

**DOCUMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE EXHIBITION “TUNTUPOLKU”  
(THE PATH OF FEELING THROUGH THE SENSES)**

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis work is based on documentation and evaluation of a pilot project called "tuntupolku" (path of feelings through the senses). It is written in partial fulfillment of the degree program and also for Taidetalo Pessi, which is a cultural center for children in Finland. Participants for this exhibition were parents and their little ones (babies and toddlers). The time frame for the exhibition was from 12th to 25th November 2016.

"Tuntupolku" is a space that creates a possibility of interaction between a child and an adult. The path is divided into four color spaces, originally derived from the four seasons in Finland. Stimulating materials are used to provide babies and toddlers with experiences of different surfaces, feelings, materials, and colors. In the exhibition, opposites translate into good starting points for differentiating between feels: light or heavy, smooth or rough, soft or hard, thin or thick etc. The path is a sensitive experiential space for the babies and toddlers to explore and be guided by their parents. Taidetalo Pessi uses art-based and child-centered methods of instructing their participants who are mostly children.

The report includes the process of building the exhibition and evaluating the outcome. Using the informal methods of interview and participant observation method to evaluate the project, the results showed that the positives outweigh the negatives. Participants in the exhibition found it laudable ideas for babies. At the end of the exhibition, there were about 500 participants for 14 weekly sessions.

Keywords: Art based method, child-centered method, babies, parents, evaluation, exhibition, "värikylpy" (color bath).

## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	2
1. INTRODUCTION.....	4
2. BACKGROUND.....	6
2.1 Art-based method.....	7
2.2 Child-Centered method of instruction.....	8
2.3 Colour bath “värikylypy”.....	9
2.4 “Tuntupolku” exhibition.....	9
3.THE PROCESS OF BUILDING “TUNTUPOLKU”.....	11
3.1 Informal Interview method.....	12
3.2 My role in the process.....	14
3.3 Pictures from the exhibition.....	16
4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION.....	21
4.1 Impact of the Pilot Project.....	22
4.2 Feedback from clients.....	23
5. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	24
5.1 Other pictures from the summer season.....	25
6. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	27
7. CONCLUSION.....	31
8. REFERENCE.....	33
1 APPENDIX :1 THE EMPTY SPACE.....	37
2 APPENDIX: 2 PICTURE WORKSHOP DURING THE OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION.....	38
3 APPENDIX: 3 CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN THE EXHIBITION.....	39

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis was written in collaboration with the cultural center for children (Taidetalo Pessi) and is owned by the city of Vantaa. I was motivated to write this thesis when I had the opportunity to do my practical placement, CEP (Community, Empowerment and Participation) with the aforementioned organization. Furthermore, because I am a mother of three and the time I joined the organization, my third child was 7 months but had no idea this country had great services for babies of such age. More so, in my country, it is seen as laziness to be playing with your child for a long time so this was an opportunity to see how these activities empower their participants. During my placement in the organization, I followed keenly what the staff did and the methods they used. I worked closely under the art instructor and illustrator and had the opportunity to be part of the instructors' team during "värikylpy" workshop. My teacher suggested that I should consider writing my thesis about the "Tuntupolku" pilot project which was a great idea.

This pilot project was aimed at creating possibilities for babies, toddlers and parents to have their own space to express themselves. It was also meant for the children to use some of the five senses (i.e. touching, feeling, looking, smelling and hearing). The idea to build this exhibition came about when an instructor in an ongoing workshop organized by Pessi called "värikylpy" (The color bath) saw the need to involve the children in a more exciting way where they can explore and discover their own world. The "värikylpy" workshop is for babies and toddlers between the ages of 5 months up to 24 months. In this workshop, the children are given colors and with the help of their parents, they can use it to paint, draw and do all kinds of interesting things. The children explore by touching, feeling, looking, smelling and hearing and they are made to use their five senses simultaneously. Out of this workshop, the concept of "tuntupolku" came about. This exhibition was divided into four ideas taken

from the four seasons of Finland namely summer, autumn, winter and spring. The objectives of Taidetalo Pessi for conducting this pilot project were to find befitting activities for babies and toddlers that are effective. Furthermore, to be able to rent out the exhibition to the whole of Finland and create space and place for parents and their little ones.

In the exhibition, each season was decorated with objects peculiar to it. A mind map for the exhibition was drawn at the beginning of the year and meetings were held to see how best the exhibition will go. The time frame set for this project were stipulated to be from 12th - 25th November 2016. The target groups were families with babies and toddlers and day care centers with children under 3 years old. The funding came mainly from the ministry of culture and the city of Vantaa. The team for the exhibition worked assiduously for a good outcome. Items for the exhibition were purchased on time with the help of the art instructor.

The exhibition registered a total number of about 500 participants in 14 weekly sessions. The attendance for the first day was 70 participants.

## 2. BACKGROUND

Finland has been involved in cultural activities for decades and each municipality has cultural centers for both young and old. The provision of cultural services is in abundance and in active use. Children's culture is one of the priorities for the Ministry of Education and Culture. It has a mandate to promote children's creativity, based on play or storytelling as well as art and cultural services (Lastenkulttuuri 2012). Subsidies for children's culture are given by the Arts Council. The Ministry of Education and Culture uses children's culture as one criteria by the Division for Art Policy in allocating grants to art and cultural institutions, organizations and different forms of art (Lastenkulttuuri 2012).

