OLOTILA

A COMMUNITY SPACE AND ITS MEANING TO ITS USERS

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ABSTRACT


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The objective of this thesis is to explore the meaning of Olotila from the point of view of its service users. Olotila is a drop-in center situated in the heart of Tikkurila which is one of the administrative headquarters of the city of Vantaa, Finland.

The qualitative research method was deemed suitable for this research. Data was collected through observation, document consultation in addition to four individual and three group interviews which were carried out during a five weeks practice related placement at its premises. With emphasis on “what does Olotila mean to you” a sense is developed on the different ways in which Olotila is beneficial to its service users.

Findings suggest that, Olotila means much more than an ordinary café. To some of its service users, Olotila means a place for socialization, a place for building social support networks to improve subjective wellbeing, a place for development and improvement of some individual relevant skills, a place providing opportunities for community engagement while to others it means a meeting space, a space for solitude and a space of care.

The purpose of this research is to prove and document the importance of Olotila by matching the voices of its service users and some social theories.

Key Words: community space, care, social support, solitude and wellbeing.
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1. INTRODUCTION

Generally, it is thought that happiness is in short supply when people suffer extreme poverty, poor housing and insufficient food. Of late, Economists have been wondering why increase in wealth has not necessarily led to a corresponding increase in happiness. Studies have shown that, over the past 30 to 40 years, levels of happiness have not risen in the UK or the USA even though on average people are much more better off, while happiness rates are significantly higher in some relatively poor countries.(Howe 2009, 176-177.)

Psychologists and economists have also discovered that much of people’s happiness and wellbeing depends on the quality of their relationship with others. Also, that enjoying respect, being socially involved and feeling emotionally connected to family, friends, neighbors and colleagues all contributes to wellbeing (Howe 2009, 176-177).

In Finland, one of the main aims of the National Association of Unemployed people in the 1990s with the sudden increase in unemployment, was to increase the physical and mental wellbeing of the unemployed (Nylund 2000, 100-104).

The aim of this research is to find out the meaning of Olotila from the point of view of its users by exploring their experiences both individually and in groups through interviews and observation in its premises.

The purpose of this research is to prove and document the importance of Olotila by matching the voices if its service users and some social theories as requested by a staff at Olotila who acted as my supervisor during my practical placement.
2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This section provides a brief history and description of Olotila and its surroundings. It will also describe Tikkurila briefly, the part of the city of Vantaa in which Olotila is situated. Finally, brief demographic information about Vantaa will be mentioned.

2.1 Brief history of Olotila

Olotila is a non-governmental association. The initiation of Olotila in 1991 came as a result of the 1990 Finnish recession which left many people unemployed (Virtanen, interview May 2012).

In 1991, Olotila was registered as a non-governmental organization (NGO). It aimed at supporting the wellbeing of the socially excluded people living in Helsinki capital region through diaconal work by organizing daytime activities and providing education needed for voluntary and advisory work. The socially excluded here referred to the unemployed, those on long sick leaves, refugees and other immigrants, single mothers and others who could also be victims of loneliness (Latvus 2005, 68).

To support its activities Olotila raised funds through members' contribution, donations from well-wishers and legacies. It also sought permission from authorities concerned to organise relevant lotteries, bazaars and fund-raising events.

Today, Olotila belongs to the Vantaa`s Parish Union which provides funds for rents and daily running of its activities. A well trained deaconess with over fifteen years of experience in adult social work has been employed by the Parish to supervise and coordinate work in Olotila.
The volunteers are the main work force in Olotila. They are engaged in the preparation of coffee, pastries, and sandwiches sold at Olotila. But volunteers’ main role is to interact and “be there” for the clients who are interested in sharing or engaging in conversations (Hyvän mielen olohuone 2012).

2.2 Description of Olotila

Olotila provides a clean, cozy, comfortable and spacious inclusive space with a warm and receptive environment. It is a strategically located living room based in Tikkurila. It is surrounded by grocery, jewelries, and clothes shops, in addition to, administrative offices, health center, the church, restaurants, cafes, banks, pharmacies, etc.

It is open on week days from 9.30 to 15.00 to the public but the space is also used in the evenings and even weekends for other activities including church related groups and activities.

Its inside is very spacious with well-organized sitting arrangements to suit large groups of about 8-10 persons and as small as to suit pairs. Purple being its dominant color, can be noticed from chairs to curtains which gives it very cozy look. It has a small kitchen section from where coffee and pastries are served. The kitchen is equipped with a fridge, a small oven, and small dishwashing machine and a serving table where items to be served are displayed.

It also has a book shelf which serves as a library from where one can pick a newspaper, a magazine or a book to read. There is a notice in this area which says that people are welcome to donate books to this space, can read books but are not allowed to borrow or take away.

It has a clean, spacious and comfortable toilet, accessible for people with prams, strollers, wheel chairs, and all kinds of walking aids.
On the right, from the entrance is a small children Corner equipped with toys and books for children and next to this children Conner is a computer connected to the internet and a printer (visitors are allowed to use it for a brief purpose such as paying bills, checking addresses and route maps etc.). A volunteer worker is available on Mondays for a few hours to provide help and assistance to those who are interested in learning how to use a computer.

Finally, it has a small office at the back of the kitchen which is reserved for use by the volunteers and the Supervisor of Olotila. This area is used for administrative purpose and as a counseling room when there is a need for one-on-one counseling services.

2.3 Tikkurila

Tikkurila is part of the city of Vantaa situated along the northern side of the river of Kerava, about 16km north of Helsinki. Together with Myyrmäki, it serves as the administrative center for Vantaa. It has an area of 1.0 km2 and has a population of about five thousand inhabitants. The Tikkurila railway station is the third most busy railway station in Finland situated about five kilometers from the Vantaa Airport which is the busiest Airport in Finland. It serves over 12.5 million people annually. There is a bus that shuttles between these two busy points. Tikkurila is mostly inhabited by elderly age group because of its closeness to services. Banks, supermarkets, a library, a high school, two branches of Universities of applied sciences, a sport center ice hall and swimming facilities, a science center, a city museum, a church, a water fall, a youth Centre, a police station and many more services are based in Tikkurila. Compared to other parts of Vantaa, a bit less than half of it apartments are averagely 58m 2, which are mostly inhabited by people, living alone. (Information on Vantaa, General introduction to Vantaa.)
3. CONCEPTS AND CLEARIFICATION OF TERMS

In this section, some theoretical concepts deemed necessary for the research such as, community and community engagement, care, solitude, socialization and wellbeing are discussed. For reasons that Olotila had a target group at its creation, researcher found it necessary to make some clarifications of the group and how their wellbeing could be affected.

