

The Baring Foundation

LOVE IN A COLD CLIMATE

Creative ageing in Finland

By David Cutler, Raisa Karttunen and Jenni Räsänen



Love in a cold climate: creative ageing in Finland

About the title

In 1949 Nancy Mitford's classic comic novel *Love in a Cold Climate* was published and we hope she will forgive us for referring to it for two reasons. Even the most patriotic Finns must admit that their climate isn't tropical. And we believe that creative aging work delivered by skilled artists and carers in Finland – or anywhere in the world – is always an act of love.

About the authors

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About the Baring Foundation

We are an independent foundation which protects and advances human rights and promotes inclusion. We believe in the role of a strong, independent civil society nationally and internationally. More about us can be found in *A history of the Baring Foundation in fifty grants*. One of our three grant making programmes focuses on the arts and creativity. From 2010–2019 this funded creative ageing and some of these grants are ongoing.

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Foreword

BY SIR NICHOLAS SEROTA, CHAIR, ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

The world of creativity and culture has always flourished from the exchange of ideas and learning from others across international borders, leading to collaborations, friendships, and inspiring works of art and literature, performances and exhibitions. It is in the same spirit of understanding and co-operation that the Baring Foundation has published this independent report on the work being done to encourage a culture of creative ageing in communities across Finland. Once more this report demonstrates the power of the arts and culture to allow older people to take control of their own lives and express themselves creatively, and through that help reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation, improve physical and mental wellbeing, and restore self-confidence.

This report comes at a time when many, whatever their age, have turned to creativity and culture to help maintain their wellbeing during the pandemic. Whether that is rediscovering, or for the first time exploring, their own creativity through music, art, writing or performance, or using technology to virtually visit the theatre, opera, galleries or museums. At the same time the creative and cultural sector has had to face challenges, including financial ones, as in many countries public health measures meant cancellations or closures. In England, and the rest of the UK, the sector's survival has relied on unprecedented investment by the Government through the Culture Recovery Fund, allowing creativity and culture to continue to bring inspiration and joy into the lives of millions.

Recognising the contribution that creativity and culture can make to our wellbeing is familiar territory to the Arts Council. Celebrating Age, one of the programmes we have worked on with the Baring Foundation, has empowered older people as creators, artists, and curators. Around 64,000 older people have taken part in more than thirty projects since the inception of Celebrating Age. More than two hundred organisations have been involved, including the creation of new partnerships beyond the traditional realm of the arts with health and social care providers. Our ten-year strategy Let's Create reaffirms our commitment to use art, creativity, and culture to improve the health and well-being of communities by building more partnerships of this kind, while our recently published Delivery Plan outlines how we intend to put the strategy into action in the years up to 2024.

Of course, each country has a unique political heritage and context and therefore different views on how to best implement projects of this kind in their own nations. The learning and best practice in using creative and cultural experiences to help older people in Finland which are described in this report will feed into the debate. It will no doubt be adapted, reshaped, and reused by practitioners in other countries in much the same way as artists and creatives have done for generations by looking for inspiration beyond the borders of their home countries.

Summary

This report is a collaboration between two Finnish authors and one British one, all of us concerned with creative ageing and who have collaborated together for a number of years. The immediate spark was a highly successful Finnish-led international creative ageing conference in January 2021 which led to a lot of interest in finding out more about what is happening there.

The report is aimed at practitioners such as artists and carers, as well as policy makers and funders anywhere in the world with an interest in what more can be done to support older people, especially vulnerable older people, to take part in culture and creativity.

It defines terms such as creative ageing and participatory arts and seeks, very briefly, to put the work in Finland in the country's context, especially around demographics and the provision of services for older people.

The heart of this report is a series of 18 examples of good practice. These are deliberately varied. They are organised around four broad themes. The first is **Systems**, which includes a national network of cities and a festival; shared posts in some local authorities combining health and social care and culture; new posts of Cultural Instructors in Senior Centres; the use of video calls and digital technology to access culture in home care; and the integration of cultural needs into care planning documentation.

Neighbourhoods and volunteers underlines the importance of a community-based approach and includes a neighbourhood culture project and, the use of Art and Culture Arts Companions, PiiPoo Accessible Centre for Art and Culture and RockHubs which uses rock music to bring together generations.

Arts organisations include a series of Finnish Orchestras, the Touring Stage of the National Theatre, two dance programmes and a puppetry project. Finally, **other organisations** include the unique Finnish model of Service Centres that combine wide-ranging services for older people and for the unemployed, a hospital for the elderly, as well as a museum and library services.

