SHAAH & SHEEKO; EMBRACING IDENTITY IN THE MULTISENSORY SPACE FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS

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The purpose of this thesis is emphasising the act of embracing identity of the multi- and bi-cultural adolescents in a multisensory environment. Another aim for this thesis is for the adolescents to communicate constructively. These objectives conclude towards the aim of improving self-reflection skills of the participants. The thesis is in partnership with ELO-project ("Building skills and Communities Together"). Multisensory space is located in Laurea University of Applied Sciences Tikkurila Campus, in Vantaa.

We observed the level of self-reflection skills of the participants as well as communication skills, and their self-expression skills. This was achieved through assembling a group for adolescent girls with immigrant background. We held 6 sessions with different themes: Introduction to the project and the Multisensory Space, Art Activities, Building the Multisensory Space, Constructive Communication, Tradition, Love and Relationships, and lastly Past, Present and Future. Each theme was based on the theoretical framework, of which the most important ones include: art therapy, Nonviolent Communication, Life Span Narrative.

Our group started to resonate with the concept of Multisensory Space once they understood its function, even though in the beginning they were hesitant and had hard time comprehending how this space could work. One of our most favoured sessions was the Art Activity, which worked as a great tool for using creativity in expressing identity. The participants were able to express themselves and through that, caused interaction that ended up encouraging inclusion within the group. One of the observations we had made, was how easily the girls were able to create a space that resonated with their personal identity, by forming the Multisensory Space into Finnish and Somali.

We used our observations and the received verbal and written feedback to conclude, that bi-cultural adolescents do not have enough safe and comfortable environments, where they can express themselves, and reflect on their identity. The participants were also able to use their artistic creativity to explore their opinions towards Finland and Somalia. They also explored their emotional connection towards their Somali identity and contemplated how it corresponds with their Finnish identity.

Keywords: identity, communication, self-reflection, adolescence, multisensory space, bi-cultural

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

This is a functional thesis concentrating on offering a safe and comfortable environment in Multisensory Space for bicultural adolescents to embrace their identity by discussing issues, that are related to the Somali community. We relate constructive communication and the exploration of artistic creativity in practicing self-reflection. The reason why adolescents should practice communication is for them to be able to express their difficulties, that they have experienced during their life time or concerns towards their future. Adolescence is a challenging period in the life of the individual and our aim is to enhance the communication skills of the adolescent by using constructive communication as a method. Bi-cultural adolescents can have difficulties communicating with peers and in their own ethnic groups, which can lead to identity crisis later in their lives.

Our aims for this thesis include: encouraging active interaction in the Multisensory Space, practise communication and self-reflection, encourage artistic creativity to explore identity, offer peer support by gathering participants of similar life experiences. Lastly, to offer a safe and comfortable environment in a Multisensory Space, where participants can express their thoughts and possible criticism of their culture. We chose these aims, because we believe they are necessary in the process of embracing identity. We shall meet these aims by applying objectives to the methods, that will assist us in reaching them.

Our target group is secondary school aged adolescent girls who are born in Finland and have bi-cultural background. The purpose of creating this group is, because we are authors are Finnish-Somalis and hence, bi-cultural. Growing up between two cultures was difficult and challenging to form an identity, which was strong and stable. We are aiming to use peer support as a method by gathering participants of similar life experiences to offer guidance and support. Target group is important, because of the sensitive life stage.

This thesis was made in cooperation with ELO-project ("Elämyksillä Osaksi Yhteiskuntaa", which in English is "Building Skills and Communities Together"). The ELO-project is a partnership between Laurea University of Applied Sciences, The Espoo City Library and The Finnish Red-Cross. Its aim is to promote inclusion and interaction between immigrants and the main stream population. The project develops citizen-driven approaches to support integration through multisensory space, by learning from people through action.

We will be using observations, our cultural knowledge and reflection in the thesis process. Within this thesis we will explain concepts regarding our target group such as, development of an adolescent. We will offer information about immigration, multiculturalism, self-reflection and identity. The background information of these concepts are used as the basis for the theory and the methods we used in the implementation process.

Since this thesis is based on our culture, we chose a title which is appropriate. Being together and talking about different topics is very popular in our community. Somalis generally drink a lot of tea. In Somali language we call it "Shaah" and when there is a get-together, tea is always present. In Finland, Somali women mostly come together by visiting each other's houses or in community centres. They have gatherings and discussions that can be about the state of Somalia or issues that affect the community. The interactions and discussions are lively and active. Conversation in Somali is "Sheeko". We want to discuss and reflect with our participants, which is why we chose the title "Shaah & Sheeko".

As this is a functional thesis, we held a total of 6 sessions. Within the sessions, we applied a variety of methods supporting our objectives to empower adolescents practice self-reflection. The adolescents will have activities suitable and appropriate for them, that can benefit them during this life stage. The methods applied are well connected to multisensory space, as these methods can be supported through sensory stimulation, e.g. art. Multisensory space encourages active interaction and supports self-expression, which intertwines our methods to the space. Multisensory space also helps in exploring artistic creativity and reflecting on own identity by offering an opportunity to build the space and make it look original. These methods include, peer support, art activities, constructive communication and lifespan narration.

In the end of the thesis we will evaluate our observations. The initial plans and how we were able to accomplish them are explained. We will reflect on how Somali community deals with situations and matters concerning Somali adolescents. Our responsibility is to observe if the multisensory space has helped participants be more confident in their identity, if they felt encouraged to use creativity to express their thoughts and emotions about their identity, if they got an opportunity to practice communication and self-reflection and how did peer support empower participants in embracing their identity.

1.1   What is a functional thesis?

The basis of our functional thesis is developing a peer support group for adolescent multicultural girls in the Multisensory Space. The main aspect of the functional thesis must stand out in the thesis. This means that everything should be based on theory to increase the authenticity of the methods applied during the implantation stage. The implementation process of the functional thesis starts with an idea. It is beneficial to consider a topic of interest that is motivating, and the chosen topic should be relevant to the target group. The purpose of the functional thesis is to design an event or a product, that will be targeted to a certain group. The target group defines the content of the thesis, which means target group should be chosen carefully. (Vilkka & Airaksinen 2003, 38-40)

In the functional thesis, an action plan is created to recognize the idea and the objectives of the work. With the action plan, the authors of the thesis organise what to do, why it is done and how to do it. It also shows that the topic is justified and well thought out. An action plan is a tool to maintain a consistent progress towards the aims of the thesis. (Vilkka & Airaksinen 2003, 26-27)

It is not necessary to use research methods in a functional thesis, as the amount of work could be unnecessary. Indicative information is often sufficient within implementation stage. However, a decent amount of material must be analysed and changed into a reviewable and observable form through grouping and categorising. (Vilkka & Airaksinen 2003, 62-63)

2   Background, Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this section is to create an understanding of the purpose and the significance behind our practical thesis and why we are doing it. We will explain who we are in co-operation with and the client/target group we are working with. We shall give information on ELO – Project and the Multisensory space due to us being in partnership for this thesis, and the immigration in Finland, due to our target group being adolescents from immigrant backgrounds. Within this thesis we are concentrating on adolescent girls with bi-cultural background and will look into the history of immigration in Finland and how multicultural adolescents see themselves in Finland. We will also explain the objectives of the thesis, our personal goals and evaluation methods.

2.1   ELO – Project and Multisensory Space

ELO-project (Elämyksillä Osaksi Yhteiskuntaa, translated as Building Skills and Communities Together) is a partnership project between Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Espoo City Library of and The Finnish Red Cross, funded 364 150 € by European Social Fund, with the duration of 01.02.2017 – 31.01.2019. According to Laurea (no date), the aim of ELO-project is to encourage the integration of the immigrants in to the Finnish society by improving and promoting the interaction between mainstream population and the immigrants. The main idea behind the methods used by the project is to learn from the society through action and mainly by a method called Multisensory Space, hence this practical method is the main utility of our thesis.

Multisensory space has been used in several projects and is an established concept and why we chose to do our thesis project in the Multisensory Space in Tikkurila, was because it was a new experience for us and we wanted to learn how to lead a group in a creative environment.

We were familiar with the space, because we have had classes in the space and it was always exciting. As a learning environment it is original and innovative.

Since creating the Multisensory Space, several thesis projects have been made and most of the projects focus on the socio-cultural empowerment. Socio-cultural encouragement refers to activities that support the empowerment of individuals or groups and support self-initiative. Socio-cultural stimulation is particularly needed when people's own resources are low. Socio-cultural empowerment aims to motivate, strengthen, and demonstrate individual resources, and to involve the individual. Inspiration supports the fact that a group or individual designs and executes activities that improve their own life situation or environment. Socio-cultural inspiration can support the integration of people into a particular community or society. It is essential to find the common points of the old and the new culture and to work on them in everyday life. (Aistien, n.d.)

A good physical learning environment can inspire an individual to learn and take responsibility about learning. The design and construction of the sensory space also functions as an open learning environment in which learners themselves can create a common space by sharing their own expertise and acting as a peer-to-peer network. Multisensory space as a method achieves an experimental, collective and project learning. Multisensory space can be used as a space which helps in reflection and definition of identity. For immigrants of different ages, the multisensory space can act as a producer of good and familiar experiences, and in distinguishing of own identity. Also, people of the mainstream society can conduct a discussion on identity issues, reflecting the importance of a local community, local identity or Finnishness in a globalizing world. (Aistien, n.d.)

2.2   Immigration in Finland

Immigration, the act of permanently moving to a country from another, has increased in Finland. In the past few years, records of increasing immigration in Europe and Finland has multiplied due to the refugee crisis (Ministry of Interior Finland, no date), and the majority of the immigrants tend to live in the 10 largest cities in Finland (Väestöliitto, no date). But immigration to Finland can date back to Finland's Independence, where there was about 6 000 Russians in Finland (Korkisaari & Söderling 2003).

During the year of 2017, there were 384 123 people with immigrant background, in other words, a 7% of the whole population of Finland. Foreigners or people with immigrant background are known as people whose both parents, or the only known parent has been born abroad. During the 1990s, immigrants' first destination was Helsinki, where they would later migrate around the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. The placements of the immigrants into the

municipalities and the increasing immigration, has increased the immigrant population around the rest of the country. Within the recent years, the migration into the Uusimaa region, has become very common. (Tilastokeskus, n.d.)

According to Väestöliitto (no date) children who have moved to Finland with their parents are considered immigrants until they receive their citizenship. This also includes children who are born in Finland, whose both parents are immigrants until they receive their citizenship, hence the proportion of "young immigrants" are calculated on the basis of their mother tongue. In Finland there are people who have immigrant parents, who are not statistically considered immigrants, but are known as "Second generation immigrants" or as "a person of immigrant background" (Terveyden ja Hyvinvoinnin Laitos 2018). In the beginning of 2017 Helsinki had 22 595 residents of immigrant background within the ages 15-29 (Nuortenhyvinvointikertomus, 2018). From Figure 1 you can see the population structure of the youth with immigrant background within 2015-2017.
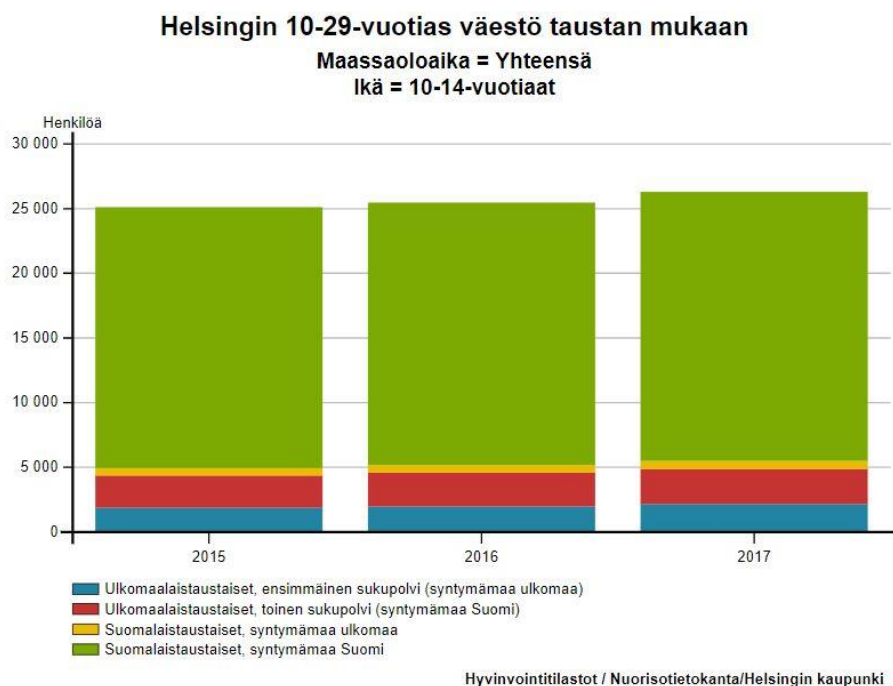

Figure 1: The population of 10-29-year olds with immigrant background in Helsinki (Nuortenhyvinvointikertomus, 2018)

2.3   Target Group

Our target group consists of young adolescents who are middle school age (grade 7-9). The adolescents can be born in Finland or have moved with their families to Finland when they were young. ELO-project's aim is to improve and encourage integration through the experiences in the Finnish society. We as authors are interested in working with immigrants, and one of us works specifically in an afterschool program targeted towards multicultural girls. Also, we are very interested in the integration process in the Finnish society. Both of us were born in Finland and we experienced being different.

We chose adolescents as a target group for our thesis-project, because adolescence is a life stage that both of us are familiar with, having experienced it personally as children of an immigrant families. We were raised according to the traditional Somali culture in Finland. Sometimes, this created challenges of confusion between the two cultures. Therefore, we can relate to the girls, and bring up topics that they are familiar with, but can be complicated to talk about with their families and communities.

In some cultures, things like honour and shame are mentioned. As women, we have experienced in the past, that in our culture, people are stricter on girls and women, than they are on boys and men. But surprisingly we have also seen this in Finnish schools. For example, teachers become more offended by girls swearing than boys, and hence easily punish them by giving them detention.

It's highly significant to youth, in this case girls, to have representation in services provided for them. Living in a Eurocentric country, where the societal attitude towards multiculturalism is decreasing, there should be programs dedicated towards Muslim girls. Services directed towards multicultural girls and women are found in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, such as Helsinki Girls House. Their activities are gender and culturally sensitive (Loisto Setlementti, 2018), however there are a lack of workers who embody the same culture and religion as their clients. When it comes to girls and their parents, this issue is particularly important because of the parent's mistrust of the system. The parents are more protective towards the girls in Somali culture. The underlying reasons vary. When the professional is a person from the same culture and/or religion, the parents trust the daughter to participate in activities provided by the organizations. Fathi, one of the authors of this thesis, who is a supervisor in a girls-only after-school program, has observed all mentioned points above.

2.4   Objectives of the thesis and personal aims and goals

Bi-cultural adolescents might have challenges in acknowledging their place in Finland. It's important to examine the identities of second generation immigrants whether they see themselves as Finnish. Adolescence is a confusing life stage and during that time young people need a lot of support. It is important to have confidence in own identity, this can be established by being surrounded by people with same backgrounds; it can develop into a sense of security for the individual and establish a sense of belonging.

Within the Somali community across the globe, self-reflection skills are not encouraged, and it can create simple solvable issues within the community, which we have observed throughout our lives as Finnish-Somalis. We want to help our community. It is of high importance for us to create an activity which helps participants to reflect freely on their past experiences and struggles. Adolescents have problems in expressing their feelings and thoughts verbally especially if their mother tongue is different from the mainstream population. Using creative methods such as art as visual communication can encourage young people to self-reflect in a calm way.

Usually learning environments are one-dimensional and don't promote innovative thinking. The purpose of Multisensory Space, is to offer a new learning environment, through creative and flexible approaches. This concept is beneficial for our target group due to supporting a variety of thought processes. Creativity can awaken subconscious thoughts through sensory influences, which is why Multisensory Space is an ideal environment for self-reflective dialogue. When raised in a country that is not yours by ethnicity a young individual might struggle with gaining a complete confidence towards their own identity, particularly when immigrants parents deny their children from identifying with the country of the child´s birth or residence. Therefore, we want to emphasise embracing the bicultural identity in the multisensory space.

