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Stepping Stone to Sorella

Multicultural cooking club for Sorella -project

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<p>The purpose of this study was to find out if the cooking club concept works for the Sorella –project as a stepping stone activity that brings the girls to the project for the first time. The other aim was to find out if participating in the community and cooking together would improve the immigrant participants' acculturation process and therefore improve their well-being.</p> <p>The data of this study was gathered with two questionnaires which the participants filled out at the first and the last meetings of the cooking club. I also observed the cooking club as a participant observer.</p> <p>The results showed that the cooking club was successful as a method of bringing new participants to the project. The results also showed that the participants were pleased with the activity, felt like they were able to affect the activity and wanted to continue in other Sorella –project's activities. Based on my observations the participants formed a community and their behavior showed examples of assimilation and/or integration.</p> <p>I reach the conclusion that the cooking club is a good low-threshold method to find new participants for the Sorella –project. My observations indicate that the cooking club may also help the participants' acculturation process but further study is needed in order to prove this.</p>	
Keywords	acculturation, Sorella -project, cooking, well-being, community, immigrant

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<p>Opinnäytetyön tavoite oli selvittää toimiiko kokkikerho menetelmänä uusien osallistujien löytämiseen Sorella –projektissa. Toinen tavoite oli selvittää parantaako yhteisöllisyys maahanmuuttajataustaisten osallistujien akkulturaatioprosessia ja sitä kautta heidän hyvinvointiaan.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyön tieto kerättiin kahdella kyselyllä, jotka osallistajat täyttivät ensimmäisellä ja viimeisellä kerralla. Keräsin myös tietoa osallistuvalla havainnoinnilla.</p> <p>Tulokset osoittivat, että kokkikerho oli toimiva metodi uusien osallistujien löytämiseen. Osallistajat myös olivat tyytyväisiä toimintaan ja kokivat voivansa vaikuttaa kokkikerhon toimintaan. He myös halusivat jatkaa Sorella –projektin toiminnassa. Havaintojeni perusteella osallistajat muodostivat yhteisön ja heidän käyttäytymisessään oli merkkejä assimi-laatiosta ja/tai integraatiosta.</p> <p>Tulosten perusteella päättelen, että kokkikerho on hyvä matalan kynnyksen metodi Sorella –projektille uuden osallistujien löytämiseksi. Havaintoni voivat viitata siihen, että kokkikerhon tyylinen toiminta monikulttuurisessa ryhmässä myös edistää osallistujien akkulturaatioprosessia, mutta lisätutkimusta tästä tarvitaan.</p>	
Avainsanat	akkulturaatio, Sorella –projekti, kokkikerho, hyvinvointi, yhteisöllisyys, maahanmuuttaja

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1 Foreword

This functional thesis focuses on providing a low-threshold stepping stone activity for immigrant girls in the Matinkylä area of Espoo to other Sorella –project’s activities. This thesis was executed in co-operation with the Sorella –project which is a project that brings gender and cultural sensitive work to neighborhoods where immigrant girls live (Kalliolan Nuoret ry 2015; Bahmani & Honkasalo 2016).

My personal interest for outreaching youth work and especially towards immigrant youth comes from my work placement experience in Belgium where I worked in an outreaching youth work project which tried to find excluded immigrant youth. The project used sports as a method and I quickly noticed that this method mainly reached the boys. During bigger events where us project workers were cooking pancakes and directing arts and crafts we were able to meet the local girls as well. This experience made me interested in implementing the cooking as a work method to the Finnish youth work scene and the beginning of the Sorella –project was a good time and place for this.

Immigrant youth have higher possibility to be excluded from the society. Also the amount of immigrant youth in Finland have increased 18-times since the year 1987. (Myrskylä 2012). Bahmani and Honkasalo (2016) imply that especially immigrant girls in Finland face more harassment than before. Immigrant families also have lower income than Finnish families, and immigrant girls have more anxiety and less hobbies than Finnish youth (Kalliolan Nuoret ry 2015). The concept of a girl’s honor that must be protected in some cultures prevents the girls from participating in mixed groups in local youth houses (Kalliolan Nuoret ry 2015). Based on these reasons low-threshold work with immigrant girls is very important at the moment. More targeted work approach can reach youth that would otherwise be excluded (Bahmani & Honkasalo 2016).

In this thesis I will refer to the target group as “immigrant girls” despite the fact that they might have been born in Finland to immigrant parents or the other parent is an immigrant. With the term “immigrant” I refer to the participants’ different cultural and ethnic background.

The first, practical goal of this thesis was to research if the cooking club concept works for the Sorella –project as a low-threshold activity to find new participants for the project. The Sorella –project also wanted to know what kind of other activities the participants would like to attend in their own neighborhood in order to provide pleasant activities for the participants.

The second, theoretical goal was to find out if a multicultural community would affect positively the immigrant participants' acculturation process (Berry 1997; Jajinskaja-Lahti et al 2003; Berry et al 2006). I wanted to find out if the participants formed a community and if they felt that they could participate the club. With "multicultural" I refer to the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the participants that differ from the Finnish (Honkasalo, Souto & Suurpää 2007). I will describe the terms "acculturation" and "community" later in this thesis.

2 The work environment

2.1 Immigration in Espoo

Espoo has the 3rd highest percentage of immigrants in Finland, excluding the autonomous Åland Islands (Statistic Finland 2016). In 2015 around 13 % of people in Espoo spoke some other language as their mother tongue than Finnish, Swedish or Sami and this number is expected to grow to 26% by the year 2030 (City of Espoo nd).

