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Steps Together—Children's Experiences of Participation in Club Activities with the Elderly

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ABSTRACT

The amount of time that children and elderly spend alone has grown in recent years in Finland. Based on sociocultural theory, children's development and learning occur in close interaction with the surrounding society, place and time. The aim of this study is to research children's experiences of participation in club activities for children's and the elderly. The qualitative research data was collected by observing activities and interviewing children. The key factors in supporting children's participation were common interests in rewarding activities. A warm atmosphere and humour during activities were also found to be important elements in creating positive interactions between children and the elderly.

KEYWORDS

Intergenerational relationships, children's experiences, children's participation, childhood studies, sociocultural theory

Introduction

The Western world's rapidly aging population and decreased birth-rate in addition to deteriorating communication between children in nuclear families and their grandparents have led different agents to develop and enact shared activities for children and the elderly (Femia et al., 2008; Jarrott, 2011). The elderly are generally willing to spend time with children; in many cases their own grandchildren may live a great distance away, so children's presence in their life is welcome (Femia et al., 2008; Heyman & Gutheil, 2008). According to the Finnish national authority for collecting and compiling statistics on various fields of society and the economy (OSF, 2002), the time that both children and elderly spend alone has grown in recent years.

According to the sociocultural framework, children's development and learning occur in close interaction with the surrounding society, time and place (Berthelsen et al., 2009; Karlsson, 2012). Nowadays we see children as active social agents. Although the adults have an important role in children's lives, the children are also experts on their own lives. It is important that children can spend time with people of different ages in intergenerational activities (Goodman, 2013; Hannon & Gueldner, 2008; Heyman & Gutheil, 2008; Jarrott, 2011). With this study we wish to participate in this discussion by considering the club activities shared between children and the elderly.

Research background

In recent years, researchers across many fields of study have grown interested in the benefits of shared activities between children and the elderly (Hannon & Gueldner, 2008;

Heyman & Gutheil, 2008; Kamei et al., 2011; Murayama et al., 2015; Yamazaki, 1994.) According to most of the studies regarding intergenerational activities, both children and the elderly enjoy attending activities together. These activities seem to have a positive influence on the well-being of the elderly and help children develop a positive attitude toward aging (Hannon & Gueldner, 2008; Heyman & Gutheil, 2008; Kamei et al., 2011; Murayama et al., 2015). Jarrott (2011) found that the results are best when children and the elderly are equal in the activities and have something to do together. In relation to studies concerning intergenerational shared activities, children's experiences have yet to receive as much consideration as the elderly's experiences have received (Heyman & Gutheil, 2008). While interaction is usually initiated by adults (Karlsson, 2000), children's role as the ones who answer questions is unsurprising. The role that an adult takes in a group has an impact on how the power is divided in the group. Power relations are key factors in an intergenerational community's action (Hännikäinen & Rasku-Puttonen, 2006). Intergenerational relationships influence children's opportunities to experience participation in clubs as do children's conception of age. Society's dominant intergenerational relations are the main cause for hierarchy in relationships between children and adults. Intergenerational relations create formal procedures and mind-sets in the relationships between generations (Korhonen, 2006).

Development in childhood studies, ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the growth of the sociocultural concept of learning and interaction have contributed to the studies concerning intergenerational relationships and the concept of power in intergenerational relationships. These three paradigms have also been key factors in changing the traditional view of the child not only as a future part of the society, but also as an equal agent in contemporary society (Kallio & Häkli, 2013; Karlsson, 2000; 2013; Lipponen et al., 2016; Leinonen, 2014; Sinclair, 2004).

This change in focus from children in the future to the children in the present may be the result of several societal changes. For example, children's spontaneous time spent outside of adult regulation has decreased. Therefore, children most often are active and participate in activities organised by adults (Hohti & Karlsson, 2013). Adults' understanding of childhood and the role they want to give children is essential in planning children's experiences of participation (Karlsson, 2014; Rasku-Puttonen, 2006). In children's participation, a culture that values children as active agents and allows them to experience and influence their environment and life is ideal (Lipponen et al., 2015; Turja, 2011a). Understanding that children are experts, especially in matters concerning themselves, has significantly increased the opportunities for researchers to document their activities and substantiate them in research projects. Researchers have become more interested in children's experiences and the knowledge the children produce. It's important to pay attention to children's perspectives despite it's not always easy especially if researchers work with young children (Karlsson, 2012). James and James (2008) regard a child orientation and child-centredness as key factors in childhood research. This research is based on children's experiences and the aim is to examine both children's and adults' perspectives.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child demands that researchers take into account children's participation. The Convention changed the way children are viewed and treated. They can be seen as human beings with a distinct set of rights instead of as passive objects of care and charity. As stated by Nyland (2009) and Woodhead (2006), the Participation rights state that children have a right to be heard and to have their opinions taken into account, as they are competent subjects of the culture.

