

# OLD HANDS

A report of the handbook

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## ABSTRACT

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The aim of this report is to introduce the process of creating a handbook, Old Hands – A handbook to motivate and empower communities in helping elderly people. The report debates cultural aspects and information on the present situation of several aged people. The report also includes the reason to make a handbook to the community.

The interviews were conducted in the spring 2009. The method applied was a qualitative, semi-structured interview. The interviews were recorded by using a dictating machine. One of the interviews was conducted on e-mail due to the distant location of the respondent. The gathered data was not analysed. The purpose of the interviews was to produce a handbook and not a thesis research.

In the process of creating the handbook seven respondents were interviewed; one social worker, two nurses, two practical nurses, one volunteer and one deaconess from the Lutheran church. The valuable experiences of these respondents were turned into a valuable tool for the community

This report indicates that participation of the community is required in order to develop and improve the quality of life of the elderly people. Furthermore, the handbook is an important tool for Finnish and foreigners people who want to make a difference in the elderly people's lives. Eventually the handbook was created in order to graduate as a Bachelor of Social Services. The handbook is opened to the possibility of being published.

Keywords: handbook, elderly people, aged people, foreign, community work, participation

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

I have worked as a practical nurse for over two years in an elderly care home in the town of Nurmijärvi. As a Chilean, I have become familiar with another way of respecting and taking care of elderly people. In this process, I have also learnt that as a foreigner I can contribute to this society with my culture and identity. In my opinion, these two elements instead of being impediments, they can be a great assistance when helping other cultures in developing new ideas, strategies and methods in order to improve the quality of life of the aged people.

In August 2005, I became a student in Helsinki Diakonia College. I participated in a special programme designed for immigrants who, after the programme, intended to apply to high schools, vocational schools or polytechnics in order to graduate to a profession. The programme I attended was called MAVA, which means vocational training education for immigrants. During the training, the students gained experience and knowledge of different careers and education, for example, study skills, Finnish language, society and working life. Furthermore, the students were sent out on placement training. (Helsinki Diakonia College.)

I was encouraged by my teacher, who knew that after this programme my desire was to apply for social work, to execute my placement in an elderly care home. The period of the practice was an eye-opening experience for me. The training helped me to see how numerous professionals involved in the work with aged people offered older people better quality of live, support and care. Most people would agree that the work of nurses, practical nurses and other professionals in these care institutions is important and necessary. During the training, I was astonished by the degree of loneliness that several elderly people encounter on a daily basis and by the indifference of some authorities regarding this issue. Tarja Tallqvist, a member of the Finnish parliament, comments on this issue in a following manner:

I was shocked when I asked the home care office supervisor, why is the current situation so inadequate? Why do you not clean up? Why do you not direct or even to take them to the hospital care, when they are in need? I got the answer

“the elderly person is capable of making his or her own decisions without being controlled by anyone. The practical nurse cannot just go and clean the refrigerator or do anything else except what is written in the caring agreement”. Such a law does not exist. This shows negligence and lack of responsibility. When an aged person is living in such conditions, then the alarm bells are ringing, he is silently screaming for help. It must be heard. We need to react. (Tallqvist 2009.)

Often, when I read newspapers articles on elderly people who have been found dead after several months in their homes, without anybody noticing it before, it makes me realise that older people are in need of help. Loneliness and depression are drastic issues affecting numerous people in Finland, however primarily older people.

Imagine that you wake up alone in your bed before the sunrise. Stay up until morning alone, then you eat breakfast alone. Walk alone and come back home alone. Nobody speaks to you; nobody hears you or looks at you. Nobody is interested in you. The morning turns into evening but nobody approaches you. Weeks are following each other but you do not get companionship. How long would you carry on without losing your zest for life? Lonely people over the age of 65 are not able to carry on. Every second day one of them commits suicide because of loneliness and depression. (Appendix 1: Helsinkimissio advertisement.)

The number of aged people in Europe is growing rapidly. In 2005, 7.4 per cent of the Finnish population was over the age of 75 (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health). The project-population shows that in 2030, people older than 65 years will comprise more than a quarter of the population and fewer than every sixth person will be under 15 years of age (Castells & Himanen 2004, 92).

We all know the world will change slowly and imperfectly. We cannot afford to be unrealistic or utopian. We must be flexible and experimental. We must avoid rigid boundaries and expectations. We must move beyond the limited framework of the formal ritual and recognise wider possibilities, encouraging everyone to use restorative practice freely in their work and in their daily lives. (Watchel 1999.)

The reason why I decided to create a handbook was that I wanted to motivate and empower communities to take care of the aged people altogether in a better way and with dignity. Furthermore, the handbook is for me a significant tool for my own use when developing my work among elderly people.

## 2 BETWEEN CULTURES

In this chapter, I introduce the reader a comparison between Chile and Finland in relation to elderly people's care. This comparison is constituted of my primary experiences and point of view gained in Finland during these past six years. This comparison is observed from different perspectives such as social welfare, religious beliefs, language, family and gender. This comparison is illustrated in Table 1: 'Comparison table, in respect to elderly people's care, in Chile and Finland'.

As an immigrant, I have experienced and learnt the challenge of being caught between two important cultures. I have often wondered how two cultures, both of which having encountered important transitions in their history, can have such differences and similarities between them. In Finland, the changes that took place already 50 years ago affected society more rapidly and radically than the changes experienced in Chile 50 years ago. However, even though the changes that occurred in Chile were slower, they still altered people's lives.

TABLE 1: Comparison table, in respect to elderly people's care, in Chile and Finland

Countries	CHILE	FINLAND
Welfare system	Institutional welfare state model	Nordic welfare state model
Who provides the social and health welfare system	FONASA (Government, public National health insurance) AFP and ISAPRES (Private Institutions of social and health) Family, NGO's and churches	KELA, The social Insurance Institution of Finland. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Municipalities National pension Finnish Centre for Pension NGO's and Churches
The role of the family and individuals	Close	Individualistic
Religious beliefs	Christian background Catholic and Protestant	Christian background Lutheran and Orthodox
The use of language in order to approach older people	More formal, the use of "Tú and Usted" The way of speaking in diminutives	Direct, less formal
Transition in the history 50 years ago	Industrialisation Pinochet and the Institutionalisation of the social and health system Globalization	Second World War Industrialisation The Nordic welfare system Globalization



## 2.1 The way of life

Raymond Williams (1976) claims that culture is one of the most difficult words in the English language to define. Culture can be seen as the things that humans produce or do.

Christopher Jencks (1993) describes culture in four main senses in which the word culture is now used:

1. Can be seen as a quality of possessed by individuals who are able to gain the learning and achieve the qualities that are seen as desirable in a cultured human being. The first definition is slightly elitist as it sees human as superior to others
2. The second definition is also elitist but it sees certain societies rather than people as superior than others. In other words more civilised than other societies
3. The third definition sees cultures as the total of all the arts and intellectual work in a society
4. The final definition sees culture as the whole way of life of a people. (Haralambos and Holborn 2000, 791.)

In this chapter of my study, I am applying Jencks'(1993) fourth definition of the concept where he describes culture as "the whole way of life of a people".

Linton (1945) argues that the culture of a society is the way of life of its members, it is the collection of ideas and habits, which they can learn, share and transmit from generation to generation (cited in Haralambos & Holborn 2000).

Linton's definition is clear and easy to comprehend. However, I would add to his definition that culture is the collection of traditions and practices.

## 2.2. The welfare system in Chile and Finland

According to Ari Nieminen (Lecture 04.02.2009), the concept of welfare system has not a generally agreed definition. A narrow definition of welfare services is 'social and health care sectors'. Whereas, a broad definition of welfare services is 'welfare cluster that includes several services sector branches'. According to Matthies, (2006) there are

four types of welfare state models: residual, corporative, fragmentary and universal. (Cited in Ari Nieminen lecture 04.02.2009.)

The Chilean welfare system represents an institutional welfare system. This institutional welfare system was created under the government of Pinochet in 1981. Pinochet created a system of private funds called Administradores de Fondos de Pensiones or AFP (Pension Fund Administrator) to manage and administer workers' individual retirement account. (The Social Security Network.) The main idea of this system was to recognise the freedom and ability of individuals to choose the health system and the pension system of their choice (Isapres de Chile).

Thus, in Chile each individual has the responsibility, as a worker, to affiliate to an AFP (the Pension Fund Administrator) and ISAPRE (the Social Security Health Institution) or FONASA (the National Security Health). Every worker participating in the defined-contribution system, in order to access to the welfare system of health and pension, is to pay a compulsory contribution. The Chilean Pension system is based on the capitalisation of social security savings on individual's accounts. (Ferreiro 2003, 5.)

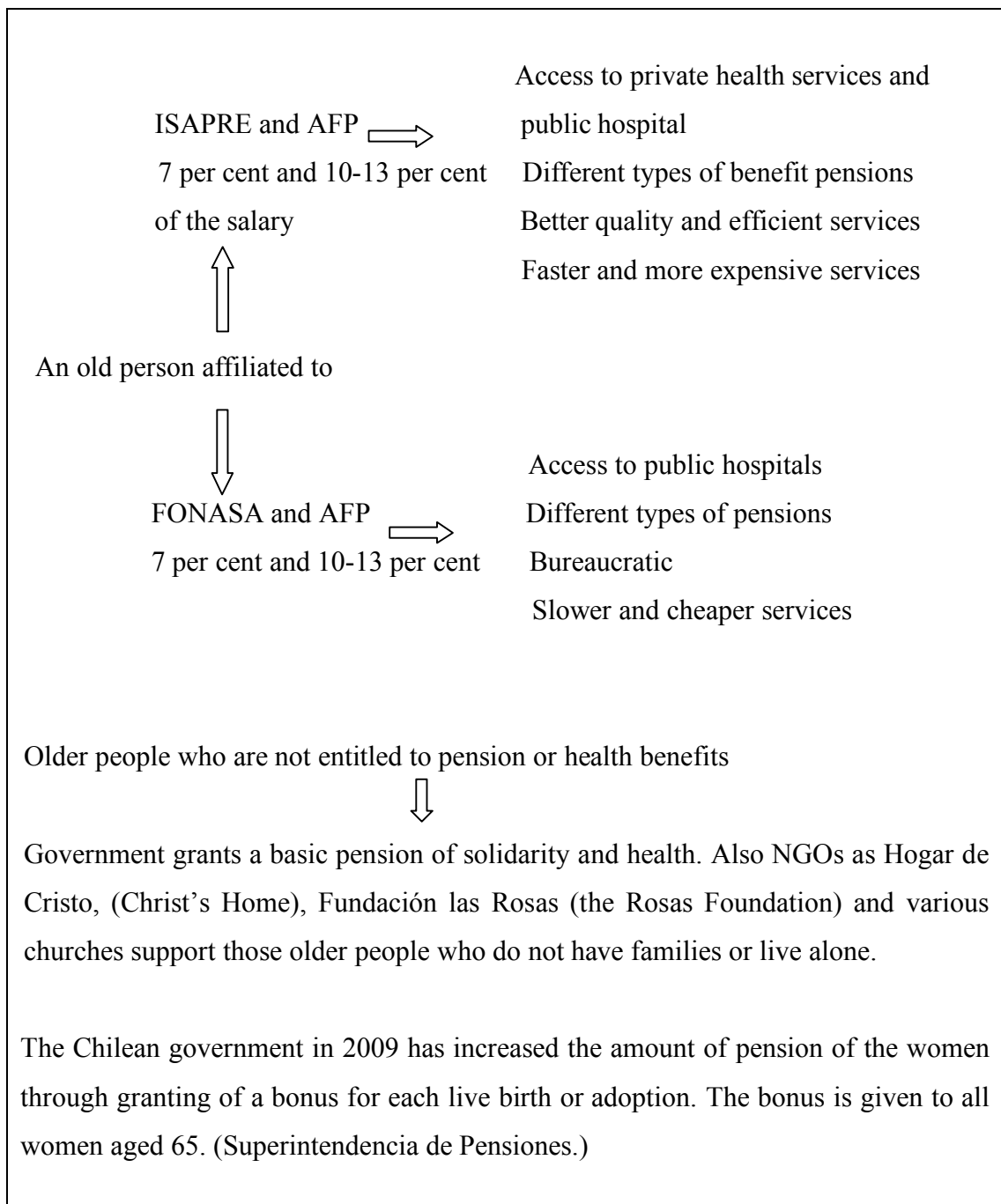
Coverage of health benefits is channelled through the National Health Fund (FONASA), which is a public service, and the Social Security Health Institutions (ISAPRE), which are private entities. FONASA offers two health plans, known as the Institutional Option and the Free Choice Option. The first plan mentioned, Institutional Option, is addressed to the poorest members of the country. These people receive health benefits through FONASA and they are attended in the institutions belonging to the National Health Services System. The second plan, the Free Choice Option, is addressed to the workers, those who pay contribution. The National Health Fund provides coverage for 67.4 per cent of the Chilean population. The main source of income both FONASA and ISAPRE is the contributions of their members, fixed at 7 per cent of taxable income. ISAPRE, the Social Security Health Institutions offer a wide variety of health plans to their members. (Ferreiro 2003, 14.)

The Social Security Health Institutions are legal entities, registered with the Superintendency of Social Security Health Institutions, offering coverage for health benefits, which is charged to the contribution established by the law for this purpose. This is equivalent to the 7 per cent of the worker's taxable income, or a higher rate agreed between the worker and the ISAPRE. In December 2001, the ISAPRE system was providing coverage for 19 per cent of the total population. (Ferreiro 2003, 15.)

The coverage of pension benefits is channelled through the Pension Fund Administrator or AFP. Similarly in the process of the health benefits, the worker must pay compulsory contribution. The percentage to apply on the taxable income is between 10 and 13 per cent of monthly earnings (Superintendencia de Pensiones).

Thus, the benefits that a Chilean elderly person receives depend on which system he/she was affiliated to, during the work history. The poorest citizens of the country, those who are not entitled to pension or health benefits, receive a basic pension of solidarity and basic health support from the Chilean government. Table 3: 'The welfare system in Chile in order to provide health and pension benefits to aged people' illustrates and assists the reader in creating an overview on the Chilean system.

TABLE 3: The welfare system in Chile in order to provide health and pension benefits to older people



The Finnish social welfare is based on the Nordic welfare state model, which means all permanent residents of Finland are issued a social and health insurance. In Finland the primary institutions responsible for the wellbeing of people are the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, municipalities, The Social Insurance Institution of Finland, The

National Pensions and The Finnish Centre for Pensions. In addition, churches and NGOs (non-governmental organisations) take responsibility of this entity. The aim of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is setting and guiding the basic principles of social welfare and monitoring the implementation of those principles. However, at present the provision of social welfare is carried out at the local level, in municipalities. Municipalities produce most services. The primary task of the municipality is to fulfil the needs of the population by providing a sufficient range of high quality services. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.) Municipalities can also provide services together with other municipalities or by buying services from another municipality, an NGO or a private service provider. At the beginning of 2009, there were 348 municipalities in Finland (Kunnat.net).

In Finland, municipalities are autonomous administrative units with the right to collect taxes. Democratically elected municipal councils take decisions on local matters in municipalities, including social services. Municipalities are required to provide social welfare services according to the needs of their inhabitants. Although this is a statutory requirement, the law does not specify the extent or content of the services nor the manner in which they should be provided. Municipal authorities thus exercise broad discretion in how to provide these services. There are, however, in some respects very detailed provisions on the obligation to provide services. For example, children's daycares and services covered by the special provision requirement in the Services and Assistance for the Disabled Act are subjective rights. All children under school age in Finland have the absolute right to daycares arranged by municipal authorities. Persons with severe disabilities have a subjective right to transportation and interpreter services, to service housing and to home conversion services. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.)

During this report, I will refer to the welfare system known as Kansaneläkelaitos in Finland, with the abbreviation Kela (the Social Insurance Institution of Finland). Kela was originally a pension institution with a sole responsibility of providing basic state pension for the people.

Later on, Kela's operation have been expanded, diversified and modernised. From a pension insurance institution, Kela has evolved into an institution offering social protection for all. Kela is now a provider of cradle-to-grave social protection. (Kela.)

Kela attends to basic security for all residents in Finland through the different stages of their lives. Kela incorporate among its customers everyone living in Finland and anyone living outside Finland covered under by the Finnish social security system.

The schemes administered by Kela cover such areas of social security as family benefits, health insurance, rehabilitation, basic unemployment security, housing benefits, financial aid for students and basic pensions. In addition, Kela provides disability benefits, conscripts' allowances and assistance for immigrants. (Kela.)

For example, by presenting Kela card at the pharmacy or at many private medical clinics, the individual can get a direct, on-the-spot-reimbursement for the costs (Kela).

This system model is tax-financed by all the citizen members of the country through taxation. When everybody pays, everybody is also entitled to receive social security, guaranteed by the state. In addition, everyone who is in Finland as a tourist or lives in Finland permanently pays VAT (value added tax) to the state. The VAT is a general tax, which affects nearly all consumption of goods and services (Vero 2006).

Finnish social policy focuses on the prevention of social problems. Preventive measures are the most economical and most humane way of maintaining social welfare. Preventing social problems requires the consideration of social aspects in all decisions that have a social impact, for example in environmental policy, housing policy, employment policy and education policy. Social services are in high demand and greatly valued in Finland. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.)

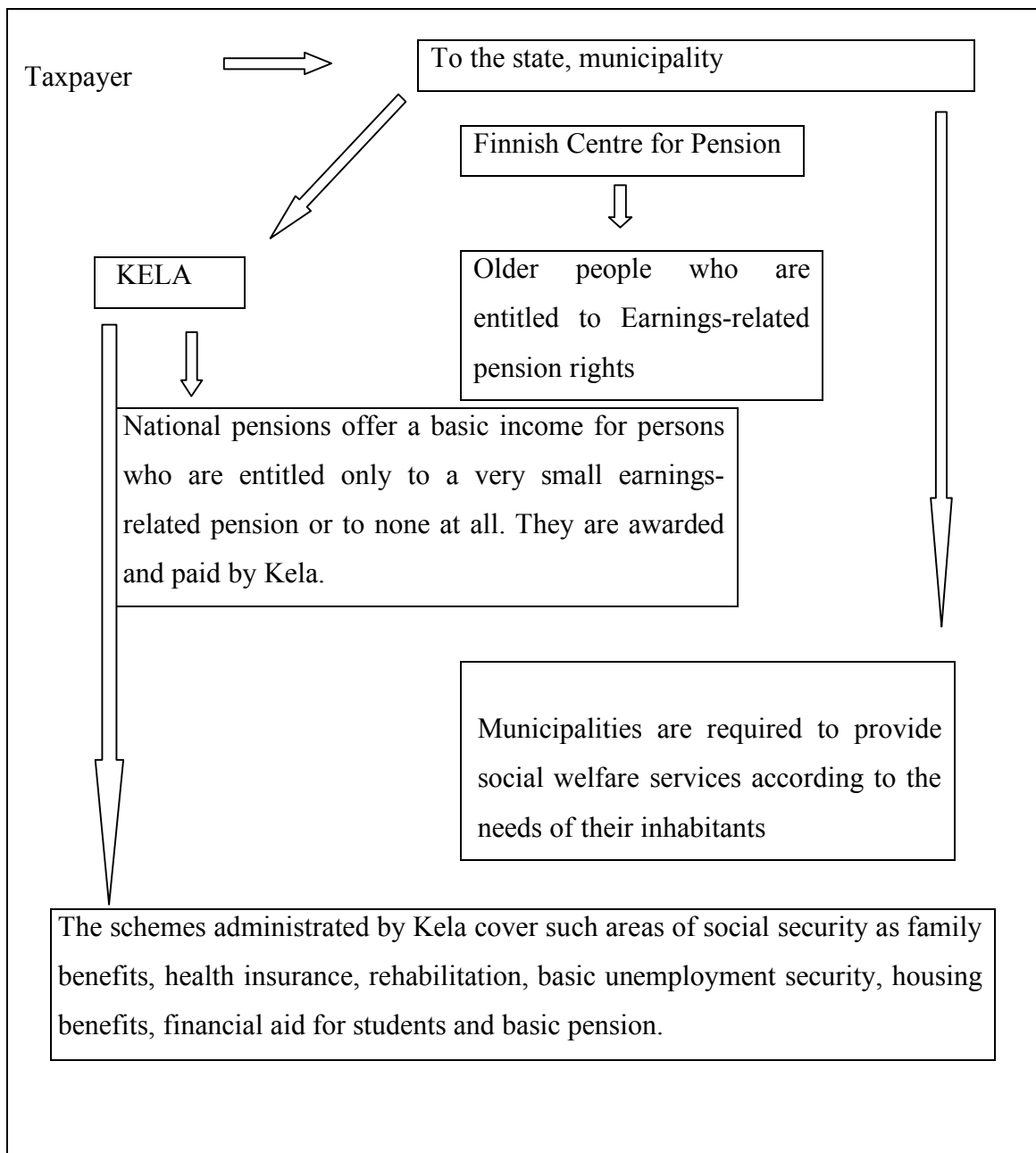
Finland has two statutory pension systems. The national pensions offer a basic income for persons who are entitled only to a very small pension or to none at all. They are awarded and paid by Kela. Earnings-related pension rights are accrued through employment and self-employment. (Kela.)

