Abstract

Background: Women in Uganda constitute a marginalized group because of their position in society. They often face discrimination in different forms, and this affects their possibility to participate in society. This exclusion often leads to occupational injustice. The Participatory Occupational Justice Framework (POJF) is a tool that is used to raise awareness and demonstrate underlying factors for occupational injustice. This study highlights social participation and occupational participation and how it has an important role in achieving health.

Aim: The aim was to study the experience of change factors for increased participation, for vulnerable women in Uganda after participating in the Neighbourhood project.

Method: A qualitative research using semi structured interviews with vulnerable women that participate in Watoto’s The Neighbourhood project. Seven interviews were held with participating women between 20-40 years old who have been in the project for at least one year.

Results: The women experienced that different factors in life had changed after participating in the project. From these factors five different categories arose, which are “Economic conditions”, “Family conditions”, “Social context”, “Meaning of faith”, and “Self-image”. From these categories followed subcategories based on a time perspective, before the participation in the Neighbourhood project and after. A repeating theme emerged from the analysis and was entitled: “From despair to hope”.

Discussion: This study has highlighted how important hope is and how an occupational therapist can inspire others and bring hope into people's life, to encourage and motivate for a change.

Keywords: Participation, POJF, empowerment, vulnerable women, Uganda
**Sammanfattning**

**Bakgrund:** Kvinnor i Uganda utgör en marginaliserad grupp på grund av deras ställning i samhället. De möter ofta diskriminering i olika former, och detta påverkar deras möjlighet att delta i samhället. Denna uteslutning leder ofta till aktivitetsorättvisa. The Participatory Occupational Justice Framework (POJF) är ett verktyg som används för att öka medvetenheten och visa underliggande faktorer för aktivitetsorättvisa. Denna studie belyser socialt deltagande och aktivitetsdeltagande och hur det har en viktig roll för att uppnå hälsa.

**Syfte:** Syftet var att studera erfarenheterna av förändringsfaktorer för ökat deltagande för utsatta kvinnor i Uganda efter att ha deltagit i The Neighbourhood project.

**Metod:** En kvalitativ forskning med semistrukturerade intervjuer med utsatta kvinnor som deltar i Watoto's The Neighbourhood projektet. Sju intervjuer genomfördes med deltagande kvinnor mellan 20–40 år som har deltagit i projektet i minst ett år.


**Diskussion:** Denna studie har belyst hur viktigt hopp är och hur arbetsterapeuter kan inspirera andra och tillföra hopp i människors liv, för att uppmuntra och motivera till en förändring.

**Nyckelord:** Deltagande, POJF, empowerment, sårbara kvinnor, Uganda
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Background

Occupational justice (1) is an occupational therapeutic concept that assume that all humans have a unique set of occupational needs and capacities. The concept occupational justice is based on that participation in meaningful activities can achieve, maintain and improve health. Therefore, all people should have the right to engage in activities that are considered meaningful for them, to achieve occupational justice (1). The Participatory Occupational Justice Framework (POJF) (2), is a tool that is used to raise awareness of, and demonstrate, underlying factors for occupational injustice. The basics of POJF are occupation, enablement and justice. Occupational performance capacity depends on different factors like mental or cognitive abilities and physiological factors (3). All these factors are shaped by its physical and socio-cultural context. The right to participate and perform daily activities applies to all people in society (1). However, exclusion and lack of opportunity to participate in activities for certain groups in the community occur, often because the group is marginalized. The exclusion leads to occupational injustice (1).

Women in Uganda constitute a marginalized group because of their position in society (4). They often face discrimination in politics, economic situations, working conditions and health care, which affects their possibility to participate in society and use their social rights (5). Uganda is a Sub-Saharan country in Africa and two-thirds of the population lives in poverty, and Uganda has one of the lowest “GDP per capita” in the world (6). The possibility of education and work opportunities are low. The opportunities for self-sufficiency are limited and violence against women is common (5). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), almost 68% of all HIV-infected in the world lives in Sub-Saharan Africa, and 59% of these comprise women (7). Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), is a reverse transcriptase virus that can cause an impaired immune system (8). Women in Uganda also face marginalization if they are HIV-positive (4). Exclusion in society and depression are common outcomes of the disease. Several aid agencies for excluded groups in society exist around the world. One organization helping vulnerable women in Uganda is Watoto.