For the longest time, since childhood, we have both been curious to know why Somalis do not value becoming vulnerable, communicate and openly express sensitivity. We feel like empathetic communication is lacking due to behavioural patterns within our culture. It is sometimes difficult to express concerns and confusions to parents and the older generation, because they themselves are not familiar with the concept of sensitive communication. Often when a younger person tends to challenge the views, morals and values held by e.g. a parent, it is considered disrespectful and sometimes parents tend to cut the communication by mentioning how they never used to "talk back" at their elders. Constructive communication can be a working tool regarding communicating with parents.

Certain aspects in one's culture can be complicated, and values and morals of the parents might not correspond with the adolescent, which can cause challenges in forming the

identity. In this case a positive and inclusive environment where the individual is able to express their frustrations freely is significant. For instance, the topic of dating in Somali culture is avoided but people concentrate on marriage. Living in Finland as bicultural adolescent can be perplexing especially when an individual is not given the proper protocols. Some people don't consider the western conduct as appropriate, particularly for Muslim people. Somali girls often hesitate in expressing their attitude towards dating because they feel judged by multiple parties. We want to offer the participants of the project an opportunity to discuss about the Finnish and the Somali culture in forming and maintaining a relationship.

Therefore, objectives conclude as:

- Observing the identity of the participants in Finland

- Using art as a medium for self-reflection

- Encourage creativity and self-reflection in Multisensory Space

- Reflect on the communication within the Somali community

- Reflecting on traditions and norms, which affect the bi-cultural adolescent

2.5 Evaluation methods

The evaluation methods will be based on our own observations from a non-biased perspective. We will be taking notes during the sessions and throughout the process, in which we will write our sessions on. During the progression of this thesis-project, we will ask at least for verbal feedback from the participants after every session. In the last session the plan is to ask for feedback about the whole project.

These written feedback questions for the last sessions are:

- Has the multisensory space help you express your thoughts about your identity?

- Did you feel encouraged to use creativity to express yourself?

- Did you get an opportunity to practice communication and self-reflection?

- How did participation of the other Somali girls affect you?

We have chosen these questions, to receive a conclusive result towards the aims of this thesis-project.

2.6   Personal goals

We will work as cultural experts in this thesis-project, because of our Finnish-Somali backgrounds. We will work as peer support supervisors for our participants according to ethical guidelines. Our common personal goals consist of developing professional competences in dealing with people of similar background, familiarising ourselves with using multisensory space for peer support, time management skills, and networking with organisations specialised on working with immigrants. We are expecting that gathering the adolescents will be challenging due to the conflicting hours, because of their school.

One of the most important aspects we want to develop is socio-cultural methods towards participants to strengthen interactions. Throughout the sessions we are planning to use different methods to encourage interaction between participants. Another aim we have is to enhance our skills in working with working-life partners.

3   Theoretical Basis

In this section we will introduce theoretical frameworks, which supports our implementation methods. Considering our target group, we have looked through theories that are linked to our thesis: Human lifespan development, which specifically concentrates on adolescence, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory, Self-Reflection, Identity, Multi- and Bi-culturalism and Cultural Sensitivity.

The purpose of the Human lifespan development is to comprehend how an individual develops through adolescence, mainly emotionally, intellectually and socially. Whereas, the Ecological Theory is to understand how the surroundings of an individual has an influence through the course of their lifespan; growth and development of an individual. The requirement of proper self-reflection is the ability to reflect and understand taken actions and the reasons behind them. Multiculturalism refers to the cultural diversity existing in current society and bi-culturalism shows a knowledge of one's heritage and culture but additionally the culture of the country someone lives in. The purpose of cultural sensitivity is to understand own cultural background, transparency and respect for diversity, which is an important factor to consider when being around people from different cultures. Lastly, identity as a theory was chosen to understand how each person defines and understands themselves in relation to their social environment, culture, and self. It is important to understand these theories, because of our target group.

3.1   Human lifespan Development; Adolescence

In this section, the different subjects of development of the adolescents will be described. The reason for this is due to our target group, which is multicultural adolescent girls. The main source used for this theory is the book BTEC Level 2 First Health and Social Care by Haworth, E., Higgins, H., Hoyle, H., Lavers, S. & Lewis, C. 2010.

For the life stage we will concentrate on physical, intellectual and social development and growth, in other words PIES, which is an important value to lay down the application of theories in the upcoming theories. Each of these factors will be looked into separately, but they are interlinked.

Development and growth differ from each other, in a way where growth is described as the increase of a size, shape, or weight, and is hence easier to measure. On the other hand, development is described as changes in complexity, which makes it harder to measure, but can be aware of e.g. capable of solving harder problems as time goes on due to increase in the ability of comprehension. Growth and development are easier to be comprehended by applying physical, intellectual, emotional, and social factors of one's lifespan. (Haworth, et al. 2010)

P = Physical
I = Intellectual
E = Emotional
S = Social

According to Haworth, et al. (2010) the age group of the adolescent life stage is between the ages of 11-18 years and are usually called teens. In this life stage important physical stages will take place, which is called puberty, which after a teen is able to produce. Intellectual changes will take place, that can impact a teens emotional state and social life, or vice versa; it is all interlinked. Social life is also a big one as it can affect one's "status". This will be now looked in to more detail.

Physical development – when one reaches puberty, their body start to change due to the trigger of hormones. These changes include sudden growth and weight increase. Compared to the previous life stage, which was childhood, boys and girls start to look even more different that before as they grow into young men and women. Changes that can be seen in both sexes include, development in their pituitary gland (a pea-sized organ at the base of the brain, that produces hormones (Klibanski & Tritos 2013)), and hypothalamus (a small part of the brain that produces hormones, manages sexual behaviour, controlling appetite, etc. (Seladi-Schulman 2018)), and the appearance of pubic hair.

Intellectual development- according to McLeod (2018) based on Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory, during adolescence a person reaches the Formal Operational Stage, which means a teen can challenge a hypothesis and think abstract thoughts and problem- solving skills (Haworth et al. 2010). This means teen starts to think about and analyse religion and

politics and can reach a conclusion that the world is more complex than what it used to seem to them, when they were children. Things like long-term planning for their futures will also start to take place as they think about possibilities what their future ambitions and goals are, such as moving from the parents' house, or planning ahead for their educational possibilities. Their morals and values start to become clearer, as they start thinking about what is right or wrong. This can be applied to their everyday life or conversations about religion, politics and ethics.

Emotional development – this stage has been described as "storm and stress" stage for teens from an emotional perspective, as the teens start to gain their own identity and emotional intelligence. During the early adolescence or even mid, depending on the individual, their behaviour can change from immature to mature behaviour. Things such as pushing boundaries or challenging the values of the parent(s), could be seen as controlling to the parent. This is usually called a rebellious stage, and could cause tension within the family. (Haworth, et al. 2010)

This can cause them to become and they generally do become less dependent on their families and start to look for advice within their friends or also known as peers. The term peer in this context mean, that a group shares at least one identifying character. Hence it is called a peer group. Sometimes a teen may be influenced by their friends positively or even negatively, and this is called peer influence/pressure. Because, they want to feel included they might give in to the peer pressure to gain validation, that can have an impact on their self-esteem/confidence. As you can see this is linked to the social environment of a teen, which we will be explained further on in the next paragraph. (Haworth, et al. 2010)

Social Development – as you saw from the paragraph above emotional and social development are strongly intertwined in adolescence. This is how a teenager starts to gain more independence and explore their identity, as they spend more time with their peers, and start to develop socialising skills, which will lead to the development of social intelligence. This is linked with Albert Bandura's theory on Social Learning, which according to McLeod (2016), meant that children and teens tend to look for the people closest to them, such as family or friends, for role models. In this content it can be described as "having someone to look up to" or their "ideal self". This is where a teen could become vulnerable to peer pressure or pressure from their parents, especially if they feel like they are failing or being a disappointment. (Haworth, et al. 2010)

This can impact a teens parent's view on the peer group of their adolescent child and cause misunderstanding or tension within the family. Hence, it is important for a parent to know how to communicate with their teens effectively, in a way where the teen can tell them about their problems or even try to seek solution. This can allow the parent to feel more

relaxed about their teen's life outside home and give the teen a stronger sense of security. But there could be cases where a teen keeps their problems to themselves, because they could be scared of their parent s reaction, or independently seeking for their own solutions. (Haworth, et al. 2010)

Sometimes a teen could become a parent at this stage, by experiencing pregnancy. This is called teen pregnancy, and in some cultures is considered normal, whereas in others, it is looked down upon, e.g. in Western-cultures due to the hindrance it can bring to the parent's education; mainly the mother's. This can be very apparent in Finland, as usually to have a career an individual is expected to have a degree. It is so strong that in the younger generations of immigrants or children of immigrants, tend to get married later than the people from their original home countries. What could also be done is to prevent stigmatisation from the general population. (Haworth, et al. 2010)

3.2   Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner, born in 1917 and passed away in 2005, formulated the ecological System Theory. According to Gilstrap and Zierten (2018), they quote:

"His work led him to define human development as a lasting change in the way a person perceives and deals with his or her environment."

- Gilstrap and Zierten (2018)

This theory describes the ecological system, that surrounds an individual through the course of their lifespan and how these qualities influence the growth and development of an individual. According to Psychology Notes HQ (2013), there are different systems that equal up to 5, although sometimes people exclude the last system described below. These 5 systems include:

- **Microsystem** – describes the direct relationship between an individual and their environment, e.g. the impact a person has on the environment by driving to work, dropping trash, and participating in a project that helps to improve the appearance of the city they live in.

- **Mesosystem** – describes relationships between systems; the effect a social group has on another social group e.g. is the overall effect a group of people has on a public park or a recreational facility.

- **Exosystem** - is a system, where one group has an influence on other groups e.g. the effect a particular family has on their interactions between other families visiting a public space.

- **Macrosystem** - is the type of system that dominates the society such as the culture, government, politics, and a religion of a group of individuals.

- **Chrono System**- is the flow of time, which affect individuals and the environment.

An example of how this is visually represented can be seen in figure 2.

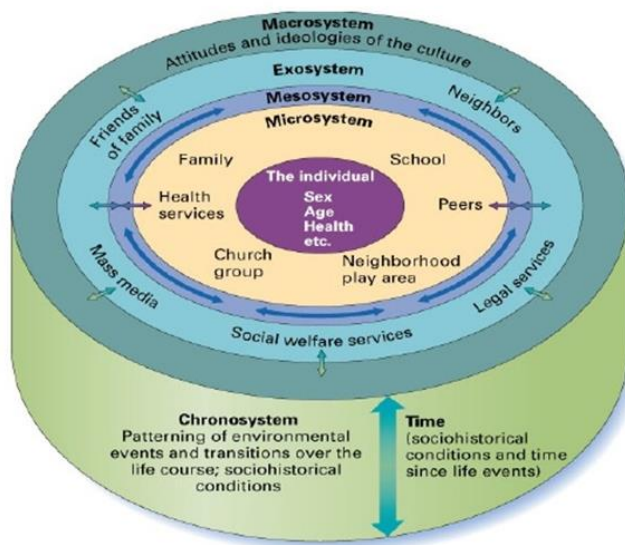Figure 2: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory Graph (Santrock 2011)

3.3   Multiculturalism and Bi-culturalism

Culture is the result of human activity and is transmitted through experience and learning from one human to another and from one generation to another. From birth to death a human is constantly surrounded by interaction. Cultural evolution refers to the human development that does not pass from one generation to another through a biological inheritance, but nurture and nature. Evolution is shaped through natural selection, whereas cultural evolution, development is largely done through people's individual, interactive, social and political choices. (Lahikainen et al. 2008, 87, 95.)

Multiculturalism means equal coexistence between groups of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The premise of multiculturality is that even though people are different, they are equal in relation to each other. Multiculturalism generally refers to the coexistence of different people. Multiculturalism requires political and structural changes in society. (Song 2017.)

The term multiculturalism is used to refer to a variety of phenomena. As a descriptive term, multiculturalism refers to the cultural diversity existing in current society. A culturally diverse society contains several disparate groups of culturally, religiously and worldly views that share the public space together. The descriptive concept of multiculturalism does not in itself include the idea of appreciating cultural diversity, nor does it take a stand on the kind of politics in a multicultural society. (Song, 2017.)

As a normative term, multiculturalism also includes the assumption of the acceptability of cultural diversity. The term multiculturalism is also used to refer to normative multiculturalism. Normative multiculturalism means, at the very least, that cultural diversity is not considered necessary to get rid of it. In its stronger forms, cultural diversity is also considered to be something that should be appreciated and cherished. The perception of multiculturalism as an ideology for immigration to some of the forums is also normative, although this view is rare - except in academic and public debate - but also problematic in identifying immigration and cultural diversity. (Song 2017).

Secondly, there is an aspect of multiculturalism, bi-culturalism which is applicable in this thesis. Representation of biculturalism shows as knowledge of one's heritage and culture but additionally the culture of the country someone lives. Biculturalism is valid to immigrants coming from other countries, but also second-generation immigrant children who have born and raised in receiving country. Culture at home is deeply rooted to children by their families. (Schwartz & Unger 2010).

Multiculturalism is topic much discussion, but there is a lack of deep understanding. This raises emotions and complicates the peaceful reflection on multiculturalism and the debate that is taking place. In addition, people are easily confused by multiculturalism as a demographic reality and as a political ideology.

Autio (2018) examined in her survey, on youth who have bicultural background. The parents of the children are from two different countries. The purpose was to hear about adolescents' own thoughts and experiences. Cultures appear in religion, humour, food, music and clothing, but also in values. The values of parents' cultures affect both the family's and young people's choices, for example when choosing a career or partner. (Autio 2018).

As always, life in both cultures is associated with both positive and negative aspects. Young people responding to the survey, consider the positive aspect to be the fact that living with two cultures has made their worldview open and versatile. Young people see growing in a bicultural family taught them about a lot of different cultures and helping them to be more understandable and flexible in their diversity. Bi-culturalism gives young people the opportunity to be part of two cultures and to see these differences from up close. (Autio, 2018).

More than one third of the young people who responded to the questionnaire mentioned that they felt like they didn't belong or the feeling of "otherness", young people said they felt like they were outsiders, regarding both countries. Many also said they did not feel that they were sufficiently involved in both cultures. (Autio, 2018). The questionnaire studied the need for services directed to people with bicultural background. The results presented clear evidence for the need of distinct services.

However, many young people felt that activities directed for their peers would increase the sense of inclusion and reduce loneliness. It could also help in the acceptance of their own roots and increase the sense of pride in their own backgrounds. Young people attach great importance to the possibility of receiving peer support, sharing experiences, and discussing issues that affect oneself with others. (Autio 2018).

Adolescence is the time for finding own identity. To a person with multicultural background, it can become slightly confusing. They are supposed to find their identity between two cultures. Even living in Finland their whole life won't prevent the fact that, they need to explain and justify their presence in Finland. There is no recollection of their home country, except for the stories from their families and relatives, news and social media. The view of adolescents about their own culture is often how their own culture, as a minority, appears in Finland. It differs extensively from their parents, who have lived in their country with a strong sense of culture and identity. The adolescent must build their own worldview by combining the surrounding society and the values and views of own ethnic group. Adolescent is trying to find bonds to the society; through them the feeling of belonging can be found. With peers, the adolescent receives safety and inclusion. They are united by similar experiences, which causes them to seek each other out. Additionally, the racist and the sceptical energy towards foreigners promote forming of foreign-gangs; it is a safety measure to protect from the external world. (Räty, 2002, 169).

