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Supporting Ageing Somali Women

Low threshold activities as part of promoting overall well-being in everyday life

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<p>Immigration as a phenomenon is relatively new in Finland. Even though various researches have been made on the topic in Finland, no comprehensive studies have been made on ageing immigrants and more specifically ageing Somali women. Furthermore, the amount of ageing Somali women living in Finland is steadily increasing. The aim of this thesis was to discover the personal experiences and thoughts of the ageing Somali women concerning the services and activities provided to them. The thesis was carried out in cooperation with Jade Project. Jade is a developmental project supporting ageing Somali women from. The focus was to gain feedback from the ageing Somali women that participate in Jade's activities. The central aims were to discover what the needs of the target group are, what they like do they like and how to further develop the services and activities.</p> <p>This study is qualitative. The data was collected by using semi-structured group interview. The sample group consisted of seven participants. The data analysis was done through thematic analysis as it was seen the most suitable to support the aims of the thesis. Empowerment was used as a theoretical framework to support this thesis.</p> <p>The findings indicate that the clients of Jade are rather satisfied with the services and activities arranged by Jade. However, there are still some needs that have not been met. The findings show that there is a lack of Finnish language teaching which hampers the integration to Finnish society. Moreover, more and different activities were hoped for to enrich and support everyday life and functioning of the clients in Jade. The wish was to have activities in which the clients could use their skills and talents to support others. In addition, the interviewees stated that ageing in Finland does not concern them as their lives are in God's hands.</p> <p>In conclusion, the experiences that the interviewees have had in Jade were rather positive. The interviewees were grateful for the support they have received. However, more support is still needed to enhance the integration of the ageing Somali women. In addition, more attention should be paid to supporting the interests and the use of the existing skills the target group possesses.</p>	
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<p>Maahanmuutto ilmiönä on Suomessa suhteellisen uusi. Vaikka ilmiöön liittyen on tehty lukuisia tutkimuksia Suomessa, yhtään kattavaa tutkimusta ei ole tehty ikääntyvistä maahanmuuttajista, ja vielä tarkemmin, ikääntyvistä somalinalaisista. Ikääntyvien somalinaisten määrä Suomessa kasvaa tasaisesti. Tämän vuoksi näimme tarpeelliseksi tutkia ryhmää enemmän. Tämän opinnäytetyön tavoite oli ottaa selvää ikääntyvien somalinaisten kokemuksista ja ajatuksista liittyen heille tarjottuihin palveluihin ja aktiviteetteihin. Opinnäytetyö tehtiin yhteistyössä Jade Projektin kanssa. Tavoitteena olikin kerätä palautetta Jaden asiakkailta Jaden toimintaan ja sen laatuun liittyen. Pyrkimyksenä oli kuulla mitä tarpeita asiakkailta on, mistä he pitävät Jaden toiminnassa ja mitä voisi mahdollisesti vielä kehittää eteenpäin.</p> <p>Tämä tutkimus on laadullinen. Aineisto kerättiin käyttämällä teemahaastattelua ryhmässä. Otantaryhmä koostui seitsemästä osallistujasta. Aineiston analysointi tehtiin teema-analyysinä, joka nähtiin sopivampana tukemaan opinnäytetyön tavoitteiden saavuttamista. Voimaantumisteoriaa käytettiin viitekehiksenä tukemassa opinnäytetyötä.</p> <p>Tulokset osoittivat Jaden asiakkaiden olevan melko tyytyväisiä Jaden palveluihin ja aktiviteetteihin. Jotkut asiakkaiden tarpeet eivät kuitenkaan täyty. Tulokset osoittivat suomen kielen opetuksen tarjonnassa olevan puutteita. Heikon suomen kielen osaamisen katsottiin myös haittaavan kotoutumista Suomeen. Lisäksi enemmän ja uusia aktiviteetteja toivottiin järjestettävän asiakkaiden jokapäiväisen elämän ja toimintakyvyn tukemiseksi. Toiveena oli sellaisten aktiviteettien järjestäminen, joissa asiakkaat pystyisivät käyttämään omaa osaamistaan ja omia taitojaan muiden tukemiseksi. Lisäksi haastateltavat mainitsivat, että ikääntyminen Suomessa ei pelota heitä sillä heidän elämänsä on Jumalan käsissä.</p> <p>Yhteenvetona haastateltavien kokemukset Jaden toiminnasta ovat olleet suhteellisen positiiviset. Haastateltavat ovat kiitollisia saamastaan tuesta. Lisää tukea kuitenkin kaivataan ikääntyvien somalinaisten kotoutumisen edistämiseksi. Lisäksi enemmän huomiota tulisi kiinnittää kohderyhmän taitojen ja voimavarojen hyödyntämisen tukemiseen.</p>	
Avainsanat	Ikääntyvät somalit, maahanmuuttajanaiset, voimaantuminen

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Terminology

An ageing person = 55 years of age or older

Somalia and Somaliland = With these terms we refer to the greater Somalia, which includes Somaliland and Somalia. Due to different references both names are used in this thesis.

Refugee = A person who has a refugee status which is granted to those who either gain asylum in Finland or are accepted into the country in the refugee quota.

1 Introduction

The amount of immigrants in Finland has slowly increased during the last twenty years (Väestöliitto 2014). Therefore, it is obvious that specific services are needed to support immigrants in all phases of their lives. In addition, it is equally important to ensure a good quality of these services and to study the impacts of them. Only a small amount of studies have been conducted about the quality and significance of social services for elderly immigrants in Finland. Furthermore, specific studies about elderly and ageing immigrant women's opinions about and perspectives on the services offered to them are rare. Therefore, further studies about the perspectives from this client group are useful and welcome.

This thesis is a qualitative research about the significance and impacts of the low-threshold services on everyday life of ageing Somali women. We conducted the research by interviewing the clients of our working life partner Jade project which is administrated by Kantin pysäkki, Käpyrinne ry. In short, the aims of Jade project are to promote the integration and wellbeing of the ageing immigrant women through different activities, counselling and strengthening of social networks.

All of the women who participate in the activities that Jade offers come from Somali background and are aged 55 years or older. In our thesis we focus on discussing ageing Somali women's opinions about the significance and meaning of everyday life activities and services offered to them by Jade. In addition, we discuss the developmental points as well as the benefits of these services.

The theory we use to support the thesis is the concept of empowerment. In addition, we use other researches to support our own thinking as well as the overall process and analysis of the results.

In the context of this thesis with Somalia we refer to the greater Somalia, which includes Somaliland and Somalia. The connection between these two will be explained more in detail later on in this thesis.

2 Purpose of study

Due to the increasing amount of immigration in Finland there is a growing demand for specialized services and support for the ethnic minorities. Until the early 1990's the population in Finland was relatively homogenous as the immigration was not prevalent in the country (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004: 15). Nowadays immigrants as a group is rather heterogeneous which brings challenges into planning and implementing services that could meet the needs of all the immigrants residing in Finland. For this reason, various researches have been made on the topic during the recent years. Especially Somalis as a minority group has been studied rather much. However, only a few of the studies on immigrants have focused on ageing or on elderly immigrants. For example ageing Somali men have been studied in Finland (Lindberg, H. 2015). However, there are no studies made on the ageing Somali women. (Mölsä, M. 2008: 60.)¹ Hence, we saw that there is a need for studying the topic further.

Since Somalis have been diversifying the otherwise rather homogenous Finnish society for almost thirty years it does not come as a surprise that Somalis as an ethnic group has been studied through various researches (Mölsä, M. 2008: 59). Moreover, there is somewhat much information on the topic. Therefore, we found the topic very relevant since there is a no researches conducted about the quality of the services offered to ageing Somali women. According to Mölsä (2008: 60) there is no researches done on ageing Somalis in Finland. For this reason, studies on the topic are much needed to ensure high-quality services and to gain comprehensive information about the ageing Somalis. As mentioned earlier, this thesis will focus on the ageing Somali women. In order to develop the services further it is essential to study the experiences and the specified needs of this very group. The topic is relevant also because of the increasing amount of ageing Somalis in Finland, especially in the capital region. This can be seen in the statistics (Figure 1); in 2010 there were 370 ageing Somalis whereas in 2014 there were already 514 of them which is almost 50% more (Statistics Finland, 2015).

¹ Mölsä, Mulki and Marja Tiilikainen have been studied the ageing Somali women and men's perspectives on mental health. In addition, Hilikka Linderborg have studied ageing Somali men in Finland.

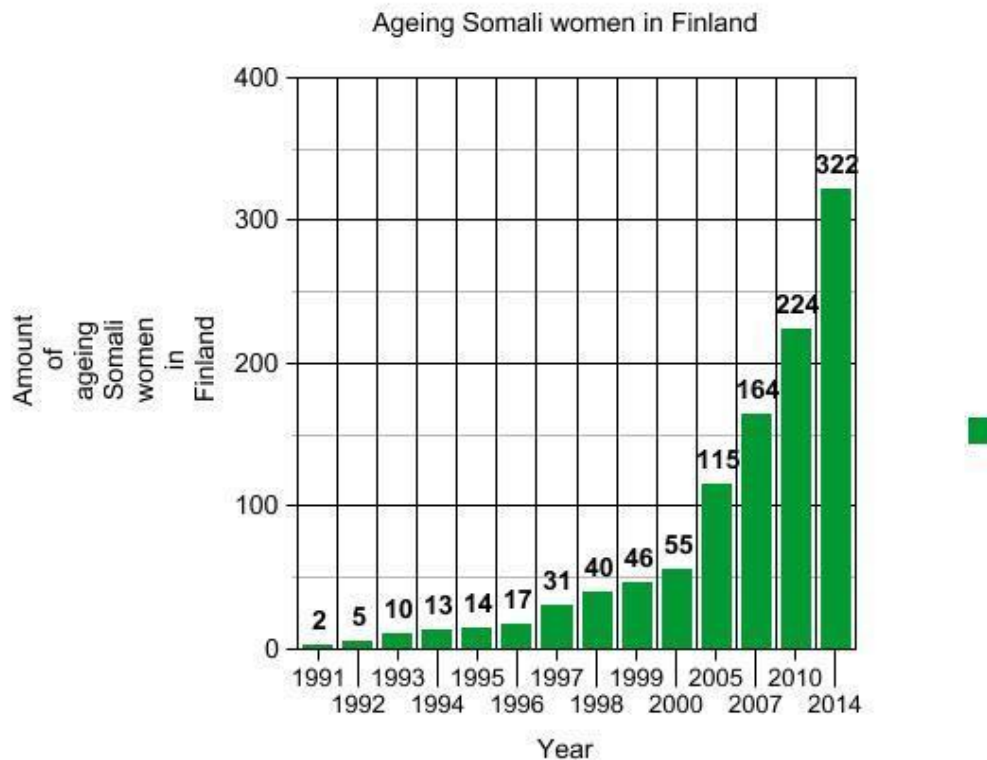


Figure 1: Ageing Somali women in Finland (Source: Statistics Finland 2015).

The aim of this thesis is to explore the personal experiences and thoughts of the ageing Somali women concerning the services and activities provided to them by the working life partner Jade project. The focus is to gain feedback from the ageing Somali women that participate in Jade's activities. The central aims are to discover what the needs of the target group are, what do they like and how to further develop the services and activities. Therefore we will interview seven Somali women who participate in the activities that Jade arranges. Moreover, the purpose is to support the work of Jade and indirectly all other organizations which are planning services for this service-user group. The aim is to find out the benefits and developmental points of the earlier mentioned activities and services by analysing the client's responses. Furthermore, the purpose is to gain deeper understanding and knowledge of what are the elements supporting overall well-being of ageing Somali women in Finland.

The focus of this study was to collect information primarily from the service users. Giving a voice to the target group was seen very central when gathering information about the topic that concerns them. We believe that everyone is an expert of her own life, thus in the beginning of the thesis process our aim was to create a safe environment for the

women in which they could express their thoughts freely and to feel that what they think and how they experience things truly matters. In practical terms, this meant participating in the activities (mainly discussion groups). This allowed us to observe as well as to familiarize ourselves with the clients of Jade. At the same time the idea was to create trust between the women and us. All this was important and useful for two reasons: observing the target group helped us in clarifying the central themes as well as our interview questions and familiarity with the women might have significant impact on the responses on the actual interview session. However, all this was to create a foundation for our actual data collection, semi-structured group interview. Furthermore, the interview was analysed through thematic analysis. We considered this data collection method as the most suitable one since it is slightly less formal and allows the interviewees to respond more freely.

