

# Strength in Old Age – Effective Model for Healthy Exercise



# Strength in Old Age Programme

- 🕒 Aims: to launch evidence-based counseling, guided strength and balance exercise training, and outdoor activities for independently living older adults (75+) with decreased functional capacity.
- 🕒 Coordination and mentoring by Age Institute
- 🕒 Financing: Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA) and Ministry of Education and Culture and Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

# Three target groups



## 1. 75+ independently living physically inactive persons with

- ☞ early problems of mobility
- ☞ early signs of memory illness
- ☞ mild depression
- ☞ feelings of loneliness

## 2. Physically active 60+ volunteers

- ☞ functionally capable
- ☞ willing to act as exercise friends, peer leaders, communicators...

## 3. Cross-sectorial cooperation groups and coordinators in the municipalities

# Municipalities are chosen on application to the Programme

- 🏠 for the three-year mentoring in order to implement the best practices in:
  - 🏠 exercise counseling
  - 🏠 strength and balance exercise
  - 🏠 outdoor exercise
- 🏠 committed through intersectoral collaboration without extra funding.
  - 🏠 Municipal sectors: social, health, education, culture, and sport
  - 🏠 each sector appointed one of their regular staff to coordinate and cooperate with the Age Institute mentoring
  - 🏠 NGOs essentially taking part
- 🏠 Key role in the intersectoral collaborative group.
- 🏠 Joint exercise councils of older adults and decision-makers

# Strength in Old Age - municipalities

Chosen to the Program (see map)