Watoto is an organization in Uganda that is offering help through a program for vulnerable single mothers. Watoto started as a church in 1988 and from that church was the Watoto Child Care Ministries formed to give orphan children help to live and given the chance to have a family (9). Watoto is based on the keywords: Rescue, Raise and Rebuild. Their aim is to rescue individuals and raise every individual as a leader that can, in turn, rebuild the nation (9). With Watoto’s project “The Neighbourhood project”, they help vulnerable women in Uganda to be empowered and give them the opportunity for occupation. The project also strives to increase women's participation in the communities.
The definition of occupational participation, according to Kielhofner (3), is to be engaged in all kinds of daily activity. These activities are a part of our socio-cultural context and are an important key for wellbeing. Personal and social significance capture and shape the personal experience of participation (3). Occupational participation is affected by volition, habituation and performance activity (3), and engagement in participation can be self- as well as socio-political initiated (1). Social participation and being socially included means to be able to learn, work, engage and to have a voice in society (10). To be able to engage involves connecting with people and participating in local, cultural and recreational activities. In a society, the people need to feel valued, respected and that their basic needs are met. As the government of South Australia put in their policy in 2009; “Social inclusion is about participation; it is a method for social justice” (10, s.190). In everyday activities, role identity has also a major part in social society (3). A consequence of role loss and role lessness is loss of purpose, structure in everyday life and lack in self-esteem (3). To promote wellbeing, the occupational therapeutic concept of empowerment can be used as a process in which the individual is supported by his or her environment to develop independence and the ability to take their own initiative (11). By empowering the individual, they can be able to develop a healthy lifestyle that can improve their health.

Previous research (12) shows that bad economy, exclusion from society and no social support are factors that can lead to occupational injustice. These factors are common among vulnerable women in Uganda. The study also showed that occupational therapy group interventions enable the opportunity to develop practical, psychological and social skills for these women. Another study (13), conducted on group interventions for HIV-positive women in Indonesia, showed that the ability to participate in a group with others in the same position helped recovering from psychological problems caused by stress related to their disease. The group intervention also brought friends, help, and knowledge about the disease, which had a positive impact on their lives. The participants also experienced increased self-confidence due to the group intervention (13). The possibility to participate in occupations in society can be affected by poverty (14). This is because a lot of time is spent on providing for everyday needs, such as finding food. The inability for social participation can affect the ability to develop as a person, engaging in meaningful activities or developing different skills.

The above mentioned research showed positive outcomes of how different group interventions have helped vulnerable women to be able to participate in meaningful activities and how, in return, that has affected their health. Also, what consequences the inability to participate in society may lead to. The idea for this study was to study which factors of participation in society that have changed for vulnerable women after participating in the Neighbourhood Project. Thus, the result illustrates which factors have changed and how they have changed. Consequently, the study highlights if the women partaking in the project experience made a difference in the women’s possibility for participation in meaningful occupation in society. This study is needed to highlight how occupational participation can be promoted for vulnerable groups in society and can be useful for people involved working with vulnerable groups and, in line with POJF (2), make voices of vulnerable persons heard.
Aim

The aim was to study the experience of change factors for increased participation, for vulnerable women in Uganda after participating in the Neighbourhood project.

Method

Study design

To meet the aim of this study, the authors have used a qualitative research approach, and implemented semi structured interviews with vulnerable women that participate in Watoto’s the Neighbourhood project (15). The study design has an inductive approach (16). The use of interviews enables a holistic perspective from the participating women’s point of view, where the aspects they consider meaningful can be identified (17).

The Neighbourhood project

The Neighbourhood project’s goal is to “empower vulnerable women and children through Christ centered holistic care for community development” (18, s.3). The organization has three foundational words to achieve their goal with the project. That is to engage, empower and embrace the women in their communities. The Neighbourhood project is a two-year program with one year of discipleship lessons and one year of learning business knowledge and business skills. The discipleship class has a Christian base and includes lessons in forgiveness, how to practice faith, and reading the bible. In the business skill class, the women chose what skill they want to learn such as tailoring, jewelry, or soapmaking. After the program, the women receive a start capital to start their own business. Staff from the program provide follow-up checks to see how the women are doing and help them improve their business. With this help, the expectation is that the women can have an income and send their children to school for a better prospect. The organization aims to find and rescue the most vulnerable women in the communities in Uganda. The organization has predetermined criteria to find and select the most vulnerable women. These are the following: deplorable housing conditions, low level of income (i.e. less than one US dollar per day), have biological children, experienced difficulties in medical care, experienced domestic violence, having difficulties providing quality education for her children, between 18-40 years of age and are willing to improve herself (18).