3 Background information on the topic

In this chapter we are going to discuss in more detail the background information concerning our topic. Information will be given about ageing immigrants in Finland as well as Somalis in Finland. In addition, we will present the services offered for immigrants in Finland and the acts that support the integration of earlier mentioned group. We will further discuss the culture and identity of Somalis to gain deeper understanding of them as a group.

3.1 Ageing immigrants in Finland

In the 21st century immigration has increased smoothly. In addition, movability and working have become easier due to expansion of European union. (Helsingin kaupungin tietokeskus, 2009.) For this reason also more immigrants have come to Finland. According to Tilastokeskus (2015), the amount of foreign language speakers in Finland were 310 306. This amount in Uusimaa (capital region) in 2014 was 171 242, which is almost 8 % of the population of the Uusimaa region. Moreover, the amount of foreign language speakers is prognosticated to double by the year 2030 (Helsingin kaupunki, Talous ja suunnittelukeskus).

More focus will be on the amount of ageing immigrants. As mentioned earlier, the number of ageing immigrants in Finland has continuously been increasing (Figure 1). However, despite the growing amount of this group of people and the varying backgrounds of these immigrants, not very much attention has been paid to them. (AliTolppa-Niitamo A, 2004:15). This may be because this group of people is still a rather new in Finland. Yet, ageing immigrants have been viewed as future's challenge (HS 10.7.2009; Maiman kuvalehti 11/2007). According to Statistics Finland (2014), in the end of year 2014 there were around 33 000 ageing immigrants in Finland of which approximately fifty percent lived in the capital region. In this context, ageing immigrant is a person who is 55 years old or older and whose mother tongue is other than Finnish, Swedish or Sami. These immigrants have moved to Finland for various reasons: to return to their roots, as refugees, because of family ties and so forth. Furthermore, the amount of ageing and elderly immigrants have rapidly increased during the past nine years (Figure 2).

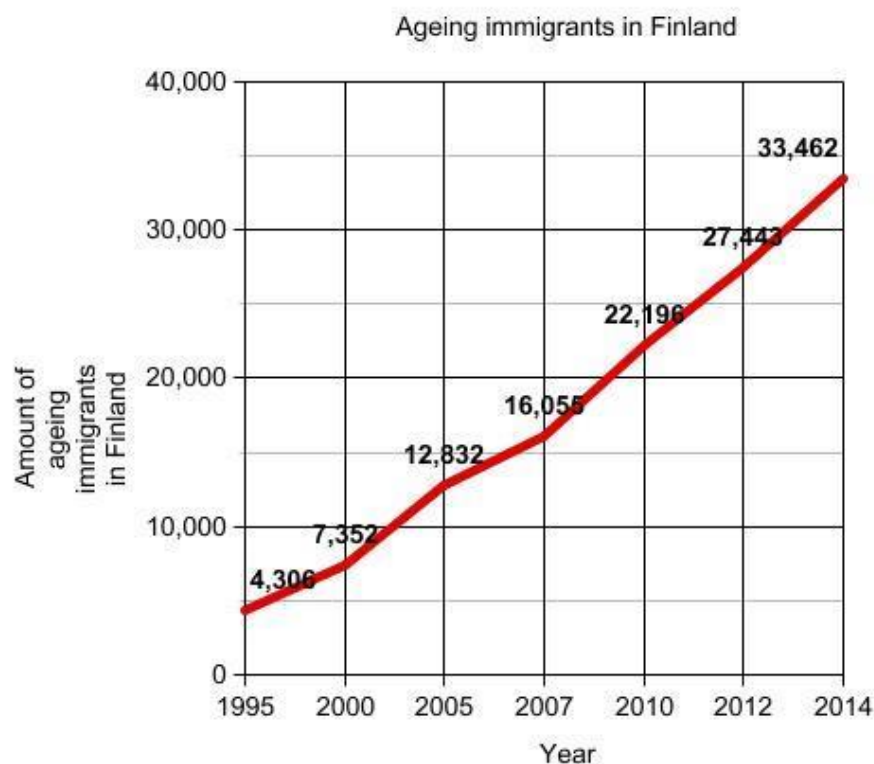


Figure 2: Ageing immigrants in Finland (Source: Statistics Finland 2015).

As mentioned, ageing immigrants have been and still are a rather invisible group of people in our society although the number of them has gradually been increasing.

The special needs of this group are not always recognised (Uusikylä, P. et al 2010: 47). However, it is important to take into account that in the same way as natives, those from ethnic minorities can face similar challenges such as dementia, depression or the risk of becoming excluded from the society. This phenomenon is studied in various international studies conducted of ageing ethnic minorities. For example Runnymede (2010) has studied the future ageing of the ethnic minority population of England and Wales.² Moreover, there is a lack of comprehensive researches made on the ageing immigrants in Finland as the phenomenon is rather unknown.³ Consequently, more focus should be put on this group in order to discover the challenges and special needs they have.

In order to have a comprehensive understanding of the ageing immigrants in Finland, it is important to discuss the challenges of integration of the mentioned target group. Factors that can support the integration of immigrants into their new home country can for example be a study place or a job. For various reasons ageing and elderly immigrants may not be as active as the younger ones. These reasons can be the pension age (not in working life anymore) and deteriorated physical capability. Thus, the risk for elderly immigrants to experience loneliness and to be excluded from the society is higher. Elderly immigrants face various challenges in their new country. Such challenges can be, to mention a few, learning the language, physical limitations and being dependent on the help and support from family members. As earlier mentioned, elderly immigrants are a rather heterogenous group of people, thus it is important to remember that their life situations and conditions may vary significantly (Suomen Pakolaisapu Ry).

Many of the elderly people build their identities based on their past. A great number of elderly immigrants experience a sense of nothingness and rootlessness which increases the risk of exclusion (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland). There is not very much information and knowledge in Finland of the effects the insufficient language skills, experiencing loneliness, gender norms set by one's own culture, humanitarian crisis that is the reason behind moving into a new country and the moving into a new country at an old age have on immigrants. However, it is known

1. ²Runnymede (2010) the future ageing of the ethnic minority population of England and Wales. London: Runnymede trust and centre for policy on ageing

³ HS 10.7.2009, Maahanmuuttajien ikääntyminen on tiukka paikka terveydenhuollolle. The article discusses the challenges ethnicity brings to the health care in Finland.

that these factors increase the risk of depression, dementia and exclusion (Maahanmuuttajien henkinen hätä huolestuttaa 2013). What it more, it is important to take into account that there can be painful memories and experiences in the ageing immigrants' pasts which they are not able to handle (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland). Moreover, an extensive research was conducted in 2012 by National Institute for Health and Welfare of working age immigrants from Somali, Kurdi and Russian backgrounds. What came up from the research was that a significant number (76-80%) of Finnish Somali women aged 30-64 had experienced a trauma at some point in their life (Castañeda, Anu et al. 2012:151-156). As mentioned, this number tells only about working age immigrants and there is very little information on the ageing immigrant women. Notwithstanding, it can be assumed that a significant percent of ageing Somali women and other ageing immigrant women in Finland have also experienced a trauma.

All the above mentioned factors have an impact on the overall well-being of the ageing immigrant women. Humans are physical, psychological and social combination. In addition, attention should be paid on supporting the good mental health. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, most ageing and elderly Somalis are expected to have trauma experiences. When discussing the good mental health, it is important to first define the concept. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines it to be a part of the overall wellbeing. More precisely, it is a state in which a person knows and understand her own capacities, can function as a part of the society and in stressful everyday life situations. It also means the capability to work productively. According to WHO good mental health keeps changing in various situations during life. However, it is something that one can practise and strengthen by supporting individual and communal, cultural as well as social structures (Jade Project plan). Since mental health is a significant part of the overall well-being it cannot be left out when planning the services and activities for the ageing immigrants.

In elderly care services for immigrants there are some beneficial and well-functioning approaches and ways to work. To mention a few, these kind of ways are group activities that increase the sense of meaningfulness and hope as well as group activities that maintain both physical and psychical performance. Read more in detail in a guidebook "Ikätovereita ja ilon hetkiä" and in the website of Vanhustyön

Keskusliitto.⁴ In addition to these, there are also other valuable approaches. These approaches have their focus more on the therapeutic work. To mention a few of these, collecting life stories, facing and dealing traumatic experiences and grief as well as therapeutic reminiscing can be very meaningful tools for coming to term with the past and experiencing inner healing (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland).

3.2 Legislation concerning elderly and immigration in Finland

For deeper understanding of the structure of the support that immigrants in Finland are entitled to it is necessary to look into the Finnish legislation. In this chapter we are going to mention a few of the laws regarding immigration and the integration of immigrants. The legislation creates a foundation for the service provision and provides guidelines for organizing the services and support for immigrants. There are more than ten laws issued concerning immigration in Finland (Ministry of the Interior, maahanmuutto). However, in this chapter only few central laws are mentioned and explained. Moreover, it is important to look into the legislation concerning the services for elderly. The elderly immigrants are also entitled to services that are presented in the legislation concerning the services for elderly.

Apart from the policy concerning integration, it is important to mention a few words of the Finnish Constitution. The Constitution of Finland states that the purpose of it is to ensure same kind of basic services and rights to everyone as well as to set same obligations to everyone. In addition, it also legislates that no one should be set in a different position based on his gender, age, ethnic origin, language, religion, opinion, disability or some other reason concerning the person. The basic rights and human rights of everyone should be secured (The Finnish Constitution, 1999).

From the Finnish Constitution it is logical to proceed to looking deeper into the policy that regulates integration. The most relevant acts concerning integration in this context are Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration (1386/2010 Finlex) and Aliens Act (301/2004 Finlex).

⁴ Suomen Pakolaisapu ry (2010). Ikätovereita ja ilon hetkiä. Helsinki: Trinket Oy.; www.vanhustyonkeskusliitto.fi/fin/ikaantyyvat_maahanmuuttajat/

Aliens Act has very much in detail defined what an alien person means. The description is vague, thus, a person can be called an alien for various reasons. However, in short, an alien is a person who is not a Finnish citizen. Aliens Act as well as any provision that has been issued under this act applies to several matters. It applies to an alien's residence and employment in Finland as well as an alien's entry and departure from Finland. The purpose of Aliens Act is implementing and promoting good governance as well as legal protection in matters that concern aliens. Moreover, this act is to promote managed immigration and provision of international protection while respecting human rights and basic rights in consideration of international agreements that are binding on Finland (Finlex, 301/2004, amendments up to 1152/2010 included).

As mentioned, another central act regarding integration is the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration (1386/2010 Finlex). This act came into force in the first of September .2011, following the previous act that was from the year 1999 and had concerned receiving asylum seekers and integrating immigrants. The changed act that came into force in 2011 obligates that the immigrants are provided with information on their rights and responsibilities. Moreover, the changed act made it obligatory to provide immigrants with information about the Finnish service system. The Act on Promotion of Immigrant Integration applies to persons who possess a valid residence permit in Finland as has been referred to in the previously discussed Aliens Act. In addition, the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration applies to those who have been registered or who have been granted a residence card under the Aliens Act. The services and support this act aims at guaranteeing for immigrants will be explained more in detail in the next section. However, in short, the purpose of this act is to promote non-discrimination, positive interaction between various population groups as well as to promote gender equality. Moreover, the purpose of this act is to support and promote integration and to enhance the possibilities of immigrants to be active in Finnish society.