The amount of the pension depends on the total amount of the annual earnings during the work history. The taxation of pension income differs from that of wage earners' income due to different tax deductions and social insurance contributions. Deductions awarded on pension income are the pension income deduction and a possible invalidity deduction. The wage earner again is awarded a deduction for costs incurred in order to gain earnings and the earnings deduction. In addition, the wage earner pays pension contributions and

unemployment insurance contributions as well as contributions for earned income insurance in health insurance, and these can be deducted in the taxation. (The Finnish Centre for Pension.)

There are several earnings-related pension providers. For more information about earnings-related pensions, the employee needs to contact the pension provider or the Finnish Centre for Pensions. (Kela.) The Table 4: ‘The welfare system in Finland in order to provide health and pension benefits to aged people’ illustrates and assists the reader in creating an overview on the system in Finland.

TABLE 4: The welfare system in Finland in order to provide health and pension benefits to older people



### 2.3 Family and older people

In Chile, the family is the refuge of emotional, economic and even physical security (Tironi 2006, 2). When older parents cannot cope alone in their homes because of



illness, diseases or the death of the spouse, it is the “duty” of the family to take care of them.

According to Anna-Liisa Salomaa (personal communication 15.10.2009), in Finland 50 years ago, elderly and disabled people were under the care of the family until the day of death. In addition, older people did not live as long as elderly people live nowadays. In addition, they were not put in the elderly care homes, because it was a shameful issue to the family. Only those people who did not have families were taken into special care homes called “Kunnallis koti” which means a local home. In these local homes, older people and disabled people lived together. Unfortunately, 50 years ago there were no special care centres for the disabled people.

My grandmother was 72-years-old when she died and according to many people, she was very old. However, at present, the situation is another, several elderly people can easily live older than 85 and some even older than 100 years. (Salomaa 2009.)

However, the situation in Finland has changed. Presently, the responsibility of taking care of older people does not necessarily meet the family. In Finland, The National Pension insurance and Kela became responsible for the national health insurance of its people after 1964 (Kela). This system “relieved” the family from its responsibility of being the sole provider for elderly people. In Finland, it can be argued that the main provider for the health and social pension security of the older people is the state.

In Chile, when an elderly person lives in poor conditions and is in need of support and care, she/he does not instantly plead to municipality in order to ask for help. Although, an elderly person has the right to demand for benefits and support as a citizen of the country because it is established in the welfare system. Nevertheless, several older people prefer surviving with the support of the family. The reason for this behaviour is not rooted solely in the fact that older people do not know their rights, since the reason for this type of conduct is perhaps rooted on the bureaucratic process that people face in order to access for benefits. The bureaucratic process makes people feel humiliated and poor rather than dignified. For that reason, elderly people will turn to their family instead of the government pension and health solidarity. Older people know that family

will respond faster and more effectively in order to provide love, care and support. In addition, in Chile the role of the gender is fundamental when taking care of the aged people, especially to take care of one's own ageing parents.

### 2.3.1 The role of the women

The role of the women in several societies is important and essential to the country and the family. In addition, the role of the women in the participation of caring older people is virtually an "obligation" to achieve.

A central element of the social construction of femininity is that women are "naturally" equipped to love and care for others. One of the experiences that unite almost all women is their serving and caring function for men of their own class and race. This servicing work is also a central element of relationship between mothers and their children while in turn it is considered "natural" for daughters to care for the aging parents (McDowell & Pringle 1992, 128.)

In the Chilean culture, it is not written in any document or policy that women will take care of the aged parents. However, this responsibility is part of the Chilean culture that has descended from generation to generation. It can be argued that this phenomenon can be called as "culture of consciousness". The role of the women in Chile, in relation to the care of the older people, is important and needed. Otherwise, without the participation of the women the level of poverty, suicides, depression and exclusion among elderly people would be critically high.

In Finland, the role of the woman is somewhat different, in comparison with Chile, but very important and relevant to society and especially to elderly people. In professional terms, the role of the women (non-direct relative) has demonstrated that they have a great participation in taking care of elderly people. Nevertheless, the role of the women (as direct relative) is not a part of "the culture of consciousness" or an issue that women "must fulfil". When referring to the expression "non-direct relative" means, that the relationship between the woman and the aged person is not related to each other by a family ties. The expression "direct relative" means that the relationship between the woman and the elderly person is related to each other by a family tie.

However, it is clear that the role of the women as professionals is visible and important in Finland. If we claimed otherwise, the work that thousands of women do in the area of social and health services would be forgotten. In Finland, the participation of the women in caring for the elderly people is much stronger than the participation of men. Although women's role in professional terms has an important place in society when taking care of the elderly people, yet it can be clearly observed that several women do not want or cannot take this challenge. The reasons for these changes are based on the social changes that the wars, industrialisation, technological developments and the improvement of living conditions, brought to the country (Harju 2006, 22).

It is important to remind that due to the war, 'the winter war, 1939-1940', many men deceased. Therefore, a large number of single-parent families and the women generated and the women were obligated to start working and supporting for the family. Therefore, the women did not have the same chance and time to take care of the older people. Finnish women were also of great importance in political and economic life after the war. They were not pushed back into the homes likewise in several other western countries. The positive attitude to the women towards the labour force helped Finland to evolve. (Cheal 2003, 356.)

The female population started to leave the Finnish countryside earlier than men. Educating girls gave them a better opportunity for an occupation. The bourgeois model of women as potential wives who would not work outside the home was not commonly rooted in Finnish culture. Already, as early as 1959, only 23 per cent of working age women were exclusively housewives. In 1982, the percentage staying at home was no more than 8.6 per cent (Cheal 2003, 356.)

In Finland, the changes that occurred affected primarily the family. At present, there are smaller families and a high rate of divorces from an agrarian way of life to an industrialised way of life. As more women entered to working life fewer women were staying at home. In Chile, the changes occurred after industrialisation and the creation of the institutional welfare system did not affect the family as fast as it was in Finland. However, according to Tironi (2008), the changes observed in the conduct of people, families and yet in the role of the gender have had an essential impact to society during the last 15 years in Chile

After the Second World War and industrialisation, the Finnish society went through a great transitional period in the 1960s. It is claimed to have been the fastest transitional period of the history. The number of people working in agriculture and forestry dropped from 46 per cent to 15 per cent between the years 1950 and 1975. Due to the change in occupational structure, half million people, almost one fifth of the population moved from the countryside into the cities in the 1960's. (Harju 2006, 22.)

In some countries all social changes may be slower. Meanwhile in other countries; the process can be faster as it was in Finland. However, all changes that occur in the structure of society and primarily those changes that are concerned to the family will be continuing to grow.

## 2.4 Religious beliefs

Finland and Chile have Christian religious beliefs background in both countries. The main churches are based on one God and on the teachings of the Bible. The definition of religion for people has different meanings and positions. However, in this report I am not trying to look for “new” definitions. Nevertheless, for the importance that religion plays in every culture and society, it would be a good reason to compare the Finnish and Chilean cultures in this respect. Religious beliefs of one sort or another are present in every culture, society, and family (Haralambos & Holborn 2000).

McGuire (1981) examines the factors that influence the role of the religion in society. The beliefs of a particular religion will influence the role of society, culture, social location and internal organisation. Culturally, religious beliefs can play two types of roles. First, religious beliefs can play a central role to the culture wishing to produce changes in society and it could be more significant and important in justifying social changes. Second, religious beliefs in other societies could play a less significant central role and would not have a strong meaning in people's lives (Cited in Haralambos & Langley 2004, 96).

In the Bible there are several parts referring to the respect and care of the older people. However, is it true that Chilean and Finnish people have Christian values? In theory, Chile and Finland have Christian values. According to the Lutheran church, approximately 80.6 per cent of the Finnish population belong to the church (Suomen Evankelis-luterilainen kirkko). This means that most Finnish people have knowledge about God and the teachings from the Bible. In Chile, according to the latest census, approximately 70.0 per cent of the population declared to be Catholic and 15.1 per cent declared to be Protestant (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas 2002).

However, it is interesting to notice that although Chile and Finland are mentioned to have “Christian values”, Chile is still among the nations with the worst income distribution in the world (Portales 2005). Consequently, thousands of older people live in poverty. In Finland, numerous older people live in loneliness and suffer from depression and high rates of suicide. Therefore, do really Chile and Finland have Christian values? According to the scriptures from the Bible, people should have a more respectful behaviour when taking care of the older people.

Honour your father and mother. Then you will live long, full life in the land the Lord your God will give you. Exodus 20:12.

Show your fear of God by standing up in the presence of elderly people and showing respect for the aged. I am the Lord. Leviticus 19:32.

Jesus replied: you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: love your neighbour as yourself. Matthew 22:37-39

Never to speak harshly to an older man, but appeal to him respectfully as though he were your father... the church should care for any widow who has no one else to care for her. But if she has children or grandchildren, their first responsibility is to show godliness at home and repay their parents by taking care of them. This is something that pleases God very much. I Timothy 5:1, 3-4.

In practice, it seems that those values are known but are not practiced. McGuire (1981) argues that religion can influence people's lives, therefore, for them religion is important. However, for many other people religion does not have any meaning and does not influence their lives, it is simply a religion. The scriptures mentioned earlier are known by those people who profess Christian faith. However, it is important to

emphasise once again that to be a part of a society where religious beliefs are Christian, or belong to another religious beliefs do not mean that all individuals in that society “share the same religion, teachings and opinions”. Often people try to generalise issues by saying “everybody does” or “everybody believes” however, it is important to understand this phenomenon from the point of view of people as individuals and not as a group. In other words, I respect elderly people, firstly because I learnt from my parents (at home), secondly I learnt it from the church, (religious beliefs) and finally through observing the behaviour of my parents towards their own parents.

## 2.5 The power of language

As a foreigner, I have experienced a couple of times what it means to have a language barrier, different cultural background and to be between two cultural identities. I have felt lost, confused and unable to understand anything. These three elements (language, culture and identity) can influence, shape images and lives (Seelye & Wasilewski 1996, 37). In my first year in Finland, I put my best effort to learn the Finnish language. I knew from a former experience living abroad, that the only way to get over the feeling of confusion and isolation is by learning the language, the main key that will open the door to success. Language is a powerful and an important key in understanding cultures and ways of communication.

Ask people what they think is an important part of culture and their responses will almost always include the role of the language. Language is the verbal expression of culture. The word we used, the meanings, sounds, the script and other aspects of the language are both a reflection of our cultural identity as well as the concrete thing that creates and maintains it. Language unites peoples into one culture who might otherwise be grouped separately; for instance, the language is different to race, so people of different racial backgrounds can share the same culture through language. (Gore 2007, 95.)

Often the most foreign thing about the foreign culture is the foreign language (Seelye & Wasilewski 1996, 46).

In most South American countries people speak Spanish. Moreover, each country has their own way of expressing, intonation and accents. For example, the Chilean people

are characterised by their speech. The number of idioms, sayings and words invented, has led us to create a derivation of the Spanish. The Chilean people have a tendency to speak in diminutives. Why, nobody knows for sure. (Embajada de Chile en Costa Rica.)

Consider the conversation of a Chilean mother with her child talking about the care of older people, “Los niñitos deben cuidar a los abuelitos, porque ellos son muy importantes”. In English, this sentence would be translated like this “the little children have to take care of the little grandparents because they are very important”. This way of speaking in diminutives does not try to discriminate or deprive of power, on the contrary this way of speaking makes people feel respected, important and loved.

For the majority of Chilean people the information go through oral stories and conversations, which means that it is spoken and not written. In addition, most of the information people learn is by observing other people’s behaviour. For example, to dance in every celebration, except in funerals, to talk loud, to hug each other, to give kisses on the cheeks, to take care of the aged parents is a part of the behaviour of the Chilean people. It is not necessary to be written in books to know how to behave and act. This is an important part of the culture.

Older people have an important role in the family and community. In South American countries as well as in Asia, Africa and some tribe or aboriginal groups for example, Gypsy and Mapuches, (from Chile) older people play an important role in making decisions. Older people are the wise people in their communities, the judges and guides for new generations. The elderly people have more knowledge and understanding of life because of their experiences. In some societies, the strengths of older people are celebrated. Elders are honoured by as the holders of wisdom and cultural traditions. (Dominelli 2004, 137.) In addition, older people are not solely respected because of their experiences and knowledge. In my opinion, elderly people are also honoured and respected because of the power the language plays in various cultures.

Language is the key to opening the culture’s coffers of interrelationship and knowledge riches (Seelye & Wasilewski 1996, 46).

In Chile, the spoken language is Spanish. In our grammar, the uses of two important pronouns can be recognised. Their purposes mean the same but they are targeted at two different people. “Tú” and “Usted” emphasise the second singular pronoun “you”. The use of the pronoun “Tú” is fairly informal and it is used to address a person of your own age, a friend or a person who is younger. The use of the pronoun “Usted” is formal and polite and emphasises or clarifies to the reader and listener to understand who is in higher position and must be respected. In the Finnish grammar there can be found the same rules. Nevertheless, it has become less and less usual to use these rules in order to approach people more formal and polite manner.

In my experience in Finland, I have become familiar with another way of approaching people of different age. As mentioned earlier, I have worked for over two years in an elderly care home. In the first year working with elderly people, I was often shocked and I felt ashamed realising that I was not able to “respect” or talk more formally to an old person. It took me a long time before I understood that I was not showing disrespect for them.

Because language encodes culture, that is, language stores and organises experiences as a community of speakers. Language can get a sense of what is on people’s minds and that is the reason to understand the language, because language will open the coffer’s treasure of any culture. (Gore 2007, 97.)

I often feel that I need this part of Spanish grammar to approach elderly people and authorities with more respect. The Finnish language in comparison with the Spanish language is more direct and less formal. However, it does not mean that there is not respect in communication. Teaching people how to have formal conversations does not oppress, discriminate or deprive of power of a person. The use of formal conversation promotes respect and value for the other person.

## 2.6 The family, social changes and globalisation

At present, there is a profound transformation in terms of family. Numerous changes are not transitory, but a reflection of a modernisation process. Most of the information



about the social changes in society began around the world during the last decades and has accelerated in the last years. Martine Segalen stresses “each era knows its ways of family”. This sentence can be defined so that due to circumstance contingents of society and culture, every era will be different from one another. (Cited in Tironi 2006, 3.)

The 1960s are often associated with the “permissive society” and a whole range of legislative reforms, including the legalisation of abortion and decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1967 and divorce reform in 1969. Lewis (1992) argues, together, this amounts to “the deregulation of personal life” and a decline in the power of the state to impose a moral code. (Charles, Aull Davies & Harris 2008, 28.)

According to the individualisation thesis, processes of individualisation and detraditionalisation are associated with the transition from modernity to reflexive or second modernity (Beck 1992) or late modernity (Giddens 1991). This new phase of modernity, rather than undermining the traditions of a pre-modern society, undermines the traditions of modernity itself. This has particular implications for the family because women, because of individualism, are free to engage in wage labour and are no longer dependent on a man for financial support. This leads to decline of the traditional, family, which loses “the monopoly it had for so long”. Women’s individualisation therefore is seen as allowing reflexive modernisation to complete the process begun by classic modernisation, which is held to imply the eventual disappearance of the family. (Cited in Charles, Aull Davies, & Harris 2008, 3-4.)

The decline of family and community is also conceptualised in terms of a loss of social capital which consists of networks, shared norms, values and expectations, and sanctions.

Marwick (1998) describes the 1960’s marked a transition from a society characterised by unquestioning respect for authority and a strict formalism in language, etiquette and dress codes, to one which “general audacity and frankness” and new social movements such as second-wave feminism and gay liberation. (Cited in Charles, Aull Davies & Harris 2008, 53-54.)

At present, it is often argued that the family is in terminal decline. Rosser and Harris conceptualised social changes in terms of increasing differentiation and the move from a cohesive to a mobile society. They also argued about the ways in which demographic change was associated with the “de-domestication”, or increasing individualisation, of the women. Since the 1960s, there have been

considerable changes in the occupational structure, which have created more employment opportunities for women. (Cited in Charles, Aull Davies & Harris 2008, 53-54.)

Since the 1960s, the families and households have changed. Many generations are no longer living under the same household. Moreover, many family members have moved to live in other cities, far away from their relatives, bringing as consequence the disconnection between the families. In addition this makes it difficult for families to get together more often. Thus, the proportion of single-person households has increased from 5 per cent to 19.9 per cent. The family consisting of three generations living under the same roof has declined. (Charles, Aull Davies & Harris 2008, 55.)

#### 2.6.1 A chain reaction

The world has changed in many ways. The changes occurred 50 years ago have affected our society like a chain reaction and those changes will continue to take place also in the future. Globalisation affects and influences people's lives and causes reactions. It can be argued that the world is turning into a small village. John Viktröms, (Pyhän Silmissä Seminar, 2006) the Archbishop of Turku commented that globalisation appears like God, "we know and feel God everywhere and his presence, but we cannot see and touch him. The globalisation has the same effect, "we know that globalisation is here and everywhere, we feel it, but we cannot see, touch and measure it".

In technical terms, a chain reaction is a chemical or nuclear reaction, which produces energy and causes more reactions, a series of related events, each of which causes the next event (Longman Exams Dictionary).

At present, we live in a globalised world, where "the borders are losing their lines". In Finland, the presence of immigrants (refugees) has gained a strong place in society since 1973 (Statistic Finland). Likewise, in Chile, during the last years the presence of immigrants from its neighbour countries has gained more force, primarily among the Peruvians.

In 2005 during the first half semester of the year, over 643.000 Peruvians moved out from Peru. Out of this figure, 20.4 per cent chose to reside in Chile. (Cooperativa.) The reasons, for this exodus are rooted in the economic and political situation that has affected Peru, primarily the workforce. The present situation in Peru has produced that thousands of Peruvians move out from their country in search for better life condition.