The city of Espoo has noticed the growing amount of immigrants and especially immigrant youth and has made a multiculturalism programme for years 2014-2017 (City of Espoo 2014). The program consists of many parts but one of the parts is to "provide meaningful free-time activities for all of the youth despite of socio-economic status or other premises". Also the programme states that special attention will be provided towards non-Finnish speakers' attachment to the Finnish society. This shows that there is a need for multicultural youth work in the city of Espoo.

2.2 Girls' House

Tyttöjen Talo (in this thesis it's translated to Girls' House) is a low-threshold youth house that provides activities for girls only. Their work approach is gender and cultural

sensitive. There are seven Girls' Houses around Finland, in addition there's Poikien Boys' Houses in Helsinki and Oulu and an online service e-Talo ("e-House") that provides help online.

The goal of the Girls' Houses' work is to increase the well-being of girls and women and offer them life management skills (Eischer & Tuppurainen 2011).

Girls' Houses around Finland have similar work methods. Basis of the work is the open activity. The girls can just drop by the Girls' House and meet with safe adults. Another important work method is different hobbies, such as dancing or cooking clubs. The hobby group provide a sense of community and a natural environment for interaction (Escher & Tuppurainen 2011). Girls' Houses also provide closed peer support groups for girls in need of more support, such as young mothers or girls with mental health issues. Girls' Houses also provide personal support.

2.2.1 Settlement activity

Espoo's Girls' House is a part of a non-profit organisation called Kalliolan Nuoret ry. The organisation focuses in low-threshold activities, cultural and gender sensitivity, community and participation. Kalliolan Nuoret ry also embrace co-operation with different organisations and public services (Kalliolan Nuoret ry n.d.).

Kalliolan Nuoret ry is also part of the settlement movement in Finland through Kalliolan Setlementti ry. Settlement activity which means that it's based on the co-operation and interaction of different people (Settlementtiliitto ry, n.d.).

2.3 The Sorella -project

The cooking club was part of a project in the Girls' House of Espoo. In the year 2016 Girls' House of Espoo received funding from the Finnish Slot Machine Association (RAY) for an outreaching gender-sensitive youth work project called Sorella -project. The project started in the spring 2016.

The Sorella -project is the first low-threshold activity for immigrant girls in Espoo. The project has four main goals:

1. The opportunities for action of the immigrant girls increase in their own neighborhood.
2. The participation of the immigrant girls is improved.
3. The participation of the immigrant mothers is improved and family conflicts are prevented.
4. Gender sensitive work approach settles in Espoo through multicultural outreaching girl work.

The Girls' House of Espoo is located in Leppävaara area. Even though the Girls' House of Espoo is easily accessible, there are many areas in Espoo where the residents wish for the activities that the Girls' House provides. The Sorella –project hired two instructors to execute the activities of the Girls' House in other facilities around Espoo. The Sorella -project brings gender sensitive work to places where the youth already are (Bahmani & Honkasalo 2016).

Bringing youth workers to the neighborhood makes the activities even more low-threshold than the traditional Girls' House work. Working in the local library, community house etc. gives a possibility for the youth to participate even if they can't travel to the Girls' House (Kalliolan Nuoret ry, 2015). Bahmani and Honkasalo (2016) state that outreaching youth work should be implemented in other Girls' Houses where reaching especially immigrant girls is considered to be difficult.

One goal of the Sorella –project is to reach the girls who otherwise won't necessarily attend activities in youth houses or who don't have any hobbies. The cooking club was the first activity for the project. Sorella –project's goal for this activity was to find out that it would attract new girls who could then continue in other Girls' House activities. In the cooking club I was assisted by a project worker in order to give the participants a contact person in the Girls' House.

Bahmani and Honkasalo (2016) say in their study that outreaching work advantages of the local organizations and authorities that already have a connection with the potential participants. This goes both ways: when the project reaches out to girls they can also guide them to other necessary services in the area (Kalliolan Nuoret ry 2015).

3 Theoretical background

3.1 Wellbeing

In my thesis I will focus in the subjective well-being of the participants. Well-being can be measured with objective indicators but life quality consists of more than material goods (Allardt 1976).

Table 1. Allardt's grid about happiness and well-being

	Well-being	Happiness
Standard of living	Satisfaction of needs based on material and impersonal resources	Subjective feelings and experiences about individual's material and external
Quality of life	Satisfaction of needs based on relationships between humans, human and society and/or human and nature	Subjective feelings and experiences about individual's relations with humans, nature and society

Happiness is much more subjective feeling than well-being. Also happiness can be described as a momentary feeling whereas well-being is more permanent. When evaluating well-being we must take into consideration causes and consequences which are not important when evaluating happiness (Allardt 1976). This is why I decided to focus in improving the well-being of the participants; because I wanted to if there is connection between the cooking club (cause) and acculturation (consequence) which would eventually improve the participants' well-being.

Allardt (1993) has developed a theory to describe the factors that affect well-being. This approach "focuses on conditions without which human beings are unable to survive, avoid misery, relate to other people and avoid alienation." In this basic needs approach he divides well-being into three sections: Having, Loving and Being.

According to Allardt (1993) *Having* refers to the material conditions that are vital for surviving and avoiding misery. In his theory these are i.e. economic resources, housing, employment and health.

Loving stands for the social relations, like attachments and contacts in the local community and active patterns of friendships. Person's happiness in social relations is not

correlated with one's material level of living. Person can have a rich social life and be satisfied with it even if they are living in a hut.

Being is the need to integrate into the society. This is for instance opportunities for leisure-time activities and participating in decision-making and activities considering one's own life. According to Allardt (1993) the positive side of Being is personal growth and the negative aspect is alienation. Allardt (1976) found out in his study that especially self-realization is connected to the subjective feelings of satisfaction.

