

Heartful co-operation towards healthier future

Population is aging and diversifying worldwide. The share of the population over 65 years in Finland will increase to 25,6% by the year 2030. Due to NHO report in Northern Savo area especially mental health issues should be taken into consideration. Mental illness rates in Kuopio area are the highest in Finland.

In the strategy of Kuopio the aim is to be the capital of good life by the year 2030. The Kuopio community college implements the strategy by various means, e.g. by offering possibilities to enhance participation and prevent isolation of the citizens. Good life consists of e.g. vitality, participation and meaningfulness. The focus in different stages of life varies and therefore services of the society should be adapted to various needs. This demands intersectional co-operation.

In Kuopio an intersectional network of local authorities and organizations working with senior citizens has been created. It organizes encounters in order to enhance agefriendliness and versatile co-operation. The network operates both locally and nationally and organizes e.g. events and education to promote healthy ageing. Participational methods are used to promote mental health by creating possibilities to get senior citizens' voices heard. By this kind of service design they can take an active role in making their life more meaningful. Senior citizens are assets for the society and we want to create future services together with them. Being heard and being able to participate increases mental health and wellbeing.

The network has proved to be effective, cost-efficient and empowering for the participating organisations. According to the feedback collected in the events the network has played a part in improving mental health and good ageing of the senior citizens in Kuopio region. The services have become more familiar to the target group and information has been successfully exchanged between the participants. The network has a strong state of mind for working together towards better environment for healthy ageing.

In conclusion this kind of approach has proven to be positive and meaningful way to promote mental wellbeing. Still, reaching more marginalized people remains a challenge.