3.1 Community and Community Engagement

Alavaikko in his publication adopts the description of a community in which the word “community” is seen as something vibrating with positive connotations, as something to which we all wish to belong, in which we receive love, help and understanding without binding contracts and questions of repayment (cited in Fortunato, Friessnhahn & Kantowics 2008, 57). Clary (2002), affirms that, as a community, people can and do take actions as individuals and as members of communities to address the many and varied problems that confront and challenge society. Diverse problems such as stigma, prejudice, discrimination, environmental degradation are some of such social problems that can be addressed or alleviated through collective action by being a member of community, a volunteer in a group or an organization or some activist social movement. (Clary & Snyder 2002, 582.)

Some studies suggest that community engagement could have a positive impact on individuals’ perceptions of personal empowerment which helps them feel useful to others, feel in control of events and being able to express ideas and having awareness of individual rights. Engaging in communities on the one hand helps individuals make new friends while gaining appreciation of other peoples’ points of view, makes them feel happier and improves their quality of life because of the increase in social network and social interaction. At commu-
nity level on the other hand, it increases mutual trust and understanding between different population groups including cultural awareness between different ethnic groups.

Community engagement may be particularly important for ‘at risk’ population groups, such as residents in poor social and economic circumstances, and older people who tend to be less well connected socially. For individuals with health issues, engaging in health facilities communities may gain self-confidence and self-esteem as a result of participation in decision making groups. (Attree, French, Milton, Povall, Whitehead & Popay 2011, 250-260.)

3.1.1 Community and Empowerment

Perkins (1995) state that, empowerment occurs when individuals feel they have the capacity to solve problems, control the means to do so, and as a group have authoritative say in decision making. They are willing and able to assert their collective will to gain control over their lives. Empowerment at individual level, known as individual or psychological empowerment allows people gain control over themselves while at collective level, people share expertise, support one another, and as a community become a recognized voice. Empowerment involves how people feel about themselves, their shared perceptions about the ability to take action and the capacity for battling those in privileged positions. Empowerment is achieved collectively. (Rubin & Rubin 2008, 61.)

3.2 Solitude

Solitude means that an individual needs time to get away from the constant bombardment of daily responsibilities, chores, demands, stimuli and life hassles. Solitude is time in which one finds pleasure. Solitude is cherished time that can help one rejuvenate, reflect, refresh and renew a person. Most often soli-
tude denotes a time of privacy or the ability to control the ability of others to intrude upon one’s life. (Rokach 2011, 72.)

3.3 Care

Twigg & Atkin (1994) equate care with the performance of tasks of supportive character which goes beyond the normal reciprocities common between adults (cited in Conradson 2003, 507-525). Conradson conceives care more generally. He describes care as a proactive interest of one person in the wellbeing of another and as the articulation of that interest in practical ways. Care may thus be present in everyday encounter between individuals who are attentive to each other’s situation, who perhaps provide practical assistance or who simply make time to listen to what the other has to say. It is about the movement towards another person in a way that has the potential to facilitate or promote their wellbeing; it may or may not involve physical caretaking tasks. (Conradson 2003, 507-525)

To agree with Conradson, a space of care can then be understood as socio-spatial field disclosed through the practices of care that takes place between individuals. In drop-in centers, volunteers-users relations are of great importance. Care occurs when a volunteer seeks to relate in a supportive manner with other service users, through activities such as listening, befriending, offering practical advice for instance. Gordon (1999) mentions that many drop-in centers provide training that encourages the development of these qualities which seeks to cultivate a particular affective and ethical stance of care towards other service users. (Cited in Conradson 2003, 507-525).

Olotila trains and educates its volunteers with such skills to attain the level of care required. (Pia Talvela, personal communication May 2012).
3.4 Socialization

According to Wrong (1961) socialization may mean two distinct things. On the one hand, socialization means the transmission of culture, the particular culture of the society the individual enters at birth. On the other hand, socialization is used to mean the process of becoming human, acquiring uniquely human attributes from interaction with others. (Cited in Jenks 2005, 13.) Socialization can also be described as learning the norms and values of a field (Rubin & Rubin 2008, 237). This simply means that, to be human or being a human being, one should be able to achieve the characteristics of being human by interacting with other human beings.

3.5 Wellbeing

Wellbeing is a result of the quality of life. This means that higher quality of life produces happiness which provides a higher level of satisfaction. Therefore leaving a low quality life will lead to sadness which is a sign of dissatisfaction. We all have a clear idea of what sort of things would promote our individual quality of life and most probably, the quality of life of other individuals too, this could include: higher pay, longer holidays, more satisfaction in our working lives, time to pursue enjoyable and satisfying leisure pursuits, emotional fulfillment in our relationships and above all having a long and healthy life while living within a safe, caring and supportive local community.

Quality of life can be seen in two perspectives. From the point of view of libertarians, human beings are essentially individuals seeking their own quality of life as discrete, independent and free thinkers and for the egalitarians, humans are essentially social, at the center of interlocking rights, duties, obligations and collective identities.
Even if we intend to look at wellbeing at individual level, there is still a need to look at it from two approaches: the subjective and objective approach of wellbeing. For objectivists, on the one hand, the most important thing is the question of how people are fed, how healthy they are, if they are appropriately housed, economically secured and well educated and they call this objective wellbeing (OWB). On the other hand, subjectivists are more focused on the pleasure as a building block of human happiness which is termed subjective wellbeing (SWB). (Phillips 2006, 1-3.)

From the above, we can deduce that objective wellbeing can be measured and or determined in a more general way and by any other person but subjective wellbeing is a self-defined issue which requires the individual to describe how they feel about themselves and what they think are the most important elements of their lives. SWB which is mostly based on self-realization or flourishing introduces us to the concept of autonomy which is central to major theories of quality of life in social settings which encourages people to fully exercise their human capabilities and which may increase their ability to find happiness and life satisfaction.

Agreeing with the fact that, wellbeing is not all about happiness or life satisfaction, then wellbeing needs to be dealt with in a holistic approach (both objective and subjective) but since government policies can cater for objective wellbeing to an extent, there is a need to focus on the loopholes of public policies which is the reason why Olotila does exist. Olotila is there to cater for subjective wellbeing which in this piece of writing will have the same meaning as happiness.