Allardt (1976) noticed that having friendships and being able to fulfill themselves correlates to happiness and especially having friendships leads to individual feeling like they can fulfill their needs. According to Allardt (1976) especially young individuals' value friendships. Therefore we can say that if one has lot of friends, belongs to a community and has leisure-time activities they feel more positive about their well-being even if they don't have that much material goods. This is why the cooking club can improve participants' well-being: it can give the participants friendships, contacts in the local community and a hobby.

3.2 Participation & community

Community is a "group of individuals with associated interests and/or common goals". The term also describes social relationships within groups or territorial boundaries. Community as a concept can be divided into three groups: community as geographical locality, community as a collection of related interests and community as a network of relationships. (Pierson & Thomas 2010) In my thesis the community refers to the participants of the cooking club and these three groups overlap each other. The participants live in the same neighborhood, they have a related interest in cooking and I'm interested in creating relationships between the participants themselves and also a relationship between the participants and the Sorella -project workers.

Belonging to a community prevents exclusion (Escher & Tuppurainen 2011). Exclusion can be understood as a problem with belonging. The individual is in some way not part of a community, such as a group of students or the society.

In social pedagogy it is considered that the community plays an important role in one's personal growth (Úcar 2011). It is vital for individual's growth to be a part of a commu-

nity. Langager (2011) states that in youth work there cannot be an activity without the community between the youth and the adults. Planning, executing and celebrating achievements together creates a strong sense of community (Escher & Tuppurainen 2011).

Langager (2011) defines two types of communities in youth clubs and compares his definitions of these two, a social-pedagogical community and a “classic” after-school pedagogical community, in following table:

Table 2. Langager’s community models

Activity model <i>“Classic” after-school pedagogy</i>	Relation model <i>“Classic” social pedagogy</i>
Activities as attractor	Relations as attractor
Creative orientation	Social orientation
“Small conversations” as partial aim	“Good activities” as partial aim
“Aesthetic communities” (common interests)	“Ethical communities” (common values)

Aesthetic communities bring youth in general together to do activities they enjoy doing whereas ethical communities respond the vulnerable youth’s needs by providing for example peer support. In practice both types of communities are needed. (Langager 2011)

Langager (2011) showed in his study that in one area in Denmark an outreaching youth work programme was able to reach 200 new young people in the area and nearly 50 of them became stable users of the local youth club. This means that almost 25 % of the reached youth became a part of a service. In Finland the immigrant participants have had issues to participate regular youth house activities (Bahmani & Honkasalo 2016). This could show that outreaching youth work could help the more vulnerable groups to become a part of a community.

Heikkinen (2006) emphasized the meaning of community work in multicultural youth work. Community work makes it easier to incorporate the youth’s families in activities as well. This is especially important when working with immigrant girls. Incorporating girls’ families to the activity makes it easier to help in possible family conflicts (Kalliolan

nuoret ry, 2015). The cooking club will invite the mothers and other family members to the club at the first and the last time.

The third sector, which consists of organisations, has a growing part of multicultural youth work (Heikkinen 2006). This can be seen in the fact that Sorella –project is the first outreaching project meant for immigrant girls in Espoo.

3.2.1 Group development

Tuckman (1965) created a theory about small group development which consists of four stages. Later on Tuckman and Jensen (1977) added a fifth stage to the theory. The stages according to them are presented in the following paragraphs.

The first stage is *Forming*. In this stage the group members are usually depending on the leader of the group, the members are not functioning independently and might be questioning a lot, such as why they are a part of the group or how they are doing. The members of the group seek acceptance of the group and need to find out if the group is safe. The members are avoiding conflict and do not speak about deep topics. The leader should provide as much structure as possible, for instance establish common rules. (Tuckman 1965)

If the members find out that the group is safe, the group can grow to the next stage, *Storming*. In this stage the members of the group become competitive and some personal-relations conflicts can be seen. Individuals have to conform their feelings, beliefs and attitudes to suit the group. In this stage the group seeks structural clarification and commitment. Conflicts about responsibilities and leadership will exist and they can surface. There can be a large range of behaviour patterns in the group, from dominating to completely silent and cliques are formed. In order to reach the next stage, group members must find a problem-solving mentality in which the leader can help by listening. (Tuckman 1965)

The third stage is *Norming*, interpersonal relations can be described as cohesive. All of the members are acknowledged for their personal contribution, they are building and maintaining a community and solve group issues. The members know and identify with each other which creates the feeling of cohesion. Different opinions are bent to fit the groups' and questions are asked actively from one another. In this stage the members

get a sense of group belonging. In this stage the members share feeling and ideas openly and feel good about being a part of the group. (Tuckman 1965)

Stage four is *Performing*, in which the members can work effectively individually or in sub-groups and they can change tasks and responsibilities fluidly. The group focuses in task solving and has its highest performance. This stage is not accomplished by all of the groups and it is not relevant for the group development of the cooking club. (Tuckman 1965)

The fifth and last stage is *Adjourning* where the group comes to an end. Planned conclusion, such as the cooking club's last time because we have only a limited number of times, can include personal goodbyes. For some group members this might be a minor crisis. (Tuckman & Jensen 1977)

My aim for the cooking club is to achieve a stage three group where the members have a sense of group belonging and they are building a community. This would be ideal for the theoretical goal of acculturation.

3.3 Gender sensitivity

The Girl's Houses have a gender sensitive work approach which means that the participants are encouraged to find their gender as a strength and embrace their own way of representing their gender (Eischer & Tuppurainen 2011). Girls' Houses' gender sensitive approach comes from the point that identifying with your own gender is an important part of growth.