Informants

A strategic selection of informants was made for the data collection in this study, and the authors got help from the organization (Watoto) to select participating women for the interviews. The organization also helped the authors to find participating women from different communities nearby and around the capital Kampala, to get a broader perspective for the interviews. The organization selected women who were about to have a follow-up meeting, and the women who were open to share their story. Seven interviews were held with participating women between 20-40 years old who have been in the project for at least one year. Participation was voluntary and the women's personal information kept confidential.

Procedure

For this study, the authors chose to visit the Neighbourhood project at the organization in Uganda for data collection. Before departure, contact was maintained via e-mail and the
authors received approval to accomplish data collection for this study from the organization. To implement this study, a volunteer application had to be made because the authors' stay in the country lasted a month. Volunteer work was done throughout the stay, and data collection was carried out in consultation with the employer in due time. An approval letter was given and signed by the head of the department, which approved the authors to conduct the study. All women who participated in the study received a content letter with information about the aim, how the study was to be conducted, and where the result was going to be published. The women had the right to interrupt their participation at any time during the research. After receiving this information, the women signed the informant consent.

Data collection

The interviews included open questions (16) with focus on how participation, finding life meaningful, and the role as a mother had changed after participating in the project over time. The interviews covered perspectives of the past, the presence, and the future. One of the authors held the interview, and the other acted as a secretary through recording the interviews. The authors had the same role through all interviews. The authors insured together that the question guide was followed. Each interview lasted between 25-45 minutes. The interviews were conducted in English and an interpreter was present in four out of six interviews. The participating women did understand English, but some of them needed an interpreter to answer the questions. Where the interviews took place were determined in consultation with the participating women and the interpreter. One test interview was held to avoid that the interview questions would not feel adequate or appropriate (16). The test interview was not included in the analysis. The interviews were audio filed for transliteration and transcribed verbatim. The audio files were saved in one of the author’s computer in a secure file that requires a password for access during the data collection. Thereafter, the audio files were transferred to a USB-memory for the University of Gothenburg to store.

Data analysis

The analysis was made through an inductive content analysis (19), and an analysis template was used to encode, categorize and structure the collected data (16). Since the inductive analysis was based on the text in the data, the thoughts and perspectives of the women are clearly highlighted. The analysis started when all interviews were transcribed. The qualitative content analysis was both manifest and latent with focus on the visible and expressed aspects of the women's stories as well as the underlying meaning in the interviews (15). The authors analyzed each interview separately at first. The analysis started with both authors reading the same interview twice, thus to remember the interview better and to get an overview. While analyzing the interviews, the authors separately identified meaning units in the text and then compared and discussed which meaning units were relevant. These meaning units are sentences in the text that responds to the aim of this study and highlights the women's experiences (chart 1). These meaning units were then organized in different domains, the domains included the past, the present and the future. Each meaning unit was condensed and coded to make it easier while organizing the meaning units (chart 1). To get an overview of the content of the interviews, all codes were written on a whiteboard. Each code was grouped with similar codes, from there the groups could be divided due to the emphasis contrast from the time perspective, making up the subcategories. Based on these groups, categories could be designed and took form such as “family conditions” or “economic conditions” and from this the overarching theme emerged (chart 2). The categories are an expression of the
manifest content of the text. Each category responded to the purpose, but in different ways (19).

*Chart 1. Example of the analysis process in the current study.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning unit</th>
<th>Condensed meaning unit</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I knew that I was the only one going through what I was going through</td>
<td>I was the only one in my situation</td>
<td>Sense of loneliness</td>
<td>Being alone</td>
<td>Social context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I became a beggar because I could not do anything</td>
<td>I became a beggar to survive.</td>
<td>Begging to survive</td>
<td>Having nothing</td>
<td>Economic conditions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Chart 2. Presentation of the subcategories, the categories and the overarching theme in the current study.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having nothing</td>
<td>Economic conditions</td>
<td>From despair to hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent provider</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling insufficient as a mother</td>
<td>Family conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to restore motherhood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being alone</td>
<td>Social context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being part of a community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Being a leader</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Loss of future vision</td>
<td>The meaning of faith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding viability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-contempt</td>
<td>Self-image</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proudness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Ethical considerations**

For this study, ethical considerations were made. Primarily to respect the participating women’s integrity and their right to terminate their participation at any time during the study, thus, to avoid anyone being harmed, exploited or injured (16). The authors took into consideration providing information about the study both in written and in oral, to secure that it was understood. All data was treated confidentiality. In the selection of which women were suitable for the study, ethical considerations were made due to it being an exposed group with a vulnerable position in a developing country. All quotes from the interviews were de-identified, where names and colloquial language were removed. The risks that have been identified were taken into consideration during the study. Despite this, the benefits have been considered and outweigh the risks. This study makes it possible to make these women's voices and experiences heard.