Some economists have found that for most people happiness was not only measured in terms of what they earned or possessed, it was also assessed in terms of the less tangible goods such as, health, relationships and a sense of community. The bonds between people could create a sense of belonging. Living in harmony reduces isolation, anxiety and stress. Added together, these less
tangible components predicted people’s sense of wellbeing. (Howe 2009, 176.)

In line with the above statement, Layard (2005) and Csikszentmihalyi (1998) also mentioned that, psychologist and economist discovered that so much of people’s happiness and wellbeing depended on the quality of their relationships with others and that, enjoying respect, being socially involved, and feeling emotionally connected to family and friends, neighbors and colleagues all contributed to wellbeing (Cited in Howe 2009, 176-177.)

According to Howe, the more people have a large number of relationship with others the more happy they turn to be, but he also mentioned that, it is not all about the number of relationship that one has that matters but also, the quality and satisfaction that they get from the relationships.

In fact, with the same understanding as that of Layard and Csikszentmihalyi, if we agree that happiness and wellbeing depends on quality of relationships with family, friends, co-workers, and others in the community, then we are left to find out more about those that are socially excluded who may turn to be lonely because their families leave far away from them and they cannot afford to visit them frequently, who do not have co-workers because they are unemployed or cannot be together with others in the community because of the barriers in communication and so on. This will lead us to take a close look at the target group of Olotila and how being a member of these marginalized groups can affect individual’s wellbeing.

Olotila at its initiation, aimed at supporting the wellbeing of the socially excluded people living in Helsinki capital region through diaconal work by organizing daytime activities and providing education needed for voluntary and advisory work. The socially excluded here referred to the unemployed, those on long sick leaves, refugees and other immigrants, single mothers and others who could also be victims of loneliness. (Latvus 2005, 68).
Like discussed above the term wellbeing and happiness are used interchangeable in this piece of writing. Haybron agrees with other studies that have adapted the idea that:

People have happiness “set points” towards which their happiness naturally tends to gravitate. These set points are said to be substantially heritable, perhaps as much as .80, though, .50 is a more widely accepted figure. Recent events, even quite recent ones can move people up or down for a brief period, maybe a few months, but usually they will return to their set point – no more or less happy or unhappy than before. (Haybron 2008, 123.)

Let us now take a look at how the wellbeing of these groups is affected.

3.5.1 Unemployment and Wellbeing.

It is understood that individual wellbeing or happiness is dependent on things such as, income, job description, leisure activities, health, family, friends and other social networks, etc. Unemployment can therefore reduce the level of individual wellbeing. To be unemployed means no income for countries without unemployment benefits. For countries with unemployment security income, it means a reduction or drop in income. Low self-esteem, loss of identity, family and social pressures and the uncertainty of the future are some of the consequences of unemployment, which could lead to stress, thereby reducing the level of individual wellbeing (happiness) of the unemployed person. Satisfaction from work is not all about the income gotten from that job, it also entails the social network around the work environment. Therefore, the impact of becoming unemployed for persons with families members and other close social networks will be less than in those whose families members live far away (if they have) and those who do not have any other social networks. Berkman & Glass (2000) point out that, family and social relationships help to reduce the stress and anx-
iety during job loss and promote satisfaction and physical health. (Cited in Namkee, Juan & Juan 2004, 1-23)

Therefore, if we agree that family and social networks helps in reducing the stress of job loss as mentioned above, for those who have become unemployed, thereby losing the social network created within the work environment and have no family do not necessary need to become isolated.

3.5.2 Retirement and wellbeing

To get a clear picture about the effects of retirement on individual wellbeing, it will be wise to differentiate between voluntary and involuntary retirement. The effects on wellbeing will differ according to the degree of preparedness. The shock of being laid-off before the actual or expected retirement (maybe due to ill health or poor economic situation of the employer) will eventually reduce the level of wellbeing as it is no doubt that savings decisions are made according to the generally accepted retirement age. They would love to be at work but cannot, because of reasons beyond their control. The reason for the drop in wellbeing is not necessarily connected only to the drop of income but is combined with the loss of the social network at the work environment.

The wellbeing of those who are retired at the expected time may not be affected at all or the effect could be very mild, as they must have prepared themselves. Börsch-Supan & Jürges (2009) found a strong connection between early retirement and subjective wellbeing and that involuntary retirement is similar to unemployment in that people are not working but have the zeal to work (Cited in Bonsang & Klein 2011, 1-40) Being out of work life either on voluntary basis or on involuntary basis is not the issue of concern to subjective wellbeing but the
social or family network of the retiree is our concern. Eventually, individuals who are retired but still enjoy or receive support of any form from family members or other social networks are at low risk of reduced subjective wellbeing than those with very limited or no social networks at all.

3.5.3 Elderly and wellbeing

Research has brought it to light that in the UK, a third of elderly men and women live on their own and have very little contact with their friends and families, most of them have lost contact with formal friends and colleagues. Secondly, that isolation amongst pensioners is increasing with many suffering from severe loneliness and financial hardship and rarely leaving their homes all, with some confessing that they only person they see often is the postman. Thirdly, that those who ended up in break-ups have lost contact with their own children because they lost custody of them while others are even reluctant to spend their money on taxi or other means of transport to visit families and friends. It concluded by mentioning this: but we know that something as simple as getting out of house to meet and chat with others can have a long lasting effect. (Borland, 2008.)

3.5.4 Immigrants, mothers with children under school age and Wellbeing

Generally immigrants, especially the newly arrived, they have left their families members and friends at some distance places and cannot see or meet them often as they would wished. If we agree with psychologists and economist claiming that much of people’s happiness and wellbeing depends on the quality of their relationships with others and that, enjoying respect, being socially involved, and feeling emotionally connect to family and friends, neighbors and
colleagues all contributed to wellbeing, there is a need to take a double look at immigrants with families and friends living far away, in a society where no one knows his or her neighbors, with shy or reserved colleagues and with language barrier. Olotila is a place meant for them to meet, chat and create new networks to boost their level of wellbeing.

Generally, mothers with children under school age spend most on their time at home cooking, cleaning and taking care of the children. Their subjective wellbeing or level of happiness may easily drop as the daily house chores consume most of their time. There is a need for them to mingle with other adults. For them, Olotila offers a place where they can meet, chat with their peers and others and may participate in other activities while the children make use of the children corner at Olotila.
4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is aimed at understanding the meaning of Olotila in the lives of its service users from service user’s perspective with main question being “what does Olotila mean to you”. In this section, the method of data collection and sampling will be discussed. Issues concerning research ethics and other challenges will also be discussed while reliability and validity will come at the end of the chapter.