According to Mubarak, Nilsson and Saxén (2015, 95), adolescents with multicultural identities in Finland may be multi-layered, young people have the ability to adapt to different situations. However, it is difficult for many young people to find in Finland such an identity that would be united, appropriate and accepted. The desire of young people to adapt or just have fun can drag them into doing things that are wrong according to Islam. This may not be suitable for parents and the adolescent can receive a tough response. Peers might even comment about each other's behaviour. (Mubarak, et al. 2015). Being in-between two cultures and feeling pressure from the peers, young Finnish adolescents and community can cause emotional struggles that will affect the individual long-term, which can lead to identity crisis.

3.4   Identity and Self-Reflection

Identity means the way in which each person defines and understands themselves in relation to their social environment, culture, and self. Identity is not predetermined, but it must be deliberately contemplated and viewed. The concept of identity has traditionally been divided into personal and social identity. Personal identity is associated with the feeling of continuity and consistency in personal experience, whereas social identity implies identification with different social communities or groups. The need for identity research arises from uncertainty when one does not know itself as an individual or entity. (Kuusela et al. 2006, 173.)

Positive self-perception affects human behaviour and activity. Self-perception is the whole concept of the individual itself, so if it is not good, it is impossible for the individual to remain psychologically balanced, solve problems and take responsibility for his / her activities. The psychological balance is destabilized by a situation, in which the subjective and objective concept of the individual contradicts. Subjective is the self-perception of an individual's self and objective identity is defined by other people. Young people with immigrant backgrounds who are having problems in identifying their identity are vulnerable to stress-related illness and may experience challenges at the social or emotional level. (Talib 2002, 44.)

The creation of a balanced identity requires the independence from the parents, interaction with both the same and different gender peers, an understanding of their uniqueness and specialty in relation to the surrounding community. For some minority youth the formation of a positive identity can be more challenging than that of young people from the majority population. Belonging to an ethnic minority places them in the role of the underdog. Studies show that the identity of bicultural children are more multidimensional than the mainstream youth. (Martikainen & Haikkola, 241.)

Young people with foreign backgrounds shape their ethnic identity in relation to being Finnish and the culture of their own country of origin. The way in which the identity develops is significantly influenced by the age of immigration, the period of residence and the country of origin. The surrounding society, its atmosphere and the treatment the young people receive will have an impact in the forming of the identity. (Larja, 2017)

Youth and immigration pose challenges in the formation of identity - young people seek their own identity in the transition period of childhood and adulthood but also must take a stand on their ethnic identity. In the table below (Table 1) the different strategies to creating an ethnic identity targeted specifically towards bi-cultural people. The purpose of the table is to indicate how a person identifies; both cultures, single culture or neither. (Larja, 2017)

Table 1: Strategies for Creating Ethnic Identity

Integration	Merging
The person who adopted the integration strategy identifies both as Finnish and their own country of origin. This strategy is often considered as the best option in research literature. The integration law aims to provide the immigrant with the knowledge and skills needed in society and work, while supporting his / her ability to maintain his or her own language and culture.	In the merger strategy, the person identifies as a part of the mainstream population (Finnish), and does not relate closely with their country of origin; with its ethnicity or culture.
Isolation	Alienation
Isolation as an identity strategy refers to a situation where an outsider does not feel himself at all as a Finnish but identifies himself in his own country of origin. This can be due to the surrounding society not wanting to accept the individual as a full member of the society.	Alienation describes a situation in which a person does not identify as a Finnish or their country of origin. This strategy is generally least desirable in research literature and is often associated with poor psychological and social well-being, school success and position in the labour market.

As you can see from the table above an individual a non-Finnish ethnical background residing in Finland, has different possibilities in developing an identity. The goal for an individual with immigrant background is to have a stable identity resonating with both cultures at the same time, hence it is the most ideal ethnic identity. The second ideal dimension is Merging where an individual identifies with the country of residence but not with their ethnicity. The third is Isolation and is second least ideal identity strategy level where an individual rejects the Finnish identity but has strong connection to their ethnicity. The least ideal is Alienation which is described as not identifying with either cultures.

An article written by Larja (2017) reviews the level of the identity of individuals from immigrant backgrounds. According to the article, 30% of young people under the age of 25 are identified with both Finland and their countries of origin, which is why, their identity strategy is classified as Integration. Compared to young people, for the 45-64-year-olds, Merging is more common. This result may reflect a different social status of the age groups: young people who have Integrated had a more effective strategy than Merging, if the family and parents

want to maintain the ethnic culture. Integration and Merger will become more common since the residence period increases. As we expect to see, the longer the number of foreign-born young people living in Finland is concerned, the more often their ethnic identity is classified as integration and merger.

The younger the person has immigrated to the country, the more likely the individual identifies as Finnish. 34% of young people (15 to 29 years old) who were either been born in Finland or have been under school age when migrating have developed their ethnic identity with Integration strategy and 33% on the merger strategy.
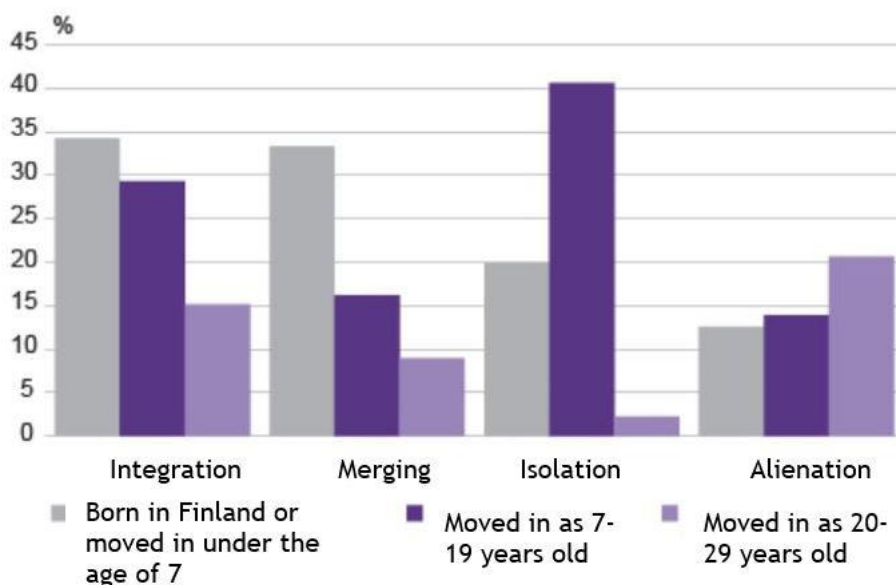

Figure 3: Strategies for Creating Ethnic Identity of Immigrant from the Age of 15-29 in Finland According to Their Residential Period 2014 (Larja 2017)

Of these young people who have gone to the whole elementary school in Finland, however, 20% classify with Isolation strategy, which is mainly confined to just their country of origin and not feeling very Finnish. The rest of the 13% don't identify themselves as Finnish, but do not identify themselves with the country of their origin. Additionally, the Isolation strategy is somewhat more common in African-born teenagers than in others. This can be observed from Figure 3.

Somalis, who according to our experiences, have the tendency to challenge one's identity. According Kroger (2007, 21), receiving conflicting messages from important people in your life, about how one should identify themselves, would become vulnerable to changing their perspective on identity, and will destabilise. This can lead to identity crisis, due to identity being a result of social discourse. This is related to socio-cultural approaches in identity development.

Presently adolescents are not given the proper opportunity to contemplate who they are as individuals. Youth from immigrant backgrounds, can be less familiar with the concept of self-reflection. Reflecting on own individuality and perception of how you see yourself, should be encouraged from a young age. The society has made it easy to be more aware of how other people see you. Understanding how your personality is constructed and all the factors behind it, is a key in creating successful relationships (Ramsay et al. 2008, 17). This is done through self-reflection.

Self-reflection is the process of self-exploration. This means that an individual assesses and evaluates themselves by looking into own actions, being aware of how different factors and presences influence us mentally, physically, emotionally and socially. It is also, a process of self-discovery, in which an individual will look into how they behave, feel and think, in the present, past and future. For one to objectively assess themselves, this means being non-biased and detached. (Ramsay et al. 2008, 18)

According to George (2015), there are three different phases to improve self-awareness. There should be a consistent effort to practise self-reflection. There are different forms of reflection. Keeping a journal, praying, walking, or other methods of daily rituals. The idea is to reach one's internal core and focus the attention in to what is essential.

The process of self-reflection is continuous; it will take time and soul-searching. By doing this, a person becomes more transparent and it can increase vulnerability. Understanding the story of your life, is a significant part of self-reflection. Looking into your past events and the people you have interacted with have a great impact towards the individual you are. (George 2015)

3.5   Cultural sensitivity

Culture is what people have learned to do, appreciate, and believe in during their life. A person is raised to become a member of his own culture. It is not something to be born in clearly. Learning about cultural patterns, values and norms is based on the worldview typical of the community, the significance of the existence, meaning of own life purpose and the perception of right and wrong. Through culture, the whole world is interpreted to help shape the surrounding environment. It automatically controls actions of the individuals which causes noticing only if someone acts differently from the norm. Culture includes the surrounding society and the built environment. (Räty 2002, 42-43.)

Despite the cultural background, all people are individuals. They all have their own life experiences that shape their own image of the world. Every individual belongs to their own culture group differently. Every culture includes different worlds and lifestyles. In addition, different

subcultures are created, which can be part of a residential area, age group or workplace. The cultural background is influenced by nationality, regional and ethnicity, gender, generation, social class and profession as well as work community, family community and hobbies. Culture represents tradition and persistence, but is constantly changing, which people have to accept. (Räty 2002, 43-44.)

An understanding of own cultural background, transparency and respect for diversity are important things to consider when working with people from different cultures. It is good to use a holistic approach to immigrant and minority people, provide systematic and long-term support, and more time and guidance. A professional should consider customer experiences and strengths. They must also provide information on services and, if necessary, support the client's participation in care or assessments more effectively than with the mainstream population. It's a good idea for a professional to get information about the client's cultural background and to get to know the events and events of her culture. This will enrich his or her cultural awareness. (Räty 2002, 46.)

Working with different cultures, an immigrant client and the employee may both have prejudices. They may also have little knowledge and beliefs about each other's differences. If the difference is emphasized, it can prevent the emergence of genuine contact. In meeting a client, the good qualities of an employee are understanding of your intuition, authenticity, and respect for the client. This employee skills should include strength of understanding and support. Connecting with a client with sincere intention, a genuine encounter and the beginning of a dialogue can surface. Customers bring their own problems, their personality, their current life situation, their background, their growth environment and their experience in the service situation, a service provider must have the competences to deal with it. (Lähde & Emas 2010.)

The cultural sensitivity of professionals is a good start to how the family feels; they are met and heard. The family and the professionals should recognize the cultural values, beliefs and customs and know how to behave according to them. However, all things cannot be explained by ethnicity or religion, and experts should be able to understand that. A professional does not have to know all cultures, as long as they remember to consider the individual's differences in families, in parenting and the family's current life situation. Parents' own experiences in the new home country, the number of children in the family, and the help provided by family parents and siblings have a great influence on the well-being of parents and children. (Kuittinen & Isosävi 2013.)

4   Methods

In this section we shall describe the methods we are planning to use by implementing some of the theories. These include multisensory space, Peer Support, Art Activity, Constructive Communication, and Life span narrative. We will introduce how these methods works generally and then with our target group. It is important that theories correspond to the practices, so that they are accountable. Theory enables the professional to see if these descriptions describe practices that are acceptable for the work activity to be examined and to justify that they are appropriate. (Payne 2005, 27).

4.1   How to use Multisensory space

Multisensory Space in Laurea University of Applied Sciences is the work method of the "Building Skills and Communities Together"-project used for learning and supporting the encounters between people. A multisensory space offers an environment and opportunity to experience an enjoyable cultural experience. The space can be changed in numerous ways. It is used to help to empower different people and clients such as immigrants. The method was created on 2009 and has been developed further in different social field environments.

There is a multisensory space in Laurea University of Applied Sciences, in Tikkurila campus. The facility is easy to modify and therefore suitable for environments of many kinds of events. In addition, the multisensory space can be moved to anywhere else with the portable tents, such as libraries or kindergartens. The diversity of the space also tells how it is suitable not only for operating environments of larger cultural events, but also in a smaller scale such as children's room. (Räty, 2014).

The multisensory-space is intended to allow for encounters between different cultures and people. In multisensory-space organisers can bring their own supplies or use the project's own material. There are numerous different fabrics and carpets from different cultural backgrounds accumulated during the years. However, it is essential that the group using the multisensory-space is trying to create an operating environment special for the group, which caters group's own needs in design and construction stages. This often requires not only the use of your own pictures and sounds, but also bringing your own items into the space. The multisensory-space is intended to support recollection of memories and thoughts through various sensory powers. These stimuli include sounds, smells and flavours, as well as various objects, pictures and videos that can be projected on the walls. Often the stimuli are related to one culture or country. (Räty 2014).

We will apply this method to our sessions by holding them in the multisensory space except for the Art therapy session. The idea is to create an environment and an atmosphere to allow

the participants to improve their self-reflective skills that can result in the strengthening of their identity. This can be done by applying the available technology and resources provided by Laurea.

One theme that is going to be particularly exiting to apply this as a method is the wedding and the building of the multisensory space. People tend to be very interested in and appreciate traditional cultural events such as weddings, therefore it can be a very successful theme to present the functionality of the space when done right. The space can help in discussing topics related to sensitive topics that aren't often mentioned or require complex preparation.

4.2 Peer Support

A peer is a person who is in the same life situation as another or has similar experiences. The essence of peer support is that people in the same life-situation help each other by talking about their own experiences. It is not based on diagnosis towards psychiatric standards nor criteria (Curtis et al., n.d.). The experience of not being alone in his or her mind is empowering. Peer support is thus "the desire of people in a similar situation of life to share experiences and information in a respectful atmosphere". (Halme et al. 2011, 6).

According to Peers for Progress (n.d.) Peer support can include four elements:

- Daily assistance

- Provision of support

- Informing about services in the community

- Long-term support

It would be good to have a gathering place in the group's own residential area or in a place where public transport can be accessed. Suitable gathering spaces are playgrounds, resident parks and leisure centres. It is a good idea to choose a suitable place for the target group, e.g. youth houses for adolescents. In this way, group members can choose to continue meeting after the end of the group and can integrate into existing services. The space should be arranged so that group members can sit in the circle, so everyone can see each other. (Halme et al 2011, 64)

The peer support group's themes and the way of processing are selected for the target audience. Themes such as working life, identity and parenting culture are dealt with from the perspective of the target audience. The goal of the group is to support the daily life of group members and the most important activity is discussion. The goal of the peer support group is

not just to share knowledge, but also to deepen the understanding of phenomena. (Halme et al 2011, 31)

In addition, group members can feel their self-esteem increase, they can see their identity as a source of strength and they can begin to see their own pains. The members of the group receive advice, ways of coping with different life situations, strength in self-expression and the ability to console and interact with people. Activities in peer support group create inclusiveness, the participants can share experiences and get support and information. In peer groups empowerment and commitment is promoted. (Hartikka, 2013)

With adolescents, peer support is a method, which is very beneficial to them. Young people can have elements of peer support in their school life, but school mates can have different experiences, which challenges the main purpose of peer support. Adolescents should get the opportunity to express themselves openly without the fear of judgement. We will apply this method by encouraging peer support in our group. We want the girls to talk about subjects that relate to them currently and in the future. Topics like dating, communication, hopes and dreams are usually discussed from the point of view of the parents. An individual should be able to think independently, this can be done by creating spaces where they feel empowered. Our main goal is for girls to get to know different people from the same background and similar experiences.

4.3   Art activities

Art therapy can be used as a non-verbal communication tool for thoughts, worldviews and emotions. It provides an opportunity to scrutinize problems, strengths and chances for change. The process of making art can be adapted for working with people during the whole lifespan, from youth to old age. Art therapy is especially beneficial for adult clients, for who therapy doesn't create treatment response or to adults, incapable of talking about themselves or their problems for personal or cultural reasons. The client and therapist can examine the creation, whatever it may be, which forms a situation where the attention is not directly on the client. (Malchiodi 2011, 58).