It is argued that the “only” way to get over the poverty and lack of opportunities is by away from the problem. Since ancient times, men, women and families have travelled in order to gain better living conditions. Chile and Finland have lived through this process of migration to other countries in search for better life. In Finland, between the years 1960 and 1980 roughly seven per cent of the population moved to Sweden to find work (Harju 2006, 22). In Chile, approximately 12.1 per cent of Chilean people migrate to other countries looking for asylum after the military coup, in 1973 (Chilenos en el Extranjero).

Nevertheless, another phenomenon is occurring parallel, it is called illegal immigration. In 2005, more than 40.000 Peruvians arrived in Chile with a tourist visa, which it is estimated that somewhat 25 per cent of this quantity to stay in Chile illegally. (Moyano 2005.) In Finland, this phenomenon of illegal has also arisen. According to the World Global Time, an international newspaper from China, in 2009, the number of illegal immigrants in Finland rose three times more than the last year. There were at least 3,800 illegal immigrants. The authorities of Finland estimate that about 8,000 people are staying in the country illegally. Most of the illegal immigrants, according to the police originate from countries at war or with an armed conflict such as Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq. They have arrived to Finland by ship or by car via other European countries. (World Global Time.)

This phenomenon is not solely affecting countries in macro levels, but also in mezzo and micro level in society. Migration and illegal immigration are important phenomena to research. At present, the number of people moving from poor countries to live in richer countries in order to work is immense. Moreover, these phenomena make the generations to lose their connections between them.

Old and young generations have been separated. The connections between children, youth and seniors have become less common in recent history. The fast-paced lifestyles, the move towards single-family housing and the increased accessibility to older people housing have inadvertently fostered a growing divide between the generations. This divide can lead to social isolation and missed opportunities for young and old alike to learn from one another. (BC Care Providers Association.)

There are thousands of people crossing the borders, but in this exodus, most of the older people are leaving behind. Unfortunately, the number of older people living in loneliness is growing faster and affecting the societies. This disconnection has created a situation influencing new generation to adapt somewhat negative image toward old age.

Europe getting older, high rate of suicide among older people, loneliness and mental disorder are some factors caused by the consequences that took place in the world 50 years ago. In addition, the exodus of thousands of people moving around the globe is making this world more globalised.

In this chapter, I have tried to show the reader the important differences and similarities that as an immigrant I have seen and experienced in Finland in comparison with Chile, my home country. Finland is becoming multicultural, colourful and global. The Chilean situation is somewhat in process. The number of children is decreasing and the number of older people is increasing. Probably the only difference so far between Chile and Finland is the fact that in Chile the family has an important role in the elderly care. Meanwhile, in Finland the state has taken the role of the family in many ways.

### 3 EUROPE GETS OLDER

In this chapter, I present to the reader the main important facts that are affecting Europe in respect to the long life expectancy. The rapid growth of number of older people in Western countries and in Nordic countries, in particular, is becoming an important phenomenon to observe. Therefore, in this chapter will concentrate on the main challenges and the possibilities that Europe has in order to face this phenomenon.

This significant phenomenon is primarily due to the so-called “natural increase”, which is defined as the difference between the numbers of births and death and net migration. Until the end of the 1980s, the natural increase was by far the major component of population growth. However, since the early 1960s there has been a sustained decline in the natural increase. (Eurostat Regional Yearbook 2008.)

It should be noted that there are several researchers as Bond (2007), Peace (2007), Crawford (2007) and Dominelli (2004) that have drawn attention to this phenomenon that the number of older people in Europe grows rapidly. The population of the world is getting older with the vast majority of older people living in developing world. The World Health Organisation states that:

- In 2000, there were 600 million people aged 60 and over; there will be 1.2 billion by 2025 and 2 billion by 2050
- Today, about 66 per cent of all older people are living in the developing world; by 2025, it will be 75 per cent.
- In the developed world, the very old (age 80+) is the fastest growing population group.
- Women outlive men in virtually all societies; consequently, in very old age, the ratio of women to men is 2:1. (Cited in Crawford & Walker 2007, 31.)

In Finland, the statistics show that the demographic changes in old age are increasing. In Table 5: ‘Population projection Finland’, the reader can see the percentage of older people projected to the year 2030, where approximately 42 per cent of the Finnish population will be over the age of 65.

Table 5: Population projection Finland

Age	2005	2030
Over 65 years old	840.000 (16 per cent)	1.450.000 (27 per cent)
Over 75 years old	400.000 (7,6 per cent)	800.000 (15 per cent)

(Adopted from Nurmijärvi 2009. Suun hoidon koulutus)

Before examining the trends, it has to be said that the Nordic countries have different starting points.

According to Koskinen, (1997) the future demographic situation is expected to change most dramatically in Finland due to the post-war baby boom experienced in the latter part of the 1940s and early 1950s, visible in the present age structure as a peak in the number of people aged around 50 years. In Denmark, Norway and Sweden the ageing of society is less pronounced than in Finland. Finland differs from the other countries also in its skewed gender balance in the elderly age groups. In the 1990 in the age group aged over 65 there were 181 females per 100 males in Finland. (Cited in Kautto 2002, 59.)

All Western Industrialised countries show increasing life expectancy. By international comparison, women and men in the Nordic countries live very old. From a gender perspective, the majority numbers of older people are women. In the year 2000 there were 63 millions women more than men aged 60 or older. (Bond, Peace, Dittmann-Kohli & Westerhof 2007, 2.) Finland has the widest gap between the life expectancies of men and women. In 1990's, the Finnish population older than 65 years showed that men represent 9.9 per cent while women represented 16.9 per cent (Eurostat Yearbook 2008). The life expectancy in Finland has increased for both men and women faster than in its neighbouring countries (Kautto 2002, 60).

In Finland, several municipalities are working hard in order to improve the social services and health care services for elderly people. For example, the authorities in Nurmijärvi have established a long-term programme to improve the social services for those elderly people who are at social risk. The programme is related to older people's

well-being programme from 2008 until year 2020 and operational programme until year 2012. (Nurmijärvi 2008.)

These challenges are not solely affecting Finland and countries in Europe but also around the globe. For example, in Japan, the birth rate is only 1.26 children per couples and the population of Japan aged over 65 is 20.2 per cent. The average men's age is 78 years and women 85 years. Dementia among older people is very common approximately 1.9 million of the older people suffer from it. In 2007 in Japan, more than 8.000 elderly care homes were built. (Soivio 2007, 40.)

The challenges that many countries will face due to longer life expectancy can have a profound impact on the countries' economic and in the development of other important spheres in society. Nevertheless, long life expectancy is not solely the major challenge that Western countries will face. According to figures produced by the Alzheimer's society, the number of people with dementia is increasing, with the increasing age.

In Finland approximately 132.000 persons, over the age of the 64 suffer from dementia. In 2005, approximately 85.000 elderly people fell ill with difficult dementia and 35.000 elderly people in mild levels. From year 2000 until the year 2030, the number of older people with dementia will double in the numbers. (Koivisto 2009.)

In addition, the terminology of dementia is mostly used when describing certain signs and characteristics that are commonly associated with memory loss, language impairment, disorientation, change in personality and aggressive behaviour. Furthermore, the Alzheimer's Society claims that dementia can be associated with depression among elderly people. Finally, yet importantly, loneliness and high rates of suicide among older people have risen considerably during the last decades. (Crawford & Walker 2007, 72-73.)

### 3.1 Loneliness and depression

According to several studies, loneliness has become more common among older people than among younger people. The reasons for loneliness are connected to many changes that have occurred during the late years, for example, the death of the spouse. Jylhä (2004) claims that loneliness may increase with age, not because of age, but because of increasing physical disabilities and diminishing the social net such as families and friends (cited in Savikko 2008, 19).

Every second day in Finland, an older person commits suicide (Appendix 1: Helsinkimissio advertisement).

Loneliness is defined as an individual's subjective experience of a lack of satisfying human relationships, and thus loneliness is a negative feeling causing distress to an individual (Savikko 2008).

In Table 6: 'The reasons for loneliness', Nevalainen (2008) illustrates the variety of reasons that cause loneliness in late life.

TABLE 6: The reasons for loneliness

Timidity: Shy
Strong attitudes: too conservative
Too many changes: few people living in the same place
Discrepancy: strong attitude
Diseases: Alzheimer, strong physical disabilities
Mental traumas: caused by the war, bad experiences, accidents
Good qualities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extreme honesty</li> <li>• Excessive sociability</li> <li>• Excessive good heartedness</li> </ul>
By chance: lack of believe (It needs for everything an explanation, why)

(Adopted from Nevalainen 2009, 30)



At present, the changes and challenges that numerous families face are also associated and influenced by this phenomenon. The Finnish society has changed considerably. For most Finnish people the changes suffered after the wars, the industrialisation and the urbanization led to the disintegration of the small rural communities, the family structure was diversified thus nowadays there are different types of families and more people living alone (Savikko 2008, 11; Kautto 2002, 64).

The families have changed and it seems that the changes will not decrease, but on the contrary, the changes will continue evolving.

- Families are becoming smaller and in several cases parenthood single family (Bernardes 1997, 151).
- The cost of life is high and it makes difficult for families to take care of older people in their home.
- Parents who in cases of divorce most times the fathers lose contact completely with their children. This fact also implies that paternal grandparents may also lose the contact of their grandchildren (Bernardes 1997, 167).
- Thousands of older people living in loneliness
- Loneliness drives people to suicide (Vuorela 2008).

Generations of families no longer tend to live together; children are more likely to move away from their parents at a certain age. The decline in marriage and rise in separation and divorce, it is likely that the numbers of single households will continue increase. The increasing number of workingwomen means less time is available for caring for their older relatives. Changes in marriage and fertility patterns, the increase in longevity as well as the rise in divorce, cohabitation and single parenthood are also likely to impact on both household structure and availability of the care, which family members provide. With the competing family obligations people may not have the same capacity in terms of finances or living space, to accommodate or care an older member of the family. (Crawford & Walker 2004, 28.)

Chang and Yang (1999) point out that loneliness is more common among those older people who are not satisfied with their living conditions than among those who are satisfied with the life. According to Jylhä (2004) older people living in an elderly care home appear to be associated with an increase prevalence of loneliness than those older people living in the community. The feeling of loneliness is often experienced as

shameful. Older people do not want to become a burden to anybody. (Cited in Savikko 2008.)

According to Vuorela (2008), the number of suicides among older people is four times more frequent than in the post-war period. Every second day a person older than over 65 years commits suicide (Appendix 1: Helsinkimissio advertisement). According to the statistics, the high rates of elderly people's suicides are increasing. Olli Valtonen, the chairperson of Helsinkimissio claims that one of the greatest reasons for older people to commit suicide is loneliness. (Autio 2009.)

### 3.2 The pension reform 2005

According to the Eläketurvakeskus, (Finnish Centre for Pensions) the 2005 pension reform has been more successful than was initially estimated. The average retirement age in Finland was about 59 years, but since the pension reform, the retirement age of Finnish people has rising. Fewer people aged between 63 and 65 choose to retire from their work than previously, and more and more older citizens stay at work. Following the reform, a person aged under the age of 68 can stay at work and being covered by pension insurance, thus having the prospect of a higher pension. One of the objectives of the Finnish pension policy is to postpone the effective retirement with such an objective that by 2050 the retirement age of all Finnish people would be three years higher than currently. (Cited in Helsingin Sanomat International Edition Home.)

Wesanko (2007) argues that this reform has coaxed employees to continue in their work. At present, Finnish people have the chance of taking retirement by choice instead of at early fixed 65 years limit. This situation not solely has rose good opportunities to employees over 63 years to earn higher pension, but also it has been taken into account how to make possible for employees to stay at work without being discriminated. (Cited in Clayton, Greco & Persson 2007, 97.)

The Constitution of Finland protect the position of the older people, under equal treatment clause of the Constitution, 'nobody shall be discriminated against because his/

her age'. Older employees are protected, thus, the employer is under the obligation to try to find resources, to pay attention in the special needs of the ageing workers, and guarantee them to continue working with joy and motivation. (Clayton, Greco & Persson 2007, 96.)

Antti Piitulainen vice-president of operations Abloy believes that if all the older workers were to leave suddenly, the companies will lose a lot of production. Many Finnish companies are treating older employees as precious resource. Instead, of pushing them into early retirement, they are persuaded to stay at work and work longer. Moreover, the employers offer ageing workers better health benefits, extra weeks of paid vacation, and other benefits. Finland's workforce is ageing faster than any other country. Approximately 40 per cent of the Finnish workers will reach retirement age during the next 15 years. (Cited in Edmondson 2007.)

### 3.3 The challenge and opportunity

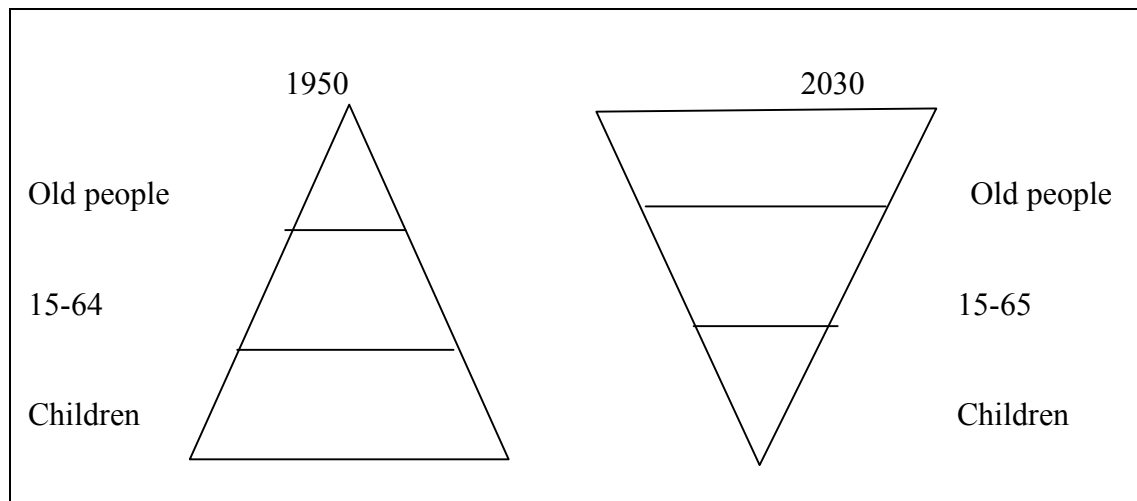
Although, the reform 2005 seems fairly tentative for ageing workers to stay at work longer. In Finland, The reality concerning to long life expectancy is a big challenge. People are living longer due to the improvement of the healthcare and living conditions in the social environment. In addition, the birth rate will decrease, bringing as a result few numbers of young people into the labour market. (Kautto 2002, 60.)

According to Europe in Figures' statistics EU will face major challenges in relation to population and workforce ageing brought about by low fertility levels, longer life expectancy, and the baby-boom cohorts entering the age of retirement. The growth of the population aged 80 or more will be even more pronounced as more people expected to survive to higher ages. The proportion of very old people (aged 80 and more) is projected to almost triple in the EU-27, such that this cohort will account for a double-digit share of the total population by 2005, with more than 50 million older people. (Eurostat Yearbook 2008, 80.)

Before the Second World War, the bottom of the age pyramid was wide and the top was narrow (Notkola & Ryyänen 1994). However, at present the age pyramid has changed

its position. The pyramid has turned around. In Table 7: ‘The comparison age pyramid in Finland with 1950 and 2030’ the reader can see the demographic changes in the age structure. This means that in the 1950’s there were many children and few older people, and that the population was growing (Ollikainen 2003). Nevertheless, in the future the demographic indicates there will be more elderly people and fewer young people. According to Eläketurvakeskus, in the year 2008 approximately 1.4 millions of Finnish people have retired from their work (cited in Tenhunen 2009).

TABLE 7: The comparison of age pyramid in Finland in 1950 and 2030



### 3.3.1 The future care of the Finnish elderly people

Finland needs immigrants in order to have taxpayers to grant pension, social and health security to its people. On the one hand, the contribution of the immigrants is of a greater significance in Finland than most people realise. On the other hand, the opportunities that immigrants have in order to educate and access to working life are a great challenge. Astrid Thors, the immigration minister of Finland, sees this as a positive phenomenon. Thors sees immigrants as great potential in order to help Finland to fill the needs or workforce in the country. She also claims that the needs of society are not sudden but the needs of society are in long-term.

The greatest challenges are to get enough resources to the municipalities that they would be able to receive immigrants well. Those, who have been getting the permission to stay in our country. It is important that the person quickly would get into the Finnish daily life and start learning the language of the country and getting work according to the experiences and education that they have. (Sosiaali-ja Terveysviesti 2009, 34.)

Although there is a clear understanding about these phenomena as lack of workforce, low fertility rate and long life expectancy, another important phenomenon occurs on the borders of Spain and Italy. Especially, in a small city named Ceuta, a city located at the north part of Africa. This city belongs to Spain. Ceuta has become during the last years in the home of thousands immigrants from different parts of the world. Their goal is to cross the borders and settle in Europe in order to work, have better opportunities, life conditions for themselves and for their families who remained behind. Nevertheless, to cross the border has not been an easy task to accomplish. In few years, people have been shot, while attempting to cross the border between Moroccan and Spanish territories of Ceuta and Mellila. Others have died in the seas and thousands have been deported and abandoned with neither food nor water in the Sahara desert. (Migreurop.)

Europe needs workforce, but it seems that the policies of the European Union do not want to bring whoever immigrant into Europe.

The policy of the European Union of "selected (chosen) immigration" which concerns only those migrants needed by the European economy, aims to avoid having to accommodate what it calls "inflicted (imposed) immigration" (Migreurop).

On the one hand, this solution can be seen as a threat to some European countries. Nevertheless, on the other hand, it can be a good alternative in order to maintain the economic activity of Europe and the wellbeing of its citizens.

Helping foreigners enter the Finnish labour market would benefit both parties – the foreign jobseekers as well as the Finnish employers – since people with foreigner background possess cultural skills and knowledge that could be of significant value not only to Finnish economic life suggested by the internationalisation strategy of the ministry of education, but also to the Finnish society

Labour market organisations have argued that by the year 2015 Finland needs at least 1500 new employers to replace those who are to retire. The foreign degree students – unlike exchange students -are those who potentially could close up the gap since they are bound to stay in Finland permanently, thereby the enriching Finnish society and the labour market with their input. (Pulkkinen 2003, 12, 73.)

In 2008, Esperi Care brought the first group of Filipino workers to Finland in order to compensate for the shortage of employees. The Filipinos were already professional nurses, but they have been trained as practical nurses through a special program and they have trained with the language skills as well. Esperi has provided the Filipinos nurses with an apartment and contract for a minimum of two years. The Finnish elderly people have given positive feedback on the Filipino workers. Finnish elderly people are happy about their ability and attitude. Aarnio-Isolahni argues that these are the keys for successful care, especially with the elderly people. (Esperi Care 2008.)

Aarnio-Isolahni the managing director of Esperi Care, the company has put special interest on Filipino nurses, because they know how to serve and respect older people (cited in Martelius 2009).

In Finland, several schools such as Diak (Diakonia University of applied Sciences) and Adulta provide tools and education to immigrants in order to train and empower them to get into the working life. The greatest challenges that perhaps immigrants face in Finland are not solely to get used to the cold weather and culture but also to learn new skills and language. As mentioned earlier, language is the fundamental key for everyone in understanding people's lives.

### 3.3.2 Immigrant older people in Finland

According to the Statistics Finland, in 2008 there were 143.256 foreigners registered in Finland. In addition, immigrant as refugees there were 31.769. Among the biggest groups of citizenships are from Russia, Estonia, Sweden, Somalia and Thailand. It is interesting to put attention on this phenomenon as well, because in Finland, there are not solely Finnish older people becoming older but also there are immigrant older people. (Statistic Finland.)