4.1 Research method and data collection

With “what does Olotila mean to you” being the research question, the qualitative research method was deemed suitable for this research. The qualitative research method focuses on the meaning of something through verbal narratives and observations rather than on figures (Boulmetis & Dutwin 2005, 100). Wolcoot (1994) state that, with qualitative research, the researcher makes an interpretation of the data which includes developing a description of the individual or setting and analyzing data for themes or categories. Researcher finally makes an interpretation of or drawing conclusion about its meaning personally and theoretically while stating the lesson learned, and offering further questions to be asked (cited in Creswell 2003, 182).

Interviews with semi-structured open-ended questions were designed for scheduled interviews. In addition to this, other supportive data was collected by consulting some feedback questionnaires answered by service users during spring 2012, the registration document and observation. All this was carried out during a five weeks studies related practice placement. It should be noted in this research that volunteers were also considered to be service users.
4.1.1 Interviews

Interviews were conducted both individually and in groups. Interviews with casual users took the unstructured form of interviews (casual conversations) where researcher is required to remain conscious of her/his research question.

For the regular users, the semi-structured (no proposed preexisting answers to choose from) face-to-face interview with open-ended questions was used as the main instrument so as to encourage respondents talk freely and give as much information as they wanted. The semi-structured interview design with open-ended questions offers the opportunity to use probes and prompts to obtain more information from the respondents at necessary points during the interview. Interview questions for groups were different, even though they were all considered to be service users. Volunteers in this research were considered to play a double role, as service providers and as service users at the same time. For this reason, their research questions were different from that of the elderly group (see appendix 1 for interview questions for the elderly group and appendix 2 for interview questions for the volunteers).

4.1.2 Documents consultation

Researcher was provided access by placement supervisor to the existing documents of the organization. These documents were useful at the analyses stage of the research. Vital and useful documents consulted were: the organizations registration documents and previous feedback from clients gathered in spring 2012.

4.1.3 Observations

Observation played another important role in data collection. Both the obtrusive and unobtrusive observations were used in a narrative form using a pen and a
note book. In unobtrusive, those observed had no idea that data about them was being collected. This was used mostly on casual users of the space. In obtrusive, those being observed know that they were being observed. They were mostly regular users who in most cases met me several times in the same premises. Observation provided the opportunity for exploring topics that otherwise with be difficult or uncomfortable for respondents to discuss. For example, interactions between service users only and service users-service providers’ relationship could be observed.

4.2 Sampling

Here again, the supervisor of Olotila had an important role to play. She assisted in the identification of groups that existed in Olotila that could be interviewed. The supervisor basically introduced the researcher to the groups and vice-versa. Planning of convenient interview schedule and became the responsibility of the researcher. For the group of the elderly people, the interview schedule was planned together with them and with the volunteers, they were informed by supervisor about the interview was then included as part of the agenda of their monthly meeting.

Individual service users interviewed through casual conversations were chosen at randomly on different days of the week and at different times of the day by the researcher while maintaining a degree of diversity. The researcher approached intended interviewees at the premises of Olotila and introduced herself and her intentions. All persons approached were willing to participate and so the intended number of planned interviews was easily achieved.
4.3 Ethical considerations

The issue of confidentiality was explained to respondents at the start of every interview or casual conversations. It is suggested that ethical procedure can be clarified by consulting ethical guidelines for one’s professional association (Silverman 2005, 258). According to social work ethics, the right to self-determination calls for the respect and promotion of people’s right to make own decision and confidentiality which stresses on professional secrecy (Talentia Union of Professional Social Workers 2007). Respondents were therefore informed of the right to hold any information which they considered confidential to them in addition to their names and ages. Direct questions thought to be confidential and or emotional were avoided. For example, questions such as: “how old are you or do you work or do you have a family?” were avoided as much as possible. As a strategy to obtain vital information, indirect follow up questions or probes were used to obtain some vital information. For example, a question such as “what do you do when you have your holidays from work” gave the respondents to opportunity to either say they were unemployed or retired or to say that they were on retirement. Respondents were also informed about their rights to withdraw from the interview as anytime they wished.

4.4 Research process and challenges

All interviews were carried out at the premises of Olotila located at Tikkurila Vantaa during a five weeks studies related practice placement.

The staff at Olotila (researcher’s placement supervisor) was of great assistance in identifying interviewees. It could have been difficult for researcher to be able to identify especially the regular users whose contribution to this research is very valuable. Staff played the role of introducing the researcher and her mission to these service users. It was then easier for researcher to plan a date for
the interview with these service users. For the causal users, researcher being provided with a name tag and her duties clearly stated on it created some degree of trust even with casual users who could be sure that the information gathered was not for personal use but could be beneficial or necessary for decisions about Olotila. This made it easier to approach individual interviewees. Also, because target group was vast, it was easier to get interviewees (stick to those who are interested to speak and forget those that were not interested).

Language would have posed a big challenge since most of the service users; especially the regulars were elderly people and could only speak Finnish. On this, there was another Finnish student from DIAK Helsinki on practical placement at the same time when researcher was in Olotila who could speak fluent English. Staff at Olotila made arrangements, so that he could assist researcher with the interviews when there was a need. He did the translation of the interview questions into Finnish. The researcher conducted the interviews by reading the translated interview questions. Finnish and the respondents responded in Finnish. Probes or follow up easy questions were asked directly again in Finnish by the researcher but more difficult ones were translated again by the Finnish student. At the end of each interview, researcher and acting translator compared their notes and clarifications were made on words and or text that were difficult for researcher to understand. During group interviews, a question was asked and all interviewees were required to answer individually but they also had a right to remain silent if they choose to.

There were no big challenges per se as the placement supervisor was always there to provide the needed support. Nevertheless, some questions that probed up such as “how often do your grandchildren visit” that were asked during group interview were observed to a bit emotional. With questions about grandchildren everyone answered (even those with no grandchildren). Differences from the tone of their voices and their facial expressions made a clear that it was a sensitive issue to discuss in a group.
The unstructured interview format used with the casual users in which one has complete freedom to ask any question also brought a lot of open ended answers because it was difficult for researcher to stay focused. This interview format is difficult to conduct objectively and therefore requires special training (Boulmetis & Dutwin 2005). Researcher, because of inexperience gathered a lot of irrelevant data which also made the data analysis challenging.