From a sociocultural perspective, it is possible to create a new type of knowledge that is formed in interaction between individuals (Cole, 1996; Karlsson, 2012). When we consider childhood through a sociocultural paradigm, children are competent actors and active agents

who construct their development path through shaping, sharing and reproducing their learning (Corsaro, 2011; Kronqvist & Kumpulainen, 2011).

In this study, children's experiences of participation are discussed in the light of early childhood education studies including models from Thomas (2002), Turja (2011a) and Venninen and Leinonen (2012). First, early childhood education research sees children's experiences of participation as outcomes of interaction between an adult and a child and interaction between an individual and a group. Second, small children's participation does not influence social matters, but it does help them achieve a sense of well-being from influencing interactions in everyday life. Third, children's will to participate in activities and derive pleasure achieved from participation is important. Furthermore, we will be using dimensions of participation developed by Thomas (2002) to examine intergenerational interactions that fit well in a third sector framework. They have been developed in a situation in which children were not daily in touch with the adults who were participating in the study; the children may not have known these adults beforehand. These dimensions of participation are: choice, information, process, self-expression, assistance, and independent decision-making support. According to Thomas (2002), the most important issue for children is not getting their own way. Being heard, voicing their views and receiving support are significant in increasing experiences of participation. Decisions require reciprocity and the children must have a feeling that they are listened to, able to initiate actions and respected; thus, participation can be experienced (Clark, 2005).

This study aims to analyse children's experiences of participation in intergenerational, shared club activities for children and elderly. This study is a part of the intergenerational project *Koko Suomi leikkii* (The All-Finland Play project 2014-2016) that is the result of collaboration among three important Finnish organizations: The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (<http://www.mll.fi/en>), the Finnish Red Cross and the Finnish Cultural Foundation

(<http://skr.fi/en>). The project has gained a lot of positive attention in Finland. The aim of this project was to raise discussion about play and intergenerational relationships and create places for children and the elderly to spend time together. The last goal was reached by creating intergenerational Terhokerho clubs in each of 297 municipalities in Finland by the end of the year 2016. In the end of the project there were 321 clubs in 251 different municipalities. In Terhokerho clubs, 5-10 year-old children spend informal time with the elderly, adult volunteers and parents. The volunteers lead the meetings but the aim is that every participant can take part in planning and implementation. The activities are unhurried and all the attendees are encouraged to participate. The research initiative was guided by three questions about children's experiences of participation in Terhokerho clubs: 1. What are children's experiences? 2. In what ways do children feel that they are part of the group? 3. In what ways do children feel that they can take initiative in organizing activities?

Method

The research material was collected during October-December 2014. In the end of September 2014 there were 50 clubs in 42 different municipalities. Two clubs, which were from Southern Finland and had started their operations in September 2014, were chosen as research targets. Both clubs convened every second week, so both clubs had had a couple of meetings before our research started. These two clubs were chosen as the research targets together with the project's steering group, because the participants in these two clubs were children between 5 and 10 years of age and the elderly, which matched the goals of the project. Some other clubs gathered only small children with their parents and some other clubs didn't

ask the elderly to join. Also the voluntary people working in the chosen clubs were ready to participate in the research. It was desirable to carry on the research soon after starting the clubs so that the research results could be used for training the volunteers and for improving the club activities already during the project.

The clubs were located in urban areas as were the participants' residences. One of the clubs met at a club house owned and maintained by the Lutheran church and the other in a communal retirement home. Both meeting places were unobstructed and accessible to all participants, who were able to come to the meetings by themselves. The meeting places were close to good public transportation connections and open to all the inhabitants in the region regardless of their age, sex, religion or cultural background.

Participating in the clubs was free of charge and public. The club meetings were scheduled in the afternoon and most of the participants walked to the club locations. There were 27 children and 21 adults who participated in this study. The number of participants varied per club and per meeting. In the first club, there were from 16 to 21 children and from 6 to 11 adults per meeting. In the second club, there were from 7 to 9 children and from 6 to 9 adults per meeting. Out of all children who participated in the research, 19 were girls and 8 were boys. Out of all adults who participated in the research, 17 were women and 4 were men. 13 of the women and all men were the elderly. The rest of the women who were parents of young children. The data was collected by the first author by observing meetings in the Terhokerho clubs and by interviewing children.