In Vantaa, children, young people and their families as well as day care centers and schools are provided with high quality and diverse services in arts and culture. As at 2016, the total population of people living in Vantaa were 214,605. Among which children from 0-6 years of age form 8.7% in the city of Vantaa (Vantaa, 2016). Considering the fact that there are many children in the municipality, there was the need to create more recreational facilities for the children and families. It is in this light that the city of Vantaa came up with cultural services for children, youth and adult. The services for children include music, theater, circus, exhibitions and guided tours, courses and workshops, as well as public events all around Vantaa.

Taidetalo Pessi has been in operation since 1992 and has been providing cultural services for children, young people and families with children, schools and day care. Taidetalo Pessi, organizes recreational activities and extracurricular activities for their clients. It has been hosting activities throughout the year and in summer, it organizes summer camps for the children (Vantaa city 2016). The organization uses art-based and child-centered method as medium of instruction. They work under the

city of Vantaa and also under the Ministry of culture. There are two cultural centers for children in Vantaa, Taidetalo Pessi in Tikkurila and Toteemi in Myyrmäki. These organizations have established partnership with other cultural centers and collaborate to carry out different activities. They share and build knowledge of the communities in Vantaa and its environments and develop public participation. Taidetalo Pessi is an organized institution with seasonal time table and activities to be held are collated in a booklet or brochures. These brochures are deposited at vantage points like the Vantaa information center, libraries in Vantaa and neuvola (clinic for mothers and children). For the autumn season in 2016, activities such as “värikyly” (color bath) for babies from 5 months to 24 months were held. With this activity, parents registered to be part of it and paid 7euros for one session and was held every Tuesday for four weeks. The color bath is a visual art activity for babies to experiment and explore while making the use of their senses. In this workshop, the goal is not perfection but to create room for babies and parents to have quality time while the baby learns to do many things on his or her own.

As the Pilot project has come to an end, there was the need to conduct an evaluation of the project, with the view of assessing its potential to serve as a model for similar initiatives in the future. This need forms the basis for this thesis.

## **2.1 Art-based method**

Childhood is a changing approach based on the context in which it is defined and logical assumptions upon which it is based (Lesley 2007). More so, children’s self-confidence is affected and influence by the way adults responds to them. This is the reason why Taidetalo Pessi premises provide high quality interactive services for their participants.

Basically, the staff of Taidetalo Pessi are art educators and the method mostly used are visual arts. They also use the child-centered method to engage their participants. Images can be represented at any given time depending on factors such as who is doing the viewing and the context in which the image is viewed (Neilson, 2012). Furthermore the use of art helps to bring out the understanding of what one wants to portray. Barone T. and Elliot W. (2011) brought out the view that art-based research methods help to broaden the understanding of people. Babies appear to respond happily when they get into contact with anything artistic. Art based activities create good rapport with children within the shortest possible time (Alderson & Morrow 2005). In addition, visual culture as a phenomenon and critical approach to teaching and learning has been partly responsible in shifting traditional approaches to interpreting and creating images within art education (Chalmers, 2002). Art boosts the ability for everyone to imagine the absoluteness above one's own experience. Arts brings out the opportunity for children or adult to build self-esteem. It is a wonderful way for a child to communicate verbally or non-verbally his or her feelings. In a way, children develop their fine motor skills through the engagement of art. It also help them to think critically, thus improve their cognitive and language skills.

## **2.2 Child-Centered method of instruction**

According to Eldén, (2012), child-centered method of teaching aims at building and facilitating learning through physical education, that is in keeping of holistic and thematic approach. In addition, child-centered education is mostly used to explain the key idea involved in the assumption that a child should be the central focus of what education is determined to be (Doddington, 2007). According to Lindon ,(2011), the crucial beginning of social interaction is established over the baby year. Taidetalo Pessi is of the same persuasions. This is the reason why they use child-centered methods in the cause of dealing with the participant who are the children, knowing the fact that children are born as social beings and surrounded by social



environment. To most early childhood professionals, the role of play and spontaneity is central to the learning process and is non negotiable (Hyvönen, 2011). The children as well as their parents are mostly not allowed to stay quiet during an ongoing activity in the premises. If it is a music activity, the parents with their wards sing along and dance when the need arises. This applies to all the activities.

Child-centered method supports children to make their own decisions and goes a long way to empower them as their opinions and voices are heard.

### **2.3 COLOUR BATH “VÄRIKYLPLY”**

“Värikylpy” is a visual art workshop organized for families with babies and toddlers. This kind of workshop allows the child to explore and observe things around her or him. It also gives the child opportunity to create his or her own abstract image. The workshop offer the opportunity for parents and babies to bond well and participants in this group are empowered through the process. The idea of this group is not geared towards perfection but sensing and experiencing (Pori Centre for children culture, 2016). Children mostly use their five senses during this workshop as there are tremendous benefits in training a child to use their senses simultaneously. There is mostly laughter and giggling in the faces of these little ones which is an indication that they enjoy being in the workshop.