4.5 Reliability and Validity

In my opinion, the results of this research are reliable and should be valid. Reliability is the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions (Bell 1987, 50-51). The results are therefore reliable because they produce similar result as that yield through customer feedback carried out by another student on placement during the same period in the same year. Bell states still, that validity tells us whether an item describes what it was supposed to describe and proposes further consultation with colleagues, fellow students and or pilot respondents to find out if design questions or items devised are able to do the job (Bell 1987, 51). In line with Bell, the research questions were drawn up by the researcher but with input from researcher's teacher supervisor and the placement supervisor at Olotila. In my opinion, the main question "what does Olotila mean to you" with probes gave respondents the opportunity to express themselves without holding back any vital information. The result of this research should be considered reliable and valid.
5. EXAMPLE OF DATA COLLECTED

This chapter covers mainly data that was collected through the different. Firstly, data collected through interviews will be presented, followed by data collected through observations and finally data from consulted documents will be presented.

5.1 Interviews

There are people who use the space almost on daily basis and others visit occasionally. This will lead us to making a distinction between these two groups, casual and regular users. To make things clearer interviews conducted with different service users will be placed under these two sub groups.

5.1.1 Casual Users

This includes for example one-time users such as passersby’s and those who visit when they have some free time

Two individual interviews and one group interview fell under this category. For the purpose of social work ethics, other names have been used to identify the interviewees. Jannet and Jesibelle are the individuals and The Asian Women is used to represent the group.

Jannet

Jannet lives in Kerava and is mother of four. Two of her children are of school age and attend school in Kerava. The other two are still under school age and Jannet looks after them at home
According to Jannet, she likes one play park which is situated in Tikkurila, about 500 meters away from Olotila. She brings her children there once in a while. They come by train from Kerava to Tikkurila. For Jannet, she does not need to take breakfast at home on the days they plan to visit the play park at Tikkurila as she can get good, cheap and fresh pulla (a typical Finnish bun) from Olotila while reading a newspaper. For Jannet, Olotila is the right place to stop because she can change the children’s diapers, heat up the children’s food and feed the children before proceeding to the play park.

Jesibelle

Jesibelle is a middle age nurse by profession. She has earlier lived in the Middle East. She has children of her own still living with her. She works with elderly people who can no longer go out of their homes by themselves around Tikkurila. She visits them at home and also takes them out for a walk if they so desire.

Olotila was recommended to Jesibelle by one of her artist friends. Olotila is a nice place for her to visit with some of her clients, so that they can mingle with other people and have a chat over an affordable cup of coffee. Jesibelle sometimes visits Olotila in between her rounds. On such occasions, she has the opportunity to relax and drink a cup of coffee. At Olotila, she often sits alone when she comes because she knows she is in Finland where giving distance is almost a culture but welcomes anyone who wishes to engage in a conversation. It is also a good place for her to just sit and relax without thinking of any responsibilities (away from the children) and without any rush, pressure or need of purchasing anything.

The Asian Women
This is a group of three Asian ladies of age about 30. They have arrived Finland a couple of years ago from Asia for different purposes. One of them lives in Tikkurila and has visited Olotila about three times during her couple of years stay in Tikkurila. She is married to a Finn and has no children of her own. She is unemployed because of inadequate Finnish language skills. She got to know about Olotila from one of her friends who has children who said she liked Olotila because it had a kid's corner where children could play freely while she had a quiet conversation with her own friends. The other two times, she has come around because she was bored staying at home alone after the husband had gone to work.

To these three ladies, Olotila is a good place to meet because of easy accessibility. It is situated at a point where they can all easily get transport connection to the job places after a chat (two of them lived and worked out of Tikkurila). They commented that, Olotila is very clean, cozy and relaxing even though they were not sure if they were at the right place because it was mostly populated by elderly people. They had wanted to leave after one cup of coffee each but were assured by one trainee that they could stay as long as they wanted without purchasing anything. The trainee was an Asian lady too which they confessed that, it made them felt much more at home as they had a close chat with the trainee. They also made mention that, they felt so good chatting we me as they felt we have shared same experiences as immigrants.

5.1.2 Regular Users

This includes those who use the space more often.

Four interviews conducted are deemed to fall under this category of users. Two of the interviews were conducted with individuals and two with groups. The interviewees will also be attributed names in the same way as casual users. The
individual will be named Jukka and Peter and the groups will be Elderlies and Volunteers.

It should be noted that Volunteers in this piece of research are also considered service users. Because more than eighty per cent of the volunteers at Olotila are elderly and retired people, it supports some findings which suggest that elderly or retired people who lack daily adult contacts seems to make friends and acquaintances by doing voluntary. They consider social motive to be the reason for doing voluntary work. (Nylund 2000. 129.)

Jukka

Jukka is a retired man who lives alone about 3 km away from Olotila. Jukka walks to Olotila about three to four times in a week depending on the weather. While in there, he usually sits alone on a separate table but engages in communication from other angles.

According to Jukka, he likes being at Olotila for several reasons. He has friends which he has met in Olotila and others which he made during working life who do visit Olotila, so the place serves like meeting point for them. Secondly, they can chat freely and stay at Olotila as much as they want with or without buying anything and with no one telling them to lower their voices as it done in the libraries. Thirdly, Olotila is well situated i.e. with shops, banks and the health centre which makes it easier to use its facilities to and from visits to these places. Fourthly, Olotila has a smoke free and alcohol free environment which is healthy for them as one of the values maintain by him and his friends is “no alcohol and no smoking”.

Another important aspect mentioned during the interview “likeness”. Jukka likes not only the environment but the volunteers too. He says he likes the way the volunteers relate with and interact with themselves and with other users of the
space. He says even those volunteers who are not so good at talking with clients still do find a way to relate with the clients. He described a smile or just eye contact from volunteers as a sign of acceptance and welcome.

He however concluded by speaking about the challenges he and his friends face in finding other things to do or places to go to, on public holidays and weekends when Olotila is closed. According to Jukka, being together with friends out of home brings good feelings and keeps him away from the usual boring house routine of eating and drinking coffee while lying on the coach and watching television.

Peter

Peter is a retiree who lives in one of the neighbourhood of Tikkurila. He has lived and worked abroad for years. He lives alone but has several grandchildren who live quite close to him. He stops by at Olotila each time he comes to Tikkurila for shopping to have a chat with other people and if there is no one to chat with, he reads a newspaper.