Art therapy helps the client receive clarity about own experiences, define problems and try out possible solutions by drawing or other creative methods. Additionally, art therapy can be used in group settings. Group art therapy creates an opportunity for communication and interaction and it can be directed to handle a specific issue or topic. Whereas family art therapy is suitable for families and it allows for each generation an equal voice via pictures. It can make the participants act more actively. (Malchiodi 2011, 62).

Art therapy is a functional method that offers people of all ages a chance to communicate and support verbal interaction, and literally let the therapist and client see things from different perspectives. The most important aspect of art therapy is the personal meanings found by the individual to his artistic expressions. It offers a variety of ways to cope with emotional pressures, achieve insight, change behaviour, and increase overall well-being. (Malchiodi 2011, 67).

This method will be applied into our session by organising a "Paint and Party" environment. A Paint and Party event usually tends to be inclusive and energetic, where people listen to music and dance while painting. This creates the opportunity to have a light and a fun atmosphere, where communication even about heavier topics can be more light-hearted. We want to bring aspects of the multisensory space in to the room, by utilizing music, where the participants can choose a song of their own preference. The aim for this session is to create an inclusive environment where the girls can now become more comfortable with each other and explore their artistic creativity.

4.4   Constructive Communication

Improving constructive communication skills is important in any society. The concept of Nonviolent communication is appropriate for our target group, because the main idea to improve interaction and communication, where the core theme is empathy. It offers different tools in how to express and listen effectively. Nonviolent communication "NVC" is based on language and interaction skills, that reinforce the ability to remain humane even in difficult conditions. NVC redirects the way one expresses own emotions and listens to others. Instead of the usual, automated functions, the words become conscious responses that are firmly based on conscious perceptions of emotions and wills. It teaches to make clear observations and identify how behaviour and circumstances affect people. (Rosenberg 1998)

The aim is to learn how to clearly identify and express what is practical in each situation. It is also intended to see oneself, others, intentions and relationships in the new light as it replaces old patterns of defence, retreat and attack in situations of condemnation and criticism. Instead of categorising and condemning, it focuses on finding out just the current observations, emotions and needs, finding empathy. Emphasising depth and listening to others, it promotes respect, attentiveness, and empathy. The model is simple but can make great change. (Rosenberg 1998). This can be seen from the next page in table 2.

Table 2: Important elements of Nonviolent Communication (Rosenberg, 2015, 1998)

Observations VS Evaluation	Thoughts VS Feelings
- We decrease the possibility of the received understanding our intended message, when we combine evaluations with observations. It can make them prone to only hearing criticism. This can make more resistant. - It is important to separate observations from evaluations. - Example of an Evaluation: "You are being too selfish!" - Example of an Observation: "When I see you not sharing your charger, I think you are being selfish".	- Being capable of differentiating thoughts from feelings, so that the receiving individual will be able to interpret the intended feelings from thoughts. - Develop a vocabulary, which helps to clearly express feelings in order to create a connection to people. It can help in solving conflicting situations. - Examples of **how not to show** feelings: "I **feel** like I am **worthless** to my co-workers". - Examples of **how to show** feelings: "When you do not greet me, I **feel neglected**".
Requests VS Commands	Empathy
- Request in a clear and positive language will uncover what we really want to the receiver - When expressing just the feelings, the receiver will might not comprehend what should be done. This is because, sometimes we are not aware of what we are asking. - Request that lack the feelings felt and the needs could seem like commands. - The more we understand what we need from the receiver, it is more probable that we get it.	- Empathy creates opportunity to view a situation from a different perspective; "being in someone else's shoe". - The ability to offer empathy gives us an opportunity to stay open, resolve conflict, helps us hear the word "know" without feeling rejected. - It is important due to being able to be in touch with our humane side.

The reason as to why chose to incorporate Nonviolent Communication elements in our activity was to inspire participants to practise constructive communication to help improve the communication skills of our participants. Adolescents often have challenges with communicating and expressing their feelings and thoughts. In families with adolescents, the atmosphere is easily burdened with negative emotions. Adolescent behaviour gives rise to negative feelings in other members of the family and arouses negative remarks. The emotional atmosphere of the family must be consciously balanced with positive emotions. When the family expresses joy, gratitude, pride, and goodwill, it endures and even listens to the negative emotions and responds to them by taking the responsibility (Kinnunen 2014, 66).

We will practice constructive communication by using real life situations of their personal lives and give them advice in how to resolve difficult situations. We shall use the table in the previous page help us explain the main aspects of Nonviolent Communication and we will mention the basic elements of the concept. Nonviolent Communication explains well how to take responsibility of own feelings and actions. We believe it is important for adolescents to understand accountability. We will discuss the level of Somali community's communication and whether it would need improvement.

4.5   Life span: The Narrative Approach

The narrative approach, is a method used as a medium for communication in order to perceive the life story of a client. It was developed by Michael White and David Epston in 1980s. This approach can be used for counselling across many fields. Examples include: family therapy, schools and higher educational institutes and community work (Narrative Therapy Centre of Toronto, n.d.).

This approach is one of the many forms of therapies used that allows to perceive an individual by describing their experiences in life, rather than diagnosing people through a single major life experience such as a victim of rape. The aims of this approach through narrative therapy is to seek and gain information respectfully and where none of the people included in the life of the individual and the individual themselves will receive any blame; a non-blaming-manner. It allows to enhance the client's confidence to be the expert in their own life, allowing them to gain confidence in the way they have perceived their own life. This means that in the therapy session the client would tell their life story as the main character and the protagonist of the journey. The therapist/counsellor would take the position of someone who gives support within the journey and gives guidance in the story's flow. But, they have to give the client the freedom to choose the direction of the conversation. (Dulwich Centre n.d.)

Hence, it would make it natural that both parties, the therapist/counsellor and the client/customer, would have their roles to fulfil, because during the session they would discuss about the life of the client. This means that, the life stages experienced by the client would be brought up. If we would remind ourselves of Bronfenbrenner's theory on Ecological Systems in section 3.2, it will be very important to apply the 5 five systems into the session as it explained the various cultural worlds and dimensions and individual inhabits in, that has a high influence on how they shape their morals and values, beliefs, ideas and social structures. This is why the therapist/counsellor has to concentrate on (The university of Waikato n.d.) the impact of the socio-cultural practises present within the clients environment. University of Waikato emphasises the importance of this factor as they have quoted:

> "This stance is taken because problems are understood to be produced within socio-cultural contexts, rather than to reside within an individual, family, or community."

> - *The University of Waikato (no date).*

As mentioned in the previous page, if you would think the narrative therapy as a journey, the client is the protagonist of the journey and the therapist is there to support the journey of the protagonist and give guidance in a manner that the client can choose, which direction they want to go in the conversation. As Dulwich Centre (no date) quotes:

> "There are many cross-roads, intersections, paths and tracks to choose from. With every step, a new and different cross road or intersection emerges – for-wards, back, right, left, diagonal, in differing degrees."

> - Dulwich Centre (no date)

During these sessions, it is of extreme importance, that the client/customer can recognise that they have the right to their own life story, which is the role they have in the journey of narrating their life story. This means that during the therapy/counselling, they have the right to interpret and narrate their story how they feel the most comfortable. Therefore, if they feel like they do not want to explore parts of their life story, that can prove to be traumatising experiences making its narration and interpretation challenging or difficult, they have the freedom to do so in any stage of the conversation. It is important that the client comprehends; the goal of the therapy/counselling is not to blame nor shift blame on anyone, and that the aim is to perceive and challenge powerful and significant discourses in their life, that can be interpreted as occasions, that shape their life in a manner which can be destructive and harmful, whether it is a behaviour or a thought. (Dulwich Centre n.d.)

By supporting the client/customer to separate these occasions from their own identity as an entity, rather than as e.g. "I am bullied person". This allows them to perceive their life as a

collage of multiple occasions, that include great times too, and that they have many other aspects to themselves such qualities within themselves (competence skills, intellectuality, appearance, great organising skills, caring and loving, etc.). (Dulwich Centre n.d.)

The techniques and methods that the therapist uses to guide the client through the conversation will now be explained. The client/customer can determine how they describe and express their own self in the session. As long as they are recognisable from the other mentioned people or "characters" in a manner they feel comfortable, such as using first- or third-person pronoun, meaning they can narrate themselves as someone else. (Dulwich Centre n.d.)

According to Dulwich Centre (no date) the therapist/counsellor can do this by consulting with the client/customer about their preferences on how to continue the journey by asking questions such as these:

- What is your opinion on how the journey is going so far?

- Would you like to continue talking about this topic?

- Which topic would you be more interested in discussing? A,b,c or d...?

- Do you feel comfortable with going more deeply into this topic?

The therapist/counsellor can use these example questions to the advantage of the client/customer to change the course of the journey/conversation or for themselves to dig deeper into a topic when asking the fourth example question. However, the ultimate decision always lies with the other party, meaning they have the ultimate control. The first step in the therapy/counselling sessions tends to be a conversation on the client's current wellbeing, then continue the conversation on their life in the past. Afterwards, the conversation diverts towards the future; what are they looking forward to and their concerns. (Dulwich Centre n.d.)

Next, we shall look into the advantages and the disadvantages of Narrative Approach:

- Advantages: The flexibility of the conversation. Due to the non-blaming method, the client can avoid feeling strong negative emotions and direct them towards someone. It allows the client to concentrate on their positive characteristics. (Dulwich Centre n.d.)

- Disadvantages: The stories´ authenticity can be questionable due to the flexibility this method has, this can cause the inability to identify the significant occasions in the lives. Immigrants who do not know the country´s language and need a translator, could put the translator into difficult situation unless the translator is experienced with dealing in such situations. (Dulwich Centre n.d.)

We will use this method to broader understanding of our participants' lives, and how they have lived until the times. Some people tend to have difficulties in talking about themselves, much like when someone is asked "what are you good at?". According to Beck (2015), teenagers' ability to narrate stories and maintain its structure is at an understandable level.

We shall implement this by simplifying this theoretical method and use whiteboards to visually describe their lifespan, while memorising past events, and talking about whether it was high- or a low-point in their lives. This does not require a lot of detail to explain these events and allows them enough reflecting time to gain a deeper understanding of their emotions and thoughts.

5   Planning Process

As this thesis is in a partnership with Elo-project, we had a preliminary idea of a peer support group of immigrant mothers and their adolescent daughters. The multisensory space was the idea of our working partner supervisor. The purpose of ELO-project is to use the multisensory space as a medium/tool in encourage the integration process and improve the contact between the members of Finnish population and the immigrants. In this section we shall describe how our thesis has developed from its preliminary stages into the current structure.

The first step into the planning was to choose a target group. At first, we were adamant in having a mother-daughter peer support group, because the Multisensory Space can be an intimate place to reflect together especially for adolescent daughters. We decided to concentrate on secondary school aged adolescent girls, as they tend to hesitate to communicate with their mothers regarding their personal lives.

The daughters didn't have to be immigrants but could be born in Finland so that there could be less challenges involving language barriers, as one of our preliminary aim was to improve the language skills of the mothers.

Once we were clear of our target group and location, we proceeded to creating advertisements and marketing. However, we were unsure about the time, themes and the amount of sessions we would hold. But regardless we proceeded to create advertisements. These advertisements were available in three different languages: English, Finnish and Somali languages in two different drafts. In the first draft we didn't apply times nor the themes of the sessions and how many times would sessions be held. Therefore, in the second draft we made sure to include missing information. We also decided to change the Finnish and the English into basic languages, so it could be understood by the immigrant mothers. However, the Somali had the same text as in the first draft. The pictures of the advertisements can be seen in appendixes 4, 5 and 6.

5.1   Advertising Online

Because of the current times, social media is popular amongst all age groups. We decided to take advantage of it and advertise the thesis project via Facebook where we posted an image of our first draft in Finnish a seen in appendix 1. It was unsuccessful, because our expertise marketing in social media wasn't up to the standards. Facebook was chosen, because we believed it was a social media, where both mothers and daughter would be active. We realised youth are not as active in Facebook comparing to other social media. Via social media we also tried to connect with organisations specialising in services for immigrants. One organisation we contacted was Sahan-Seura Ry.

One of the local secondary schools was Jokiniemen Peruskoulu. We contacted the student coordinator via email explaining our activities and as to why we needed students to participate in our project. Unfortunately, the coordinator didn't not reply. However, we should have contacted her by phone or visit the school.

5.2   Visiting organisations

Nicehearts Ry is organisation established in 2001, concentrating on working with girls and women. They have several units located in Vantaa. These units include, Tyttöjen Tila (Girls Space), Neighbourhood Mothers-project and Wahvat Naiset (Strong Women). These units have different activities specialised for their own target groups. In order to find adolescent girls, we contacted the Girls Space that has a group consisting of girls attending secondary school. However, we couldn't openly advertise our project to the girls as some of them are of Finnish ethnicity. Which would mean that it could be excluding. The supervisors of the group proposed that they could go to the girls individually and advertise our project. Then we advertised to Neighbourhood Mothers, during Neighbourhood Mother evenings where immigrant mothers are the only attending group. In one particular evening, no mothers had adolescent daughters. In another evening, the time of the session was not decided on, causing the mothers to be less enthusiastic. For Wahvat Naiset we went to visit a group consisting of middle-aged immigrant women. In this case most of the mothers had children who were older than our target group.

Afterwards we visited local Ohjaamo (Navigator) in Tikkurila to take our flyers and inform about our project to the worker. We also went to the local Job Centre continuing into the library. We found the children/youth section and asked the worker if she could distribute the flyers. The reason as to why we chose these places was due to finding local immigrant mothers and their adolescent daughters who would be interested in our project.

After these occasions we decided to find a proper organisation with good networks. There was an organisation called Hakunila International Organisation with good activities with immigrant mothers and families. Their cooperation was good and the workers were encouraging. One of us went to speak with the project coordinator and the other went after that to introduce the project. They liked the concept; however, the location and the timing were not suitable for many mothers. They would have preferred if the sessions would have been held in their local area. The operating premises belongs to Hakunila International Organisation but is located in Länsimäki, Vantaa. If our project would have been in Helsinki, it would have received more participants as we were more familiar with Helsinki Somali immigrant population.

5.3   Preliminary preparations

With our working partner supervisors, we reserved the multisensory space and for the amount of times it would be needed. At first, we had Friday on mind, because it is the end of the working week and the immigrant mothers would be more likely free along with their daughters. Usually when talking about Muslim immigrants, they tend to hold Quran schools during the working days if not during the weekend. We wanted to ensure mothers had the proper time to be present during the session with minimal distractions. Unfortunately, due to Friday being reserved we needed to decide on another day. The only day multisensory space would be available continuously was Tuesdays.

Because the girls are secondary schoolers, we had to keep in mind that they would finish school late during the afternoon. Laurea Tikkurila campus closes at 7pm on Tuesdays, so that meant we had to finish our sessions 30 minutes earlier, to have enough time to clean up. We decided that our reservation time would start 4pm, which meant the sessions had to start at 4.30pm. This can be very early, because the adolescents might not make it on time. We decided that the first session would begin on 11.09.2018 and continue weekly until 16.10.2018, but was reserved just in case until 30.10.2018. This means that we planned to hold session five times over the course of five weeks and the two last reservations were for just in case if we needed to continue or the sessions would start later on. Due to the lack of and time on 11.09.2018, we couldn't keep to the preliminary schedule. We then decided to start first session on 18.09.2018, however nobody attended, causing for us to start the sessions again on 25.09.2018. The last session would be held on 30.10.2018.

Fathi had previous contact with three adolescent girls who lived outside of Vantaa, but near enough to travel by train for few stops. This meant we had to prepare the girls ticket in advance by Fathi traveling to the girls' train stop, picking them up and bringing them to our premises. They have never travelled to Tikkurila so they wouldn't know the route. Because

the travel tickets were sponsored by ELO-project the girls could travel without fees. This meant we also had to take the girls back.

According to our awareness the girls would have had eaten a meal at lunchtime in school and might not make it home without being late. Therefore, we decided that we would prepare them snacks and we decided to incorporate Somali tea.

5.4   Themes for the Sessions

The theme for the first session was introducing the project and getting to know each other. The point of this session is to get to know how the participants identify themselves living in Finland as well as the mothers´ ethnical background. We planned to do this by asking them the questions presented below.