### **2.4 “Tuntupolku” exhibition**

The whole idea of “tuntupolku” started when Jaana (art producer of Pessi) had a discussion with Mirva (art producer and in charge of exhibitions) about coming up with an exhibition for babies as many people were enjoying the color bath (väri kylpy)

workshop. Mirva saw it as a laudable idea and discussed it with Heli (the art instructor) and they came up with the idea of building exhibition for babies using the four seasons of the country. The proposal for “tuntupolku” was written as part of a big festival but unfortunately, the festival could not materialize but the “tuntupolku” came on its own as an independent activity. Plans were commenced with eager preparations and meetings were held to see the way forward and to find how best the exhibition will be mounted. Mind map for the exhibition was drawn and logistics required to make it a success were purchased. “Tuntupolku” is a pilot project or trial version. The term pilot study refers to a trial version of a major activity (Polit & Yang 2014).

“Tuntupolku” is a space that creates a possibility of interaction between a child and an adult. The Path is divided into four color spaces, which were meant to depict the four weather seasons in Finland. Stimulating materials previously used for instance at the color bath workshops, were placed along the path which provided babies and toddlers with experiences of different surfaces, textures, materials, and colors. Opposites translate into good starting points for differentiating between feels: light or heavy, smooth or rough, soft or hard, thin or thick.

Lots of things that are familiar to grownups are amazing and interesting to a child because those things are new as far they are concern. In view of this, the participants were allowed to choose the path which interest them the most and the best way to explore.

The path (tuntupolku) does not show any track of tricks, even though you are allowed to try some tricks there. This path is a sensitive experiential space for the smallest members of the family. Parents too may gain pleasant spatial experiences, not to mention good ideas for making simple toys out of everyday things and materials.

The small miracles of the path are worth pondering over. The parent’s task is to lead, support and assist the child to the path. Parents can give names and explanations which help to open up the world little by little as unhurried experiencing together is the key. Parents need only couple of instructions to make their stay enjoyable.

Art education for babies, toddlers and preschoolers supports children's natural interest in materials, colors, and shapes. Who am I and what is the world like? This core question of art is key to art education for children as well. In addition to feel and sight experiences, rhymes and rhyme games as well as soundscape can guide the activities. The aim is to practice eye-hand coordination, fine-motor skills, as well as perceiving three-dimensional objects. A child's observation systems develop during the first year of his or her life and continue to mature thereafter. For example, a 4 month old can classify primary colors. A 3-year-old connects certain colors with certain expressions of emotions (Bronfenbrenner,1977). At first, a child's observations are of the holistic nature and the senses interact with one another (Goodman &Yetta, 2014). Offering children stimulants enhance and stimulate among other things the development of perception of colors and the sense of touch (Schneider, Wolfgang, & Pressley, 2013). Doing things together helps to develop the child's social skills and the child may get his or her first touch of acting in a group (Seymour,1980). The devotion between a child and an adult strengthens, and early interaction improves. Many of a child's later developmental stages especially those related to emotions are built on the foundations of early interaction( Philips, Deborah & Jack, 2000).

### **3.THE PROCESS OF BUILDING “TUNTUPOLKU”**

My objectives were to document and evaluate the pilot project “tuntupolku”.The methods used in the evaluation for writing this thesis work were informal interviews

and participant observation methods. Evaluation is a method used to describe how effective a project was and the method of evaluating the project was the systematic way of analyzing how everything went on from start to finish. The methods are described below.

### **3.1 Informal Interview method**

In order to get the clear picture of the whole exhibition, the process started with informal interviews of some of the staff members in Pessi. The first person was Mirva (arts educator).

Mirva got her motivation from the värikylpy (colour bath) which has been going on for 10 years. Over the period, it has had lots of customers who have registered to be a part of it. The organization already had customers, so coming up with a new thing was not difficult. Heli who has been an art instructor for so many years with lots of experience was also involved in the planning process, likewise Jaana (art producer whose specialty is with the youth). These people brought heads together to see how best they could do something for babies since no exhibition has been organized for babies in the premises.

In spring 2016, the preparation for autumn brochure was ongoing and the exhibition was part of the activities listed in the autumn season. Most of the customers had already registered their participation. Heli on the other hand, had started planning independently for the exhibition and came up with a mind map on how the exhibition was going to be and showed it to the team. They liked it and meetings were held to plan and deliberate on what should be done. Heli started buying the materials in autumn 2015 and in spring 2016, she had quite a lot of materials and also hand crafted some by the end of the summer period.

In the beginning of autumn 2016, the final brochures were made to finalize the planning of the exhibition. The grand opening of the exhibition coincided with the celebration of Father's day in Finland. Turn up was very good and participants were

mostly families with children. A workshop was organized on the first day in which many babies with their parents participated. The babies and toddlers printed their hands and feet on a greetings card for their fathers which was interesting to watch on that day (appendix 2). Approximately 100 participants were present.