Girls' Houses' gender sensitivity is based on the idea that regular gender equality and gender neutrality leads to unintentional re-enforcement of traditional gender roles (Eischer & Tuppurainen 2011). Girls' Houses' encourage girls and women to find their own voice and place in different communities, such as family, friend, school and society.

Gender sensitive work approach doesn't mean the idea that other gender is better than the other. Also when having a gender sensitive work approach it is important to remember that individual differences are usually bigger than differences between genders (Eischer & Tuppurainen 2011).

In the Espoo's Girls' House gender sensitive work is implemented as groups and spaces meant for girls only (Espoon Tyttöjen Talo n.d.). This gives the opportunity to have different kind of conversations about womanhood and everything that it includes (Bahmani & Honkasalo 2016).

3.4 Cultural sensitivity

Girls' House of Espoo practices cultural sensitivity which means the ability to notice the features in different cultures and work in a way that enhances equality. In the work of Girls' House this means that multicultural youth are not seen as a cohesive group. It also means that culture is understood to be more than just ethnicity. Culture is a way of being and can be also the youth culture, different lifestyles, sexual orientation or participation in the society. (Espoon Tyttöjen Talo n.d.)

3.5 Acculturation

In my thesis I will focus in the acculturation process of the immigrant girls. Acculturation is a theory of what happens when an individual who have developed in one cultural context try to live in another one (Berry, 1997). It describes the process of adjusting to a new culture. The classic definition of acculturation is according to Berry (1997)

Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups.

Acculturation can in fact take place in both cultures but my focus is in the immigrants due to the limited extent of this thesis.

Acculturation is a process that takes a long time, even many generations (Berry 2005).

Berry (1997, 2005) states that there are four different strategies of acculturation. A person living in another culture can integrate, assimilate, marginalize or separate, depending on one's relationship with the larger society (host country) and their own cultural heritage. Berry (1997, 2005) describes these acculturation strategies of the acculturation process in following chart:

Table 3. Berry's acculturation model

"Is it considered to be of value to develop relationships with the larger society?"	Yes	Assimilation	Integration
	No	Marginalization	Separation
		No	Yes
		"Is it considered to be of value to maintain one's cultural heritage?"	

A study by Jajinskaja-Lahti et al (2003) suggest that Finland as a host country prefers assimilation-integration. They also came to a conclusion that immigrants who preferred separation reported more stress than other participants. Also Berry (2005) states that cultural conflicts cause acculturative stress.

A study by Berry et al (2006) found out that immigrant females are more likely to experience psychological distress, such as depression or anxiety due to acculturation problems. Berry (2005) also says that adapting to the larger society can affect ones well-being. Therefore having a multicultural group that enhances integration, provides access to other low-threshold activities and professional help is important for the well-being of immigrant girls.

The same study (Berry et al 2006) also found out that discrimination increases individual's orientation towards their own ethnic group and decreases their involvement with the national society, which leads to negative effects in one's well-being. Berry et al (2006) also suggest that organisations should promote one's one ethnic identity and encourage immigrants to participate in the national society in order to minimize the acculturative stress. This is exactly what the Sorella -project and the cooking club aims to do: it lets everyone express themselves and their culture in their own way while

bringing the immigrant girls to a multicultural group that operates within a mostly Finnish environment.

3.5.1 Tolerance towards immigrants in Finland

The tolerance towards immigrants in Finland has increased between years 2010 and 2012. Still 67% of Finns have some or totally negative attitudes towards immigrants. (Söderling & Kiiveri 2015). Bahmani and Honkasalo (2016) imply in their research that multicultural and gender sensitive work among original population reduce such attitudes. This would suggest that this type of multicultural work could reduce the negative attitudes towards immigrants and therefore move the immigrants' acculturation process towards assimilation or integration.

3.6 Research methods

My research question was if participating the cooking club would improve the participants' acculturation. My hypothesis is that it will improve their acculturation.

I used both quantitative and qualitative research methods. My main methods for evaluating the activity were two questionnaires that were filled the first time and the last time. I also observed the group as a participant observer. (Labaree 2017)

The questionnaires were carried out in for two reasons. The first questionnaire was done in order to find out if I reached the target group. The last questionnaire was about the activity; did the participants enjoy it, were they part of the community and was the work cultural and gender sensitive. The second questionnaire was executed to find out if the cooking club filled the practical goals of the Sorella –project and my theoretical goals. I decided to have questionnaires that the participants filled in individually without assistance because I wanted them to have a safe way to express their opinions and the work life partner wanted to have statistical data. (Labaree 2017)

I observed the group as a participant observer since I wanted to observe the forming of the community, i.e. were they noticing each other individually. The participants might not be able to evaluate their participation in the community. I also wanted to observe the signs of acculturation. I participated in the action by directing the participants and

being an active member of the cooking club. I didn't take notes during the club's gathering but wrote notes after the participants had left. (Labaree 2017).

4 The activity

4.1 Goals

My hypothesis is that cooking together improves participation which enhances acculturation. I studied this by having a questionnaire in the end of the activity.

The goal of the activity is to improve community involvement and participation by cooking. The participants represent different cultural backgrounds and in this environment they can share their stories. This way the participants' acculturation process will hopefully gear towards integration and in the long run it will reduce their cultural stress and improve their well-being.

The goal for the Sorella –project is to find new participants to their activities and to see if a cooking club serves this purpose. The project wanted to find an activity that would work as a stepping stone to the other activities of the project and the Espoo's Girls House.