Moreover, it is vital to look into the Act on Supporting the Functional Capacity of the Older Population and on Social and Health Services for Older Persons (Finlex 980/2012). According to the act home services are primary and an elderly person is entitled to have a comprehensive evaluation of one's needs. This also includes the elderly with immigrant background. Moreover, the law states that an elder person should be provided a personal care plan. In addition, the functionality of this law

concerning older population with immigrant background should be evaluated. According to Heikkinen S.J & Lumme-Sandt K. (2014), the policies concerning elderly immigrants are rather vague. Heikkinen S.J. & Lumme-Sandt K. discuss the functionality of the above mentioned law concerning elderly services (Finlex 980/2012) as well as what still to improve. Read more in detail in the article about policies concerning elderly immigrants. ⁵

3.3 Services for immigrants in Finland

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the legislation obligates to arrange support for immigrants and their integration. To see how this actualizes in practice it is necessary to take a look into the already existing support systems and services for the immigrants. Therefore, in this chapter we are going to discuss the integration policy in Finland as well as the services offered to immigrants.

Integration into Finland means that one settles in Finland and learns skills as well as gains knowledge that are needed for the life in the Finnish society. Such skills and knowledge can for example be learning the language, creating contacts with Finnish society and becoming employed or obtaining a study place. (Infopankki, kotoutuminen Suomeen.) Moreover, the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration (1386/2010) states that social integration refers to multidisciplinary promotion of integration through different actions and services. To enhance and support integration municipalities have composed integration programs. These programs are either composed by and for one or a few municipalities. These programs have been developed individually but they all should include a few important aspects, such as how the services in the municipality will support the immigrant population and how the integration of immigrants in different states of lives will be enhanced (Kotouttaminen, 2015).

More in detail, the municipalities, the Employment and Economic Development Office and other public authorities in Finland are obligated to offer services and support for immigrants and asylum seekers (Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration 1386/2010). In addition, they have the main responsibility in offering and

⁵ Ikääntyvä maahanmuuttaja kuntien kotouttamisohjelmissa ja vanhuspoliittisissa ohjelmissa. - <http://docplayer.fi/267122-Gerontologia-28-3-2014-artikkelit-ikaantyyva-maahanmuuttaja-kuntien-kotouttamisohjelmissa-ja-vanhuspoliittisissa-ohjelmissa.html>

planning services to support the integration of all immigrants. However, most of these services belong to the domain of normal supply in the municipality (such as kindergarten and school). Nonetheless, every municipality should provide support for its residents that the legislation mentioned in the previous chapter concerns. In addition, the Employment and Economic Development Office provides support for the jobseeking for all its immigrant customers. Moreover, the Employment and Economic Development Office has a central role in providing early phase integration services for immigrants. To mention a few, these services include guidance and advice, the initial assessment, integration plan as well as integration training (Infopankki, Services provided by the Employment and Economic Development Office). In practice, an individual should receive guidance as well as language teaching and other training to enhance the integration. There are immigrant advisors in Employment and Economic Development Offices whose duty is to help immigrants in their integration process. An immigrant may receive information from the advisors concerning working life, education and studying as well as integration and services related to it (Infopankki, Kotoutuminen Suomeen).

As already mentioned above, the municipalities and the Employment and Economic Development Office are in charge of planning and providing the services for immigrants. Moreover, for example the city of Helsinki has an integration program called Maahanmuutto ja monimuotoisuus Helsingissä 2013-2016. The program entitles municipal operators to take responsibility for taking care of the ageing people. However, many services are also provided through third sector organizations. Especially in the capital region there is a rather wide range of services that are arranged by third sector organizations. For instance, The Finnish Refugee Council and Refugee Advice Centre provide support and guidance to refugees especially in legal matters. Moreover, there are various associations that aim to support the everyday life of immigrants in Finland. To mention a few, such associations are Familia Club and MonikaNaiset.

3.4 Background information on Somalia and Somalis

As mentioned in the introduction part, in the context of this thesis with Somalia we refer to the greater Somalia, which includes Somaliland and Somalia. It was decided that only one term will be used in order to avoid confusion and in order for the thesis

to be more in-line and easy for the reader to follow. The term Somalia was seen as the most logical one to use in this context. However, it is important to understand that Somalia and Somaliland mean two different things and that there are great differences between these two states⁶. There is a significant contrast between the troubled central and southern parts of Somalia and the peaceful northern parts where Somaliland is situated (Somalia-Canada research institute, 1999).

Somalia is a country which is about 396,00 square miles, situated in East Africa, on the tip of the horn of Africa. During the colonial times Somalia was under British, French and Italian rule until 1969 when it gained its independence. Not long after becoming an independent nation, an army commander Siad Barre with the support of Soviet Union conducted a takeover and took the rule of Somalia. This dictator ruled Somalia until 1991 when his rule was taken over (Globalis, Somalia). In the same year after Barre had been removed from power, Somaliland, located on the Coast of Gulf of Aden, in Somalia's northwest, declared independence. Despite Somaliland not being internationally recognized by other governments, the country has a functioning political system, own currency, a police force and government institutions. Somaliland is continuously working on trying to win support to become a sovereign state (BBC News, Somaliland profile, 2015). Unlike Somalia where there is constant instability and violence, Somaliland is a rather peaceful territory (Aljazeera, 2010). Regardless of the fact that the history of Somaliland has not always been peaceful, Somaliland has also been on the brink of several civil wars, it has been able to reach economical growth that is very different compared to the rest of Somalia.

The collapse of Barre's rule lead to civil war, as a result the country was divided into smaller areas. The civil war has resulted in the Somali people to flee and be spread to many different countries. Thus, a great number of Somalis are nowadays living in diaspora. The main reason for the war in Somalia to continue is the clan system (Globalis). Since the year 1991 several attempts have been taken to try to create a centralized democracy to Somalia. Unfortunately these attempts have failed and since 1991 Somalia has been seen as a failed state. The state of the current government is close to a collapse. In spite of the help and support provided by the Ethiopian military since 2006 the government is taken over by an Islamist insurgency

⁶ Will be discussed more in detail later on in this chapter.

(Kenning, D. 2011:63). As has been explained, Somalia and Somaliland mean two separate territories. Despite the fact that in this context we discuss Somalis who have had to flee from the violent and unstable central and southern parts of the country we do not make division between the different states of Somalia. Instead, we want to refer it all as Somalia regardless of the fact that the situation of Somaliland, as has been explained, is rather stable which enables the people of Somaliland to live a rather peaceful life without a need to flee.

A large amount of Somalis in Somalia lead a nomadic life, therefore it has been impossible to count the population. Thus, instead of counting the population, it has been estimated. According to these estimations, the population is something between 5 to 8 million people in Somalia (Ohio Homeland Security, A Guide to Somali Culture).

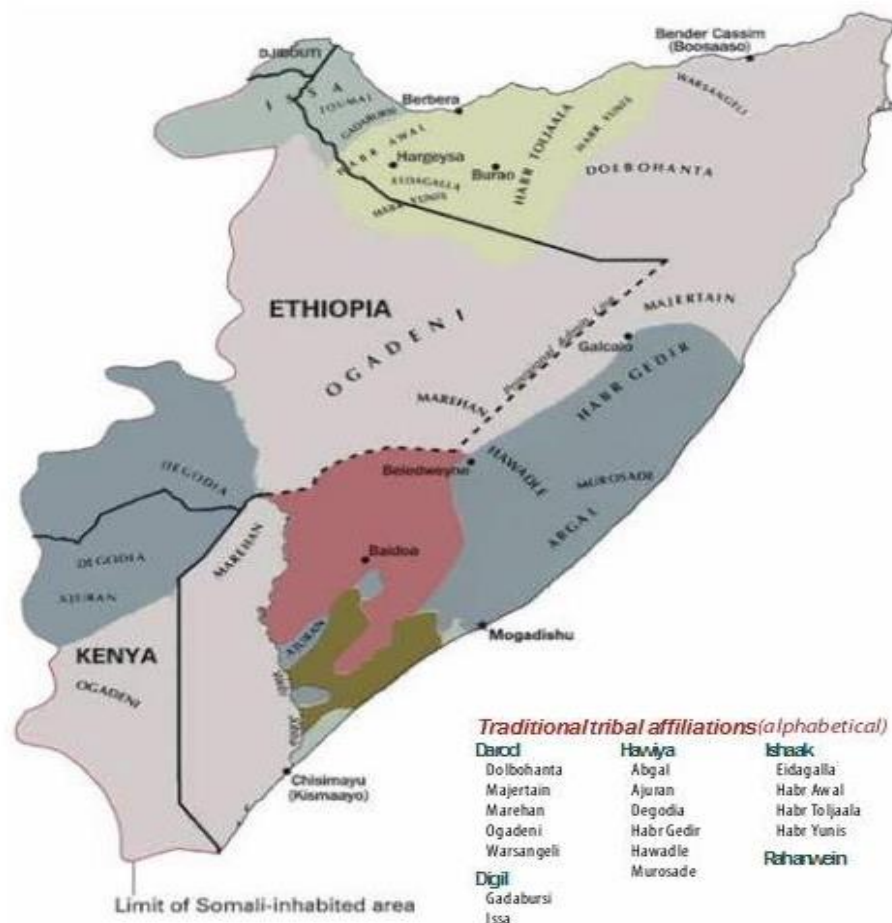


Figure 3: Map of Somalia (Source: A guide to Somali culture, Ohio Homeland Security).

3.5 Somali culture and identity

To gain wider understanding of the target group it is vital to discuss the Somali culture and identity. Therefore, we are going to give a little background information on Somali culture and identity of the Somali people. In addition, we are going to mention the central aspects that determine and guide the lives of Somali people. In addition, background information on ageing Somali women is needed in order to plan and develop culturally sensitive activities. Moreover, taking into account the age and gender when discussing this very target group is crucial.

Tribes have a significant role in Somali culture; they lay a foundation for the identity of Somali people. The size, geography and wealth of its members determine the power of a tribe. Both the culture and the political system of Somalia are affected by the tribes that have most power (Ohio Homeland Security, A Guide to Somali Culture.) Tribes are usually big in size and for that reason a clan system has been established. Clans are smaller groups inside the tribes. However, the importance as well as the effects of clans do not emerge significantly. Despite the women in Jade sometimes mentioning something concerning the hierarchical clan system there is a non-verbal agreement of trying to avoid discussing politics and clans.

Another central feature of Somali culture is its patriarchy and gender sensitivity. Men make decisions concerning almost every aspect of life, even concerning matters of life and death. In Somali culture it is the men who make decisions concerning providing treatment for family members. Men are the center of Somali society holding the cultural authority. In addition, the extended family plays an important role in Somali culture. The extended family is the basic unit and it can combine more than two generations to live in the same family. Somali families are large in size when compared to western families. It is common for a Somali nuclear family to have nine or ten family members sharing the same house. Women in Somali culture are in charge of the chores in the household as well as taking care of the children and grandchildren (Ohio Homeland Security, A Guide to Somali Culture.) Therefore women in Somali culture have a significant role and are influential in the society (Lewis, M. I. 2014). In addition, the elderly Somali women are highly respected in their culture for the wisdom they have gained through life experiences (Ohio Homeland Security, A Guide to Somali Culture).

In the same way as culture has a great role in the way of Somali people's life, religion has a significant part in their life as well. Somalis are Muslims of which 99% percent are Sunni Muslims. Islam is not only a religion for Somalis, rather it is a way of life which defines and provides guidance for the proper way of leading one's life. Islam's doctrine instructs one on how she is supposed to live as well as behave both in public and private life. It also provides guidance on how to prepare for salvation in the life after. Therefore, the religion has a significant role in guiding the lives of Somali women.⁷ In general, Islam is a great source of strength for Somalis (Ohio Homeland Security). Daily prayers, Islamic dietary law and ramadan (a month of fasting) are central parts of the life of Muslims. In addition to these, the religion also creates a foundation to how to relate to health and sickness. In Islam, these are both in Allah's hands (Mölsä, M., Tiilikainen, M. 2007). Many Somalis believe that "Shaitan" (the devil) causes illnesses and diseases. It is also believed that the "evil eye" can either cause joy or pain as well as sickness on others.

The significant role that Islam plays in Somalis life aroused in the interview as well as when observing the ageing Somali women in the activity groups organized by our working life partner. To mention a few examples; The women had prayer moments during the activities, the groups and activities were planned so that there was no music present nor were there men taking part in the activities. The importance of Islam in the women's life and the strength it gives became clear also when conducting the interview. When the women were asked about their thoughts regarding ageing in Finland and the old age in general, it came up in many of the answers that they are not afraid of getting older. A few of the women mentioned that since Allah takes care of them, they do not have to be afraid of old age and the limitations and other possible issues it may bring. Although almost all Somalis are Muslims, it is important to take into consideration that there are considerable differences between individuals and families in the ways the religion is practised and followed (Mölsä, M., Tiilikainen, M. 2007).

