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AGENTS OF CHANGE

Measuring social impact of the Neighborhood Mothers program

ABSTRACT
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This qualitative social impact study aims to investigate whether the Naapuriäidit (Neighborhood Mothers) program had an impact on its participants. Naapuriäidit is a community action program ongoing in Finland and implemented by a women and girls organization called Nicehearts ry. It is currently receiving funding from the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organizations of Finland (STEA). The thesis' definition of social impact is the measurement of changes experienced by a program's participants over time and how much of that change can be contributed to the program.

The method used was adapted from the 'Most Significant Change'(MSC) technique by Davies and Dart (2005). Thirteen migrant women from the Neighborhood Mothers program were interviewed to collect 'life-change stories' that reflected the changes they had experienced and that was reported to be related to their participation in the Neighborhood Mothers program.

The results of the study revealed that all of the participants reported experiencing changes in their lives related to their involvement Neighborhood Mothers program. The amount of change that could be contributed to the program's efforts, however, could not be determined. The various types of changes were categorized into four domains of change. The most common type of change reported was emotional and social related changes. If a particular change arose in the data that could not be categorized as one of the four domains of change selected, it was categorized as other. The research was important to the work-life partner to be able to show its stakeholders how the efforts of the program were impactful to its participants. The Neighborhood Mothers program staff will use the evidence of this social impact study to apply for continued funding.

Keywords: migrant women, social impact, most significant change, community action, program evaluation, monitoring and evaluation, impact measurement, NGO, funding, impact, Neighborhood Mothers

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the social field, social impact deals with the measurement of change over time in an individual or a group. Impact is an important concept because it allows us to examine if our work, efforts, programs, and projects are effective in social services (Ebrahim & Rangan, 2014, 119). Social field refers to social services work, social work, and NGO work that include many different specialties spanning across different sectors. Without impact measurement, the efforts of the social field whether in an NGO or in a public capacity would be feeble and pointless. To determine if a program or project has been fruitful, often we in social sector ask, "How many beneficiaries did we reach?" or "Did we reach our project objectives?" However, it is impossible to understand a program's impact without the input of the beneficiaries or service users (United Nations Development Program, 2009, 7-73). The ability to measure social impact of a program or project can lead to more and/or steadier financing, attraction of talented employees, sustainability of a program or project, and other benefits. The emphasis here is not to appease funder's but to find evidence of the effectiveness of the efforts of those in the social sector.

Determining the impact of a social program became a topic of interest when abroad in Nepal for an internship. During the internship, I assisted in a qualitative impact study about gender-based violence interventions. The research aimed to measure the impact of those efforts and interventions done by NGOs, INGOs, UN organizations, local alliances, and other aid groups after a massive earthquake in 2015 in regards to gender-based violence. The research measured impact from the stakeholder's point-of-view and through quantitative indicators like the number of survival kits distributed for example. The methodology used was puzzling because an issue like gender-based violence should be understood from the point-of-view of the women who were affected, rather than the service provider. The idea of conceptualizing and standardizing impact measurement in the social sector was born. Thus, the point of

view of the service-user will be used and considered when measuring social impact in this research.

This thesis aims to measure social impact of the Neighborhood Mother's program by examining changes seen in the participants lives over time. The Most Significant Change technique will be used as a framework to guide the research process. It is problematic that there is not a widely defined or standardized approach to measuring impact in the social services field, this thesis aims to establish a social impact measurement format, with limitations, of the Neighborhood Mothers program.

Naapuriäidit or henceforth referred to as the Neighborhood Mothers is a program targeted at foreign-born women living in Finland. The program aims to support women who have lived in Finland for a some time. The project aims to transform the women from target group to actors through community action by empowering one woman at a time.

The thesis will aim to find out how have the women's lives have been impacted by the Neighborhood Mothers program. Further aims include providing valuable information and data to the working life partner (Nicehearts ry) and other stakeholders of the Neighborhood Mothers program.

The data collection was done via one-on-one semi structured interviews called life-change stories where the women reported changes experienced in their lives that could be contributed to the Neighborhood Mother's. The stories reported were later divided into four domains of change during the analysis. The results will be shared relevant staff of the Neighborhood Mothers program, funders and stakeholders.

The women will be involved in measuring the impact of the program by selecting and narrating their 'life-change stories'. This term, 'life-change stories' is borrowed from Rick Davies and Jess Dart's (2005, 17) approach to social impact measurement, the 'Most Significant Change' method. The concept of using participants 'life-change

stories' will be adapted for the purpose of this thesis. The changes reported and collected will be of emotional, social, action-orientated, and professional nature. The changes reported will be used to determine if social impact is present and can be attributed to the efforts of the Neighborhood Mothers program.

2. WORKING LIFE PARTNER & BACKGROUND

A history of Nicehearts ry, previous monitoring and evaluation efforts, and the research questions guiding this thesis are discussed in this section. Understanding the working-life partner and its establishment of the Neighborhood Mother's program is key to considering the need of the program in the Finnish social services context.

2.1 Nicehearts ry & Neighborhood Mothers

The thesis' working life partner for this research is Nicehearts ry. Nicehearts is

> "...a girls' and women's association founded in 2001 with the aim of enabling girls, women and themselves to find their place in society as equal and equal members" (Nicehearts.com, 28/1/2020).

Ry, in the Finnish context is the equivalent of a ltd. or limited in English and simply means they have rights to the name. Nicehearts uses preventative measures to find 'hard to reach' women and increase their participation in society. Hard-to-reach, according to Neighborhood Mothers project manager means migrant women who are on the borders of society and do not interact with many services or groups in society. The organization aims to empower women and girls to make a difference and be able access resources and opportunities available to them to increase inclusion in society.

Nicehearts has many ongoing projects in partnership with many different organizations including the European Union Social Fund. The projects are for women, by women and for the empowerment of women in Finland. Nicehearts has expanded its efforts to outside the capital region to include South Karelia region in the city of Lappeenranta.

The organization was interested in contracting a researcher to help evaluate an ongoing program called Naapuriäidit. Naapuriäidit or Neighborhood Mothers in

English began as a pilot project in 2015 by Nicehearts and is receiving ongoing funding from the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organizations (STEA) until the end of 2021. The aims of the program are carried out through various activities like participation in a Neighborhood Mother training, one-on-one support given from area coordinators, empowerment through skills training and expansion of networks through community action and more. All of the activities are directed towards

> "...promoting social inclusion, active participation, recognition of skills, and most importantly – the development of innovative actions for community cohesion." (Neighbourhood Mothers: Community Change Agents in Action!, 2017).

The target group is migrant women who have lived in Finland for some time and want to become more active in their communities or in their host society in general. More time here means women who have not just moved or arrived to Finland and have residence and have begun learning the language of the host society, Swedish or Finnish. The aim of the Neighborhood Mother's program is to turn migrant women from passive recipients of services into proactive agents of change in their communities. The program aims to promote peer support among migrant women, give tools to women to organize community activities, tools to help provide support to others, and help women to recognize their own skills and abilities. Essentially, empowering women to empower others.

For this thesis, migrant or foreign-born refers to anyone not born in the host society--Finland. The way in which the women involved in the Neighborhood Mothers' program have migrated to Finland, whether refugee, asylum seeker, labor immigrant, study abroad, foreign exchange student, is irrelevant for the purposes of this thesis. The project manager and three of the four area coordinators of the Neighborhood Mother's program are closely involved throughout the thesis process and have been collaborating since the beginning of the research process.

2.2 The importance of measuring social impact

The Neighborhood Mothers program, according to the program director, has formerly used quantitative indicators to measure things in the program like, attendance, number of women trained, events held, and other 'countable' activities. Since the program began, feedback forms were distributed for 2017 – 2018 to measure satisfaction in the Neighborhood Mother's and additional efforts to start an evaluation process have begun, but are in the initial stages of implementation. However, impact measurement processes have not yet been implemented. The project manager and various stakeholders hope to establish an impact measurement process to 1) improve the program, 2) provide evidence to the program stakeholders, and to 3) continue to receive funding for the program.

According to the inFocus *'Guide on impact measurement'* (2016) measuring social impact is important because it can help you or your organization report to its funders, attract new funders, learn and improve the program, promotion of social impact of the program through marketing and communication, and share results with other organizations for best practices and replication (Keyte & Ridout, 2016, 6). These are the key reasons why Neighborhood Mothers program would like to understand and assess its impact on its program participants. The Neighborhood Mothers program already possesses the quantitative outputs of their efforts (i.e number of women trained as a Neighborhood Mother, events held, social groups, and other countable activities). However, this thesis aims to find out the long-term effects of the program or outcomes. The short-term or ongoing examination of outputs is called monitoring where evaluation is more in-depth review of the program: often referred to as M&E (monitoring and evaluation). This thesis examines the program from an objective point-of-view (not directly involved in the program) and aims to find new information through research.

2.3 Research Questions

To understand the Neighborhood Mother's program and what the working-life partner wanted in its impact measurement, the following research questions were created and considered to guide the research.

1. What kind of changes will Neighborhood Mothers' report?
2. How much of the change reported by the women is related to their involvement in the Neighborhood Mothers' program?

These questions will act as a compass throughout the research process and help to guide the research methodology, data collection, and analysis.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW AND KEY CONCEPTS

In this section, the history, background, relative statistics and literature, as well as key concepts will be discussed. This section provides contextual background information to better understand the experiences migrant women face in Finland, Finnish migration policy, examples and definitions of social impact, and other programs like Neighborhood Mothers.

3.1 Defining social impact

Social impact is a complex phenomenon and is even more complicated when attempting to measure. However, measuring social impact is becoming more and more important for the NGO field, non-profit organizations, and the development sector (Keyte & Ridout, 2016, 3). Measuring impact is difficult because there is no universal definition of social impact is. It requires the measurement of complex issues like increased self-confidence, becoming more proactive, or changes in behavior. These complex changes can be difficult to link back to the organization and measure the degree in which a change has occurred (Keyte & Ridout, 2016, 6). However, these complexities should not keep organizations from striving to measure social impact as well as stakeholders learning how fruitful their investments have been.

First and foremost, this research cannot progress without a better understanding of social impact. According to the Stanford definition, social impact is,

> "How an organization's actions affect the surrounding community." (Stanford, 2013).