*Figure 1 Art producer hanging the curtains*

The second person Heli (fig.1), is an art and craft teacher with 20 years experience in teaching handicraft in an art school. Her clients are school going children and children under school going age. When she was young, she had a passion for arts and that was shown whenever she crafted or drew something. She pursued her dream in arts pedagogy education with children and obtained an honors in it. So far, Heli has been involved in exhibitions for the past ten years and has also taught handicrafts in many art schools and some adult schools as well. She derives her inspirations from nature and the fact that the children she

instructs feel empowered make her happy. She is talented in using natural things which are baby friendly to craft.

### 3.2 My role in the process

To ensure the success of the exhibition, we the team members were committed to each other as we supported and learnt from each other which brought immense success to the group. Finding myself in Taidetalo Pessi was a privilege and an eye opener as I saw myself as a helper in the team. As a helper, I exhibited lots of trait which helped the team. Seeing, recognizing, and seizing an opportunity was a behavioral trait that I exhibited. My team was geared towards a particular direction and that was the success of building the exhibition. Norms were clearly stated as to how the tasks were to be performed. My task-oriented roles were to seek information and opinion about the exhibition. I also gave constructive views for the betterment of the project.



My social roles in the team were encourager and observer. As an encourager, I praised the ideas of the other team members. Using the participant observation method described below, I was able to keep records of the whole activities.

Participant observation method as described by Dewart (2007) is a method in which the researcher engages him or herself in an activity of a group with the aim of learning some aspect of their daily life routine. Participatory work can also be referred to as field work (Spradley 1980). This method involves the use of information gained from participating and observing through recording the exact event (Dewart 2007).

With the use of this method, which was used to evaluate the project, as discussed earlier, I had specific task to perform and since the team had appropriate resource and skill for the work at hand (Richman, 2002), I seize that opportunity. I did some cleaning, painting and cutting out

materials (Fig. 2). Participant observer seeks the opportunity to spend time and perform activities with community in which he finds himself (Schensul et al 1999). With this knowledge, I actively participated in the process of building from start to end. Observation was done in a tacit manner taken into

*figure 2 Working in a team*

consideration the details that went on. I carried a note book everywhere and was constantly taking notes.

During observation, There were few limitations in the cause of building the exhibition. Since it was a pilot project, there were lot of trial and errors method during the building and in view of that, there were many delays.

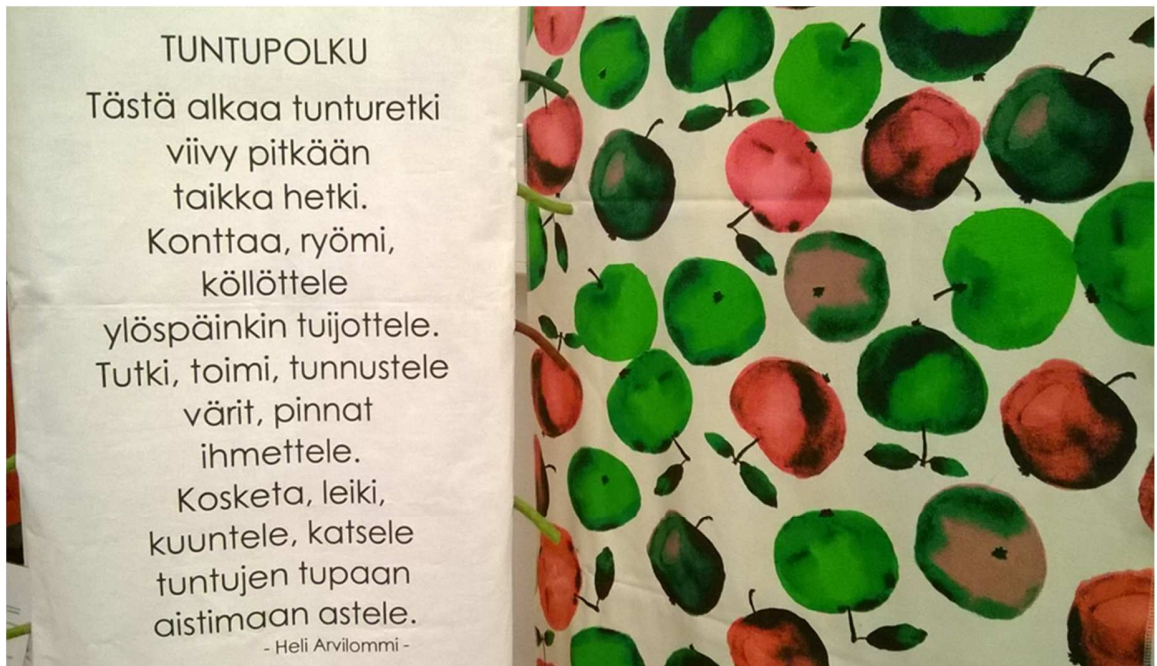
Further observations made during the exhibition were the fact that some of the parents came in groups and others came individually. It was observed that some were playing with their children in groups and some alone. The participants had lots to do differently and they did whatever suits them. The babies explored differently too. Some were fascinated with the colors and others were thrilled with different feelings that they touched.

An important thing about this exhibition was the fact that, materials which were used went under strict scrutiny in order to ensure the safety of the children. Most of them were washable, non-breakable and eatable.