- Have you ever participated in youth activities? If not, explain.

- Do you feel like you are a part of Finnish Society?

- What challenges have you experienced in Finland?

The second session is planned to be based on the Art Therapy, which has been explained as a method in section 4.3. This is a good method to include everyone and enhance the group dynamic. This session will be held in the art room in Tikkurila campus because multisensory space was reserved. We have planned for the participants to paint their thoughts and experiences regarding living in Finland. There are three stages in the process which are: good experiences, bad experiences and the Finland of their dreams.

Third session is introducing the functionality of the multisensory space. The idea is for them to create a space based on their identity. It can allow them a new way of self-expression and reflection. We are planning the spaces for the future sessions to be build based on this creation.

Fourth session is based on communication, especially on constructive communication with inspiration on Nonviolent Communication (NVC), which was developed by Marshall B. Rosenberg as explained in section 4.4 The reason why we chose this method was to improve the communication skills of the participants with their families. NVC emphasises empathy and mutual respect, which is needed during the challenging times of adolescence. Multisensory space offers a unique and suitable environment where participants could be more open to new experiences.

The theme for the fifth session is tradition, love and relationships. We are planning to talk about the different aspects on each of these three concepts. We are planning to decorate multisensory space according to a Somali wedding. The participants can wear their own traditional party attire. The purpose of this theme is for the participants to have a dialogue on topics they might not have with each other.

The last session we have planned is about life span narration. Participants will talk about memorable occasions and experiences in their life. We also want to explore participants hopes and dreams. The meaning of this session is to showcase participants´ self-reflection skills and for us two to observe whether they have improved throughout the course of this thesis.

6   Implementation

In this chapter we shall explain the sessions that have taken place, which could differ from our plans written above. One major aspect that has changed from the planning is that we have decided to focus only on the adolescents. The reason why mothers didn't participate was due to the conflicting schedules and logistics. Majority of the mothers are taking care of their large families. Also, all the girls happened to have a Somali background.

6.1   Session 1: Getting to know each other

Table 3: Session 1

Amount of Girls	3
Duration and the date of the session	16:30 – 18:30 25.09.2018
Objectives	• Introducing the thesis and ourselves as supervisors. • Learning about girls' background • Their perception towards their level of inclusion within the Finnish society
Questions to meet the objectives	• Have you ever participated in youth programmes? • Do you feel part of the Finnish society?

	• What challenges have you experienced in Finland?

The first session was on Tuesday 25.09.2018, in the multisensory space, located in Laurea Tikkurila. The theme for this session was introduction to the project and the thesis; we explained the future plans and the activities we would hold for them and the purpose for why we have this thesis topic. By introducing ourselves first, it would encourage them to also do the same and warm up to us. We did this by telling them our current studies as well as previous experiences and why we chose to work with adolescent girls, including our experiences as Finnish-Somalis. All three girls were of Somali ethnicity and born in Finland, which allowed us to establish feelings of comfort and have the courage to open up.

After we explained the information above to the girls, it was their turn. Out of the three two were sisters, and then their childhood friend. One of the girls wants to become a health professional but previously she wanted to become a police officer and a detective. She also expressed her enjoyment to be around children. Her latest acquired talents include drawing and henna designing. The next girl and wants to become paramedic in the future and is specifically interested in working in emergency sector in the health field, because she likes to help people. She also expressed herself as a fun person who has a great sense of humour. Her future plans include working in UNICEF. Third girl said she would like to become a nurse and previously wanted to become a customs officer. Her interests include travelling. The mentioned the places she has been were Ethiopia, Egypt, Norway, Sweden, Germany, and Denmark. Her ambition is to continue her studies to High school.

During the session we discussed about their participation in youth programmes. They stated that they have, but not regularly. They were asked if they attend youth centres; they said they have; however, they didn't feel safe and their parents weren't comfortable with the thought of the girls visiting such places due to the reputation youth centres hold in Somali communities.

An organization's activity they have attended is NUMU Ry (Nuoret Muslimit Ry: Young Muslims Ry). The girls feel like their activities reflects their lifestyle, because of the religious element. The girls expressed the significance of Islam in their life.

The second topic of our discussion touched upon their personal connection towards Finnish society. The girls said that they feel like they are a part of the Finnish society, because they have been raised in Finland and are Finnish citizens, but they do not identify themselves as "Finnish". They strictly identify themselves as Somalis. They justify this with the fact that their parents are Somalis. According to their opinion they do not resemble a Finnish person,

which translates to them as being different from the Finnish majority. To them, they cannot be "Finnish" because their appearance doesn't resemble that of a white person.

Third discussion was on challenges they have experienced in Finland. Two of the girls happened to be in the same class since second grade and they are best friends. They are the only people in their class that have an immigrant background. They feel excluded from the class but have never mentioned this to their teacher. According to Haikkola et al. (2010, 235), adolescents with immigrant backgrounds, whether they migrated to Finland or were born in Finland, are associated with difficulties of establishing friendships with Finnish people. People who are immigrants and have immigrant backgrounds are more likely to form friendships with each other. The girls feel like it's not a huge issue, because they feel comfortable for having each other. We asked them about the jilbab they wear, which is a religious clothing. They have never been questioned about it.

Girls expressed feeling pressure when applying to high schools. They consider many aspects in choosing the right school. They believe that it is important to have a certain amount of ethnic diversity in the school they want to attend, because they want to have support and people surrounding them that understand their feelings. This would help them in adapting the new environment. They feel more comfortable when they are surrounded by their ethnic and religious peers. According to their opinion, Finnish people are introverted and reserved, which makes interaction more challenging. The girls strongly emphasized their displeasure and discomfort with Muslim people being generalized with/as terrorists.

Fourth topic of discussion was areas in Helsinki they regularly visit and answered with central Helsinki, the area where they reside in and one other place. They haven't had the opportunity to visit different areas in Helsinki. They expressed their desire to travel around Finland and see different sides of Finland, which could help to broaden their view towards this country. When navigating their way around Helsinki, the mothers need to know their location at all times. They view this as protecting them and are not irritated by this behaviour.

In the end of the session we played Blah Blah Blah; a game of guessing a chosen word of an object within the space. It a nice way to end a session after a heavy discussion. The girls left with light emotions.

6.2 Session 2: Views about Finland

Table 4 Session 2

Amount of Girls	6
Duration and the date of the session	16:30 – 18:30 02.10.2018
Objectives	• Exploring their artistic creativity • Using art as a tool for self-expression • Improving the group dynamic • Importance of peer support
Tasks to meet the objectives	• Paint about your bad experiences in Finland • Paint about your good experiences in Finland • Paint the ideal Finland

The second session took place on Tuesday 02.10.2018, in the art room of the campus. It worked quite perfectly. For this theme required materials were available and the art room had plenty of space to move around. We planned the space in a way that the food and relaxing place would be separated from the working space, where we would create art together. This is to allow them to relax and take a break from the painting and for safety due to the paints having chemicals. We had also planned the space for more girls to participate. Fathi, like the previous time, went to fetch the girls from outside of Vantaa and paid for their fares, while Hafsa was preparing the space. The three girls from the 1st session appeared along with a new participant.

The girls settled in and had some Somali tea and snacks to eat. The girls kept mentioning their mutual love for Somali tea, they said it one of the best things in Somali culture. We decided to take a round of introduction once again for the new girl. Once we had introduced ourselves, two more girls appeared, which was delighting and welcomed them in. They sat down with us and introduced themselves after we, Fathi and Hafsa, had introduced ourselves and the purpose of this activity to the new participants.

One of the new girls was also a Somali born in Finland, and the other biracial; Half-Somali and Half-Finnish. They were born in Finland attended Secondary school. The girls spoke fluent English and Finnish. Because these two girls didn't know the other four, we decided to observe the group dynamic a bit more closely. To bring aspects of a multisensory space, we had background music on, where the girls could have freedom in choosing what music they wanted to listen to. Different kinds of music were put on and the girls had full control. There

was western music and Somali music was also played. Interestingly, they girls got most excited for the Somali music.

Once the time to paint had come, we first explained to them what the session's activity would be. The point was to paint their experiences and communicate their thoughts and feeling they have experienced as people of bicultural background; as people who belong into the Somali ethnicity living in Finland. They were meant to paint through difficult and negative emotions. Initially, the space was arranged

Figure 4: Initial arrangement of the tables

as seen in the figure 4, but we later changed it, so it would be easier to go around the tables and reach the papers that were A2 sized. The instructions on what to paint on the paper were all different as seen on figures 5, 6 and 7.

Step 1. First paper: some thought tips to help them paint.

- paint/draw all the horrible memories and thoughts that come to your mind. what has been difficult in your life.

- Think about the negative feelings that you felt when you were in a difficult situation. What created the situation?

- Think about something that has happened when you felt helpless.

We started to paint the first paper; what negative experiences the girls had in Finland. We talked how it was difficult being a girl, walking outside when it's dark and the feeling of anxiety. Girls shared they had bad experiences about the hijab and they expressed how it was difficult. The girls painted about the weather and most of them agreed that they hate the cold and snow. They also have encountered people saying bad things about their skin colour. The music was blasting all around us and the girls seem to enjoy it. The whole group had same taste in music and while painting the girls seem to bond well. There wasn't any tension and the group dynamic was good.

Step 2. Second paper: some thought tips to help them paint.

- paint/draw memories that make you feel good. Things that make you feel powerful.

- Think about positive feelings and memories.

- What kind of things help you to make you feel better?

The second paper was about the happy experiences they had in Finland. The intention was to paint based on positive feelings. Some painted about how peaceful it is in Finland compared to Somalia and that they'd wish Somalia would be equally peaceful. Another aspect mentioned was free education and once again they contrasted the situation to how it is in Somalia; decent educational institutions in Somalia tend to be private, meaning they have study fees. Girls stated that Islam was the most important positive thing in their lives and how they feel comfortable identifying themselves as Muslim, even though they have experienced challenges for being one in this country. Other mentioned aspects included travelling, and money.

STEP 3 paper about dreams: some thought tips to help them paint.

- What would you like to become when you are older?

- What would you like to change about Finland?

- What would you like Finland to maintain and continue doing?

The Third and the last paper was about their dreams. The common thread around it was how they wanted positivity and development for their country. This included things like better education, a functional and a democratic government, and some of the girls hoped to do volunteer work in Somalia and in Finland. The theme for discussion revolved around the topic of peace and love.

The last step included having the papers merged together to create a one piece, by laying the papers with positive and negative thoughts on top of each other. As we were using acrylic paint unfortunately the paints were almost completely dry, but nevertheless, we still explained what the point of doing so was. It was to realise that we need a balance in our lives. There will be bad times and then life gets better. Our job is to be calm and adapt to different scenarios. If everything would be good all the time and there would be no bad ones, we wouldn't be able appreciate the good times as sincerely.

As we were reaching the end of the session the girls openly expressed how they loved the session and wanted to continue participating until the end of the sessions held for this thesis. According to our observation, the art activities with basics of art therapy incorporated, worked excellently as a medium for bonding. Activity like this, which is thought-provoking to encourage deeper thinking and reflection can be applied well with adolescents. Through it, participants can discuss even personal topics comfortably.

Figure 5: Complete painting for step 1

Figure 7: Painting in process for step 2

Figure 6: Complete painting for step 4

6.3   Session 3: My Finland, My Somalia

Table 5 Session 3

Amount of Girls	2
Duration and the date of the session	16:30 – 18:30 09.10.2018
Objectives	• Familiarising with the space's utility and function • Allow the girls to create their ideal environment for the multisensory space • Let them take control • Observing the girls' process of thought and how it translates onto the space

The third session was held on Tuesday 09.10.2018 in the Multisensory room B202. We were informed before the beginning of the session that the first participants of the project could not attend as they had informed us that they have new activities starting this week at the same time as the sessions. However, the new girls from the previous session appeared, but seemed disappointed that rest of the girls wouldn't be attending the project. This could be because,

they had felt comfortable with the other girls, as most of them were around their age and from the same cultural identity, or the fact that they could talk and express about similar challenges they have experienced in this country in a bigger group.

We allowed the girls to settle in and asked how their day went to give them time to relax, and they proceeded to eat some of the snacks we had prepared for them. After this we proceeded to explain to them about the session's theme and what would happen. We explained to them the purpose of the Multisensory space and how it functions. We decided to not get too deeply into the explanation to allow them to learn from the building experience.

We as supervisors of the group made the conscious effort to allow the girls take more control and have freedom in the choice of space they want to create, and we supervisors took the initiative to go with their flow. We did not prepare any questions, or specific activity other than the preparation of the space, to allow a more relaxing and a free atmosphere where they could have space to bring out their personality.

The space created by them was half-Somali and half-Finnish as seen on figures 8 and 9. We also implemented visual elements by having two of the walls used for visual audio. This way two senses could be used constantly. Also having Somali tea like the previous two sessions, allowed them to have some Somali aroma and taste within the space. Other foods such as sandwiches and the snacks were Finnish, as we had easy access to them. Preparing Somali food is time consuming, so we settled to having Somali tea for all the future sessions. The multisensory space had materials that allowed us to bring alive our cultures into the space and the girls deemed it very successful.

When we asked them why they decided to specifically make a such a space. One of the girls explained that it was because of her Finnish-Somali identity; having a strong Somali ethnic identity allowed her to accept her blood and her ethnic background and mentioned that she was proud and comfortable being one. For the Finnish aspect it was mainly her mentality and environment. With the mentality she expressed that if she would go to Somalia, she would immediately stand out due to her different way of thinking, behaving and communication; she wouldn't fit in. But having a mentality where there is a strong Finnish influence, doesn't bother her she believes it is a part of her identity and what makes her herself. This can be backed up by Ramsay et al. (2008, 77), who states that defining personal identity is a directly affiliated with race and ethnicity.

Discussion continued to girls expressing that it is comfortable and easy for them to express their views and morals within the group; they cannot express their experiences on racism and islamophobia with their friends at school. But, felt like they could freely talk about feminism. With their family, they might not be able to express their thoughts on feminism, but can talk about racism. In other words, their level of comfortableness with expressing their thoughts

openly without holding back, at school and with family it is 50/50, but here with us in the multisensory space the level is 100/100. One of the girls is biracial. She resonates with both the Somali and Finnish identities strongly. She mentioned challenges and aspects she doesn't feel so comfortable in both ethnicities but is also capable of recognising the positive aspects as well, which is really important.

At the end of the session, we played a game. We aren't sure about the name, but it's a ball that had questions written on them to reflect. Due to the limited time, we had no time to personalise the ball by hand, but as we went on in this game of reflection we kept the questions appropriate for the theme, so they could be implemented in. All four of us participated in it, and we took the initiative to answer the questions first to encourage them to speak as well.

Figure 8: Somali side   Figure 9: Finnish side   Figure 10: Ball of questions

6.4   Session 4: Expressing emotions

Table 6 Session 4

Amount of Girls	2
Duration and the date of the session	16:30 – 18:30 16.10.2018
Objectives	• Introducing nonviolent communication • To encourage communication of the adolescents • Reflecting on the communication skills of the Somali community • The importance of constructive communication
Question to meet the objectives	• How is the level of your communication? • Who can't you communicate with?

This session was held on Tuesday 16.10.2018 in room B202, in the multisensory space, located in Tikkurila campus. The theme was based on Nonviolent Communication and for the activity we took some elements from it. The idea was to observe the girls´ level of self-reflection skills. We explained the motive of the session while they were eating and asking them about their week.

We decorated the space in comfortable way, the lights were dim and had the Christmas lights go around the seating space. We brought the food into the space, so that they could comfortably reach the food without disrupting the flow of the conversation. Once everything was settled we asked them to reflect upon their own communication skills. The question asked for the girls was:

How is the level of your communication skill?

The girls answered unsurely. So, we decided to go specific with the question: Who can't you communicate with? The girls said they have communication issues with their closed ones. Sometimes they feel ignored and disregarded. Usually they are the ones who must compromise.

