



# Housing needs of Somalis living in Suvela



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## **Housing needs of Somalis living in Suvela**

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In the early 1990's, Finland received a large number of immigrants from different countries and majority of these immigrants came from conflict African countries. Due to the financial situation in Finland during that period, it was not ready to receive a large number of immigrants. Preparation was inadequate because immigrants arrived unexpected and also they came in large numbers. The country with the highest number of immigrants to Finland in the early 1990's was Somali.

This Bachelor thesis is part of Suvela project (Kotilo); the aim of the project is to improve the housing satisfaction for the residents living in Suvela and also to organize activities for the residents. The Kotilo project is under The Finnish Refugee council organization which deals with immigrants living in Finland. In addition to the above there is cooperation between Laurea University of applied sciences and Suvela project. This study will also help to gather information for Kotilo project in Suvela.

In this research, the target group was Somalis living in Suvela. Suvela is one of the suburbs of Espoo city. Somalis were chosen for this study because they are the largest number of immigrants living in Suvela. The reason for this study was to find out if the Somalis living in Suvela community are satisfied with their present living situation or if they have any housing needs that they are not satisfied with in the place in which they live. This is because the number of Somali families in Suvela keeps on increasing.

The study started in 2009, Qualitative and semi- structured interviewed was used in this study. The participants consisted of five Somalis living in Suvela. The interview involved female and male participants who read, signed the consent form and agreed to participate in the study. The data were collected through tape- recording and note taken. The findings consisted of both positive and negative results, but the positive result is greater than the negative result. On the basis of the findings, this study concluded that Somalis living in Suvela are satisfied with their housing services, especially having their own Mosque in Suvela. The interview took place in Suvela and participation was voluntary.

Key concepts: Somali immigrants, housing needs, and housing policy

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1990-luvun alussa Suomeen tuli paljon pakolaisia eri maista, suurin osa Afrikan maista, joissa oli konflikteja. Suomessa oli tuohon aikaan lama-aika, joten Suomi ei ollut taloudellisesti valmis ottamaan vastaan suurta määrää pakolaisia. Asiaan ei ehditty valmistautua, sillä se tapahtui odottamatta ja he saapuivat niin suurena määränä kerrallaan. Enemmistö pakolaisista, jotka saapuivat Suomeen 1990-luvun alkupuolella, tuli Somaliasta.

Tämä opinnäytetyö on osa Suvelan projektia (Kotilo); projektin tarkoitus on kehittää Suvelan paikallisten asukkaiden asumistyytyväisyyttä sekä järjestää heille aktiviteetteja. Kotilo projekti toimii Suomen pakolaisyhdistyksen, joka hoitaa Suomessa asuvien pakolaisten asioita, yhteydessä. Yllä mainitun lisäksi projektia toteutetaan yhteistyössä Laurea ammattikorkeakoulun kanssa. Tutkimus auttaa myös kokoamaan yhteen tietoa Kotilo projektista Suvelessa.

Tässä tutkimuksessa kohderyhmänä oli Suvelassa asuvat somalit. Suvela on yksi Espoon lähiöistä. Kohderyhmäksi valittiin somalit, sillä he ovat enemmistö Suvelassa asuvista pakolaisista. Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selvittää, ovatko Suvelassa asuvat somalit tyytyväisiä asuinoloihinsa tai mikäli heillä on jotain asumiseen liittyviä tarpeita, jotka aiheuttavat tyytymättömyyttä. Tätä kartoitetaan, koska somali-perheiden määrä on kasvussa Suvelan alueella.

Tutkimus alkoi vuonna 2009, menetelmänä käytettiin laadullista ja puoli-strukturoitua haastattelua. Kohderyhmä koostui Suvelassa asuvista somaleista. Haastatteluun osallistui sekä naisia että miehiä, jotka lukivat, hyväksyivät ja allekirjoittivat sopimuksen tutkimukseen osallistumisesta. Tietoa kerättiin nauhoittamalla haastattelut ja kirjoittamalla muistiinpanoja. Tulokset sisälsivät positiivisia ja negatiivisia löydöksiä, mutta positiivisten tulosten määrä oli suurempi. Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että somalit ovat tyytyväisiä asuinoloihinsa ja erityisen tyytyväisiä he ovat siihen, että heillä on oma moskeija Suvelassa. Haastattelut toteutettiin Suvelassa ja osallistuminen tutkimukseen oli vapaaehtoista.

Keskeiset kasitteet: Somalialaiset, asumistarpeet, asumispolitiikka

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## 1 Introduction

A large number of Somalis immigrants came to Finland in the early 1990's. According to Muddle, the arrival of the Somalis to Finland was a shock and media coverage was negative because Finnish society was not prepared to receive this large number of immigrants. Finland was not ready because the society was going through economic depression at that time (Muddle 1998, 112). The number of foreigners living in Finland has increased ever since; the number of immigrants altogether living in Finland was 132708 in the year 2007, Immigrants have also become ethnically diverse (statistics Finland 2007). In 1987 there were less than 18,000 foreign nationals in Finland, more than half originated from Western Europe. There were 900 immigrants and about 46 were seeking asylum in Finland. By 1993 the number of foreign nationals had increased three times and the immigrant's number also increased even more (Jaakkola 1987- 1999, 130).

Suvela is a community in the city of Espoo with more immigrants than native-born. Espoo is the second largest city in Finland with Population of (31. Jan 2009): 241 400). Suvela area has two day care centers, school, which is called the Central School of Espoo. It has several small grocery stores, shopping malls, resident parks, walking distance to Espoo train station and Tuomarila train station. The field in Suvela can boast of gravel field, ice hockey field, skating rink, and volley ball court. There are also several busses from Suvela to Helsinki city center regularly. ([www.espoo.fi](http://www.espoo.fi)).

Principal languages (year 2008): Finnish 84.3%, Swedish 8.4%, other languages 7.3% ([www.espoo.fi](http://www.espoo.fi)). The majority of immigrants are Somalis, Russians, Albanians, and Vietnamese. The number of Somalis living in Suvela is about 180 consisting of 40 families in all (Statistics Kotilo Project). Espoo city has grown rapidly to become the second largest city in Finland. There is no clear centre in the city but there are five regional centers of which Espoo Centre is one of them and Suvela is an area under Espoo centre.

As social work students of Laurea University of Applied Sciences with focus on multiculturalism, we decided to carry out a study on the housing needs of Somali immigrants living in Suvela community in Espoo city. This study seeks to answer the question: what are the practical housing needs of Somalis living in Suvela. We targeted Somali for this study because they have the largest number of immigrants living in Suvela and also in Finland as a whole. The interest for this study came naturally to us because it offers us the opportunity to work with immigrants. Suvela project work directly with immigrants and native speakers, and as social students this was the reason why we became interested in this project. Our interest in the place of work after our studies is to work with immigrant, children and people who are marginalized in the society. In addition we have had experience about working with immigrants; children and marginalized people so studying this will widen our knowledge about immigrants. This topic is very important in order to know the population change in Suvela for future housing planning and also for

immigrant's opinion for future development.

This study focused on the housing needs of Somalis living in Suvela community to give them the opportunity for their voice to be heard in issues concerning their living situation in Suvela. This study is significant in the realm of social work because this study shows whether or not it is necessary to create more housing assistance for Somali immigrants in Suvela. Also, this research can have significance on the social and economic well-being of the residents. Participant ideas and participation through interviews could help develop a good housing environment in Suvela if needed, since a good housing is important for the health and well-being of the people living in the environment but poor housing helps an area to get a bad reputation.

The framework for this study is to gather information on housing needs of Somalis living in Suvela community. Some workers in Kotilo activity centre, a project in Suvela which deal with housing needs and other multicultural issues with the Somalis living in Suvela were also involved in this study. Kotilo project supported students in getting the contact of participants for this study.

Qualitative research method was used in this study; the data gathering of this study was done by using semi-structured interviews as clear list of issues were addressed and questions to be answered (Denscombe 2003, 167). Students choose to be part of this project, since Kotilo project deals with the better living of multicultural people. Also, our field of study is about multicultural and people who are depressed in the society. Students had used this opportunity to exercise what they have learnt in their studies in the working environment. Being social services students, we think this study and the gathered information will be useful in the life of Somalis in Suvela. The learning goal was to gather information of housing needs of Somali immigrants for the development of Suvela.

