



The Open University



Loughborough
University

The TiKL Newsletter

May 2011

Transitions in Kitchen Living Project

part of the New Dynamics of
Ageing Programme

nda

PROGRAMME

new dynamics of ageing
a cross-council research programme

Fieldwork completed

During February 2011, the TiKL research team completed the fieldwork phase of the research involving 48 older people living in the chosen location of Bristol and Loughborough aged between 61 years and 91 years. The main characteristics of the participants are given below, as you will see they include people living in both 'ordinary' and 'supportive' housing; for those living in mainstream housing these included detached, semi-detached, terraced, flats and bungalows. Two thirds of those who took part are women (30) and 18 are men. Both those living alone and couples were included and in a small number of cases the interviews were conducted with both partners who could offer different views of the kitchen. There are only two people from minority ethnic groups. Issues of health and well-being are diverse: one person is a wheelchair user and eight reporting mobility problems use a stick or frame for support; more than half reported issues relating to their eyesight, while a quarter comment on using hearing aids.

Following the format of earlier pilot work, each participant has been interviewed on two occasions. The first being the oral history interview concerning their kitchen experience at key points across the life course (childhood, leaving home parental home, parenthood, adult living, post-retirement shared living, grandparenthood). At the end of this interview they were invited to take pictures of things they like or dislike about their kitchen using disposable cameras. Not everyone wanted to do this and many were happy for the TiKL team member to take photos following their direction. The second interview focused on everyday life using their current kitchen. During this meeting team members also sketched floor plans of the current kitchen adding measurements, noted domestic equipment and took lighting readings. This has provided a detailed record of diverse kitchen experiences.

Participants housing by age	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+
Detached house	2	5	0	0
Detached bungalow	3	4	1	0
Semi detached house	4	2	2	0
Semi detached bungalow	0	1	1	0
Town house	0	1	0	0
Mid terraced house	3	1	1	0
Terrace	1	1	1	0
Flat (in house/pb)	1	1	4	0
Sheltered housing	0	0	3	1
Extra care/retirement housing	1	0	1	1
TOTAL	15	16	14	2

Analysing the Data

Discussion of how to analyse the data led the team to consider using the NVIVO computer package for analysing qualitative data.

Members of the Loughborough team were already familiar with the package while Sheila and John went on training for NVIVO8. However, on reflection the team have decided that the complexity of the data requires the development of systems that enable team members to share the findings, give papers at a range of meetings, and begin to develop a range of publications. This has led the team to establish coding systems and sharing procedures between them. There is an intention that the methodological procedures will form an important publication from the project.

Data concerning the contemporary kitchen comes from a semi-structured interview and this has been relatively easy to quantify and record on a spreadsheet also containing any open-ended comments. This material has been essential to the development of draft guidance concerning how people can use the current kitchen (see below).

The oral history data has proved more complex for analysis.

“Well it was used as a living kitchen. We sat at the table and we ate, and during the war like most of the time that was the only room used because the fuel was rationed and mostly your fire in the kitchen and other fire, like the front room or dining room, was only lit on the weekend”. (L, female, aged 77 years, childhood and teenage memories, 1940s and 50s (DT3))

The TiKL team chose to approach this material by each team member looking at the interviews for a small group of 4-6 participants and then coming together for a group discussion of findings.

Obviously given the age range, the earliest date of birth was in 1919 whilst the latest was 1949, and both generational differences and variation in housing mobility has meant that oral histories vary widely. Yet, despite these differences, the researchers noted common themes defined as:

- Space (building)
- Domestic equipment
- Services (water,coal,gas,electricity,oil)
- Tasks
- Storage
- Meanings/emotions
- Social Etiquette
- Changes

and these have been used to identify passages in the interviews that may be used in publications. The researchers are also aware of information concerning the development of material culture across time, and to outline a parallel timeline for domestic appliances, Sheila Peace has been to the Science Museum in South Kensington, London to develop a timeline of Kitchen Equipment from the ‘meaning of home’ display.

“ I had to get rid of things. Well a lot of things were too high for me to get. You see this is what is happening here. I can’t get to the top shelves up there and really all the tings I use a lot are all here and there..... It is an effort to get to them. So you would really say lower cupboards would be better.... I can actually take the saucepan with the colander, I haven’t had to move my feet, you know, it is so easy and you can put it back again. Now I am older I would find that a bit of a bother to be walking with a saucepan and the colander across here to do it. It is so convenient for me but a lot of people don’t think it is a good idea to have a small kitchen.” (L, female,83years, detached bungalow)

How to disseminate the findings?

The TiKL team have also been considering how to disseminate their findings which will provide some important case studies of not only the impact of life history on present situation but also of how people are coping with their needs in the current kitchen. To disseminate the material the team have begun to discuss the findings at a range of **meetings** including:

* Sheila talks to the Women's Design Service about the main study at an event organised by student Rachel Scicluna, April 2011

* Annual Conference of the British Society of Gerontology, University of Plymouth, July 5–7th 2011, paper at Symposium on 'Environments for Living' that will include the TiKL project alongside research on bathrooms and inclusive design

* INCLUDE 2011 organised by the Helen Hamlyn Centre at the Royal College of Art, London (18-20th April 2011)

* 2nd International Visual Research Methods Conference, IVM2 *Kitchen Living*, The Open University, September 2011

* Older people's experience of their kitchens: dishes and wishes, presented at the Ergonomics and Human Factors conference, 12-14th April 2011

HCI International 2011, 14th International Conference on Human-Computer Interaction, Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek, Florida, USA (9-14th July 2011)

This has led to the on-going development of articles that will be considered for a range of journals: Journal of Human Ergonomics; Oral History; Journal of Material Culture; Ageing and Society; International Journal of Social Research Methods; Qualitative Research Methods

Following the idea voiced at the last Advisory Group Meeting, the team would like to bring a number of these articles together as a text that addresses the needs of a range of professionals – OTs, Architects, Kitchen Designers, Older People and their families etc. and this has already begun by the drafting of guidance from the study.

