



Age Institute

National Strength in Old Age Program: 20 years of committed municipalities and intersectoral collaboration

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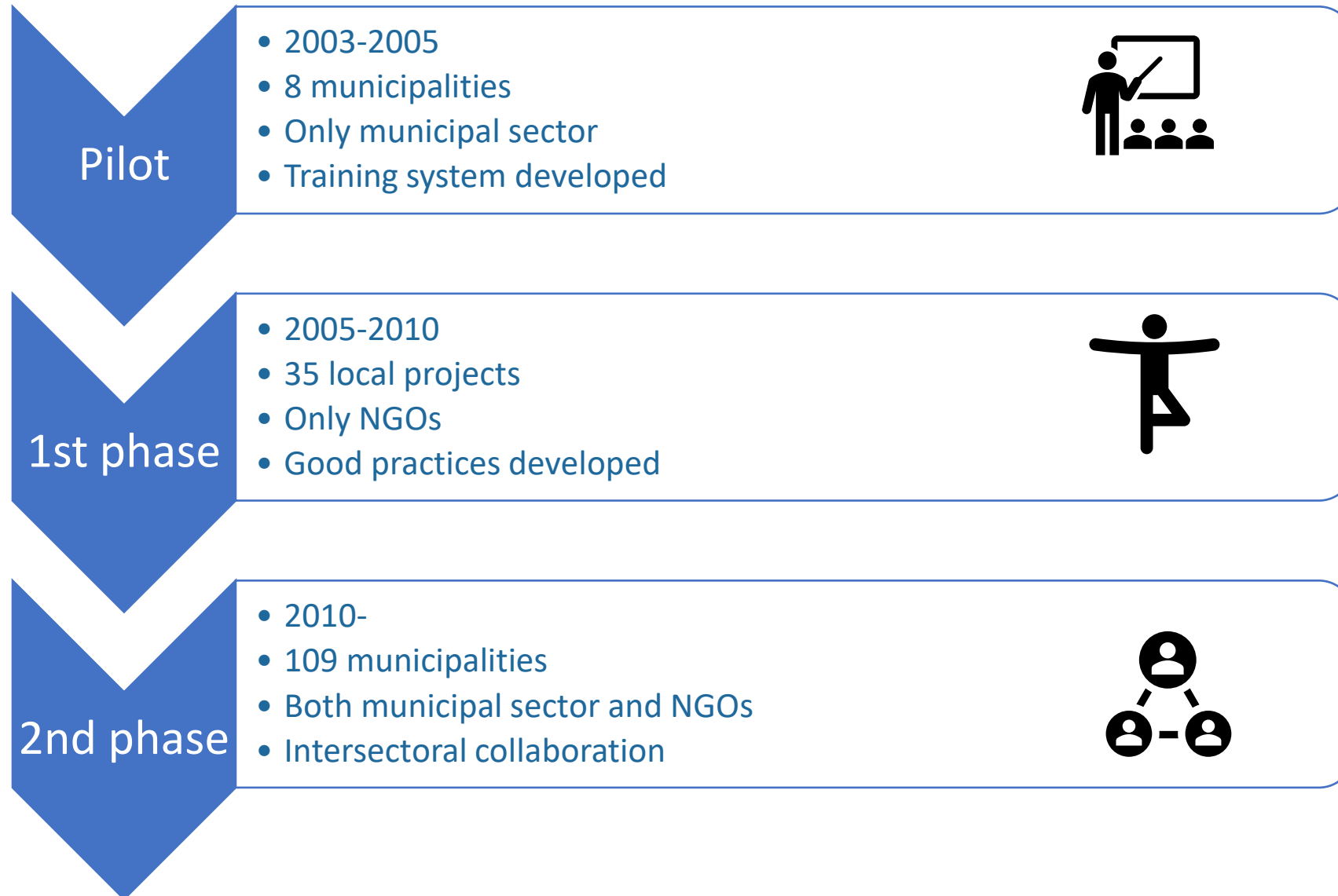


20 years ago

- Number of elderly people was increasing
- More knowledge of older peoples' strength and balance training – also some Finnish studies
- Not enough sport services for older people with decreased functional capacity
- Governmental decision to launch a national health exercise program for older adults in 2002
- Age Institute was chosen to coordinate the program
- Primarily funded by Ministry of Social Affairs and Health



Phases of the Strength in Old Age program



AIM:
To launch health-enhancing exercise for independently living older adults with decreased functional capacity

Intersectoral collaboration in municipalities





Each municipality participate for a three-year-period.