Again, most of the groups that came were mothers and their babies or toddlers. Gender role was clearly evident here. One couple came with their toddler and it was very beautiful to see them playing together. Most parents would have wanted their children to play according to how the arrangement had been made but the children chose otherwise and went where they wanted.

Furthermore, I was the only African participant, this means sensitization did not reach the foreigners or non-Finnish speakers.

### 3.3 Pictures from the exhibition



Picture 4

Pic. 4 shows the banner of the exhibition. It was in Finnish language but I made a free translation about the idea of the banner. Below is the translation.

“Tuntupolku”

This is the beginning of tuntu excursion

Linger for a long time. The magic of the moments

Crawling, crawling,

The upward stared.

You can examine, do actions, recognize colors, surfaces and be surprised.

Touch, play, listen, watch, feel the housewarming.

You can detect when you walk in.





Picture 5



Picture 6



Picture 7



Picture 8

*The autumn season of Finland depicted in colors*

The pictures above show the autumn season of Finland and are things that can be found in autumn. Most of the things are made for the children to touch and feel the difference. Below are detailed descriptions of the pictures and the activities that correspond with them.

In picture 5, baby could rest on the carpet rags, surrounded by fall colors, and

watches the leaves rich in fall colors. Parents could give the baby a ball made of carpet rags to finger and the child could burrow into the carpet rags. Babies could try the apples which have fallen from the tree and see if they all weigh the same or not.

Picture 6 had the apple tree with the leaves and fruits feel different. One could feel them, remove parts and place them wherever they.

Picture 7 had Hedgehog made with materials are placed under the mushroom huts and could be found by peeping under the hut. Apple worms and maggots could also be seen hiding under the mushroom huts which the child touches to have a feel of the texture. The child could also arrange the worms according to their length, color or feel. All could be placed one after the other to see how long a row they form. Finally, the child gathers all the worms or hide them again.

Picture 8 had scarves with dry autumn leaves beautifully hanged up for babies to view from a distance.

Picture 9 which is below shows basket of cones, stones and wool allowing the baby to explore the rough cones, hard rock surfaces and soft woolen moss with his or her toes or fingers. Rustling bottles made of plastic with different contents could be seen in the black basket. Parents could shake the bottles with babies and listening to the different sounds coming out.



Picture 9



Picture 10



Picture 11



Picture 12

*The winter season in pictures*

Similarly Pictures 10,11and 12 are some of the items found in the winter season.  
Different activities are discussed below.

Magic of Winter - white space

With picture 10, parents could take their babies in their arms and sit on a big snowball (stool). Little snowballs could be taken from the basket for babies to

study and feel them (soft, jingling and hard). You could wrap a wonderfully warm quilt around you and view the teddy sleeping in its winter den. Take a peep and see if you could take it in your arms to cuddle. The teddy might want to hear a few bedtime rhymes which could be found in the bag of rhymes.

Picture 11 and 12 show a moon and the snowflake-mobile on the wall which could be lit with a flashlight to see the stars twinkling. The teddy bear sleeping could be viewed or admired with a baby or toddler.



Picture 14



Picture 15

*The spring season*

The pictures above show the spring season with colorful things for the children to touch and see. Most of the items here are baby friendly and edible. Below are instructions on what to do.

SPRING SUN - yellow space

Babies could feel the different colors of slabs by trying to crawl or walk on them coupled with colorful knobby balls for babies to play with them.

Toddlers and older ones could walk into the tent along the slabs and could play hide and seek in the tent. They could also dress up as a buzzer (ladybug, bumblebee, beetle). Toddlers could paint on the easel with water and a brush. At the back of the easel, different colour palettes could be hanged by toddlers. They could test the surface and describe what colour it is and how it feels.

## **4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

In every research work, there is the need for one to take into consideration his or her environment and what is acceptable and not. According to Helgadóttir (2008) every academic research work should conform to the guidelines of the university one finds himself so that the researcher can justify her or himself wherever she is called upon. In addition, every researcher should have a moral responsibility to protect research participants from harm (McLeod, 2015). With this knowledge, my thesis topic was discussed together with staff from Taidetalo Pessi and my thesis supervisor from Diaconia University of applied sciences. More so, permission was sought in written form and both the organization as well as the school had a copy. Consent were sought both from the organization and parents to use the images for this pilot evaluation.

In writing the thesis, a lot of things were taken into consideration and it was written in a morally sound manner. Taken into consideration the subjectivity (values, emotions, thoughts, ideas, opinions ) and those aspects that can be looked at and measure such as data, processes, resources.

My reason for using pictures in my documentation was to bring out the clear picture of what went on. Again, because it was a pilot project, there was the need to bring out details in visual form in order for the organization to have a clear picture when they have the opportunity to build this exhibition again.

#### **4.1 Impact of the Pilot Project**

After carefully examining the evaluation of “tuntupolku” exhibition, the results showed that the Pilot Project had achieved its objectives with respect to creating space and place for parents with their little ones and also finding befitting activities for babies and toddlers to enjoy. In the aspect of encouraging the engagement of arts in children and sharing ideas to parents, it was successful in that the parents got to learn more about how they can make some of their own playing materials using simple household items.