Stanford's definition is powerful in understanding the wide and varying nature of social impact, however, it is difficult to define what constitutes 'community' in this definition. Yet another definition examines social impact as a large sum of changes that can be examined over time.

> "By social impact, we mean any of the great variety of changes in physiological states and subjective feelings, motives and emotions, cognitions and beliefs, values and behavior, that occur in an individual, human or animal, as a result of the real, implied, or imagined presence or actions of other individuals" (Latané, 1981, 345).

The Latané definition gives examples of social changes on an individual level rather than a community or social level. Furthermore, Sopact, a data management and impact measurement company provide a slightly ambiguous definition on a macro scale that even further clarifies understanding of social impact.

> "Social Impact Measurement is a process of understanding how much social change occurred and can be Contributed to an organization's activities" (sopact.com).

Thus far, social impact is understood as an individual, community, or societal effect that can be measured and contributed to the efforts of others or an organization over time. A further definition was established in 2004 by Oxfam (Oxford Committee for Famine Relief; privately funded international organization that provides relief and development aid to impoverished or disaster-stricken communities worldwide) to help understand its social impact of ongoing development programs. It was created by a group of researchers' aiming to conceptualize impact measurement for their stakeholders.

> "What changes have been experienced by people, and, second, how the work of Oxfam had or had not contributed to those changes" (Kelly, Kilby, & Kasynathan, 2004, 696).

The above definition provides insight of how impact is viewed in the social sector and development sector. However, the variations in definitions embodies the difficulty in understanding the phenomenon of social impact. Finally, the following definition was provided by researchers aiming to conceptualize the process of impact measurement.

> " Social impact relates to the long-term positive changes, for individuals, communities, and society as a whole, that result from activities or services provided by development-sector organisations" (Keyte & Ridout, 2016).

A culmination of these definitions has formulated a working definition of social impact for this research. The definition that best embodies social impact for the purpose of this thesis is defined by more closely to the Oxfam (2004) definition. This research will investigate changes in the Neighborhood Mother's lives and how those changes can be credited to the Neighborhood Mother's program.

With a working definition of social impact, understanding the means at which social impact is measured is paramount. There are many methods to measure social impact or sometimes known as 'social value creation' (Emerson, Wachowicz & Chun, 2000) or 'social return' (Clark, Rosenweig, Long, & Olsen, 2004). The oldest and most widely used method is called the logic model originally developed in the 60's for the United States Agency for Interntional Development (USAID). The logic model is implemented in the following format: inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. In the logic model, inputs are the resources put into a project (financial and human resources), activities are the things an organization will do for or with its beneficiaries. Outputs refer to quantifiable and immediate results seen from the implementation of activities. Outcomes are generally qualitative indicators measured on an individual level and are seen on a more long-term basis. Finally, impact according to the logic

model is measured in terms of populations and communities, like a drop in poverty, for example (Ebrahim and Rangan, 2014, 137-139).

Other methods of social impact measurement include: Cost benefit analysis, experimental methods, systematic reviews, participatory and relationship-based methods, and integrative approaches (Ebrahim and Rangan, 2014, 120-123). It is not necessary to understand all of these methods, but to have a slight understanding of the diversity in social impact measurement across different industries.

The Most Significant Change technique (MSC), another method to measure social impact was used to measure the impact of Neighborhood Mothers program. MSC was originally created by Rick Davies to help answer challenges related to monitoring, evaluation, and social impact measurement for participatory programs. Participatory here means programs implemented 'with' beneficiaries and not 'for' beneficiaries (Participatory Dialogue: Towards a Stable, Safe and Just Society for All, UN, 2007). Using participatory based methods over others has advantages such as; inclusion of beneficiaries in research and evaluation, empowers beneficiaries, identifies impacts and changes without using preset indicators, and use of target-group as experts rather than passive recipients. Furthermore, participatory methods are useful when trying to engage active stakeholders, promoting transparency with stakeholders and beneficiaries, and for clear examination of changes and impact in an organization (Shah, 2014, 268).

Generally, other social impact measurements require a program to identify impact measurement indicators prior to the data collection process (Davies & Dart, 2010, 18). The reason for this is generally a program or project's indicators need to be S.M.A.R.T (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound). Thus, when creating indicators prior to a program, a program only measures those indicators and may miss or overlook real outcomes or social impact that may have occurred. According to Davies and Dart (2005) good indicators must be predefined so that everyone interprets the indicators in the same way. In MSC technique, however,

domains of change are used and are unlike preset indicators. Domains of change can be any type of change to measure according to the nature of the program and are ambiguous and not predefined. For the Neighborhood Mother's program, use of domains of change rather than indicators is ideal because it allows the women to define their own changes, to discover unexpected changes, and to allow social impact to be uncovered naturally through the use of life-change stories. Life-change stories is a terminology used by Davies and Dart (2005) referring to an interview or narrative given by the participants to the researcher in the form of a story. MSC technique has originally been used for rural programs in Bangladesh to Papua New Guinea, Nicaragua, and more, but has been adapted to meet the needs of the Neighborhood Mothers program.

3.2 Neighborhood Mothers around the world

The Neighborhood Mothers or Naapuriäidit did not begin in Finland but has been cultivated in many other places around the globe. The Neighborhood Mothers program originated in Rotterdam, Netherlands; where the program focused on language support for migrant women. Then it spread to Denmark as '*Bydelsmødre*' and eventually was brought over to Finland and several other cities across Europe. The original project in Rotterdam began with a clear and present need for a social action to empower women to be more engaged and active in their communities. As in Finland, the Rotterdam Mothers were women of a foreign or "ethnic" background who are active or want to be active in their communities. From one of the initial programs in Denmark called Bydelsmødre, a manuscript to help other organizations replicate the program in their areas was created. The manuscript includes instructions on how to train the Neighborhood Mothers and practical considerations when doing so. In 2015 Nicehearts ry used this manuscript to create and implement Naapuriäidit. The training aims to address prejudices and stereotypes, acknowledge the power of a women's position in her community, useful communication skills, recognition of one's own abilities and to act as a bridge for vulnerable or isolated women to be

reached. Additionally, the training covers an introduction to topics like childcare, child protection services, and other local social services. The aim of the training is to empower women to empower others through small acts and support the Neighborhood Mothers with other services in their community. The idea of a Neighborhood Mother has been far reaching. Similar sister programs of the Neighborhood Mothers can be found in Rotterdam, Berlin, London, as well in Lappeenranta, Imatra, and South Karelia. (Naapuriäidit, 2015, ppt).

In Germany, Neighborhood Mothers are known under the name of Stadtteilmütter. In a 2018 online magazine published by Nicehearts ry about the Neighborhood Mothers, Sükran Topuz, program coordinator of Neighborhood Mothers in Berlin-Kreuzberg talked about the importance of the Neighborhood Mothers in Germany. The project began in 2004 in Berlin-Neukölln where Topuz saw a need to reach families that were excluded from German society or whom had never been connected to it. Topuz further discusses the region that the program began and the problems that afflict the area. For example, she states that the area is considered a melting pot with high unemployment rates and 70% of children threatened by poverty (Topuz, 2018, 13). The conditions of the region, according to Topuz made it a perfect place to implement Neighborhood Mothers. She says,

> "They are: Neighborhood Mothers...aim to help other families, mothers, women, and children find their way in a new culture" (Topuz, 2018, 13).

The Neighborhood Mothers project began in this area and has continued in Berlin and spread to other parts of Germany (Case study, Euro Cities, 2011).
The spread of the Neighborhood Mothers' demonstrates the need and importance of programs like these that aim to empower and socially support women and those with a foreign background into a new culture. The Neighborhood Mothers is a unique program because it does not aim to merely provide services, but to turn women into service providers themselves.

3.3 Integration and women in Finland

The current status of migrant women in Finland must first be understood to understand the need for a program like Neighborhood Mother's.
According to the 2018 OECD report vulnerable groups are outlined in regard to skills and labor market integration for immigrants living in Finland. Of the vulnerable populations, women were identified as vulnerable and struggling to integrate due to inactivity, isolation, incentives to stay home rather than work, and childcare responsibilities.

These factors impede migrant women living in Finland from not only entering the labor market but creating social connections and building networks to help encourage social integration in Finland as well. Without social connections and professional networks, it is difficult to find work and employment opportunities. Furthermore, adapting to harsh living conditions in Finland without social support can be nearly impossible. Many of the Neighborhood Mothers have experienced problems identified above in the OECD report including poor social connection and difficult finding work. Though the aim of this thesis is not to report on the trials and tribulations of migrant women living in Finland, it is a prerequisite of this research to better understand the lives of migrant women in Finland. (OECD, 2018, 164).

According to the UTH-survey conducted by the Statistics Finland and the National Institute (2014), the employment rate of women with a foreign-background, aged 20 to 64 in Finland totaled 56.1% and those women of Finnish background totaled 73.5% (UTH-survey, 2014).

The staggering difference of employment rates between foreign-background women and Finnish women provide a glimpse of some of the challenges migrant women face in Finland versus native-born women. Though improved employment is not an aim of

the Neighborhood Mothers program and will not be examined closer, it is still an indicator on which to determine difficulty in integrating in Finland.

Additionally, the UTH-survey reports that it was more common those with Finnish origins to have upper secondary level qualifications than those with a foreign background (UTH-survey, 2014). The discrepancy here between those with a foreign background and those with a Finnish background is a key reason why programs like Neighborhood Mothers exist and continue to grow.
In a Dutch study (van de Beek MH, van der Krieke L, Schoevers RA, & Veling W, 2017) about social exclusion among the Moroccan-Dutch population in the Netherlands, the researchers explore the link between poor mental health and social exclusion. Of the 267 respondents in the online survey, 87% were women, and of the total number of respondents, 50% screened positive for depressive symptoms and psychotic experiences. Social defeat and perceived discrimination were positively associated with depressive symptoms among the respondents.

In the study above, the importance of social inclusion, or at the very least, absence of exclusion is demonstrated well in the results. The Moroccan-Dutch population was negatively affected by societal exclusion in the Netherlands. The Neighborhood Mothers program's key aims is to promote peer support and social inclusion because they recognize the risks of social exclusion among migrant populations. The dangers of social exclusion and potential marginalization of migrants has tremendous effects on an individual and population. The results of the Moroccan-Dutch study demonstrate how significant feelings of inclusion among immigrant populations are and its importance on the society as a whole.