## 2 Background

This bachelor thesis is part of Kotilo project which is situated in Suvela and the study environment was in Suvela. A number of Somalis living in Suvela were interviewed. Housing is a basic human need and social well being, Kotilo project is being set up to ensure a good housing environment for immigrants and native speakers. The "Yhtesstyöllä ja Kilailen perspalvelut 2000 report made by the Government Institute for economic Research, a good service system is one providing services that correspond to the needs of the users and promote their well being. The aim of Kotilo project is to promote the standard of living among immigrants and native speakers in Suvela.

Kotilo project is a project under Finnish refugee Council. It started in the year 2006 and was estimated to end at the year 2008. Kotilo project is based in the suburban areas with a

high proportion of Somalis residents. The project works in collaboration with Espoonkruunu Ltd, Myllypuro housing Ltd, VAV housing Ltd, TVT housing Ltd and Tampere Rental housing foundation. The development and main goal of this project is to: Prevent conflict within the neighborhood, Promote the standard of living among immigrants and native people in Suvela, develop model for neighbor mediation, develop a system of guidance for residents of multicultural backgrounds, and organizing training for residents and collaborators.

It has trained neighborhood negotiators who work as cultural interpreters and negotiators. The objective of neighborhood negotiation is to solve and prevent conflicts occurring in the neighborhood. The Kotilo project has also trained home-helpers and these Home-helpers come over to advice and help in matters related to housekeeping. They are not there to do the work but to help and advice in complicated situations

Participation creates common goals and objectives and thus reduces clashed between inhabitants. Shared aspirations bring people together and increase the sense of security in the neighborhood. [www.pakolaisapu.fi/en/finnish\\_refugee\\_council](http://www.pakolaisapu.fi/en/finnish_refugee_council).

The learning goal of this study is to gather housing needs information from Somalis immigrants living in Suvela in order to improve their living situations and involved them in the development of Suvela community, understand the situations and needs of the Somalis living in Suvela, and apply knowledge and an ability to engage in, culturally competent practice. In addition, part of our learning goal is to be able to use qualitative reasoning skills in our research, evaluate research studies and apply findings to our practice, be able to use generalist social work skills, including problem identification, goal setting, data collection, implementation of plan, differential use of intervention roles and evaluation. Furthermore, we should be able to have a clear understanding of core social work values so that we can clearly identify ethical dilemmas and use ethical guidelines and critical thinking skills to resolve them and most importantly to protect our informants.

### 3 Theoretical framework

The key concepts in this study are Somali immigrants, housing needs and housing policy.

#### 3.1 Somalis immigrants

In the year 1992, the situation in Somalia due to the political unrest in the country was described as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. At the end of 1992 over 400,000 people passed away and about 1.5 million fled from the country to seek refuge abroad (Bradbury, 1994, 13-16). Tens of thousands moved to Europe and North America. About 6,000 of the Somalis came to Finland, a country different from Somalia in terms of ecological setting, societal structure, religious affiliation and other cultural differences.



The Somalis in Finland form a minority of greater importance than their numbers would indicate—a mere 1 % (one per mile) of the population—in that they constitute at the same time the largest group of Africans and of Muslims in the country and they are also seen as the horn of Africa in Africa (Amnesty, Somalia, a long term human rights crisis). Most importantly, the Somalis arrived in Finland as asylum seekers. Finland had, hesitantly been receiving refugees since the end of the 1970's, only in a very small numbers and only at the request of UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). Immigrants are minorities in a community or in a country. Immigrants have an identity that sets them apart from other groups and limits their participation in the larger society. Immigrants' policy should, however, incorporate elements that help integrate people into society, and take into account the needs of immigrants' families. Not all immigrants go home once they have contributed their labor, instead settling with their families in the new country and become permanent in minorities (Forsander 2002).

In 1990's Finland received more refugees (about 17000) especially Somalis (about 5300), Iraqis (2670), Vietnamese (1964), and refugees from the former Yugoslavia (3500). These figures are one of the lowest in Western Europe and among EU countries. (Assad March 2001)' According to Laakkonen, 'Finland was a much closed country in respect to immigration Until the 1970's almost the only way to immigrate to Finland was to marry a Finnish citizen (Laakkonen 1996) .

Now is not the same as it used to be, there has being a change in the immigration system, people have other reasons of moving to Finland such as work and school.

The age structure of immigrants is different from that of the Finnish population and most of the immigrants are of working age. The number of children started to grow in the 1990s, when Finland received whole families as refugees. The proportion of children and young people has expanded, because families were reunited in Finland (<http://www.alli> 13-01-09)

Many Somalis families are struggling with a lot of challenges, how to socialize children in this new setting so that they would maintain and teach the values and norms that are traditionally regarded as important. They are trying to cope with all the challenges that have taken place in the family structure and in the roles of individual family members. Sometimes these challenges put so much pressure on the entire family that it might be unable to support its individual members. The unemployment rate within the community is high. Unemployment has not only made men to lose their traditional role as bread winners of their family, but it also has detrimental effects in terms of trust in the future and school motivation for the younger ones. (Muddle 1998, 42)

In this study, Somali's were involved in identifying their housing needs, Somalis living in Suvela were allowed to talk about their housing needs and situation since they are the ones experiencing it. By allowing their voice heard on their housing needs, Somalis being part of decisions concerning their lives enable them to be part of the community in which they

live. The main goal of this was to interview them and understand their needs, understanding their needs professionally help to involve them in their community.

### 3.2 Housing needs

Housing is the houses in the towns, communities and the general environment that makes the place habitable. Housing has an amenities such as shopping centers, schools, clinics or health care centers, play grounds, recreational centers for both children and adults and other facilities that improve the health and social economics life of the residence. Housing deals with the individuals and their relationship with other people in the neighborhood and the community. A good housing is expected to serve two main purposes of providing shelter and safety for the occupant. In Finland, houses are mostly built in blocks of flats or apartments. These blocks of flats are built to provide houses for many people within a limited space. The design is such that all the facilities, bedrooms, sitting room, toilet facilities and the kitchen are on the same floor.

Appropriate housing reduces the reliance on community support measures and assists in integration. Municipality provides the first dwelling for refugees, and other immigrant usually live in municipal rental housing. The number of immigrants living in government-financed dwellings and rental housing in general is considerably higher than those for Fins (Jussila 1998-1999). A good housing environment provides a good standard of houses where there is a safe, lightning, comfort and good water supply. A good environment, functional and economical community structure is key success factors for the municipalities of the future. Local authorities are given better instrument than before for guiding community development (Kangas, 1998-1999, 115-118)

A well functioning housing policy and states involvement in housing matters will be needed in the new millennium (Ijäs 1998-1999, 111-115).

The municipality provides the first home for the immigrants and their families, immigrants are given permanent homes once they get their residence permits (Parhankangas 2000). Most of the immigrants living in Finland live in state-subsidies houses own by the municipalities (Tiitinen 2001).

Immigrants who have permanent residence permit are entitled to the same resources and services as the native Finns (Valtonen 1999, 119). Amount of immigrants has increased during the last few years in Finland, which poses new challenges to the cities. Appropriate housing reduces the reliance on community support measures and assists in integration. The lack of knowledge about the needs of service users is a significant barrier to an effective housing strategy (Foord 1998, 16). There is less of inclusion of service users in decisions about where and how to live, despite the essential importance of ascertaining their needs and desires in assessing future housing provision (Glynn 1998, 28). Needs to be

met through housing are physical and psychological needs. Physical needs include all things the body needs to survive for example shelter, sleep, and food preparation. It also provides safe environment to store possessions. Psychological needs are related to thought and feelings. These include the need to feel sense of identity and express one's self. A house that provides opportunities to meet psychological needs is more than a structure.

### 3.3 Housing Policy

The general objective of housing policy is to enable every household to have available an affordable dwelling of good quality, suited to its needs, in what can be described as a good environment and if possible at the tenure of its choice. The overall principal underpinning the housing objective is that those who can afford to provide for their housing needs should do so either through home ownership or private rented accommodation and that targeted supports should be available to others having regard to the nature of their need. What is housing affordability? Well it can be said to be an expression of the social and material experiences of people, constituted as households, in relation to their housing situations. Affordability expresses the challenge each household faces in balancing the cost of its actual or potential housing. Housing affordability depends crucially on household income, not just on the price and availability of housing. Given that almost all housing is purchased in a private market, the distribution of income is the most important determinant of the quantity and quality of housing obtained by the rich, the poor and those in between. The average level of income; degree of income inequality between high-and low-income families; and income differences by race, gender and age all translate directly into how well different groups are housed. Understanding trend and disparities in income is essential for understanding the same with regard to housing. The reverse is also true (Bratt 2006, 20).