The Elderly

This is an open group of men and women over retirement age. They have visited Olotila on average four times a week over an average period of 5.4 years. Almost all of them at the time of the interview lived alone. Some had children and grandchildren who presently reside far away while others did not. Most of them were no longer in good physical shape to pursue their usual hobbies.

The group has existed for more than six years. Before the renovation of Olotila in 2009 there existed two of such groups consisting of elderly persons. These two groups were formed in Olotila. Many of them could not stand the changes
brought by the renovation, they withdrew themselves and eventually the number of regulars dropped.

Those who accepted the new changes brought by the renovation decided to come together to form the present group. This group, even though they miss the old leather coach which served like a rest chair to take a nap and the fact that children’s toys and books were easy to access by the children themselves, they also embrace the modernisation which they say has attracted a variety of persons instead of just sticking to the old client group. This group has become an important part of their lives as they sometimes organise other activities such as trips to touristic cities both in and out of Finland for themselves. For example they have organised trips to Porvoo and also to Tallinn.

To this group, Olotila is very important in their lives for several reasons. Firstly, it is close to their homes, they do not need to pay a bus fair and walking to and from Olotila every morning is a way of exercising and has become an important daily activity for them since they all live about 2km on average away from Olotila.

Secondly, it is important for them to meet every morning and find out how the others are faring and make a phone call to those that could not be present to find out if they are doing fine.

Thirdly, Olotila gives them a good reason to wake up in time in the morning and prepare themselves so as to meet up with others as they have a usual daily routine that they have developed at Olotila such as discussing the “Metro magazine’s 10 questions”.

Fourthly, they like Olotila because it has big tables and enough space to contain all of them, an alcohol and smoke free space where they could come with their grandchildren when they visit them.
Finally and most importantly, meeting other people out of their group members like the manager of Olótíla, volunteers (they called them nice workers), and other users of Olótíla gives them a better feeling and they leave Olótíla smiling rather than just watching TV and or reading a newspaper at home while waiting for the post man to arrive.

This group also mentioned that they also meet on weekends and public holidays in a place known as “Tori kahvila”, a coffee shop situated about five hundred meters away from the Olótíla which is open seven days a week and also on public holidays.

They concluded that, they liked Olótíla because it is has enough space and big tables and also because it is like a “home” and they feel good while in there.

Volunteers

According to some of the volunteers, volunteering at Olótíla brings them happiness, joy, light and makes their everyday different while providing them with an opportunity for personal growth. Some talked about the challenges of not being able to speak or chat with colleagues during their work life because they were either shy or reserve and admitted that they have gain courage while volunteering at Olótíla and now have the skills to initiate a conversation. Others had friends and close acquaintances during work life but these friends and acquaintances have relocated after retirement. For them volunteering at Olótíla has offered them the opportunity create new acquaintances.

For some of them even though retired, have a husband, children and grandchildren, Olótíla gives them a good opportunity to see, meet and speak with different people which made every day a special day. For others who had no husband, no grandchildren and no other close friends and relatives, they say, “they miss a family” and have no one to share their joys and sorrows with and
so Olotila is an important place because they can share their joys and sorrows not only with other volunteers but also with other users who become friendly and close to them.

For others, they had grown up children who now live far away, so too their grandchildren, they speak with them on the phone but still they need the physical presence of people in their daily lives. Volunteering at Olotila filled this gap as they meet and chat with people on daily basis.

Others said they volunteered at Olotila because, it is open to families with children, according to these people, they get “great time and joy” with the children. Others did volunteering at Olotila because it has some faith values and they can feel free to discuss about Christianity. Others volunteered because they feel that doing something freely for others is one of the duties of a good Christian while others said they volunteered in Olotila because they like manager’s (of Olotila) personality and want to support her in her work.

The few volunteers who are still in work life say the come because of the need to develop their interaction and client approach skills and also, because their present job does not permit them to meet and talk with people often which they feel is necessary. However, they also talked about not being sure of all service users, especially those that they are not familiar with (non-regulars) mentioning the fact that, there are a lot of people out in the community with mental health problems.

5.2 Observations

Through observations as another means of data collection during this research, it was noticed that in Olotila, there exist a high degree of interactions and a special connection not only between service users (including volunteers) but also between service users and the supervisor. Volunteers also interacted closely
amongst themselves and the supervisor. To crown the interaction, the supervisor had a large role, not only with the volunteers but she could easily connect with almost every other visitor but most especially with the regular users which in a way portrayed that she knew them quite well and had already built some bonds with them. Her active and participative personality brings more life in Olotila as most volunteers enjoyed being around her, working and chatting with her.

It was also observed that, volunteers understood their role quite well. They were conscious of the fact that one of their role is to be there for the other users. They remembered to acknowledge the presence of service users either by a simple head nod, word greetings and in some cases a mere eye contact and or a smile was enough depending on the mood of the person just arriving.

Volunteers assisted users in different ways. They served coffee on the tables and clear the tables after use for service users who had difficulties in doing this by themselves, they sometimes spent time with kids at the kids’ corner, they sometimes went to sit and chat with other service users but this also depended on whether the visitor has asked a question or had brought up a conversation, without which they will let the visitor be as they wished. It was also observed that Olotila has two categories of service users which researcher attributed a name. Casual users are those who stop by, when they have free time and have no group or activity that strongly connects them to Olotila and regular users are those who visit Olotila almost on weekly basis and have some attachment or pull factor to Olotila other than a cheap cup of coffee.

5.3 Documents Consulted

The third form of data collection was through consultation of the most recent feedback carried out in Olotila during spring, 2012. The feedback gotten through questions such as sex, place of residence, visit frequencies, grading of the im-
importance of Olotila, and reasons for visiting produced a lot of vital information. However, only responses to “reasons for visiting Olotila today” were deemed to be relevant information to support this research. Below is the table, that present responses gotten from the above mentioned question “ I am in Olotila today because” translated by the researcher into English in Table 1.