The 1386/2010 *Act on Promotion of Immigrant Integration* was created in accordance with European Union's Action Plan on Integration. In 2016, the EU Action Plan on Integration was drafted and signed in the Treaty of Amsterdam (European Commission, 2017). The Action Plan on Integration is a goal-oriented

document that helps member-states with a comprehensive framework to help improve integration of immigrants through policy and actionable integration efforts. In accordance with the Action Plan on Integration, Finland developed and passed an Act to,

> "...support and promote integration and make it easier for immigrants to play an active role in Finnish society. The purpose of the Act is also to promote gender equality and non-discrimination and positive interaction between different population groups" (1386/2010).

Additionally, Finland has a policy, first developed in 1999 and amended in 2009 that aims to,

> "...promote the integration, equality and freedom of choice of immigrants through measures which help them to acquire the essential knowledge and skills they need to function in Finnish society, and to ensure support and care for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of temporary protection in the context of a mass influx by arranging for their reception" (Act Amending the Law on the Integration of Immigrants and the Reception of Asylum Seekers, 1269/2006).

This Finnish legislation, along with the Action Plan on Integration by the EU Commission sets a precedence of what integration should look like in Finland, which includes the social integration of immigrants into the host society.

Integration is not further discussed in this thesis as it is not a qualitative indicator on which one can measure. However, the above legislation is relevant as it relates to the status and treatment of migrants in Finland. Gaps in the service delivery of integration assistance by the municipality can be seen in the prevalence of programs like Neighborhood Mothers where they seek to assist in successful integration where public services are inadequate.

3.4 Key concepts & Abbreviations

The following terms and abbreviations are to help the reader better understand this thesis as well as provide context for rhetoric used in the social sector. Many third sector (see definition below) professionals use shorthand or abbreviations when discussing terms like 'beneficiary' or other methodology. However, this guide to key concepts and abbreviations will also help the reader understand the importance and complexity of the third sector and social welfare programs programs.

- Beneficiary – refers to the persons and the communities that utilize social services in any sector
- Domains of change – a unit of measurement of social change created by Davies & Dart (2005) in the MSC technique
- INGO – International non-governmental organization. Operates similarly to an NGO but on an international level. Example: Plan International, Ecpat, Save the Children, etc.
- Life-change stories - The narrative given by a participant of a program or project about their life and a change experienced because of the program or project. (Davies & Dart, 2005)
- Migrant – From the perspective of the country of arrival, a person who moves into a country other than that of his or her nationality or usual residence, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence. *IOM*
- 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) - Participatory monitoring and evaluation technique. (Davies & Dart, 2005)
- Neighborhood Mothers or NaapuriÄiti (NM) - a community project funded by STEA and implemented by NiceHearts ry to help empower women to empower other women
- NGO – non-governmental organization
- NiceHearts ry – a local women and girls association based in Vantaa operating around Finland to empower women and girls, promote well-being, create networks, and promote multiculturism.

- Participatory here means programs implemented ‘with’ beneficiaries and not ‘for’ beneficiaries (Participatory Dialogue: Towards a Stable, Safe and Just Society for All, UN, 2007)
- Significant change – a term used to describe a change over time told in a participant's life-change story or narrative. (Davies & Dart, 2005)
- Social impact - Changes experienced by people, and, second, how the efforts of an organization, program, or project had or had not contributed to those changes” (Kelly, Kilby, & Kasynathan, 2004, 696)
- Social sector – referring to those who work in social services either in the private, public, or in the third sector
- STEA - Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations of Finland (Sosiaali- ja terveysjärjestöjen avustuskeskus)
- Third sector – NGO, non-profits, alliances and other entities that operate separate from governments and provide social and welfare services outside that of the public services and that do not operate for profit as a business.
- USAID – United States Agency for International Development
- Woman or female – someone born as a woman by sex at birth or someone who identifies as a woman (Unicef, 2017)

4. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this thesis is adapted from a method called the Most Significant Change technique. This technique has been used to collect the data and to analyze it. The following sub chapters outline the type of research methods used and the process in which the data was collected and why.

4.1 Most Significant Change technique (MSC)

This thesis is a qualitative social impact study using the guidance of the MSC technique to collect data. The thesis aims to determine if the Neighborhood Mothers program has a social impact on its participants. Social impact is defined here as changes seen over time in the Neighborhood Mother's lives and how those changes can be contributed to the efforts of Neighborhood Mother's program. The MSC technique, as mentioned in the subsection, 3.1 Defining social impact, describes how MSC was invented to help meet the demands related to complex participatory programs. Though MSC was invented while monitoring and evaluating a rural Bangladesh community program, the method has been adapted to suit the need of the working life partner, Nicehearts ry. MSC uses qualitative data collection methods (life-change stories) and a systematic data analysis process through panels to better understand complex changes that participants experience over time when involved in a community-based program.

The program aims to empower women, thus the approach to data collection, had to be empowering as well (Naapuräidit, 2015, ppt). The MSC technique is flexible and adaptable to the needs of many programs. Traditionally, the MSC technique is implemented as follows:

1. How to start and raise interest
2. Defining the domains of change

3. Defining the reporting period
4. Collecting SC stories
5. Selecting the most significant of the stories
6. Feeding back the results of the selection process
7. Verification of stories
8. Quantification
9. Secondary analysis and meta-monitoring
10. Revising the system.

(Davies & Dart, 2010, 10).

The steps demonstrate the flow of the MSC technique as it was designed, however, the fluidity of the technique allows for adjustments that still yield similar results. The Neighborhood Mothers' program however, required impact measurement that was cost effective, included a small sample size with limited resources and conducted in less than a year. When applying these organizational criteria and limitations changes were made to the MSC technique that included limiting the data collection period, collecting a smaller number of life-change stories and limiting the numbers of analysis panels. The data collection and analysis process that the project manager and the researcher created and was implemented is as follows:

1. Introduction to the Neighborhood Mothers Program and training
2. Define the reporting period
3. Define the domains of change
4. Organize one-on-one meetings with the Neighborhood Mothers referred by the project manager.
5. Collect life-change stories
6. Panel 1: Analysis and division of life-change stories into 4-5 domains of change and determine 'most significant change' story (researcher)
7. Panel 2: Analysis and division of life-change stories into 4-5 domains of change with project manager and area coordinators
8. Quantification
9. Panel 3: Determination of 'most significant change' story with project manager and executive director of Nicehearts ry

The first few phases of the data collection process involved several meetings with the Project manager to discuss the scope of the data, reporting period, research design, and the evaluation needs of the Neighborhood Mothers program. In the fourth phase, I became acquainted with not only the project manager but the three of the four area coordinators from Helsinki, Espoo, and Vantaa municipalities. Additionally, I attended three Neighborhood Mothers' trainings to meet women involved in the program and further understand who the Neighborhood Mothers are and what their training involves. In the fifth phase, correspondence was done via email and WhatsApp to communicate with the Neighborhood Mothers and schedule meetings face-to-face. The research respondents chose the times and places in which we would meet. The interviews would take approximately 45 minutes each. During the meetings, I gave a summary of the research, offered personal information about myself to build initial trust and started the meetings with small 'chit-chat' about non-descript topics. Once initial tension was broken and trust was formed, I discussed consent with the research participant and ensured that she understood the verbal consent and contents of the written consent form (see Appendix 1). After signing the written consent forms, I would show the storytelling form (see Appendix 2) to the research participant. Before the storytelling commenced, I collected some demographic information from the women as well as their motivations for joining the Neighborhood Mothers program. I then asked the women if they preferred to either write their own stories or narrate their stories while I transcribe. Most of the women, except one, preferred to speak while I transcribed. After the storytelling was complete, the women were asked to read through their stories for verification of the details in the transcription and to amend or delete any information that was inaccurate or that she wished not to be included. The domains of change discussed below and defined prior to the data collection was not revealed to the Neighborhood Mothers prior or during the story collection. The reason for doing so was to adhere to the MSC guidelines for data collection and to ensure that the changes described in the life-change stories were not influenced by the pre-determined domains of change. This allowed for the women to narrate their life-change stories organically without being influenced by categorization of their personal changes. The remaining phases

of the data collection, 8-10, refer to the data analysis process found in chapter 6, Results. A simplified version of the data collection process can be found below in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1. Simplified data collection process

The above process outlines how data was collected and then analyzed through three systematic panels. In the following sections, the panels, and analysis methods will be discussed at greater length.

4.2 The Neighborhood Mothers

The project manager initially referred 18 Neighborhood Mothers who were willing to participate in the research. Of the 18 women referred, data was collected from 13 women in total. The women who participated in the thesis process are from either Helsinki, Vantaa and Espoo whom participated in Neighborhood Mothers' training in either 2016, 2017, or 2018. The 2016 – 2018 range of Neighborhood Mothers were selected because they were the earliest Neighborhood Mothers trained since the pilot in 2015. This group of Neighborhood Mothers allowed for long term changes to be

measured as 3-4 years has elapsed since their training took place. The longer lapse of time allowed for long term changes to be seen and to determine if the program outcomes had been sustainable. Though the Neighborhood Mothers' program has been ongoing for four years, impact measurement has yet to be attempted.

The 13 life-change stories were collected from migrant women whom all spoke English fluently. The research was conducted in English and thus required that the research participants speak and understand English. The table below shows a breakdown of the number of interviews, according to the municipality in which they serve as Neighborhood Mothers.

TABLE 1. Life-stories according to location

Helsinki	Espoo	Vantaa
3	7	3

13 of the 18 Neighborhood Mothers referred by the project manager were interviewed, however, the reason for not interviewing all 18 women varied. Scheduling conflicts, lack of free-time, or disinterest were the primary reasons given to not be able to meet during the data collection period.

Additional demographic information about the Neighborhood Mothers was collected regarding 'country of origin' and 'number of years lived in Finland' and 'residing municipality' was collected. The data revealed that the Neighborhood Mothers interviewed were from very diverse backgrounds. The average number of years lived in Finland varied as well, spanning 3 to 25 years.

The Neighborhood Mothers who were volunteered to be interviewed on their own were willing and interested to speak about their life stories and the changes they had experienced since becoming a Neighborhood Mother. As mentioned prior, reasons for migration into Finland were not relevant for the purpose of this research.