Individuals may live in housing that fails to meet physical standards of decency either in overcrowded conditions, with insecure tenure, or in unsafe or inaccessible locations. While each of these forms of deprivation is logically distinct from lack of affordability, most households that experience one or more of these other forms of deprivation in reality do so because they cannot afford satisfactory housing and residential environments. Other forms of housing deprivation are largely due to the affordability squeeze. The cost of obtaining satisfactory dwellings and residential environments within the same housing market area exceeds what such households can afford. While housing deprivation is complex and can take various forms, standards for most forms of deprivation are fairly well established, and hence the measurement of deprivation and its relationship to affordability is, in principle, reasonably tractable.

However, Housing need is seen as being instrumental to choice and thus individual households are seen as being capable of determining their own needs as seen in this study whereby the housing needs of the interviewed Somalis living in Suvela varies according to

each person's needs because some individuals households will need assistance to fulfil their needs which go beyond their own resources (King, 1998, 1).

The majority of householders in Britain and a significant proportion elsewhere are owner occupiers and thus, we can presume they have a degree of choice in their housing consumption. Housing is not simply giving to them, but they choose on the basis of their preference as constrained by income, family ties, employment, market condition etc. Of course, these constraints may loom large at times to the extent that any notion of choice may appear a chimera. However, this does not negate the fact that they have arrived at that position through the exercise of choice (whether to enter the market, when, where, and what to purchase). Thus owner occupation as tenure is related to choice.

Furthermore, in the early 1990's when this large number of Somalis arrived in Finland, the government allocated houses to them which at that time choice did not exist and thus housing was provided for through direct procedures by the city. The reason for this, of course is that the Somalis have insufficient means to provide for themselves. Their condition is such that choice is not deemed to be the most important consideration. They are seen to be in an imperative state, where the degree or existence of choice is not a particularly relevant consideration. This leads to the simple dichotomy that the minority who cannot provide for themselves are in housing need and thus financial subsidies are made available to alleviate this need, whilst those who have choice are not deemed to be in housing need (King 1998, 40).

The critical evaluation of needs plays significant roles in the housing policy arena. For example, local authorities have a duty to assess housing need. Yet need is difficult to pin down, and the way it is approached or measured varies according to the setting. (Somerville 2001, 62). Throughout Western Europe, as elsewhere in the world, housing policy reflects the political ideology of the government in power. Despite the considerable variations in the aims and objectives of housing policy from one country to another, governments 'right of centre' generally tend to favour less state intervention, as they give only limited support to the social-rented sector, and promote owner-occupation and private landlordism. Governments to the 'left of centre' normally accept the need to intervene in the market, give responsibilities and funds to local authorities and non-profit housing organisations to enable them to provide affordable housing, and attempt to ensure that housing resources are distributed fairly equitably across and within tenures. Nevertheless, prior to the formulation and application of housing policy, broad demographic and macroeconomic trends need to be fully taken into account by governments, of whatever political predilection, to ensure that workable and politically relevant solutions are devised for the many different problems of housing market dysfunction (Balchin 1996, 1).

### 3.4 Previous studies

In the majority of advanced market economy, housing costs account for the second largest share of consumption in an average household. Housing takes an average of 22% of the family budget (Polakow 2001, 4), as everybody want to live in a good environment to have access to all the social amenities. According to Bennett and Larry, the first turning point marking government involvement in housing for the poor came in the late 1890s when activists worked to enact some of the first tenement laws defining health and safety minimums for slum buildings. Government could regulate the development of housing to protect the health and safety of its poor citizens (Bennett& Larry 2006, 21)

People have needs and must be satisfied, for instance, they need housing; jobs; education; opportunities for recreation; transport, and basic services like water, electricity, clean air and health care.

A research carried out by Weinberg indicates that to have a good community people should be encouraged to work together to create a healthy community.

Development should be done in the right place, at the right time, to provide sound and safety lives of those who live in that community. The researcher said, in a community whereby natural resources are preserved, neighborhood are secured, jobs are available, education is life long, live in a good environment, and having access of a very good health care services improves the quality of life of the citizens. And also an opportunity should be created for the less fortunate and the desperate people (Weinberg 2000, 3-4).

Findings indicate that the number of minority group households with children keeps on growing and for that it is very important for these communities to be developed for them to have access to modern social amenities (Markkanen 2009, 3). Communities' members should have access to basic services and facilities to support their healthy living.

Blear also said that involving the whole community and also all the communities will help to support those individuals, institutions and communities that are required to progress in their daily lives, and by so doing will help build strong, prosperous and empowered community. (Blear 2009, 140).

Mitlin also stated that, the less fortunate people enjoy the pride of being part of a process, and that it is gradual process that provides the community with the capacity and confidence needed for a good comprehensive development in a community. Moreover, if State participates in providing affordable and healthy housing environment for the needy and minority citizens, the communities will not only gain stability but will also increase employment opportunities and this will bring economic growth. (Murie 2007, 46-48). It is very important for the State to intervene in the development of the citizens (Sivan 2000, 13, 14). And also respect the choice of immigrants and recognizing their achievement will build their confidence to be part of decision-making.

The development of capacity and the opportunity for individuals and groups to play a full role in society in general, not only in economic terms but also in social, psychological and political terms, with those involved in the implementation of activities also taking part in decision-making (Wilkinson 1998, 40, 50). Downs Anthony studied on the availability of affordable housing for moderate, low, and very-low-income residents earning less than 80 percent of the median income in counties in urban metropolitan areas. He said that residents are not likely to be able to buy or rent at prevailing market rates without spending an “excessive” fraction of their income on housing. There are several ideas to focus on housing for these income groups. First of all, growth management principles emphasize equity in the development and availability of housing for residents at all income levels. In states where growth management laws exist, jurisdictions are asked to plan for affordable housing (Downs 2004, 24)

#### 4 The research methodology and the implementation of the thesis work

##### 4.1 Objectives of the study

The objective of this study was to study the housing needs of Somalis living in Suvela community. The interview questions aimed at the perception and the experiences about their living in Suvela. Different issues about their living in Suvela were explored for example why did they move to Suvela and how do they see their living in Suvela? The research question for this study is: what are the practical housing needs of Somalis living in Suvela. Other issues concerning their life were brought up for discussion, such as language barrier and joblessness.

##### 4.2 Qualitative research method

Qualitative research method was used for this study. This method was used in this study since the study is about specific group of people housing needs. Qualitative research method is about exploring issues, understanding phenomena in answering questions. Qualitative research is used to gain insight into people's attitudes, behaviors', value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture or lifestyles. It's used to inform business decisions, policy formation, communication and research (Vishnevsky & Beanlands 2004, 235). It aims at exploring the phenomenon in question by focusing on the individuals who experience it, assuming that it is possible to maximize the understanding of the phenomenon by minimizing the interpersonal distance between the researcher and the participant.

Qualitative research is favored, when the research concern exploring the life of people histories or everyday behavior (Silverman 2000, 1).

Interview process is merely the conduit between the two participants. The standard vision

of the interview process keeps the interviewers involvement to a minimum (Holstein and Gubrium 1995, 388-389). Interview words can be used by the researcher later and the talk can be taken as a genuine reflection of the person's thoughts (Denscombe 2003, 163).

Qualitative research involves immersion in situations of everyday life. The situations are normal ones, reflective of the everyday life of individuals, groups, societies and organizations (Shaw and Gould 2001, 7) Qualitative research is naturalistic, draws on multiple methods that respect the humanity of participants in the study, focuses on context, is emergent and evolving and is fundamentally interpretive (Marshal & Rossman 2006, 2).

In qualitative research, there is no right or wrong methods; there are only methods that are appropriate to the research topic and the model with which you are working. The safest option for most researchers using qualitative method is to keep it simple and to have a straightforward fit between the topic, method and model (Silverman 2005, 109- 113). This kind of method was used since more ideas about their housing needs are needed to develop their community. Qualitative research is favored, when the research concern exploring the life of people histories or everyday behavior (Silverman 2000, 1), we chose this method for our studies since it concern the life of Somalis living in Suvela. And the quality of qualitative data depends to a great extent on the methodological skill, sensibility and integrity of the researcher (Patton 2001, 5).