Observation data

The observation data was collected by participatory observation with eight observations conducted during 12 hours, 1,5 hours at a time. Observing the Terhokerho several times enabled the observer to understand the variety of activities and changes in the activities that took place in the club and helped her to observe non-verbal behaviour. Several observations were necessary in order to earn the children's trust as a familiar person so that they would feel comfortable during the later interviews (e.g. Cohen & Manion, 1994).

The observations began with an overview of the action and gradually moved to more details concerning interaction in the club. The premises, equipment and location of the participants in the premises were noted. In addition, the duration of the club meeting and participants' initiatives and positions during the activities were also generally observed and recorded. Observations were recorded by hand during the action and transcribed after each meeting.

The interviews

There were 12 interviewees (9 girls and 3 boys, from 4 to 12 years old) in this research. These children represented the target group set for Terhokerho clubs. In the research consent form, we asked for the permission for observation and for the participant's interest for participating in an interview. In practice, all children who gave a permission for an interview and were participating the club meeting on the dates of interviewing, participated in the interview either alone, in pairs or as a group of three. There were two pair interviews, one interview of three, and five solo interviews. It was important for the children that they could choose the place, time and friends for interviews. Two children had given a permission but at the moment of the interview, they didn't want to participate. Based on research ethics, they

were not interviewed. All the interviewed participants had visited the club meetings more than once. The distribution of girls and boys was the same among the interviewees as among all the club participants. The interviews were half-structured and the themes for the interviews were developed based on observations and theoretical knowledge. The researcher as observer was already familiar to the children and she had discussed the coming interviews with them during the activities. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher introduced herself and clarified the meaning of the interview. She explained that children's views about the Terhokerho were something she especially wanted to hear and that the information children possessed was something she did not have. The questions were in the form of one narrative task, open-ended questions and a task in which children had to complete a sentence with their own words (Cohen & Manion, 1994). The narrative task was: If we imagine that I'm your friend, what do you want to tell me about the Terhokerho club? The open-ended questions came from the interview discussion and the sentences they were asked to complete were: It's nice to . . . in Terhokerho; In Terhokerho . . . are listening; In Terhokerho . . . are deciding, and so on. Some children took photos during the club meeting about pleasant things that happened. If they wanted, they could describe or explain the photos. For many children, the photos made it easier to talk to the interviewer and they enlivened discussions. The conversations during the interviews were tape-recorded. The lengths of the interviews varied between 3 minutes to 23 minutes. The common interview duration was between 8 and 12 minutes. The average interview duration was 10 minutes. The duration was affected by the child's age and familiarity with the interviewer and the club. Younger children replied with shorted answers than elder children. The interviews were transcribed immediately afterwards.

Data Analysis

The observation notes were analysed and interviews transcribed separately with content analysis by classifying and finding themes in the data collected by the first author. The systematic analysis began following the sampling and immediate transcriptions of the recordings (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2014; Kiviniemi, 2010). As the analysis began, the recordings were listened to once more to refresh the researcher's memory of the feelings from the interviews (LeCompte, 2000; Rapley, 2004). This study was analysed with abductive content analysis by proceeding from more extensive unities towards details. The researcher acted open-mindedly in favour of all findings from the data (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). In abductive content analysis, the results are studied based on the data and then connected to theoretical knowledge.

The observation notes and transcriptions from the interviews were marked with the researcher's observations. Following this, the parts that were related to different categories were colour-coded in the files. This categorisation helped determine typical and general elements from the data. Categories were formed from the observations and the children's responses. The first author formed the categories with the supervision of the other experienced author. The authors had similar views about the classification. These categories were used to form more extensive category descriptions (Schreier, 2014). The evident categories were 'sensation of belonging to the group' and 'sense of the possibility to make initiatives'. The categories related to experiences of participation that were formed from the observation data of the structure of the club meetings and adults' actions. After forming these categories, the researchers constructed different themes under the main categories and then formed more extensive theme descriptions.

Results

Children's participation in the clubs based on the observations

The structure of a club meeting. All the children are personally welcomed to the club meeting. The clubs begin with the ringing of a bell, stamping the club pass and registering the names of the children and the elderly. The starting game that brings all the participants together and introduces them to each other is not performed every time.

