

FINLAND

Local development

Location
Sodankylä

Programming period
2014 – 2020

Priority
P6 – Social inclusion & local development

Measure
M07 – Basic services & village renewal

Funding (EUR)
Total budget 330 000
EAFRD 138 600
National/Regional 158 400
Other 33 000

Project duration
2019 – 2021

Project promoter
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Promoting family care services for the elderly in sparsely populated regions in Lapland and Koillismaa.

Summary

Lapland and Koillismaa in the Arctic are very sparsely populated regions where the distances between villages and municipal centres are long and cold weather conditions create their own challenges to mobility between locations.

There are many elderly people living in the countryside villages of these areas and this is why different types of home care services will be needed in future.

This project trains new carers who do not necessarily have prior education in the field and supports them to establish family care homes. These family carers provide the elderly with home-like, human care instead of institutional care. The project cooperates closely with municipalities preparing family care operational guidelines for them and support when they launch family care in their region.



Results

During the project, five new elderly care homes have been created and two are opening soon. In addition, five family care homes were being planned.

Three municipalities have had new family care operational guidelines and seven municipalities have updated their old guidelines.

So far, the project has organised 45 information events for different target groups, of which eight were held remotely. These events have involved a total of about 600 participants.

The project has carried out 25 real estate assessment visits, where the suitability of the properties for elderly family care has been assessed.

Family caretakers have been provided with support in planning and establishing a new family home. This is evidenced by the fact that so many new family homes have been set up and several are being planned around Lapland and Koillismaa.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The operational model of the project is easily transferable to other regions in Finland and elsewhere in Europe. There are many elderly people around the world having to go into institutional care, when family care would be a much more humane alternative. There are also unemployed people, or those who have employment difficulties, who could become employed as family caretakers, as well as healthcare professionals who might be interested in a new manner of doing their valuable work among the elderly.
- ❑ These projects aim to create a more socially inclusive future. The project has promoted the rights of elderly people to receive human, caring and high-quality treatment in home-like conditions.

Context

Lapland and Koillismaa in the Arctic are very sparsely populated regions where distances between villages and municipal centres are long and cold weather conditions create their own challenges to mobility between locations.

There are increasing numbers of elderly people living in the countryside villages of these areas and a growing demand for more diversified forms of home care services. The elderly are frequently faced with no alternative but to spend the rest of their lives in institutional care: a sector that is struggling with a lack of resources, such as care workers, and this also places a burden on municipal budgets.

In the past, younger generations took care of the elderly and several generations could live together under the same roof. Now, with the help of family care, society is partly returning to this former era; where the elderly are taken care of in a safe, home-like environment without them having to move far from their community and loved ones to live in a care institution.

The elderly deserve more human care, which can be provided in home-like, family care homes. Family care homes are private homes where the elderly can do everyday activities and maintain their functional capacity with each other and their carers in a safe environment. Family care homes provide joyful activities and experiences, much-needed company, and a dignified life for the elderly and their carers. They are a more humane alternative to institutional care, and there is less expense and bureaucracy involved for the municipalities.

Elderly home care has been promoted in Lapland and Koillismaa in several projects financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). Five new family homes have been established in Lapland, two more are opening in the near future and there are several family care homes in the planning stages. The project is proving itself to be a new type of social and health care and a good example of care related entrepreneurship. Giving dignity to people in old age, it has been received positively by the northern media, that has reported on the family care homes' activities and results.

Objectives

The project aims to establish family home care for the elderly as a functional model in Lapland and Koillismaa. The project supports municipalities who adopt this model

by preparing guidelines on family home care, organising different types of information events on family care and organising training for new family caretakers.

The project creates the basis for a new type of local social and health care, as well as a model of diversified entrepreneurship, helping to employ local people in the sparsely populated countryside.

Activities

The project informs the wider public about elderly family care homes through newspaper articles, social media and information events. The aim is to spread knowledge about family care for prospective customers and their loved ones, potential family care entrepreneurs and employees, as well as municipal decision-makers. If needed, visits or online presentations are organised with other family care homes already operating. The project also conducts questionnaires, which review the possibilities of elderly family homes and the interest of other rural actors towards family care.

The project organises training for elderly family care in cooperation with the municipalities, the continuity of training is also being planned. Municipalities are supported in the launch of family care homes and in preparing and developing operational guidelines.

People interested in launching family care schemes are also supported in cooperation with municipalities. Those beginning work as elderly family carers are provided with a regional guide. If needed, the project is involved in creating business plans for developing profitable social and health care entrepreneurship.

Existing family care homes are professionally supported and those who are interested in becoming social and health care entrepreneurs are guided through the process. The project helps review elderly family carers' possibilities to work as diversified entrepreneurs. Interested parties can be supported in the early phase of entrepreneurship and if needed, guided towards suitable counselling service. Family care entrepreneurship can also be combined with other rural entrepreneurship activities thus diversifying rural livelihoods.

The project also models private professional elderly family care home activities together with the Regional State Administrative Agency for Lapland, 'Eastern Finland family care as livelihood' project and municipalities. Private family care can be used by those who pay for their care themselves and as well as by elderly people travelling in Lapland.

The project cooperates with healthcare education providers with the aim to raise awareness and improve perceptions amongst healthcare professionals about the family care operational model.

The project also creates, in cooperation with educational institutions or technology companies in the field, a pilot model that promotes networking between family home entrepreneurs, or remote healthcare services for existing family homes.

The project operates in the entire region of Lapland and Koillismaa. Cooperation partners include all LEADER groups in Lapland and Koillismaa and the funding body, the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment in Lapland. All cooperation partners support the visibility of the project through their own communications channels. The project organises networking days for the entire project region and works together with the municipalities on regional family care operational guidelines. The project also cooperates with other parties developing regional elderly services and social and health care entrepreneurship as well as with the authorities.

Main results

During the project, five new elderly care homes were established and two are opening soon. In addition, five family care homes are being planned, and in three different municipalities, family carers have started working by regularly visiting elderly peoples' homes.

Three municipalities have introduced new family care operational guidelines and seven municipalities have updated their old ones.

So far, the project has organised 45 information events for different target groups, of which eight were held remotely. These events have involved a total of around 600 participants.

The project has conducted 25 real estate assessment visits, where the suitability of the properties for elderly family care has been assessed.

Family carers have been provided with support in planning and establishing a new family home. This is evidenced by the fact that so many new family homes have been set up and that several are being planned around Lapland and Koillismaa.

Key lessons

The operational model of the project is easily transferable to other regions in Finland and elsewhere in Europe. Elderly people around the world have to go into institutional care, when family care would be a much more humane alternative. There are also unemployed people, or those who have difficulties finding jobs, who could work as family carers, along with healthcare professionals who might be interested in doing their valuable work with the elderly in a different way.

The project activities have promoted the aim of achieving a more socially inclusive future. It has promoted the rights of elderly people to receive humane, caring and high-quality treatment in home-like circumstances. The project increased the knowledge related to social and health care entrepreneurship and family care and diversified the entrepreneurial structure in sparsely populated countryside.

Additional sources of information

www.facebook.com/groups/1230591490444638

www.youtube.com/watch?v=bS5ZR9Std7M