#### 4.3 Data gathering

The study is a research based qualitative study with semi-structured interview questions. We used Semi-structured interview because it is conducted with a fairly open framework which allow for focused, conversational, for two-way communicational. It can also be used both to give and receive information. The objective is to understand the respondent's point of view rather than make generalizations as it uses open ended questions. However, the interviewer in a semi-structured interview generally has a framework of themes to be explored because the questions were prepared ahead of time.

The target group consisted of 5 Somalis living in Suvela community who were informed beforehand about the reason for the interview and how it will benefit them.

The interviews were done in September and in the beginning of October in 2009. The respondent group consisted of four men and one woman aged between 18 and 60 years. The interview language was English in four sessions and one of the interviews was done by the help of an interpreter. The question paper was available through all the interviews. The interview took about 45 minutes to 1 hour for each interview. Before the interview participants decided how much time they could spend with us.

Kotilo activity center worker, made an appointment with students of which it was agreed

that the interview would be tape recorded and also no interpreter would be needed. The first interviewer did not turn up for the interview; another date was fixed for another interview. One of the participants was interviewed by the help of an interpreter but the rest of them were interviewed without any interpreter. The first participant among them refused to be tape recorded at some point, he read the consent form and signed it but at some point of the interview he told students to write and stop recording it. As a result of that, students ended up by writing the information the participant gave.

In three cases out of five the answer for question concerning recording was negative. As a result three interviews were written by using pen and paper and the remaining two were tape-recorded. The issue of recording raised feeling of fear, hesitation, withdrawing and shyness. These reactions were perhaps mainly due to fear of being recognised by the voice.

Only two interviews were tape recorded and three interviews were written down by profound notes and keeping the learning diary afterwards. Nothing crucial concerning the topic was left out. The target group consisted of people who have been living in Suvela for more than a year. They already have opinions and experience living in Suvela community. This suitability has been clarified by preliminary discussions with the manager of Kotilo since the informants are from Kotilo.

Because we were not allowed to use the tape-recorder to record three of the interviews, we wrote down the information that the participant gave to us. For that reason, one person asked the questions and the other person wrote down the response. This was not done anyhow, one person who is very good to listen and write at the same time did the main work. The other person also jotted some important point. We did not have any difficulties in writing it because participant spoke slowly in order for us to be able to write everything.

The process of the interview functioned very well but as much as students tried to document all their findings, naturally, one cannot know or foresee all the possible problems that might come up before hand but on the other hand, this has made the project more interesting by providing important learning experience in all phases of the work.

#### 4.4 Participants

Participants of a study can be selected in different ways, the purpose and the method of the study and the research questions needs to be considered when planning for participants. In this study purposive sampling was used, because students had an idea of the participants, what to look for and also finding out the housing needs of Somalis living in Suvela, this gave specific requirements for the selection of the participants. In this study the participants have lived in Suvela in different years and have Somali origin.



Participants of this study were contacted by the help of Kotilo activity center worker, who also happened to be a Somali but not living in Suvela. The idea of him helping students was that he knows the Somalis who visit the activity center and lives in Suvela. Moreover, he works with all the age group who visit the activity center and some contacts were also made by students themselves. The Kotilo worker was contacted and accepted to help students to get Somalis who will accept to participate in this study. He was informed about how the interview was going to be and the number of participant needed for this study.

In this study, the participants were male and female Somalis and who have Somali origin and also living in Suvela. The participate who participated in this study were between eighteen to sixty years (18-60) and have lived in Suvela between two to fifteen years. All of them have lived in some other places before moving to Suvela. Two of the participants moved to Suvela because the city gave them the apartments and others moved there because of blood relations and marriage.

#### 4.5 Content analysis

According to Bogdan and Biklen, qualitative data analysis is "working with the data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned (Bogdan & Biklen 1982, 145). Therefore, qualitative analysis requires some creativity, for the challenge is to place the raw data into logical, meaningful categories; to examine them in a holistic fashion; and to find a way to communicate this interpretation to others.

In analyzing this study, students used content analysis to analyze tape recorded interviews; students transcribed tape-recorded interviews into written form and developed it. There are different methods that can be use to analyze data, analyzing involves how to differentiate and combine the data being collected and the reflection of the information (Miles & Huberman1994, 56).

Content analysis can be used with any text, sound or pictures as a way of quantifying the contents of the text. The main idea of contents analysis is that many words of text are classified into fewer categories and each category should be relevant, there is the need to have a clear idea of the kind of category, issues and ideas that would concern and how it will appear in the text (Denscombe 2003, 221). Content analysis is used in large number of field and has being the fastest growing technique in many years (Neuendorf 2002, 1).

For the purpose of this study content analysis was chosen to analyze the data collected. Since it has been used in all kinds of field and it is also good to study communication (Neuendorf 2002, 1), it can be used to analyze all kinds of text form (Denscombe 2003, 221). The data for this study was gathered through interview, because of that the

transcribed text is different from normal written document. The transcribed text includes spoken language and repetition of statement. The most important ideas and issues that concern the topic or the question were considered. This means that the transcribed text should be studied properly in order to be able to select the relevant ideas that relate to the topic. The text was divided into different components for easy identification of the various points of the data collected (Denscombe 2003, 221).

This analysis was done through students' discussion, reasoning, listening to recordings, writing and also reading the gathered material since students did most of the work by writing. After reading through the written interview document, students typed their note on a computer in order to compare each document and fill in the missing ideas and empty space that were left out in the written document. The recorded interviews were written "open" word by word. Reading the written documents through several times made students to be familiar with the content; this phase lasted several weeks since the process started already at the first interview. Similarities and differences were highlighted from the written text and by underlining the reduced expressions. Students joined together their typed document of the interview when all the corrections have been made.

Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text to the contexts of the use and it involves special procedures. It views data as representations of physical events but of text, images and expressions that are created to be seen, read and interpreted (Krippendorff 1980, 17-18). Weber also said content analysis can be used for the purpose of disclosing international differences in communication content, audit communication content against objectives (Weber 1990, 5-10). Tapes and transcript offer more than just something does to begin with. They are a public record, available to the scientific community and can be replayed (Silverman 2005, 184). The questions were designed to assess, find out the needs and the living situation of Somalis living in Suvela

In the beginning, the answers were classed according to the issue with no division based on the questions or informants. The reduced expressions were listed and similarities and differences from them were searched and after that, subcategories were formed. The main categories appeared fairly naturally from the subcategories, as one example "security" where several examples mentioned. The most important points that were mentioned several times were coded, underlined and similarities were numbered. Coding is the heart and soul of "whole-text-analysis". Coding forces the researcher to make judgements about the meanings of contiguous blocks of text (Denzin & Lincoln 2000).

the diagram in page 19 shows the main categories and the sub categories of this study.