It appears that the activities in the clubs are divided into two parts. At first, there is a part planned by the volunteers, which includes arts and crafts, gymnastic exercises, baking or similar activities. The adults set out the necessary equipment for the children. The children are interested in participating in the activities planned by the volunteers. Parts of the activities are only for children and parts are for children and the elderly to engage in together. Before or after the planned activities, a small snack is served. If there is time after the planned activities, the rest of the club is reserved for free activities. During this time, games suggested by the children are played; some might draw or play board games. There is no consistent way to end the club meetings. Sometimes participants are gathered to join in a game or a chant, but usually a club meeting ends when the time is up and the participants simply leave for home.

Adults' actions. Ringing a bell at the beginning of a meeting by volunteers is a clear signal that the club is beginning. Right after the ringing of the bell the participants get together and learn who else are attending. At the start, it is also easy to acknowledge every child as an individual with a smile or greeting. In the past, when there was no mutual starting time, the

participants did not know each other by name and the team spirit within the group was not developed.

Some of the activities were planned for both the children and the elderly. During the activities only for children, the elderly participants found it hard to fit into the club and began conversations of their own. The activities together draw the elderly closer to the children. The elderly people participating in the club activities acted naturally around the children. When the volunteers monitored the activities, they were able to encourage the children verbally or non-verbally to participate in the action. The volunteers in the clubs are not presumed to take educational responsibility for the children, but they understand their positions as people who offer time and support to the children.

A specific feature of the club meetings is the presence of humour between the elderly and the children. By wordplay and silly contact, the elderly and the children get to laugh together. The children and the elderly communicate in a friendly way.

Grandma Aune read a yoga story and both children and adults moved as the story described. Everyone was focused on the action. Laughter and talk were heard during the activity. Everyone had his or her nametag hanging from the neck, so everyone communicated by using each other's names. At the end of the yoga story, Grandpa Esko began to applaud and others joined in the applause.

Participation in club activities is always voluntary. Almost every time, there are children who do not participate in the action at the beginning. These activities usually include children who are not yet familiar with the club or require interaction with the elderly; however, during the play, many new participants eventually join.

Grandma Aune suggested a new game in the circle and sang the game song once aloud. **Antti** (7 years) withdrew behind a table and said, ‘I don’t want to; I want to watch’. Grandma Ulla answered, ‘You can just watch’. **Niilo** (4 years) also circled around, but then sat by Grandma Ulla and joined the game. Everyone got a shoe and a circle was formed. Someone was waving an extra shoe. **Antti** was still nearby and said partly to himself, ‘Well, I’ll join after all’. ¹

During the activity, the children mainly answered questions from the volunteers and the elderly and asked for advice or help. Conversations between the elderly and children also took place. The volunteers and the elderly were interested in the children’s comments; they gave positive feedback and encouraged and admired the children’s skills.

Following the snack, old time tools were examined. When sugar tongs were presented, **Anton** (6 years) was alert.

Anton: ‘It’s just like shears’.

Volunteer Eeva: ‘Yes it is; you are on the right track’.

Anton: ‘It is used to cut something’.

Volunteer Eeva: ‘That’s right’. (Pays attention to other children.) ‘Who could figure out what they are?’

Laura (9 years) and **Sanna** (10 years) are painting textile bags. Grandma Lena looks at the girls and says, ‘Your bags look wonderful, you are great painters’.

¹ All of the parts quoted from observation data and interview transcripts have been indented. All the names of the test subjects have been altered. The children’s names are five letter words and **bolded**. The adults’ names are four-letter words and ordinarily typed. To illustrate the researcher, the title researcher is used.

Based on the observation, children's initiatives were mainly in the form of questions about whether something was allowed, games they would like to play or the choices made during arts and crafts. Feedback was gathered from the children concerning the past fall. When the next club session is being planned, adults also ask for the children's wishes. Sometimes a situation occurs in which a child makes a suggestion, but the adults do not react. The child's request might also be forgotten or a promised action not carried out.

Factors which support or reduce children's participation are presented in figure 1.

Figure 1. Adults' actions as factors that support or reduce children's participation in Terhokerho activities

Children's experience of participation: belonging to the group

Apparently, children's sensation of belonging to the group is formed when old friends and family members are participating and new friends are made; when activities are fun together, the atmosphere is pleasant and the elderly pay attention to them, children thrive. For children, fun activities and friends are the most important reasons to come to the club.