4.2 Why cooking?

The aim of the activity was to make the girls part of a service and/or a guided free-time activity. Cooking was chosen as the activity because everyone has to eat and has some kind of experience about food or cooking, either from school or at home. Since the club does not require any special skills, I reckoned that the cooking club would call forth the girls who don't have any hobbies and therefore haven't necessarily acquired special skills that some other activities (for example dancing) could require. Also cooking doesn't require any special equipment from the participants, such as different clothing, which might prevent the girls from lower income families to participate. Providing free-of-charge activities is important when reaching out to immigrant girls (Kalliolan Nuoret ry, 2015).

The food culture is a part of cultural identity and eating together is an important communication method (Knuuttila 2004). Eating a meal that has been cooked together creates a sense of community. This is an important aspect of the cooking club.

Knuuttila (2004) say in their book the food culture and recipes along that are traditionally matrilineal which means that the mothers teach them to their daughters. In immigrant families the mothers don't necessarily know the Finnish food culture nor recipes so teaching the participants this is a step towards integration. The directors of the cooking club can pass the silence knowledge onward.

Cooking is a wholesome experience where the cook uses their all senses to prepare the dish (Knuuttila 2004). Hämäläinen (2001) states that humans seek for experiences. Giving people different experiences is a social pedagogical work approach.

In a wider perspective all families might not have the opportunities or knowledge to cook by themselves. Cooking is learned informally at home and the Finnish school system doesn't take part of it (Knuuttila 2004), even though home economics is a compulsory subject in Finnish schools. The model from home is the one that you use at later stages of life (Knuuttila 2004). In my opinion teaching the participants how to cook can improve their well-being at later stages of life since eating well affects physical well-being. Also teaching how to prepare food gives the participant life management skills which is the aim of the Girls' House work and one of the aims of the Sorella –project (Eischer & Tuppurainen 2011; Kalliolan Nuoret ry 2015).

An easy activity is an important part when trying to reach out to new participants. The project worker's contact with the youth is a natural result when doing the activity together (Heikkinen 2004). A group activity also brings out the differences in each participant (Heikkinen 2004), for example in the cooking club environment one is excellent at decorating cakes while other one is a care-taker and makes sure that everyone has had enough to eat. Embracing differences is the core value of settlement work (Settlementiliitto n.d.). Langager (2011) says that food preparing is a pedagogically functioning action which means that cooking works well as a method to raise the youth.

Multicultural dialogue can be difficult to achieve. A project that is executed together and directed by the professionals produces more solidarity and a sense of community more than open activities (Bahmani & Honkasalo 2016). This way a cooking club is a great

tool: it is not an open activity but the participants had to register and outsiders were not allowed to participate. It was also directed by a project worker from the Sorella –project and myself.

4.3 The location

The cooking club took place in the local community house called Kylämaja in Matinkylä, Espoo where the Sorella –project workers have their office.

Kylämaja is also part of the settlement movement in Finland. It is operated by Kalliolan Nuoret ry. which is also the organization behind the concept of Girls' Houses. Other administrators are the Department of Social and Health Care of the City of Espoo and Espoo Mental Health Association EMY. (Kylämaja n.d.)

The community house provides a venue for different kind of activities. Kylämaja provide their rooms for different organisations for different activities. They also have an in-house service director who provided guidance for the community house users who need it. The community house is a part of a network which improves the well-being of the local residents, especially families, children and youth (Kylämaja n.d.).

Bahmani and Honkasalo (2016) state that bringing the immigrant youth to a shared space is a start for the multicultural dialogue. Even though we worked in our small group we were operating in a Finnish environment. I see this as the type of work that Berry et al (2006) suggest to do in order to reduce the sociocultural stress.

4.4 Before the club

The cooking club was executed with a project worker from the Sorella –project. The execution and instructing of the participants happened in co-operation with me and the project worker. The project worker advertised the activity and acquired the necessary ingredients while I planned the content of the cooking club.

The cooking club was advertised by the project workers in a local peer support group for immigrant mothers with a flyer and a handout which explained that the cooking club

was part of this thesis and that the participants will be anonymous in this thesis. The project executed the flyer and I wrote the handout.



Figure 1. The flyer for the cooking club, made by the Sorella –project worker

After each time I collected feedback from the participants with emotion cards. I wanted to use something more interesting and familiar for the teenagers rather than for example pieces of art. I made emoticon cards. This way the participants were able to express their feelings about the activity immediately and we were able to talk about the day.



Figure 2. Emoticons used in the cards

The cooking club was free of charge for the participants. The Sorella –project paid for the expenses of the ingredients.

4.4.1 Target group

The target group of the activity was girls living in the Matinkylä area, age 12-15 years who didn't have any hobbies. The area was chosen by the Sorella -project because the Matinkylä neighborhood is one of their work environments. The age group was selected in order to have participants who already have the required skills for cooking (i.e. motoric skills to use knives without assistance).

The age group was also selected based on the need of professional help in the participants' lives. At the age of 13 the adolescence in Finland move to secondary school and at the age of 16 they move to upper secondary school which are big changes in young person's life. A study by Larja, Sutela and Latting (2015) says that immigrant youth in Finland are less likely to study after secondary school. Since studying is the best way to prevent social exclusion (Myrskylä 2012), more professional help might be needed to help their attachment to the society. Helping the participants to become a part of the Finnish society is important goal of the Sorella –project (Kalliolan Nuoret ry, 2015).

The group was supposed to be multicultural so I wanted to reach out to immigrant girls as well as Finnish girls. Having as many cultural backgrounds as possible would help the acculturation (Berry 1997). Having Finnish participants and immigrant girls together improves the immigrant girls' position in the society and prevents racism and exclusion which is why the Sorella –project wants to keep the activities open for everyone .(Kalliolan Nuoret ry, 2015).