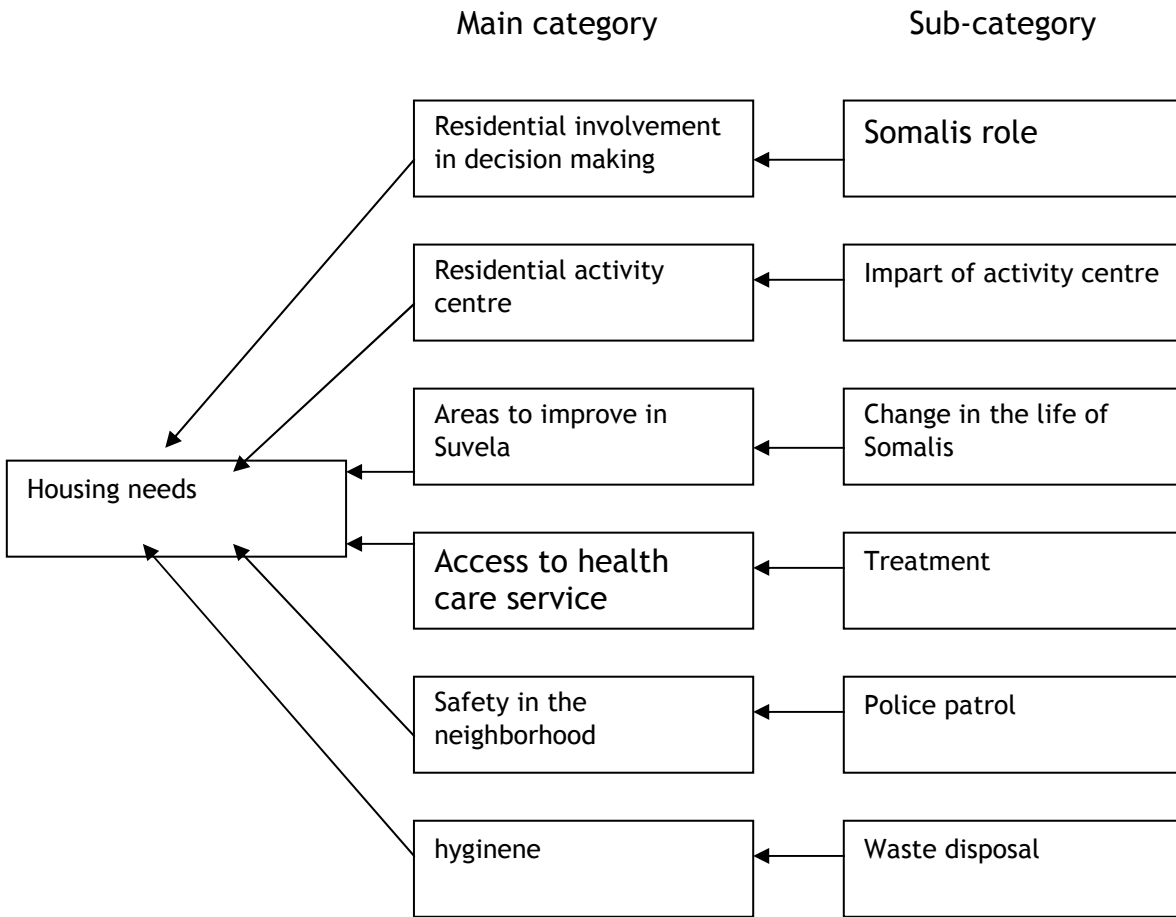


Figure 1 Main and sub-category of thesis

## 5 Findings

The findings of this study include some of the original interview data from the five participants. This was done according to the way it was categorised, some of the original text were added to this findings and nothing was done to change the meaning, but information about the participant were not added just to protect the participants from identification. The main issue in this thesis is the housing needs, hence it is chosen as the main theme and starting point for the evaluation as well. The informants gave a good overview of their housing needs amongst others as immigrants; different theme arouse very clearly from the interview material.

Six main categories were derived from the data collected, they are residents' involvement in decision making, residential activity centre, areas to improve in Suvela, access to health care service, residential safety in the neighborhood, and hygiene. The first category, residents involvement in decision making, this consist of how decisions concerning the life of the residents are made, their participation in the community.

As well as how this affect their daily life. The second category, residential activity centre, where their leisure time is been spent during the day. This emphasis on the purpose and how important they see this multicultural activity centre, does it serve the purpose of community activity centre.

Third category, areas to improve in Suvela community, this also is about new changes that they would want to happen in the community, the places this changes can take place and how they would want it to be done. The fourth category, access to the health care centre, is how quick they get an appointment time for treatment, the distance and transport opportunities to the health care centre and the hospital, how good is the services they receive from the health care centre and the hospital.

The fifth category, residential safety in the neighborhood, it also emphasize on factors that affect their life in the neighborhood and how on expected occurrences are prevented from occurring and is the authority concern on their safety. The last category, hygiene, how clean is their neighborhood, and household rubbish is kept.

### 5.1 Residence involvement in decision making

In community development it is essential to ensure that residents have adequate information in order for them to effectively participate at the level that suits them. The interviewed residents said they are aware of everything that goes on concerning their housing, and they are very happy that they are involved in decisions made in the community.

The residents are fully informed about the policies and the changes that happen in the place they live. They are encouraged to participate in decision about the housing services provided in Suvela. They said they are happy with the way they are involved in the decisions made in the community. The residents went on to say that this is very important to them and it makes them feels part of their community. Above all it is very important for service users to have their say and be involved in how services are run and developed.

*“In the decision making I think everyone is involved because sometimes we get mails or notice informing us about a block meeting or some sort of repairs that might take place in the apartment so we are part of the decision making”. (2nd participant)*

Effective resident involvement gives an opportunity for residents to take active part in improving the communities where they live and gain the view of residents to obtain an understanding of their needs and aspirations, and also to constantly enhance and improve their community and this helps residents to be happy with the area that they live in.

In Suvela, the housing leaders pay attention and listen to the residents and finds ways to inform, consult and involve the residents in the planning of the community development, changes and issues that affect the quality of their life in the community that is they Work alongside with residents to encourage residents to become more involved in local issues and the environment.

*“Just like everywhere else in Finland. We are involved in all decisions concerning our neighborhood; we get notified of any changes and new development” (3<sup>rd</sup> participant).*

They said they are given the opportunity to be part of their community development.

They are involved in their community by:

Taken part in a survey

Attending housing meeting

And receiving letters concerning their housing

Living situation in Suvela according to most of the participants is very good. The first participant said he is happy because “it is better than in Africa”. The facilities inside their homes are in good condition, the heating system is very good and the water is constant but they want renovation of some of the buildings they live in. According to the participants, the decision making concerning their housing needs in Suvela is really good because they are involved in any decision taken by the City and they are happy to be part of the decision.

*“Decision made in my neighborhood is very good than in Africa. I am very satisfied*

*with all the decision taken by the City because if there is any plan of renovation in the building where we live or any work of repairs in our apartment, we are always notified by mail and the problem is easily solved for example like when you lock your keys inside you will get your door quickly opened by just a phone call". (1<sup>st</sup> participant)*

## 5.2 Residential Activity centre

Kotilo is a welcoming place for children, youth, adult and a place for multicultural people living in Suvela. The centre offers different kinds of activities for the residents, children, youth, and adult visit the place during their leisure time. They said sometimes residents use the place for meetings and special events. The interviewed residents said they visit the place to meet new friends that shares similar interest, they hang out with their friends and also students hang out with their friends after school hours. They said they do this to avoid loneliness and hanging out with their friends is part of their culture.

Kotilo has really helped the participants to meet other immigrants, share common interest and participate in activities together. Kotilo serves as a meeting point to all the participants, they meet there to socialize and discuss about issues concerning their families and the community. The participants see kotilo as a place where they get to know what is going on around them when they meet and discuss openly and freely amongst themselves.

*"There are so many different people coming from different cultural background and one thing about Suvela is that, there are a lot of immigrants living here. I usually meet different people anytime I visit Kotilo activity center, we greet each other, talk to each other and share ideas. We really go along". (5<sup>th</sup> participant)*

All the participants have good relationship with their neighbors because they are foreigners, they meet at kotilo and they participate in the same activities in Sports and different games. The participant's need more youth centre like Kotilo in Suvela, they say it is part of their culture to meet in groups and discuss issues concerning their lives and the community where they live. "We prefer to come together when we are free this is part of our culture". And also most importantly, kotilo should be improved with more facilities like computer, computer games, Educative books and toys for kids.

*"We know each other in the area I am living, and also most of us are immigrant so we understand ourselves. I have not had any trouble with anyone the only problem I have is Finnish language that I do not speak I like to learn it but am too old now to start learning this language". (2<sup>nd</sup> participant)*

### 5.3 Areas to improve

According to the five Somalis interviewed for this study, the centre has been a great help to them, it brings them together for them to feel at home, for that reason if there should be any changes or improvement in the centre they would prefer that more resources and material may be put in the centre. They are content with their Mosque; they said they have enough things that they need in the Mosque. Moreover the Mosque is used by only Muslims but the activity centre is used by all the residents living in Suvela so it will be good that they adequate resources in the centre.

*“An upgraded youth centre will give the young ones the opportunity to meet and do a lot of inter cultural activities together like here in Kotilo”. (5<sup>th</sup> participant)*

*“If we have more activity centers like Kotilo activity centre in Suvela, it will help us to spend our free time together and share ideas and get to know each other better. We prefer to come together when we are free this is part of our culture”. (1<sup>st</sup> participant)*

*“Actually, Suvela is a very good place to live because the Mosque is very nearby where we Muslims can go and pray unlike in other places like Helsinki and the rest where Muslims have to travel far to get to the Mosque to pray. The facilities in the Mosque are good and we are happy about it. We see ourselves lucky to have a Mosque nearby because even Somalis from Kivenlahti come to Suvela Mosque to pray. Living in Suvela is also fun because the Kotilo office is open to all”. (1<sup>st</sup> participant)*

The participants need a youth centre, renovation of some of the buildings and most importantly, kotilo should be improved with more facilities like computer, computer games, Educative books and toys for kids. The interviewed Somalis think the development in Suvela will improve their living if more of the activity centres are set up, this will let them come together most often as coming together is part of their culture.