The report concludes by trying to draw some comparisons between the countries we know best – Finland and the UK. There is much that we have in common. However, developments in the UK on creative ageing have been largely driven by the arts sector: arts organisations themselves and their funders. In Finland the state, in particular local authorities, has had a much more central role which has led to a more systematic approach.

Both countries have a great deal to learn from each other and intend to continue this dialogue.

Introduction

“We listened to jazz, and our heads didn’t fall off!”

Participant, 86

Why we wrote this report and who it is for

The authors have worked together on creative ageing since meeting in 2013. We have taken part in several international exchanges between Finland and the UK (and other countries) and we profoundly believe that the two nations have a huge amount to learn from each other. In January 2021, Jenni and Raisa organised a virtual international conference on creative ageing involving David, with a keynote speech from Sir Nicholas Serota, Chair of the Arts Council England. There was such a positive reaction to the conference and the Finnish good practice case studies that we decided that it would be a good idea to follow up with a short report based on a wider selection of case studies. This report is part of a series of similar publications from the Baring Foundation which has included work in Japan, Germany and The Netherlands.¹

Our experience is that practitioners such as artists find real stimulation from seeing and reading about relevant work in other countries. Rapidly ageing societies are a reality around the world and it is easy to see the commonalities in Tampere, Taipei and Tenby or Helsinki, Hanover and Hartlepool. There is more about this in the Baring Foundation report, *Around the world in 80 creative ageing projects*.² Therefore we hope that this report will attract interest from people in many countries, either as policy makers or practitioners, looking for new ideas in creative ageing. It is the first such publication about work in Finland. (We hope that Finnish readers

will forgive the authors for stating facts about their country which they may see as rather obvious but may be useful for other readers.)

Defining creative ageing and why it is so important

We are using the phrase ‘creative ageing’ in this report to refer to a wide range of activity involving the arts undertaken by people older than 60. Using an age to define ‘older’ is admittedly highly arbitrary. In reality, we all age differently and someone may have almost no cognitive or physical limitations at the age of 80 while someone else may have severe constraints at a much younger age.

The Baring Foundation has mainly funded what is called ‘participatory’ arts or community arts in the UK. This is where a trained artist works with people who have not had their training to ‘co-produce’ works of art.

The case studies here are mainly concerned with older people who are in some sense vulnerable and where assistance, usually from a professional artist or carer, is valuable. Common examples are where people are living in care homes and nursing homes, living with dementia and/or are lonely when living in their own homes in the community. We are defining arts as broadly as possible from hip-hop to opera, from sculpture to drawing cartoons and graffiti art, from standup comedy to puppetry.

It is unlikely that many readers of this report will not support creative ageing already, but it might be worthwhile to make explicit our thinking on the case for creative ageing. Firstly, we see it as a human right, as acknowledged

¹ *Living national treasure: arts and older people in Japan*, David Cutler, 2015; *Dutch old masters – and mistresses: creative ageing in the Netherlands*, David Cutler, 2017; *Creative ageing in Germany: A view from North Rhine-Westphalia*, Harriet Lowe, 2017. All available at www.baringfoundation.org.uk.

² *Around the world in 80 creative ageing projects*, David Cutler, 2019. Available at: baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/around-the-world-in-80-creative-ageing-project.

in the UN Convention on Human Rights that anyone should have the right to access culture and to be creative themselves, regardless of age. However, we are also aware of the 'instrumental' value of creativity. This includes its positive effects on health and wellbeing as described in, for instance, the World Health Organization 2019 report, *What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being?*,³ and the Kings College London/Baring Foundation 2019 report, *Older and Wiser?*⁴ As regards health, there are an increasing number of studies of the benefits, for instance, of the use of dance with people with Parkinson's Disease. Perhaps the strongest evidence produced has been regarding the use of singing and music with people living with dementia.

Finland in context

Finland's population in numbers:

- **5.54 million** people (**657,000** in Helsinki)
- **1.28 million** people over 60
- **312,406** people over 80
- **44,111** people over 75, in care/nursing homes
- **56,357** people over 75, receiving home care support
- **190,000** people living with dementia

The one thing that many foreigners know about Finland is that it is repeatedly cited as the happiest nation in the world. It may or may not be related(!), but it is also one of the most rapidly ageing countries in the world. So how an increasingly elderly population can stay happy and healthy is naturally of tremendous importance.

Another much quoted fact about Finland is that it is a country with very low levels of inequality in comparison to most of the world. One aspect of this is that redistribution of wealth and tax rates are relatively high, along with high expectations as to the provision and quality of public services.