Training of peers, peer groups

Remote exercise

Outdoor activities

Intensive strength and balance exercise

Exercise counseling

AGE INTITUTES MENTORING
Guidance, networks
Training of trainers
Materials
Tools for evaluation

Finding the target group

Intersectoral collaboration

Evaluation



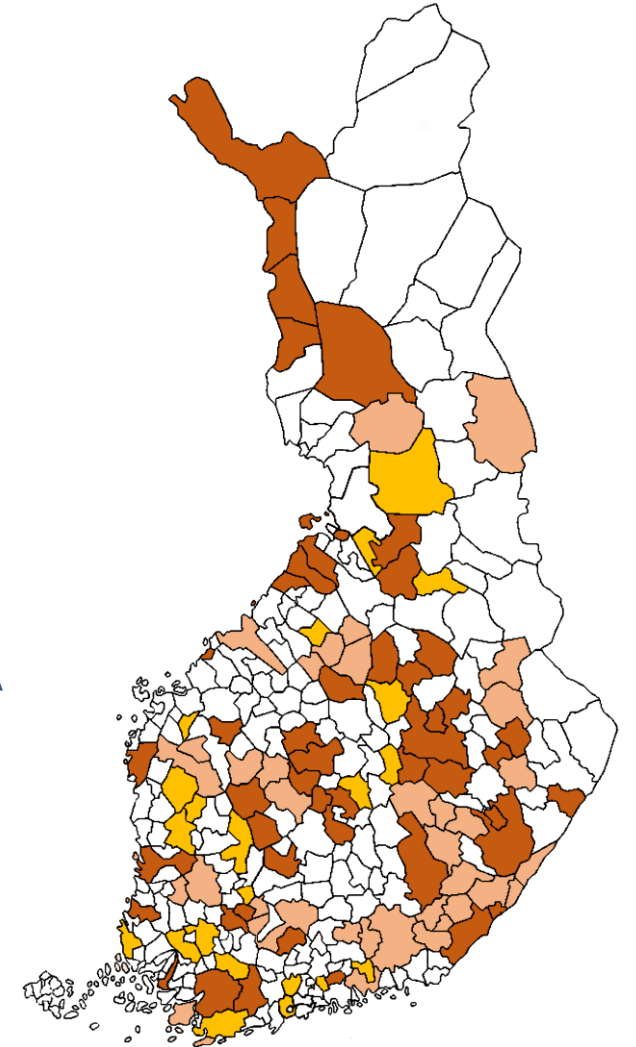
Municipalities benefit from participation

109 municipalities (out of 297)

79% of municipalities perceived receiving high or very high benefits from participation

89% were committed to continue the good practices

91% mentioned Strength in Old Age or older peoples PA in some municipal strategy or financial document



More than 1 000 new groups in municipalities

- In 2023 started 123 new groups in 23 municipalities
- Many of them peer lead groups
- At least 5 000 trained peers and outdoor friends

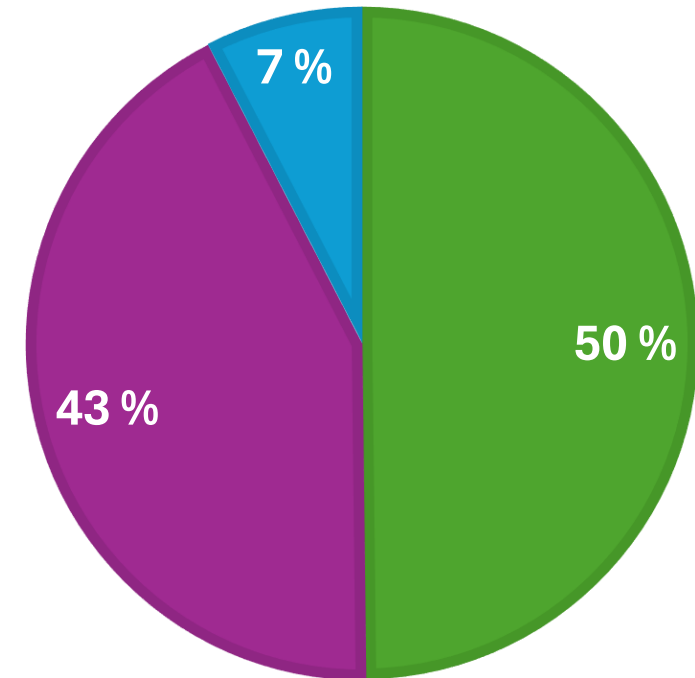


Progressive exercise groups

- 2 times a week
- Exercise period 2-3 months
- Testing at the beginning and at the end of period
- Progressive strength training in a gym
- Also balance exercises
- After the training period participants are guided to other groups