4.3 Data analysis process

The technique that was used to collect the data was also used to analyze it. The MSC technique was suitable because it met the needs of the Neighborhood Mothers' program and could be conducted in the timeframe of the thesis by a single researcher. Additionally, the comprehensive framework to conduct MSC method was easy to follow and implement. The benefits of using MSC is that it utilizes domains of change that are slightly ambiguous to allow for the participants to define their own impact. Furthermore, measurement of observed life changes related to the Neighborhood Mother's program differs from typical impact measurement strategies that measure changes based on a comprehensive set of goals or indicators.

The data analysis, or stages 8-10 of the data collection and analysis process included initial analysis done by the researcher (panel 1), secondary analysis done with the stakeholders (project manager and three area coordinators), third analysis and selection of MSC story (panel 3, and finally, the quantification of the data.

The initial analysis involved re-reading the life-change stories collected and dividing the stories into the four domains of change (determined prior to the data collection). The four domains of change that were chosen are: 1. Changes in community participation, 2. Social changes (changes in quantity and/or quality of social connections whether professional or personal capacity), 3. Emotional related changes (confidence, perception, feelings, thoughts about society or integration, ideas, etc.), 4. Educational and/or professional changes, 5. Any/other changes.

The fifth category was reserved in case the data did not correspond with any of the domains of change one through four or a single life-change story embodied 2 or more of the domains of change. The domains of change were determine based on the qualitative goals set by the program, which is to promote peer support, empower women, supporting women to "be an actor" or more active in their communities, increase networks and enable women to develop their professional skills, and more.

The first analysis was conducted by the researcher (panel 1) before being analyzed by other program staff and stakeholder. I used a simple scoring system to determine which life-change stories I found significant and what domain of change were dominant throughout a single life-change story. This process involved reading the life-change stories and determining (or counting) how many times a specific domain of change was referenced. After the first step, I selected a single story that I considered 'most significant' according to the Neighborhood Mothers program goals. The selection was made by determining which life-change story best embodied what it means to be a Neighborhood Mother.

The second analysis was done with the project manager and the area coordinators (panel 2) of the program for Helsinki, Espoo, and Vantaa. To adhere to the MSC technique and to ensure the analysis of the data was continuously participatory, stakeholder and program staff needed to be constantly involved in the research process. The second analysis took place at the Nicehearts ry headquarters. Prior to the meeting, the area coordinators and the project manager were briefed via email about the basics of the Most Significant Change technique, the domains of change, and the data collection methods. Then Panel 2 were given instructions on how the data analysis should take place and how long it would take.

Finally, Panel 2 read through every single life-change story and kept their own scoring system to categorize each story. Panel 2 was instructed to use the reference numbers, rather than names on the life-change stories to record and keep notes about each life-change story and what they found most significant. Confidentiality was paramount as it allowed the area coordinators and project manager to remain objective when reading the life-change stories. Once all of the stories were read, as a group, we discussed each story in detail. The life-change stories were categorized according to a specific domain of change as mentioned above. A domain of change categorization was determined by the number of times a specific type of change was mentioned in a single life-change story and which domain of change dominated a life-change story as well. A life-change story, once divided into a particular domain

of change was grouped together according to that particular change; social, professional or educational, emotional, increased community participation, and other changes.

The third analysis was conducted with the project manager and the executive director of the organization Nicehearts ry. This process including reading through all of the life-change stories and selecting a single life change story that was most representative of the Neighborhood Mothers program goals. In the first round of selection, the project manager and executive director were asked to read all of the stories and select three stories that they thought were most representative of the Neighborhood Mothers program. After three life-change stories were selected, Panel 3 was asked to narrow down their selection to just one story. The results of their selection will be shared in chapter 6.

Finally, the quantification phase was determined by recording the number of times a specific domain of change was mentioned in all of the 13 life-change stories. The record of this quantification can be found in the Results.

5. RESEARCH ETHICS

The following guidelines to ethical research in social science is guided by the Diak University of Applied Science and the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity. This subsection explains considerations made throughout the research process to maintain ethical integrity as a researcher as well as to 'do no harm' in the research development process.

5.1 Informed Consent

As stated in sections 9 and 10 of the '*Guidelines for Research Ethics in Social Sciences, Law, and Humanities'* obtaining free and informed consent before research commences is required. The Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity has written comprehensive guidelines regarding obtaining consent that outline that a research participant must know the topic of the research and how the research will be collected before giving consent. Furthermore, the consent must be obtained freely, meaning without pressure from the researcher or any other party to participating in the research against his or her will (National Committees for Research Ethics in Norway, 2006).

Therefore, before contacting the research participants, the project manager of the Neighborhood Mothers program was the first point of contact. I, the researcher, wrote a detailed description of the research I was conducting, the timeline, and the general specifics of how the research would be collected. The project manager then distributed this information to all of the potential research participants in the Neighborhood Mothers program. The Neighbors Mothers targeted to participate in the research were chose by the following criteria; A) English-speaking, and B) participated in the Neighborhood Mothers training from either Espoo, Helsinki, or

Vantaa between 2016 – 2018. The international guidelines for ethical research insist that,

> *"…research subjects are to be given all the information they require to gain a reasonable understanding of the field of research in question, of the consequences of participating in the research project, and of the purpose of the research. Subjects shall also be informed about who is funding the research."* (National Committees for Research Ethics in Norway, 2006, p.12).

I have adhered to the guidelines by first, ensuring that a familiar person, the project manager of Neighborhood Mothers, made contact and gave all the information about the research upfront. Additionally, once research participants gave consent to the project manager, I further informed them about the research and methods for collection during correspondence by WhatsApp messages and in our one-one-one meetings.

The original methodology, as discussed and agreed upon with the work-life organization was focus group discussions. However, after speaking with the research participants and attempting to coordinate a common meeting time with all of the women, it became clear that conducting focus group discussions would not be feasible. The Neighborhood Mother's schedules were full and burdened and thus, made it impossible for all of the women to convene for a focus group discussion. After this realization, I began contacting the women individually notifying them of the change in research methodology. Subsequently, the project manager and I agreed that one-on-one semi-structured interviews to collect the 'change stories' would be more adequate.

As I began meeting with the research participants, I structured the interviews as follows:

a. Introductions - Greet one another and briefly get to know one another before the interview begins to build some rapport and initial trust. I

asked the women some questions about their lives, introduced myself and explained why I was doing the research and how I came to know about the Neighborhood Mothers program. Additionally, the women would offer some personal information about mutual acquaintances we shared and other personal life details.

b. Research aim - Inform verbally of the research topic and the reason for studying said topic.
c. Explanation of consent - Present consent form and explain, as written on the form, that the Neighborhood Mother's participation was voluntary and research participants could withdraw consent at any time.
d. Free and informed written consent - Sign and complete consent form and offer a copy
e. Form of transcribing interview - Before beginning I asked the women if they preferred, I transcribed what was said throughout the interview or if they preferred to write their own change stories. Most of the women preferred to talk while I wrote what they said. Once transcription was decided, the interview could begin.
f. Interview & Transcribe - Read from the interview form and the research respondents speak as the researcher records. I recorded what they wrote in the first-person perspective.
g. Accuracy – once the women finished speaking, I gave one last opportunity to add any last details to their story. Then, I asked the women to read what was written and correct or delete or adjust any information that was incorrect or that they did not want to be recorded.
h. Closing – After the interview commenced, I thanked the women for their participation and reminded them that if they so choose to withdraw at any point from the research process, they can contact me to do so. Additionally, I informed the women of the publication timeline of the thesis, where it would be published and ensured them that I would send a link to read the thesis once it had been published.

The above structure was necessary to adhere to the ethical guidelines for research by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity. For instance, by reiterating verbally and in a written consent form, the women fully understood their rights as a research participant and their free will to withdraw from research at any time. Additionally, planning personal chit-chat at the beginning of interview was intentional to allow any reservations the women had about participating in the research to disappear. I tried my best to offer any personal details about myself, including my own migration to Finland and struggle as an immigrant to be available to the women as we could relate to one another and create a bond. Finally, I tried to allow my integrity as a researcher to be evident by being transparent and communicating with the women by offering opportunities to ask questions, discuss topics related to the research and shape the way the data was collected. Ultimately, the data collection embodied an ethical approach to the participatory method by allowing the women to be in charge of their own narratives and lead the research with slight facilitation from me, the researcher.

5.2 Research permit

Prior to conducting any interviews with the women, the working life partner and I signed a working-life agreement and discussed over several meetings at length the aim and process of the research.

After the thesis plan was presented and approved in October 2019, the working-life partner, Nicehearts ry and I filled out Nicehearts specific research permits to be approved by the board of Nicehearts. Once this step was completed, data collection phase of the thesis could commence with the research permit granted, working-life agreement and cooperation forms filled and signed, and a comprehensive work plan between the researcher and Nicehearts ry.

5.3 Privacy and confidentiality

According to the '*Guide for Research Ethics in Social Sciences, Law, and the Humanities'* (2006), I have communicated with all of the research respondents that no personal data (i.e. name, id number, date of birth) will be used in the making of this thesis. The only place in which any personal data was used, names of research respondents, was on the consent forms in which the research respondents retained a copy if they so choose. Additionally, as a researcher, I am obligated to ensure that the information is not disseminated in anyway and kept confidential. I did so by keeping only one print copy of the confidentiality forms with the research respondents' names and kept the forms sealed in a folder in my possession. This data will remain in my possession until the thesis is published, at which point, I will destroy the data as mentioned below. The obligation of the research to store data responsibly is mentioned at length in section 16 of the 'G*uidelines for Research Ethics in Social Sciences, Law, and the Humanities',* (2006). Finally, reference numbers have been used to identify the 'life-change stories' rather than names to help further respect the privacy of the research respondents and ensure that the respondents' identity is not revealed.

5.4 Responsible storage and disposal of data

Once the thesis has been published, the disposal of all interview forms, consent forms, and any notes containing personal information from the research participants will be destroyed via a paper shredder. Additionally, the contact details of the Neighborhood Mothers, saved on the researcher's mobile device will be destroyed as well as the WhatsApp conversations that took place during the thesis work.