Therefore, the immigrant students and communities have not solely the opportunity to access to a job in Finland by working or helping Finnish elderly people but also they can become fully participants in the work among immigrant older people. For most immigrants to take care of elderly people is not an “odd duty” to achieve, for it is part of their culture. Thus, immigrants’ participation is also needed in order to develop new ways of how to take care immigrant older people in Finland. In addition, Immigrants can become important resources to the Finnish education, in which they can provide news techniques of how to take care of elderly immigrant people and offer them better care.

## 4 REASONS TO MAKE A HANDBOOK

Chapter 2, 'Between culture' and chapter 3, ' Europe gets older' I have presented to the reader a comparison between Chile and Finland from my experience gained by living in Finland. Furthermore, how these differences and similarities were rooted on the important transitions that both countries have faced in the last 50 years as Culture, way of communication, social welfare and religion. Moreover, I have presented to the reader the immense need that Finland will face in future years concerning long life expectancy and low birth rate. Finally, how this would give foreigners the chance to fill this gap in Finland's work force and become a great participants.

Chapter 4, I present the reader the process of creating the handbook. This handbook is a response to the problem of loneliness and depression that thousands of elderly people face in the Finnish society today. This handbook will provide the reader with simple and concrete techniques of work in helping the aged people. This handbook is constructed on the philosophy of community social work. This handbook is a guidebook to meet the needs of those people who want to participate actively in helping elderly people and for many reason they do not how to approach this group. In this form of handbook the community, family and individual can find easy methods how to contribute and approach more effectively the work with aged people. (Hadley, Cooper, Dale & Graham 1987, 23.)

### 4.1 Aims of the handbook

The aim of the handbook is divided in two main purposes

1. To motivate and empower communities, families and individuals to get involved in the work with elderly people. Moreover, how to involve other people to become active participants in order to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of thousands of elderly people being at social risk.
2. To unite theory (information and knowledge) with experience (stories)



We cannot move theory into action unless we can find it in the eccentric and wandering ways of our daily life... [Stories] give theory flesh and breath. (Cited in Holman Jones 2008, 205)

In Table 8: 'The main content of the handbook: Old hands, a handbook to motivate and empower communities in helping older people' illustrates to the reader how the handbook is divided into two parts. The first part of the handbook is organised into four chapters where the reader is able to find information about Finnish family history, definition of words, activities, case studies, strategies and ideas.

In the second part of the handbook is organised into seven stories of people sharing time or working with elderly people. The sharing and the learning experiences of these professionals could mobilise, sensitise people in helping, and be closer participants in the daily life of elderly people.

TABLE 8: The main content of the handbook: Old hands, a handbook to motivate and empower communities in helping older people.

- Acknowledge
- Preface
- PART ONE: to motivate and empower communities in helping older people
- Chapter one: Families in Finland 50 years ago
- Chapter two: Families and elderly care in Finland
- Chapter three: Understanding older people and the challenges
- Chapter four: Working in collaboration
- Last words
  
- PART TWO: seven stories of care
- Introduction
- The evening prayer
- Summer and blueberries
- The glass of water
- The first day in the elderly care home
- The card greeting, that never came
- From a warm heart to make a warm home
- A story from the other end of the world
- References

However, it is important to mention that the handbook has secondary purposes as well. The handbook is divided into two parts and each part has its own objective. In Table 9: 'Purposes of each part of the handbook', the reader finds general information about the objectives of both parts of the handbook.

TABLE 9: Purposes of each part of the handbook

First part	Purposes
The first part of the handbook is organised into four chapters.	The purpose of the first part of the handbook is to familiarise communities, families and individuals with definitions, and general information about the changes occurred in Finland during the last 50 years. Special attention has been put on the changes that after the war, “The Winter War” and industrialisation families and the role of the women have faced and experienced. The handbook wants to give information about older people and their challenges in late life. In other words, the handbook tries to change the negative portrayal that old age projects to society for a healthy, positive and constructive image of old age.
	Furthermore, the purpose of the first part of the handbook is to show communities, families and individuals that they have great potentialities, skills and tools to be developed in order to get involved in the work with older people and motivate others to improve the quality of life of older people.
Second part	Purposes
The second part of the handbook is organised into seven stories.	The purpose of the second part of the handbook is to share seven stories of people sharing time or working with elderly people. The main idea of the second part of the handbook is to motivate and sensitise communities, families and individuals to see the reality of several older people through the view of these people.

However, the purpose of handbook is not to victimise, deprive of power or mistreat the elderly people. Neither, the handbook is made for society to feel bad about the present situation of aged people or give rise to depression and cause thoughts of desperation towards old age. On the contrary, the handbook has been written in order to strengthen and intensify the standards of community, family and individual in responding effectively to the needs of older people and improve the living condition of older people's today and in the coming years.

#### 4.2 A handbook to the community

The handbook is addressed to those people who want to make changes and improve the quality of life of elderly people, who are vulnerable to face social risk in society. On the one hand, the handbook is addressed to the Finnish communities, families and individuals to get involved and likewise to motivate others in helping older people. On the other hand, one important objective in conducting the handbook has been to provide foreign students and communities with information about Finnish family history and changes that occurred 50 years ago. In addition, the handbook is a guidebook to immigrants how to get involved in helping elderly people much better. The handbook is a great tool for immigrants to compare the different social changes that not solely took place in Finland but also in their countries. Immigrant students and communities have a great opportunity to become a fully participant in society, where they can share their skills, knowledge, experiences and their diversities.

The handbook provides case studies, activities, references, ideas and point of views from the perspective of the professionals working with older people. The beauty of the handbook can be implemented in different parts of the civil society for example, in schools, NGOs, churches and volunteering work in order to train, empower and educate people to get involved and to motivate other people in helping older people.

Finnish elderly people need more than just the participation of health and social services from the state, municipalities, Kela, nurses or other different organisations.

In a community development context, community can be usefully defined as a group of people who share an interest, a neighbourhood, or a common set of circumstances. They may, or may not, acknowledge membership of a particular community. (Smithies & Webster 1998, 79.)

Development work that strengthens the ability of community to build their structure, system, people and skills so that they are better able to define and achieve their objectives and engaged in consultation and planning, manage community projects and take part in partnerships and community enterprises. (Smithies & Webster 1998, 80.)

As referred in chapter 2 'Between cultures', the role of the municipality is to provide and create services. In addition, the role of the municipality is to ensure the wellbeing of its people in order to enhance the life condition in dignity. That is the reason why municipalities will provide the resources, structures, work force, equipment and treatments. Nevertheless, the municipalities need the support of the communities, families and individuals as well.

Unfortunately, municipalities cannot meet the need of longing that all human beings possess. Affection, love, longing and relationship are facts that humans in contact with other humans can solely provide. Thus, the participation of the families, communities and individuals are important and needed. The purpose of working collectively is to bring about social changes and justice. Moreover, thousands of elderly people are just waiting for real changes.

## 5 THE PROCESS

Any academic work requires a methodology approach in order to achieve its purposes. In this chapter, I present the reader how this production has turned into a handbook. The method employed in the production of the handbook was qualitative interviewing.

Qualitative interviewing is a great adventure; every step of an interview brings new information and opens windows into the experiences of the people you meet (Rubin & Rubin 1995, 1).

Qualitative interviewing is a way of finding out what others feel and think about their worlds, experiences and feelings. Qualitative interviewing is a way to understand people's experiences, habits, and reconstruct events in which other people did not participate in. (Rubin & Rubin 1995, 1.)

For example, consider the case of a woman immigrant. She just came to Finland for studies. Then while doing placement training, she notices that in Finland elderly people are not "well treated and several aged people are put into elderly care homes". Yet, she cannot understand the behaviour of the people or why the behaviour of the Finnish family toward older people is distant. Moreover, she cannot understand why several families do not visit their older parents often. Why the women in Finland do not take of the aged people in their home or why an immense number of them are living in loneliness. This lack of understanding is likely to be a consequence of not being familiar with the background and the important transitions in the history of another country or culture. Neither is it "almost" natural to make a generalisation of the people's behaviour. However, through the valuable information that people can provide through interviews, book of stories, biographies, it can make a great difference in the life of others in understanding "the way of life of a people" (Jencks 1993).

Qualitative interviewing helps explain how and why culture is created, evolved, and maintained. Furthermore, also it explores specific topics, events, or happenings. Interviewers can solicit personal histories to examine social and political phenomena. How were people changed by war? What motivates a person to be involved in helping older people? How was the community work

50 years ago? Nevertheless, to conduct a qualitative interview and truly hear what people say requires skills beyond those of ordinary conversation and takes considerable practice. How to think of questions for the topic chosen? Whom to interview and why? How can trust what people are telling? On a more technical level, how to persuade a person to become an interviewee? How specific should a question be? How to put together different telling of the same event? But qualitative interviewing is more than a set of skills, it is also a philosophy, an approach to learning. (Rubin & Rubin 1995, 3.)

Qualitative interviewing has three important philosophy elements.

- One element of this philosophy is that understanding is achieved by encouraging people to describe their worlds in their own terms and words.
- A second component is that interviewing involves a relationship between the interviewer and interviewee that imposes obligations on both sides.
- Third, this philosophy helps define what is interesting and what is ethical and helps provide standards to judge quality of the research, the humanity of the interviewing relationship, and the completeness and accuracy of the write-up.

Qualitative interviewing describes this philosophy of qualitative research to provide the underpinning for more technical skills of interviewing (Rubin & Rubin 1995, 2.)

### 5.1 Reason for storytelling

The encounters that each individual has experienced in life are relevant to be emphasised, told and shared with others. Storytelling is a fundamental form of human communication. It can serve an essential function in life. Storytelling is a way where people can share valuable experiences and happenings of an event. (Atkinson 1998, 1.) In my opinion, these important events and experiences that people have gained in life must be told and shared in order to empower people and provide them with wider knowledge, understanding and other meanings to situations that often are hidden or are “taboos” to society.

Autobiographical performances provide an opportunity to “educate, empower and emancipate” (Holman 2008).

In Finland during the last years, the situation of several elderly people has become somewhat difficult. Many of them face the lack of resources and services, poverty, depression, suicides, loneliness and mental disorder in their late years. Unfortunately, these “stories” have often been on the cover of newspapers and news.

Old man died in the barrack in loneliness (Iltalehti 21.07.2009)

Elderly care homes are in crisis in the whole country (Elisa Uutiset 08.09.2009)

Elderly people starve in Helsinki (Yle Uutiset 06.10.2009)

Practical nurse gave old patient medicine that was not meant for him (Iltalehti 09.09.2009).

Due to nurse shortages two patients died. One of the patients hanged himself and the other ate the wrong medicine (Iltalehti 09.09.2009).

Senior wanted to use the toilet, but he was forced to make his needs in the diaper (Iltalehti 09.09.2009).

A few times on the newspapers, there are positive articles on older people’s lives and care. According to Ahonen, (2009) the elderly care has risen to the public discussion strongly and has been widely generalised. Clearly there are problems and several of them are serious. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that “in all” elderly care homes; older people are not well treated or are suffering. Unfortunately, many truths have not been told. The work that nurses, practical nurses, social workers, volunteers and deacons are doing is often untold. People who read newspapers often read these types of articles where older people are treated badly.

I have worked for 26 years and I have not seen any seniors been mistreated (cited in Virtanen 2009.)

Hence, it is important to communicate the learning experiences and reflect on the stories and on the work of people. At the different transitions and turning points of one’s career, autobiographical work may become an important tool. Writing about one’s life and reflecting on the text and the writing process, or telling one’s life story may be used in guidance in various ways and in with varying goals.

Telling and acknowledging testimony represents a form of restitution for the past in the present and a record for the future. Testimony thus cuts across different temporal relations, recording a past which lives on in the present, yet



opens up the possibility for a different kind of future in which social relations and civic life could be imagined otherwise. (McLeod & Thomson 2009, 48.)

Karjalainen (2004) states that when people creates a state of self-understanding in which she /he can look at his life honestly, he/she, through the story, can find meaning, motivations, values and beliefs that can produces changes in them and in other people. Telling a story conveys not only what has happened, but also the storyteller's attitude towards it. The experiences of sharing stories may help the storyteller to build a better future with power. These resources are of particular value in encountering the sought-for or unexpected changes in life. (Karjalainen 2004.) For that reason to share stories is more than just to say "something" it really means to open the treasure chest of your heart.

## 5.2 Choosing the interviewees

The interviewees were selected by applying particular criteria and contacted carefully. The interviewees are professionals, who experiences working with elderly people are rich and trustworthy. They have been working with aged people for several years in different elderly care services. In table 10, 'Work experiences of the interviewees with elderly people in different elderly care services' shows to the reader the particular significance of the interviewees in respect their work experience.

Having a conversation with somebody is extremely common in human interaction and it might be thought that interviewing requires no special preparation. In reality, the art of interviewing requires preparation and knowledge. It is impossible to interview people if the interviewer does not have clear understanding of the issue that he/she is approaching. Furthermore the researcher needs to overcome the problems of making contact with and gaining the cooperation of interviewees. Having made the contact, and persuaded a person to take part in the interview, the interviewer then needs to try to ensure that the interviewer give full, honest and open answers. (Haralambos & Holborn 2004, 904.)

TABLE 10: Work experiences of the interviewees with older people in different elderly care services.

	ELDERLY CARE HOME	ELDERLY HOME HELP SERVICES	INDEPENDENT HOME
1 Nurse	X		
3 Practical nurses	X	X	
1 Social worker	X	X	X
1 Volunteer	X	X	
1 Deaconess	X	X	X
Total: 7 interviewees			

The criteria used when choosing the interviewees were:

- The participant must work with elderly people continually
- The participant must have a long experience in the work with elderly people
- The participant must understand the role that he/she plays in the life of elderly people
- The participant must have knowledge about Finnish history 50 years ago from the elderly people's viewpoint, through having listened to their stories, not necessary from the school of Finnish history books.
- The participant must have clear ideas and strategies how community could be involved in helping elderly people

The participants were two practical nurses and one nurse in elderly care homes and one practical nurse in home help services, one deacon from the Lutheran Church, with bachelor of social services studies, one volunteer, and one social worker.

### 5.3 Planning the interviews

Each participant received an invitation to take part in the making of the handbook. In the invitation was explained and established why I wished to conduct the interview and where the information would be used. In addition, the purpose of creating a handbook based on the interviews was explained in the invitation. Moreover, in the same context, the participants were informed that the information would be used solely to make the handbook and the report. Furthermore, because the handbook is for the use of the community, the interviewees were ensured that their identities would be protected and kept confidential. (Appendix 2)

After approving the invitation, the interviewees were given a day, according to the possibilities of the participant to be interviewed. The interviews were recorded by using a dictating machine. The total of time recorded was 513.5 minutes. The average of the interviews was one hour and a half.

The interviews were conducted by qualitative interviewing, semi-structured interview in order to get more information that is specific.

This technique is used to collect qualitative data by setting up a situation (the interview) that allows a respondent the time and scope to talk about their opinions on a particular subject. The focus of the interview is decided by the researcher and there may be areas the researcher is interested in exploring. The objective is to understand the respondent's point of view rather than generalise about behaviour. It uses open-ended questions, some suggested by the researcher ("Tell me about...") and some arise naturally during the interview ("You said a moment ago...can you tell me more?"). The researcher tries to build a rapport with the respondent and the interview is like a conversation. Questions are asked when the interviewer feels it is appropriate to ask them. They may be prepared questions or questions that occur to the researcher during the interview. The wording of questions will not necessarily be the same for all respondents. (Sociological Research Skills.)

Furthermore, the use of semi-structured interview helped and facilitated the interviewees to get deeper in the issue addressed and focused in the answers. Since one of the interviewees lives in other country, I used e-mail as a medium for sending the

interview questions. Finally, the interviews, due to the interviewees being all Finnish speakers, were conducted in Finnish language. (Appendix 3)

The interviews were transcribed and organised into boxes according to the chapter and the purpose for what the question was made. In Table 11: 'The chapter and question' illustrates to the reader the division of the question. Although, I used this method of boxes in order to create the chapter, the collected data was not analysed. The purpose of the interviews was to produce a handbook and not a thesis research.

Transcribing interviews from an oral to a written mode structures the interview conversations in a form amenable to closer analysis, and is in itself an initial analytic process (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 180).

TABLE 11: The chapter and question

Chapter one: Families in Finland 50 years ago	Question number: 10.
Chapter two: Families and elderly care in Finland	Question number: 8, 11.
Chapter three: Understanding older people and the challenges	Question number: 8.
Chapter four: Working in collaboration	Question number: 2, 3, 4, 6, 7.
Second part of the handbook The seven stories	Question number: 5.

#### 5.4 Planning the handbook

As mentioned earlier, the handbook is divided into two parts. The first part of the handbook is concentrated on the Finnish family history 50 years ago, definitions of words, case studies, knowledge and information about the changes that older people experience in late years. The collected data was not analysed. Nevertheless, the collected data was used to convert the raw information from the interviews into usable information and strategies to create this production in order to motivate, and empower communities, families and individuals in helping elderly people.

The second part of the book is concentrated on the storytelling and experiences from the interviewees at work with elderly people. When creating the second part of the handbook an important key question from the interview questions took place. Question number five (Appendix 4) was created with the idea and purpose that the interviewee

would share a memorable or moving experience from her/his time working with elderly people. The stories of the seven interviewees were not analysed. However, the stories were modified. The names of the people and places in these stories were changed in order to protect the identity of the interviewees and the people in the stories.

### 5.5 The development of the chapters

The first part of the handbook was organised into four chapters. The creation of the handbook was not an easy work to produce. The process of every chapter was challenging, demanding and required careful development and revision.

Chapter 1 is focused on Finnish family 50 years ago and the consequences and changes that the Second World War, industrialisation and modernisation brought to the country and families, principally. It is important to look back and study how the behaviour of society was before important transitions in the history. For example, nowadays, the Finnish family is much different in comparison with the Finnish family 50 years ago. According to different research studies, the structure of the Finnish society was based on the family. The family was used as a production and a consumption unit in society. At present, however, the role of the family has diminished into just a consumption unit. The family size is smaller, although the most recent development is once again in the direction of larger families of three or four children. (Ollikainen 2003.)

Before, the Second World War families were big and consisted of many children as well as the grandparents and other relatives. People lived in the countryside and had big houses, which were more often than not farmhouses. It was economical to have a big family working on the farming. In addition, the family was hired help working on the farm as well. The hired help was in a lower position in the hierarchy, but would be still be a part of the community, the extended family, living under the same roof. Right after the Second World War, in 1950, the age pyramid in Finland resembled those of developing countries at the moment. The bottom of the pyramid was wide and the top was narrow. This meant that there were many children and few older people, and that the population was growing. (Notkola & Ryyänen 1994; Ollikainen 2003.)

Nevertheless, the challenges that the country faced after these important transitions affected profoundly society's behaviour. These changes and behaviours are important to underline in order to understand why a country with strong family and community values changed radically after the 1960's. Most of the interviewees referred to these changes as the lack of opportunities that families faced on the countryside. Therefore, industrialisation was an "alternative" to the families and to the young people, primarily, to move from the countryside to the city in order to improve quality of life and gain access to better opportunities and education.

When the industrialisation started and people moved to cities, the family size grew smaller. From a practical point of view, not that many children were needed in the city, nor was a boy needed to take over the family farm. In Finland, this change took place only after the Second World War. (Ollikainen 2003.)

Before the 1960's many houses did not have washing machines or refrigerators either in many houses were not running water and electricity. When the social welfare service was created many things changed for good or bad... however, for poor families, especially for the women, these resources were very important and valuable things to appreciate. (Vanhanen 2006.)