Several features create the basis for the identity of a Somali woman. Since Somali culture is patriarchal, women do not have a say concerning societal matters. Notwithstanding, Somali women do not participate in decision-making. They perform varied roles during their life. Inside the family Somali woman is a wife as well as a

⁷ Further reading on the topic: Tiilikainen, M 2003. Somali women and Daily Islam in the Diaspora." *Social Compass* 50 (1), pp. 59-69.

mother and a teacher for each of her children. In addition, women are the hearts of their family and home and are in charge of the household chores. (Unicef, 2002.) The role of women is therefore highly specialized and respected. Despite the Somali culture being very patriarchal, women have an important role in the life of Somalis. This is clearly seen in a few Somali proverbs concerning women's role (Somali Proverbs, Research on Islam and Muslims in Africa, RIMA) ;

“Naag la’aani waa naf la’aan (To be without a woman is to be without life)”

“Haween la’aani waa hoy la’aan (Where there are no women, there is no home)”

“Guri ann hooyo lahayni waa lama degaan (A home without a mother is like a desert) “

It is also important to take into consideration that in Somali culture children take care of their elderly parents. In addition, in situations of divorce or widowhood a Somali parent moves in to live with his/her eldest child (Mölsä, 2008). Therefore, it is significant to notice that the elderly care in Somali culture is very different when comparing to that of Finnish culture. For this reason it is also rare to see Somalis living in elderly care centres. This emerged also in the interview we conducted. The interviewees mentioned about how the Finnish culture differ from the Somali culture when it comes to taking care of the elderly. They cannot imagine that an ageing or elderly Somali person would be put into an elderly care center. There is always someone who takes care of a person who needs help. The women mentioned how it is part of their culture that the children take care of the parents when they get old because when the children were young the parents took care of them and raised them. It is the children's responsibility to take care of the parents in return. In our interview one woman mentioned: "...This culture (Finnish) is very different. In our culture parents and children are very close and they listen to each other. It is not enough to remember your mother only on Mother's day."

In addition, the elderly in Somali culture are highly respected which can also be noticed from a traditional Somali proverb. According to the proverb, there are three pillars which together form a well-functioning society. These pillars are a person who has great knowledge of religion, a poet and an elderly person who provides advice

to others (Mölsä, 2008:63). Furthermore, the elderly Somali women are highly respected and they are seen as wise teachers inside the families.

3.6 Somalis in Finland

Somalis came to Finland in great amounts in the beginning of 1990's as asylum seekers as a result of civil war in Somaliland (Cassanelli, 2001). It is significant to notice that in the beginning most Somali asylum seekers came to Finland via Soviet Union due the co-operation between the former Soviet Union and Somalia (Allas 1991: 5.). Due to the difficult situation in Somaliland big amounts of Somalis moved to other countries as refugees. In consequence of this, Somalis also form the biggest single ethnic group in Finland. Prior to 1990s' there was a thought that barely no asylum seeker would enter Finland (Alitolppa-Niitamo A, 2004:15). According to Statistics Finland, there were 16 721 Somali speaking people in Finland in 2014 and 12 488 of them lived in the capital region. This has also brought challenges and a need for development to the already existing services to support immigrants.

As mentioned earlier, due to the civil war in Somalia some of the Somali refugees have had traumatic experiences in their home country. In addition, the culture and traditions of Somalis differ greatly from what has been seen as ordinary here in Finland (Mölsä, M. 2008:60). Therefore, integration into the Finnish society is a process of reciprocal communication. In addition, a need for studies on the specific needs Somalis in Finland have arose. Education on the Somali culture is crucial to enable good quality of the services. Moreover, it is essential to create culturally sensitive practices and approaches.

As mentioned, in Somali culture family has high value and the responsibility to take care of the elderly lays on the younger generation. Many Somalis have entered Finland later on to connect with their families through family reunification programs (Ali-Tolppa-Niitamo 2004, 24-25). The family reunification program includes several requirements that need to be fulfilled. Therefore some Somalis have not necessarily been able to connect with their immediate family but instead have moved in with other family members.

When discussing ageing Somalis it is important to take into account the fact that unlike in the western world, in Somali culture age is not defined chronologically.

Instead, the age in Somali culture is seen through functional capacity (Mölsä, 2008:59-60). This is because the functional capacity has been important in a nomadic way of life. There is no pension age in Somalia. Instead, men and women work until their physical condition prevents them from doing so.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, many ageing Somalis have entered Finland through family reunification. According to Statistics Finland (2014), there are 322 Somali-speaking women aged 55 years or older in Finland and 264 of them live in the capital region (Uusimaa). The basis of identity and self-worth for ageing Somalis is broad and multidimensional family network. However, as a result of dispersal due to civil war these networks are broken in many families. Since most ageing Somalis have entered Finland at an older age, they have formed strong bonds to their homeland. To detach oneself from these bonds in order to integrate into a new environment is particularly challenging for the newcomer as well as for the society (Nylund, A. 2008). In Finnish Refugee Council's guidebook 'Ikätovereita ja ilon hetkiä' (2010) an ageing Somali woman mentions the following:

"...Ever since I came to Finland I have not visited Somalia. I miss my extended family in Somalia. Life in Somalia was good before the war..."

It is important to notice that there is limited researches made on ageing Somali immigrants in Finland (Mölsä, 2008).⁸ In addition, during the next decades the amount of ageing Somali immigrants in Finland will increase greatly due to the increasing amount of Somalis living in the country. Due to these facts there is an increasing demand for information about the living conditions and needs of this group.

3.7 What is still needed

In the previous chapters we have discussed the important background information on the topic. Moreover, the central aspects have been mentioned to support this

⁸ Hilikka Linderberg, Henna Died Beards - Ageing Somali Men in Group Activities; Mölsä, Mulki 2008. Somalialaisten maahanmuuttajien ikääntymisen ja sairastumisen kokemuksia Suomessa; Mölsä, Mulki, Tiilikainen, M. Potilaana Somali.

thesis as well as to discover what is still lacking concerning the services arranged to immigrants and more specifically, to ageing Somali women. When discussing the background information on Somali culture and identity as well as what services there are and what the legislation demands it is vital to take into consideration what can still be developed. Moreover, based on background studies concerning the target group of this thesis, it was discovered that there is a small amount information about the situation of the ageing Somali women in Finland. Therefore, information about the personal experiences, needs and wishes of the target group is needed in order to develop further the services offered to this group. Moreover, we value the information coming directly from the target group and find their thoughts important when developing services.

4 Research questions

Due to the increasing need for new information about and deeper understanding of the situation of ageing Somali women in Finland (Mölsä, 2008), the aim of this thesis is to provide more information about the target group. In addition, the aim is to support our working life partner Jade through this thesis work. Therefore, we have determined three main research questions which are used to provide information about the target group. Our research questions are: what is good in the functioning of Jade, what is needed more and what to develop further. Although the questions are aimed to evaluate the functioning of Jade, we considered the information to be useful for all professionals working in the field.

The three research questions aim to provide comprehensive information about the quality of services and support offered by Jade. Moreover, the aim is to gather information about what the ageing Somali women value and what are their needs and wishes. Therefore the aim is to discover what is functioning well, what could be in addition and what could be developed further and changed.

5 Introducing the working life partner

In this chapter there will be given background information on the working life partner Kantin pysäkki (Käpyrinne ry). The goals and purposes of the association as well as what kind of services and support it provides will be explained. In addition, the background information on Jade-project will be given. Jade is the focus of this thesis work and all co-

operation will be done together with Jade. We are going to give background information about the project and its' purposes. Moreover, we will discuss the activities that Jade provides as well as the supportive elements these services have on ageing immigrant women's everyday life.

5.1. Kantin pysäkki, Käpyrinne ry

In recent years ageing population has become a problematic phenomenon to the Finnish society. As a result, the need for services for the ageing and elderly people has increased. This change has brought about foundation of organizations which all in various ways aim at maintaining and supporting the well-being of the ageing population.

Kantin pysäkki is an organization that provides sheltered accommodation and care services as well as other kinds of activities and support for the ageing and elderly. Käpyrinne ry is a private non-profit social association which was founded in 1988 in Helsinki. It receives its funding from the city of Helsinki, private residents and RAY (Finnish Slot Machine Association). The city of Helsinki has made a purchase agreement with Kantin pysäkki which in practise means that the city purchases twenty psycho-geriatric care places from it. In addition, Kantin pysäkki receives funding for maintaining a wellbeing center for elderly. The rest of its funding Kantin pysäkki receives from private residents of sheltered accommodation. The financial support from RAY is directed only to Jade project (2013-2015. After long-span preparations, Kantti ry and another similar association, Käpyrinne ry were merged in spring 2015. These two non-profit organizations hope that getting together and becoming one can strengthen the services and activities that are provided by non-governmental organizations. The synergy that follows from combining these two organizations is a solution to answer the needs of the ageing population by providing better possibilities than before for the work done in NGO's, voluntary services, advocacy as well as developmental work. Since the unification, Käpyrinne ry now has two premises of which both are located in Helsinki, Käpyrinne's sheltered housing in Käpylä and the other one, Kantin pysäkki in Töölö. Both of the premises provide care around the clock as well as function as centers in their own areas to provide support services, activities as well as peer support.

As mentioned, Käpyrinne ry offers home-like accommodation and care services in Kantin pysäkki. In addition, it runs a wellbeing centre and develops services for the elderly. Käpyrinne ry provides various activities for its clients. These groups are sports group, gym group, maintaining mental wellbeing group, swedish kaffepaus group, university of elderly, culture Kantti and art group. In addition, in the fall of 2015 starts a peer support group for elderly sexual minorities. Kantin pysäkki has provided activities for ageing Somali women since 2008. In the work it does Kantin pysäkki emphasizes rehabilitation, psycho-geriatric care and culturally sensitive elderly care. Moreover, the focus of the organization lays on promoting good mental health. In addition, Kantin pysäkki aims to prevent the exclusion of the ageing population. Kantin pysäkki uses arts in the work with the clients for its rehabilitative impact. The central operational principles of Kantin pysäkki are communality, individuality and providing home-like environment in its premises. In addition, it focuses on expertise in its work as well as sharing experience and information regarding the work with the elderly (Kantin pysäkki). Moreover, Kantin pysäkki cooperates with several other organizations. The central principles that guide Kantin pysäkki are respect towards divergence and individuality, tolerance and humanity, equity and openness as well as participation and communality (Kantin pysäkki).

5.3. Jade project

Our focus is on Jade which is a three year long (years 2013-2015) project administrated by Kantin pysäkki. It is part of a bigger, nation-wide program called Active Age -Never Mind the Year (Eloisa ikä 2012-2017) which is coordinated by Vanhustyön keskusliitto (Central Union for the Welfare of the Aged) and financed by RAY (Finnish Slot Machine Association). The program consists of thirty projects around Finland. The purpose of Active Age is to promote performance and psychosocial well-being of the elderly population.

The project is based on Somali women's "soma-groups" that were held in Kantin pysäkki 2008 and on the activities offered in Kantin pysäkki wellbeing center by voluntary workers. Jade is an innovative developmental project aimed for ageing women from African backgrounds. It welcomes women 50 years or older with African background to join its activities. (Jade project plan). However, it is vital to take into consideration that in spite of the services to be aimed for women from African

backgrounds, the women participating in Jade's activities all have Somali background. According to our working life partner it has been difficult for various reasons to reach and get women from other than Somali backgrounds to participate. To mention a few reasons, many women who come from other African backgrounds have their own communities and the number of the women from these other African countries is low. Since all the women participating in Jade's activities come from Somali background it is logical and goes without saying that our focus is on ageing Somali women only. In addition to welcoming ageing women to take part in the activities, Jade is open for everyone who is interested in voluntary work regardless of age or origin

The demand for such project raised from the need to provide more specialized support for ageing immigrants. However, Jade offers activities for women only as the women did not wish to invite the family members to attend. However, workshops and special events are organized for people from various backgrounds. In order to support and maintain the overall well-being of the ageing women Jade provides a rather wide range of activities to its clients. Weekly activities are designed to improve both the physical and mental well-being as well as to provide means to a meaningful social life in Helsinki area. The activities and services Jade provides will be explained more in detail in the next chapter.