The overall exhibition went well and there were about 500 participants. Art producers from various cities also paid courtesy visit to the exhibition. It was planned that in February 2017, the exhibition was mounted in Toteemi in Myyrmäki which also came to an end successfully. Again, the exhibition will be a part of children art festival (Lasten taide festival). More information can be found at ([hippalot.fi](http://hippalot.fi)). The children art festival last year had about 17,000 participants so for “tuntupolku” to be a part of it this year is a plus to the organizers and the organization as a whole.

With respect to networking Heli (art instructor) on the other hand was asked to write an article to a magazine known as “Pieni on Suuri” (small is the biggest). The article has been published in the beginning of March 2017.

While the Pilot Project was focused on the exhibition in Vantaa, it was conceived by the Vantaa group as a pilot that might serve as a model for other cultural services elsewhere in the country.

The evaluation also found that the Pilot Project was effective in bringing together arts producers in different regions and organizations to share knowledge and networking. The Pilot Project’s partners also noted they benefitted from the knowledge shared and admitted they have gained new knowledge in the aspect of babies and children activities. The Pilot Project was successful in encouraging other organizations to build their relationships with their participants. Though the duration given to each participant was not enough as many complained bitterly, they still enjoyed every bit of it.

## 4.2 Feedback from clients

Though there were about 500 hundred participants to this exhibition only 8 written feedbacks were received. Most of the participants gave verbal feedback and they commended the exhibition and showed their gratitude. In all, both the verbal and the written feedback that came boils down to the fact that everything went well .

Below are the summary of the questions and answers for the feedbacks collated from participants during “tuntupolku” exhibition.

Table 1. summary of feedback from participants.

Feedback questions	Answers
1. What do you think about the exhibition, what was good and what was bad.	All the eight participants said they enjoyed the exhibition because there were lots of things to do with children.

2.How would you rate this exhibition from 1 -10, 1 being the least and 10 being the highest.	From the eight participants, five gave 10 points, 2 gave 9 points and 1 gave 8 points.
3. what other wishes do you want to send?	All the participants thanked the organizers of “tuntupolku” and wished more time will be allocated to them to spend more time with their babies. They also wished that more of these activities will be organized periodically.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The partners in the pilot project are of the view that the project offered a model for future partnerships. There is also support from the arts community to undertake similar initiatives in the future. Below are some suggested means of improvement that could be considered in a future design of the project:

- The organizers of the project should also consider non Finnish speakers living in Vantaa in the course of advertising.
- In recognizing the importance of arts and culture in the community and reaching out to the people, sensitization could be in three ways considering the fast growth of foreign population in the city of Vantaa. The advertisement could be in Finnish, Swedish and English.
- Sounds from every season can be added to the exhibition to help develop the child’s capacity of hearing and experience.
- Meanwhile, workshops like the hand and foot printing can run through out the exhibition.

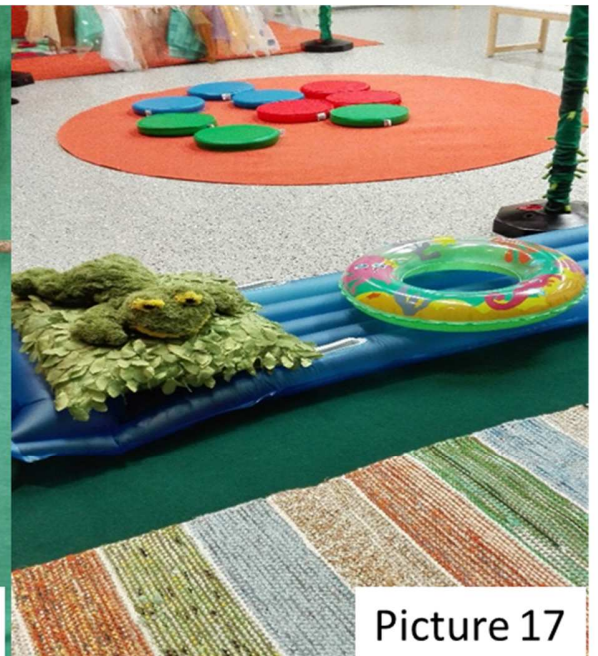


- Organizers can be mindful to extend the duration given to clients as the 30 minutes was not enough for them.
- Not only is this exhibition good for children but it can be used in rehabilitation centre with people with disability such as visually impaired.
- The feedback collection can be improved in a way to motivate participants to express their views. instead of putting the feedback forms in a hiding box, the participants can be handed the form before they start the tour.
- Vantaa municipality can rent out this exhibition to the organizers of the yearly exhibitions in Pasila Messukeskus ( Exhibition center) since such activities for are babies friendly.
- Workshops can be organized for parents who wants to learn this idea in their daily lives. They can build a small exhibition in their homes.