**TABLE 1: Client feedback conducted in Spring 2012- Grouped responses for reasons of visiting Olotila.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coffee</th>
<th>Sociability</th>
<th>Atmosphere</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Location &amp; Leisure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I wanted a cup of coffee</td>
<td>I wanted to see people and drink coffee.</td>
<td>Peaceful, tidy and cozy place.</td>
<td>I heard about computer guidance.</td>
<td>I have never been here before but just encouraged myself to come.</td>
<td>I had something to do in Tikkurila.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I needed a cup of coffee and pullaa. I just got fresh ones from the oven. Excellent.</td>
<td>Nice company.</td>
<td>It is always nice to be here.</td>
<td>I noticed an advert about some icon exhibition when I was walking by.</td>
<td>I wanted to get familiar with to the environment and also get some coffee.</td>
<td>I was waiting for my tires to be changed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to eat and read a newspaper; places were warm and sunny.</td>
<td>I brought a friend with, so that we can discuss peacefully.</td>
<td>It is our main destination when we walk from Koivukylä to here and back. There are always nice girls in here.</td>
<td>There was a lecture.</td>
<td>I work with the elderly in Vantaa city and wanted coffee.</td>
<td>I was having a day walk with my friend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s a cheap place for small snacks.</td>
<td>It’s a meeting place for the deaf and dumb.</td>
<td>This is an important and spiritual place.</td>
<td>I needed juice and a place to rest and cater for my baby in between our trip. There is African Tahti (game) hear and Helsinki newspaper.</td>
<td>I need a small break and brother recommended this place.</td>
<td>It is raining outside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I was together with an association- sydänvyhdys.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I have to wait here because my wife is shopping.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this chapter, results from findings will be presented by matching data collected through interviews, observation and documents consultation and the theories of community, well-being, solitude, care and others, presented as theoretical framework for this thesis to respond to research question “the meaning of Olotila to its service users”

6.1 Analysis

Researcher used the analysis method proposed by Wolcott (1994) which suggest that analysis could also be meaning derived form a comparison of the findings with information gleaned from the literature or extant theories so that the findings confirms past information or diverse from it. It can also suggest new questions that need to be asked – questions raised by the data and analysis that the inquirer had not foreseen earlier in the study. (Creswell 2003, 195.) Therefore, the researcher made comparisons of the voices of the interviewees and the theories stated in chapter three.

6.2 Results

The result of this research reveals that Olotila means different things to different persons (volunteers and visitors) but depending on the prevailing situations in their lives at moment of use. It meant much more than a cheap café and or waiting point for travellers as perceived by the public.

Olotila to some users meant a place to build social networks to improve well-being, a place to improve or develop some meaningful skills, a place that offers opportunities for people to feel that they belong and are worthy to the society, a
place for planning or organizing activities, a space of care and also a space for solitude which all sums up to improving wellbeing.

6.2.1 Olotila as space for social support network building

Statements in the data collected such as “being together with friends out of home brings good feelings” from Jukka, “great time and joy with children brought to Olotila by their parents” from the volunteers and nice company from consulted documents indicates missing social networks.

Jukka mentioned during the interview that the only person he sees frequently is the post man and statements from some volunteers such; having no husband and no children, they miss a family and have no one to share their joys and sorrows with, falls in this same category. Other volunteer mentioning that they had grown up children who now live far away, so too their grandchildren, they speak with them on the phone but still they needed the physical presence of people in their daily lives are all signs of people craving for human contact.

Being alone, when we crave human contact and belonging means we are experiencing loneliness (Rokach 2011, 72). For persons in this category, suffering from loneliness, Olotila is a place for them to meet and chat with other people because they like and enjoy seeing and being in the mist of people.

Furthermore, the elderlys’ description of how they became a group reveals that they got to know themselves in Olotila They have come to Olotila independently but have been able to form a group within Olotila. Now they are able to organise and plan own activities by themselves for their own interest. Trips to the City of Porvoo and Tallin were some examples of such activities planned at Olotila. They have found a space for social support. Social support in this sense means, having friends and other people, including family, to turn to in times of need or crisis to give you a broader focus and positive self-image. Social support en-
hances quality of life and provides a buffer against adverse life events. In fact, social support is now proven to be a live-saver. People that are supported by close relationships with friends, family or fellow members of church or other support groups are less vulnerable to ill health and premature death. (Taking Charge of your Health 2012.)

Also, as mentioned in chapter three Berkman & Glass (2000) point out that, family and social relationships help to reduce the stress and anxiety during job loss and promote satisfaction and physical health. This implies that, social relationships can promote both satisfaction (happiness) and physical health.

6.2.2 Olotila as space for personal development or improvement of skills

A few number of volunteers who were still in work life mentioned that they come because of the need to develop their interaction and client approach skills and also, because their present job does not permit them to meet and talk with people daily which they feel is necessary for personal development or growth. Statements from feedback such as “I heard of computer guidance” reveal that, there are people who come to Olotila because they want to improve their computer skills.

6.2.3 Olotila as meeting space

In the documents consulted, one of the respondents said they came to Olotila on that day because it is meeting place for the deaf and dumb, the other said they came as a group (Vantaan Sydänyhdistys). Within the group of elderly, statements concerning the size of tables, being there without necessarily purchasing something and non-smoking environment makes it clear that Olotila serves as a “dream” meeting place for this group of persons. For the three Asian ladies, the location of Olotila (good transport connection), its cozy look,
freedom to be there without necessary purchasing anything for unlimited time made it a perfect meeting space.

6.2.4 Olotila as space of socialization and community engagement.

There are volunteers who mentioned that they do voluntary work at Olotila because they feel that doing something freely for others is one of the duties of a good Christian. They are considered as finding space for community engagement. Some studies as mentioned in chapter three suggest that community engagement could have a positive impact on individuals’ perceptions of personal empowerment which helps them feel useful to others, feel in control of events and being able to express ideas and having awareness of individual rights. Engaging in communities on the one hand helps individuals make new friends while gaining appreciation of other peoples’ points of view, makes them feel happier and improves their quality of life because of the increase in social network and social interaction. At community level on the other hand, it increases mutual trust and understanding between different population groups including cultural awareness between different ethnic groups. Community engagement may be particularly important for ‘at risk’ population groups, such as residents in poor social and economic circumstances, and older people who tend to be less well connected socially. (Attree et al. 2011)

“Doing something freely” for others as duty of a Christian mentioned in the interview with volunteers is seen in the community described by Fortunato, Friesnhahn and Kantowics in chapter three, where one is able to give and receive love, help and understanding without expecting any reward.

Responses such as that from one of the Asian ladies who says she is bored being at home alone when the husband is gone to work. They may not be suf-
fearing from loneliness but miss human company at certain or points or moments. This is supported by the theory of socialization mentioned in chapter three which suggests that, as humans we need to interact with other humans to acquire human attributes.

