

Older people's neighborhood groups in the Strength in Old Age Programme

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OBJECTIVES

The Strength in Old Age Programme aims to launch guided strength and balance exercise and outdoor activities for independently living older adults with de-

creased functional capacity. Good health exercise practices are created in 38 municipalities (2010-2015) in intersectoral cooperation.

One of the main challenges is that going to gyms is often a problem for older people with decreased functional capacity. They need places to exercise near home.

METHODS

The problem was solved with intersectoral cooperation and with the help of the Age Institute's mentoring.

Mentoring included guidance, training programmes and tools for development.

RESULTS

Two neighborhood practices were created.



RESIDENT EXERCISE GROUPS

A physiotherapist and sport instructor

- Visit the resident and inform the inhabitants
- Recruit the peers among inhabitants
- Organize free training for peers

The apartment building

- Offers a suitable club room where the group can exercise free of charge

Peers

- Collect a group from their building
- Lead the group alone or with a pair

The groups

- 8-10 participants
- Exercise 1-2 times a week
- Plan the exercises independently

Supporting peers

- Advice and equipment
- Get-togethers and further training regularly by professionals



BUS STOP WALKS

Sport sector

- Coordinates the activity
- Recruits peers from NGOs and gym groups
- Organizes free training for peers
- Advertises and invites people to participate

Outdoor friends

- Guide the groups
- Collect the elderly from their homes

Outdoor groups

- Are free of charge
- Come regularly together in central locations around the city
- Are suitable for all ages and conditions
- Design the routes according to participants needs and hopes – various distances with resting places

Supporting peers

- Possibility to gym training twice a week
- Regular get-togethers

The groups have spread to several neighborhoods.

According to the participants exercising in groups has improved their mood and functional capacity, offered social contacts and increased the sense of community.

CONCLUSIONS

Both practices succeeded because they were created in cooperation with public sector, volunteers and

the elderly. Training volunteers is a good concept to start new neighborhood groups. The older people are

reached and they can participate in groups near home which offer them an easy and safe way to exercise.