Postgraduate Work

Rachel Scicluna continues to be busy doing fieldwork for her PhD thesis. As you know Rachel is working with older lesbians in London taking an anthropological view on how these older women may use the kitchen in similar or different ways from those in the main study. The fieldwork is going well with both individual interviews and focus groups. We shall hear more about this at the June meeting.



Taking the Study Forwards

The Techno Kitchen

While thinking through a paper for the next International Human Computer meeting, Martin Maguire from Loughborough design School decided to consider how ambient assistance and applied electronic technology may add to the future use of the kitchen. He decided to go back to a small group of our participants and their colleagues to test some ideas, and 21 people aged 50-85 years (average age 71 years) were asked about a range of possible technological enhancements that might support them in the kitchen. This has been called 'The Intelligent Kitchen' survey.

People were asked to say whether they would want this facility in your own kitchen and twelve questions were posed including issues such as: 'the kitchen will shut off some electrical equipment for safety for example your kettle, toaster, iron or over, if it is left on for a long time or if it is detected that you have left the house' or 'a task light comes on automatically to help when you start to work in a dark corner'.

These two questions were thought to be helpful by a majority whereas issues such as 'using a special touch screen with simple controls, you make a shopping list which is delivered by the supermarket within a certain time period that you choose' was not so popular with this group.

Having looked at this the TiKL team decided that it would be useful to consult all the participants from the project. This survey has gone ahead and hopefully we shall have a larger data set to add to our material



Helping People Make Living in the Kitchen Easier

At our last Advisory Group Meeting, Caroline Jacobs from RICABILITY told us about the Kitchen Guidance that they had developed with B & Q that was published in 1999. In the New Year, Carol contacted us with a proposal for developing a new guide that she felt would benefit from being able to use material and case studies from the 'Transitions in Kitchen Living' project. She wondered also if there might be a way of funding such a venture through the Research Councils.

This led the research team to make contact with the New Dynamics of Ageing during February/ March 2011 to find out more about funding for Knowledge Exchange. Later we learned more about 'follow-on-funding' at an NDA meeting in March. Indeed a call has gone out to project teams who can apply for funding in the last 6 months of their research for resource to disseminate the outputs of their work in partnership with businesses, policymakers, voluntary bodies. The deadline is June 14th and the TiKL team are busy putting together ideas as they are encouraged to come up with a range of ideas for outputs that form part of one proposal.

Influencing the Designers

The TiKI team want to build on their own guidance. Indeed the team had always planned to write their own guide based of the research, it is one of our objectives in the research proposal. Martin has taken a lead on this by doing a first draft of the guide which is now being added to by other members. It is already a very comprehensive document already having 50 pages covering a wide range of topics from: Layout and Space to Food preparation, cooking and eating to Lighting and contrast, Planning a new kitchen, Downsizing to move and Low and hi-tech solutions to kitchen problems building on the Techno ideas given above.

Sheila has been back to talk with Caroline about potential ideas for dissemination of guidance through RICABILITY of benefit to both parties. Also during this period, Sheila has been contacted by the creative designer, Milka Vest at Howden Kitchen Joinery in the north east. A meeting was held in Loughborough to talk through ideas with Milka Vjestica and at the time the team considered putting in a proposal to the Technology Strategy Board (TSB) call 'Independence Matters'. Howden's interest lies with informing 'Computer Assisted Designers' about the needs of older people in the kitchen. They work with people who purchase kitchens not necessarily as individuals but as local authorities or other providers of housing for older people. Unfortunately, the TSB call had to be put in by the business partner and there was a third party directing the computer assisted design who could not be brought in quickly enough for this call. This is still an enthusiastic link for the team developing the new call.

On a totally different tack for the output of the study, Sheila has also been contacted by the curator of the domestic appliances collection at the Science Museum and will be getting back in touch with her to see if there is any particular way in which the material could be used.

Finally, the Department of Design at The Open University is just starting to put together a course team for a new third level course 'Design for Society' which will come into production in the Autumn. The course Chair Mathew Cooke has shown particular interest in the TiKL and Sheila has talked to the team. They would like to see whether data from the research would have value as case study material for student projects. OU courses have an eight year life in presentation and so this could be a really useful teaching tool.

New Dynamics of Ageing Programme

During the last 6 months the NDA programme has also been grouping the projects so that they can begin to disseminate their work collectively. The 'Transitions in Kitchen Living' project has now found itself in two groups.

First, the **Arts and Humanities Group** which has been run by Alan Blackwell, Reader in Interdisciplinary Design, at the University of Cambridge Computer Laboratory. Alan has been running a weekly blog for this group. However, Professor Alan Walker, Director of the NDA Programme has also been organising workshops run by members of this group and on June 7th there will be a meeting in London.

Some of the TiKL team will be attending this meeting and will be taking leaflets about the project; they will not be talking about the study and having offered to do an exhibition now find there is not the facility at the meeting room to do this unfortunately.

Technology Group

A talk will have to be given for the new Technology Group which has also been set up and where TiKL may find a different audience.

We will keep you informed.