukur Ingi, Helgi Thor 2013, 7.)

Project ethics can be seen through ethical opportunities and risks, which can be thought through following questions: Should the project be done in the first place, what should be done and how, and how should it be communicated. (Haukur Ingi, Helgi Thor 2013, 15)

Ethical guidelines regarding project ethics change on regular bases. They derive from experience and observation of the long-term wider consequences of actions. The Social field changes all the time, and as it changes, our collective wisdom regarding ethics grows, as negative event emerge over time. Following ethics is really important, since failing an ethical code of practice can be destructive to the reputation of the professional and therefore can harm the professionals' careers (Haukur Ingi, Helgi Thor 2013, 8.)

Ethical decision-making can be considered as a process where social workers engage in values personal, professional, social and organizational life. In order to establish where an ethical dilemma is according to common principles, one needs to consider what factors go prior when weighing up of alternatives. Critically reflective practice means evaluation of one's own performance. It gets developed through exploring pre-existing values, socialized value patterns, and how personal and professional experiences influence. Duty, responsibility, obligation

and rights and clarified via critical reflection when making ethical decisions (Gray, Webb 2010,41.) A project like this requires a lot of decisions and reflection, which is considered below.

7.2 Ethical Questions in the Project

During the process of writing book, I had to go through several ethical questions in order to be able to write the book.

Social work comprises basic values, which all projects also should follow. One of those values is social justice. Social justice means that social workers help clients find individual solutions to problems, but then also work to change the structure of society. Alongside social justice goes human rights, which is more universal. In human rights, national and local rights differ from a country to a country. Social workers' duty is to promote social justice. In this project justice happens through participation, giving women a voice, empowering them to make a difference in this society by telling their point of view about integrating immigrant women to Finland (Gray, Webb 2010, 21.)

The women in the book gave their names and photos and dates, except for one. Is it ethical to write their personal stories, since there are only a few of their nationals here in Finland? Everybody knows each other. Do they still want their stories to be published in five years? Also, along the stories of the women, the voice of their families and friends is heard too. The motivation for the women themselves was to help other immigrant women in their own journey, and tell their stories because it helped them feel better about themselves and their journeys. Women have the right to tell their own stories, and also the responsibility.

Social work emphasizes respect for persons; it relates to self-determination and to the belief in the client's autonomy, and believes in the worth, dignity and the uniqueness of the individual. Another important value is self-determination, which is based on the belief that humans are rational being who are able to decide

things themselves (Gray, Webb 2010, 21.) This project gave the women space to choose themselves, whether they want to be part of this or not, and to what extent; Did they want their pictures and names in the book, they were able to edit the stories.

What about the names of Nicehearts workers. Does the book now give the picture that individuals are more important than the whole organization? According to Meg Sakilayan-Latvala (personal communication, 28.10.2016) book needs names, to prove people working in Nicehearts are professionals with degrees. It also builds the organization's reputation and creates a picture to everyone how the model there works.

Other value in social work is confidentiality. There needs to be client confidentiality, except if there is a risk of harm to self or others. In the process of writing the book I gave the decision to the interviewees to decide what they want in the book, but also the promise that I would not publish the things they did not want there. Confidentiality means also workers', which is why I contacted the Nicehearts workers who were mentioned in the book (Gray, Webb 2010, 21.)

I had each story checked by the people, but the ones who do not speak Finnish are not able to read the final versions in Finnish. What if translating the stories make them sound something they do not want and they do not even know about it? However, the women are aware that the book will be in Finnish, and can ask translation from how many people they want. Also, women co-wrote the book with me as they were giving corrections and suggestions what to write and what not to write about, and what to delete. This book gave them a voice and empowered them. The book is not written academically, or in simple Finnish, it is average Finnish, since the book is for everyone, clients, and supporters and for others.

Originally, I described things in the book, such as "a beautiful dress". I had to delete that kind of adjectives, since they value the women. In addition, I described things a lot in the book, is it then a book for marketing, or my personal story with the women's stories? According to Sakilayan-Latvala the book will be used as a

part of fundraising campaign, they need funding to keep the work alive and to spread the good work elsewhere too. The women in the organization want to help other women.

A value close to the topic of valuing people is non-discrimination. It signifies not prejudging clients on the basis of earlier preconceptions. Most codes of ethics have a provision about non-discrimination based on class, religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, culture, economic status, political beliefs, disability and so forth. If I took this thought very far, describing somebody positively in a group, and another not, could it be considered as discrimination, even if it was unintentional? Even if it was not, better safe than sorry. (Gray, Webb 2010, 22.)

Finally, how does my background as a Finn have an impact on how I write if I really want the interviewees' stories heard, then should my voice be silenced? The impact it has is that I ask questions that interest me as a Finn. However, the women were aware that I wrote their stories and our meetings from my angle, and they agreed and corrected the texts after I had sent the ready versions back to them. The stories are now heard, but through the lenses of a Finnish Social Work social work student. According to Sakialyan-Latvala (personal communication, 28.10.2016) author's voice is always louder, even when co-writing.

One of the values is cultural competence. Since 1996, The NASW code of ethics has been a leading force in social work. It aims to develop cultural sensitivity, meaning awareness of cultural differences, and it should be recognized when working with diverse populations. All the women were from different cultures, even though I commented on the story, I had to be careful to be as respectful as possible when doing so. (Gray, Webb 2010, 23.)

7.3 Professional Development

During the process especially interviews seemed hard, because the interviewees were at times very emotional. It was difficult not to comment their lives and especially not try help or give therapy for them. I had to learn the difference between an interviewer and a therapist. Throughout the process I noticed that I improved in asking questions and seeing what I need to ask to get the answers I needed. I learnt about immigrants and integration. I therefore learnt to interview and improved in writing skills.

When I heard the stories of this book, my picture of immigrants changed a lot. My view of them is much more human now, and I now try avoiding judging them before I know their backgrounds and really get to know them. As a social worker, it is vital to learn how to listen to clients in a way they feel like they are free to talk about anything and they can trust you.

I now also understand that macro-level problems can be dealt on the micro-level; Women have impact on their families, therefore to the communities and the whole society. Changes can be made from the bigger scale to the smaller, or the contrary, which means that everybody's voice is important, since it has an impact. Community development is something to be done in many ways, empowering the community itself to do it is the best way to do it, giving them the tools to work on the issues that bother them. In this project, a voice was given to immigrant women. Social Work is a constantly growing and developing field of both academic and practical knowledge, and targets to embrace the newest, and most effective methods to make an impact; Media is an area that constantly changes, in my opinion specialists both in the media and social work would be needed.

Writing a product as thesis taught me about cooperation between my University and an organization. I learned that transparency and regular messages help the

process go forward. Every project needs time and space to write and people to support you, I now support group work, even though in the beginning of my studies I did not, since I was used to working alone. I also emphasize the meaning of having a supervisor, who constantly gives feedback. Learning from feedback is the best way to grow. I now see that when starting a new project such as writing a book and interviewing people for it, it is good to work with an organization, or a company who already has the contacts, and the experience and the trust of the clients. It is very beneficial to work under a bigger name, a school or a company, even if you had your own project.

Having gone through a process of writing a book and analyzing it, it has made me think of all angles. The more I study integration, the more I understand there is still plenty to be explored. This thesis project made my hunger for more knowledge about social work and its' possibilities grew along the process.

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