There are four workers in Jade; a project manager, a project worker who has a training of a practical nurse, another project worker who is a psychologist and there is also a geriatric nurse. Together they form a multi-professional team. When introducing the professional team it is important to mention that one of the project workers speaks fluent Somali which enhances the communication between the staff and the ageing women. However, this can also affect in such way that the Somali women do not necessarily put as much effort in speaking Finnish as they would if translation was not offered. In addition to the workers of Jade, the role the volunteers play in Jade's activities is significant. The volunteers come from Akateemiset naiset ry's Luetaan yhdessä network. Volunteers have an important role in helping immigrants to integrate into the society. They are important also in diversifying the project's activities and services and ensuring the continuity of the project.

5.2.1 The activities and services Jade provides

Ageing Somali women is discovered to be a forgotten group of people in discussions concerning elderly care services and immigration (Active Age, internet blog, 2014). Jade aims at changing this by giving a voice to its clients. The purpose of the project is to promote integration of ageing immigrant women with the support of good mental health. Furthermore, Jade aims at promoting cultural-sensitivity and intercultural communication. Primarily, the project wishes to develop new working methods in order to fill the lack of services that have arose in the multicultural activities and services (Jade project plan).

The starting point of Jade is to find out what the clients experience as challenging and what they see as something that would need to be improved. As mentioned in the previous chapter Jade arranges a wide range of activities as well services for its clients in order to support their overall wellbeing. It is important to take into consideration that despite the clients being ageing women they are all still in a rather good physical condition. For this reason there is much variety in the activities as well as in how the activities have been planned. (Jade project plan)

In Jade there is a possibility for the ageing immigrant women to get practical as well as concrete guidance with societal issues in Finnish, English and Somali. The women can receive help with filling applications and service guidance. In addition, Jade offers informal translation of different kind of paperwork, for example documents and applications. Moreover, Jade aims to promote the overall well-being and integration of the ageing immigrant women through activities, guidance and the entrenchment of social networks. Jade has a weekly schedule that is followed. The activities that are provided are such as various sports, mathematics group, Finnish language group and discussion group. In addition, since fall 2015 together with the city of Helsinki Jade provide a water sport activity group and handicrafts.

In addition to above mentioned, Jade arranges multicultural workshops for the clients. In the workshops the women have had a chance to experience different food cultures as well as to try out various handicrafts, arts and outdoor activities. The purpose of arranging these kind of different workshops is to offer meaningful and empowering activities for the everyday life of the ageing immigrant women.

Lastly, Jade arranges seminars and trainings for professionals and people who are interested in matters concerning elderly immigrant women in Finland. The project aims to raise consciousness of the needs that the ageing immigrant women may have in Helsinki. By providing services and activities that are client-oriented low-threshold services Jade aims at guaranteeing that the women's strengths and needs meet. In addition, by doing advocacy work Jade wants to raise discussion and to take care of it that ageing immigrant women's needs would be taken into account in organizations as well as in social and health care services. It also attempts to increase the knowledge of the needs of ageing immigrant and to discuss the challenges multiculturalism raises. Jade arranges two seminars each year and takes part in a research of a Active Age programme. The seminars are targeted especially for social workers, students, NGOs and municipal workers. In addition, Jade writes project releases and reports where various sections of operations are taken into consideration (Jade project plan).

6 Supporting the client group through Empowerment

In this chapter the relevant theory that supports this thesis will be discussed. Empowerment was chosen as the main theoretical base for it was seen as the most suitable one considering the client group. Moreover, in this chapter the definitions for the concept of empowerment will be given as well as why and how it supports the target group and this thesis work.

6.1. Empowerment as a theory

Empowerment is the theory and framework that is used to support this thesis, therefore it is important to define and understand what this very theory means. It needs to be taken into account that empowerment is not very easy to define and the whole concept needs continuous redefining. In addition, the concept should also be constantly reconstructed, not only by so-called professionals but also through the words and actions of those individuals who want to obtain more control over the services they receive and use (Adams, R. 2003).

Parker, R.L. (1999) defines empowerment to mean theory which is concerned with how people can gain collective control over their own lives in order to achieve their interests as an individual or as a group. Moreover, it defines empowerment as a method which social workers may use when seeking to enhance the power of people who do not have it. Moreover, there are various definitions of the concept but in order for this thesis to be consistent we concentrate on further discussing the definition made by Robert Adams only. ⁹Adams defines empowerment as the capacity of individuals, groups and/or communities to take control of their own life situations, achieve their own goals and exercise power. It also mentions empowerment to be the process which enables people to both individually and collectively to help themselves and other people to increase the quality of their lives (Adams, R. 2008). Empowerment in practice means constant interaction between critical reflection and practice that is empowering which means the continuous in and out cycle of reflecting, acting as well as evaluating. It also means the interplay between thinking and acting (Adams, R. 2008).

As can be seen, there are several ways define and explain the concept of empowerment. However, to provide a short definition of this theory, empowerment can be defined as a process of becoming powerful. What is more, especially in social work settings empowerment embraces both theory and practise. Although it is important to understand what the concept of empowerment means, it is good to keep in mind that empowerment is a multifaceted area which has various associations, such as radical, theoretical as well as academic associations. All in all, empowerment means different things to different people (Adams, R. 2008).

6.2. Why this theory was chosen

We consider empowerment being a central concept and theory basis to support the overall process, findings and conclusion of our thesis. Discussing and pondering the empowering elements in the researched project as well as their impact on our target group has significant value. The central object in this thesis is to discover how to support ageing Somali women. We consider the concept of empowerment playing a key role when discussing the meanings and impacts of the services offered to this client group. The reason for choosing this particular theory was because the target

⁹ The concept of empowerment has been studied in different schools, such as in development studies and gender studies.

group is in a vulnerable position and therefore in danger of exclusion. Thus, empowerment provides vital viewpoints for how to approach the clients in Jade.

6.3. Empowerment as a method in Jade

For deeper understanding of the theory it is vital to understand the connection between it and the actual work done in and through Jade. Therefore, it is essential to study how the empowerment can be linked into the functioning of Jade. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, one of the central purposes of this thesis was to find out what the clients views as something that is empowering for them.

As mentioned in the previous chapter empowerment means one's capacity of achieving desired goals and taking control of one's own life. When looking at Jade's operation and the project plan, several empowerment elements can be distinguished. As comes up in the project plan one of the aims is to guarantee that the strengths and needs of the women can meet. In addition, Jade aims to support the integration of the women through low-threshold activities and case management. Moreover, preventive mental health activities are there to promote the well-being of the clients. Mapping the needs and life situations of ageing immigrant women are also purposed to gain more understanding of this target group. Moreover, in practice, such things as discussion and wellbeing groups as well as sport and Finnish groups are aiming to empower the clients. Nonetheless, despite these activities aiming at the empowerment of the Somali women, it is important to pay critical attention to how well all the above mentioned support the clients in reality. This will be discussed more in detail in the data analysis section of this thesis.

In addition, what can also be seen as empowering is that Jade brings people together from similar life situation. Many clients in Jade did not know each other before hand but met through the project. Peer support and making connections with each other might enhance the empowerment and well-being of these women. By being able to share and go through personal experiences, possibly even traumatic ones, the women can become more strengthened. Thus, there are benefits in the special feature that the clients can speak in their own language. Notwithstanding, it is also a question whether speaking in Somali is purely beneficial and empowering for them. This may be for the reason that using their own language can be a hindrance for integration and thereby learning Finnish. What is more, Jade aims to

discover the needs and wishes of the women concerning the activities they are offered. However, when interviewing the clients, it came up that they felt their opinions and thoughts had not been asked about. All in all, it is evident that Jade's activities and services consist of various empowering elements. Thus, it is also noticeable that there are a few points that may be considered when further developing the services

7 Semi-structured interview and thematic analysis

In this chapter the reasons for choosing semi-structured interview as the main data collection method in our thesis will be discussed and justified. In addition, information on the method, thematic analysis, through which the data was analysed will be provided. The reasons that lead us to use this very method in the analysis part of the gained data will be explained as well.

7.1 Semi-structured interview as a data collection method

According to Cohen D. and Crabtree, B. (2006) semi-structured interviews provide comparable and reliable qualitative data. Moreover, Fylan F. (2005) states that semi-structured interviews are simply conversations in which one is aiming to get the information that is needed and wanted. In addition, semi-structured interviews vary a lot and the structure of one is dependent on the research question (Fylan F. 2005). Therefore this data collection method can be used in various settings for its flexibility. Moreover, the semi-structured interview in this thesis was carried out in group setting.

Semi-structured interview was chosen as the primary data-collection method for it allows the interviewers to specify the questions more in the interview situation. However, although the data collection method was seen to be the most suitable in this thesis it does not mean it is flawless. According to Hannan A. (2007), the interviewees may not answer truthfully but may instead say what they think is expected from them and what is polite. Therefore, familiarization with the clients and their thoughts impacted on questions that were in the interview as well as in the way they were presented. It was discovered that familiarization with the clients and their

ways to communicate was a good ground for planning the implementation of the data collection.

7.1.1 Why this method was chosen

Discovering and eventually selecting an efficient and client-friendly data collection method was a process. As a result of careful consideration of different options, semi-structured interview was chosen as the primary data collection method. As mentioned, in the beginning of the thesis process the aims of the thesis as well as what would be effective ways to achieve them were discussed together with the working life partner. It was discussed that creating trust with the clients might have an impact on the honesty in the responses. Therefore, in the beginning of the thesis process we decided to participate Jade's conversation groups a few times to get to know the clients somewhat better. The aim was to discover and learn more about the clients of Jade as well as to introduce ourselves to them as an attempt to create trust. However, we observed that as the conversations proceeded more sensitive topics were raised. We pondered that participating in the activities and getting to know the clients had created trust between us. In addition, participating in the conversation groups expanded our understanding and knowledge of Somali women and the Somali culture.

After discussing with the working life partner it was decided that the interview would be conducted as a group interview in which we interviewed the Somali women who participate in the activities that Jade offers. The aim with our data collection was to gain information in one group interview session. This method is useful since it is often used when there is no more than one chance to interview someone. (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation). In addition, in our thesis group interview was seen as the most effective as well as client-friendly way to gain information. Moreover, discussing with our working life partner lead us into the conclusion that group interview was considered to support openness and honesty in the interviewee's answers.

In addition, another reason for this method to be chosen was that semi-structured interviews are often complemented with observation. We had been observing our target group in the activities they participate in Jade.

Naturally we used observing in the interview session as well. This informal and unstructured interviewing method helped us to understand our research topic more profoundly. A keen understanding of our topic was important because it enabled us to develop our interview questions to be meaningful and relevant in a way that could provide us with the information we hoped to gain.

7.1.2 How the semi-structured interview was conducted

As already mentioned above, the semi-structured interview was conducted through a group interview. This was considered as the most suitable and gentle way to approach the target group in order to gain information. Group interviews are seen as an efficient way to collect data among marginalized population (Morgan,1988).

Our working life partner chose the interviewees for us for the workers of Jade project are well familiar with the Somali women who participate in Jade's activities. Thus, the workers believed they could choose such interviewees who would be most likely to be active in the interview and who would provide different information. This was to ensure the best possible access to the desired data.

The sample group consisted of seven people and it was considered that a rather small amount of participants would secure the careful analysis of all the data. In addition, it was thought that when the sample group is not very big it is easier to give each participant sufficient space and time to respond. The data collection was implemented through a face-to-face group interview in order to give the space and opportunity for the interviewees to express their opinions and thoughts more comprehensively. Moreover, in face-to-face situations the interview questions can be clarified more if necessary. Semi-structured interview provided a clear set of instructions for us to conduct the interview. In the interview we used open-ended questions as we considered that the answers to open-ended questions can provide us with new ways to see and understand our research topic and leave enough space for the interviewees' voice to be truly heard. The data that we needed in our

thesis was the ageing Somali women's own thoughts, experiences and ideas. Hence, by hearing the women themselves we had the best access to a topic that concerns them. They are the experts of their own situation.