They also mentioned they have problems in being assertive. They cannot differentiate between when to be nice and when to refuse to help people. They mentioned they are afraid of

being used. According to Hussey (2017) one must recognise the need they have. In this case the solution could be by establishing boundaries. The girls feel like that is the most important action needed.

They continue by expressing their frustration with Islamic lessons held at school, where they feel like the teacher concentrates mainly on girls´ behaviour around guys. In primary school Islamic lessons used to be about the stories about the prophets but in secondary school the focus is on relationships. The tone of language is a little criticising specifically towards girls. In their case, they don't judge a Muslim based on their appearance, but rather their behaviour and action.

After discussing with the girls about their challenges and frustrations they experience with the people close to them and/or around them we concentrated on whether some Nonviolent Communication practices could work as a solution to their problems. We used Nonviolent communication as an inspiration and proceeded to explain about the functionality of Nonviolent Communication and its basic principles. The concept can be summarised it into being capable of differentiating between observations vs. assumptions, feelings vs. thoughts, wants vs. needs and requests vs. commands.

This discussion lead to the topic of Somalis´ inability to talk, reflect and manage their feelings. We all had the common experience of never hearing our parents saying the word "sorry". This issue highlights the lack of authentic emotional support a child a requires from their parents. One of the examples we discussed together was about the expression about sensitivity and vulnerability, like crying. Generally Somali fathers cannot handle crying, because in our culture sensitivity is not appreciated and vulnerability is frowned upon.

People usually hide their emotions to seem tough, strong and capable. This is an underlying reason as to why the children, adolescents and even in some cases, young adults tend to be confused in how to handle their emotions or about the ability to deeply reflect on themselves. By learning to communicate constructively, Somali parents could be able to be more empathetic towards their children and realise their needs.

At the end of the session we asked the girls about their thoughts towards constructive communication. They said they learned how to effectively handle conflicting situations; how to construct sentences that inhabit thoughts, feelings and needs clearly. They appreciated the topics that were discussed during the session and said they will implement them in the future.

6.5   Session 5: Tradition, Love and Relationships

Table 7: Session 5

Amount of Girls	2
Duration and the date of the session	16:30 – 18:30 23.10.2018
Objectives	• Discuss about relationships and weddings • Express thoughts on own culture • Discuss about the roles of women in Somali Culture
Question to meet the objectives	• Several case studies were used

This is the fifth session of this thesis process that was held on Tuesday 23.10.2018 in the multisensory space. During the session a Danish visitor of Elo-project had attended with us. Topic for this session was Wedding and Dating/courting. We chose this theme, because this topic is very important in Somali culture as we have a lot of limitations that can impact an individual's as well as families' reputation and honour. It can a be a complex and a sensitive topic to discuss with family, hence we wanted to bring this topic up in a safe, creative and comfortable environment. In our culture, there is a lot of discussion towards wedding and marriage. Usually there is a lack of discussion about dating. Girls are not given proper "guidelines" to dating except for the religious manner, which is not really applied in real life, this can cause Somali youth to develop confusion about identity, morals and values. The fact that girls are offered an opportunity to talk about these issues in an environment with no judgement and additionally being facilitators who completely understand their situation, is extremely important.

We prepared for the session by bringing traditional fabrics and dresses to be worn by us. We had advised in the previous session the girls to bring their own dresses if they wanted. We as the supervisors of the group had brought our own dresses to wear and wore makeup, in order to make the experience as authentic as possible with the limited resources.

Our resources included, home brought traditional fabrics and the ones provided by the multisensory space. We mainly concentrated on colour red, because Somalis usually decorate houses, wedding venues to red. It is generally popular within the Somali community, according to our experiences. Therefore, we implemented red into the space as seen from figure 13. Unfortunately, there were no Somali delights to be served, however we brought Somali tea.

We had prepared them snacks to eat and some sandwiches. The Danish guest was there to observe how to use the multisensory space and the manner of creating a dialogue from it. The Danish participant was an active member, and happily wore the "Dirac", which is a type of Somali party dress including gold jewelleries.

The first topic of discussion was how did the wedding process take place in Somali community. The girls gave vague answers; one of the girls thought that the topic wasn't timely due to her age. But, because they had experienced wedding occasions in their family, they were able to give some answers, such as how the groom-to-be asks the bride-to-be's family for her hand in marriage and that he has to give dowry. With the dowry the bride can decide how to spend it, with the form of a wedding, honeymoon or whatever she desires. The girls also emphasised that the weddings happen to be very high energy, by specifically mentioning "you can see all your quiet aunties go crazy in the dancefloor".

To continue the discussion we asked them: what is the right time to get married? They answered after completing studies and mentioned that some people they know are getting married even though they are in their early 20s, which they considered young. They say the age around 25-26 is a decent age to get married, because getting married earlier would hindrance one's education. They also expressed concerns about people tending to get married "very quickly" without knowing their spouse-to-be properly and isn't surprised why they get divorced rather easily.

This then led to us discussing about divorce and its process within Islam. They first mentioned the Finnish method, which was by signing the divorce papers. Afterwards we brought in religion, which were the three "strikes" or "rejections" ("talqad" in Somali). These manners of divorcing means, that once 3 rejections have been given by either party, the marriage is irrevocably concluded with the spouse, which means the pair cannot get married again unless they get married to someone else after, without the intention to get back with the previous spouse (Esposito and DeLong-Bas, 2001, 30).

We asked them how they felt about divorce. One simply answered it as "not fun", whereas another one explained more deeply by saying that it's very sad, but part of life. When the parents have children they should be careful to not to bring their kids between them during the process of divorce. The importance is acting in positive manner.

We continued on to talking about social acceptability towards women being married more than once in comparison to men. We openly discussed how in our community rumours tend to spread really fast, and how situations can be twisted out of proportion. There might be a negative tone towards the woman for initiating divorce. A strong personality in a woman can be off putting. One of the girls felt that a man wants to feel dominant, and if the woman is strong and/or smart it can make him feel threatened.

We started to discuss about the existence of the clan system in Somali ethnicity, as this might be a reason for not allowing marriages to happen and divorces taking place. Positive and negative aspect of it were found during this topic. The positive aspect was described as creating strong family ties and establishing a strong sense of identity. On the contrast, the negative was that it can become compulsive behaviour. E.g. by constantly starting the conversation with who the parents of the person they are speaking to are. This translates as caring more about one's background than the individual. Particularly in marriage conversations where some families feel uncomfortable merging with a family of a different tribe where tension is present.

The girls, in this case as second generation immigrants, have a certain opinion about how parents raise boys and girls differently in terms of responsibility and how it will have a long-term impact on the community. The girls have partially absorbed western values such as equality, equity and feminism. Girls were in an agreement with the fact that boys have to be taught chores and have everyone expect that of them similarly to how girls are treated. Due to this different treatment the boys seem to be confused about the standards they have of Somali girls; should she be traditional or modern? There is a trend happening currently where Somali men travel to motherland to get married to a girl, who has more traditional values and standards because the men from Western countries standards are set towards the women living in Somalia. This leaves the Western-born Somali women with less choices, leaving them to be more open towards foreign men.

6.5.1 Online peer support groups; real life situations

Currently in the online platform, people have started to recognise and taking advantage of social media, where they can receive peer support by sharing their worries and receive advice. They connect through live-streams or sending anonymous posts in closed groups, which means people cannot access into the groups space without permission of the admin or admins. It has recently become highly popular with the Somali communities globally. We were given permission to use some posts from Facebook in our thesis.

The positive aspect of this, is that people have started dialogues between different genders, generations and nations. Therefore, we incorporated three anonymous posts into our session, to dissect it. We chose these three particular posts, because we believed they resonate with everyday issues experienced by Somali women.

DILEMMA 1

"I am married to nicest guy ever, he is sweet and kind. I was 19 years old when we first met and when I became 22 we got married. I've been married to him almost three years, but I found out I didn't love him and he is not my type. I was young and just wanted to get my own place and have freedom. He is 173cm tall and as I'm getting older I'm thinking about why I didn't get myself a taller guy. I want a divorce but I am afraid that I won't be married again, because I heard that once you get divorced no one wants you. You are expired. I'm not attracted to him".

- *Facebook peer support group in an online platform*

The girls think it's best to get divorced as soon as possible if an individual is unhappy, because they are still young. They agree that attraction is an important element of a successful relationship. But they also thought that the reason for a divorce should be backed up by a justifiable reason and not due to judging of appearance such as height. They feel that the girl in the dilemma should have thought about this beforehand; before they got married. They emphasised that the girl in the post had 3 years to communicate with her spouse regarding this matter.

Both girls recognised that individual in the dilemma prioritised her own situation over the qualities she should look for in a spouse. Making a reckless decision for the sake of her freedom and might end up hurting the person she has had an intimate relationship with. They also recognised the initial problem of the wife's family's strictness, which caused her to want to get away from the family. However nowadays parents feel more comfortable letting their daughters move out primarily for education or work.

DILEMMA 2

"Hey I'm 22-year-old girl and I apologise for typos since English is not my native language, but anyways back to the issue. So, I have been talking to this guy, it's been a week, I re-peat a week! We connect in a certain way I haven't with anyone and also I've never in my life have been in a relationship due to my insecurities. But this guy seems to make every-thing feel better. Here is the problem [sic] he doesn't live in the same country as I and he claims he loves me and he wants to marry me [sic] now is that possible? We have been FaceTiming and speaking on the phone only and let me repeat one last time it's been a week! Have y'all ever been in a long distance relationship? If yes [sic] how did it end up?"

- *Facebook peer support group in an online platform*

We focused on the long-distance relationship and whether they can work out. Girls thought that long-distance relationships don't work out. There are many uncertainties associated with such relationships. Meeting the person is most important factor in it possibly working out.

If they would get married and continue the long-distance relationship, it would mainly mean that the mother would have to take initiative in taking care of the children which means the father's presence will be minimal. In Somali culture it would be considered acceptable.

From that topic, discussion continued to parenting roles and in the case of divorce, how the children are managed. In Somali culture, the common situation is that when a woman delivers her baby, the grandmother from the mother's side is supporting her and is with her during the early phase of a new-born child. For the fathers the expectations and accountability held against them when something negative happens to their children is very low.

DILEMMA 3

"Hello sisters, I am getting married soon and I just need some personal advice on things since this will be a whole new thing for me. What do I need to wear while I am at home with hubby? Do you guys say hell with it and wear baati or dress casual? Do I make all meals, breakfast, lunch, dinner? (…) Idk [sic] I just feel like I am entering a whole new world. I am scared to make a fool out of myself lol. (…)"

- *Facebook peer support group in an online platform*

The girls strongly expressed their thoughts by saying that the girl in the case should ask her husband on his preferences and sort it out. Cooking should be split, but can also vary based on their situation. Having mutual respect is crucial. Clothing should be an individual's own concern. When married to someone, considering your spouse attractive no matter what should be natural.

Home wear for Somali women is dirac baati, which is a loose square/rectangle-shaped gown made of cotton. The fabric comfortable and affordable. It is present in every Somali house-hold where there are women. It is highly favoured with Somali women. We also have a party version of the dirac, but is made up of more luxurious fabric, which can be seen from figure 11.

Figure 9: Party-wear dirac

Figure 12: Guntiino

Figure 13: Décor for the space

The last topic discussed was about the girls' thoughts and views on Somali marriages. It was emphasised in the conversation that Somali families are great at taking care of children. As in the culture parents, particularly mothers, tend to prioritise children over their own needs. Hence, it is important to show respect to parents and to people who are older, especially elderly. On the contrary, parents tend to be bad at communicating in general.

During this session the girls were very active and had a lot of opinions. They felt relieved that they could express their opinions on certain things in our culture they are not happy with. They were able to express their frustrations. They demonstrated they had earlier thoughts about this subject.

6.6   Session 6: Past, Present & Future

Table 8 Session 6

Amount of Girls	2
Duration and the date of the session	16:30 – 18:30 30.10.2018
Objectives	• Practice visual narration • Reflecting on memorable life moments • Recognising the high and low points in their life • Reflecting hopes and dreams
Questions to meet the objectives	• What do you remember from your childhood? The earliest memory? • What were the life changing events or major moments in your lives? • What is the most important thing you want to continue to do in your life? And what do want to be in the future.

Sixth and the last session was on Tuesday 30.10.2018. The theme was about life span as a visual narration. The topics we concentrated on were childhood memories, memorable life moments and what can be learned from them. We first decided to introduce our personal life narrations with the girls so that they can feel more comfortable with becoming more intimate

about sharing our lifespans. We emphasised to the girls that this shall stay as confidential information by making the girls anonymous. The second phase of this session was to describe personal hopes and dreams and desires for future.

The questions were as follows:

- What do you remember from your childhood? The earliest memory?

- What were the life changing events or major moments in your lives?

- What is the most important thing you want to continue to do in your life?

The reason as to why we chose these questions is due to taking the role of a guider within their life story as they go down the memory lane.

As supervisors we decided on building the multisensory space in a way that the girls would feel comfortable. We put our pictures up in different phases in our lives; baby, childhood, teen and adulthood as a slideshow to give inspiration. The girls didn't participate in building the space because they were late, they had an event at school which prolonged. We determined that we wanted the girls to focus on the task and have an opportunity to express their thoughts. We dimmed the bright lights, surrounded the seating area with Christmas light to offer calm ambience and played some peaceful music. We set the Somali tea, the snacks and the sandwiches to be ready for when the girls arrived. The decoration was kept minimal.
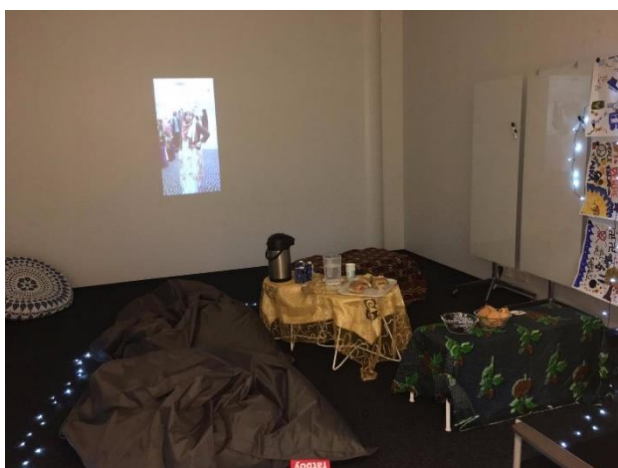
Figure 10: The space
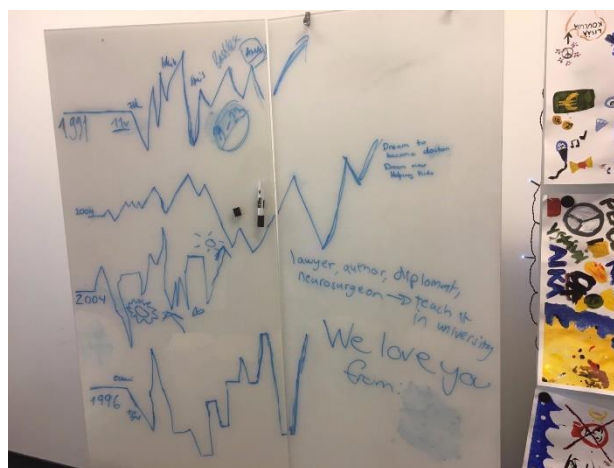
Figure 11: Lifespan narration

There were two participants in this session. We introduced the activity by talking about our own life stories. The girls were interested but slightly hesitant. One of the girls wanted to try first and went through her life span. She talked about her relatives, which were her earliest memory, she then continued to talk about school life and the challenges she had experienced. However, the highlight was her travels, where she learned a lot by depending on herself. For us this was impressive as she was capable of doing something independently from a young age. This highlighted her mental strength. It is important to her to be focused, have confidence and not to worry about anything.

The other girl's earliest memory starts also with family and she reflects on the changes in her family dynamic when she was young and how those situations affected her. She also mentioned about her health and how she values it. She continued on by mentioning school life and the relationships there. She was capable of recognising her positive aspects, morals and values. She emphasised her interests and hobbies.