Chapter 2 is the continuation of the chapter 1. The aim of the second chapter is to give general information about the present situation of the Finnish family as caregivers and the position of the elderly people inside society.

Chapter 3 is created with the purpose that the reader could understand the main changes that several elderly people face in late years. The changes after certain age in the life of the human beings are inevitable. A significant number of older people suffer from different types of illnesses, loneliness, depressions and mental disorders, such as Alzheimer and dementia. Chapter 3 tries to make society more aware of the fact that ageing is a necessary part of the natural cycle and neither does it mean that ageing is a shameful issue to society, nor that people would be discriminated, because of their age. According to the Constitution in Finland, nobody shall be discriminated because of age. Tarja Tallqvist, a Member of Parliament comments:

We Finnish people are afraid to become older and worst we feel ashamed of our older people. Nevertheless, we must start respecting the life. Older people have rights to become older, to get sick and to live as long as the life continues in him/her. (Cited in Myllärinen 2008.)

Chapter 3 addressed the role that media plays in society today. Media and ageism have influenced in the behaviour of society. Unfortunately, media has put more attention on the negative sides of the old age than on the positive sides. It is true that thousands of elderly people are living in social risk, poverty, depression and loneliness. Nevertheless, it is also true that numerous positive facts occur in the lives of the elderly people as well. Thus, media also needs to stress and strengthen them.

Chapter 4 is focused on the participation, skills, possibilities, strengths and potentialities that communities, families and individuals have in order to become active participants in the late life of the older people.

Participation has become a byword in many spheres, notably in social planning. It is seen as a crucial element in community work practice (Smithies & Webster 1998).

People's participation in the late life of our elderly people is important and fundamental. As referred earlier, in Finland the number of older people who commit suicides because of loneliness is high. In 2007, 175 persons older than 65 years made decision to commit suicide. From them 130 were men and 45 women. (Ilta-Sanomat 2009.)

At present, in Finland more than 300.000 of older people experience loneliness (Helsinkimissio)

It is important to motivate, empower, educate and raise awareness in communities. However, it is also emphasise the responsibility of the state in order to mobilise their workers, expertises and professional to get out of the offices and get closer to the communities. The responsibility of the state is to provide financial support, tools and resources to the community.



Those elderly people who live in elderly care homes are not living in “loneliness” because during the 24 hours a day, they have the constant care of the nurses and they enjoy their companionships. Nevertheless, these elderly people need the family and close communities as well. According to Harvard magazine, from 12-14 per cent older people living in elderly care homes suffer from depression. However in many other research studies it have been observed that approximately 29-52 per cent of the older people living in an elderly care home suffer from depression (Harvard Mental Letter, 2008)

People need to be more than just involved; they need to be actively involved. This does not mean given them a job that nobody else wants! Help them through their abilities, qualities and even create a new job for them to do if necessary. Help them to recognise their potential. (Federation For Community Development Learning.)

## 5.6 Evaluation of the handbook

The seven participants were sent a copy of the handbook in order to present them the work created. In addition, it was also asked them to evaluate the handbook. Most of the interviewees were agreed that the book was written in a very caring and knowledgeable manner. In addition, the interviewees evaluated the handbook as a very interesting and a powerful tool to be used, for example in vocational schools, churches and different organisations.

One of the interviewees was amazed to see that out of her answers and stories a book could be created for encouraging people to get involved in the work with elderly people.

“Andrea, I cannot believe what I have in my hands...a book... did I speak that much to make this?” (1)

Another interviewee commented:

“I loved the stories at the end. I feel like I know you so much better!”(2)

The purpose of the handbook is to motivate and empower communities in helping elderly people.

“When I was going through the handbook, I realised that everybody can take part in taking care of the elderly people. Because there are always elderly people around us, no matter where we are” (3)

“After being read this book I have the feeling that I want to continue developing my work among elderly people” (4)

The seven participants were satisfied with the creation of the handbook.

## 6 CONCLUSION

Since I knew that in order to graduate I had to do a thesis as my final work, I decided to make a thesis production in the form of a handbook.

Thesis production can be carried out in a variety of ways. An action oriented thesis project can be carried out by producing a book, folder, video, portfolio or home page for a special target group. (Vilkka & Airaksinen 2009, 3.)

I started developing the thesis production in the spring 2008. My first idea was to compose a song and make a video; actually, I composed the song. Nevertheless, during the process, I came with the conclusion that if I want to create “something” needs to be lasts for a long time. Therefore, I decided to create a handbook.

The primary aim in creating a handbook was to motivate and empower communities in helping elderly people. Furthermore, my idea was to make the important transitions in the Finnish history 50 years ago visible to the readers. In addition, the handbook was created to challenge and encourage people to become a fully participant in society and mainly in the late life of the elderly people.

Originally, the handbook was created with the vision to empower and motivate Finnish families and communities in helping elderly people. As I mentioned in the introduction of this report, I have worked as a practical nurse for over two years and I have seen the needs and the lack of resources in this field. I have become familiar with another way of respecting and taking care of the elderly people. During my experience as a practical nurse, I have understood that older people are not asking difficult things to achieve. Older people are solely waiting just for a moment of our time. They want to share with us a cup of coffee or simply just a conversation. Unfortunately, the negative image that elderly people project makes people to feel afraid of ageing and give rise to other issues and behaviours.

The creation of the handbook was in response to the issues that are affecting elderly people today. Communities, families and individuals need to do something, altogether. Therefore, motivation and empowerment are definitions that communities need to understand in order to change the negative images that old age projects to society. Before I started creating the handbook, I knew that, in every one of us there are potentialities, tools and ways how to develop and create new forms of work. Nevertheless, I knew beforehand that to create a handbook was not going to be an easy task to approach. However, I decided to take the challenge and create a handbook, which purpose is to motivate and empower communities in helping elderly people.

When planning a thesis production the goal must be defined first, as well as the way in which the work is integrated into professional practices planning a thesis production should also be based on researched data concerning the subject of the production and professional practice and in the methods that the researcher will use in order to gather the data. (Kuokkanen, Kivirinta, Määttänen & Ockenström 2005, 33).

In the development of the handbook, I learnt how to conduct interviews as a qualitative method. It was not easy to conduct an interview, although may look very easy to have a conversation between people. However, conducting interview is more than just to seat down and talking about whatever. Conducting interview implies that the interviewer must get informed beforehand on the subject to be approached. In addition, the interviewer needs to create a comfortable atmosphere when doing the interview. Furthermore, the interviewer needs to develop the right questions and how to apply them correctly. In addition, the interviewer must be ready in creating new questions if it is necessary.

When doing the interview the interviewer is in the middle of the conversation. Therefore, the interviewer participation is neutral. It was sometime difficult to keep the distance between my role as an interviewer and as a receptor. Especially, when the interviewees shared the most memorable stories, it was difficult to do not get involved in the conversation and not to get emotionally involved.

A great challenge was to conduct the interviews in Finnish language. Although, I can speak in Finnish does not mean that I speak perfect Finnish. The interviewees were

great supporters when I conducted the interview. In addition, English was a great challenge in creating the handbook and the report. Therefore, to learn and apply the kind of English, which is used in academic, writing regardless if someone speaks English was an opportunity to develop a new skill.

Academic English tends to be a truly international language and the units of the book focus on vocabulary that will be essential for you regardless of where you are studying now or may study in the future (McCarthy & O'Dell 2008).

During the process of creating the handbook, I understood that there is a great need for more practical books and tools that could help people to approach challenges easier and in more simply ways. As mentioned before, originally the handbook was mainly focused on Finnish families and communities and how to motivate them to be active participants in helping elderly people. Nevertheless, in the process of creating the handbook, I realised that this work not solely can be addressed to the Finnish people and community but also it needs to be expanded to those immigrants that live in Finland as well. At present, there are more and more immigrants coming to Finland due education, marriage or other reasons. Nevertheless, it seems necessary to create more handbooks and books to guide and help immigrants to become more familiar with the foreign culture.

The handbook and the report of the handbook, both books are excellent tools for people who would like to get more information about the present situation of elderly people and develop new forms of work. For me these two works, the handbook and the report are important tools for my personal use in future career. The creation of these works helped me to see:

- First, Europe gets older, long life expectancy grows rapidly and birth rate decreases. Europe needs immigrants. The lack of workforce during the next years is immense. Finland is projected that in 2030 more than 40 per cent of the Finnish population will older than 65 years. For better or worse, these changes may affect positively some people in society. Meanwhile, for other people and especially in some political sectors, these changes will be seen as negative, threats and challenging issues

- Second, important learning was to understand the difference between my own roots or background in comparison with the ways of how people behave in different parts of the globe. Since, that I have lived in Finland I have always wondered how a country with a good economic, Christian values and a great welfare system can have such gaps between the way they act and they claim to have? While doing this report, I realised that, it does not matter if the country is based on Christian values or based on a good welfare system, the behaviour and conduct of the people will be different from one to another. Thus, any type of generalisation is good. Inside of every individual and every culture there is richness and diverse. Therefore, it is important to get to know the other culture.
- Third, it is important to empower, educate, aware and train communities to take action in important issues that affect society. Furthermore, in situation when they come across with elderly people who are living in loneliness or in need of companionships. It is the responsibility of the state to mobilise their workers, expertises and professionals out of the offices and get closer to the communities. In addition, it is the responsibility of the state to provide financial support, tools and help to the communities to understand the situation at present. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that family and close communities have an important role and task to develop. Aged people who live in an elderly care home are not living in “loneliness” because they have the constant care of the nurses. However, numerous elderly people do not have the same chances to be assisted by a nurse the whole day or to have somebody to talk. Thus, their days go slower and more depressive.
- Fourth, the creation of the handbook is a long-term work. Therefore, the result can be seen in a long period. The handbook is addressed to the community, family and individual. The handbook can be used as a guide or educational book in churches, NGO’s, communities and different groups.

I believe that the handbook can make a great difference in the lives of many people and likewise to make a great difference in the lives of our elderly people. This is the reason

for what the handbook was created – Old Hands, a handbook to motivate and empower community in helping elderly people (Appendix 5).

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: Helsinkimissio advertisement



**Ei ketään, jonka  
pyytäisi käymään.  
Paitsi kuolema.**

Kuva: Nina Korhonen / Gorilla

**Kuvittele, että heräät aamuyöllä yksin. Valvot aamuun asti yksin. Sitten aamiainen yksin. Kävelyllä yksin. Ja takaisin kotiin. Yksin. Kukaan ei puhu sinulle, kukaan ei kuuntele, eikä kukaan katso. Ketään ei kiinnosta. Päivä kääntyy iltaan, mutta kukaan ei käänny puoleesi. Viikot seuraavat toisiaan, mutta seuraa sinä et saa. Kauanko sinä jaksaisit menettämättä haluasi elää? Yksinäiset yli 65-vuotiaat eivät ainakaan jaksa. Joka toinen päivä joku heistä tekee itsemurhan yksinäisyyden ja masennuksen murtamana. Useimpia heistä voitaisiin auttaa, jos heille vain voitaisiin järjestää tarpeeksi terapiaryhmiä, joissa heidät saadaan takaisin toisten pariin ja uudelleen kiinni elämään. Me HelsinkiMissiossa teemme tätä työtä vanhusten itsemurhien vähentämiseksi. Mutta voidaksemme auttaa, me tarvitsemme myös sinun apuasi. Tapoja on monia. Mutta jos saamme pyytää, anna apusi jo tänään, sillä huomenna on taas joka toinen päivä. Lisätietoja: [www.vanhuusilmanyksinaisyvyytta.fi](http://www.vanhuusilmanyksinaisyvyytta.fi)**



## APPENDIX 2: Invitation

Andrea Vanhanen  
Sorvankaari 7B 14  
01900 Nurmijärvi  
Tel: + 358 50 40 33 689

January, 2009.

Dear

My name is Andrea Vanhanen, a student of Bachelor of Social Services in Diaconia University Applied Sciences,.

I started my education on August 21, 2006 and the estimated time for the graduation is on December 19, 2009. As you know every student has to prepare a final thesis work in order to graduate. There are three types of research such as thesis research, thesis project or thesis production.

I, myself, chose to work on a thesis production, the name of the work is, Old Hands: a handbook to empower and motivate communities in helping older people. My idea is to create a handbook from the experiences of nurses, social workers, and volunteers gained working in different cares services with elderly people.

The main purposes of the handbook are two:

1. To motivate and empower communities, families and individuals to get involved in the work with older people and become an active participant in order to improve the life condition and wellbeing of thousands of older people being at social risk of loneliness, depression and poverty.
2. To unit information, knowledge with experiences, storytelling

At present, the situation of the nurses' work is getting, demanding and challenging because of lack of workers and resources. The lack of social workers and volunteer

workers among older people is needed. Moreover, many older people suffer from severe diseases and mental disorders where the most common are dementia and depression.

I believe if we, altogether, can motivate and empower our communities by sharing experiences, important events and stories probably many new workers and volunteer people would want to work with elderly people. In addition, the life condition of many older people would be improved and would be prevented severe diseases. The rate of suicide among aged people older than 65 years is high.

I would like to invite you to take part in the production of the handbook to share your experiences, motivation and feelings gained by working with elderly people.

The interview is an open conversation, but there is a frame questionnaire interview. The questions are attached to this invitation. (in Finnish and English language)

The way of collecting the interview and the stories will be by recording them. The interview is personal. Because the handbook is a social and open work to communities I, as a interviewer, committee to protect and keep your identity confidential

Looking forward to have a good respond to the invitation and very soon to hear your valuables and precious learning experience stories. I encourage you to be a maker in this project and to dream of a better work services for elderly people.

Sincerely,

Andrea Vanhanen

Student,

Diak Järvenpää.

## APPENDIX 3: The interview questions in Finnish

## Kysymykset

1. Kuinka kauan olet tehnyt töitä lähihoitajana vanhusten kanssa (sosiaalityöntekijänä, tai vapaaehtoisena)
2. Miksi sinä teet töitä vanhusten kanssa?, pidätkö sinun työstäsi? pidätkö työstäsi tärkeänä?
3. Mitkä ovat syyt tai motivaatiot jotka rohkaisevat sinua tekemään töitä lähihoitajana työ? miksi?
4. Ovatko nämä sanat: palkka, ystävyys, ympäristö, tiimihenki tärkeitä sinulle työssä? Miksi?
5. Kerro, mikä on ollut liikuttavin tarina vanhusten kanssa?
6. Kuinka voit motivoida toisia tekemään samanlaista työtä lähihoitajana?
7. Miten yhteisö voi auttaa vanhusten hoidossa? esim. ideoita
8. Mitä sinä ajattelet kun joku vanhuksista kuolee yksin?
9. Miksi niin monet vanhukset asuvat yksin?
10. Kuinka vanhuksia hoidettiin 50 vuotta sitten?
11. Nykyään puhutaan, että vanhusten hoito on pulassa, vanhusten numero kasvaa paljon, mutta työvoimaa on vähän. Mitä sinä näet tämän tilanteen, 20:n vuoden päästä?

Kiitos, halukkuudestasi osallistua tähän projektiin!

## APPENDIX 4: The interview questions in English

## Questions

1. How long have you been working with older people?
2. Why do you work with older people? Do you like your work?
3. What are the reasons that encourage you to work with older people as a nurse, social worker, and volunteer worker? Could you explain those reasons?
4. Is it important your work? Why?
5. What has been the most memorable story gained from working with elderly people?
6. If you would have the chance to motivate new workers of how to get involved in the work with elderly people, what would you say them?
7. Are these words important for you when you think about your work: job satisfaction, friendship, salary, and environment?
8. What do you think when an elderly woman or man died in loneliness?
9. How can the community be an active participant in the life of older people? Do you have examples?
10. Do you know how the care of older people was 50 years ago?
11. In media we read or get informed that the work among elderly people is getting demanding and challenging. The lack of workforce is immense, what do you see this situation in the next 20 years?

## APPENDIX 5: Old Hands: a handbook to motivate and empower community in helping elderly people



# OLD HANDS

A HANDBOOK TO MOTIVATE AND EMPOWER COMMUNITIES IN HELPING ELDERLY  
PEOPLE

Andrea Vanhanen

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I wish to dedicate my career and this handbook to my dear parents Jaime and Nancy. You both are a big example to me, thank you for teaching me to respect and honour older people. I love you very much.

To my dear grandparents Teofila & Octavio Gonzalez and my late grandparents Teresa & Miguel Morales, what an example you all gave me. I loved to spend time with you all. I will never forget the happy days when we got together, or when we sang and talked around the fire remembering old stories.

To my husband Antti Vanhanen, thank you so much for your love, patience and for all your good advice and hours that we spent together in this project. I love you “Osito Vikingo”

To my beloved brother Michel and his family, Mabel and Yadira.

To all Finnish practical nurses and nurses especially, to those wonderful women working in Nurmijärven Palvelutalo, it has been an honour and a valuable learning experience for me to work together with you, Girls you are Great! Thank you so much for your patience, love, encouragement, examples and the many ways in which you have daily made it possible for elderly men and women to smile again. To all volunteers, deacons and social workers that work with older people every single day. The Bible says that your work is not in vain, “be strong and steady, always enthusiastic, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless” 1 Corinthians 15:58.

Finally, I dedicate this handbook to my unique Lord and Saviour, to my friend and mentor, the Ancient of days. Without you, I can do nothing, but all things are possible when you are right here. I love you so much!



## YOU WOULD NEVER DIE

Silence, silence; do not take away my thoughts  
Silence, silence; do not take away my dreams  
Can the silence then, take away my life?  
Can the silence then, take away my whisper? Of course not  
I have joy, I have peace, I did everything.  
Flowers in the grave I will put.  
But, joy I have within me.  
Because, flowers I put in your heart,  
Those will never die  
Your memory will always be alive.  
Perhaps, for while the night will endure dark  
For while the sorrows will freeze the pain  
However, I know tomorrow will come  
This is only the path from here to there  
We do not say good-bye  
Only  
I see you again!

Andrea Vanhanen

## PREFACE

When I was a little girl, I used to assist the church every Sunday. The minister of my church, a man of simple speech nevertheless with a strong sense of love and care for others, used this expression for years:

“It is important to bring flowers to the parents now when they are still alive and they can see, smell and feel your love, rather than to bring flowers for the funeral when they are four meters under the ground and they cannot see, smell nor feel your love anymore”

When this man referred “to bring flowers” his expression was more than just to remind the children or adults to bring a rose for mother’s day or father’s day. His simple message behind these lines was: “do not forget them, they are more than worthy to receive a hug, a kiss, a warm word meaning, “I love you dad, I love you mom!”

My parents taught me that respect for older people is not demonstrated with words or attitude alone, but also with actions.

When the father of my mother died it was a moment of deep sorrow for the whole family. Even though the pain of losing a member of the family is a very powerful feeling, I saw in the face of my mother, peace, joy and strength. She was sad, of course, but she was not desperate or deeply depressed for things that she did not do. Instead, she was blessed by knowing that she did everything that she was able to do in helping her father. During the later life of my grandfather, mom spent most of her time with him. She accompanied him during the whole treatment of his cancer. She went with him from one hospital to another hospital, getting up early in the morning to get an appointment with the local doctors. During those long days in hospital waiting for treatments they talked and shared very much. My grandfather was a man who always had a funny story to tell or a joke to share with all. His life was an example for many people. I am sure that the time that my mother spent with him was and will forever be a strong testimony of courage. She will always remember it as a time of personal blessing.

Death is always present; to say that death takes away solely aged people is wrong and a foolish thing to say. Nevertheless, we can make a great difference in the life of our older people today. On the one hand we can bring them joy, love, good memories, respect, and honour. On the other hand, all these things will also bring to us joy, self-confidence, motivation to spend time, get involved in helping older people, satisfaction and peace of mind. One day they will not be anymore here with us, and after that it would be too late to help, take care and show them love. Thus, let us show them that they are important; they are valuable people and finally most importantly let us show them our love and respect.