Something we needed to take into consideration when interviewing was the language barrier. Some of the Somali women spoke and understood Finnish better than the others. However, because of the overall level of their Finnish skills it was impossible for us to conduct the interview without a translator. Our working life partner organized a translator (Vantaa Asioimistulkkikeskus) who they knew to be a very professional one and who had the same cultural background with the interviewees.

The interview took place in Kantin pysäkki's facilities on the 11th of May 2015. Since the women come to the facility to take part in Jade's services and activities we considered it to be a natural place for interviewing them. By interviewing the women in a place that is familiar to them we expected them to be more likely to want to take part in the interview for they would not have to go anywhere else for being interviewed. Apart from choosing the interviewees for us our working life partner also chose a favourable place for us to conduct the interview. The place selected for the interview was neutral, confidential, comfortable, quiet, free of distractions, and easily accessible for the respondents. In addition, the interviewees were offered beverages and little snacks during the interview

7.1.3 The central themes in the interview

It is essential to discuss the central themes of the interview in order to expand the understanding of through which questions the information was gained. The themes in our interview raised from the research questions as well as from the empowerment theory that we used to support the thesis work. The central themes in our interview were the following: why participating in the activities, what is good, what to further develop, what is wished to have more and what are the empowering elements in Jade's activities. The questions were formed in such a way that they were presented in plain language and were easy for the interviewees to understand. Furthermore, additional questions were used to ensure the full understanding of what was asked.

Since empowerment is the theory supporting this thesis we considered that the themes and more precisely the interview questions would be important to be formed around this very theory. In addition, we formed such questions for the interview that would provide us with answers about the empowering elements of Jade and its activities. The purpose was therefore to discover the empowering effects of the activities on the interviewees. Hence, the interviewees were asked about how the activities have brought joy and energy into their lives.

In addition, the research questions had a significant role when forming and deciding the themes as well as the questions for the interview. Since the research questions were about what is good and what to further develop, those themes were also essential in the interview. Therefore, the interviewees were asked what they like in the activities of Jade and what they would want more or differently organized. Moreover, in this context it was also important to discover what drives them to participate in the activities. Thus, the reasons for participating were also asked in the interview. Furthermore, the women were asked what is best in Jade as well as if there is something new that they would like to have in the activities.

In the beginning of the interview the interviewees were asked a few general questions about their participation in Jade. Moreover, the women were asked how they view ageing especially in Finland. This was to gain wider understanding of the interviewees' own views and feelings concerning ageing. By raising this topic we wanted to make them focus on considering what are the needs and wishes they have in this particular stage of life and what could support this phase.

7.1.4 Ethical consideration and confidentiality

When working with vulnerable population, in this case with the ageing Somali women, it is important to discuss the ethical matters concerning the data collection and interviewing. In addition, when the interviewees have different cultural background than the interviewers, it is vital to have sensitivity in the

interview situation. Moreover, it is important to reflect to the interview session and to critically view the overall interview session.

In the beginning of the interview the purpose of it as well as the confidentiality of the information gained from the interviewees were discussed. It was clarified that the data gained was and will only be used to support the thesis and the personal information of any interviewee will not be presented in any documentation. Moreover, the interview session was recorded so that all the responses could be analysed later on in a useful way. Transcribing the recording was made in such a way that no names or other revealing features of the interviewees were mentioned.

When pondering the ethicality of this thesis it is important to pay attention also to the cultural differences. According to our working life partner the clients of Jade tend to speak positively instead of telling about their thoughts in a very straight-forward way. Therefore, it is good to consider whether the women spoke honestly about their thoughts or did they try to make their responses more positive than what they are in real. In order to lessen the likelihood of getting answers that are not as honest as they could be we had decided to ask similar kind of questions. By repeating same topics we hoped to get the respondents to speak their minds more honestly. What is more, by repeating similar things in the questions we hoped to make the interviewees to ponder these things more and that way to speak about them more openly.

Furthermore, what needs to be taken into account is the ethicality of the interview session. By additional questions and other additional words in the interview as well as with the actual interview questions did we lead the women to answer in a certain way or did they have a possibility to answer without their responses being affected by the thoughts we had in our minds. As an attempt to make the questions more clear to the interviewees and in order to make them understand the questions more profoundly we tried to open the questions more during the interview. By doing so did we lead the interviewees answers? What is more, it is good to take into account the way the questions and answers were interpreted by the translator. Having an interpreter was necessary, however, did it have an impact on the ethicality of the interview?

7.2 Thematic analysis as a method

The data analysis was done through thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. Through this analysis the data can be organised and described in detail (Braun, V. and Clarke, V., 2006). In this manner the central themes can be clarified. Categorizing the qualitative data thematically clarifies the analysis. As Boyatzis R.E (1998) states, "This may be a list of themes, a complex model with themes, indicators, and qualifications that are causally related; or something in between these two forms"

Moreover, thematic analysis is an independent qualitative descriptive approach. In thematic analysis interpretation there is space for interpretation yet more focus is put on the context. In addition, there is no peer checking in thematic analysis. What is more, the method is more used in analysing life stories or personal experiences of people. One of the features of thematic analysis is its' analytical way to examine narrative materials (Vaismoradi, M., Turunen, H., & Bondas, T., 2013). According Braun V. and Clarke V. (2006), thematic analysis can be done in various ways and through a six-phase process. This process includes phases such as familiarization with the data, coding it, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and writing up. Moreover, these phases might not be totally sequential. In this thesis a six-phase process is used in data analysis.

7.2.1 Thematic analysis of data

The analysis of data began by transcribing the interview. The recording was carefully listened to two times and transcribed during the latter listening time. Since the emphasis was to gain information primarily about the thoughts and opinions of the interviewees, the transcription was made in such way that irrelevant comments and utterances were left out. Moreover, this way was chosen since the way of transcription depends on the research question as well as on what is emphasised in the analysis

As previously mentioned, the analysis of data was done through thematic analysis. The transcribed data was therefore analysed thematically and the responses were categorized into different themes. The data was organized under three different themes which were; what is good in the activities and services provided by Jade, how to support the overall well-being of ageing Somali women and what to further develop in Jade. These themes were formed with the help of the research questions in order to categorize the answers in a way that they support the aim of the thesis. In addition, the frequency of similar answers and thoughts was paid attention to in the categorizing phase of the analysis. As mentioned, the analysis was done in six phases. In the beginning of the process of the analysis, the transcription was carefully read through a few times. Repeating words and expressions were underlined and written down on a separate paper. Moreover, the repeating ideas and concepts were also written down. This helped in gaining wider understanding of the interviewees' thoughts about as well as on the attitudes towards the topics. Furthermore, after categorizing the answers the themes were reviewed and they were reflected with the transcription in order to ensure their consistency. As the themes were confirmed and the consistency with the transcription was assured, the more comprehensive analysis of each theme was carried out.

8 Findings

In this chapter the central results that emerged from the interview will be explained. The findings on the themes as well as other findings that raised from the answers are grouped and discussed. The findings on themes discuss such topics as what is good in the activities and services provided by Jade, what supports the overall well-being of ageing Somali women and what to further develop in Jade. Moreover, the other results that will be explained in this chapter include findings related to participating in the activities, the impact of language skills into the quality of life, social aspects, resources and utilization of them as well as the impacts of culture and religion.

8.1 Participation in the activities

As mentioned earlier, our sample group consisted of seven interviewees. The times the respondents have been participating in the activities provided by Jade vary from a few months to two years. Unlike the times the respondents have been attending in Jade, the ways how they had heard about Jade did not vary considerably. Nearly all of the women had heard about Jade through their neighbours who come from the same culture and who themselves take part in Jade. When asked about the impact Jade has in the respondents lives they mentioned how it is beneficial for both mental and physical health to take part in the activities. The activities provided by Jade have brought joy and have energized the women. Moreover, what was brought up in the interview a several times was the fact that all of the respondents are still in a good physical condition and thus still have energy and posses skills and knowledge that they wish they could use to provide and give back to the society. Thus, it can be frustrating not to be able to use the skills and the energy.

What is more, the sports group the women take part in Jade help in maintaining the performance which naturally decreases when ageing. A few of the respondents mentioned how the sports have even helped them to lose weight. One of the interviewees stated how she had been obese but after coming to Jade she had been able to lose some weight and is now feeling lighter and more energetic.

When discussing participating it is important to take into consideration that having motivated participants does not happen automatically and should not be taken as something self-evident. The interviewees mentioned an important factor to them in Jade are the workers.. It was brought up that the workers respect the clients' culture and religion. What is more, the workers genuinely care and are understanding.

8.2 The impact of language skills to the quality of life

Each of the respondents is motivated to learn the Finnish language. However, the women wished there could be more Finnish teaching available and that it would be more intensive teaching. It was mentioned in the interview that pensioners are not offered language courses by the Employment office. Therefore, the respondents wish someone could organize a language course for them as well. One of the respondents explained

how she has been offered two separate language courses both of which lasted for four months. Since the courses have been rather short the learning has not been efficient and the respondent has been confused with letters for not being able to recognise them. She would be very motivated to learn the language but has not been offered other language courses. A few of the interviewees had moved to the capital region after living in other Finnish cities or towns. The respondents mentioned how there is more language teaching in other cities and that it is more efficient in these cities. Knowing the language is important in many areas of life. One very significant matter concerning language skills was mentioned in the interview; insufficient Finnish skills make applying for the citizenship complicated. In order to be able to apply for the Finnish citizenship one needs to have a certain level of Finnish skills. These language skill requirements are not easy to be met.

The level of the Finnish skills of the interviewees vary greatly. Some of the women can speak Finnish rather well whilst others have difficulties with the basics. However, the insufficient knowing of the Finnish language is not a limitation and does not affect negatively in enjoying taking part in the activities. The respondents mentioned how signs can be used in situations where there is no common language. What is more, those who know more Finnish help those whose language skills are less. As has been mentioned earlier, one of the workers in Jade comes from Somali background and thus speaks fluent Somali. According to the interviewees it has been very beneficial to have a Somali speaking worker in Jade for that way they can understand better what is discussed and what is happening.

8.3 Social aspects

The social impact of Jade's activities and services on the ageing Somali women is significant. The respondents come from different parts of Somalia and it was mentioned in the interview that not all of them knew one another beforehand. Thus, because of Jade they have learned to know new people and have got new acquaintances. Moreover, the respondents emphasized how it is important to take part in the activities instead of staying home alone. In Jade they can talk to each other and share with each other. They explained how no one is left on her own in times of worries and sorrow but everyone is there to support each other.

8.4 Resources and utilization of them

In addition to earlier mentioned, in the interview the interviewees brought up several times an important consideration that they still have energy to do things. The respondents mentioned that they also have skills and knowledge that they have learnt back in Somalia or in Finland. Therefore, the interviewees noted that they would like to make use of the skills and knowledge and pass them on to others.

A few of the women mentioned that they like to do handicrafts (such as knitting) and are good in that. However, they did not know how to make use of these skills. There was a suggestion made of how Jade could arrange knitting clubs where the women could come together, teach each other and make something to pass on to those who are in need of something. The women suggested that they could knit for their own children, grandchildren or residents in Kantin pysäkki. The importance of getting together and doing things together was emphasised. The women wish to be together with people and to go outside their homes which also is one reason for the wish to have handicrafts club in Jade. Moreover, one of the women shared about her wish to open up her own company in order to sell the handicrafts she has made.

In addition, interest towards sports came up several times during the interview. When analysing the data, this was probably the most emerged topic in the interview. The interviewees mentioned that they like swimming, gym and guided sport lessons (jumppa). The respondents wished to have more swimming lessons organized by Jade. They mentioned that doing sports is good both for one's mental and physical health and is therefore very important to include in one's everyday life. Lastly, a few of the interviewees mentioned they would like to cook together in Jade and share their skills with one another. Most of them have interest as well as skills in the earlier mentioned activity. Moreover, the interviewees wished to use these skills to help and support others.