- ☞ 38 municipalities 2010-2015
- ☞ 48 municipalities 2016- on-going

Chosen to other forms of activities

Piloting new mentoring model

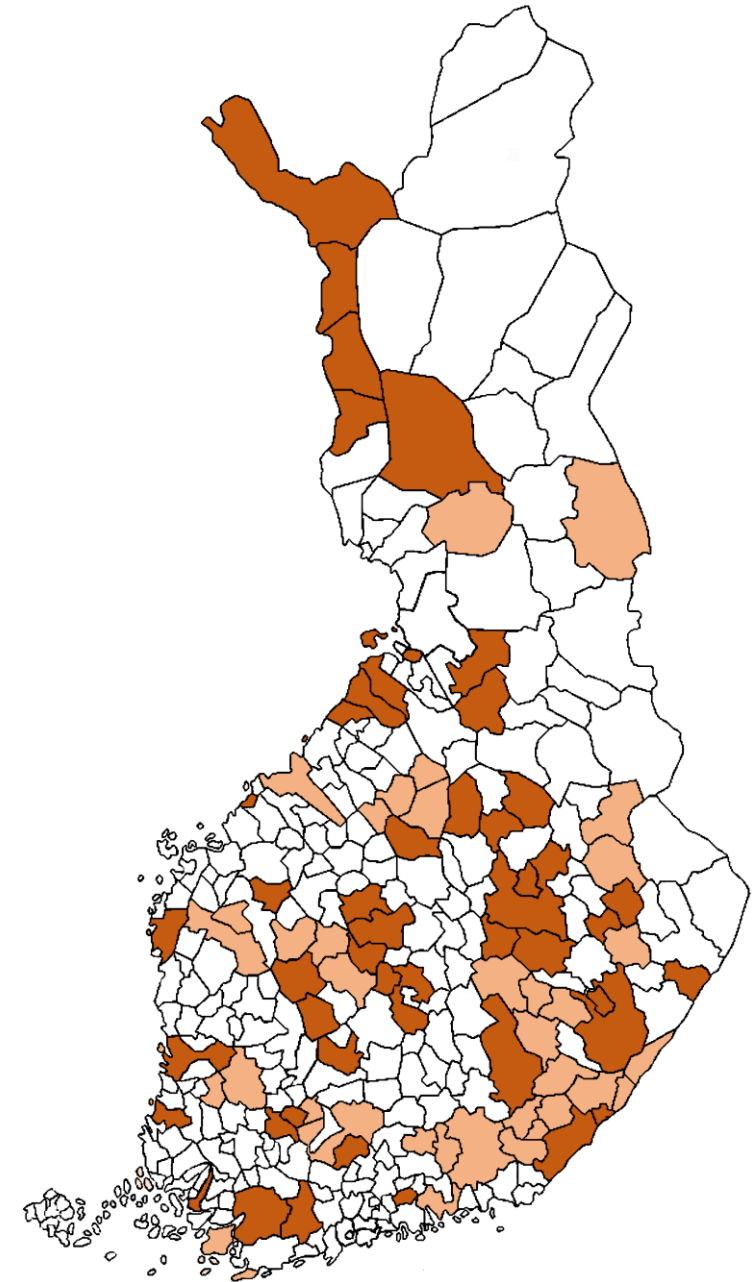
- ☞ 109 municipalities 2017-2019

Regional learning networks (14)

- ☞ 100 municipalities 2019-2020

Motion machine (Ikiliikkuja)

- ☞ Around 70 municipalities 2020



# Implementation of good practices with the help of cross-sectorial cooperation and mentoring

## Reaching the right target group for exercise

1. Successful **exercise counseling** and service guidance
2. Qualified **assessment of mobility**
3. Successful **strength and balance and outdoor exercise**
4. Solutions for **facilities, equipment, transportation, assistance and cooperation**
5. **Training** for group leaders
6. **Inclusion of the elderly** in development

Best practices

Hyviä toimintatapoja ikäihmisten terveysliikuntaan



Implementation



# Joint exercise councils of older adults and decision-makers

- ☞ convey **older people's experiences** to providers of exercise and decision-makers
- ☞ increase older people's inclusion
- ☞ speed up fulfilment of older people's wishes



# Go out with the elderly

## Training of outdoor friends since 2007

### Need for a campaign

Annual campaign promotes outdoor activities in safe company



### Goals

1. Challenge volunteers in NGOs, students, elder care professionals, families and neighbours to go out with older adults.
2. Older adults with decreased functional capacity around Finland have a possibility to go out regularly.