## PART ONE

To motivate and empower communities in helping older people

## INTRODUCTION

## How to use this handbook

The purpose of the handbook is to motivate and empower communities in helping older people. The handbook contains practical information and resources to support you how to get involved and understand that everyone can take part in the work with older worker.

This handbook is divided into two main parts. The first part of the handbook is organised into four chapters. Chapter 1 explores the social changes that have occurred in the Finnish family and society 50 years ago. Chapter 2 sees the role of the family in relation to older people and how these changes affected the connection between children, youth and seniors. Chapter 3 gives you worldwide information about the biological changes that older people face in later years. Finally, chapter 4 brings together ideas, suggestions, tools and approaches needed to engage the community, family and individual in the work with older people.

The purpose of the second part of the handbook is to share seven stories from the experiences of people working or sharing with seniors. The main idea is to motivate and sensitise communities to see the reality in which several older people are living

To help you get started, consider the following steps:

1. Read and follow the chapters and make notes.
2. Follow the activities, case studies, ideas and suggestion given in this handbook.
3. Consider what kind of participation you want to develop and use your potential skills to engage in discussion with the group.
4. Remember, the purpose of working collectively is to bring about social changes and justice.

The handbook is addressed to people who want to make changes and improve the quality of life of older people who are vulnerable to face social risk in the society. On the one hand, the handbook is addressed to Finnish communities, families and

individuals to get motivated and alike to motivate other people in helping older people. On the other hand, the other important objective of the handbook is to provide foreign students and communities with information about Finnish family history and changes that occurred 50 years ago, important meanings and how they can become potential workers to fully participate in this society.

The beauty of the handbook is therefore written from the perspective of experiences and from the passion and commitment to the community development. This handbook can be implemented in different parts of the society as vocational schools, NGOs, churches and volunteering work in order to promote, train, empower and educate people to get motivated and motivate other in helping older people.

I am very glad to put into your hands this valuable resource. Together we can do more!

## CHAPTER ONE

## FAMILIES IN FINLAND 50 YEARS AGO

### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter you should:

- Have general view of what the Finnish family was like 50 years ago
- Be familiar with definitions such as “talkoot”, “industrialisation” and “the role of the women after the war”
- See how your experience can be similar or different from the Finnish context

When people look back the past 70, 60 and 50 years ago, they realise that several social changes have occurred in society, family as well as in many other spheres. At present, increasing technology, new trends in fashion and even changing vocabulary highlight a shift mean from former years. During these past years there are other changes that have occurred. Some good and some not so good. Some people would like to turn the clock back 50 years and live again those “old years”, but unfortunately, it is not possible. Time goes by and with it new challenges and new adventures will come. The present and the future will depend on the willingness, the collective work and effort that community, family and individual would like to create and develop in order to improve justice, dignity and quality of life.

### ACTIVITY 1

Write down the differences of the everyday life of your grandparents in comparison with your everyday life today. Do you see any changes? Are families closer to each other than before? Are there many generations living together under the same household. Compare Finland with other context.

Finnish family 50 years ago

The Finnish family 50 years ago was very different from the family of today. Before the Second World War, families were larger and consisted of many children, in addition to the grandparents and other relatives. People lived in the countryside and had big houses, often farmhouses. It was economical to have a big family to help on the farm. In addition, the family hired help to work on the farm. The hired help was in a lower position in the hierarchy, but would still be a part of the community, the extended family, living under the same household (Notkola & Ryyänen 1994.)

### CASE STUDY 1

Read the case study given below. As you read Mari's story and her experiences, pay attention to the facts and write down what happened in her family.

Mari

I was 5 years old, when my grandmother came to live with us. My first thought was: "Grandma came to die". Before she came to live with us, grandma and grandpa lived together in the east part of Finland together. When grandpa died, my mother decided to bring her mother to live with us and like this to take care of her. Even though grandma was sick, she helped my mother at home and looked after us, while my parents were working. After a few years, my grandmother passed away. At that time, homes for older people did not exist. The social and health services were not yet developed. Therefore, it was the responsibility of the family to take care of their parents when they became older.

- Share in the group and discuss similarities and differences in your own context. What do you think about this situation?



When an older person fell ill or was in need of help because they became widow or widower the family was the “first aid” that an older person received in order to get well, support and care. During those years, many older people already lived in the family before they became older. As noted above, because both families and farmhouses were big the help of the whole family was required, for example, grandparents, sons, daughters, daughters-in-law, children and relatives. In other words, to live together was an essential part of everyday life.

Family structure was strong and important in the society. Furthermore, community and neighbourhood were also significant in the development of the country. The work was done with the help of the family, neighbours and close communities. Therefore, Finnish society was much closely tied than it is today. For most Finnish people this phenomenon is known as “Talkoot”.

According to Suomen Kielen Perussanakirja, talkoot means to give help to neighbours. Talkoot is an opportunity for communities to do a voluntary and unpaid work for neighbourhoods, villages and friends. For example, during harvest time in July with the collection of the hay, the building of new houses for families and cleaning the environments. The meaning of the word talkoot is co-operation, when families were building houses the closest neighbours came to help and to give their time in so that the family would have soon a house. There was not any salary given to the enthusiastic helpers only food was the reward for the help, but that was enough for everybody (Vanhanen 2006.)

## ACTIVITY 2

- a) If you are a Finn think and draw a picture what talkoot means to you.
- b) If you are a foreigner make a story how do you define in your context self-help
  - Share in the group your findings and pictures
  - Do you find the same phenomenon in other cultures or countries

In the period of 1939-1944, Finland fought two wars and unfortunately, Finland lost both. This period had an important impact in the lives of Finnish people not solely because Finland lost about 10 per cent of its territory and 11 per cent of the population (Karelians families) were resettling in other towns but because Finnish people had to pay a heavy war indemnity to Russia, with the products of heavy industry. Thus, it was the beginning of the heavy industrialisation in Finland and the major changes in the structure of the families (Harju 2006, 20.)

What is industrialisation?

Industrialisation can be defined in three ways: First, as the production of all material goods not grown directly on the land. Second, as the economic sector comprising mining, manufacturing and energy. Third definition as the constant process of technical and social changes that increases society capacity to produce a wide range of goods (Kiely 1998, 3.)

In this handbook, I concentrate on the third definition, “social changes that increases the society capacity”. In Finland, industrialisation took place only after the Second World War. One of the reasons why there were also fewer families was the shortage of men after the war. Due to the war there were also more single-parent families. There were increasingly fewer families where only one parent worked outside the home. The children went to day-care or school and both of the parents worked. The grandparents were taken into elderly care homes and therefore the home no longer was the key element that tied a family together (Kontturi 2003.)

## The role of the women after the Second World War

Unlike other Western countries, Finnish women were of great importance in political and economic life after the war. They were not pushed back into the home in the same way as in other western countries. Therefore, the positive attitude to women's labour force participation helped Finland to move on.

The female population started to leave the Finnish countryside earlier than men. Educating girls gave them a better opportunity for an occupation. The bourgeois model of women as potential wives who would not work outside the home was not commonly rooted in Finnish culture. Already, as early as 1959, only 23 per cent of working age women was exclusively housewives. In 1982, the percentage staying at home was no more than 8.6 per cent (Cheal 2003, 356.)

Since the 1960's family structures have diversified so that there are now different kinds of families, but also more people living alone. Families have become smaller, there are fewer marriages and more cohabitation, there are more divorces, there are more children born outside marriage and there are more people living on their own. Demographers have drawn attention to the fact that trends concerning families are very similar in all the Industrialised countries. (Kautto 2004, 65; Ollikainen, Anne-Leena 2003.)

### ACTIVITY 3

Read the sentences below and discuss about the effects of industrialisation in Finland and in others countries.

“Industrialisation broke the families...”

“Extreme poverty and lack of opportunities brought the young people to move from the countryside to the city”

“The role of the women after the war changed radically. During the war most of them lost their husband, thus the women took the role of the main provider at home”

“The young people started forming families in the city and the high cost of living and few opportunities at the countryside stopped the new young families to come back to the countryside or to visit the parents more often”

## CONCLUSION

In Finland 50 years ago, family and community work were an important part of the society. The life community was present in those years. The participation and collaboration of the people in groups or individually was respected, being the key for the success of the country. Nevertheless, after the Second World War several changes influenced and affected the whole country. Some people attribute these changes to industrialisation, while others to prosperity. However, the questions are:

What happened to the Finnish family? What happened to the community? Why were so many elderly people after this boom left behind alone in the countryside? Alternatively, why were many of them put into elderly homes or why were put into home help services created for older people, and why a large number of older people were forgotten? In the next Chapter, we will discover the answers.

## CHAPTER TWO

### FAMILY AND ELDERLY CARE IN FINLAND 2009 AND 2030

#### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter you should

- Have general information of the present situation of Finland in relation to family and elderly people
- Have general information of the future situation of elderly people in relation to low rate fertility.
- Be familiar with the definition of “family”, and “Universal System”

#### Finland 2009

As referred in chapter one, the changes that families suffered after the Second World War were the reason to various changes in the Finnish people behaviour, culture, structure, education, and demographics. According to the yearbook of population in Finland (2009), in 2008 the total of the population was 5.325.600. In Finland 50 years ago, the percent of rural population was higher in comparison with the present situation, were nowadays most Finnish people are situated in urban areas. In Finland during these past 100 years and 50 years, the changes that have occurred in different parts of the society are clearly reflected in this today's society.

TABLE 1: Changes occurred in the last 100 years in Finland, rural and urban areas

YEAR	PERCENT OF RURAL POPULATION	PERCENT OF URBAN POPULATION
1900's	87.4%	12.6%
1960's	61.6%	38.4%
2007	35.0%	65.0%

(Finnish Yearbook of Population Research 2009, 141.)

TABLE 2: Changes marriages registered

Year	Annual Marriages registered	Annual divorces registered	Couple same sex registered
1900's	18.947	-	-
1941-1950	37.367	3.721	-
2007	29.497	13.291	213

(Finnish Yearbook of Population Research 2009, 144-145)

At present, numerous single adult people are living alone (by no means all elderly people). The number of divorces grows is higher and there are many children living in care institutions. Among youngsters, the problems related to alcohol and drugs abuse grows rapidly, seeing such consequences as mental disorder and depression from a very early age.

## What is family?

There are several interpretations and definitions of family. For most people family is the nuclear of the society that consists of a father, mother and children. Nevertheless, the concept of family is wider and difficult to explain in simple words. The concept of family is not solely referred to the above definition. There are different kind of families, not all of which are connected by blood, for examples, same sex parent families. The best way of finding a balance in the definition would be that family is a group of people who are important to each other where they show love, respect, care, support and sense of belonging.

## Care for the elderly people in Finland today

In Finland 50 year ago, the family had an important participation in the care of the elderly people. However, this role has changed drastically and it does not have the same importance. In many families to take care of the aged parents is not anymore a family goal. In Finland, the care of the older people do not necessary has to come directly from the support and income of the immediate family, relatives, neighbourhoods or communities. The reasons to these changes can be rooted in the social changes that Finland faced after the war and industrialisation. The role of the family after these important transitions suffered important changes where unfortunately, the most affected by these changes have not solely been the children but also the immense number of older people living in loneliness.

Why is it so? In chapter one, we observed that the changes that families and women faced after the war and industrialisation were radicals. After the war, many women lost their husband and they become the breadwinner to support the family. Later industrialisation brought new challenges to the country in order to develop strategies of work faster and more productive. However, these challenges instead of unifying families these challenges separated the families. In Finland at present, older and younger people appear to live in “different worlds”. To put it simple, the connections between children, youth and seniors have become less common in recent history. The

fast-paced lifestyles, the move towards single-family housing and the increased accessibility to older people housing have inadvertently fostered a growing divide between the generations. This divide can lead to social isolation and missed opportunities for young and old alike to learn from one another (BC Care Providers Association.)

Unfortunately, this situation has affected older people seriously. In Finland, there are numerous elderly couples living alone without the help of their children, close relatives and close communities. In addition, there are thousands of single older people living alone. The reasons by they want to live alone are several, perhaps the most known are because the death of the spouse, they did not get married or they are divorced. Furthermore, numerous older people do not want to become a problem neither to their family nor to the state. Therefore, many of them prefer to live alone in their homes longer rather than to live with the family or in an elderly care home. Finally, as we noticed earlier, the connection between the new generations is less common.

#### The social welfare system

The aim of the Finnish social protection system and its social welfare component is to guarantee everyone the constitutional right to indispensable subsistence and care consistent with the dignity of human life. Social services and income security together secure the support and care that individuals and families need at various stages in their lives, while also enabling participation in working life and ensuring gender equality. Prevention and treatment of social exclusion are an essential part of social welfare.

Finnish social welfare is based on the Nordic welfare state model. Extensive public responsibility and tax funding are its cornerstones. The central government plays a strong guiding role in setting the basic principles of social welfare and in monitoring their implementation. However, the actual provision of social welfare is carried out at the local level, in municipalities. Finnish social policy focuses on the prevention of social problems. Preventive measures are the most economical and most humane way of maintaining social welfare. Preventing social problems



requires the consideration of social aspects in all decisions that have a social impact, for example in environmental policy, housing policy, employment policy and education policy (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

This universal system is financed through taxation. The Finnish population supports the statutory benefits and services of the welfare state that are based on taxation and social security contributions. When everybody pays, everybody is also entitled to receive social security, guaranteed by the state. In addition, everyone who is in Finland whereas is tourist or live in Finland permanently pays VAT (value added tax) to the state. The VAT is a general tax, which affects nearly all consumption of goods and services (Vero, 2006).

The main institutions in Finland to provide health and social security to its people are the municipalities and Kela (The Social Insurance Institution of Finland). The Municipality is required to provide social welfare services according to the needs of their inhabitants (Saarinen & Saarinen 2008, 17). The benefits that municipality provides are included maternity grant, child benefits, special care allowances, assistance with housing cost, financial aid for student and older people care institutions.

Kela, The Social Insurance Institution in Finland, looks after basic security for all persons resident in Finland through the different stages of their lives. Kela counts among its customers everyone living in Finland and anyone living outside Finland who is covered under the Finnish social security system. The schemes administered by Kela cover such areas of social security as family benefits, health insurance, rehabilitation, basic unemployment security, housing benefits, financial aid for students and basic pensions. In addition, Kela provides disability benefits, conscripts' allowances and assistance for immigrants (Kela.)

Finland has two statutory pension systems, which complement each other:

- National pensions and

- Earnings-related pensions

National pensions offer a basic income for persons who are entitled only to a very small earnings-related pension or to none at all. They are awarded and paid by Kela. Earnings-related pension rights are accrued through employment and self-employment. There are several earnings-related pension providers. For more information about earnings-related pensions, the employee needs to contact the pension provider or the Finnish Centre for Pensions (Kela)

Eläketurvakeskus (the Finnish Centre Pension) the Earnings-related pension is a basic social right of Finnish citizens. The joint liability of the pension providers guarantees that pensions accrued are always paid out. Neglect on the part of the employer, or even the bankruptcy of the pension provider, does not remove the right to earnings-related pension. The earnings-related pension is just as secure regardless of whether it is provided by an industry-wide pension fund, a company pension fund, an insurance company or a public-sector pension provider. Earnings-related pensions are financed through insurance contributions, of which some are used to pay for pensions currently in payment, and some are funded for future pension expenditure. The connection between earnings-related pension provision and the labour market is a combination of power and responsibility. The same parties, the labour market organisations and the state, together hold the responsibility for the pension benefit level and the financing of the same (Finnish Centre for pension.)

In Finland, when an older person is still able to live alone by his/her own capability, strength and by his/her pension then, is not necessary to the state or to the family to worry about special needs. Nevertheless, when an elderly person needs help, care and support then the role of the state or municipality, enters to play an important role. This role includes taking care of this person by providing her/him equipment, housing (if needed), special treatments, programme as suggested by doctors, as well as many other types of support. Albeit, the municipality provides all these benefits mentioned above, it is important to clarify and understand that they are the one who will pay most of the

expenses. For example if an older woman lives in an elderly home, she will pay her food, medication, treatments, care, nurses, place to live, clothes and so on. In other words, the state will provide her the resources, structures, place and workforce but is the user, in this case, the older woman who out of her pension will pay most of her own expenses.

#### The care of older people by 2030

In Finland the living condition of thousands of elderly people is getting demanding and challenging to the society. The number of older people over the age of the 65 grows rapidly. According to many researches done by the government of Finland by the year 2030, the number of older people will be higher in comparison with the present day. It is projected that there percentage of the elderly will be approximately 40 per cent of the entire Finnish population. The major challenges that Finland will face are several, however, in relation to long life expectancy there are two important phenomena to observe:

- Long life expectancy among older people and,

TABLE 3: Population-projection

Age	2005	2030
Over 65 years old	840.000 (16%)	1.450.000 (27%)
Over 75 years old	400.000 (7,6%)	800.000 (15%)

- Low fertility in the families.

TABLE 4: Fertility rate

Year	Rate fertility
1950's	3.37 per woman
2007	1.76 per woman

(Finnish Yearbook of Population Research 2009, 142.)

In other words, the birth rate will decrease, bringing as a result few numbers of young people into the labour market while larger numbers of older people will be moving into retirement and few tax-payers. These would give foreigners the chance to come and fill this gap in Finland's work force.

#### ACTIVITY 4

Think and meditate in the sentences given.

- Many older people die alone
- Every second day an old man/woman commits suicide in Finland
- Older people's work is in crisis

Share in the group your reflection about what should be done about that? By whom?

What can I/we do?

#### CONCLUSION

The care of elderly people is turning into a big issue in this society. People speak of these issues at homes; politicians during elections procure to take this phenomenon into agenda. Some other people offer different alternatives as “death pills” for seniors that turn 70 years (Utrion Ilta Sanomat 14.09.2009). Nevertheless, it seems that all this propaganda of how to improve the quality of life of older people ends only in good speeches. People from different organisations try to raise this issue about older people's care more seriously and effectively. Nevertheless, the future actions and participation are not solely based on the strategies and resources from the municipality and Kela. It is important to understand that the participation of the community, family and individual is required in order to improve the quality of life of older people with dignity. The concept and role of the family have changed in different ways. Consequently, the society turns every time more individualistic and disconnected. It is important to foster communication and contact between generations and cultures. What are we going to do? Older people need other people and vice versa, we need them to understand the past and to see the future.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### UNDERSTANDING OLDER PEOPLE AND THEIR CHALLENGES

##### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter you should

- Be able to recognise the challenges that an elderly person face in late life
- Be familiar with definitions as “older”, “depression”, “dementia”, “mental health disorder”
- Have general information about negative portrayals of older people, and how these facts affect the behaviour of the society toward older people and elderly as process of life

Old age is generally stereotyped by physical appearance. Cognitive and social change may follow a different rate of development – a person may look older but continue to retain mental alertness and positive, young, social attitudes.

Taking a biological perspective it can be suggested that most living organisms show an age-related decline: there are changes related to the cells within the body, which are usually associated with decline (Crawford & walker 2004.)

##### ACTIVITY 5

Discuss and share in the group how do you define old age? What are its characteristics and attributes? Who are the elderly?

### Changes on the way

The vigour of a senior at 65 years is not anymore as when he or she was 20 years old. Ageing is a natural part in the life of human beings. It is obvious that many changes occurred on the way, from one stage in life to another. William Shakespeare in “As You Like It” conceptualised the four ages of the man

- The first age, up to the end of formal education (whether primary school or postgraduate);
- The second age, of potential membership of the labour force;
- The third age, or the later stages of active life;
- The four age, of frailty and greater dependency.