All in all, the interviewees emphasised that they still have energy to do things. In addition, they mentioned that in Somalia they were used to being busy the whole day which is why they miss having more activities here in Finland. Therefore the women wish to have more

things to do together. Moreover, the aim is also to support and help others through the skills that the women have.

8.5 The impacts of culture and religion

As already mentioned earlier, the culture and religion have significant importance for Somalis. In the interview the women mentioned that families are taking care of each other. This also means that those who are sick or old are taken care of by the family members. The family networks are strong and children and parents usually have close and good relationship with each other. Moreover, according to their religion (Islam), people must help each other. These values were also seen in the answers of the interviewees. As mentioned in the earlier section, the respondents wished to use their energy, skills and knowledge to help and serve others. This was also discovered when reading background information on Somali culture. Moreover, Islam also have significant impact on how the interviewees view ageing and death. The Somali women participating in the interview all stated that they are not concerned about ageing or about the changes that it brings to their lives. It was mentioned that they believe God is in charge of their lives and therefore there is no worry about what will happen. In addition, the women believe in the life after death which is why death is a positive and good thing.

8.6 Sport activities

During the interview swimming and guided sport lessons (jumppa) were mentioned several times. These activities were mentioned to bring joy to the interviewees. The sports were repeatedly brought up in the answers. The interviewees highlighted the earlier mentioned sports to be meaningful activities for them. The participants consider sports especially important because it supports both physical and mental well-being. In addition, the sports were mentioned to help some of the interviewees in weight-loss. Most of the interviewees also wished to have more sports activities to be arranged in Jade. Especially swimming groups were wished to be arranged more regularly.

8.7 Handicrafts

Many of the interviewees mentioned about their interest and/or skills on handicrafts. More specifically, knitting and painting were repeatedly mentioned throughout the interview. Some of the interviewees mentioned that through handicrafts they could utilize

their skills. For example, one interviewee told that she would like to knit hats for people who are in need. A few other interviewees also mentioned that doing something for others would be meaningful for them. In addition, doing handicrafts especially together in Jade's facilities was emphasised. Making use of one's own skills and talents were mentioned to bring joy. Moreover, most of the interviewees told that they are very interested and talented in making handicrafts.

8.8 Other wishes of the interviewees

When asked about what kind of services or activities the interviewees would like to have in addition to what is already provided, a few of the ladies mentioned that a cooking club would be an interesting and pleasant activity. Most of the women are used to cooking for their families and they would like to use their skills and know-how to gratify and help others. Moreover, the interviewees would like to have something to do together with others and cooking was mentioned to be something pleasant for them.

9 Conclusion

In this chapter we will give a conclusion of the findings. In addition, the central themes in the findings are discussed. We will discuss the most relevant and significant information that was gained throughout the thesis process. Moreover, as a result of analysing the data gained through the interview and familiarizing ourselves with Jade's working methods, we distinguished a few developmental points. Therefore, the developmental ideas for Jade are presented in this chapter. Moreover, we will discuss how the activities and services of Jade could be developed even further. In addition, although we have been focusing on the service provision of Jade the overall utility of this thesis and the findings for all the professionals working in the field are briefly discussed. Therefore, the utility of this thesis is also briefly discussed in the end of the chapter.

9.1 Findings on the central themes

In this section the findings on the central themes are discussed and explained. As mentioned earlier, the interview was planned in a way that we would gain information on the subjective perspectives that the clients of Jade have on the activities and services

provided for them. Therefore, in this section the answers on these matters are shortly introduced.

9.1.1 What is good in the activities and services provided by Jade

Several good and positive features were mentioned regarding what is good in the activities and services provided by Jade. The interviewees also mentioned what is meaningful for them and what kind of activities and services they find empowering. In addition, it was noticed in the analysis part that a few words were often used to describe the activities.

Most of the interviewees mentioned swimming and guided sport lessons (jumppa) to be meaningful and good for them. These were mentioned as something that bring joy to them and support their overall well-being. In addition, the interest towards these sports were brought up several times during the interview. The sport activities can be noticed to have empowering features as they support the well-being of the clients in Jade and give them energy to do things.

In addition, connecting with each other and getting new friends is seen as a very positive thing. It was mentioned several times that just getting together and talking about things brings joy to the clients and is good for their well-being. Moreover, it can be noticed through the responds that the interviewees become empowered already by just attending the activities that Jade organizes. This conclusion can be made for the reason that the respondents describe coming together and participating different activities as strengthening and energy-giving.

9.1.2 What supports the overall well-being of ageing Somali women

As already mentioned, the interviewees described the participation, meeting each other and sharing their thoughts and problems as something that brings them joy. In addition, according to the respondents the usage of one's own skills and resources is empowering and supports the well-being. The impact of physical exercises (in this case, swimming and guided sports classes) on the overall well-

being were mentioned as something significant. Sports were the most frequent topic that were brought up by the interviewees.

As can be discovered, there are multiple answers for the question of how to support the overall well-being of ageing Somali women. Therefore, the answer to the very question is rather multiform and multi-dimensional. Thus, the interviewees mentioned most frequently the significance of social relationships, using one's resources and skills and taking care of both one's own physical and mental health by doing sport activities. More specifically, the overall well-being consists of and is affected by various factors.

Moreover, supporting the overall well-being can also be linked to the empowerment of the target group. As has been described earlier, empowerment is the process which enables people to help themselves and other people to maximize the quality of their lives (Adams, R. 2008). Therefore, the means to the empowerment of the ageing Somali women can be discovered from their own responses; what is significant for them and what brings joy and motivation in their life. As mentioned earlier, the interviewees stated that they still have energy to do things. The question then is what to do and how to do? Therefore one aim was to discover how to develop the activities and services of Jade to respond to the needs and wishes the ageing Somali women have.

9.1.3 What to further develop in Jade

When asked about what the interviewees wish to have more or differently done in Jade a rather surprising point was made. The women mentioned that they had never before been asked about what type of activities they would wish to have more or would themselves want to organize in Jade. However, the respondents had a great amount of ideas and thoughts concerning this. To begin with, as has been mentioned earlier, there would be a need and motivation to have more Finnish teaching. The sports are pleasant, something the respondents enjoy doing and find beneficial. Therefore, they would wish to have more swimming classes. In addition to sports, the clients would like to have more time for handicrafts in Jade. It was mentioned in the interview how it would be good to have handicraft classes once a week. One of the interviewees explained how she

would want to learn to do more handicrafts and this way stay aware of what is fashionable. In addition, it came up a several times how the respondents would want to be able to use their skills and knowledge, not only for themselves but instead for the good of others as well. The respondents would want to return to society what they have learned and this way be useful. They would also wish their families, relatives and other close people to benefit from their skills. In the coming fall (2015) the clients of Jade are going to a service center located in Töölö to try different handicrafts.

Moreover, the respondents wish they would be given clear information and instructions for instance on how to establish an own business. When asked about what the women themselves would want to organize a few ideas were mentioned. Such activities could be a cooking club or a handicrafts group. Moreover, they mentioned how they would want to have more activities in Jade. Instead of having activities in Jade twice a week there could be activities three times in a week. This is because in the interviewees' opinion twice a week is not enough. As mentioned earlier, in their home country the women have been very active and have had something to do the whole day.

9.2 Developmental ideas

Based on the answers in the interview there are few developmental points in the functioning of Jade. When first familiarizing ourselves with the target group as well as on the services and activities provided to them by Jade, we discovered a few things that could be developed further in order to support the overall well-being of the ageing Somali women more comprehensively. Therefore, we picked up a few things that were noted to be significant for the target group. The developmental points and suggestions of what could be done are explained in this section.

9.2.1 What could there be in addition

Jade provides various activities and services for its clients. The variety of these activities is rather broad and the aim is to support the overall well-being of the ageing immigrant women. However, a few new ideas raised from the interviewees. Firstly, the interviewees wished to have activities arranged in Jade

more than two times a week. The wish of the interviewees was to have activities three times a week. In addition to the changes on the schedule, there were some activities that the interviewees would like to have. Handicrafts and cooking clubs were mentioned by several interviewees. However, there is no certainty if the clients would like these activities to be organized on a regular basis.

As mentioned earlier, most of the interviewees mentioned that they would like to have more swimming classes and guided sports lessons (jumppa). At the time when the interview was conducted swimming lessons were not arranged throughout the year but instead rather irregularly or for a few months. The wish for more swimming was mentioned several times. Therefore, if possible, a volunteer could arrange and lead swimming lessons for the clients of Jade. One option could also be to hire a swimming teacher. The main issue is the lack of public swimming halls that are accessible only for women. Moreover, the Somali women need a professional to guide and teach swimming as most of the women can not swim. It is crucial to mention how central topic swimming was in the interview. Therefore we also saw the need for development in arrangements of swimming possibilities.

9.2.2 What could be done differently

When the interviewees were asked about their opinions on Jade and the activities and services provided by it, the answers were mainly positive. The word kiva (nice) was mentioned several times when describing Jade. However, when asked if there is something the interviewees would like to have more or if they would like to organize something in Jade, all of the women responded that they had never been asked this question before. This response was rather surprising since the workers of Jade mentioned that the activities and services are planned based on the wishes of the clients. Therefore, there is a need for more clear communication between the workers and clients. The clients ought to be informed that their opinions, wishes and needs are heard and taken into account when planning and further developing the functioning of Jade. In addition, when considering the cultural impacts, it is important to be aware that the women may not stand out strongly on their own initiative. This can also be linked with empowerment; the clients may not know how to gain power to have control over their own lives and have an impact in the aspects that could maximize the quality

of their own lives. Therefore, it is important to ask the women to bring out their wishes and opinions.

9.3 Was the central aim of the thesis achieved

As mentioned throughout this thesis paper, the central aim of the thesis was to collect subjective perspectives of ageing Somali women. The aim was to discover the needs and wishes this target group has. In addition, one of the central aims was to discover the utility of the services and activities that our working life partner Jade provides for its clients. The focus was to gain information about the needs and wishes the clients of Jade have in order to further develop the services and activities.

We as the authors were pondering together whether the aim of the thesis was achieved. All in all, when reviewing the central aims that we had, we were satisfied with the overall process and the findings. The opinions, wishes and needs of the ageing Somali women participating in the activities of Jade were heard. A proper background information and studies were also made. We discovered that especially familiarizing ourselves first with the clients of Jade helped us to gain trust and to get to know the clients more before conducting the interview for this thesis. This trust gained could also be distinguished as one of the interviewees said during the interview that “you are our girls!”. Moreover, a few new ideas and developmental points for Jade came up as a result of the thesis. In addition, this thesis may support the work of other professionals in the field.

10 Discussion

As mentioned, the aim of this qualitative research was to study about the significance and impacts of low-threshold services to the everyday life of ageing Somali women. The focus was on the women’s own opinions and thoughts about the significance and the meaning the activities offered to them by Jade have in their life. It is important to ponder and discuss a few factors concerning our findings and the whole data collection process.

10.1. Data collection

As mentioned earlier our working life partner had chosen the interviewees for us as well as had organized an interpreter for the interview session. We believe this secured us the best possible access we could have to the desired data. The interviewees were those of Jade's clients who had not taken part in any or many other interviews previously and would possibly therefore be likely to be more active in the interview instead of being bored of having taken part in several interviews. It might be challenging to find the motivation in the interview if the interviewee feels it will not in any way benefit her. In the beginning of the interview we explained to the respondents what we are doing and why and where to we are gathering this information. We mentioned that although this thesis may not directly benefit them we hope it could help in future when planning and developing similar services and activities. What is more, we explained that with our thesis we want to raise this topic which is very current yet not much studied or paid attention to. The interview had been tried to plan well and the themes of the semi-structured interview chosen carefully. The whole data collection process was conducted rather successfully in a way that provided us the data we were looking for. Careful planning of the questions as well as of letting our working life partner choose the interviewees all secured a successful interview session which lead to an access to the desired data. However, the interview themes and questions which we had written in plain language could have been made even more clear as they now were. An even more careful choices of words in the questions and making the language even more simple could have made the understanding more smooth. However, we as authors think we succeeded well in planning the questions. The way the translator understood our questions and was able to translate them into Somali language was something we considered and did our best to support and enhance.