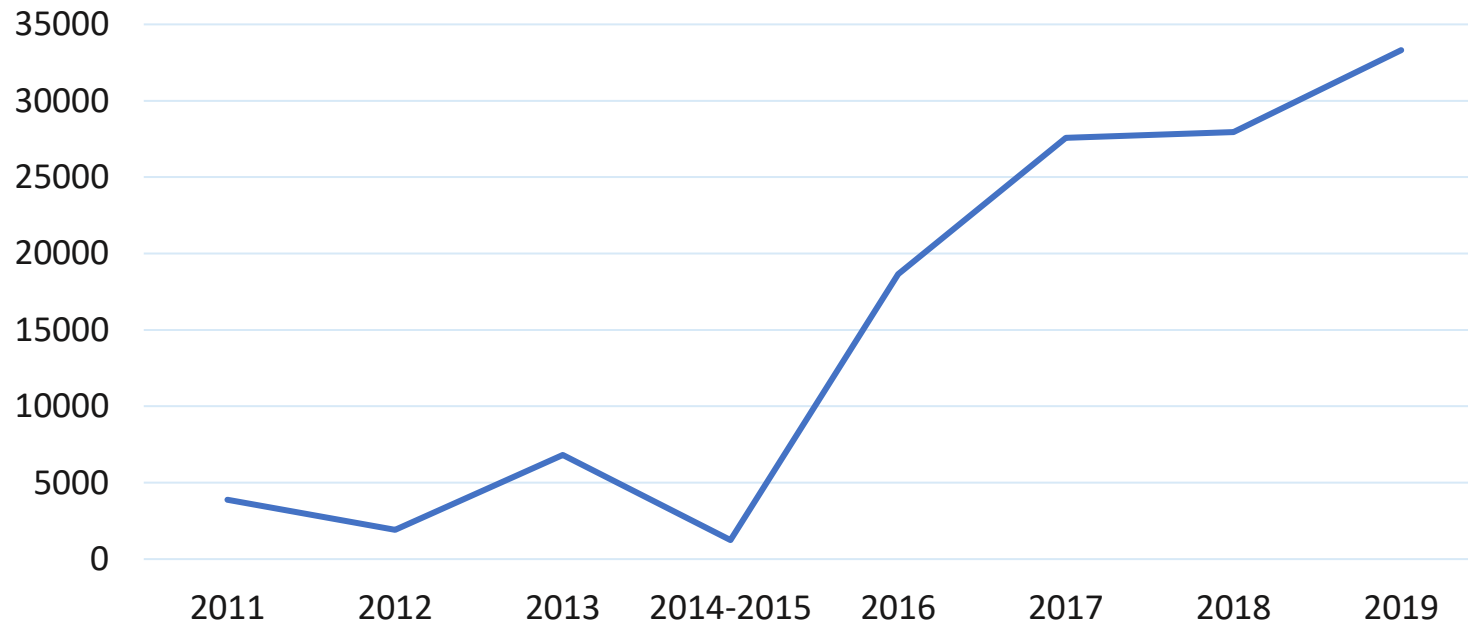




# In 2019 – new records

- ☞ 33 311 recorded outdoor visits
- ☞ 146 municipalities
- ☞ 285 organisations