**Result**

The women experienced that different factors in their life had changed after participating in the Neighbourhood project. From these factors, five different categories arose, which are: “Economic conditions”, “Family conditions”, “Social context”, “Meaning of faith”, and “Self-image”. From these categories followed subcategories based on a time perspective; before the participation in the Neighbourhood project, and after. A repeating overarching theme emerged from the analysis which was entitled: “From despair to hope”, describing the time perspective of how the women’s life had changed throughout the Neighbourhood project. Before participating in the project, there was a sense of despair in their economic condition, their self-image, their family condition, their social context, and despair in their faith. After the project, there was an overlaying sense of hope throughout all categories.

![Diagram of the change factors process from despair to hope through participating in the Neighbourhood project.](image)
Economic conditions

The economic conditions changed for the women after participating in the Neighbourhood project. Before, the women experienced the sense of having nothing due to the inability to provide and satisfy basic needs such as buying food. This was due to economic struggles. The project gave business skills and budget knowledge, which facilitated and enabled economic independence.

Having nothing

The possibilities to have an income before attending the Neighbourhood project was hard according to the women. Some made several attempts to start a business, but it never lasted. Begging to survive was sometimes the only thing to do. Not earning enough money had consequences like homelessness, the women could not afford food or the school fees for the children. The women could not satisfy their basic needs. There was no ability to provide for herself and the family. The inability to provide could have caused a premature death, due to starvation. The women used to live in the slum because of economic struggles, and the accommodation was not safe for her and the family. Stress due to risk of eviction was experienced.

“I would have died a long time ago if I wouldn’t made it to the program... my conditions was so bad, I can't even explain... I was not eating because I had no money, even if I called my relatives, I didn't get any help.” (interview 1)

Independent provider

The women experienced an economic change after participation in the Neighbourhood project. The project gave business skills and budget knowledge, which was used to start a profitable business of her own. The ability to stand on her own and being self-employed brings a sense of happiness and satisfaction. The women were given an opportunity for income and knowledge about how to set up a budget and save money. Today, the women are able to save money and to have plans for the business. The women experienced new dreams with their businesses and the possibility to fulfill those dreams after participating in the project, due to the business and budget knowledge. The women use the knowledge from the project to improve the business. Due to the economic changes, the women were now able to provide and take care of herself and the family. The women experienced that the ability to satisfy basic needs changed after the project and it is now possible to maintain everyday needs. The possibility to have safe accommodation, due to a better economy, has also changed and the women were able to move away from the slum area to better situated areas.

“I am now so confident because I am now running my own life. I know I have this much money, I can buy food for my kids, I can have a balance, I can pay my rent and bills.” (interview 2)

Family conditions

The family situation was hard before the Neighbourhood project and the women experienced a feeling of being insufficient as a mother. The inability to provide for the family caused a lot of pain and struggles for the women, and the only way to survive was to give away the
children. After the changes through the project, the women managed to restore their motherhood and take care, support, and provide for the children.

**Feeling insufficient as a mother**

The women experienced that they were not able to support their children before joining the Neighbourhood project. Being the only provider was a struggle and the feeling of not being enough as the only parent was constantly present. The woman experienced a fear of disappointing the children because she could not give them what they needed. The relationship with the children had a negative effect and they did not talk about certain things, such as the father or what to eat, simply because the women did not have an answer. The women regretted the children and wanted to give them away because she did not want them to suffer. The women experienced grief after giving away the children or having a child that died, and this caused loss of the role as a mother. Being rejected by the children also affected the possibility to maintain the role.

“Sometimes I was bitter with my kids because I was regretting that I got them. I didn’t want them to suffer. When they asked me; Mom, the other kids are having a daddy, where is our daddy? I asked myself what to answer them. They used to ask me many questions and I felt very bad about that.” (Interview 3)

**The ability to restore motherhood**

The women experienced that the participation in the Neighbourhood project made it possible to take back the role as a mother. After the economic changes, the women had the possibility to take back their children that they had to give away because of the situation. After the project, the women were able to support and provide for the children what they needed. Due to the improved economy, mothers had the possibility to pay the school fees and hope for the children's future to be restored. A better family unity was experienced, and the women no longer felt stressed or concerned for the children. The possibility to take care of the family again resulted in that the family could have functioning daily routines. These daily routines brought structure and strength to the family.