The working-life partner, Nicehearts ry, however, have asked to have copies of all of the interview and consent forms that have been accrued. After copies are given to the working-life partner, the storage and/or disposal of said data is

entirely up to the organization's policy. I have notified the research participants that Nicehearts ry will retain their interviews and consent forms after the research has been published; to which the respondents consented. The purpose for wanting to retain research materials by Nicehearts is for records purposes and not for re-use of any kind. In accordance to the 'G*uidelines for Research Ethics in Social Sciences, Law, and the Humanities',* (2006) re-use of research materials is prohibited and will be followed in the implementation and disposal of this thesis' research materials as well (National Committees for Research Ethics in Norway, 2006, p.18).

5.5 Respect for vulnerable groups

In the 'G*uidelines for Research Ethics in Social Sciences, Law, and the Humanities',* (2006), the mention of respect for vulnerable groups during the research process is a researcher's responsibility. However, though some would argue that immigrant women in Finland is a 'vulnerable group', I would argue that the women I interviewed were not. For example, the women themselves would not identify themselves as vulnerable and the parameters of the interview focused on their involvement in a program about community activism, rather than their so-called status as vulnerable. Though, I have considered whether this consideration need mentioning according to the research guidelines outlined for international research, I have ultimately decided that the considerations of 'vulnerable groups' ultimately, does not apply.

5.6 Case example

Prior to the data collection process, I familiarized myself with ethical considerations and potential risks when working with research participants. However, I did not consider what would happen in the event of when a research

respondent divulges delicate personal matters. After the interview commenced, I recommended the research respondent to seek help from the organization in which she was connected, Nicehearts ry. With her permission, I emailed my working-life supervisor asking for some guidance and how to refer the research respondent forward. The research respondent headed my advice and she emailed the working-life supervisor.

This instance reminded me of my responsibility to the research respondent and to preserve the participant's privacy and confidentiality. Furthermore, I was reminded to be delicate when handling research participant's personal matters and to remember my duty as a researcher to not due harm. To ensure the researcher participant was not harmed, I explained how her data would be handled and referred her to further resources to ensure she received the help she needed.

5.7 Participatory research and other ethical considerations

Finally, including the staff and project manager in the research is principle to ensure the working life partner is satisfied with the thesis process and that they benefit from the partnership. Involving the working life partner allows practical knowledge about the service users and helps the research process progress smoothly as trust is already established between the research participants and the organization. To continue to maintain trust between myself, the researcher, the research participants, and the organization, transparency must be at the foundation of the research process and open channels of communication must be established to allow transparency to be met (National Committees for Research Ethics in Norway, 2006, p.18).

6. RESULTS

The results below show the various forms of analysis through 3 different panels. Panel one, the first stage of the systematic analysis, was done by researcher to determine unexpected changes that were found in the data and which life-change story I determined 'most significant' according to the program goals. The second panel analysis was done by the area coordinators and project manager to categorize the life-change stories into the pre-set domains of change. The third panel was done by the project manager and the executive director of Nicehearts ry. This panel aimed to determine which life-change story, from their point of view, showed the 'most significant' change according to the aim of the Neighborhood Mothers program. Finally, the quantification process was conducted to determine in total, how many times a particular change was cited. Along with the results can be found an explanation of the domains of change and some demographic information about the research respondents. The results comprise the findings of 13 life-change stories of women that were trained as a Neighborhood Mothers between 2016 – 2018. Their continual participation as a Neighborhood Mother is ongoing.

6.1 Domains of change

The dimensions in which change was measured in this thesis was determined by concepts called domains of change. According to MSC technique, domains of change are broad, unlike indicators (Davies & Dart, 2005, 17). Program indicators are generally S.M.A.R.T (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) and thus, require a shared definition and clear understanding of what and how to evaluate the indicators. When using domains of change, however, it is important that they remain broad and ambiguous to allow for each research participant to define and characterize a change in their own way (Davies

& Dart, 2005, 18). There are two ways to determine domains of change when using MSC: 1) determine domains of change before the research commences, and 2) determine domains of change after data collection. I chose to determine the domains of change in partnership with the project manager before the research began. We determined the domains of change based on the program goals and what sort of impact the program hoped to have on its participants. By doing so, the data collected screened for four particular types of changes. However, unexpected changes arose in the data that could not be accounted for in the categories of change. The explanations of the four domains of change can be found below.

Table 1: Definitions of pre-set domains of change

Emotional	Unseen or internal changes in subjective feelings, motives, emotions, ideas, beliefs, and perceptions
Social	Changes in the quantity or quality of social interactions as well as increase in professional and personal networks
Community participation	Changes in amount of participation in one's own community. i.e. volunteering for an NGO or nonprofit, citizen action, civil action, informal help and support given, organization of own social events or groups.
Professional/ educational	Changes in professional or educational status. For example, returning to school (university, higher ed, or other education institutions), obtaining employment, or development of professional skills through training.
Other	Changes that could not be classified in any of the above domains of change. OR changes that could not be categorized as just ONE domain of change but is a combination of two or more.

The program goals, provided by the project manager, were a guide to the creation of the domains of change. The program goals include empowering migrant women,

empowering women to empower others, increased community action, reaching 'hard-to-reach' migrant women, developing more social connections and networks, and transformation from passive recipient of services to proactive participant in integration of oneself and community activities. The definitions of the domains of change were also created with help from Latane (1981) and his theory on social impact. He identifies varieties and types of changes that can occur during social impact (Latane, 1981).

6.2 Panel 1

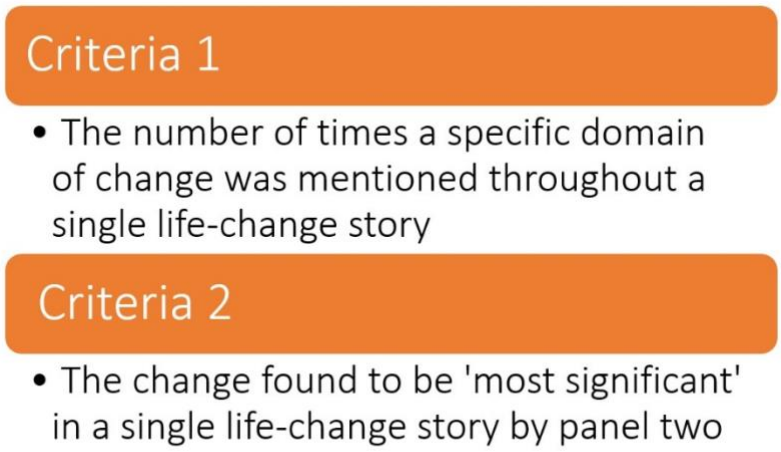
Panel one comprised of one person—the researcher. After the data collection phase, I allowed 2 weeks to elapse before reading the life-change stories again. The reason for doing so was to gain new perspective on the life-change stories after some time had elapse. Initially, I re-read all 13 life-change stories and then I searched for unexpected changes that occurred in the research. For example, mentions of 'mentorship' throughout the life-change story was an unexpected change. Another unexpected change found was increased political involvement or civil action from the life-change stories. I recorded these unexpected changes in a learning diary. Second, I conducted the quantifications process where I counted the number of times a specific domain of change was mentioned. Then, I re-read the life-change stories once again and divided the life-change stories into the four domains of change categories. Following, I selected the 'most significant' change story of each domain of change and finally, the 'most significant' change story was selected. According to my analysis and the Neighborhood Mothers program goals, I selected life-change story 022 as the most significant. There were several reasons for this selection, namely; 022 said, "The Neighborhood Mothers and being a part of Nicehearts empowered me". Furthermore, 022 told the story of how she was not alone anymore because of her involvement as Neighborhood Mother. She continued her story by telling about her struggles living in Finland as an immigrant and her inability to speak Finnish. However, she said that from her involvement in Neighborhood Mothers gave her

hope and made her feel like she had an identity and she belonged somewhere. The story 022 told, in my opinion, encapsulated the ideals of being a Neighborhood Mother. The program aims to empower women to empower themselves and promotes peer support and proactivity in one's community. Story 022 included all of the elements of the Neighborhood Mothers program goals and thus was chosen as the 'most significant' change story during panel 1.

6.3 Decision-making process for Panel 2

In the panel two analysis each life change story was separated into a specific domain of change. The changes were decided based on two criteria which can be seen in Figure 3 below.

FIGURE 3. Criteria for panel two division of life-change stories into domains of change



The above table should allow for the reader to follow the analysis process and division of life-change stories into domains of change. In the tables below there are direct quotes and instances of changes that the Neighborhood Mother's experienced. The quotes were taken directly from the life-change stories of the Neighborhood Mothers. In each table you can see an example of a domain of change and the quotes

were chosen to emulate a particular domain of change. For example, life-change story 013 was categorized into the domain of change ‘emotional’ during the second panel analysis. This means, that of the four types of domains of change (emotional, social, professional, community, and other), the panel found that the story’s most significant change fit into the category of an emotional type of change. If a story, for instance, was categorized as a social change, the number of times social changes were mentioned throughout the story, as well as the weight of the change was considered as the criteria in categorization of domains of change. In each story, many different changes in the women’s lives were mentioned, however, only the change that was considered most significant by panel two was how the story was divided and categorized into a domain of change. Furthermore, there were two life-change stories that the stakeholders and I struggled to agree upon during the analysis. We could not solely categorize either of the life change stories into a singular domain of change, so we categorized them as ‘other’. In Table 5 and 6 the ‘other’ life-change stories can be found and examples of many domains of change found in their stories are listed.