SPPB RESULTS

■ Improved ■ Remained constant ■ Deteriorated



2017-2023
n=1361

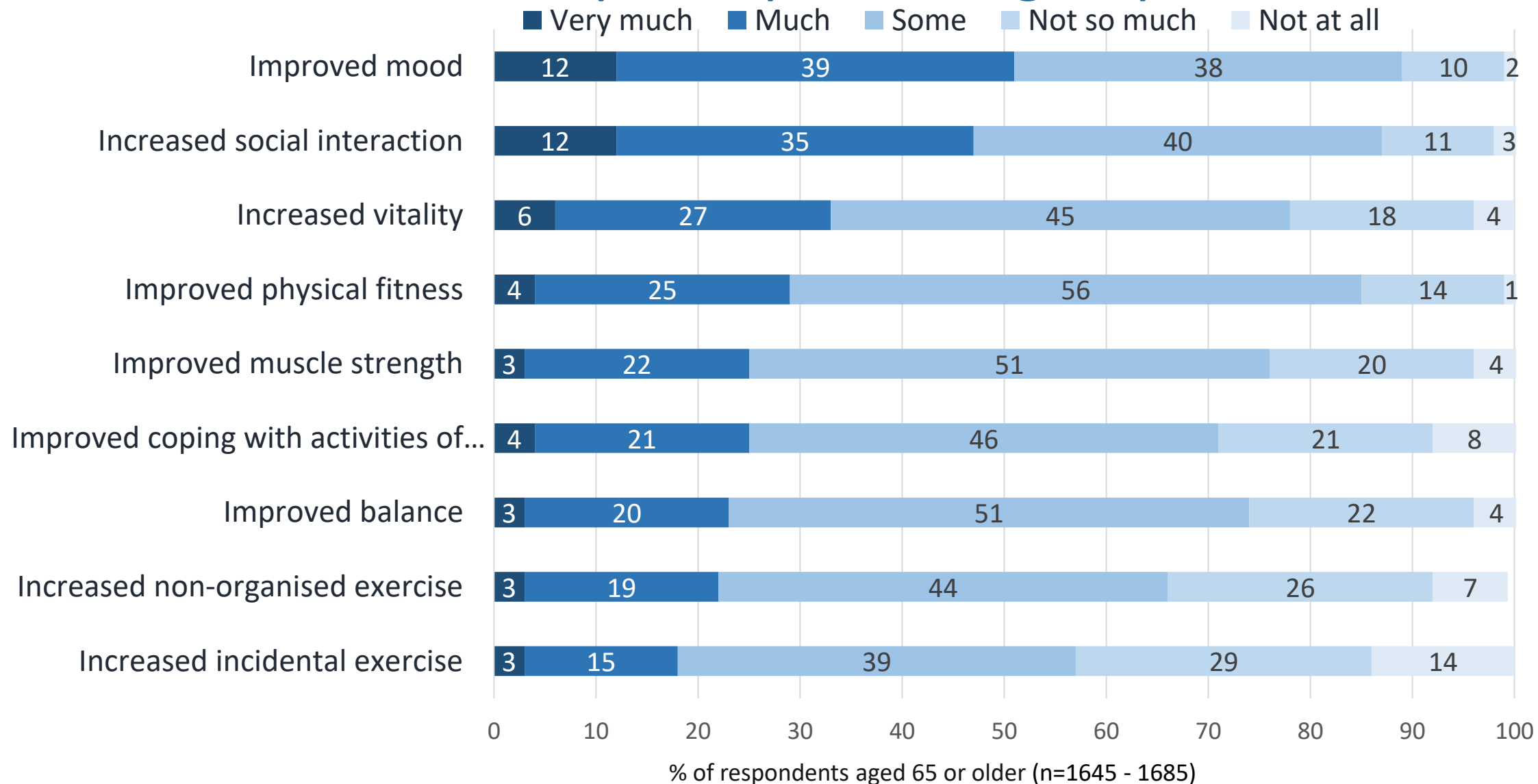
Older people's desires and needs have been heard in meetings and with questionnaires