- ☞ 136 events on the main event day (Oct 9)

Number of outdoor visits during the campaign month

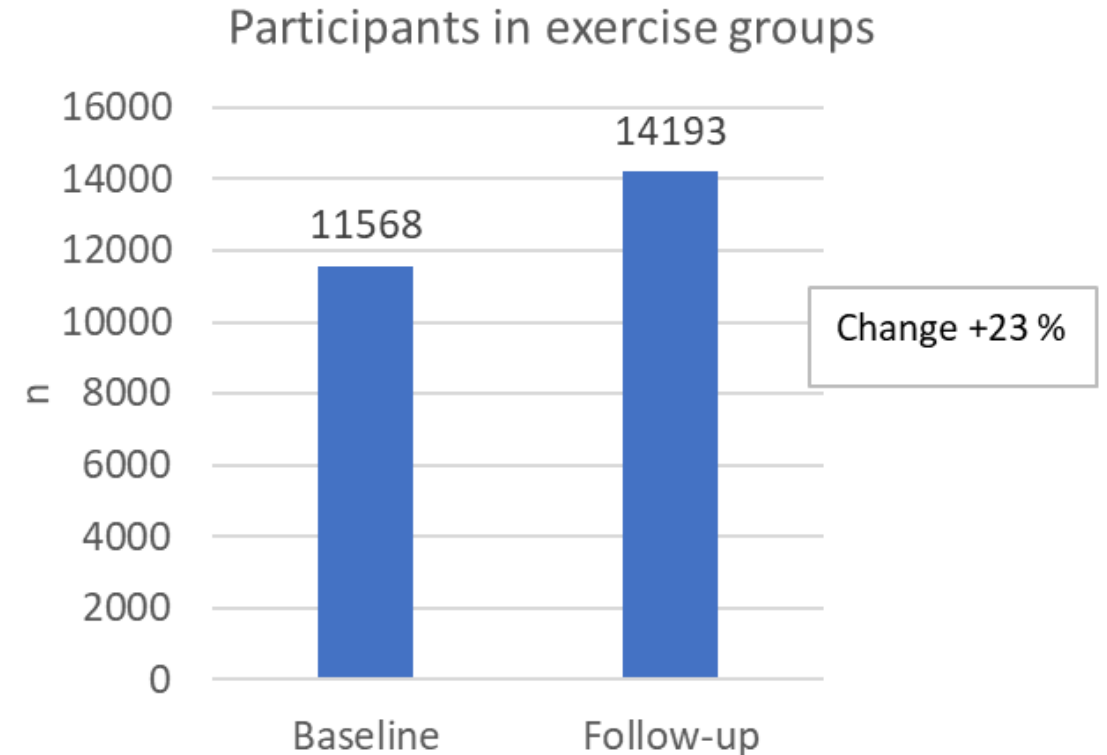
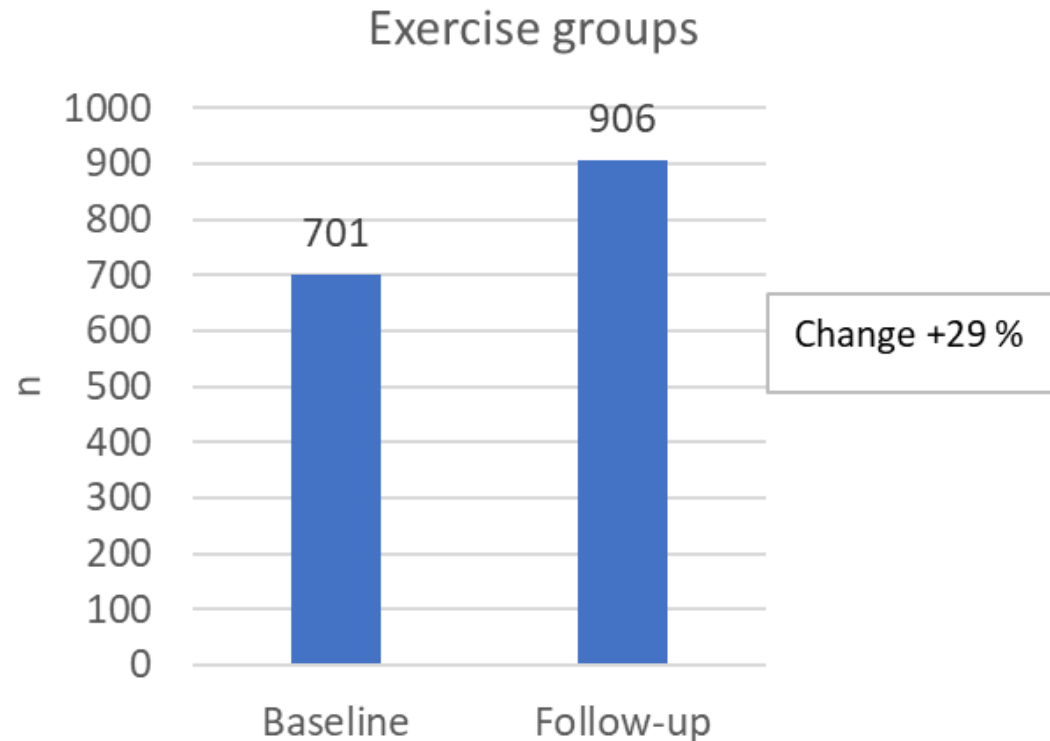