6.4 Panel 2

The purpose of this thesis was to determine whether there was a social impact of the Neighborhood Mother’s program. The impact was determined by measuring changes experienced by the participants that could be Contributed to the Neighborhood Mother’s program. In the MSC guidelines, the first task after the life-change stories have been collected is to sit down with a group of people and categorize each story into a domain of change. Then, the domains of change must be narrowed to one story per domain of change (Davies & Dart, 2005, 31). However, due to the short research lifespan, the limited number of resources, and the limited number of life-change stories, this process was adapted. The process was adapted to include the researcher as the panel one analysis, and panel two to determine the categorization of stories into domains of changes. The key difference here is that I did not ask Panel two to determine the ‘most-significant change story’ for each domain because there were so

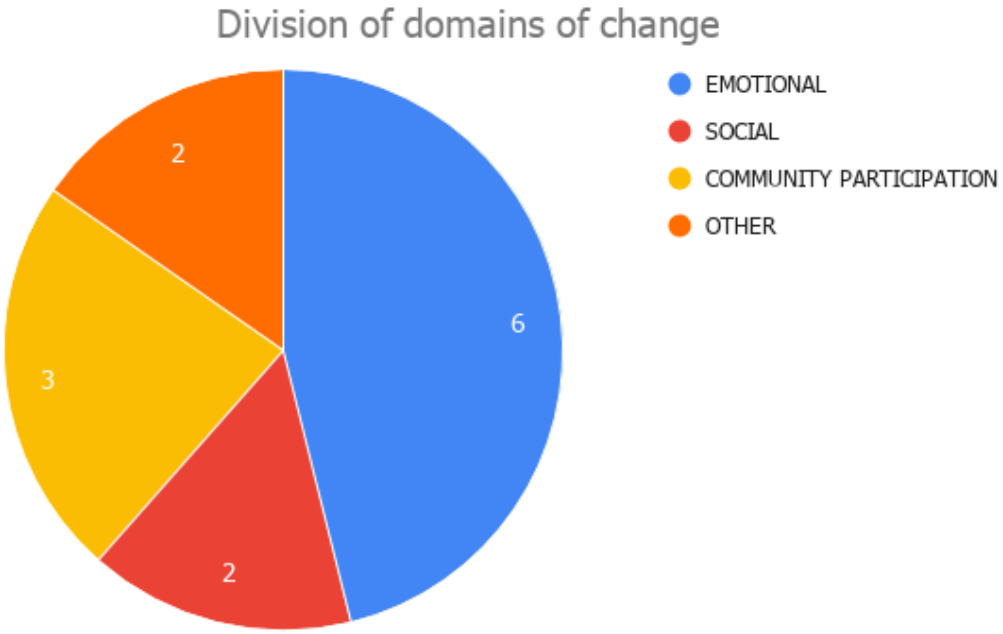
few stories to begin with. Panel two instead, used a scoring system, based on the criteria in Figure 3 to determine which story belonged to which domain of change. Panel two began with a discussion of the criteria, the data collection method, and a summary of how to conduct the analysis. Then, each of the panel members read the stories and individually scored them. After each story was read, the panel re-read the stories and began a discussion. Each story was discussed until a consensus was reached to determine which domain of change a life-change story belonged to. This process continued for all 13 stories and the process lasted 3 hours. There were two life-change stories that the panel did not reach a consensus. Those stories can be found in the 'other' domain; meaning the panel decided that the story represented two or more domains of change. The table below shows the division of all 13 life-change stories and their respective domains of change determined by Panel 2.

TABLE 2. Life-change stories and their domains of change

Domains of change	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL	COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	PROFESSIONAL /EDUCATIONAL	OTHER
Division of life-change stories into a domain of change	6	2	3	0	2

Of the thirteen life-change stories, 0 were found to have had a 'significant' professional/educational change. However, this does not mean that the research respondents did not experience changes that were professional or educational in nature. It means that the life-change stories exhibited other changes more strongly that were mentioned more often and deemed more characteristic of the story's overall theme. During the quantification phase of the analysis, however, professional/educational changes were recorded by the total number of mentions throughout the life-change stories. In Table 8 you can find the quantification of changes overall where professional and educational changes are recorded.
The chart below shows the division of the 13 life-change stories by domain of change.

FIGURE 2. Number of life-change stories in each domain of change



The tables below give examples of domains of change from each of the 13 life-change stories. For instance, if Panel two determined that story number 031 belonged in the 'emotional' domain of change; then you can find 031 in the emotional domains of change table with a quote that is representative of the changes found.

TABLE 3: Emotional-related changes

Emotional changes	Ref. #
"I speak more confidently, and I feel more confident."	031
"Neighborhood Mothers program allowed me to see that I matter, and I have value."	022
"I felt empowered from taking the Neighborhood Mother's program."	021
"On a more personal level the program helped me because it made me realize that I'm not the only one dealing with certain problems and I am definitely not alone."	012
"I have become a more positive person and a more brave person since becoming a Neighborhood Mother."	013

"I am more confident by having a group of women where I can talk about problems or get help."	026

TABLE 4. Social-related changes

Social changes	Ref. #
"I found like-minded people through the program."	025
"During the training, I realized the importance of peer support."	033

TABLE 5. Changes in community participation

Increased Community Participation	Ref. #
"Since becoming a Neighborhood Mother, I have organized an event to help immigrant mothers meet child protection workers and start a dialogue."	032
"Through the Neighborhood Mothers' training, I became connected with other organizations. I participated in a city-funded project. I am now involved with a project that gives advice to foreign-born women giving birth in Finland for the first time."	027
"I learned about other organizations after becoming a Neighborhood mother and was able to work for them. I was able to get involved with a city project to influence changes in my city."	024

TABLE 6. Other changes

Other (two or more categories)	Ref. #
Emotional: "I feel no matter what, I have support from the Neighborhood Mother's community."	011
Professional: "Through the Neighborhood Mother's program, I was able to be paid to have a workshop. I received training and then conducted a workshop and in turn grew my skills."	011
Community participation: "Through the Neighborhood Mothers program, I was given training about the elections. Then I advertised and held a workshop. The questions we came up with during our workshop were presented to the candidates."	011

TABLE 7. Other changes continued

Other (two or more categories)	Ref. #
Social and Professional: "The Neighborhood Mother's program helped me to learn how to network in the Finnish context. I met a lot of people whom are lasting friendships and social connections."	023
Professional: "I came to Nicehearts ry as a volunteer, they ended up hiring me for part-time work."	023
Community participation: "The program coordinator then connected me to other projects and connected me with other NGOs. Then I was employed for another 8 months."	023
Emotional: "I shifted my beliefs about what NGO work required while observing at Nicehearts and I decided to go back school."	023

6.5 Panel 3

Panel three was conducted by the project manager of Neighborhood Mothers and the executive director of Nicehearts ry. The aim of panel three was to determine which life-change story, of the 13, was considered 'most significant'. This process was done in a similar manner as panel two where scoring and discussion were used to determine which life-change story was 'most significant'. Both the project manager and the executive director read each of the 13 life-change stories and scored them. In the first round of assessment, I asked Panel three to select three of the stories they found most significant and representative of the aim of the Neighborhood Mothers program. After the first round of analysis, each of the three stories selected by both the executive director and the project manager were discussed at length and Panel three members provided explanations about their

selections. Finally, I asked Panel three to select the story they found most significant among their selections. In the first selection round, the project manager and executive director had one story that overlapped in their top three selections—this story was selected as the most significant change story of the 13 life-change stories. The story that was selected as 'most significant' was 013. The reasons given by the executive director for this selection was that the woman *"recognized her own privileges*" in Finnish society and realized that she could offer more help and support to give to others and as a woman, she gained more courage. The executive director further explained that this demonstrates the objectives of the Neighborhood Mothers to empower women and to help women empower other women. Helping women recognize their strength and increasing their community participation is another aim of the program and life-change story 013 demonstrates these objectives met. The project manager gave the following reasons cited in life-change story 013 as justification for choosing 013 as the 'most significant change story': she showed she had gained perspective, was empowered to help others, increased her social network, interacted and became acquainted with new cultures, and got involved with volunteering more. She further noted that when 013 said, "all help is important and there is no such thing as small help," this was key to understanding the Neighborhood Mothers. She felt that life-change story 013 got the Neighborhood Mothers program and embodied what it meant to be a Neighborhood Mother.

6.6 Quantification phase

In the quantification process, the number of specific changes (refer to Table 8) mentioned were calculated from all the life-change stories as a grand total rather than individual categorization. The key difference here is the approach from individual to collective changes measured.

Quantification, according to the Most Significant Change technique is the process of counting the number of times a specific change is noted throughout the life-change stories (Davies & Dart, 2010, 38). Due to the diversity of the women's lives and their record of their life-change stories, quantification of changes can be difficult and arbitrary. However, it was important to know which domain of change occurred most often in the data. When any mention of a change ('social', 'emotional', 'increase in community participation', and/or other type of changes) occurred in the text, it was categorized and recorded in Table 9 below. For example, in the life-change stories, when a Neighborhood Mother says, "I realized the importance of peer support," or "I gained a lot of new friends and grew my network," this would be considered a 'social' change. It is considered a 'social' change because of the direct mention of 'friends' and 'growth of network'. Then, each of these types of changes is counted among all 13 stories and recorded. Limitations to this analysis will be discussed later. Furthermore, the breakdown of the number of changes specified per domain of change are listed below in Table 8.

TABLE 8. Quantification of changes

Types of changes	Social Changes	Emotional Changes	Changes in Community participation	Professional/ educational changes	Increased mentorship	Other
Number of total changes	31	28	19	17	8	4

In this context, the above domains of change are defined broadly by the Neighborhood Mothers themselves and the program staff that helped determine the domains of change.

Social changes are defined here as any change in the quantity or quality of social connections. This could be in the form of peer support, close friendships, increased network for personal or professional use, or casual acquaintances that could be utilized the Neighborhood Mother.

Emotional changes are more difficult to define as they are personal in nature and difficult to measure. However, throughout the life-change stories any time a Neighborhood Mother mentioned a change recorded as change in perception towards something, increased confidence, sense of security, feelings of belonging, empowerment, and more were considered 'emotional' changes. These changes were counted as the number of times a Neighborhood Mother mentioned a change that could not outwardly be seen but was an internal change that was only felt by the Neighborhood Mother herself.

Changes in community participation is defined here as recorded examples of community participation from the Neighborhood Mother interviewed. For example, it the Neighborhood Mother claimed, *"Since becoming a Neighborhood Mother, I have organized an event to help immigrant mothers meet local child protection services and start a dialogue."* This change mentioned by a Neighborhood Mother interviewed was recorded as a 'change in community participation'. Professional and/or educational change is defined by any mention of employment found because of involvement in the Neighborhood Mothers program. Additionally, any reference made to professional development, skills and training, applying for school or returning to study, or employment found through Neighborhood Mothers or its host organization, Nicehearts ry was categorized as a professional/educational domain of change.

Though not an official domain of change, mentorship was mentioned a total number of 8 times throughout the 13 life-change stories. Thus, increased mentorship was included in the quantification process. Mentorship, here is defined as receiving any kind of support from the staff involved in the Neighborhood Mothers program. In many life-change stories, either the program coordinator or an area coordinator was mentioned by name and what sort of support was given. In a few of the life-change stories, the word 'mentor' was used directly and in others' references to support gained from the program or area coordinators was explained.