When it came to the topic of hopes and dreams, a girl expressed her wish to become a doctor when she was young, but has currently abandoned it, because she realised she doesn't have the heart for it. Currently her dream job is helping children in the form of therapy or rehabilitation. One element she wants to continue to maintain throughout her life is positive thinking and surrounding herself with positive people. The other girl wanted to be a lawyer, author and a diplomat when she was younger. At the moment she wants to be a neurosurgeon and a professor at a university. She realizes she is able to accomplish anything if she sets her mind to it.

Narrative method as a visual manner was successful here, because the girls were able to choose moments they wanted to reflect on, therefore had control over the topics they wanted to focus on. To end the session, we expressed to the girls our admiration and talked about how mature they were for their age and their willingness to be open throughout the process. They wrote us feedback and helped us clean the space before we left.

7 Evaluation

Within this section we will explain whether we have met our objectives. Will analyse the planning process and if the methods were effective. Also, meeting our personal goals, the observations we have made. Lastly, the ethical issues we have contemplated and the analyse the received feedback from the participants.

7.1   Achievement of objectives

The location of this thesis-project was in Laurea Tikkurila campus, in Vantaa. On the first session, the girls came from Helsinki and have never been in Vantaa. Therefore, this caused them to become excited about the project. They kept telling Fathi, who had gone to pick them up, that they loved the campus. So, from the beginning this project had given them significance in creating new experiences. During the sessions it was very clear, that the girls were not used to self-reflection and it was a slow-process. But, because it was the first session, we had expected this and hence prepared them questions. We expected that these girls would continue their attendance throughout the project. The first session focused on introducing this project. What we should have done was to create the multisensory space beforehand, and through that introduce the project. This could have supported our objective of using the multisensory space as a tool for reflection and expression.

During the session the girls' received a good impression of the art room. This is due to, the art works decorated on the walls and it helped to be inspired for what we were about to do. Then two girls arrived which we were not prepared for, because we were not sure about that they were coming, even though one of the thesis supervisors had mentioned she would find us girls to attend.

Our first experience in applying culture-sensitivity was when we were confused about whether we could put on music or not, due to the religious background of all of us attending the session. We asked them if they wanted to put on music or not and gave them an option of putting on Quran if they wanted to do so. However, it seemed that the girls we comfortable with listening to music. Once all the 6 girls were painting, the atmosphere was energetic and fun, because they had similar tastes in music.

The activity allowed us supervisors to examine the group dynamic, because the two girls who arrived later were strangers to the rest of the group. The painting helped grouping to take place for being an activity that promotes and encourages inclusion. We observed that, the girls had positive interaction with each other. The music had a clear effect on the atmosphere. This could be seen from all the girls singing together out loud. This concludes as art activity worked, because they were able to put their frustration on to the paper, with the paper that required to have negative experiences painted on. Due to the music at the time, the girls had a lot of energy. On the paper that had positive illustrations, they were calmer and became a little sentimental as they reflected on Somalia's current state, after discussing the good things about Finland. In the hopes and dream paper we observed, that when talking about Finland they concentrated more on their ambitions regarding education and future careers. Even though, the task for the paper was to mention things regarding only Finland, somehow, they started to link it to Somalia. Their hopes towards Somalia were sentimental. This can show their strong connection to their Somali identity. We did not want to disturb

their process and went along with it. According to our opinion and observations, we offered a good opportunity and an environment to explore their artistic creativity.

During the third session, there were only two participants, because the other four informed us that they would not be able to attend the future sessions. They informed us on the same day. The two girls seemed disappointed, but we managed to make into a successful session and give them control in creating the space. The space reflected well towards their personal vision of the space. It allowed the girls to work together along with us and allowed us to become closer with them. We could observe their identity as bi-cultural, when they decided to create the space where they split the space into two sections; one half was Somali and the other Finnish. After the construction of the space was finished, we asked how they want us as a group to sit. It was interesting to see that they chose the Somali side. Multisensory space successfully worked as a tool to contemplate identity.

Constructive communication was a method, that was not consciously practiced by the girls. The concept is broad and multidimensional. Because of the time frame of the session we didn't have time to deeply dive into its functionality. However, we took the most relevant parts of communication issues, which related to adolescents, family and friends. We wanted to share the most efficient features that can cause a big impact, with just awareness. Multisensory space was simple and intimate, which helped talking about personal issues. This concept helped the participants to learn to be aware of where they lack in communication. The girls mentioned how useful this method is and will try to implement it into their lives. One of the main observations made was the fact that in our culture sensitivity and vulnerability is dismissed. This constructive communication method helps in embracing our feelings and needs and encourages active interaction through dialogue.

When it came to the wedding theme, the multisensory space worked the best, because it was clearly relevant to the topic and all the aspects were very present (music, clothing, food). One the best points was that there was a Danish quest attending the session, who offered us external perspectives towards the traditional attitudes on dating and weddings. She pointed out matters, which we were oblivious to recognise, because we took some things for granted, due to being part of this culture. These matters would have not been presented if it weren't for the quest. The subject of the wedding is very broad, and the discussion continued for a long time. The session could have been held more than once to cover it all. Due to the strong interlink of the space to the topic, it established a safe environment to discuss about this topic, that would have not been necessarily discussed in other places, such as school or home. We had presented them case studies that were not necessarily relevant to our participants, due to their young age. We applied questions to their current life stage and the girls were able to reflect the topic well.

The sixth session had the strongest relation to self-reflection. The aim was to memorise the past and to think about the future. Through the life narration the girls were able to realise their low and high points, most memorable moments and trying to acknowledge the reasons behind them. The visualisation of their life span, helped them see how they have developed. This method can be used throughout their personal life. We used images of us supervisors to create a slideshow of us over the years in different life stages and it worked as an inspiration for the girls to talk about theirs. The way the multisensory space was designed was by using the images mentioned, the art work they created in the second session attached to a white-board, having a ring of light circling where we sat and the white board, to direct their attention and feelings on to it as seem in figure 16.

Peer support was one of the main concepts of the thesis and especially in the art activity session, opportunity to apply it presented itself. We had six girls and two of them were strangers to each other. During the session they were all friendly and accommodating to each other. They had same experiences, which helped in creating connection. When four of the girls couldn't attend anymore, it diminished creating the element of peer support in our group since the two girls were classmates and already good friends. However, it is always important to strengthen a friendship especially as adolescents. The girls found out new information about each other and the experiences which shaped them as individuals. Multisensory space works well in supporting peer support, because in the process of building the space, the participants and supervisors all work together and participants are able to create new memories and experiences.

7.2   Planning process

Our planning process started in May 2018, when we decided to work together for this thesis. We agreed on thesis topic and had the same goals of developing a peer support group. We wanted to specifically work with people of multicultural backgrounds, but not just Somalis. We wanted to gain a broader knowledge in how girls with bi-cultural identities would differ from each other, by belonging to different ethnicities.

We expected that gathering participants would be easy, due to our cultural background. It was harder than we assumed, due to the conflicting time of school and personal activities. We focused more in gaining the mothers as it was part of our initial plan. We realised that for immigrant mothers, the location of the activity is highly important. When we advertised the project by visiting organisations and handing out the advertisements seen in appendixes 1-3, we got good feedback towards its concept, but received wishes that the activity would take place around their local areas. We did not realise that location would have such an impact for immigrant mothers.

We did good mobile work, by visiting different organisations, however we focused too much of our attention towards creating the advertisements. For immigrant it is more important for them that they know the people who are conducting the project and are given physical insight to what would take place. However, we could not affect this, as location was of high importance for both us and them. We did not have access to a car, making it difficult the move the concept to where our possible participants are. After the four girls who took part in the beginning of this project left, we did not have to concentrate on improving the group dynamic as they were now a pair of friends. In total, the participating girls in the group had all (coincidently) Somali backgrounds. Both parents of the majority in the group were Somali, but the participants also included half-Somalis.

7.3   Personal observations and evaluation

During the thesis process, we observed that people have a need for peer support groups. When working with multicultural clients, the current trend is to focus on integrating immigrants, but forgetting the youth that was born or raised in Finland most of their life. It is important not to forget the youth with bi-cultural backgrounds. Problems that are present in many of the bi-cultural youth communities could be decreased through peer support. Nowadays some of the problems present include: identity crisis, feeling excluded, and lacking self-expression.

By creating support groups where both generations could be present can help to create an honest dialogue regarding both the ethnic identity and the identity of the residing country. Having a group consisting of the same ethnicity can help to strengthen the identity of the confused adolescent and in return support the integration of the elders. Or, to gain a better comprehension on how the ethnic youth living in Finland have developed, in contrast to the ones living in the motherland.

During this thesis, we have experienced challenges in time management; we had lectures, homework assignments, internship, work and different projects to attend to. We did not realise at the beginning; the amount of time and effort is required to devote to the thesis. After attending to all of these, we had felt fatigue, which caused lack of careful planning and detail to quality.

However, when we focused we were able to achieve a lot. Our cooperation was decent, and communication could have been better. We were able to find good organisations ready for partnership. We were flexible with time management and were able to apply our methods properly. We learnt how to use the multisensory space to target group, and how to apply it in

different places such as work. By working in a culture- and gender-sensitive work place, we have the professional competences to apply the multisensory method.

7.4   Ethical Issues

During the thesis, we acknowledged the ethical issues that might be present. Due to this thesis being strongly related to our culture, we had to realise there might be some biased viewpoints, because of our experiences growing up. Analysing our culture through our experiences, can be considered a conflict of interest, but according to Banks (2012, 86), concern directed at diversity; which in this case could be considered as bi-culturalism, is on the rise, and has led to focusing on the development of religious literacy, cultural competences and spiritual sensitivity. For having participants, that belong in to the same culture as us, requires competences in religious and cultural sensitivity, that is directed at how our participants live with their families.

In the beginning of the sessions, we expressed the importance of creating a supportive environment, where we encourage different opinions and eliminate the chances for judgement. We did this, because of the potentially sensitive subjects. We made sure the participants knew about confidentiality and how it would be an essential part of our thesis. We explained it properly and made sure they understood. This is due to the fact, that the participants are able to be as honest as possible and for the results to be authentic.

Another important aspect is the objectives. We had to be as clear as possible about our objectives and express to our participants on what we wanted to accomplish. Most of the things that we were doing, our participants were not familiar nor had previous experience on. Our role was to support them throughout this unfamiliar process.

We tried to not focus on religion, even though it is a very significant part of our daily lives and most of the culture is made to accommodate to it. Therefore, we took a sensitive approach but made the conscious effort to focus on the negative aspects of our culture, that we could have an influence on. Challenging cultural behaviours and patterns for us Somalis, is complicated, because it is hard to recognise if certain behaviours are purely cultural or based on the religion.

One of our major topics of contemplation was how to be culturally sensitive within the same culture you are part of. We reached a conclusion, that in this case, culture sensitivity could be applied as being sensitive to how an individual had been raised around their own families, and could hence, have different perspectives, and accept and appreciate that.

We made an information package as advertisements seen in appendixes 4-6 for the parents of these underaged girls, so that they could be aware of what takes place in the sessions. However, according to the thesis supervisors, we did not have to receive permission from the parents, since they were adolescents and are aware of what is appropriate for them. In the info package we mentioned that the parents can attend the sessions and would like them to especially during the last session as seen in appendixes 5 and 6. We took the wishes of the girls' mothers into account, based on the fact that they wanted us to pick them up and accompany them to their local train station. This was due to the unfamiliarity of the location to the mothers.

7.5   Feedback received from the participants

As for this thesis, we had a working life partner and responsibility to ask for a feedback from them. This was not achieved due to lack of time and planning by us. However, they were aware of our plans and when and where the sessions were held. We attended some of the available guidance sessions specifically for ELO-project, where they approved of our concept and the changes we had to make.

During the process we acquired feedback from the girls, both verbal and written. During the first two session, since we travelled home together with the girls, we were able to talk about the session and their opinions regarding it. The extra time was good way for us to acquire feedback and get to know the girls better. Because the girls insisted to clean the room with us, they got more familiar with the facility of the multisensory space room. They were comfortable enough to talk about their personal lives, which proves that we established a good connection with the girls as supervisors.

During the end of the last session, we received written feedback from both. Initially, we didn't receive feedback from the other girls, as they left abruptly. However, we sent them a survey to get feedback about the two first sessions that they had attended. The survey was conducted through Google Survey to determine whether it was difficult for them to discuss about their ethnic identity and their place in the Finnish Society. Another question was about peer support, their feeling of having other Somali participants in the group. Third question was about the use of art as a medium for dialogue. Two girls out of the four answered the survey. The girls answered positively to all the mentioned questions and believe using art works in expressing thoughts. This can be seen form appendix 7. The questions were made with the aims in mind, and as they had answered positively, this indicates that we had met our aims for the first 2 sessions.

Our plan was to receive written feedback from the girls who participated from session 2 on-wards until the end. The questions are written on section 2.5, which refers to the evaluation of the thesis. The girls discussed their opinions about the project with us and coincidently answered the questions only verbally. Their written feedback regarded generally about the project and us as supervisors.

The written feedback from girls' quotes seen in figures 16 and 17 below:

"Oli tosi kiva päästä paikkaan missä ajatuksia pysty ilmasta ja opin teiltä tosi paljon! Ootte ihania, vahvoja rooli malleja ja I look up to you so much! Kiitos kaikesta! Love you."

Thank you so much for this amazing experience. It was amazing doing all this f

un stuff with you amazing ladies. Love you two"
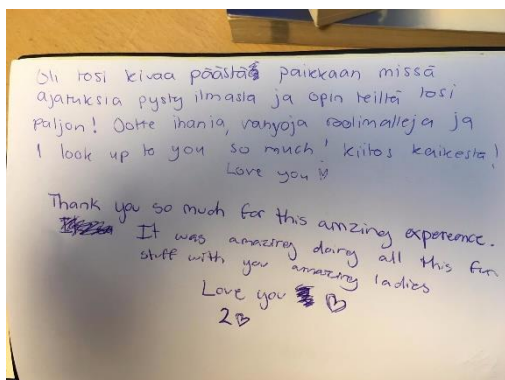
Figure 12: Feedback from the girls 1
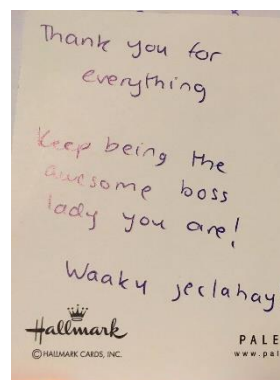
Figure 13: Feedback from the girls 2

7.6   Feedback from ELO- project

The coordinators of ELO-project gave us feedback from this thesis-project. The overall feed-back received was positive, where they evaluated how our project corresponded to their aims, what went well and what could have been improved. Their aims include: Finnish lan-guage learning through sensory stimulation, learning about society through action and multi-culturalism and community-based approaches are at the centre of their activity. (Facebook n.d)

According to the feedback received from ELO, we achieved these aims by including a target group, who might feel excluded from the Finnish society. We came up with an idea based on the needs of adolescents who are often overlooked in the Finnish society. We empowered the

participants through culture sensitivity by emphasising both their countries. Our goal of encouraging interaction was linked appropriately to the aims of ELO-project. Methods used in the thesis were creative and beneficial and worked well with the concept of ELO-project. Activities were contemporary and suitable to the target group. However, the full potential of the Multisensory space wasn't met, the available resources could've been used more. Overall, they were pleased with our contribution to the project and our collaborative skills. The full feedback can be read from appendix 8 and the working life partner agreement is in appendix 8.

8   Conclusion

We were able to offer a safe and inclusive environment for our participants with the help of the Multisensory space. By building the space, girls and we worked together and created a space, which raised topics about ethnic identity. We connected well with the participants and helped them discuss topics related to the Somali community. We were able to develop an idea, which supports the vision of the Elo-project and add a new perspective, in how to help bi-cultural adolescents embrace their identity. Identity development is a long-term process, but it's beneficial to start the progression as soon as possible. Being aware of own strengths and weaknesses is vital and practising self-reflection throughout one's life can only increase the wellbeing of the individual.