Notwithstanding, it is vital to take into account the cultural differences which may affect in the way the respondents perceive the questions. Another factor to take into consideration is the way the culture has an impact in the way the respondents answer the questions. Maybe everything is not said as straightforward as we in our culture are used to say? Maybe negative things are not brought up very bluntly? What is more, how much having a translator in the interview affected the data collection? Could the women have spoken more openly and freely had they been able to speak to us in their own language without having to speak through a translator? The translator was a professional who came from the same background with the respondents. However, despite her Finnish being good it was not fluent and perhaps some of the answers were not fully translated into Finnish. Important is also to notice that the way the translator understands

the interview questions has an impact in the way she sets the questions when translating them. Yet another question to ponder is whether the women benefited from being interviewed as a group or could individual interviews have enabled them to speak more openly? Could it be that the women did not want to say everything in front of each other? Or vice versa, did being interviewed as a group encourage them to tell more freely about their thoughts as they could hear that the other women had similar thoughts?

In order to create trust and to get to know with the interviewees we had in several occasions spent time with them before the actual interview took place. The women had made us feel very welcome and did not seem to see us disturbing them. As mentioned earlier, our working life partner told us that the women had started calling us “our girls”. During time the trust had been created. We believe this affected in a way that it was easier for the women to tell us more freely about their thoughts and ideas. Furthermore, in the interview we emphasized the fact that the responses will remain confidential and that the interviewees cannot in any way be recognised from their answers. Despite many factors that may have impacted in the way the interview proceeded and the data we got we believe the material is rather reliable and can be further used.

10.2. Ageing Somali women as a diverse group and their culture

It is vital to take into consideration the diversity of the ageing Somali women as a group. Despite there being many things in common there is also a significant number of factors that differ between individuals and this way affects their life. This is one of the reasons why the results of this thesis cannot be thought to describe the whole group and their needs. However, as mentioned, there are many things that the ageing Somali women have in-common and therefore the results of this thesis provide good insight to this client group and their needs. In order to understand this topic more profoundly it was important to familiarize ourselves with the Somali culture. This happened through reading about Somali culture and attending the discussion groups in Jade where we had valuable opportunities to ask questions and discuss with the women. The other one of us authors also had an opportunity to take part in a multicultural and functional winter’s light party which took place in Jade’s premises in the late January 2015. The day brought together the Somali women with the elderly who live in Kantin Pysäkki. During the day it was possible to try to make Somali handicrafts and while doing so to chat with the Somali women.

Outside of Jade and the activities provided by it we had already become more familiar with the Somali culture through one of the courses that was part of our studies. As a part of the course we functioned in an association where most of the clients came from Somali or Arab backgrounds. We had an opportunity to teach Finnish to a group of Somali women as well as to do case management in the association. All this made Somali culture more familiar to us and the more we interacted with Somalis the clearer we could see that there is a need for more activities and support for this client group. Despite familiarizing ourselves with the Somali culture and understanding the importance of doing so, it is vital to take into account that this thesis is not a study about the Somali culture and that there are many matters about the Somali culture that are not handled in this thesis. However, when discussing the whole topic it is vital to understand the clients' cultural backgrounds in order to approach the topic in a culturally sensitive way as well as to be able to plan services and activities for the client group that respects and takes their culture into consideration. Jade's clients mentioned how they feel respected and welcomed in Jade by Jade's workers. The workers respect their prayer moments and take into account the culture and religion. Because the Somali women feel respected they are also motivated to come to Jade's activities. One of the interviewees mentioned how she has to travel a long way in order to come to Jade but she does it for she very much likes to come to Jade. It is clear that no one would travel a long way if the place did not feel welcoming and if one could not feel like she as an individual is respected. However, this raises the question of integration. How much should the own culture of the ageing immigrant women being emphasized in the activities? Would it be better to focus more on the culture of the new country in order to better integrate? Or could it be done in a way where their own culture is respected and taken into account yet focusing on teaching and introducing the new culture to them, which would sound like the ideal way?

As mentioned earlier, the language skills of the interviewees varied. Some of the respondents could express themselves rather well in Finnish whereas others could not. To lessen the impact of language barrier in the interview we had a translator. When pondering the ageing Somali women as a group it is also important to keep in mind that they come from different backgrounds, from different clans and areas. Furthermore, despite the reason for fleeing their home country is the same for everyone the times they have lived in Finland vary. All these kind of factors are vital to keep in mind when discussing the topic. The ageing Somali women all have their own stories. Some of them may have experienced serious traumatic experiences and losses, some of them may still

be separated from their families. It is also important to take into consideration that some of the women have lived here for many years already whereas others only for a few years. However, even if someone has lived here for several years already it does not automatically mean that such a person is better integrated into the society than a person who has come here more recently.

What arose several times in the interview when discussing the language matter was the need for more language teaching. Notwithstanding the importance of knowing the language and the willingness to learn it is interesting that the interviewees did not see their insufficient Finnish language skills as an hindrance in taking part in Jade's activities. This might be for various reasons but could one of them be because of the possibility to use their own language in Jade? Or does this mean that the activities and services and the overall atmosphere in Jade are good and create positive attitude and thus not knowing the language very well does not matter as much as it could possibly matter? Being able to motivate and inspire the women plays an important role in Jade.

10.3 The role of Jade

The importance of Jade and other similar kind of projects in the ageing Somali women's life is obvious and the collected data speaks for it. The interviewees brought up the significant meaning of Jade several times during the interview. Jade provides a safe place for the women to come and gather together. As mentioned, the clients feel like the workers respect their culture and them as individuals. We believe cultural sensitivity is very central when planning this kind of services. Jade seems to have taken it into account in a successful way. If the women's own culture was not respected it is very likely they would not take part in the activities. For example, the women are allowed to have their prayer moments during the activities. Since the prayer moments are a vital part of the women's lives it is very likely they would not come to Jade had they not been allowed to pray there during the activities.

Through Jade the women have befriended with other Somali ladies they did not know beforehand. What is more, they have acquired new skills, motivation, positive feelings and meaningful activities to do instead of sitting home alone. It is clear that the work done in Jade is very important and valuable. However, what needs to be take into account is that despite Jade's functioning being rather diverse all of the needs and wishes the ageing Somali women have cannot be met in and through Jade's activities. Because of

this it is vital that the focus is mainly on a few things instead of trying to take care of and affect all the needs the women have. It is important that the women's opinions have been asked and the activities have been planned according to their wishes. This way the focus is more likely to be on the most important matters in the women's life. However, as mentioned, what was surprising was what arose in the interview about how the women felt they had not been asked before about what they would wish have organized in Jade or differently organized. It is important to ask what could be done differently in order to make the women truly feel like their ideas and wishes are heard? Perhaps more attention should be paid to the communication between the staff and the clients.

What is more, it is vital to pay attention to the language matter. One special feature of Jade is the possibility for the women to speak their own language. Being able to use Somali increases the understanding between the workers and the clients. However, is this only a positive thing? Or does using their own mother tongue lessen the chance to learn, practise and speak Finnish? The women do not have many opportunities in their everyday life to practise Finnish. Therefore, could it be beneficial to try to use every chance they have to speak Finnish? When speaking of the language matter, it is also good to ponder how the clients' wish to have more Finnish teaching could be implemented.

Initially the idea of Jade project was to welcome ageing women from African backgrounds. However, it was difficult to reach ageing women from African backgrounds to take part. Somali community in the capital region is very large, thus it was easier to spread out the word about Jade's activities and to motivate the Somali women to attend. It is obvious that the threshold to attend is smaller when there are others from the same background. The other African communities in the capital region on the other hand are significantly smaller. Perhaps it is not easy to come alone to take part in Jade. Despite it being important that Jade brings Somali women together it is good to ponder how the connection between the Somali women and the original population or other ethnic minorities could be increased. What is more, it is also important to pay attention to how ageing women from other African backgrounds could be motivated to take part in Jade? How could the ageing women be made to see the similarities they share instead of seeing the differences? Perhaps it could be empowering to get to know with an ageing woman who comes from a different ethnic background but who shares same kind of struggles or similar thoughts, interests, worries and dreams. Regardless of cultural differences ageing women face similar kinds of changes and limitations.

10.4 Limitation of the study

Despite the fact that we were able to collect a sufficient amount of data for our purposes it is necessary to take into consideration that the sample group of seven ageing Somali women cannot describe the whole group of ageing Somali women living in Finland. Thus, the findings and conclusions cannot be generalized to cover them all. Since ageing Somali women and ageing immigrants in general are a growing group of people of whom there is not a significant amount of information available, further studies are welcome and needed. Furthermore, the whole topic of ageing Somali women and the services offered to them is rather vague which lead us to choose to focus mainly on Jade's activities. Despite Jade being one association providing services for ageing immigrant women, we believe the findings and thoughts that arose from this thesis can benefit further studies on this topic as well as the professionals in this very field. In addition, gaining information straight from the clients provides valuable information on the topic.

The themes and findings that arose from the interview answers brought up important matters that should be noted when discussing ageing Somali women and their needs as well as when planning for services and activities for them. The answers of the respondents were similar and especially some matters were mentioned several times. This way we got an access to some very important factors and thoughts straight from the ageing Somali women who are the experts of their own lives and whom should be heard when planning activities and services for them.

10.5 Own reflections

All in all, we were able to collect a sufficient amount of data for our purposes and we hope this topic will become more discussed and paid attention to in the coming years. There is a need for similar projects like Jade which in our opinion does very valuable work in supporting of the ageing Somali women. We as authors hope that this thesis will benefit our working life partner and other similar kind of projects and associations. Instead of only collecting data and hoping to raise this topic to be more paid attention to, we personally received a lot while interacting with the Somali women and while learning about them and their lives. The way the women made us feel welcome was heart-warming. Before the thesis process for us Somalis were a group of people we had always

been used to seeing in the streets of Helsinki but of whom we did not know much about. Unfortunately there are rather much prejudices towards immigrants and minorities in Finland. If only people would get to know with each other perhaps they would be surprised to see how much their own thoughts and opinions might change towards these “mysterious” minorities. Now after this journey during which we have discovered more of the thoughts of the Somali women, seeing an ageing Somali person on the streets of Helsinki, there is a sense of closeness and familiarity in our hearts. These people are a part of our society and they have a right to a successful ageing, in which hopefully their hopes and dreams could be heard and met.

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Teemahaastattelu
Mari Ylhäisi & Anu Pöntinen

ALUSTUS

- Kuinka kauan olette osallistuneet Jaden toimintaan?
 - Mistä kuulitte Jaden toiminnasta?
 - Miten olette viihtyneet Jadessa?
 - Mitä ajattelette ikääntymisestä?
 - Miten se on vaikuttanut elämäänne?
 - Mitä ajatuksia ikääntyminen Suomessa herättää teissä? Mitä muutoksia se on tuonut elämäänne?
-
- Mikä saa teidät osallistumaan Jaden toimintaan? (onko joskus sellainen olo ettei jaksakaan lähteä? Mistä johtuen)
 - Millä tavoin Jaden toiminta on piristänyt arkeanne?
 - Oletteko itse voineet olla tukena jollekin toiselle?
 - Millä tavoin pystytte käyttämään taitojanne ja osaamistanne Jaden toiminnassa?
 - Miten puutteellinen suomen kielen taito vaikuttaa viihtymiseenne Jadessa?
 - Minkälaista apua haluaisitte tähän liittyen?
-
- Mikä toiminta on tuntunut kiinnostavalta? Mistä toiminnasta on tullut hyvä mieli?
 - Mitkä asiat tuovat teille iloa ja energiaa?
-
- Mikä merkitys mahdollisuudella käyttää omaa äidinkieltänne on Jaden toiminnassa?
 - Mikä on ollut parasta Jaden toiminnassa?
-
- Minkälaista tukea toivoisitte Jaden tarjoavan vielä lisäksi?
 - Mitä olisi sellainen toiminta, jossa osaamisenne ja taitonne tulisi käyttöön?
 - Minkälaista toimintaa haluaisitte Jaden vielä tarjoavan?
 - Olisiko jotain mitä te haluaisitte järjestää täällä?

LOPETUS

- Haluaisitteko vielä mainita jotain aiheeseen liittyvää?
- Olivatko kysymykset mielestänne tarpeeksi selkeitä?