*“Of course the development in Suvela will support my culture in many ways. It will bring everyone in respective of our different background together and if the services in kotilo are improved more people will spend more of their free time there socializing and bridging the gap between Somalis and other immigrants”. (2<sup>nd</sup> participant)*

*“It will encourage socialization and if more shops are open it will create more jobs in the sense that if an African shop is opened it will also help promote our culture”. (3<sup>rd</sup> participant)*

#### 5.4 Access to Health care service

In general the health care service is well developed in Espoo (Finland). Everyone is entitled to the services provided by the city; nobody is excluded using the health care centre. Somalis have right to health care services as well as other people living in Suvela. Waiting for treatment is not difficult in the health care centre where they attend for treatment. For the five Somalis interviewed for this study, they said the time they spend in health care centre waiting for treatment is alright to them and this waiting is as a result of not booking before visiting the health care centre. In most cases the appointment is booked before they visit the health care centre and there is no delay in getting an appointment time for treatment.

The distance to the care centre and the hospital is not far from where they live, they have different options getting to the care centre for treatment. They do not need their own care before they could visit the health care centre for treatment and in case of emergency they call to the emergency service centre for help. They seem not to have difficulties getting to the health care centre since they were positive.

*“The health care service is very good, it is very near to my home, care is giving to me without wasting time anytime I visit the health care center and most of the serious cases are referred to Jorvi hospital and Jorvi is not far from Suvela”. (1<sup>st</sup> participant)*

Since the participants are grown ups, the youngest being 18 years, medical needs was a common issue as they all agreed that the treatment they get from the health care centre is good, located close to Suvela where they live and if they had a severe case of illness, they are usually transferred to a teaching hospital also located in Espoo for further treatment.

Participant grade the health care system and the health care facility in Finland to be of high quality as compared to other countries that they know, have no problem about that, they are satisfied with the service they receive from their health care centre. Right information, support and advice are provided for them whenever it is needed. The same service is given to all the residents living in the community in which they live, regardless of their race and financial situation.

*“Well, I think they are the same everywhere, I mean here in Finland, it is good”. (4<sup>th</sup> participant)*



## 5.5 Safety in the neighborhood

Accident can occur in different ways but sometimes there are some of them that can be prevented from happening in residential areas. In Suvela, things that are dangerous to the quality of life of the residents are always taken care of before harming or causing accident in the neighborhood. Warning signs are placed in areas that are obviously dangerous to the residents.

Residential locations require a number of safety precautions, People have lost their lives and others have been seriously injured as a result of accidents that happened in the neighborhood. Everybody wants to live in a place where they feel safe. Crime and the fear of crime are still big concerns for a lot of people. But In Suvela community police are working around the clock to prevent accident, prevent loss of life and protect property and promote safety. Apart from the police officers patrolling the neighborhood, public spaces are used all the time because there are people around everywhere in the neighborhood and this serves to reduce criminal acts, anti-social behavior and help people to feel safe. Everybody's desire is to have the opportunity to live in a quality neighborhood, that is safe and secure. In order to sleep soundly and have peace of mind and a secured neighborhood gives peace of mind whether the residents are at home or away.

*“Yea Suvela is not all that peaceful area, because there are many drunks around and too many fights. But the police have been very good in calming the situation”. (1<sup>st</sup> participant)*

Majority of the participants feel that the security in Suvela is good because the police are always patrolling the neighborhood. The public transportation is not far from them, they have access to the bus and train stops. These stops are not far to walk to, most importantly, there are in open places that one can go to in the night without fear. The area is not busy as other people see it.

The blocks in which they live are secured; the main entrance and the doors leading to their apartment have locks and code, some people prefer staying inside their homes at night and have rest after day's work or keep themselves warm but not because Suvela is a dangerous place to live or go out at night.

*“Actually the constant presence of a police coming here makes Suvela a safe place to live but I don't know why some people still see Suvela as a dangerous place maybe because of the huge population of immigrants living in Suvela. I think it is a very safe place to live because we can go out any time of the night to meet someone or travel with no fear of someone attacking us”. (2<sup>nd</sup> participant)*

Suvela has very good and open parking space and most of these parking spaces are free for

the residents. But one person out of the five participant feels that Suvela is not peaceful, there are drunk people everywhere mostly on week days and people are always fighting and screaming on top of their voices which gives Suvela the nick name “Beirut”. People living outside Suvela have different perception about the place whereby some of the residence sees it as a peaceful place to live. The participants see Suvela as the same as other communities in Finland. Each community has different people with different character and attitudes.

*“Actually, the security in Suvela is very good. We feel safe living here. People that are seen staying indoors are not because they are feeling in secured; they are only cold and would rather stay indoors to stay warm. I feel much secured here in Suvela most especially because the corps is always patrolling the area”. (5<sup>th</sup> participant)*

*“Suvela is known to be a very rough community, I have lived here for more than a year and I have not experienced any form of violence so for me, Suvela in terms of security is safe. We are safe and we feel safe living in Suvela me and my family”. (3<sup>rd</sup> participant)*

*“Ok, when you tell some people you live in Suvela, they look at you as a dangerous but we live here and know that there are good people here and we feel safe living here”. (4<sup>th</sup> participant)*

## 5.6 Hygiene

Household waste are controlled and operated by waste operating service cars. The waste system car takes the waste away from the residential area. The waste is compressed and accumulated in a special sealed container so it could be moved by a lorry. Clean and tidy environment are important issue to provide good health for the residents in every community.

The management of waste disposal according to the participant is not good because there is no separation of bio waste from other waste but the waste management committee are doing their work because the truck comes twice a week to empty up the waste. The participant made it clear that the waste management committee is doing its job but the residents are not happy Suvela to look clean. Residence dump waste anywhere without putting them in their appropriate places as it supposes to be. One of the participants stated that maybe is because of the Finnish language that makes people to put them in wrong places.

*“The truck comes in the mornings and evenings to pick up the trash and keep the place clean so I think the waste disposal unit is doing a good job to keep Suvela clean”. (2<sup>nd</sup>*

participant)

*“Well, the management of waste disposal in Suvela is not so good when you compare it to other areas because there is no separate garbage for bio waste as everything is mixed up. It could be that because there are many foreigners living in Suvela and most of us do not speak and read Finnish language. Waste disposal is the very problem we have in the place I am living. It will be good if something will be done to our waste disposal”. (1<sup>st</sup> participant)*

## 5.7 Language

Language skill is one of the keys to integration according to the participants. It affects their life and the way the society accepts them. The biggest criticism was directed at the native Finnish speakers. They argued that the obstacles faced by majority of the participants are the difficulty in speaking Finnish language. They feel they are treated as outcast because they cannot speak the language very well and as a result, they are not having jobs. They said other people think they are lazy but fail to realize that they are jobless because they are not given jobs due to the language barrier.

*“We know each other in the area I am living, and also most of us are immigrants so we understand ourselves. I have not had any trouble with anyone the only problem. I have is Finnish language that I do not speak I like to learn it but am too old now to start to learning this language”. (1<sup>st</sup> participant)*

*“People think that Somalis are lazy people and so to get a job is sometimes difficult even if you can speak the language and you are qualified”. (2<sup>nd</sup> participant)*

In conclusion the participants requested that the City of Espoo should create more jobs for them.

## 6 Discussion

### 6.1 Summary

This study had similar findings of previous studies conducted by Weinberg (2000, 3-4) about the needs of people. Somalis needs jobs, activity center and basic language training for the old people among them. Building up a good community people should be encouraged to work together to create a healthy community. This finding indicate that the number of Somali households with children keeps on growing and for that it is very important for Suvela community to be developed for them to have access to modern social amenities.

Somali residence in Suvela should have access to basic services and facilities and also involving them will support their healthy living.

