



# Older people's sense of participation at NGO activities

**The Active Age Programme** was carried out in 2012–17 in Finland, involving 31 practice development projects by NGOs. The Programme was funded by the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA) and coordinated by The Finnish Association for the Welfare of Older People (VTKL).

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**BACKGROUND:** Creating possibilities for participation in the community and society in general is important for older people's wellbeing. It was also an important objective of the Active Age Programme.

**RESEARCH METHODS:** We studied older people's sense of participation through

- 1 qualitative individual and group interviews with 60–92 year-olds (N=92; examined by discourse and thematic analyses)
- 2 a statistical before-and-after survey with 55–98 year-olds (N=529; analysed by cross tabs and nonparametric tests)



**CONCLUSIONS:** Taking part in NGO activities promotes older people's sense of participation when it fits their own interests and personal characteristics. Measures should be taken to involve also more introverted people.

## RESEARCH RESULTS:

- Many study participants were already actively involved in different communities at the beginning of their project participation. Thus, the projects might have appealed particularly to active and extroverted people.
- In terms of promoting their sense of participation, the participants valued activities in which they were able to do things they considered important, use their lifetime experience, increase meaningful social contacts and interaction, and set pace for their everyday life.