In Finland there are a wide range of services for older people, and especially relevant here are day care centres, home care where an older person continues to live in the community,

and care homes or nursing homes. As in the UK, these services are provided locally by a range of agencies, not for profit, commercial as well as run by a local authority. The balance between types of provider has changed over time and remains dynamic. However, the state at both national and local level is very active in providing a framework, in particular around the development of standards and their regulation.

A very short history of creative ageing in Finland

There have always been artists working in old age in all countries, of course. An example in Finland is Helene Schjerfbeck who had her easel and paint brush next to her hospital bed when she died at the age of 83. Her extraordinary self-portraits chart her journey through ageing. The value of creativity and participation in later life has been recognised for some time and for instance can be seen in the development of Service Centres, the first of which began operation in Helsinki in 1965.

However, it is certainly the case that creative ageing policy and provision has really accelerated in Finland since 2010. It is best understood within the context of a determined government policy to unleash the power of creativity to effect health and wellbeing. This comes with the understanding that for this to happen there needs to be interdisciplinary working between the health/social care and culture sectors. This new era was inaugurated by the Arts and Culture for Wellbeing Action Plan 2010-2014 which recognised the need for new infrastructure to make this Plan a reality, especially the creation of Taikusydän, as a coordinating centre. This approach directly led to a similar pattern of working at the local authority level. Several large EU projects contributed to these developments in this decade as well. These often focused on creating job opportunities for artists and training care staff on art, culture and wellbeing, including creative methods in their work. Most recently this approach has been further developed at the local authority level in the Municipal Cultural Activities Act 2019.

³ Daisy Fancourt & Saoirse Finn, *What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review*, 2019. Available at: www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/what-is-the-evidence-on-the-role-of-the-arts-in-improving-health-and-well-being-a-scoping-review-2019.

⁴ *Older and Wiser? Creative Ageing in the UK 2010-2019*, Dr Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt, King's College London, 2019. Available at: baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/older-and-wiser-creative-ageing-in-the-uk-2010-19.

These developments are more fully described in a 2020 article entitled Arts and health from grassroots to national policies; the state of arts and health in Finland.⁵

A note on the case studies

These case studies were selected from over 50 contributions that were kindly offered by Finnish colleagues. Sadly, to make the report manageable, we were forced to only select a smaller number and to curate them to give a wide overview of work in Finland. However, we learnt a lot from all the contributions and very much appreciate everyone's enthusiasm for this project.

“Love is aflame. Spring comes with a smile. The air is like cotton. We Finns like that. The sun shines. The birds sing. Spring is arriving in full spate, and it warms our hearts.”

Tyyne's poem (written in a poetry workshop), (read with heartfelt Spring robustness)

⁵ Liisa Laitinen, Olli Jakonen, Emmi Lahtinen & Liisa-Maria Lilja-Viherlampi (2020). 'From grass-roots activities to national policies – the state of arts and health in Finland', *Arts & Health*, Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17533015.2020.1827275.

CASE STUDIES

Systems



Photo courtesy of Armas Festival/Niklas Sandström.

Shared employees

FACILITATING DIVERSE LONG-TERM COLLABORATION BETWEEN CULTURAL AND OLDER PEOPLE'S CARE SERVICES

Close collaboration between the arts and cultural sector on the one hand and social welfare and health care services on the other has come into close focus in the promotion of the cultural rights, participation and wellbeing of older people in Finland, beginning in the 2010s. A key factor facilitating this trend is the appointment of local government employees shared between cultural services and health and social services.

ABOUT THE MODEL

The idea of a position shared between two divisions in a local government organisation was first floated in Helsinki in 2010. It had become clear through a variety of projects and studies that providing broad-based and sustainable support for the cultural rights and wellbeing of older people would require close collaboration between operators in the arts and cultural sector on the one hand and in social welfare and health care services on the other. There was an evident need for finding common ground, common operating practices and common goals, and development efforts such as these could not be pursued through short-term projects. This led to the creation of the first shared local government position.

Subsequently, similar cross-sectoral appointments have been created in Jyväskylä, Seinäjoki and Rovaniemi. What is important here is that the employees are genuinely shared between cultural services and health and social services. Specifically, both divisions have made a financial commitment and approved the employees' job descriptions and duties. Their financial commitment, in turn, has led the managers of these services to take an interest in the goals and outcomes of the work to improve cultural activities for older people

and in how these activities tie into broader improvements in local government services in general and in services for the elderly.

“Employees are genuinely shared between cultural services and health and social services.”