“I am thankful to the Neighbourhood project because I was able to get all my kids back to stay with me. Before the program, I didn’t know if they had eaten or where they had slept. After the program I got all my kids back and we are staying together. There are still challenges, but I am grateful to the Lord that he has brought my family back. I am really happy as a mother. “(interview 2)

**Social context**

Being abandoned and alone made the life situation stressful in several ways. Having no mental or economic support from family or friends had consequences like isolation and stress. The Neighbourhood project brings the women in the same position together and knowing that they are a part of a community was experienced as one of the most important things about the project. From all support in the project, the women got the strength to become a leader.
**Being alone**

Being abandoned and alone resulted in several outcomes. The women experienced the feeling of being stranded, feeling lonely and being an outcast. The women expressed that they were unable to change the situation and that their life situation was extremely stressful. One woman expressed how her stressful situation gave her physical complications and symptoms. The women spoke of never receiving any help from others and not having any support from families or relatives. This made them feel very lonely. They expressed that it was hard to move on and isolation was common. The women often hid themselves from the kids to avoid questions of their living situation.

“I hid in my friend’s house because my kids used to ask me what to eat and I didn’t have anything. So, I decided to hide myself for the whole day.” (Interview 5)

**Being part of a community**

After receiving help from Watoto’s the Neighbourhood project, a sense of being part of a group was experienced as meaningful for the women. They felt hope and were inspired by others who were in the same situation. The feeling of not being alone emerged and the women spoke of how they got encouraged of other women’s testimonies. To be surrounded by others in the same position brought a friendship that gave the women encouragement to no longer fear other people. When they started attending the project, they went from being isolated to being a part of a group.

“When I came here, I got friends and if I get stressed, I have friends that helped me with this and that” (interview 4)

**Being a leader**

After attending the Neighbourhood project, the women started to lead others. They were leaders in different forms, it could be in their community where they live or in a “cell group” in church where a group of people gather to share life together and to pray. It could take the form of being a leader in the Neighbourhood project itself and teach other women how to sew or to make jewelry. They felt how they wanted to give back because they were so thankful for the help they have received. The women spoke of how they felt happy about how they were needed by others and that made them feel valued. From being uplifted by the project, many were entrusted as a leader and they were given a chance to inspire others.

“I feel good because I was not expecting this. I was not expecting this because I didn’t know that I could be a leader, but they have blessed me.” (interview 3)

**The meaning of faith**

Loss of future vision was outgoing through the interviews because of their situation, it was hard to see any other outcome than committing suicide. Faith had a basic meaning to find their way back to viability. After participating in the Neighbourhood project, hope of a better future was restored and the women regained their will to live.
**Loss of future visions**

The women expressed a feeling of being hopeless in their situation before attending the Neighbourhood project. The women talked about how they felt left out by God and how they started to question their beliefs and spiritual faith. The women talked about how their hopelessness turned out into emotions of wanting to commit suicide or how they wished God to take them in to eternal rest. They spoke of how they experienced a sense of no future hope, and that they would have been dead if they did not get a chance to attend the project.

“At that time, I was thinking about to take my life because of the situation I was in” (Interview 3)

**Finding viability**

Going through discipleship was experienced as one main way to restore hope in life. Parts of the project were learning how to read the bible, how to practice faith, to find patience and how to forgive. The women spoke of how these elements from the Neighbourhood project gave them a hope for a better future and life. They spoke of how this made them trusting God again and how they had restored their faith or started to believe in God and accepted Jesus in their life. Expressions of how faith has restored their hope from wanting to commit suicide to having hopes and dreams for the future was repeating through all interviews.

“Hope came after the Neighbourhood project, after hearing that I had been registered in the project. Through that training I got saved and started to believe in Christ” (Interview 6)

**Self-image**

All the struggles before the Neighbourhood project with the economic conditions, the inability to care for the children, being all by herself and without viability in life caused self-contempt. Through the project, the women found an inner drive to make things for themselves and to be in charge of changing their situation. This inner process changed their mindset and their self-image to feel proud of themselves.

**Self-contempt**

Before the Neighbourhood project, the women experienced a lot of despair and self-contempt. The situation made the women feel helpless and they were not able to change the situation. Being neglected and abused by their husband, having no support from others, having a severe disease and not being able to take care of the children made the women hate themselves. Feeling confused about the situation and self plame was experienced. A constant fear of disappointing others and not being enough was described. This made life feel meaningless and the women expressed thoughts of wanting to commit suicide.