Children reported that they feel everyone is welcome to the club and that all the participants are members of the group. As participation is analysed from the perspective of the children's experience of belonging in a group, feeling like an outsider and becoming noticed in the group are the issues children see as most important. The children explained that newcomers in the group easily feel themselves as outsiders because they do not know the other children and adults or how the club meetings work. Children see that being an outsider prevents experiences of participation in the club. The children have a clear view that both the children and the elderly are responsible for everyone's experience of belonging to the group. If someone does not have a friend at the club, they know beforehand that he or she might feel alone and stay outside of the group.

The role of the elderly as people who acknowledge children is significant. The elderly pause to listen to the children and talk with them. Nice adults are fun companions. The kindness of the elderly, humour among the participants, shared activities and an unhurried and pleasant atmosphere increase a child's willingness to interact with people from different age groups. These conditions then again increase the amount of interaction they have and enable more opportunities for children's participation.

Once the conditions for interaction have been met, children noted that the sense of solidarity is developed with conversations and shared activities. It is important for a new child to get in with the club's culture so that the child can find a place within the group as part of its social network.

Researcher: 'What makes you feel that you're part of the group?'

Rilla (10 years): 'Maybe that I'm acknowledged'.

Researcher: 'In what way are you acknowledged?'

Rilla: 'I'm kind of taken as part of all the games'.

Researcher: [...] 'Do you feel like someone in this Terhokerho group is left as an outsider?'

Rilla: 'Well, I don't think so. Maybe when someone is there for the first time For a short period [children or the elderly could feel as an outsider] and then they join in'.

The children feel that it is nice to participate in the club activities and participation is voluntary. This includes individual situations, too; a child can always choose whether or not to participate in activities. As one young participant said, *'It's so much fun here, that it's worth being here'* (**Mikko**, 5 years).

Children's experience of participation: opportunities to make initiatives

Children reported that the activities in the clubs are planned by the adults and that they have decided what to do in the club beforehand. The child's freedom of choice is often limited to choosing from the options the adults present. Communication is mainly in the form of adults talking to the children or asking them questions. The interaction is often initiated by adults. Nonetheless, the adults always listen if the children have something to say.

The children also noted that it is important to have an opportunity for them to express their views in the club. According to the children's experiences, these opportunities to express themselves do not always occur, as the adults do not always seem to remember to ask the children what they think. However, not all the children feel a need to participate in the planning. The children also lack knowledge about opportunities to participate. They are very precise in their observations of their surroundings and it is very likely that when they are among unfamiliar people, they settle for obeying and listening instead of conversing and negotiating.

Researcher: 'In your opinion, who does the planning here in Terhokerho?'

Rilla (10 years): 'I don't know. Maybe all the adults when they come to the meeting before Terhokerho club'.

Although children are content with the activities planned by adults, they have the urge to be involved in the planning. Some children reported that the activities could be improved if the children were taken as part of the planning process.

Rilla: 'Maybe in that meeting if children would join, they could say all kinds of favourite things and funny things and nice things and stuff that adults might not agree with; maybe then the adults could carry out the children's wishes'.

Children obviously are very aware of the power relations in the club. Children say that they participate in activities planned by adults where the adult makes the decisions. The children listen, answer, talk and participate. Nonetheless, they would like to be part of the planning. The children feel that if their initiatives were taken into account, the club activities could be improved. The children's opportunities to make initiatives are more concrete when the children are consciously included in the planning, execution and evaluation compared to a situation in

which making initiatives is left as the children's responsibility. The richness of the clubs is due to the interactions between the children and the adults; children's participation materialises in cooperation with adults. For example, giving the responsibility for planning entirely to children would exclude the children from many fun activities because they do not have enough knowledge about what kind of activities can be arranged at the club. However, in activities collectively planned, executed and evaluated, everyone can experience participation.

Discussion

This research was conducted in the early phase of the All-Finland Play project. The time that the researcher spent in Terhokerho clubs was quite short for such a long-term project. The club activity had not yet stabilized and the expectations of the participants towards the clubs were minimal. There is much that can be improved in the club activities regarding children's experiences of participation, especially in terms of children's sense of belonging to the group and having opportunities to make initiatives. The action is instructed by volunteers; being an instructor does not require specific training, so not very high goals can be set for the club activities regarding the experiences of participation. However, in improving the orientation for the volunteers, some of the factors that concern children's experiences of participation could certainly be enhanced. For instance, by adding a mutual game at the start of the meeting, everyone would get to know each other and that would help everyone's chances of experiencing a feeling of belonging to the group. To acknowledge children individually is easier when they can be addressed by name. It is also important that the children learn each other's names. As Leinonen (2014) states, feeling like an outsider and being acknowledged are key factors in having an experience of participation. Secondly, consciously including children

in the planning, execution and evaluation of activities would support children's participation. So on the other hand, beginning of the project was favourable time to research. The results of this research were used for improving Terhokerho clubs and in the planning and starting of the new Terhokerho clubs during the project. The results of this research were used as well as in the training of the volunteers.