Most of the immigrants living in Finland live in state-subsidies houses own by the municipalities (Tiitinen 2001). Appropriate housing reduces the reliance on community support measures and assists in integration. It is very important for the State to intervene in the development of the citizens (Sivan 2000, 13, 14). And also respect the choice of immigrants and recognizing their achievement that will eventually build their confidence to be part of decision-making. According to Foord (1998), the lack of knowledge about the needs of service users is a crucial barrier to the effective strategy since less of inclusion of service users is visible in the decision about where and how to live but this is not the case in this study because the Somalis who took part in this study are included and also part of the decision making relating to their housing needs in Suvela community

Waste disposal is an issue bordering the interviewed Somalis in Suvela. The participants made us to be aware that the waste management committee is doing what is expected of them but the residents are making their work to be difficult. The residents seem not to consider the importance of keeping their surroundings clean. Attention should be devoted by the leaders in Suvela community to educate and empower the residents on how to dispose their home waste. Leaders should emphasis more on the importance of waste disposal and keeping the environment clean. The community will be clean whereby the residents will show active interest in keeping their surroundings clean by disposing waste into the appropriate places (1<sup>st</sup> participant).

Immigrants face a number of challenges in finding suitable employments, housing and Education in their chosen communities. Due to their often disadvantaged economic positions and newcomers may be streamed into low cost housing that, when concentrated can create ghettos, and Markkanen(2009) said, minority group households with children keeps on growing so it is important for the community in which they live to develop for them to have access to modern amenities. For new immigrants, finding a suitable place to live in a safe and welcoming neighborhood is an important first step towards successful settlement and integration. However, homelessness and the lack of affordable housing are the critical problem that faces the immigrant and refugee population especially in light of immigration from other provinces. Weinberg (2000) summarizes the general view that in a community whereby natural resources are preserved, the neighborhood is secured, jobs are available, and access to good health care services will improve the life of the citizen. During the course of this study, the informants emphasized that they were satisfied with the security in Suvela community and on how accessible the health care service is to everyone. However, some Somalis family are still struggling with some challenges on how to socialize their children in the society and also maintain their values and norms that to them are regarded as very important.

The Somalis are in general satisfied with their overall housing conditions. Obtaining good quality housing wouldn't be possible to many Somali families without Finnish welfare policies that aim to provide decent housing for all the citizens. Nevertheless, the participant's satisfaction with the overall housing situation reduces mainly because of two reasons: Language barrier being the reason behind the common state of joblessness amongst them and inadequacy of youth centers like Kotilo.

Kangas (1998-1999) argued that a good housing environment provides healthy living for the people but inadequate housing can have a detrimental effect on the individual household through increased health and safety risks, higher energy prices, decreased property values, and, in the worst case, loss of the home due to abandonment or condemnation. In addition, homes are the primary asset for many of these Somalis families, and neglect can adversely impact their ability to transfer wealth to the next generation. Over the long term however, these negative consequences may affect not only the household itself, but also the neighborhood that surrounds it. These distressed neighborhood conditions, in turn will be linked to higher levels of criminal activity.

Arguably, programs like Kotilo project that assist the Somalis in maintaining their homes benefit not only the families themselves, but the wider community as well can help. The demand for services provided by Kotilo project for Somalis living in Suvela dedicated to meeting their social wellbeing and rehabilitation needs is great and will grow larger in the coming years due to the rising population of the Somalis living in Suvela so the need for more projects like Kotilo is required.

The Interview indicated that participants did not identify lack of place of prayer, transportation, gender role, health care or mental health as significant problems but identified social networking, employment and Finnish language as their primary concerns. They also identified family social networking and needs as important. Young Somalis born or raised in Finland living in Suvela won't have as many housing needs as their parents, because they have lived all their lives in the community and have friends from different ethnic background and will be able to speak the language fluently thereby bridging the gap of language barrier and this might considerably improve their situation in housing market in the future.

Somerville (2001) also came to the conclusion that the critical evaluation of individual needs will play significant roles in the housing policy such that the local authorities will have the duty to assess housing needs; like in Suvela where the authorities make decisions concerning the housing situations and involves the tenants. The local authorities have the right to assess housing needs because throughout Western Europe, housing policy reflects the political ideology of the government in power (Balchin, 1996).

The study also indicates that the Somalis feel safe in Suvela community and protected by the authorities. The preliminary results of the study indicate that the housing needs of Somalis in Suvela community can at least in some extent be improved upon in the area of

social facilities like the youth center for social gathering amongst the Somalis. It also shows the need for social integration through employment.

A part of the preliminary result of the research has delightfully been that the Somali families living in Suvela seem to have far less housing related problems but in desperate need of more youth centers due to their religious belief and the need to be together and discuss family issues.

According to the participants, tolerance in Suvela community is also essential since they live in the same area as other immigrants but hardly mix with them hence the need for more youth centers to encourage other immigrants to integrate fully into the Finnish society and not feel lonely or excluded. There are many situations and reasons where people can meet, share common interest in a centre like kotilo that will facilitate a well functioning community by the Somalis and other immigrants. This will provide excellent possibilities for ways to integrate fully into the society and encourage the Somalis to participate in more collective activities.

In conclusion of this finding, there are some basic things that the interviewed Somalis were very happy about them in Suvela. The five participants were very happy of having their own Mosque in Suvela, they made mention that even people living in other places comes to worship in Suvela Mosque. They appreciate their Mosque most because it has everything that any Mosque will have. They said that living in Suvela is very good because a place like Kotilo activity centre whereby they meet most of the time to share ideas among themselves.

## 6.2 Professional growth

This study has really imparted more knowledge into the life of the students, as this is the first research for students. Students have learnt a lot from this their first study and the knowledge acquired will be used in the next level of their education. The meetings students had with some of the kotilo leaders have improve their confidence in speaking in the presence of different people and different leaders, students have had meeting before but not with people from different professional field.

This has also made students to be competent in working with different people, as students became aware of problem solving and learning about different issues that came up during this study. Making phone calls and contacting the participants has made students to be flexible, patient, punctual and timely. Contacting the participants was very difficult in the beginning as people were not ready to listen to students, putting off their phones when students' tries to explain them, and even some not answering to the messages sent to them. At some point students became tired of contacting and not getting any response from people but Students continued to contact them without given up.

The main focus of this study was to gather housing needs of Somalis living in Suvela and other issues came up after the interview, but the main objective was achieved. This study has given five Somalis the opportunity to voice their experience and opinion they have about suvela community. In this study the interviewed Somalis gave positive result about Suvela and suggested some things that would need to be improved. The information gathered will be used for the development of Suvela.

### 6.3 Further studies

This study can be continued by interviewing different Somalis or using another immigrants group living in Suvela to find out their point of view about suvela community and also compare if they receive the same support from suvela activity centre. It would also be interesting if another study would be done that would involve the key leaders in Suvela on how issues are handled in the neighbourhood.

## 7 Trustworthiness of the study and ethical issues

The starting point of this thesis was in the beginning of January 2009 in a tutoring session where the idea was preliminary discussed and planned. The actual research process got started by familiarizing with the literature search, narrowing down the topic and clarifying the actual target group. Lots of general information about Somalis, housing, integration, theories and studies were found. Materials and sources have been used during lessons and so have been found reliable and useful. The actual search for the participants started immediately after the thesis plan was approved. Some of the Kotilo workers gave a good support and overview for possible participants who could help during this process. Also they provided information and ideas on how best to reach the informants.

In this study, a lot of things were considered during the study but the most important one is language that students and participants can have in common to understand each other. Ensuring the validity of this study we tried as much as possible to get Somalis who speak and understand English language. A participant understanding of the questions was very important to us. Right information will be gathered if the participants understand the questions set for them. Participants did not have difficulties in answering the question, they even made a comment that the language used is simple for everybody to understand without any further explanation. What made it valid was that they all gave similar answers to the questions with very good meanings.

At the initial stage, the first group of participants declined to grant the interview but with much persuasion by the manager of Kotilo and a repeated explanation of the research and the assurance of confidentiality, the participants granted the interview. The interview

situations can also be different; for example most of the interviews in this study were done without a recorder. The student's interpretation gave information more openly; recorder would have created an atmosphere more official and leads to an assumption that the content of the material would have been narrower.

The actual field work started, by interviewing possible informants by phone, and face to face in order to find out their suitability for this study. The key issue was the housing needs and also it was made sure that the clients understood the right to refuse, or interrupt the interview at any point. Also the ethical issues were explained at this point concerning for example confidentiality and possible recording of the interviews. It was made clear that confidentiality is guaranteed; the interviews are made anonymously and all the materials are only for the use of this thesis.

The aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative research is to support the argument that the research findings are worth paying attention to; reliability and validity.