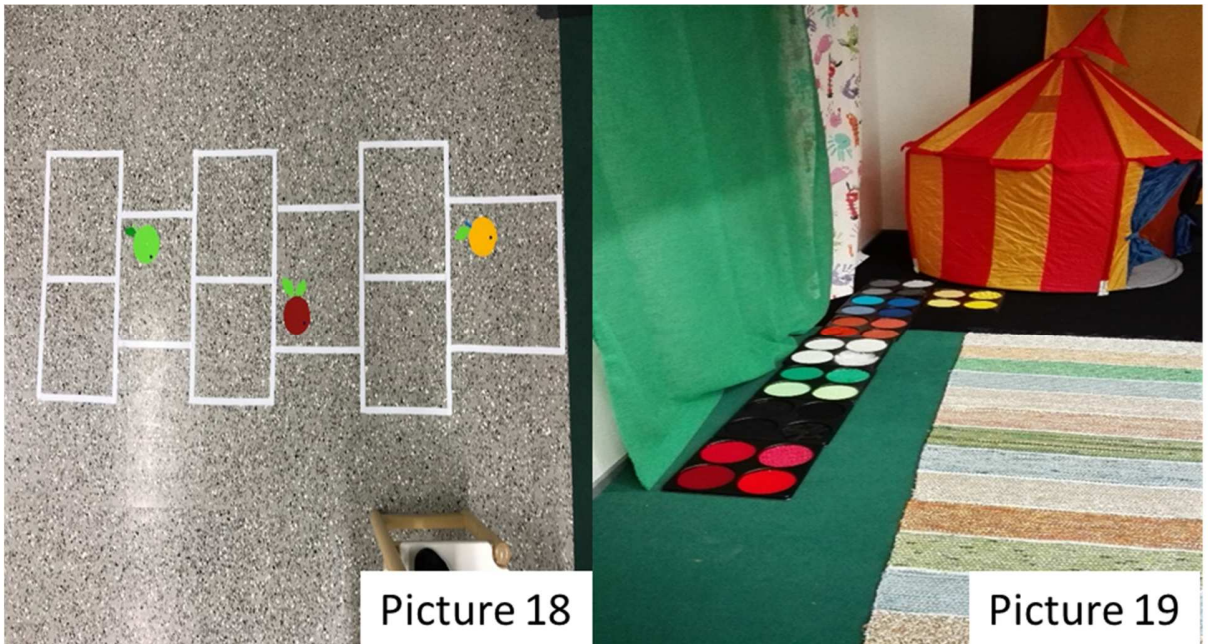
### 5.1 Other pictures from the summer season



Picture 16



Picture 17



Picture 18

Picture 19

*Pic. 16,17,18,19 shows the summer seasons with lots of colorful, warm and welcoming materials for babies to enjoy to the fullest*

Below are the descriptions of the activities

Picture 16 shows different colours of birds and their houses which parents and their little ones could look and touch. The child could match the colours of birds to their various houses. Bird could be heard singing.

Picture 17 shows beach settings which parents could put babies to sit on the swim ring or to roll on the beach mattress. the hot-air balloons could be viewed flying in the sky. Toddlers and babies could explore the colorful sand molds and wonder about the big beach ball as well as sitting on the beach ball and bouncing it a little bit.

Picture 18 shows Jumping squares game which parents and toddlers could jump into the summer by jumping through the entire square while alternating one and two feet.

Picture 19 shows different shades of colours with different textures. Parents and their wards could feel and tell the different.

## **6. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

This is the process of continuous development of an individual. Social work is a demanding and varied profession, which often requires a practitioner to do many things at any given time such as being an adviser, therapist, caretaker, administrator and many others. Though these diverse roles might seem to require an almost limitless range of knowledge and expertise, a social worker with a well-rounded set of basic social work skills will function well in most situations.

One of the most important lessons I learnt during this pilot project was to know how to manage projects effectively from beginning to end. Although I was not part of the planning process, I had the opportunity to witness what went on. Being given the opportunity to document and evaluate this pilot project, gave me a real sense of responsibility. It was prudent to get myself organized and get started from the word go. The Management for Change and Innovation (MCI) study module was an eye opener because I was able to put what I studied into practice. At the same time, I learnt how objectives and goals should be evaluated, what products should be accomplished, measurable outcomes and how to implement a project. I learnt some important lessons about how to manage work under stress. Managing stress at first was a bit difficult for me but this time around, I was able to manage my stress by setting boundaries and rebalancing my workload in order not to mingle work with family life. I did not allow my emotions to control me but rather I was able to take control of them during the process of the project and writing of the thesis. I also learnt that not all projects can succeed and that it takes courage to start all over again. I gained confidence in my abilities to work in a team and also practiced valuable skills needed in project work and learnt a lot from the projects undertaken by other groups.

Another important factor was working with families and children, I gained more experience as I have never been with children in such a professional way. I had the experience of child-centered methods and also arts based methods of working with children. Having the view that children respond well with visual things have given me more experience in my future working life since I have also learnt different techniques in dealing with them which yields result.

Self-organization of myself in a more professional way helped me during my thesis writing. Keeping itineraries and to do list paved the way for me to write. The ability to know the identity of the instructors in Pessi helped me to work in close observation and I got to know how they nurture the children through morals and collaborative relationship. More so, I was able to establish trust with some of the families by creating good rapport and winning their trust.