The duties of these employees vary from one city to another, their job descriptions having been created on the basis of existing services, structures and needs. In Helsinki, the shared employee principally has administrative duties and is in charge of big-picture development projects and strategic measures. In Jyväskylä, Seinäjoki and Rovaniemi, the shared employees are involved in producing and coordinating cultural services – events, workshops, concerts, performances – alongside their administrative duties.

In all of these cities, there are various working groups supporting the shared employees, with representatives both from cultural services and from health and social services. The size of these working groups generally depends on the size of the municipality. Such working groups have also been set up between arts and culture and health and social services in other local authorities, even when there are no actual shared employees, and these groups have likewise been able to establish long-term collaboration and development.

REFLECTIONS

The key premise in this operating model is promoting the cultural rights and wellbeing of older people, the assumption being that arts and culture are an important component in a good and meaningful life for senior citizens. Looking back at more than a decade

of developments, we can see that shared employees have been able to establish permanent joint operations and to promote cross-sectoral collaboration effectively. When successful, these efforts in local government can open up new perspectives and facilitate changes in operating practices in both the arts and cultural sector and the social welfare and health care sector.

That supervisors and managers in social welfare and health care services are involved in and approve of the work of these shared employees has been found to be important. They play a crucial role in successfully deploying new perspectives and practices in services for older people. In many cases, supervisors and managers can serve as a conduit for the shared employee to help staff in health and social services to appreciate the importance of culture in the lives of older people

more broadly. A good example of this is Cultural Profile RAI (Resident Assessment Instrument) (for more on Cultural Profiling, see page 20), which provides professionals in services for the elderly with a more comprehensive view of the cultural needs of a group of older people such as the residents of a care home, allowing the staff to have a broader consideration of those needs in their everyday work. The shared employee may also help introduce new culturally oriented tools and operating models that can be integrated into the basic job duties of the staff.

Through such long-term and diverse collaboration, arts and culture operators have likewise gained a better understanding of the needs and wishes of older people. Producers of cultural services have begun to design new services with particular attention to accessibility and to participation, and the

Photo: Tatu Kantomaa, "Potkuritanssit".



need to achieve this has driven the creation of new structures and the establishment of new partnerships. The coronavirus pandemic led to great leaps in the design and delivery of remote cultural services in particular. The shared employees have been vital contributors to these trends in their respective municipalities.

WHAT NEXT?

Having a shared employee and sharing costs has helped municipal arts/cultural services and health/social services to commit to a long-term effort to promote their shared values and goals. The effects of their efforts at structural improvements are gradually trickling upward into strategy formulation and other long-term local authority programmes.

From the outset, the work of the shared employees focused on improving access to cultural services for the most disadvantaged older people. In the 2010s in particular, this meant residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities, but in recent years the focus has shifted to include older people living at home, particularly those for whom it is difficult or impossible to make use of traditional cultural services.

The long-term efforts have paid off in that general awareness of factors that support the cultural rights and wellbeing of older people – and of those factors that hinder them – has been gradually increasing. Also, it has become possible to create more sustainable and effective practices and structures through cross-sectoral collaboration. One of the future goals is to add to the shared knowledge base which will allow an even stronger case to be made for how important and effective these efforts are, leading to more and better measures.

National ARMAS and AILI networks

PROMOTING ART, CULTURE AND WELLBEING FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Finns believe in the power of networking, and in the field of promotion of art, culture and wellbeing, it has been found to be particularly useful. Active networking is used for instance to share best practices, to distribute information, to collaborate and to learn together. There are two national well-connected networks in Finland that are active in promoting art, culture and wellbeing for older people: AILI and ARMAS.

ABOUT THE MODEL

AILI

Systematic development of the cultural rights and wellbeing of older people has been going on in Finland since the 2010s. Local authorities have played a key role in this trend, addressing sustainable development and the structural changes required. The idea of an intermunicipal network was conceived in the early 2010s, as an understanding emerged that promoting cultural rights and wellbeing would require a new national forum for discussion, sharing and joint development efforts.

AILI is a national network for arts-based work with older people, comprising experts from 13 local authorities, set up in 2016. What is special about AILI is that every local authority is represented by employees from both cultural services and from social welfare and health care services. The purpose of this is to maintain dialogue and joint development efforts between the two sectors at the national level.

“In AILI, every local authority is represented by employees from both cultural services and social welfare and health care services.”

AILI is an advocate for the cultural rights of older people. Every human being has fundamental rights that include:

- the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community
- the right to improve themselves and their community through arts and culture
- freedom of expression.

These rights are enshrined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the Constitution of Finland.

In order for everyone to enjoy their cultural rights, art and culture must be available, accessible and obstacle-free. It is equally important for older people to be heard in respect of their cultural needs and wishes and for arts and culture offerings to respond to them. The right to art and culture is the right to choose what art and culture one wishes to enjoy, experience and create.