Kirk and Miller identify three types of reliability referred to in conventional research, which relates to: firstly, the degree to which a measurement, given repeatedly, remains the same; secondly, the stability of a measurement over time; and thirdly, the similarity of measurements within a given time period. They note that "issues of reliability have received little attention" from qualitative researchers, who have instead focused on achieving greater validity in their work (Kirk and Miller 1986, 42). Lincoln and Guba said in confirm ability of the research, the researcher can demonstrate the neutrality of the research interpretations, through a confirm ability audit. This means providing an audit trail consisting of 1) raw data; 2) analysis notes; 3) reconstruction and synthesis products; 4) process notes; 5) personal notes; and 6) preliminary developmental information (Lincoln and Guba 1985, 320-321).

Validity is another word for truth. Validity is interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers (Silverman 2005, 210).

Validity of the research measures how well the result connects to the research questions. In qualitative research, the validity is divided into two: the exterior and interior validity. The exterior validity refers to the relation between the research question, findings and conclusions while interior validity also refers to the method used, theory and the concept. In this study student had support from working life professionals, and these professional work with different people from different background. Students have question about the validity of this study because participants were critical about the set questions and wanted to think about it before answering them and also some of them did not accept the tape-recording because they did not want their voice to be identified by other people.

In the collection of data, the researcher should protect their informants. According to Denscombe (2003), the right and the dignity of those who participate in a research project



should be respected. The interest of the informant was considered during this project, care was taken to avoid psychological harm.

The findings of the research data collected will be kept safe and confidential and tape recording will be destroyed at the end of this study. Care was taken not to disclose the personal identity of the informants who contributed to the project. The informants were not forced to participate in this study, their participation was voluntary and adequate information about this research was given to them before they chose to participate in this project (Denscombe 2003, 134).

Ethics and trustworthiness were considered in this study, valid information was provided and informants and students signed consent form for security reasons. According to Shaw and Gould, giving informants consent is something which cannot be regarded as a single event, as disclosures are likely to emerge during the process of an in-depth interview and consent needs to be understood as something which is ongoing negotiated (Shaw and Gould 2001,147)

The relationship between the interviewer and the respondents is important. It has to be based on respect and equality. Practitioners should be aware that their interventions are probably intrusive as well as potentially helpful. They must maintain a good balance between reaching out to provide apposite help and refraining from intervening in order not to trespass upon the autonomy of individual. This is why the clients are entitled to refuse to participate to this study as well as they are entitled to drop out from it at any point if necessary. The interviews are based on fully voluntarism without any obligations; this point is crucial also when considering the question of recording which is discussed earlier in this thesis.

Confidentiality is guaranteed by using the findings anonymously; all the names, addresses and professions are not even asked, and the other features that could lead to identification will be kept in secret and reported in the study with expressions that can not reveal any identities. The findings are used only for this study. All the materials collected that contain information that could lead into recognition, are handled with care only by the students and after analysing they will be destroyed by shredder. This way any harm that could be caused by any comment is avoided. The interview was done in a good and friendly spirit after getting to know the clients at Kotilo centre. All the characters of this study including the points of confidentiality were explained before the interview started. To make sure the participants get the same information. These points were also discussed after the interview just to make sure the informants have understood the points and to avoid all possible regrets. Nevertheless, even if the group of recipients was small, five persons, and the study provides an important channel for these Somalis to tell about their housing needs. The individuals that might be interested or affected by this thesis topic are the social workers

in charge of Kotilo and Espoo city for the housing needs. Students see this topic to be very important since it touches very closely issues that a social worker will work with in the field of immigration.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Consent form

We are students of Laurea university of Applied Sciences studying degree program in Social Services in Laurea otaniemi. We are in the process of writing our bachelor s thesis and this study is about the housing needs of Somalis living in Suvela community.

All the discussion that would be done during this interview will be tap recorded for the purpose of this study. All the information collected during this interview will not be shared to any other person and participant will be protected by keeping their information confidential. The information recorded will be destroyed after the written document is done.

For any other information please feel free to contact us or the school by phone call or e-mail us.

Thank you

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I have read and I am therefore signing this form to give students permission to interview me and tape record this discussion.

Date

place

signature

## Appendix 2: Interview Questions

How old are you?

How many years have you lived in Suvela?

What made you to choose Suvela?

How do you get on with your neighbors?

How would you describe Suvela as a community, what kind of development or changes will be best for Suvela?

How is the living situation in the apartment in which you live?

How much do you know about other immigrants living in Suvela community apart from Somalis?

What kind of possibilities are there in Suvela to encourage Somalis to go for medical treatment when needed?

How is the management of waste disposal in your neighborhood?

What do you think about the security in Suvela?

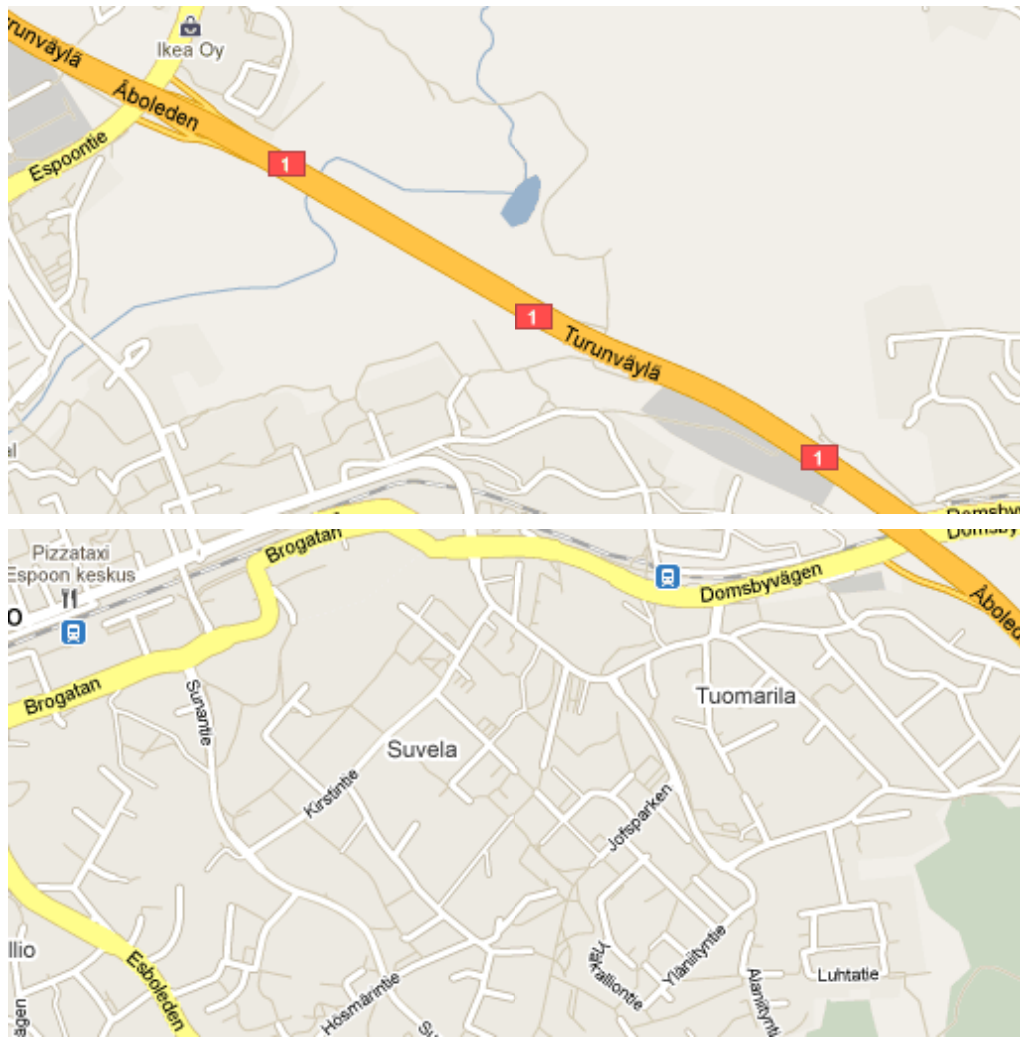
How are decisions made in your neighborhood?

What kind of obstacles or barriers have you faced since you started living in Suvela as a Somalis?

What kind of cultural issues you would like to maintain as part of your own culture when/ if this changes of development occurs?

Is there anything you would want to say or comment?

Appendix 3: map of Suvela



Map of Suvela