The ‘Other’ category was used to document changes that could not be categorized by the other domains of change or that were a combination of two or more domains of change. For example, in one of the life-change stories, the following was said by the Neighborhood Mother,

> “*My depression started to go away when I went to Nicehearts ry and then Neighborhood Mothers’ and it snowballed into other experiences.” (Reference # 023).*

This statement, as discussed in the second analysis with the area coordinators and program coordinators was found to be significant but did not fit into any domain of change. I would like to note here, that the statement made above does not intend to claim that depression can be cured by involvement in a Non-governmental organization (NGO) or participation in a social program. Furthermore, the total number of ‘other’ changes, determined through the quantification process was four. This category is difficult to measure but attempts to count a significant change that a Neighborhood Mother experienced that could not be divided into a domain of change.

The quantification process revealed that collectively, the Neighborhood Mothers experienced social-related changes more than any other domain of change. Followed by emotional and community participation domains of change. A surprising 17 professional or educational changes were seen in the Neighborhood Mothers. Trailed by increased mentorship and ‘other’ types of changes.

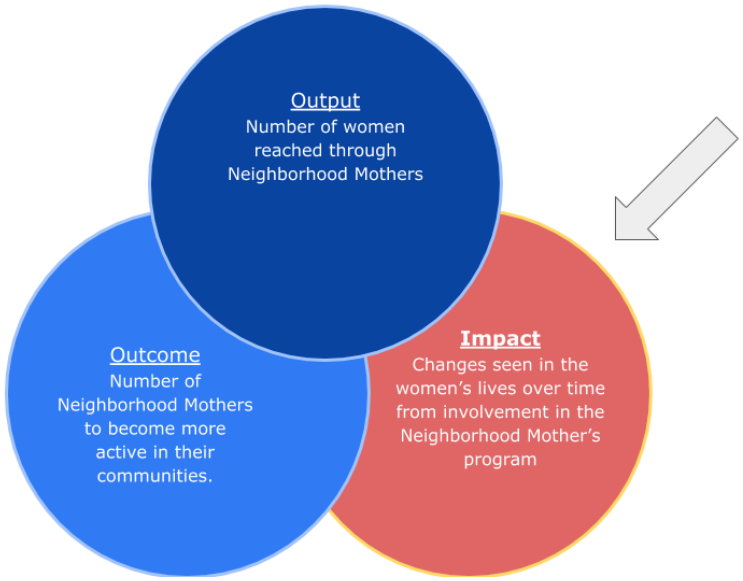
6.7 Outcomes

Before understanding the outcome of this research, it is important to distinguish between outputs, outcomes, and impact. According to a guide in managing social and health care projects, outputs are countable procedures that are completed (i.e,

the number of research participants interviewed). Outcomes are harder to measure and include qualitative indicators that are generally felt by beneficiaries and not seen. For example, in the Neighborhood Mother's program, the feeling of sisterhood or unity felt by the participants is an outcome of the program, but not necessarily defined by the program. (Henderson, Euan S., Martin, Vivien, Charlesworth, and, Julie, 2010, 154).

Impact, however, as defined by Oxfam (2004) is the measure of change or the measure of the outcomes (Kelly et al., 2004, 696). The figure below shows the distinction, but close relationship of how outputs, outcomes, and impact are connected.

FIGURE 4. Outputs, Outcomes, and Impact relationship



The arrow in the chart indicates the definition and section of the process of evaluation that this thesis has attempted to measure. As demonstrated in the Neighborhood Mothers program above, many expected and unexpected changes were found in the life-change stories. Three of the life-change stories were categorized as 'increased community participation' domain of change. However, community participation was mentioned a total of 19 times in throughout the life-change stories combined. Though the most common domain of change found in panel analysis two

was ‘emotional’, the most common change found in the quantification process was social. There were 4 changes that arose in the life-change stories that were not categorized into a specific domain of change. For example, one of the Neighborhood Mothers mentioned changes in feelings of depression. Additionally, political and civic involvement was difficult to categorize as well as housing support and changes in housing status. A change that arose in the research that was not considered was increased mentorship. Many of the Neighborhood Mothers shared their stories of receiving mentorship from the program staff that made a significant impact on their lives.

The overall outcome of the research was that changes were seen over time that could be contributed to the Neighborhood Mothers program. The most common types of changes recorded were emotional and social changes. These changes involved, but not limited to, increased confidence of sense of belonging in Finland, increased social network, sisterhood, and friendships, as well increased feeling of value and worth. These changes, as told by the Neighborhood Mothers, are seemingly related to their experiences in the Neighborhood Mothers training, network, and community involvement. However, the degree of which the changes are Contributed the Neighborhood Mothers program versus how much of the change recorded is due to organic life-changes is immeasurable and a limitation to this study.

7. DISCUSSION

In this section, the working definition of social impact compared to the needs of the working-life partner will be discussed and analyzed. Furthermore, limitations to the research, significant discoveries in the results, interpretations of the data and further development of this research will be explored.

7.1 Most significant change stories

In chapter 6, Results, panel one and panel three selected a 'most significant' change story. According to the definition of MSC, the most significant change selection is done by choosing a life-change story that most closely represents the values and goals of the program in question. The selection made during panel one, story 022, was made on the evaluation of the goals on the micro or individual level of the Neighborhood Mother. The selection made by panel three was 013. Panel one examined the internal changes more closely in the 'most significant change' selection, whereas panel three analyzed the stories based on more external and observable changes. In a manual text analysis, the text was counted to consider the number of subjective versus objective statements in the life-change stories. The two most-significant stories, 013 and 022 were compared side-by-side below.

Table 9. Manual text analysis of MSC stories

Subjective vs Objective statements of the MSC life-change stories 022 and 013		
	022	013
Subjective: (emotional, psychological, perceptions, opinions, changes in values, or attitude, ideas, feelings, etc.)	13	10
Objective (action-based, observable, measurable, and often verifiable)	5	10

The table shows the difference between the panel 1 MSC story selection, 022, and the panel 3 MSC story selection, 013. In story 013, approximately an even number of subjective and objective statements can be seen. Whereas, in story 022, subjective statements outweighed the objective statements more than two-fold. This demonstrates the necessity for systematic panel review when using MSC method because interpretation from the reader can vary. Furthermore, though both panel 1 and panel 3 analyzed the life-change stories next to the program goals, the selection of MSC story from each panel varied. MSC 013 was selected according to panel three for its representation of the program goals as a whole and on a more visible, observable scale. Whereas, panel 1's selection was made for the internal, unseen changes that 022 experienced that were representative of the program goals. This variation in interpretations will be discussed in the next section.

7.2 Limitations

Limitations to this study include the bias nature of the researcher. I am an immigrant woman, and thus was not completely objective in motivations for pursuing this research. Furthermore, as mentioned in subsection 3.1, there is no standardized or perfect way to measure social impact. NGOs, non-profits and the development sector all struggle with the phenomenon of 'social impact' or 'social value' and how to measure a one's effectiveness on an individual, a community, and/or a society. Because there is no standardized definition of social impact or measurement process, it is difficult to measure and thus makes this research a mere attempt at doing so. Though this research has a working definition of social impact, some could argue that the research is not true impact. Or, it could be said that without being able to determine the degree in which an organization has influenced an individual, community or society, then social impact cannot be determined.

Furthermore, I adapted the MSC method to fit the needs of the NGO rather than carrying it out as it is intended. The result of this is inability to establish three

complete panels for the systematic analysis of the life-change stories. Secondly, story collectors are used in the MSC method guidelines whereas, in this thesis only one researcher, me, collected data. Finally, I adapted the analysis process as well to not just determine the most-significant change story but to categorize domains of change as well. In the MSC method, each of the three or more panels are used to select a single story that is most significant to the program. However, because there were only 13 life-change stories, the panels would have not had many stories to choose from to make the selection. Therefore, I used panel two differently to categorize domains of change to determine what changes occurred in the data. Panel three was used to make the most-significant change selection and then we compared panel one and panel three's MSC story selection. The number of life-change stories collected required the MSC implementation to be altered. Furthermore, exhaustive analysis allowed for more changes and insight to the program's success overall.

7.2 A tale of social impact

The aim of the thesis was to investigate whether the Neighborhood Mother's program had any impact on its participants. When operating with the Oxfam (2004) definition of impact utilized by the development field, the program did indeed have an impact. Program impact was determined by measuring if changes occurred in the program participants and how much of that change could be contributed to the Neighborhood Mother's program.

Furthermore, the father of social impact theory, Latané (1981) said that social impact was the sum of changes seen in an individual, whether cognitive, feelings, motivations, emotions, beliefs, behavior and more that is the result of action from another. The changes seen in the Neighborhood Mothers were widely varied including the domains of change of social, emotional, community participation, and professional/educational changes. However, some unexpected changes occurred as well including; mental health status, reception of housing services, involvement in

civil action and politics, and benefits of increased mentorship. There were many changes that could not be seen or measured in this research as well. For example, the number of times a Neighborhood Mother helped someone in their community or how that informal help affected the recipients. Furthermore, though the women who participated in the research stated that their involvement in NM program led to change A or change B, there is no way determine how much the NM program influenced that change directly or indirectly.

Many of the life-change stories experienced significant changes, however, linking that change back to the Neighborhood Mother's program is the difficult part. Below is an example of one life-change story and its link to NM program.

> "I first came to Nicehearts ry as a volunteer and then I was given an opportunity for work. I then became involved with the Neighborhood Mother's program and was employed once more for the NM program. The project manager of NM then connected me to other projects, and I was able to continue finding work and making more connections as I went." (Reference # 023).

In the example above, the line between Neighborhood Mother's involvement and the employment of the participant is blurry. However, you can deduce how one event led to another and it is difficult to deny that action from one entity, Neighborhood Mother's program and those responsible for its implementation did not have an effect on this participant.

True social impact, by many, is considered to be wider and larger than that of only 13 women from a social program. For example, Burdge and Vanclay (1996) attempting to further the science of social impact assessment claimed that,

> "...social impact refers to consequences to human populations of any public or private actions that alter the ways in which people live,

> work, play, relate to one another, organize to meet their needs and generally act as a member of society" (Burdge & Vanclay, 1996, 59).