6.2.5 Olotila as space for solitude

Solitude could be found in Olotila from responses such as “it is also a good place for her to just sit and relax without thinking of any responsibilities (away from the children) and without any rush, pressure or need of purchasing anything likes to sit alone”. This implies that Jesibelle does not lack company but feels like being alone sometimes. Solitude is cherished time that can help one rejuvenate, reflect, refresh and renew. Most often solitude denotes a time of privacy or the ability to control the ability of others to intrude upon one’s life. (Rokach 2011, 72.)

6.2.6 Olotila as a space of care (non-physical).

Some volunteers mentioned that Olotila is an important place because they can share their joys and sorrows not only with other volunteers but also with other users who become friendly and close to them. The care described by Conradson in chapter three where volunteer seeks to relate in a supportive manner with other service users, through activities such as listening, befriending, offering practical advice for instance can be noticed here. Volunteers could listen to each other and also listen to other visitors who were interested in a chat not only as observed by the researcher but as they have been provided or trained with some basic skills to offer this kind of services.
7. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the researcher presents her opinions about Olotila and tries to create a connection between Olotila and wellbeing which the researcher used at the introductory page of this research. The method of analysis used in this research suggested by Creswell (see chapter 6) gives room for the researcher to suggest new research questions. Recommendations will therefore be focused on other issues that came into light from the data collected.

7.1 Summary

From the goals mentioned in the brief history of Olotila, which aimed at supporting the wellbeing of the socially excluded people living in Helsinki capital region through diaconal work by organizing daytime activities and providing education needed for voluntary and advisory work. The socially excluded referred to the unemployed, those on long sick leaves, refugees and other immigrants, single mothers and others who could also be victims of loneliness.

Interestingly, Olotila does not only offer space for victims of loneliness such as the above mentioned target group, it also offers space for persons seeking time to be alone which is known as solitude. Depending on people’s needs, they can decide to have solitary experiences in different kind of places, while doing different things and for different length of time. Some may go out for a walk or run while others need a dark quite room while others can sit alone in places where there are other people. For example Jesus prayed alone for forty days and forty nights. In Olotila people can just be themselves, sit alone, quiet and reflect on their past and plan for the future without involving in discussions and conversations as research result presents.
Nevertheless, Olotila still serves the same purpose for which it was created “supporting wellbeing” despite the fact that, its target group has expanded. Olotila now serves the whole community – be it lonely people suffering from loneliness and finding ways reduce the pain of feeling alone or aloneness people needing space for solitude to gain the glory of being alone. From research result, Olotila can be seen as place that supports subjective wellbeing (happiness). People come to Olotila for several personal reasons which do not yield any physical reward or gains. Rather, they get some personal internal satisfaction as expressed during the interviews. Olotila can therefore be seen as a place where people can get the necessary support to return to their original “happiness set points” after some life challenging situations as described in chapter.

Unhappiness is the basis of all social evils. Unhappy people commit unhappy acts: either on themselves or on others while happy people or people who feel good are more likely to work well, be nice, to stay healthy and longer than those who feel bad. (Thin 2012, 56-57.)

Olotila can now be described as neighborhood café or meeting place for local people. The coming together of individuals to this meeting place creates a community. The importance of such places in the community cannot be underestimated.

The description of “community” as something vibrating with positive connotations, as something to which we all wish to belong and Clary’s affirmation that, empowerment is achieved collectively and that as a community, people can and do take actions as individuals and as members of communities to address the many and varied problems that confront and challenge society as mentioned in chapter three are all “gains” of a community.
Olotila could be known as place for improvement of wellbeing. At individual, its users achieve pleasure which is a building block of human happiness or subjective wellbeing (SWB) and acting as a community, objective wellbeing (OWB) which is got to do with how people are fed, how healthy they are, if they are appropriately housed, economically secured and well educated as cited in chapter three could also be achieved by collectively challenging government policies.

7.2 Recommendations

Volunteers expressed some concerns of not being sure of service users state of mental health, especially those that they were not familiar with, because of the numerous cases of mental health patients leaving independently (out of institutions) within the community. Further research could be carried out on how safe public spaces are, coupled with the freedom of mental health patients to reside out of closed and controlled institutions.

The three Asian women interviewees expressed doubts if they were at the right place as they noticed that most service users were elderly people. Further research could be done to find out if other service users have the same experience. Is Olotila stigmatized in any way? They also expressed some level of joy and satisfaction meeting and chatting with the researcher (immigrant) on the day of the interview. Could it be that, immigrants may be more attracted to environments where they can meet fellow immigrants?

Still in chapter three, it was mentioned that community engagement increases mutual trust and understanding between different population groups including cultural awareness between different ethnic groups. What has Olotila done or what could be done to achieve this increase in mutual trust, understanding and
cultural awareness between different ethnic groups in this era of multiculturalism.
8. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At this point, I will like to present briefly, my professional development in two parts. The first part will focus on my professional development at general level which includes all studies at Diak towards achieving a Bachelor in Social Services. The second part will focus on professional development gained while conducting this research.

Social work in my point of view is a profession with no right and wrong answers or solutions to social problems. As people are unique, so too their problems and life challenges are unique and so generalising in social work will eventually be harmful to individuals. What counts most in social work seems to be reasons for the actions taken, best interest of client and ethical consideration. Professional development on my part has meant, familiarizing myself with the Ethical Principles of Social Work. It is said in the ethical principles that human rights and justice are fundamental to social work likewise ethical awareness is also a fundamental part of professional practice of a social worker. Updating oneself with the current national ethical guidelines of the state where the practitioner is practicing is of utmost importance. Confidentiality has been one of the watch words throughout my study period, accompanied by compassion, empathy and care. Social workers should care for themselves in order to be able to care for others.

Conducting a research such as this was the most challenging “dream Come True” for me. I have learned that, change in a society can only be achieved by providing prove of its necessity and importance. This can only be done with the help of research. Researches such as this can be used to seek grants for continuation of a project or to start a project. I can proudly say that, this research enabled me not only to improve on my writing skills but also writing logically. Through this research, I have been able to improve my skills on project proposal and project evaluation.
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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Interview questions with the elderly

1. For how long have you been visiting Olotila?

2. Describe how meaningful Olotila is, to you!

3. Was your group formed in or out of Olotila?

4. What does this group mean to you?

5. What else do you do out of Olotila; alone or with friends?
Appendix 2: Interview questions with the Volunteers

1. How long have you done voluntary work with Olotila?

2. What motivated you to volunteer for Olotila

3. What have you enjoyed most while volunteering in Olotila?

4. What challenges have you faced while volunteering in Olotila?