The art activity worked well in creating an element of peer support and helped girls use creativity in expressing themselves. The decrease of the participants challenged the peer support concept, because the girls that participated in the rest of the session knew each other before. However, we believe they found new information about each other and the project strengthened their bond as friends. We observed, that girls preferred their Somali identity more but value Finland very much.

Multisensory space helped in encouraging active interaction in building the space process, helping in bring up topics by visually seeing pictures or hearing sounds relating to the themes. Because of time restrictions we weren't able to concentrate on the space more deeply. We believe the Multisensory space works better as transportable, because then it can reach more people in their own environment. Gathering participants especially adolescents when the location of the project is a school causes unnecessary pressure. We advise future project leads to make the Multisensory Space in a location more informal.

Engaging senses can create an environment that can influence the atmosphere in variety of ways. The multisensory method helped to encourage inclusion, even though people tend to have an impression of adolescents that they can be problematic. An observation we have

made, is that bi-cultural adolescents need an environment where they can express their thoughts and feelings safely without judgement. There is a need for programs like these, led by people who have had similar experiences as their target group, as it can encourage the teens to be able to express themselves. Our earlier perceptions about the challenges in our community got re-enforced, due to the teens having experienced similar situations. As we are older than the target group, we thought things would change and improve over time, only to realise that they have mainly stayed the same. This shows that our ethnic culture is very consistent and persevering. This could be caused due to the religious influence acting as a basis for the interactive patterns of the culture.

The multisensory space can function as an instrument with different target groups, communities, environments, etc. because of its flexibility. Self-reflection, which was an essential part of the thesis, can work as a focal point in improving a person's self-awareness and actions, and through that can affect an entire community. Improving the connection between the parents and adolescents was our main intention in the beginning of the process, but this can be done by initially working with the adolescents and give them the tools to handle the sensitive time they are in currently. Improving the communication and interaction skills of the adolescents early can benefit their lives in the future.

This concept can be developed further by encouraging dialogue between generations and ethnicities. Active interaction in society can decrease exclusion from their peers and their communities. Multi- and Bi-culturalism is an increasing global phenomenon, because of the current events in mass migration, caused by different factors, that create traumas, but also different attitudes and customs, which can flourish in Finland. Therefore, societies need to adapt to different changes and provide different services, that can support the wellbeing of the whole population. The Somali population in Finland has been present for over 30 years, and different ethnicities have started to appear. We emphasise the importance of educating people belonging to minorities, to use their cultural knowledge and combine it with the Finnish professional competences and bring forth a new approaching method in a socio-cultural context.

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Figures

Tables

Appendices

Appendix 1: Thesis Advertisement in English 1st Draft

ELO
Elämyksillä osaksi yhteiskuntaa

LAUREA'S MOTHER-DAUGHTER GROUP

Contact us:

Welcome to a group dedicated to immigrant mothers and their middle -school aged daughters born/raised in Finland!

In the group you get to work, spend time with other moms and daughters in the Multisensory-space, and discuss about issues that are on your mind. At the same time you can practice your Finnish language.

The group will meet in Laurea University of Applied Sciences Tikkurila Campus, on Tuesday 18.9.18 at 16.00 until 18.30, in the Multisensory- space room B202, on the 2nd floor, at Ratatie 22, 01300 Vantaa. Laurea is located near Tikkurila train station.

The group activities are for a Bachelor Thesis, by the Social Service students: Fathi Osman and Hafsa Dahir of Laurea University of Applied Sciences.

MEETING PLACE: LAUREA TIKKURILA'S MULTISENSORY SPACE

LAUREA
AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
RATATIE 22, 01300 VANTAA

Appendix 2: Thesis Advertisement in Finnish 1st Draft

ELO
Elämyksillä osaksi yhteiskuntaa

LAUREAN ÄITI-TYTÄR RYHMÄ

Yhteystiedot:

Tervetuloa vertaistukiryhmään, tarkoitettu maahanmuuttaneille äideille ja yläkoululaisille tyttärille, jotka ovat kasvaneet/syntyneet Suomessa. Ryhmässä äidit ja tyttäret saavat tukea ja mahdollisuuden kertoa haasteistaan, joita he ovat kohdanneet Suomessa.

Tarjoamme turvallisen ja luovan tilan, missä voimme keskustella asioista, jotka mietityttävät äitejä sekä tyttäriä. Ryhmässä harjoitellaan suomen kieltä toiminnallisin menetelmin.

Ryhmä pidetään tiistaina 18.9.18 klo 16.00 – 18.30 Laurea Tikkurilan kampuksella, moniaistisessa tilassa huone B202, 2. kerros, osoitteessa Ratatie 22, 01300 Vantaa.

Ryhmä kehitetään yhteistyössä Laurean Ammattikorkeakoulun opiskelijoiden ja ELO-hankkeen kanssa opinnäytetyötä varten.

PAIKKA: LAUREA TIKKURILAN MONIAISTINEN TILA

LAUREA
AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
RATATIE 22, 01300 VANTAA

Appendix 3: Thesis Advertisement in Somali 1st Draft

ELO
Elämyksillä osaksi yhteiskuntaa

KOOXDA HOOYOINKA & GABDHAHA EE LAUREA

Ku soo dhawaada kooxda hooyoyinka iyo gabdhaha! Kooxda waxaa loogu talagalay hooyoyinka qiraanlaha iyo gabdhaboeda dhigta dugsiga-dhexe oo ku dhasheen oma ku koreen Finland.

Barnaamiika waxay ku saabsantabay xoojinta xiriirka ka dhaxeexa hooyada iyo gabadheeda, waxaano lagu aakan doonaa afka Finnish.

Kooxda waxay ku kulmideontaa xarunta Jaamacadda Laurea ee geybta Tikkurila, maalinta Talaadada 18.9.2018, markay saacadu tahay 16.00 waxayna ku egtahay 18.30, qolka Moniaistinen-tila B202, ee dabaqa 2:aad ee dismaha, ciwaankedu oma adreesku na waa Ratatie 22, 01300 Vantaa. Jaamacadda Laurea waxey ku taala agagaarka xarunta tareenada ee Tikkurila.

Waxaabad kooxeedku waxay ka mid tahay buuga aalinjibinta ee darajada Bajvlor Diariaa, waxaano aabaneya bawshaas ardayda barata Arimaha Bulshada: Fatxi Cismaan Maxamed iyo Xafsa Maxamed Daahir, oo wax ka barta, Jaamacadda Laurea ee Culunta Soyoiska.

Naga la soo xariir ciwaanada:

GOOBTA KULANKA WAA: LAUREA TIKKURILA MONIAISTINEN TILA

LAUREA
AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
RATATIE 22, 01300 VANTAA

Appendix 4: Thesis Advertisement in English 2nd Draft

Welcome to a group dedicated to immigrant mothers and their daughters born/raised in Finland!

In the group you get to work, you can spend time with other moms and daughters in the Multisensory-space and discuss about issues that are on your mind. At the same time, you can practice your Finnish language.

The group will meet in Laurea University of Applied Sciences Tikkurila Campus, on Tuesday 18.9.18 at 16.00 until 18.30, in the Multisensory- space room B202, on the 2nd floor, at Ratatie 22, 01300 Vantaa. Laurea is located near Tikkurila station.

Sessions and themes:

25.9. 16.30-18.30	GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER
2.10. 16.30-18.30	ART THERAPY
9.10. 16.30-18.30	COMMUNICATION
16.10 16.30-18.30	RELATIONSHIPS
23.10 16.30-18.30	DREAMS
30.10 16.30-18.30	THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

We encourage the participation of the mothers especially during the last session. The group activities are for a Bachelor Thesis, by the Social Service students: Fathi and Hafsa of Laurea University of Applied Sciences. If you are interested in attending you can contact through:
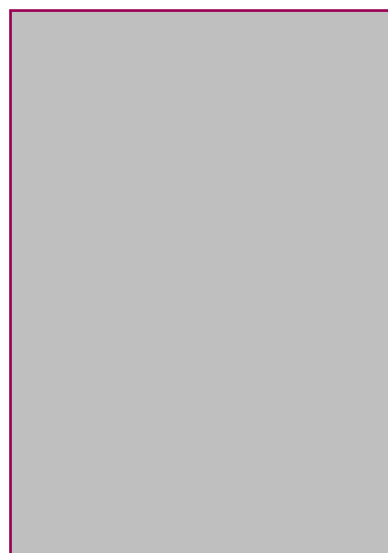
Fathi Osman Mohamed

Tel:

FB:

Email:

Hafsa Dahir

Tel:

FB:

Email:

Appendix 5: Thesis Advertisement in Finnish 2nd Draft

Tervetuloa ryhmään joka on tarkoitettu Suomessa syntyneille tai kasvaneille maahanmuuttajataustaisille yläkouluikäisille tytöille.

Ryhmässä pääset taiteilemaan, saat viettää aikaa saman ikäisten tyttöjen kanssa Aistien-tilassa ja voimme yhdessä jutella asioista jotka mietityttävät.

Kerho kokoontuu tiistaisin Laureassa (tila B202 toisessa kerroksessa) osoitteessa Ratatie 22 Vantaa. Laurea sijaitsee lähellä Tikkurilan asemaa.

Ryhmäkerrat ja teemat:

25.9. 16.30-18.30	TUTUSTUMINEN
2.10. 16.30-18.30	TAIDETERAPIAA
9.10. 16.30-18.30	KOMMUNIKAATIO
16.10 16.30-18.30	SUHTEET
23.10 16.30-18.30	UNELMAT
30.10 16.30-18.30	MENNEISYYS JA TULEVAISUUS

Kannustamme äitien osallistumista projektin toimintaan. Varsinaisesti viimeisellä ryhmäkerralla.

Projektin aikana otamme kuvia, joista osallistujien henkilöllisyyttä ei tunnisteta. Otamme huomioon tyttöjen mielipiteet asiasta.

Ryhmä on osa opinnäytetyötä, jonka tekijät ovat Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulun sosionomiopiskelijat Fathi ja Hafsa. Ryhmä järjestetään osana Elämyksillä osaksi yhteiskuntaa hanketta.

Fathi Osman Mohamed

Tel

FB:

Email:

Hafsa Dahir

Tel:

FB:

Email:

Appendix 6: Thesis Advertisement in Somali 2nd Draft

Ku soo dhawaada kooxda hooyoyinka iyo gabdhaha!

Kooxda waxaa loogu talagalay hooyoyinka ajaanibta iyo gabdhahooda ku dhasheen ama ku koreen Finland.

Barnaamijka waxay ku saabsantahay xoojinta xiriirka ka dhaxeeya hooyada iyo gabadheeda.

Kooxda waxay ku kulmidoontaa xarunta Jaamacadda Laurea ee qeybta Tikkurila, maalinta Talaadada 25.9.2018, markay saacadu tahay 16.30 waxayna ku egtahay 18.30, qolka Moniaistinen-tila B202, ee dabaqa 2:aad ee dismaha, cinwaankedu ama adreesku na waa Ratatie 22, 01300 Vantaa. Jaamacadda Laurea waxey ku taala agagaarka xarunta tareenada ee Tikkurila.

Maalmaha kulanka:

25.9.	16.30-18.30	TUTUSTUMINEN
2.10.	16.30-18.30	TAIEHTERAPIAA
9.10.	16.30-18.30	KOMMUNIKAATIO
16.10	16.30-18.30	SUHTEET
23.10	16.30-18.30	UNELMAT
30.10	16.30-18.30	MENNEISYYS JA TULEVAISUUS

Waxqabad kooxeedku waxay ka mid tahay buuga qalinjibinta ee darajada Bajular Digriiga, waxaana qabaneya hawshaas ardayda barata Arimaha Bulshada: Fatxi Cismaan Maxamed iyo Xafsa Maxamed Daahir, oo wax ka barta Jaamacadda Laurea ee Culunta Sayniska. Fadlan, haddii aad xiiseyneeso waxaad ka la xariirikartaa cinwaanada hoos ku qoran:
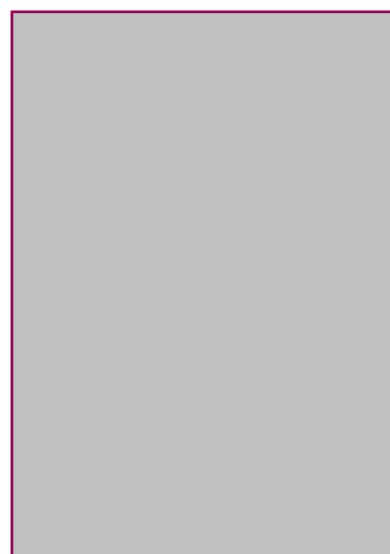
Fatxi Cismaan Maxamed

Tel:

FB:

Email:

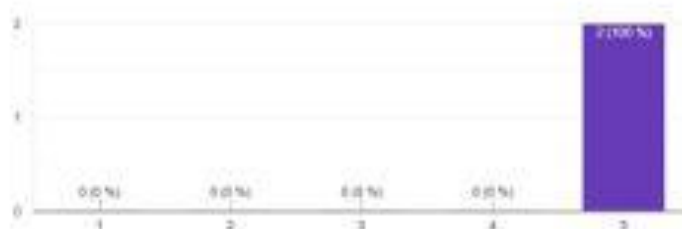**Xafsa Maxamed Daahir**

Tel:

FB:
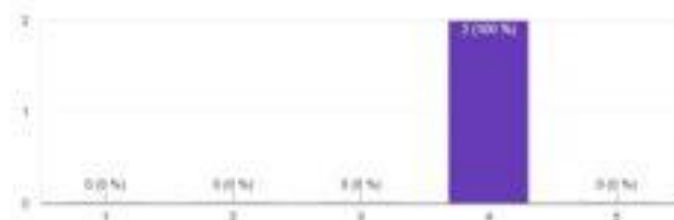
Email:

Appendix 7: Google Survey Regarding Session 1 & 2

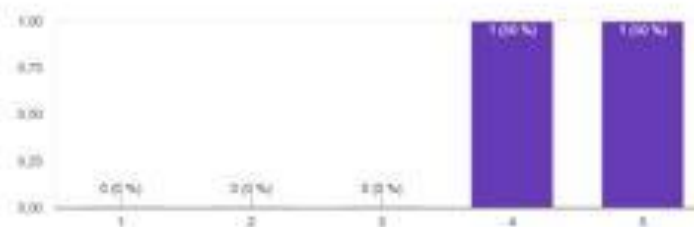SESSIO 1- Ymmärsittekö projektin tarkoituksen? Olimmeko tarpeeksi selkeitä?

SESSIO 1- Oliko vaikea keskustella etnisestä taustasi (Somalialaisesta taustastasi) ja sinun paikasta Suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa?

SESSIO 2- Oliko helppo avautua ryhmälle taideaktiviteetin aikana?

SESSIO 2- Miltä tuntui, että ryhmässä oli muita somalialaisia tyttöjä?

SESSIO 2 Miltä tuntui käyttää taidetta keskustelun apuna?

2 vastausta

Ihan kivaa oli tietää siitä, kun ei ollut sillein paljonkaan tietoa siitä. Oli kiva ottaa se puheeksi keskusteltaessa.

Se oli ihanaa ja mukavaa olla mukana taide keskustelussa.

Appendix 8: Feedback from ELO

Lähettäjän tiedot   1.12.2018

Hafsa Dahir & Fathi Osman

Thesis Feedback

Hafsa Dahir and Fathi Osman did their activity-based Bachelor's Thesis as part of the Elo
project. They planned and carried out a group for adolescent girls with multi- and bi-cultural
backgrounds. All activities utilised the multisensory environment.

Students planned and carried out the Thesis process proactively and creatively, also utilising
the support provided by the Elo project workers. At the end of the Thesis process, it can be
said that overall the Thesis project was a success from the participants' point of view.

Dahir & Osman used the Multisensory Space method to create a safe environment in which
to discuss and reflect issues related to the attendees' multi-cultural identity.

Vantaa 1.12.2018

Minttu Räty   Riikka Kanervo

Project Manager   Project Specialist