In this understanding, which many other's share, social impact is only seen on a macro level and not on a micro level as demonstrated in this thesis.
Without a standardization of social impact measurement or a common definition of social impact, it is difficult to say which is more truly *social impact*. This research could be criticized for its minuteness and that the sample of stories collected was too small to be considered social impact or real and measurable change. However, I argue that clear changes, emotional, psychological, values, behavior, and more were identified and indeed measured by the research through the life-change stories gathered.

8. CONCLUSION

In this section, a summary of the findings and research can be found along with analysis of research questions. Recommendations for future development of this research is discussed as well as my professional development and the importance of this work in the social services field.

8.1 Summary of findings

Panel two categorized all 13 stories into the four domains of change. During this analysis 6 stories were categorized as having more of an emotional significant change measurement than any other domain. Following, social was emotional with 2 life-change stories, 3 life-change stories for changes in community participation, and 2 life-change stories change categorized as ‘other’. All 13 life-change stories were determined to have significant changes in all domains of change except one, professional/educational.

During the quantification process, the most common change found was a social-related change meaning increase in quantity or quality of friendships and networks. Social changes cited included statements like, feelings of sisterhood, new friendships, acquaintances, making social and professional connections, growing one’s network, providing and giving social support, comforted by interacting with other women, and more.

The second most common change reported in the quantification process from the life-change stories was an emotional change, referring to, but not limited to, improved confidence, feelings of belonging, feelings of unity, improved self-esteem and self-efficacy, empowerment, feeling supported, and more.

The third most common change reported in the quantification phase was increased community participation. The life-change stories revealed Neighborhood Mother's initiating and starting their own social clubs, volunteering more often for an NGO or another organization, more involvement in projects run by the city and by NGOs, informal help as translation and referring members of the community to social or health services, and general support given to other women in their community.

The fourth most common changes cited in the quantification process was professional/educational. Thesis changes include direct mention of employment found through or because of involvement in the Neighborhood Mother's program, returning to school or continuing education in general.

Finally, the last changes during the quantification process was regarding increased mentorship and 'other' changes. Examples of 'other' types of change were changes in feelings of depression and housing support among other things. Many of the life-change stories mentioned program staff directly, citing receiving 'guidance', 'support', 'advice', 'recommendations for employment', and more.

During panel one and panel three an MSC story was selected. Panel three determined that the 'most significant' change story for the Neighborhood Mothers program was story 013. Panel one found the 022 to be the MSC of the Neighborhood Mothers program.

The data will be used to continue to receive funding for the program and potentially attract new funders. Furthermore, the MSC method, and the adaptations I have made to fit the needs of the Neighborhood Mothers program may be replicated in the future.

8.2 Change that matters

In the beginning of the research, I set out to investigate whether the Neighborhood Mothers program, a social and community action program, impacted its participants. Impact was determined by measuring changes seen in the program participants. Furthermore, this thesis investigated which kind of changes the Neighborhood Mothers' experienced and how much of that change experienced by the women was related to their involvement in the Neighborhood Mothers' program. The types of changes found in the research were emotional changes (values, ideas, feelings, emotions, perceptions, and more), social changes (increased social network, social support, new friendships, and increased professional network), community participation (initiative in implementing new ideas in one's own community, increased volunteerism, and/or increased citizen action), and professional/educational (employment found, return to continued education, admittance to university of university of applied sciences, and skills/training growth). There were unexpected changes found in the research as well including impact seen through mentorship given by the Neighborhood Mothers staff. Other changes were changes that could not be categorized as any of the pre-set domains of change.

Though the existence of measured change and the types of change were reported in the research, it is impossible to determine how much change reported by the women can be contributed to the Neighborhood Mother's program. The women reported the changes that were significant to their lives that they believed were because of their involvement in the Neighborhood Mother's program. Though there is no measure to determine the amount of influence the NM program had on the women, it is important to regard that what the beneficiaries consider is more important than program goals or stakeholder opinions. In this way, understanding impact from the point-of-view of the beneficiaries is the closest one can come to understanding social impact of a program's efforts.

Furthermore, to determining the impact of a project means examining the outcome or effect of project or program. Outcomes are thus, seen as long-term effects that occur long after the project or program has been implemented (Clark et al., 2004). In this research, long-term effects were measured as the training was implemented between 2016-2018. However, a subset of women was left out of the research due to inability to communicate effectively in English. The research did not have the means to acquire a translator, thus, the data was narrowed due to the language skills of the researcher. Thus, not all of the Neighborhood Mothers who received training from 2016-2018 were included. The women continue to participate as Neighborhood Mothers but vary on the level of participation in their communities. This variance presents doubt in the data and should be examined again after more time has elapsed to see even longer-term effects of the Neighborhood Mothers program.

In short, the Neighborhood Mother's program, according to the life-change stories collected, had an impact on the women's lives. Through measurement of specific changes over time and this thesis-specific definition of social impact, impact was indeed found and measured. Nevertheless, the thesis-specific definition provides a narrow understanding of social impact. According to the working definition of social impact, the women experienced changes due Neighborhood Mothers program that they would not have experienced otherwise. The amount of change and how much change could be contributed to the Neighborhood Mothers is unclear and still unknown, however.

8.3 Importance of this work

Those who work in the social field continually struggle with the uncertainty of not knowing whether their efforts made a 'difference' or had an impact. This nagging problem is what stirred this research and can hopefully provide evidence to other's in the field to implement participatory-based methods of measuring impact on a micro scale. Measuring impact is a common challenge among those in the social sector. The

spur of attempted to measure impact in the social sector is due to pressure from funders and other stakeholders to see results from their investments and to ensure social sector of NGO's are accountable for their work (Ebrahim & Rangan, 2014, 118).

This research, attempting to aid in this problem in the social sector sought to understand impact of a narrower kind of a social program in Finland—Neighborhood Mothers. For those especially interested in the social sector or professionals in the NGO field should find this research useful when designing and implementing their own impact measurement processes. As most projects in the NGO field are not long-lasting, usually due to lack of finance, it is important to design a project with clear evaluation in mind. The Neighborhood Mother's program is receiving ongoing funding from STEA. Part of the ongoing funding application includes evidence of the progress and success of the program. The data collected and impact found from this research will be used to continue receiving funding for the program.

8.4 Professional development

Throughout this research process, I have been motivated to conduct the best qualitative impact study in order to better understand the phenomenon of social impact. This phenomenon is important as it gives meaning to my work and potential career as a social services professional. As conceptualized by inFocus (2016), understanding social impact and the ability to measure one's efforts in social or community action is extremely valuable for a number of reasons. My aims are to eventually work in the third sector for an NGO, INGO, non-profit, or developmental organization. This type of work requires implementation of projects and programs constantly. When conducting projects or programs, monitoring and evaluation are necessary to determine if the program or project was successful. Furthermore, the development of this research has prepared me with a foundation to measure social impact of future programs or projects. The skills to measure social impact are

important for NGO's as it can help sustain and attract funding, as well as improve the program or project in question (inFocus, 2016).

When conducing this research, I was challenged professionally by my position in Finnish society as an immigrant with similar struggles as the research participants. This added an additional level of difficult when trying to remain objective. However, I found that because I am a migrant woman, the research participants were more willing to speak with me and divulge more details in their life-change stories. During the analysis, I found it difficult to not feel emotionally connected to some of the research participants as I could relate to their struggles in Finnish society. To avoid this, I continually sought council from my working-life supervisor and thesis supervisor to remain as objective as possible.

During the life-change story collection, women would reveal challenging or traumatic aspects of their lives that I had not anticipated. When this occurred, I was reminded of the importance of anonymity in the data collection, storage and handling, as well as maintaining the participant's privacy according to the guidelines for research ethics in social sciences (2006). Additionally, I had to maintain professionalism in referring participants to services and during the analysis of the life-change stories to ensure their identity was not revealed.

Finally, I would like to standardize the practice of measuring social impact and continue to develop my skills in M&E. For example, conducting social impact studies for other NGOs or third sector organizations could be a full-time profession and way to develop expertise in monitoring and evaluation. The experience gained from conducting this study for Neighborhood Mothers has given me a newfound love for M&E and skills that are useful for my future career in the third sector.

8.5 Recommendations for research use and development

Though I find the research to be successful, there is always ways in which it could be further developed. The following list outlines key points in which, if conducted again, could improve the credibility of the research and the overall implementation of the research.

a. More time for data collection
b. More life-change story collection from at least 100 Neighborhood Mothers
c. Usage of life-change story collectors separate from key researcher
d. Do not define domains of change prior to story collection
e. Quantify the changes on a scale of 1-10 mirroring the Likert scale
f. Establishment of multiple panels for the most significant change analysis and selection process

Primarily, the needs of the research to develop further are more time and human resources. As the sole researcher, it was difficult, given the timeline, to collect a large number of life-change stories which would have been preferred. Furthermore, more life-change stories could not be collected without assistance from other 'story collectors' as it is the most time-consuming and tedious part of the 'Most Significant Change' technique.

Recommendations *c* and *f* have originated from the MSC guidelines for implementation. The method, according to Davies and Dart (2005) should be implemented using story collectors to collect the life-change stories and establishment of panels is important to the systematic analysis of the 'most significant' change.

The research will be used further to demonstrate to other stakeholders (funders, board members, Ministry of social welfare.) evidence of success of the Neighborhood

Mothers program and to help remain sustainable. It will also be utilized by the staff to help improve the program.

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Work and well-being among persons of foreign origin in Finland in 2014. Statistics Finland, Population 2015

APPENDIX 1

'Most Significant Change' story template

1. Name of interviewer:

2. Demographic information

Country of origin	
Residing municipality	
Years lived in Finland	

3. When did you train to be a Neighborhood Mother? How long was the training?

4. What were your motivations for becoming a Neighborhood Mother? How did you hear about the Neighborhood Mother program?

5. From your point of view, describe a story or an example of changes you have experienced in your life since becoming a Neighborhood Mother?

6. Any other changes that could be attributed to your participation in the Neighborhood Mothers program?

APPENDIX 2

Written consent to use your narrative for the purposes of research and development

I _____(research participant) hereby give permission to _____ (researcher) to use my story/narrative for the purposes of research and development at Diaconia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki. I understand that during the research process, if I no longer want to participate, I may withdraw my consent **at any time**. The thesis will be made available publicly, however, all information will remain anonymous and no names or identifying characteristics will be used in the publication.

Research participant

Sign: _____

Print: _____

Date: _____

Researcher (Student)

Sign: _____

Print: _____

Date: _____