A great number of older people suffer from different diseases. Nevertheless, the major challenges that an elderly person will face will be the changes that accompany the ageing process. While in some cases the changes will be because of severe diseases; in other the changes will come because of the structural changes accompanying the process from being a full participant in the society to become a passive or in some cases to be excluded from the society.

The most common illnesses that an older person face are diabetes, heart problems, high blood pressure, cerebrovascular accidents, stroke, thrombosis, atherosclerosis, cancer, respiratory infections, and fractures in the hips, depression and dementia. In Finland at present more than 300.000 of older people experience loneliness (Helsinkimissio 2009). The number of older people who suffer from depression and dementia is unfortunately high. Therefore, it is important to have a clear understanding of what depression means and what dementia means. Furthermore, it is important to know how to recognise the symptoms of dementia and depression.

### ACTIVITY 6

- Make a list of all the words that come to your mind when you think about the terms depression and dementia.
- Share in group your findings and compare your answers with the definitions given below

#### What is depression

A depressive disorder is an illness that involves the body, mood, and thoughts. It affects the way a person eats, and sleeps, the way one feels about oneself, and the way one thinks about life in general. A depressive disorder is not the same as a passing blue mood. It is not a sign of personal weakness or a condition that can be willed or wished away. People with a depressive illness cannot merely “pull themselves together” and get better. Without treatment, symptoms can last for weeks, months, or years. Appropriate treatment, however, can help most people who suffer from depression (Saarinen & Saarinen 2008.)

There exist different types of depression and they are diagnosed according to the symptoms or manifestation of the illness in the person affected.

#### Characteristic of depression

- Low mood and feelings of sadness
- Loss of enjoyment
- Poor memory and concentration
- Tiredness and fatigue
- Unexplained pain
- Feelings of guilt



- Suicidal thoughts or impulses
- Delusions
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
- Reduced appetite and/or weight loss or overeating and weight gain (Crawford & walker 2004.)

The causes of depression may run in the families, in other words, depression can be inherited. However, not all individual with depressive genetic background in the family will develop the illness or vulnerability to have any depressive disorder. Nevertheless, depression can occur in generation after generation. There is no grand rule as to whether depression can be inherited or not.

Depression is the most common mental illness that several elderly people suffer. According to studies about this issue respond that independently living seniors who suffer from depression are about 1-5%. Older people hospitalised about 12% and older people in elderly care homes about 14% suffer from depression. However in many research have been observe that older people living in elderly care home approximately about 29-52% suffer from depression (Harvard Mental Letter, 2008)

What is dementia?

Dementia is most usually used to describe certain signs and characteristics that are commonly associated with memory loss in older adults.

Symptoms of dementia according to Alzheimer's society are:

- Loss of memory: for example, forgetting the way home from the shops, or being unable to remember names and places.
- Mood changes: particularly as parts of the brain that control emotion are affected by disease. People with dementia may also feel sad, frightened or angry about what is happening to them.

- Communication problems: a decline in the ability to talk read and write.

In the later stage of dementia, the person affected will have problems carrying out everyday tasks and will become increasingly dependent on other people (Saarinen & Saarinen 2008.)

The factors that may cause dementia include several diseases and conditions. For example: Alzheimer's, vascular disease and dementia with Lewy bodies. Dementia mainly affects older people, but still can affect younger people as well. Most forms of dementia cannot be cured, although research is continuing into developing drugs, vaccines and treatments. As noted in this chapter the transition from adulthood to become a senior has many challenges and changes. In some cases, it can be a drastic process, while in other cases not all.

## CASE STUDY 2

Read the given case study and write down what may be the reasons or factors that affect Minttu 's life so that she feels depressive?

### Minttu

Minttu is 74 years old and has lived all her life in the area of Malmi. She was married but her husband Jukka died suddenly while sleeping. Minttu and Jukka have one son, who lives in Tampere with his family. Minttu is very talkative and sociable woman. Minttu likes to watch and hear the news. She is not always happy with what the news says. The municipality of Malmi provides home helps services, in other words, a person from certain net organisation come to visit her once per week to clean her home and to make the shopping's from the nearest store, where Minttu lives. Although, Minttu is very positive and very friendly person. Minttu feels upset about her present situation. Minttu has fractured her hip, thus she cannot go out her home often for a walk, because she needs a person to help her with the wheelchair. Her son rarely come to visit her and if he comes, according to Minttu is only for five minutes. Minttu has begun to smoke frequently. She does not want to eat anymore; she only wants to smoke and to die very soon. Her only company is two cats. The money that Minttu receives from her pension is so small that she is only able to pay the rent, to buy some food for her cats and something small for herself. In the refrigerator, she has only two litters of milk and a small piece of cheese and bread. Minttu' days follow the same pattern, day after day... Minttu desires only to die soon...

Share your findings in the group. What can be done about this issue? By whom? Can I/ we do something?

## Negative portrayals of older people

The lowered status of this aspect of identity can be considered part of ageism. Ageism is the oppression of people on the basis of age. For older people, ageism focuses on a body that deemed to have outlived its sell-by date. Many older people have internalised ageist stereotypes and reproduce these in their own discourses. Ageist assumptions present older people as a homogeneous group and configure them as a weight that has to be borne by the work of younger people. In this worldview, older people are presented as dependent, incapacitated and incapable (Scrutton, 1989.) Negative images of older people are central to the medicalisation of old age. These enable younger people to see decline due to ageing as inevitable natural processes that cannot be altered. The negative image of the older person as dependent and in need of care portrays an ageist construction that treats every older person the same by ignoring the specific needs of older individuals and the contribution that older people individually and as a group have made and continue to make to society. (Dominelli 2004, 137.)

Part of the reason for this is that negative images of old age have been and are being reproduced in many sites of social interaction. The media play a crucial role in (re) constituting unfavourable images of older people, although sometimes they support the view that elders are “deserving” member of society and insist upon appropriateness of younger people providing care and resources for them.

Negative images of old age are not universal. In some societies, the strengths of older people are celebrated. Elders are revered by as the holders of wisdom and cultural traditions of the band to which they belong. (Cited in Dominelli 2004, 137.)

### ACTIVITY 7

Read and discuss in the group why young people are drawn to have negative image of older people?

What can be done to change this picture?

It is sad sometimes to visit the grandparents... Listening stories then... all these stories makes think that I do not know anything... One suffers from dementia, others... who knows what they have? Others have cancer, and then... others suffer at home living in quite poor conditions. Is there anyone else, like me who gets distressed after hearing so many terrible stories? I have always been afraid of death, diseases, and all these things. I cannot stand to listen when people talk about older people and when older person just is waiting for his/her turn to die.

Hirvi, 20 years old

### CONCLUSION

As noted in this chapter, the changes that an older person suffers from one stage in life to another are numerous. The society needs to understand with proper knowledge and information. To become older is part of the human life, is normal and is part of what makes us human beings. Consequently, nothing will stop this process. Unfortunately, there is too much of a negative image of elderly people and a lot of misunderstanding of the term elderly. For this reason, there is a large number of young people who fear growing older while many others simply do not want to hear about the elderly. Nevertheless, it is clearly a mistake to generalise about the present situation, which is that many of the elderly face living in poor condition or in loneliness. In Finland it is simply, not the case that all Finnish elderly people over 65 years old are suffering or that all Finnish people over 65 years old suffer from dementia, Alzheimer or other such disease. However, there exist a huge number of elderly people who do need support, care and companionship from society. After all society does not solely refers to areas of

land or groups of certain sectors; society is created by individuals working in co-operation with other people is not solely by mean the area of land or certain sectors. Society is formed by Individuals.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### WORKING IN COLLABORATION

#### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter you should

- Be familiar with definitions of “neighbourhood” and “community”
- Understand the importance of your participation in the work with the elderly people
- Get motivated to motivate others to do the same work.
- Obtain ideas of how to be involved in the work with the elderly people
- Be familiar with definitions such as “empowerment” and “Motivation”

When someone starts a project, it needs the collaboration of people or group to fulfil all the expectations and purposes for which the project was created. Thus it is necessary to explain the meaning of certain definitions to understand whose collaboration the project will need. For example, who is your neighbour? In other words, what do neighbourhood and community mean? Sometimes terms are easy to understand without giving an explanation. Nevertheless, it is important to clarify that there are differences between each term and that neighbourhood is not always same as community. Neither is family the same as community.

What is neighbourhood? And what is community?

For most people “the neighbourhood” means the small area immediately around where they live, while “neighbours” are those who live in households nearby with whom social relations, by no means always close, are generally based on face-to-face contact (Pierson 2008, 6.)

Communities can be defined as a group of people sharing same values and institutions; specifically, some social meaning as well as some organisational structure must connect the individuals to the community. One important component of a community is that it has a sphere that provides a method for production, distribution and consumption of goods and services (Bracht 1999, 31.)

Why working together it is important?

Have you ever heard the expression of the three French musketeers “One for all and all for one”?

This expression is known by children, teenagers and adults around the globe, its meaning is clear and easy to understand. In other words, if we work together for the wellbeing of one, that one will work in unity for the wellbeing of all.

To work together is not merely to do things together and feel good about it. To work in co-operation with other people will demonstrate that each individual is capable to work in unity with others, ensuring that all together are able to succeed. Although necessary to do, work in unity is not always an easy task to put into action, because it demands great effort from each person. We, humans, are unique and each one of us has valuable resources and contributions to make and offer. Therefore when people gather to do work in connection with other people who share the same ideas, values and want to see changes then, something can happen that can affect the whole society. These changes may be positive or negative. These changes will depend on the purpose for what he/she was motivated to do.

The term empowerment is related to the action of becoming powerful. Thus, it is necessary for individuals, groups, communities and family to become powerful. Empowerment gives communities, families and individuals more autonomy, discretion and decision-making responsibility.



Nevertheless, the question is how to become powerful? In the box below you will find different ways how you can become empowered and empower other people in helping older people.





TABLE 5: Ten different ways how to promote the participation of the community

- First, by understanding the background and the issues of the group that we want to target
- Second, by educating and training communities, families and individuals through information understanding the work of the social security in Finland and its benefits, especially concerning the group that we want to target.
- Third, by promoting the positive aspect of the target group, while viewing the negative aspects of the target group as positive challenges and positive opportunities for people to be involved in helping with elderly people.
- Fourth, be familiar with the work of what other organisations are doing
- Fifth, understand that you are not alone. There are many other organisations; groups and families that want to support your work.
- Sixth, by strengthening the ability of community and groups, and understanding that each individual has great potential to develop.
- Seventh, by setting plans, strategies and organisations
- Eighth, by becoming familiar with definitions such as community, motivations and empowerment
- Ninth, by mapping the area where you live. How many older people live? How often do they are visited? Do they have relatives?
- Tenth, everybody can take part

It has been commented that the nature of mankind is influenced by four temperaments that affect the behaviour, emotion, and relationship with other individual, including how we express ourselves. In other words, these four temperaments affect the whole nature of the human being. Each one of these temperaments are close to the each other, however, out of these four temperaments one is stronger than the other in each individual.

Hippocrates 2400 years ago developed a theory to divide people into four basic temperament types. For which, he gave the names of sanguine, choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic (LaHaye 2000, 23.)

The four basic character types

	<p>Sanguine</p> <p>Strengths: sociable, hospitable, warm, enthusiastic, compassionate, talkative and friendly</p> <p>Weaknesses: poor self-discipline, self-centered, emotionally unbalance, shiftless, prone to exaggeration.</p>
	<p>Phlegmatic</p> <p>Strengths: carefree, calm, trustful, impartial, diplomatic, efficient.</p> <p>Weaknesses: indecisive, selfish, fearful, disposer, uninspired, laggardly, stingy.</p>
	<p>Choleric</p> <p>Strengths: independent, wide-eyed, practical, leader, strong-willed, determined</p> <p>Weaknesses: cold, self-important, intense, dominant, sarcastic, cruel, angry, bears grudges.</p>
	<p>Melancholic</p> <p>Strengths: talented, aesthetic, diligent, conscientious, analytic.</p> <p>Weaknesses: moody, self centered, too sensitive, captious, the desire for revenge and guilt-ridden.</p>

(Adopted from the book of LaHaye 2000, 23)

### ACTIVITY 8

If you want to work with elderly people, how could each of these types contribute? Can you find which one is you?

The next step to follow is to know how to develop your potential and why in the diversity of temperaments there is richness. As noted in the draws above, every individual is unique and has great potential to develop. Even though individuals have weaknesses, those can turn in great potentials if you know how to use them and how to manage them. For most people, who would like to be involved in communities, think that the “only people” who can be involved in the work with other people are those ones who are sociable and talkative, in other words sanguine temperament. Nevertheless, a sanguine without the rest of the temperaments cannot do so much. Probable its strengths are good resources to the community, but its weaknesses can make chaos in the community. That is the reason, that we need each other. Everyone is important.

Have you ever thought that you have a great potential to develop in order to help others? It is important to motivate communities to be involved in work that is not necessarily a priority for all temperaments in society.

To motivate people to work or be involved in work that many people are not interested to do it is not always an easy mission to accomplish. As noted in previous chapter, the later life of elderly people change quite drastically, especially in the life of those who suffer from different diseases and social problems (poverty, discrimination, loneliness, alcohol) Thus, they need support, love, care, compassion and many other vital elements to make the life of an older man or woman easier and full of dignity. But also

communities need to understand that working together will prevent these social problems present in the life of the elderly people, problems such as exclusion, poverty, suicides and alcohol.

It will be a marvellous solution if societies communities, families, individual and government would get motivated to help, support, and care for the elderly people closely and actively. Then, this phenomenon would not be as critical as it is right now.

What is motivation?

A definition of motivation cannot be given in isolation from other concepts. One widely held assumption is that the behaviour of an organism reflects the joint influences of learning and motivation. The way we define learning necessarily influences our definition of motivation, if the two are supposed to work together” (Beck, 1983.)

David Buchanan and Diane Preston (1992) stress, a common question from managers is - how can I get people motivated to work harder, or smarter?” people only come to work for money (cited in Buchanan & Huczynski 2007.)

People need to be motivated to do things; otherwise, it would be difficult to achieve any important goals. People can participate in the work with the elderly in many ways. However in this task, there are many important elements that every community, family and individual must know and need to be clear in this task is to know how much willingness and courage he/she has and wants to give in order to improve the quality of life of the elderly people.

Most people have an idea that to work with elderly people is almost impossible to do and achieve. For others, they may think that the work is hard, difficult, depressive, oppressive, (and different other negative adjectives); especially if an older man or woman suffers from different diseases, mobility impairments, or mental disorders.

Meanwhile, for other people to become older is a “bad sign”, especially, if they have read and heard solely negatives news and stories of elderly people.

Some may agree or disagree about these thoughts. However, the work with elderly people is more than just pain or suffering. According to the experiences from those people who are involved in the everyday-life work with elderly people, there is another point of view which may help people to get motivated. Their motivations to work with older people go beyond money. They are motivated, because the job that they do is more than a simple job. For them their work is a calling. Here, some examples:

TABLE 6: Changing practice in respond to the motivations of working with older people

“It motivates me to work with older people because of the feedback that I get from them ...”

“The work with elderly people can be sometime physically hard, nevertheless the experience that you gain through those moments is rich and fills the soul”

“I do not do this work because of the salary. Unfortunately, the work of practical nurses is not yet recognised or appreciated by the society as important work. Nevertheless, It motivates me to do this work because the group of workers that I have in my working place. The work is hard but when at work there is a good teamwork, everything is possible, even to face hard tasks.

“The client and their families often provide positive feedback and express that the help or support received has been a great help for them. This is a big encouragement to me, to hear their feedback and to know that I am doing a good job”

“I have notice that the work with elderly people is not only to give to them but also to receive from them. The work is reciprocal”

“To do work with elderly people is important, though probably for some people it is not seen as significant, but your time and decision will make a big difference in the life of an aged person”

(Personal interviews, spring 2009)

## How to be involved

Many older people want to live still in their own houses; however, there many reason why many older people are taken into elderly homes or residential for older people is because they cannot cope alone in their own houses anymore. Some of such reasons are because of severe diseases, mental disorder as dementia and Alzheimer's among others. In addition, most elderly people who live in institutions are singles, widows or widowers or they do not have family either they have a close community to take care of them. That is why there are many older people who live alone in older homes services and in other elderly care homes.

In Finland, the cost of living is very high and it could be one of the main reasons why many families cannot take care of their own relatives in their homes. As is noted in chapter II, in many families both parents work to provide wellbeing for the family. In addition, many other families live in very small areas of land, houses or flat thus it would make it difficult to integrate another member in the family. Finally, when an elderly person becomes seriously ill or mentally ill, for a family it is quite difficult to take the main responsibility to care for that aged person. Probably, one of the reasons why it is difficult is perhaps because of the lack of knowledge and fears on the issue being addressed. Therefore, how can we change this fact?

In the business world, when the owner of a certain company wants to improve and add get better results to the company and its workers, the managers of that company enter to play an important role of how to develop new ideas, strategies, plans and activities to make their company more productive, increasing the profit. Nevertheless the success of the company would not be solely upon the shoulder of the managers. The success of the company will be also on the workers and the people who will expand and spread the new strategies, ideas and plans to the rest of the market.

In this study the ideas, strategies, plans are coming from those people who work and take part actively in the life of older people who live in older home services, elderly care homes and in own homes.



Let's get empowered!

In Finland, there are many programmes for the elderly people. There also there are many groups; churches, NGOs and volunteering organisation work in the benefits of older people. However, the new for more help and new strategies and ideas is needed most of the time.

As noted in this entire handbook the role of the community, family and individual is important and significant. Nevertheless, it is not always possible for families individual and communities to take a closer or more active responsibility for an older relative. Therefore, how can we motivate communities, families and individuals to participate more in the life of our elderly people?

First it is important to remember that if you want to help you need to take into account these facts

- Communities need to remember that not “all” older people living alone are in need of economical support or physical help. But loneliness is a stronger disease that many older people face today. Many of them do not have anyone to talk or to share a cup of coffee. Therefore, Their days go slower and longer.
- The organisation needs to move out from their offices and start going local. They need to educate others communities where there is not enough information and there is a lack of knowledge about caring older people and its challenges.
- Nowadays, in this globalised world, media has an important role in the society. Nevertheless media has put more focus on the negatives sides of the old age, forgetting that in old age there are many other important and positive issues to get emphasised.
- The life of an old person is full of treasure. He/she not solely has miseries, poverty and exclusion

# 1. Strategies, ideas and suggestions for communities, what do you need to know

- Community is composed of a large variety of groups, organisations, institutions, schools and volunteering groups. Here is some advice, strategies, ideas and suggestions as how this big community can be involved in helping in the life of older people.
- For those groups who want to get involved in helping elderly people, first make contact with other local groups from your town that work with older people. Second, through them, you are going to get more valuable information how to help and contact older people correctly.
- Young nurses student doing placement training at elderly care home or in other units related with older people, it should not be given them at the first practice training hard and difficult older people. The idea of the placement training is that young nurse students can learn to respect the work with older people but not to hate it. If we want to get younger nurses working with older people, we need to teach them step-by-step.
- The community needs to learn and value the work that many anonymous people do in order to improve the living conditions of the elderly people.
- The vocational schools need to promote more strongly all the advantages and possibilities that education offers to future workers.
- Different organisations can plan their own programmes for elderly people. For example preparing a special evening for calendar events such as Christmas, mother's day and father's day; to prepare old songs, dances and cultural evenings in order to bring joy and good memories to older people. Furthermore, to visit older people at elderly home, at homes care services and older people living at your neighbourhood.