Some wishes and suggestions

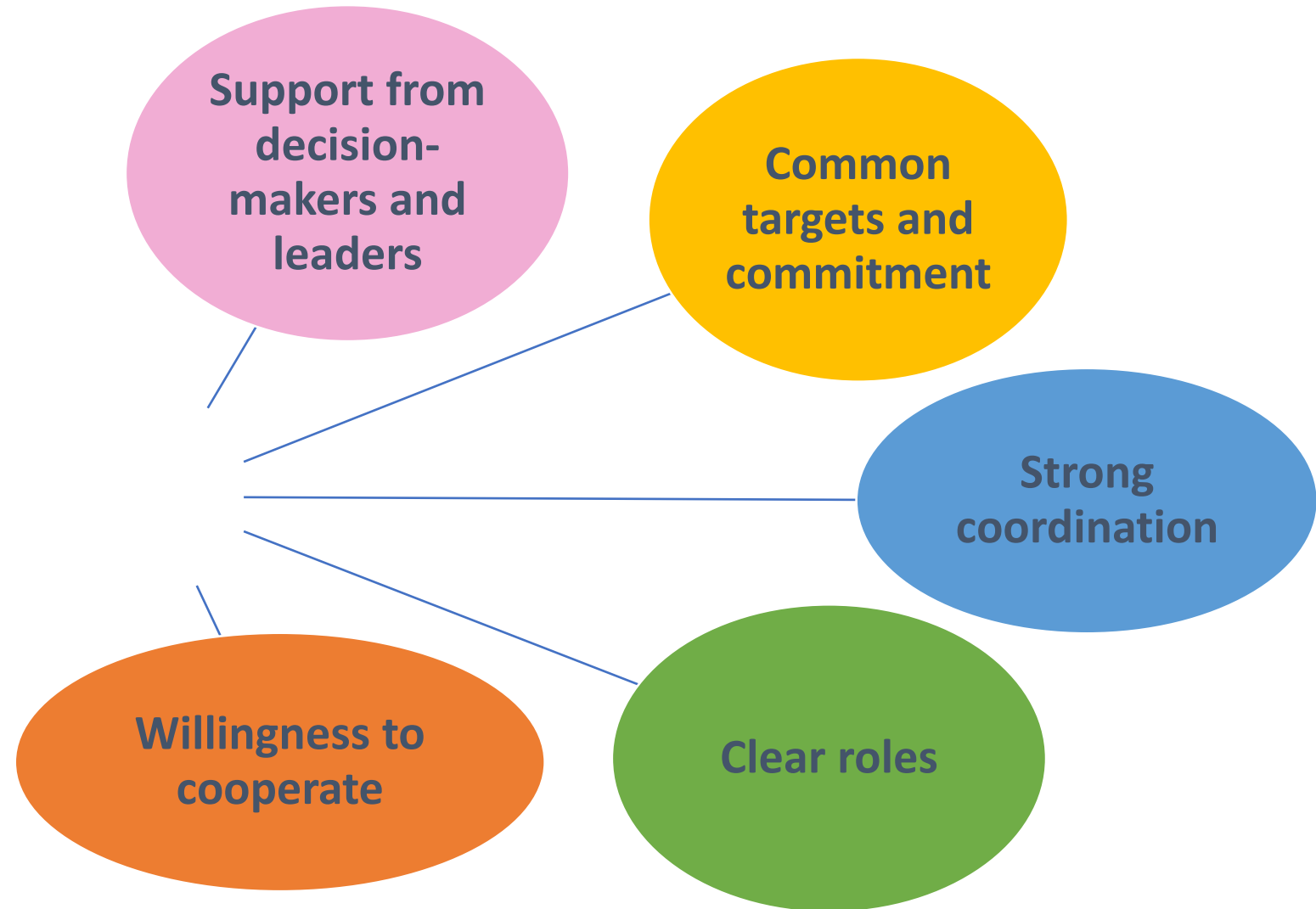
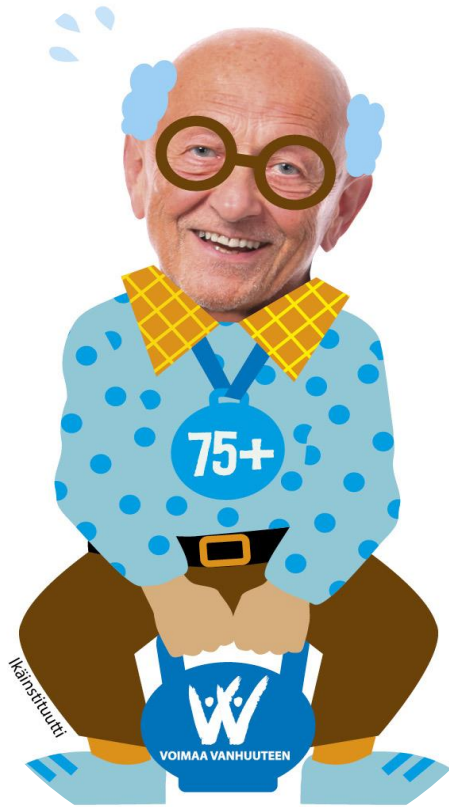
- An exercise group calendar
- Low-threshold exercise counseling
- More senior gym groups
- More benches on the walking routes
- Outdoor companions
- In wintertime, streets should be kept clear of snow and ice



Perceived benefits of participation in group exercise



The success factors of intersectoral collaboration in Strength in Old Age Program



Current phase

- Until 2023, individual municipalities applied to the 3-year-Program.
- Now we focus the dissemination to Wellbeing Services Counties, after the social and health care reform.
- In the first region there is 26 municipalities
- A new region will join the program in 2025



Conclusions

- The Program has shown substantial results in all participating municipalities, where key elements include
 - commitment of the municipalities
 - support from Age Institute
 - participation of older persons.

Everybody wins when seniors exercise in gyms

Thank you for your attention!

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