Furthermore, this thesis work has broadened my horizon on matters concerning place and space. It was something I learnt in Pessi because it helps individuals to work in a more conducive and appropriate environment. In community work, it is important to think about space, place and location because it gives an idea as to how to deal with individuals in terms of their cultural background. When we think of place or space, we also think of age and gender because certain places hold special meanings to people. Knowing the importance of one's location, helps one to know the feeling and the bond that is attached to that place and will help the person in knowing the adverse effect that can occur if that person is detached from the place or space. In the premises of Pessi, everything has been arranged to suite families and children. Some of the parents hold the premises in high esteem, this is due to the fact that most of them have been visiting the premises for many years. Some have had about two or three children participating in one activity or the other and for that reason, they have formed attachment with the place and the people there. A place which lacks a sense of belonging becomes placelessness because there is no attachment or bond between the person and that place. Also, space and place and location can be influenced by gender, age, political order, ethnicity or race. People

of common root will like to have their space in terms of doing things in common so are babies and toddlers. It was also useful for me to know the importance of place, space and location in order to study the economic states of individuals or groups.

As a student, it was important to recognize my professional development especially during practical training as that is the means of getting to know the working life. Ethical competency gave me the ability to understand the main idea of the work life and the skills involved in the everyday activity of the work. Knowledge, skill and attitude were the three elements I used to analyze my ethical competence framework that aided me to adopt to values and ethical principles of the field. Based on my knowledge skill and attitude I was able to make good decision during my process of training. Working in Pessi was not all that easy but with perseverance I was able to excel.

My active involvement in every activity was a good deal for me as that gave me the ability to get close to the children. In dealing with the participants, I had to be familiar with different concepts of the nature of human beings. In my case, the participants were children and their parents and they all had their own developmental stages. Others were more developed than others, In view of that, I saw how tactic the instructors were in their approach of dealing with them.

Getting myself acquainted to the services systems and how they were being operated helped broaden my horizons during my practical training in Pessi. I therefore sought most of my information from interviewing the staff and some of the service users to know how satisfied they were in the services being rendered to them. I also sought information from the city of Vantaa web site in relation to the cultural services provided to families and children in the city of Vantaa. In evaluating my critical and participation enhancing skills, I have seen a lot of improvement in my creative and innovative skills, being able to be part of the team of this pilot project and seeing its accomplishment has been rewarding to me. I was also very active in all the activities of the organization from drawing to craft working and I never

exempted myself from any of activities. This practical training also helped to improved my research development. By observing daily what I see at the organization, I tried to research and see how those actions conform to the theories I have been reading.

Over all, I will conclude that, the journey to writing this thesis has not been easy but it has been worthwhile.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The main idea behind “Tuntupolku” which was a pilot project that emerged from the colour bath workshop was a good concept. This is because it gave babies, toddlers and parents space for them to have quality time to explore and create whatever they liked with the different colours they were given. The exhibition was captivating because it served as time bonding between parents and their children. For parents who are always busy seize this opportunity to have ample time for their children.

The use of stimulating materials gave the babies and toddlers the experiences of different surfaces and feelings is a good experiment for the children since they turn to learn through playing. This helps them to build fine motor skills. Meanwhile, allowing the children use their five senses was also something interesting and educative because in the long run, it will help in the development of their cognitive and language skills which starts at an early year.

Furthermore, the working methods they use in the organization, thus the art-based method and the child-centered methods. Both methods are good for nurturing and instructing children because it gives them the opportunity to make their own choices in future. More so, they will be able to come out with their own ideas on whatever they will be doing which will go a long way to empower them.

Last but not the least, since my studies was focused on community work, this thesis is also linked to community development in a way that, it will serve as a source of income for the organizers. In the community level, people can come together to share common interest and build community identity and pride. It will improve individual sense of belonging. Lastly, it can help promote diversity, tolerance and free expression of opinions.

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## 1 APPENDIX 1: THE EMPTY SPACE

The pictures above show the empty space in which the exhibition was to be mounted.



Picture 1



Picture 2

## 2 APPENDIX 2: PICTURE WORKSHOP DURING THE OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION



*Pictures of Foot and handprints of babies for their Father's Day card taken during the grand opening. Babies and children were happy to participate.*

### 3 APPENDIX 3: CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN THE EXHIBITION



*Swimming toys: toddler can lie on the beach mat and admire the hot-air balloons flying in the sky or play with the toys around.*

A toddler doing her own thing during the exhibition

Blackboard: draw and color! Wipe with a sponge.





*Figure 13 a customer with her son observing the bird house.*

Bird boxes: guess which bird lives in each box! (the surface and color of the box will give you a hint... the bird is of a similar kind☺) Listen to the birdsong; which bird is singing now.



*Figure 11 Swim toys: lie on the beach mat and admire the hot-air balloons flying in the sky.*

**FOR TODDLERS AND OLDER ONES**



Catch some fish! Game: let's try to catch fish only. The winner is whoever catches the greatest number of fishes. If you catch a boot, you must return all the fish you have caught.

Salmon fishing.

Sand game: the plastic box consists of magic sand, shovel and molds. Make sand cakes with the molds!

Put the lid back on when you finish. Wipe your hands with paper/a towel.