The target group was especially immigrant girls because they need more support in their growth to become a women since they have to deal with the pressure of two different cultures (Eischer & Tuppurainen 2011). Youth clubs and drop-in centers traditionally attract more boys and are weak at creating a meeting place for the national society and immigrants (Langager 2011) so a directed closed club would be better when trying to reach out to more vulnerable girls.

4.5 First time

The first time we had 5 participants when we had room for 8. All of the girls knew each other so there wasn't such need for games to get the girls to know each other. We made rules for the activities together. Making rules together makes the participants more engaged to the rules because they can decide them by themselves instead of getting rules from an authority (Bahmani & Honkasalo 2016). I wanted to reach an ethical community (Langager 2011) since we were trying to reach out to more vulnerable girls.

The participants listened to us adults well but they were having some issues in the communication between each other. The participants called each other with names even though everyone agreed in the rulemaking process that it is forbidden.

The first time I had decided that we are going to bake cupcakes. In order to improve the participants' feeling of participation we asked what they wanted to cook the following times. Because the participants were talkative we had a discussion about the following times and I wrote down their wishes. The following four times we only cooked what the participants had hoped for.

The integration of the immigrant girls was visible. They all spoke excellent Finnish, and learning language is a sign of adaptation (Berry 2005). The participants wanted to cook traditional Finnish treats instead of treats from their home culture and told that their favorite foods were either international, such as pizza, or Finnish, such as fish fingers. The participants told that they mostly eat typical Finnish foods at home instead of something from their parents' countries. All of the Muslim participants attended Quran school and wore hijabs which showed that they value their cultural heritage.

4.6 Second time

For the second time we got three more girls so the group was full. The girls knew each other so we didn't spend too much time with the introductions. We had small game in the beginning.

I noticed that the dynamics of the groups immediately changed with the new girls, girls F, G and H. Girl E was already loud and demanding attention at the first time. This

second time she got more energy from the new girls, girl G and girl H. The first time we really didn't have issues with the girls focusing in the activity but this second time with eight girls it was more challenging. Gossiping was more interesting every now and then. Girl E and Girl H ran to the hallway to gossip at one point and I had a little talk with them about the rules of the club. Reminding them of the common rules helped them to calm down for the rest of the time. Even though disciplining the participants seemed waste of time in the beginning it is an important job of the director since respectful dialogue rarely starts by itself (Bahmani & Honkasalo 2016).

Girl G seemed to be much less interested in the club than rest of the participants. She acted older than her age and was less receiving to guidance than the other girls. She is clearly having a dominating role over the participants, especially girls D, E and H. For example in the beginning when we told what we are cooking this time girl G informed the group that she's a vegetarian. All of the sudden girls E and H were vegetarians as well even though the girl E didn't tell us this at the first time. In the end everyone ate the beef without any issues.

This time we gave the timetable for the cooking and cleaning in advance. The first time we just told the girls that the cooking club will end at 7pm but this time we gave them exact time to be finished. This really helped most of the girls to focus in the cooking and stay away from their phones. Also limiting the time to two hours was essential. The participants were able to focus better when the club was shorter. On the other hand the extra time was needed the first time when we got to know the participants and set the rules. The need for structure from the director indicates that the group was in the first stage of group development (Tuckman 1965).

4.6.1 Questionnaire

I executed a survey for the participants when they attended the cooking club for the first time (appendix 1). Five of the participants filled it the first time the cooking club gathered and three filled it the second time since they participated from that meeting onwards.

In the survey I wanted to find out if we had reached our target group of 12-15 -year-old girls who didn't have any hobbies and who lived in the area. Also the Sorella -project wanted to know how the participants found out about the activity because the project

had just started and figuring out how to reach out to the potential participants was important.

Even though our target group was girls with immigrant background I left this information out of the questionnaire on purpose and observed the cultural background that came out in discussions during the activity. I didn't want to increase the possible feeling of exclusion in the Finnish society by pointing out their cultural background. Even though an important part of the cultural sensitive work approach is to recognize the differences (Bahmani & Honkasalo 2016) I didn't feel that's it's necessary at this point. My approach was cultural sensitive in other ways: I used simpler language in the questionnaires.

The survey was an open-ended questionnaire where the participants answered to the following questions:

- Age
- Where do you live?
- What do you do on your free time?
- Where did you get the information about the cooking club?

The participants also filled in their own contact information as well as their caretaker since they all were underage but this information wasn't used for this thesis. The participants were informed in the form which parts will be used for the thesis. The survey was anonymous in order to respect the participants' privacy.

4.6.2 Results

I found out from the questionnaire that all of the participants lived in the Matinkylä area and were in the correct age group so we were able to reach our target group.

Seven out of eight participants didn't have any other professionally directed hobbies than the cooking club. The one participant had football practices regularly. Most of the participants heard about the cooking club from the girl C. Girl C got information from a social worker who was working with her family.

4.7 Third time

For the third time we started with a game to get the girls to focus in their own strengths. Every participant was supposed to tell one thing about themselves that they like. This helps the girls to get to know themselves better which is one of the aims of the Girls' House activities. The game was a little challenging for the girls. Most of the girls didn't want to say what they liked about themselves or didn't figure out anything. We expected this with the Sorella -employee because the girls are in their early teen years and need a little bit of encouragement. I believe that these girls would benefit from participating in more activities in the Sorella -project or the Girls' House.

Because the girls have been asking for pizza since day one we cooked some pizza. The girls made three pizzas in small groups and were allowed to form the small groups themselves to improve their participation in decision making. The groups worked very well together.