“I hated myself and I isolated myself because I knew I was dying. I became a beggar to survive. I used to be positive but I'm having a lot of pain in my uterus, so could not do anything. Sometimes I went back to the father of the kids to ask for something and this guy abused me. This made me hate myself even more. I felt useless and rejected so I wanted to commit suicide.” (interview 2)
Proudness

The women experienced that the project taught them to accept the past, to forgive, and they were encouraged to move on. By learning this, the women started to do things for themselves and dared to speak their mind. This resulted in that the women could be confident, firm, determined and independent. That inner drive made it possible to do things that they never thought they would do otherwise. The women also experienced satisfaction from doing things for themselves and felt proud of themselves. Being in charge of their own life also brought out dreams and new visions of the future. Having plans for the future was a new experience. The women experienced that dignity was restored into their lives and this made them regain the will to live.

“It makes me proud to be able to stand on my own and speak. I never used to do that before because of where I come from and my situation.” (interview 6)

Discussion

Method discussion

A qualitative research method was chosen because it gives a richness in credibility, dependability and trustworthiness (15). Using a qualitative research approach for this study gave an opportunity for the women that had participated in the Neighbourhood project to tell their stories. This gave an extensive interview and the authors had the ability to immerse and elaborate in the interview by asking follow-up questions. The aim of this study was adjusted after the test interview because of cultural and linguistic differences but if the study design would have been deductive, this could have been avoided. A deductive approach would enable more specific questions in relation to a chosen occupational therapy model (16). However, the advantages of using an inductive study method is that the results focus on what the women in the project consider important and the things that have helped them (16). The things that the women considered the most important were highlighted. The authors consider that using an inductive qualitative research approach was the best way to conduct this study and strengthen credibility.

An issue that could have affected the content validity of the results was that the organization selected participating women that they considered suitable for this study. The authors wanted to reach women that had much experience from the project, so for that reason it was an advantage that the organization chose the women that they know well (16). Another aspect of that is that the organization could only have chosen the women that have been successful in the Neighbourhood project and this could have resulted in a biased opinion about the project. Despite this, the authors believe that this resulted in that the women could give as rich descriptions as possible, which gave a broader perspective of the experiences and strengthened and improved the credibility of the results.

The question guide was remade after the test interview. The reason for that was that the question guide was not formulated in a way that the first woman understood the core of the questions. This misunderstanding was most likely due to linguistic and cultural differences. Thus, the test interview was not included in the analysis and the result because the interview turned out to be too different from the others (16). After the test interview, the questions were modified into more general questions about how the women's life has changed after
participating in the Neighbourhood project. The questions focused on how the possibility to participate had changed and what factors for participation had changed. After modifying the question guide, the core of the questions changed and consequently the aim of the study was adjusted. Even though the quality of the test interview was not as good as the other interviews, it was still an important interview to do since it gave the possibility to improve the rest of the interviews through changing the question guide. Another reason that the test interview was not conducted in a good way, was because the context and condition where the interviews were held was not something that the authors had expected. This affected the role as an interviewer. A better way to conduct the test interview would have been if the authors had made a community visit first without making an interview to be familiar with the environment and conditions.

The Neighbourhood project has a literacy class and the women in the project learn English. The idea was at first that the interviews would be conducted in English, but after discussing it with the head of department the plan changed due to the fact that most women could not speak English. After receiving that information, the plan changed into having an interpreter present during the interviews. This could have affected the content quality of the result because the interpreter was not an authorized interpreter. An employee at the Neighbourhood project that translated the interviews. Not using an authorized interpreter could have resulted in that some information was left out or that the translator could have perceived the information differently (16). Another factor that could have affected the results is that the employee from the organization also was the woman's supervisor. This makes the woman an inferior in the interview and the translator in a position of power, which could have affected what she said about the project (16). This is an issue that has been considered while analyzing the results because this could have affected the credibility for the study.

While making an inductive content analysis, it is important not to be affected by preunderstandings (16). In order to make the analysis as good as possible, it is important to stay neutral and not add own values or thoughts. This has been a challenge since the authors have spent a lot of time with both the staff and the participating women from the organization. This has contributed to more understanding and knowledge about the Neighbourhood project and everyone involved in it. The authors have been considering this while doing the analysis, but this still could have affected the results. Since the authors are occupational therapist students this could have affected the preparation of the question guide, by asking questions from an occupational therapy point of view. This could also have affected the analysis, but since the authors are aware of this, they always went back to the content of the interviews. This strengthens the reliability (19). In order to further increase the reliability, a supervisor has given the authors support throughout the work in this study.