# Age-friendly environment

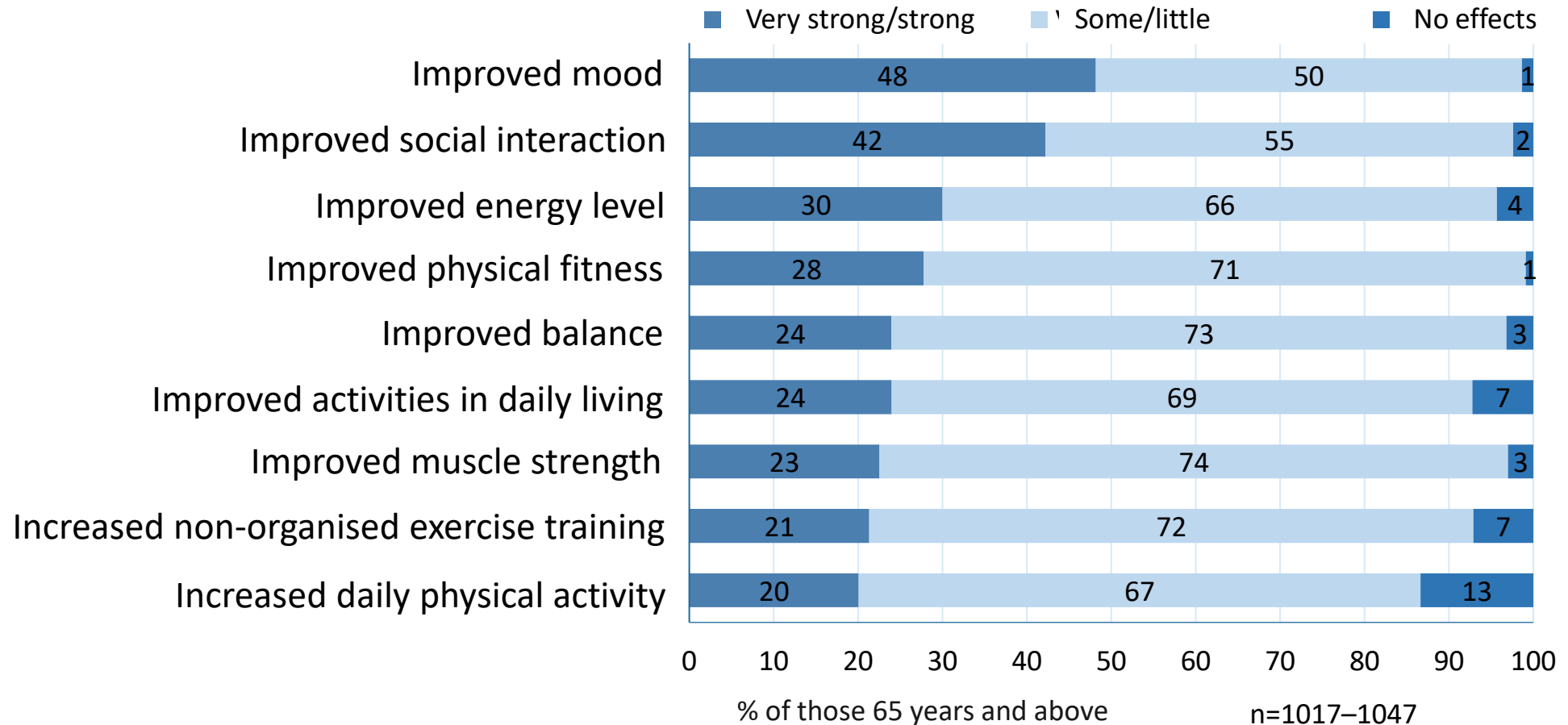
- 🏠 To have access
  - 🏠 Every day
  - 🏠 Easy to move around and orientate directions
  - 🏠 Safety first: surface/terrain, routes, benches, lighting, sanding, etc.
  - 🏠 Transition from indoor to outdoors often difficult
- 🏠 To have assistance (friends, family members/relatives, professionals)
- 🏠 To design
  - 🏠 facilities that meet older persons' needs
  - 🏠 by using co-design with older persons themselves
- 🏠 Promote walking and outdoor activities, as they are most common types of activity among older people in Finland.
- 🏠 Large proportion of older persons would like to exercise but they are home-bound due to barriers in the environment.



# Change in the number of exercise groups and participants from baseline to follow-up (18 municipalities 2016-2019)



# Perceived effects from participating in the exercise group



Ref: Saloranta et al, 2020: Strength in Old Age Participant Survey 2019

# The success factors and challenges of cross-sectorial cooperation

## Success factors

- 🏠 Willingness to cooperate
- 🏠 Common targets
- 🏠 Strong coordination and clear roles
- 🏠 Support from decision-makers
- 🏠 Mutual respect between actors and respect for older people
- 🏠 Mutual familiarity in small municipalities
- 🏠 Good 'flow' in communication
- 🏠 Suitable conditions for action
- 🏠 Perceived benefits of collaboration

## Challenges

- 🏠 Lack of time
- 🏠 High turnover of workers
- 🏠 Negative attitudes
- 🏠 Lack of courage
- 🏠 Bureaucracy
- 🏠 Lack of support from decision-makers
- 🏠 Inadequate resources
- 🏠 Difficulties in getting key persons

Laulainen Sanna ym. 2016:  
Good and active aging by intersectoral collaboration.  
University of Eastern Finland and Age Institute