The girl G seemed not to be so engaged to the activity as rest of the girls. She came late to the club and she has had hard time listening to the instructions. After cooking and eating girl G seemed to get a little restless. She kept asking if we can finish the club early and kept speaking in her mother tongue with her friends even though the participants had established a rule that we speak Finnish in the club so that everyone can understand. With the Sorella -project worker we reckoned that the lack of directed hobbies might have caused the issues in dialogue or maybe girl G didn't like this particular activity. It is important to have different kind of activities and groups in order to reach out to as many different people as possible (Bahmani & Honkasalo 2016). Also different activities that enhance the group bonding are important when establishing a dialogue (Bahmani & Honkasalo 2016).

In general the girls seem to enjoy the activity. In the end we had again a feedback with the emoji cards and the girls suggested that we use more than one emoji this time. It turned out to be a great idea because the girls could express their feelings about the day in more various way. The girls were very happy and proud of their own pizzas. This gave them feelings of success which is important in the Sorella -project (Kalliolan Nuoret ry 2015).

4.8 Fourth time

The fourth time was a different situation for the girls because we had a journalist from a local newspaper *Länsiväylä* making a story about the cooking club (Aalto 2016). In order to respect everyone's right for privacy (Talentia 2017) the photos were taken in way that nobody can be recognized and the participants who were interviewed had their parents' permission.

Before the cooking club met the journalist interviewed me and the two project workers about the purpose and significance of multicultural girl work and the cooking club. We explained how the cooking club is important for immigrant girls who might not have other hobbies.

This time the participants prepared typical Finnish dessert, mocha squares, and vegetables with dipping sauce. The journalist was surprised about this and asked why the participants were preparing such traditional Finnish dessert. I told her that this is specifically what the participants had asked for. Making typical host country food could be seen as a sign of assimilation or integration (Berry 1997).

In my opinion the presence of a stranger made the community forming more difficult. The participants behaved in a different way and were less talkative than if the group had consisted of only us directors and them. On the other hand listening to the interview gave me an opportunity to find out about the participants feelings about the activity. The participants told that they liked the fact that the cooking club was only meant for girls and the best part was making pizza and talking. This could indicate that the participants had a community since they enjoyed the communication part. This also shows the importance of participation: the participants specifically asked for pizza and were pleased when they were able to execute their own wishes.

4.9 Fifth time

The last time the participants wanted to bake a cake in order to celebrate our journey together in the cooking club. The idea was to help the possible negative feelings about the club's ending (Tuckman & Jensen 1977) and to enhance the feeling of community (Eischer & Tuppurainen 2011).

During the baking process, the participants also had to fill in a questionnaire so the participants were split to three groups who made different parts of the recipe. The smaller groups helped the participants to concentrate. In order to encourage the participants to have contact with the whole group I made the decisions about the teams. Working in pre-assigned groups helped the participants to form a contact with the girls that they might have not been in contact before. This way I wanted to encourage the group development (Tuckman 1965; Tuckman & Jensen 1977).

In order to encourage the participants to have a positive contact with each other we had a game where the participants wrote positive things about each other to a piece of paper on other person's back. This could encourage them to tell the positive things because the game is anonymous. Unfortunately some of the participants weren't able to listen to the instructions and wrote insults to the papers.

The last time was supposed to be a party where the families can also participate. However, none of the family members showed up. The participants did not seem to be too upset about it and told that they're happy to be in the girl group without anyone else.

4.9.1 Final questionnaire

The final questionnaire (appendix 2) consisted of two parts; first part was a closed-ended questionnaire with five propositions in which the participants answered on a scale of four faces from sad to happy, sad meaning they do not agree at all and happy meaning that they agree completely. The propositions were following:

1. The cooking club was fun.
2. I was able to affect the cooking clubs action.
3. I was allowed to be myself.
4. I was noticed individually.
5. I want to continue participating in Sorella project activities.

The first question was meant to find out if the participants enjoyed the activity which is important goal of the Sorella –project. The second measured if the participants recognized the participation since encouraging immigrant girls to participate is a goal of the Sorella –project. (Kalliolan Nuoret ry 2015).

The third and fourth ones measured the cultural and gender sensitivity as well as forming a community (Tuckman 1965; Tuckman & Jensen 1977; Langager 2011).

The last question measured how the cooking club as an activity worked in its goal of being a stepping stone activity to other activities and long-term participation in the Girls' House of Espoo and Sorella –project.

The second part was an open-ended questionnaire with two questions. The first question was "What kind of other hobbies would you like to do in Matinkylä?" and the second question "Other things to tell/comments/nice thing/sad things?". The first open-ended question was for the purposes of the Sorella -project. It was important to find out what kind of activities the girls want to do in order to continue their participation in the project. The second open-ended question was for the girls to tell anything they want. It was more laid-back kind of a question because I noticed that the official forms that the Girls' House themselves use was not encouraging the teenagers to answer. Also the visual style of the form was informal. The smiley faces were used a scale since all of the participants didn't speak Finnish as their first language and written options would have not been culturally sensitive (see Bahmani & Honkasalo 2016). The questionnaire was anonymous.

4.9.2 The results

The results of the questionnaire were positive. All of the participants were having fun in the cooking club, felt like they were able to affect, were allowed to be themselves and wanted to continue in the project. In each one of these questions every participant chose that they agreed completely. One participant put the second best option to the statement "I was noticed individually" while others put the best option.

Open-ended questions showed that seven out of eight participants wanted the cooking club to continue. Other hobby wishes were dancing (four out of eight participants), crafts (one participants) and camping (one participant).