Ethical considerations were taken into account in the study, and were included from the choice of topic to the practical implementation, and finally, how to report the result. To avoid language barriers and misunderstanding of the purpose with the research, an informant consent was given out to the participating women. It informed participants about the project so that the women understood what their role was, that participation was voluntary, and what will happen after the interviews. The interview material is presented with respect for the women and their identities are protected. In hindsight, it was desirable to use an authorized interpreter to give the women a full chance to not be affected by their supervisor when giving their answers. Another adjustment was that the aim and the title of the study has been
rewritten. This decision was made based on ethical considerations, to secure the confidentiality of the women and to make the approach more neutral (16). The title was changed in a way that the country, Uganda, and the target group, vulnerable women, for this study was removed. Only the name of the project remained in the title. At first the target group was called HIV-positive mothers, this was changed into vulnerable women in the aim. There were two reasons for that. First because the organization used that word, vulnerable women, for the target group. Second, because all women that participated in the project were not HIV-positive, even though most of them were. The study being made in Kampala was also removed from the aim. This decision was made because the project also exists in more cities in Uganda and the risk of identifying the women may be lower. The authors collected data not only in Kampala but also in communities nearby. The decision to still name the Neighbourhood project in both the title and the aim was made because the study is based on how life has changed after participating in the project.

In consideration of the saturation aspect, the authors experienced that saturation did not fully occur (16). The experience that there was more data to collect for being able to get such a comprehensive and probability that was needed for full saturation. Every story was different for the vulnerable women who participated in the project. Therefore, new information emerged in the interviews, giving the authors new angles to process the data. Despite this, the authors got hold of the very essence of the project and what conditions were needed to make a change in the vulnerable women's life. The outcomes of what conditions were needed was repeated in the interviews and thereby gives some credibility in transferability (19). The study therefore has an amount of quality in its data collection. Since the same change factors were experienced important to increase participation, these can be transferable to other vulnerable groups. After all, the result from this study cannot fully be transferable because it is based on experiences from this specific group.

**Result discussion**

The overarching theme of this study is “From despair to hope” and it reflects the process that the participating women have gone through by participating in the Neighbourhood project. The change factors that were experienced by the women were the economic conditions, family conditions, social context, meaning of faith and self-image. All these change factors affect each other in the creation of hope. Before the project, the women did not have the possibility to participate in any occupations because of their situation and condition. Days were spent isolated with self-contempt or begging to survive. After receiving discipleship class, business skills and business knowledge through the project had changed, and the women regained hope. The Neighbourhood project can be described as a turning point in life. From an occupational perspective, there is an undertone of the relevance of participation (3), spirituality (20) and how being, belonging and becoming (1) is relevant for the individual's health and gaining empowerment (11).

All these change factors after participating in the Neighbourhood project can be seen by the light of hope. From having all kinds of struggle in life to being able to see upon the future brightly. Hope has the overall relevance for participation throughout this study. Hope took it’s different forms throughout the interviews. It could be through spirituality, to be seen by others, to contribute in society as a leader, to be a part of a group or being able to provide for the kids. As mentioned, engagement in participation can be self-initiated (10) and to initiate that engagement, the authors find that hope can have a central role to find the motivation that
is needed. It is also shown in how hope can increase well-being (21). What is shown in this study is that hope has a tendency to spark a will to change the bad living situation into something better. Hope helped these women change their self-image and started to believe in themselves again. Changing their self-image also permeates the women's role in participation. From not seeing themselves as leaders or that they had the competence to lead others to actually becoming a leader. Restoring their self-image through hope gave them a willingness to give back. As a leader, the women felt valued and believed that their voice matter, which according to Whiteford (10) increases the possibility of social participation.

The family condition changed throughout the Neighbourhood project. The women experienced a feeling of not being enough as a mother and not being able to provide for the children. Some of the women had to give away their children. This made the women lose their role as a mother and the sense of role loss have an affection of losing self-image (3), which was highlighted among the vulnerable women that participated in the interviews. As one woman described; “I didn't know how to pay the rent, get money for my kids, take them to school, I was stranded” (Interview 3), the sense of having nothing made her feel stranded. This also affected the role as a mother and the sudden role of being the only provider. This economic aspect of participation can also be seen clearly from the aspect of having nothing. Feeling hindered in participation played a big role in not having the economic conditions that were needed. This also affected the inability to maintain the role as the only provider. By participating in the project, the women could take back the role as a mother and the only provider. Being able to maintain roles and do what is expected from others brings motivation into life (23). This was something that made the women feel hopeful about the future.