- To promote intergenerational learning program in schools, vocational schools, youth group, churches and different communities. The purpose of this resource is to interact between two different groups. However the purpose of intergenerational learning program are to strengthening communities to become more age-friendly, promoting understanding, respect and sharing of ideas, knowledge, and experience, teaching the young about ageing while teaching the aged about youth and establishing relationships that help diminish the impact of declining physical and mental health on older people (BC Care Providers 2009)

## 2. Strategies, ideas and suggestions for family

- Educating the youngest people of this society, children and teenagers:
- The family has an important role in the education of their children. A child will do and repeat what he/she learns and observes at home. Most values of an adult person were learnt at home and in the environments where the person lived. Therefore, a child, who does not see his/her parents getting involved in the life of their aged grandparents, would be “totally” natural for that child in his adulthood not to get involved or have a close relationship with his own aged parents or working for the benefit of other elderly people. It is fundamental that any child would have contact with other aged people, especially with their own grandparents more closely and continually.
- To educate teenagers that to grow older is part of normal human’s life. Nothing to be worried
- To teach teenagers to respect elderly people not only because they are older, but also because they deserve it.

## Organising the task for families

- When an older person live at elderly care institution, the role of the family as support giver is essential for older people. Although, it is true that many relatives and families do not live close to the place where the older person resides. Therefore, it would be hard to place all the responsibility on only one specific family to visit the older person. Nevertheless, the work of visiting an older person can be organised within the family or relatives.

For example, if in the family there are many relatives and closer families who live in different parts of Finland, they can organise the visit in turns. In other words, they can decide when and how many times a year a certain family/member of the family is in charge of visiting the older person. In doing so, the burden would not be always upon one part of the family. Then the whole family, even friends and closer communities can take part in this organising task; this would help the life of everyone. And the happiest person would be the older man/woman who will have the chance to meet the whole family continually.

Important issues to remember

Promoting respect means to value someone, but it does not mean to abandon

- The respect of the decision for an older person who wants to live still in his/her home or to live alone without the help of a third party must be respected for the family. Nevertheless, to respect the decision of an old person who wants to live alone does not mean to abandon the old person. Families need to respect their decision but not to forget them.

Older people have great potential to contribute to the society and family

- Many sectors of society think that to become older means that the life of the individual is over, although the skin can get wrinkles and the hair turn grey, it does not mean that the life of this person finished. On the contrary, the life of the human as complete as in the beginning. In fact, older people can do all those

things that they never before could not do because of work responsibilities and other activities.

- Most of older people who live alone do not suffer from serious illness and mental disorders. Actually, some of them are even in better physical condition than many younger people today. For example an older woman still have the capacity to help in the care of their grandchildren and pass on to them good values, teachings and the most importantly to share with them the Finnish traditions, songs and culture of past years.
- Older people can help the neighbourhood by contributing with new ideas in order to improve needs and wellbeing of the neighbourhood and community.

Families should be encouraged to take care of elderly by being supported by the state, community, and groups and different other organisations as caregivers. Therefore, families need more available services to them such as nurses, support groups, health support and other programmes, in order to become a fully participants in the life of their elderly people. It is a vital task in this process.

### 3. Strategies, ideas and suggestions for Individuals

The small things that someone can do for an old man/woman is the greatest things for them

- To be involved in the work with older people not necessary always mean to do volunteering work, unless if someone wants to do so. Nevertheless, there are many possibilities and ways of how individuals can be involved in the work with older people. Education is a great way of how people can get involved. Education offers different kind of professions to choose and be involved. In many sectors related to older people. For example, to become nurse, practical nurse, bachelor in social degree, social worker, deacon in the church, elderly psychiatric, business man/woman in order to develop an own organisation or business project. The alternatives that individuals have in order to get involved

in helping older people are wider and they are needed. At present the social changes are not solely short term but they are long-term and are needed all the time.

- If you want to get more information about older people's work, approach the nearest place of your city (parish, library, elderly care homes) and ask for more information how to be involved in helping older people
- In most of the neighbourhoods live older people. If you want to share your time with that person who is most of the time alone, you can invite him/her for a cup of coffee and for free conversation. Nevertheless, remember that it is wise to collaborate with other people and organisations. The work of a lone ranger is good, but it approaches only a few persons. Your ideas are great resources to develop and it will help and encourage other people to do the same. Thus, share your ideas and strategies for the benefit of thousands are needed.

## FINAL WORDS

The Finnish and immigrant elderly people have a great legacy to share with the new generations. The stories of sacrifices and valour are treasures that older people need to share with the world. The story behind of each older person is unique and precious. Those stories are just incredible and full of courage and bravery.

Most of the Finnish older people over the age of the 75 took part in the wars and were witnesses of the pain of losing family members, friends and land and all the consequences that war brings to society. Finland did not win any of the two wars, but for most of those soldiers, lotta (women soldiers) they got a victory. The victory was not to increase their land or to become richer, but the victory that many of these heroes won was to demonstrate to the world and its people that nobody, absolutely nobody would take away their freedom, their peace, their land and their identity. As J. V. Snellman said to his people: “we are not Swedes, we can never become Russians; let is therefore be Finns”. This is the identity of this country.

Finland is one of the best countries to live in the world and do business. The prosperous economy of this country ensures the wellbeing of its citizens in equality and in opportunity. Nevertheless, there is one part in this story that is still upsetting. Individualism advances stronger and stronger and it seems that it will not be stopped

Elderly people are important in the education of a country. Many young people know the history according what they learnt in the schools and what the book of history says about it. However there is a lot of history that is totally unknown and only older generations know. History and storytelling both together make the country successful.

For some people, a piece of antique furniture deserves a place of honour in a home, because is a masterpiece and an antique. How much more value would have the older man/woman who can tell us the story of how that furniture was made? Do not forget your roots and your people, they will tell you more and give you good advice to face both the future challenges and adventures to come.

## PART TWO

### Seven stories of care



## INTRODUCTION

Sharing stories is an important part in people's life and different cultures and societies. The art of sharing stories is not solely to say "something" but is to make a difference or to produce an impact in the life of others.

For many people to share stories are in one way or another, to free the soul. Nevertheless not always it is an easy work. In the art of sharing stories several elements play a significant part. Emotions, feelings, and memories are elements, when they work together can make the whole story more interesting, living and relevant for the receptors.

Why to share stories? Often when I take part in funerals and while walking in the graveyard, I notice that under those big gravestones, crosses, and ground there are thousands of stories that never were told and never were printed in any book. Under the ground there are thousands of ideas, projects and dreams that never were shared and never came true. Thousands stories of love, war, frustration, victories and ... I can be the rest of my life listing how much "work" there is under the ground. That is why it is important to motivate and encourage people to share their stories, their point of views, their frustrations and victories. Their stories are valuable learning experiences that must be told.

At present, media plays an important role in society and in people's life. Media is a globalised way of communication. Media not solely affects or it is known in one part of the world. Media crosses the borders and media goes beyond understanding. That is why in a world where media takes an important role is necessary to use it. But it is important to use it well and positively.

To share stories may change the negative portrayal of old age and create a real consciousness about the situation of older people. All of us we are going to get older, get ill and get wrinkles in the face as part of the life. No matter how many plastic surgeries

and miracles cream can put on the face in order to keep the youth, to become older is a simply law in human life.

To share stories make people to understand behaviours, habits and way of life. To share is an art and we need to enjoy this art. To hear stories make us to see the world, this global world from the other perspective.

That is why I invited you to read seven short and moving stories. Six stories are from the north corner of the globe and the last story is told from the other corner of the world.

Welcome to the adventure!

## THE EVENING PRAYER

During my career as nurse, nothing has blessed my life so much as working with elderly people. I remember this story because through its, I learnt something very important to my life.

A normal day when I was going to work, I had many so many around my head: too many problems to be resolved immediately.... That day was definitely not my day at all. I was at home thinking, "It is...probably... better for not go to work... I do not feel capable to do my job..."

However, I decided to go. That day I had six elderly people under my care. I did my work with happiness, but I knew that inside of me, I was destroyed.

These thoughts of frustration and desperation were so strong in my mind. That day I was hardly able to find peace of mind. Nevertheless, from one instant to the next, everything changed. This occurred when after finishing my evening care for an elderly woman ...I took her by her arm and we walked slowly to her bed. After helping her to get into the bed, she suddenly asked me to pray together. She asked me: "Would you like to pray with me...? I responded to her, "Well, I sat down next to her bed and she prayed a normal and a well-known prayer that most Finnish people know by heart. Before she ended the prayer by saying amen, she started praying for me, I had no idea what to do or how to react I just remained there in silence... She thanked God for my work that I did, that day ... She blessed my family and she blessed me I cannot explain my feelings after this wonderful time that I spent with her. Although, that day I was so depressive and sad, I found joy and peace of mind. Of course, the problems that I had that day did not simply disappear, but at least after that prayer my behaviour was different. I was happy to know that I was able to bring help and companionship to an older woman and even more wonderfully lesson that I got that day it was that doing little tasks people can give to an older person so much. I was so blessed by her prayer.

## SUMMER AND BLUEBERRIES

Elderly people who live in a home help services are in one way or another still able to do many tasks by themselves. Nevertheless, they sometimes need help from other professional particularly to cope with difficulties in order to minimise risks and unexpected situations. The Finnish Summer is one of those seasons that older people often look forward to. The reasons are numerous, but in particular for Ella, an older woman of 72-years-old.

Ella in her youth used to pick up blueberries in the summer time together with her mother and sisters. However, things are very different for her today. Now she was alone, her mother was not anymore alive and her sisters were living in other elderly care homes

Most of the winter, Ella spent her time inside of her small room. Only a few days of the whole cold winter was spent outside of her room to enjoy the fresh and cold winter sunshine.

Ella was different woman in summer, she was living again. A wonderful and a lovely sunshine day in July, I offered to go together with her to the forest, to pick up blueberries. Hardly a second passed when she was suddenly standing next to me with her big hat on her head saying to me. "Let's go darling!"

That day it was fantastic to be with her. We did not pick so many blueberries, but we talked and we laughed a lot. Never, I had seen her like this, telling me stories from her family and her childhood. She referred to old time as hard moments ... but at the same time, she referred them as the best time ever. She was witness of the war and its consequences, but still she said, "I really miss those days of joy with big families and many friends..."

I always remember her, and I wonder how is she doing... I hope that she can remember that day that we spent together in the forest. However, I hope that somebody else could be able to invite her to pick up Blueberries in summer.

## THE GLASS OF WATER

I have cared for many elderly people with very serious difficulties and sicknesses. I know what means pain for them. For a long time I was the nurse of Matti, until the day that he passed away. Towards the end of his life, the treatment that Matti was receiving was strong medical. Everyday the pain increased while the medicine got stronger and stronger. The last day that I saw him was the day of his departure. I remember that day because it was a special, touching and different day.

That morning I went to his room to greet him, to say, good morning to Matti, and just to say to him that it is another wonderful day. When I got inside of the room, Matti was sleeping and on his face, I saw peace. I woke him up gently and I asked “What you would like to eat for breakfast? He smiled as he said, “ First, I want to drink water... fresh water”. I went to the kitchen for fresh water and I returned to his room, with the glass of water. I put the glass in his hands, because he wanted to hold it. I asked him once again “Do you want now to eat breakfast?” He answered me “I think I will eat breakfast, but not here, someone waits for me this morning, for a very special breakfast”. I said to him,” well, the only person who is waiting for breakfast this morning is your body”. He only smiled at me.

I went to prepare his morning porridge, I put butter and sugar on top of the porridge, and just how he liked it. I prepared a black coffee without sugar and one slice of bread with cheese. I took the tray and while I was walking to his rooms, I felt something...I do not what it was, but I went quickly to his room. I opened the door and I thought, “well, he is just sleeping, do not worry... I put the tray on the night table and suddenly I notice that he slept very different. He still held in his hand the glass, but the glass was empty. I gently try to wake him up... but he did not wake up... he did not wake up anymore.

I cried very much while I was beside him... Matti was my patient for many years. Nevertheless, I knew that it was the end of his pain and sorrow. I tried to do my best during the time that I took care of him. He died only with the company of glass. Unfortunately, he did not have relatives and at his funeral, nobody mourned his departure.

## THE FIRST DAY IN THE ELDERLY CARE HOME

A certain morning... but it was very early in the morning I heard like a “CRACK” sound. I did not give importance to the sound, but later when I saw the ambulance standing outside in the yard of the building, I realised that something else than a CRACK sound happened that morning under my flat. I heard from one of my neighbours saying that an old woman had badly fallen in the shower room. As consequence of the fall, she broke her hip.

I knew that an older woman lived under my floor. Nevertheless, in almost four years that she was living there, I never saw her going anywhere. The older woman had some physical problems that made impossible for her to go out of her room. it is sad to say this.. but...her small room was her prison.

This old woman was for long time in the hospital. Unfortunately, the injuries provoked in the hip were very severe. Before this circumstance, the social worker proposed to the old woman to be moved from her flat to an elderly care home. However, the old woman did not want to move out her place and go to live in any elderly care home. She was afraid with the idea of going to live in an elderly care home, because she heard many negatives stories about how older people took care in those institutions and she did not want to die soon. After long time of discussion between the old woman and the social worker and doctors, the decision to move the old woman from her former flat to an elderly care was the wiser solution. The day when she was transferred from the hospital to the elderly care home it was the most painful day for her. She was so desolated and angry, because according to her, now she was going to die soon.

When she came to our department she was seated on the wheelchair her face spoke more than a thousand words. She was angry and did not want to talk. The practical nurse that became her personal care nurse introduced to the old women her new room and the elderly people in the unit. Finally after introducing to the old women the place and people the young practical nurse proposed her to go out of the building to see the flowers and to feel the sun.

They went out together and they were for long time out of the building; the old woman did not speak during the whole time, when suddenly the old woman started crying. The practical nurse looked at her and said, "Please, do not be sad I promise to take care of you in the best way that I can". The old woman looked at her and said, "I am not sad... but this is my first day in the elderly home and I am outside of those walls... here with you... I always thought that to feel the sun on my face and enjoy the colour of the flowers once again it was not be longer a possibility... but now... now... after four years living inside of my home that is was my prison, I can see the colour of the flowers and feel again the wind on my face..."

I have worked with older people for many years and I know that many of them during the first day at elderly care home they feel afraid of everything. Some of them may think that there is not more joy. But I can say that older people living in elderly care home have more opportunities to see and feel the sunshine more often than those older people who live in totally abandon confined in the last part of the buildings.

## THE GREETING CARD THAT NEVER CAME

He lived alone in a home help services. He had a serious problem with alcohol but the reason for that behaviour is was rooted in the loneliness that this old man faced everyday. I had the duty to visit him every morning to prepare his breakfast (porridge) and give his medicine and check blood pressure. When he did not use alcohol he was talkative “nice” and he took care about his appearance. Nevertheless, there were some periods in his life that he transformed into another and stranger person. Those metamorphosis times happened when there were coming special feast and celebration.

I still remember a special week before to celebrate in Finland the father’s day. He woke up every day very early in the morning. The first thing that he did it was to go to the mailbox to check for any greeting cards. Like always, in the mailbox there was not anything. Actually, he never received any letter or card... well only bill letters.

Because of this, his behaviour started changing little by little. When Monday did not get any greeting card then he started drinking. Tuesday it was drinking little bit more... Wednesday, he started asking, “Why it is so... that nobody take care of me?” Thursday...he did not want to eat or to take care of his appearance anymore.

For me to see, how his behaviour started changing was very painful. Sometimes, I did not want to go to his home, not because I did not want to do my job, but because it turned very difficult to see how cruel and rude loneliness is. Friday was the last day in that week for me to visit him... and for him the last day of the week to receive a greeting card. Friday in the morning he waited for me at the door and the first question that he asked me it was, “ did you see if there was any greeting card in the mailbox?” it was hard to answer and say him, “no, there is nothing for you...” Sometimes, I wanted to make to him a nice greeting card, but I knew that even doing a “nice greeting card for him” I was not going to make any difference, because he was waiting for a special greeting card, from his son. That day it was the beginning for a long weekend, with alcohol and other crude habits. Monday when I went to visit him again, nobody was at the door waiting; nobody came to open the door. I knew what it was waiting for me as soon as the door would be opened... well...there he was naked on the floor, unconscious, alone and wanting to die.



## FROM A WARM HEART TO MAKE A WARM HOME

The winter in Finland is very cold and cruel. Of course, it looks beautiful outside, especially when there is a lot of snow and everywhere looks so white... but, still it is a pleasure to look it from the inside of the house... through the window, holding in the hand a warm cup of Finnish coffee. In Finland most of the newest buildings have been built with very good systems for making a home warm so like that, nobody in those homes could feel cold. However, for some houses, especially houses built in the 50's, 60's and 70's, the heating system is very different. Most of those houses instead of having heating system, those homes have fireplaces. In other words, those houses need firewood.

My family has committed to help an old woman who lives with her blind daughter in a very big old house to make their home a warm home in winter. Unfortunately, these two women live alone and rarely they have the visit of some of their relatives. The blind woman, even though she has a physical disability, for her it has not been a problem to help her mother and to do her duties at home. But, there are some things that they cannot do and they need to be helped. We have been helped these two women for five years. Our commitment is to fill the storage room with firewood so they could have enough firewood for winter.

Probably we do not do any special thing, but we feel so happy in helping them. We know that our small grain of sand is important and necessary. It is so wonderful to think that during winter these two women have a warm home. "Imagine, how terrible it would be if they would not have enough firewood for whole long and cold winter...? I do not want to imagine...when winter comes, and the snow cover the land and when the temperature reaches -20 c°, the situation is awful..."

To help our older neighbours is not a difficult task to do. Older people living alone are not asking us to do difficult things, for example big parties or to buy expensive things. They are only asking us for a little moment of our time. If you have a caring heart, you can make a big difference in the life of an old person.

## A STORY FROM THE OTHER CORNER OF THE WORLD

In the rural areas of San Javier, in a small village located approximately 300 km far away from the capital city of Santiago, Jaime was born in a modest family of farmers. In his youth, he as many other young people around the globe, suffered the same consequences or characteristics that industrialisation brought to the families, likely happened in Finland. In Chile 50 years ago, the life conditions were not the best, lack of opportunities; jobs and education for younger and older workers were few, especially for those people living at the countryside. For that reason he moved from the countryside to the city looking forward for new opportunities to his life. The global industrialisation around the world not solely brought “good life conditions for enthusiastic workers that wanted to improve the life conditions of their families” or “opened new working places for younger people” or “challenged man and woman to learn new system of work, faster and more productive”. However it brought changes to the whole system and for good or worst the most affected part in the society was the family. In those years, many changes took place.

“Many young people like me, in those days had to move out of the side of their parent home looking for better horizons... life was really changing... however, even though many social changes happened and families were separated for me it was not a reason to do not visit continually my older parents. The world can change; the styles of hair, new tendency in clothes, computer and even “facebook” can be invented. But, in my life there is one thing that never changed and that was the important rule of love, respect and never forgets the family. My parents are still alive; my mother is 98-years-old years and my father is 87-years-old. I enjoy visiting my parents at the countryside where still they live. For me, it is not a problem to travel twice per month four hours by buss or train, and to bring flowers to my precious old mother. They love chocolates and cookies from the city. I love to be with my parents. I love to spend time with them, reminding old stories, drinking “mate” and sometimes just to be in silence looking each other. I know that one-day; they are not going to be anymore here with me. Therefore, I want to enjoy them and show them my love, respect and admiration. I am thankful for all the things that they have been given me. At my 58-years-old, I can say that I am a happy man and I am satisfied with the life that God has had given me to live.



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