The last question generated following comments: "the cooking club was fun", "the directors were nice" and a smiley face.

4.9.3 Conclusion

Based on the final questionnaire the participants were very happy with the activity. The participants felt that they were allowed to participate in the planning of the club and the activity itself. Also the participants felt that they could be themselves which indicates that we were able to have a cultural and gender sensitive work approach.

All of the eight participants wanted to continue participating in the Sorella –project’s activities.

As one of the participants stated “I hope that the cooking club continues and never ends”. This shows that they were very pleased with this activity.

5 Conclusion

The participants were happy about the activity and wanted it to continue. We were mainly able to reach our target group in all three aspects; the participants were right age group, lived in the area and didn’t have other hobbies. This would indicate that a cooking club is a good low-threshold activity to find new participants. In the fall of 2016 the Sorella -project continued the cooking club.



Fig 4. The flyer for the cooking club in Fall 2016

The interest of the local newspaper *Länsiväylä* indicates that the issue of multicultural and gender sensitive work is interesting and relevant in today's society. It seems to raise interest even outside social work field. (Aalto 2016).

The participants wanted to cook typical Finnish cuisine. Since cultural values are affiliated with the food that you decide to eat (Nyman 2004) it can be seen as sign of cultural integration or assimilation (Berry 1997). According to Berry (1997) integration is the best option in order to avoid cultural stress. It would be important that the participants continued in the Girls' House or Sorella -project activities and learn to appreciate their cultural heritage and integrate instead of assimilating.

Finding the girls who are outside all services is a challenge. Our participants found out about the club from one of the participants' so they were part of a group in the beginning. Co-operation with the local social worker is a good idea but through her the information doesn't reach the people who don't use social services. More co-operation with local schools would be a good idea since all of the participants were studying. On the other hand Langager (2011) showed in his study that youth will drop out of youth clubs if their friends don't go there. Reaching only one girl can be enough.

An additional question in the end questionnaire about belonging to the group would have given a better sight if the participants actually felt like they were part of a community. On the other hand the participants the girls formed a WhatsApp group where they were talking outside the cooking club as well. They also ran an Instagram page related to the cooking together. This could indicate that they attached to their group and formed a community. On the other hand according to Tuckman's (1965) the group didn't reach the Norming stage where they would build a community. The participants were having cliques and their personal relations were difficult. However Langager (2011) states that even a professionally formed community is a community.

Based on Langager's (2011) idea of a social-pedagogically constructed community the cooking club was not such. The participants were having hard time respecting the common rules that reflected the values, such as no name-calling, even though the rules were decided together. Using Langager's (2011) terminology, the club was more pedagogical than social-pedagogical. In order to help the possibly more vulnerable girls, a social-pedagogically constructed community would be the best. On the other

hand, the cooking club is a stepping stone activity and only met five times. The participants now had a contact in the Sorella –project and could seek to peer support groups etc. in the Girls' House if they needed. As a stepping stone activity the cooking club's activity model (based on Langager 2011) works well.

In order to genuinely research the impact in the participants' subjective well-being a further research should be done. Also further research should be done about the participants' acculturation. Based on my observation I state that most the participants want to assimilate or integrate to the larger society but this conclusion would need more studies to confirm it. As Berry (1997) says acculturation is a process and based on my observation I believe that this cooking club works as an activity to improve assimilation or integration because we worked in a multicultural group in a Finnish environment. The participants also showed signs of integration. Also this activity is meant to be the first activity for the participants who are just entering the Sorella –project's activities and continuing in other activities boosts the acculturation.

Lately many theories about immigrants and integration have been criticized about the fact that they don't take into account the multiple spheres of society (Kivistö 2015). I decided to use the Berry's acculturation model because it was widely used in social work in Belgium. In addition, because the activity focused in the participated girls instead of their whole families, I did not find it important to ponder their social-economical spheres.

In my thesis I focused mainly in multiculturalism and define the culture as ethnicity and religion of the participants, ignoring the other part of culture that should be considered when having a cultural sensitive work approach. In Bahmani and Honkasalo's (2016) study, cultural sensitivity was also seen as a part of gender sensitive work approach; helping the participant to find a way of being themselves. On the other hand a professional helper in the social services field must recognize the structural aspects that enforce or cause one's exclusion and try to remove these in order to work ethically (Talentia 2017). Like Bahmani and Honkasalo (2016) say, ethnicity and cultural background cause inequalities which should be considered and addressed outside the gender sensitive reference frame.

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The first questionnaire (translated from Finnish)

Background information form

Name:

Age*:

Phone number:

Neighborhood*:

What do you do on your free time?*

How did you get the information about the cooking club?*

Guardian's information

Name:

Phone number:

E-mail:

Questions marked with * are a part of Lilli Laamanen's thesis

The end questionnaire (original form in Finnish)

LOPPUKYSELY

19.5.2016

Valitse hymiö kuvaamaan tunteitasi kokkikerhosta. Punainen hymiö tarkoittaa että olet eri mieltä, oranssi hymiö vähän eri mieltä, keltainen hymiö vähän samaa mieltä ja vihreä hymiö samaa mieltä.

1. Kokkikerhossa oli kivaa.



2. Sain vaikuttaa kokkikerhon toimintaan.



3. Sain olla oma itseni.



4. Minut huomioitiin yksilöllisesti.



5. Haluan jatkaa Sorella-projektin toiminnassa käymistä.



LOPPUKYSELY

19.5.2016

Mitä muuta haluaisit harrastaa Matinkylässä?

Muuta kerrottavaa/kommenttia/iloja/suruja?