Being part of a group and having friends from the project was described as one of the main factors that increased participation and a sense of happiness. This can be understood by the terms of doing, being, belonging and becoming (1). Doing means when someone is engaging in something that is considered meaningful, and being means that the person is fully involved and present in the activity. Belonging is when someone feels that they are a part of a group and this is important to achieve wellbeing and health (1). It is repeating how being part of a group has an importance for belonging for the women and that their participation encouraged them to grow and become the best version of themselves. This can be explained as becoming (1). These aspects are underlying for the importance of the social context. Having friends from work and forming a working alliance is one factor that increases confidence and also brings a sense of hope (22). This was experienced by the participating women in the Neighbourhood project. To be supported by others and being believed in created a sense of togetherness and hope.

The feeling of being empowered is important for a person's wellbeing and health (11). This is something that the Neighbourhood project has as their main goal with the project; they want to empower vulnerable women, bring faith into their lives and make them a part of their community. Empowering the women is something that The Neighbourhood project has as one of the characteristics features in their discipleship lessons. To regain empowerment through the spiritual beliefs and faith. Through the discipleship of the project, they were delivered new hope for their life because of their belief that God has a better and brighter future plan for these women. “It has helped us to first love Jesus and second the skills, from that knowledge, I can make my own necklace or bracelet for selling and get money” (Interview 4). The spirituality aspect was described as a large part in their turning point in
life. In the Canadian model of occupational therapy (20), it is highlighted how spirituality has an inner core in our everyday activities. This is something the authors have seen being a true aspect for the vulnerable women in Uganda and is an understatement through how the project starts with one year of discipleship to set a stable ground to build from. To regain hope through faith gave them a strength to move on and even to forgive the people who have hurt them in the past. To convey hope in occupational therapy has relevance in future interventions with patients.

Our result related to previous research, has shown that the expression of hope differs. It is probably due to the fact that different research questions have been asked based on different professions, also that the selection and methods have been various. Although, throughout previous research, it turns out that hope has a great importance for participation and for creating prosperity in everyday life. Even according to human rights participation has its relevance for increasing health (24), and therefore it is important to apply the factors needed to influence participation, including hope.

The ability of participating in necessary and meaningful occupations was limited before the women joined the Neighbourhood project and social exclusion was experienced. This can be explained as occupational injustice (1). Being exposed to occupational injustice had negative consequences for the women's health, such as self-contempt and illness as a result of financial struggles. To prevent this, the Participatory Occupational Justice Framework (POJF) (2) can be used for these vulnerable women to raise awareness and demonstrate which factors promote occupational justice and participation in society. By engaging the women in occupation, it is possible to prevent occupational injustice and promote participation and social inclusion (2). The Neighbourhood project is a community initiative that in the long term promotes occupational justice with the aim of empowering vulnerable women (18). Their focus is to increase the possibility for participation in society. The three first steps in the framework of POJF (2) are made by the Neighbourhood project. They engage collaboratively, mediate agreement on a plan and strategize resource funding. The next step in the framework is to support implementation and making evaluation. This study can be described as part of an evaluation to see how the project has affected the possibility to participate in society and maintain occupational justice for the women. By conducting this study and highlighting the key factors in promoting participation for vulnerable women, the authors wish to inspire advocacy for sustainability of the project. This also shows how POJF is a useful framework to use working with vulnerable groups in society. Spreading this study will contribute to raising consciousness of occupational injustice and how it can be prevented because all people have the right to engage in occupations that they considered meaningful (1).

This study has highlighted factors that are considered meaningful for participation in society for vulnerable women. It has also shown how important hope is and how an occupational therapist can inspire others and bring hope into people's lives. Hope can arise from different factors, such as religious beliefs, from the sense of belonging, the ability to maintain an independent life or to be entrusted as a leader. By bringing hope into the person's life, it is possible to encourage and motivate for a change. The authors can see how this can apply for vulnerable groups in general and not only the target group for this study. The question still remains how to initiate hope in occupational therapy praxis to other vulnerable groups in society. This needs to be investigated more.
Conclusion

The aim of this study was to research the experience of change factors for increased participation for vulnerable women in Uganda after participating in the Neighbourhood project. The experiences showed that there are several factors in the light of hope that have helped them increase their participation. This fills a knowledge gap in how to improve the work for increasing participation with vulnerable groups in society. In conclusion, the relevance from this is that occupational therapists have the possibility to initiate hope into their work. Initiating hope helps to create motivation to change the factors that are necessary for engaging participation.

References