Voluntarily organized clubs are a rendezvous point where different-aged children and the elderly gather to spend time together. According to the results of this study, the children gladly participated in the shared club activities with the elderly. The key factors supporting children's experience of participation were fun activities and friends. Those who did not have their own friends with them in the clubs also considered getting new friends an important factor. Children also wanted to get to know the elderly in the clubs. The activities shared by children and adults helped create interactions and therefore supported children's experience of participation and possibilities to make initiatives. Beynon et al. (2013) have found the same results in their intergenerational singing curricula research. We agree with Jarrott (2011) that it is important to have activities that are shared among children and the elderly. Without that, the interaction between the two age groups is slim. Humour and a warm atmosphere between children and older adults were typical in the club activities. Other studies have also shown that humour, friendship and pleasant activities are very significant for the children (Karlsson, 2014).

With this study we expand the knowledge base about children's experiences and analyze the phenomena of participation, which are related to time, place and culture. (Karlsson, 2013; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). Thus, it is possible to understand the broader social and historical significance of children's experiences. Using the methods of this research, children's experiences of participation can be described and analysed and the factors that produce or weaken those experiences can be found. Participation is analysed as a phenomenon that is

formed in interaction within a group (Ruusuvuori et al., 2010). Our findings are child-oriented because in this study we were interested in children's opinions and we tried to look at the club activity phenomenon from a child's perspective. Honan and her colleagues (2000) note that different analytic approaches have an important influence on what can be found in the same data. Although there may be other interesting conclusions that could be drawn from the data collected, in this case we were looking for evidence of children's participation. Because the interview material was small and the interviewed children were of varying age, we cannot consider them to represent all the children who participated in the clubs, but they rather represented children's different perspectives to the research topic. In this research children are viewed as active social actors to ensure that their voice is heard in the future for more active children's decision-making in participation activities.

In our research, shared activities, an unhurried and pleasant atmosphere increased children's willingness to interact with different-aged people as has also been confirmed by other researchers such as Leinonen (2014), Thomas (2002) and Ukkonen-Mikkola (2011). To achieve successful interaction, regular meetings and shared activities are required (Heyman & Gutheil, 2008; Murayama et al., 2015; Ukkonen-Mikkola, 2011). It seems clear that the structure of the club and actions of the participating adults could be more supportive towards the children's experiences of participation. Involving children more in the club's planning, execution and evaluation not only would bring joy to the children and increase their experiences of participation, but early on, it would also teach valuable skills of working in a group and sharing democratic practices. The culture of involving children more tightly in the shared activities would also be valuable in breaking harmful authoritative relationships based on age. A model to evaluate activities by children and the elderly has already been developed in 2015 in the All-Finland Plays project for Terhokerho clubs. Children and the elderly photoshoot and discuss activities and events that have made them happy.

This research has given important new information about children's sense of belonging to the group and sense of the possibility to make initiatives. This research has also sparked lots of new research questions. It would be important to know, how children's experiences change as the project goes on and how these same topics would look like with a larger set of research participants. It would be interesting to find children's and adults' practices, which promote or prevent children's participation and agency and look same things from children's and adults' perspective. We are also interested in using different methods to help children tell their opinions in the future researches.

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<i>Factors that support children's participation</i>	<i>Factors that reduce children's participation</i>
Starting together	Starting randomly
Sharing activities	Separating activities for children and the elderly
Being acknowledged individually	Adults ignoring the children
Adults being natural	Adults being authoritative or remote from the children
Adults having fun with the children	Adults leaving children out of activities
Adults planning activities with the children	Adults excluding children from discussions
Adults respecting the option to participate in activities or not	Adults forcing children to participate
Adults seizing upon children's initiatives	Adults ignoring children's initiatives
Adults asking the children for feedback and ideas	Adults invalidating children's ideas

Figure 1. Adults' actions as factors that support or reduce children's participation in Terhokerho activities

The figure should appear on the "Results" section right over the following title: Children's experience of participation: belonging to the group