Another major goal for the AILI network is to promote art, culture and wellbeing for older people. What this means in practice is systematically considering the potential and role of art and culture activities in social welfare and health care services for supporting the health, wellbeing and functional capacity of older individuals. The AILI network has created a platform allowing local authorities to take consistent action towards attaining this goal. The AILI network has shared information on how employees in services for the elderly have been provided with training on the wellbeing impacts of art and culture and on what administrative support structures are needed to establish development work on a solid foundation. The AILI network has also played a crucial part in the establishment of job descriptions for employees shared between



Photo courtesy of Armas Festival/Niklas Sandström.

two local government sectors – cultural services on the one hand and social welfare and health care on the other – that to date has been taken up in four municipalities (for more on Shared Employees, see page 8).

The ARMAS Festival

ARMAS is a Finnish nationwide festival celebrating old age, inspired by international models such as the Bealtaine and Luminare festivals in Ireland and Scotland respectively. Cooperation and communication with international partners remains a key feature of the festival's activities.

ARMAS has three missions:

- 1. Senior power:** giving voice to older people
- 2. Tear down walls:** old age as you like it, no restrictions on how to be or what to do
- 3. Joy in the everyday:** a happy and energetic festival.

ARMAS showcases older artists and the themes of old age in art. The ARMAS festival was first held in 2017 and continues to grow.

The ARMAS partner network currently has nearly 100 members: local authorities, arts institutions, individual artists, NGOs and associations working with older people. Most of the local authorities involved in the ALLI network are also active contributors to the ARMAS festival. The festival itself is an umbrella organisation that coordinates the programmes designed by each partner independently into a two-week national cultural festival that takes place annually from 1 to 14 October. ARMAS celebrates its fifth anniversary in 2021.

ARMAS is not inactive outside of the festival itself. For instance, the network has produced an instructional video for older people on how to find digital cultural services online and collaborated with the Ateneum Art Museum to test the digital skills of senior citizens. ARMAS teamed up with the City of Helsinki and the Baring Foundation to produce an international webinar, *To Infinity and Beyond – visions and strategies for our ageing societies*, in January 2021, which attracted participants from 14 countries.

The keynote speaker was Sir Nicholas Serota, Chair of Arts Council England. The webinar also marked the launch of an international cooperation network.

REFLECTIONS

There is a huge need for shared experiences. Both networks have proven to be necessary, and there was an obvious demand for something like them.

The AILI network has helped local authorities share the responsibility of promoting and improving the cultural rights and wellbeing of older people. Although all AILI municipalities have a history of determined efforts in this field, they have typically not had very much in the way of resources. Therefore, the experiences of other municipalities and the potential for joint projects have proved to be important elements of support. Over the years, the AILI network has had a number of joint development projects, one of them involving cultural profiling (for more on this, see page 20). During the coronavirus pandemic, information exchange and expertise sharing has focused on developing digital services for older people.

It says something about the importance of the ARMAS festival that the festival has been self-governing to an astonishing extent from the very first. The festival partners have shown commendable initiative in coming up with event ideas, in fundraising and in mutual collaboration. The duties of the actual festival organisers (the Kaapelitehdas property management company) have mainly been limited to hosting conversations and reminding network members to announce and share events. Kaapelitehdas has therefore been able to focus on organising the events in Helsinki and on keeping up international contacts.

WHAT NEXT?

The AILI network was launched with what is known as 'spearhead funding' from the Finnish Government in 2016. Its specific initial purpose was to help establish art, culture and wellbeing as something to be considered in the practice of social welfare and health care services. The funding continued until 2019, during which time the network had a dedicated coordinator. Since 2019, the network has been running without central coordination, although network participants still meet regularly to share information and best practices. Also, the local authorities involved in the AILI network have various joint projects that help carry the well-established cooperation forward. But above all, the network members hope that it will be possible to secure dedicated funding for the network one day and to develop it into a stronger national operator and development forum. Arts-based care for older people and their cultural rights are gaining some ground in the arts and culture sector, thanks to the persistent efforts of pioneers in the field. One manifestation of this is the increase in funding. The ARMAS festival was awarded a special grant by the City of Helsinki for 2021; this will be used for example to commission a study on the cultural behaviour of older residents of Helsinki. ARMAS is also planning a touring exhibition of works by Erik Bruun, the Grand Old Man of Finnish graphic design, to celebrate his 95th birthday in 2021. An international seminar on the cultural rights of older people and on arts-based care for older people is planned for January 2022.

Cultural Instructors

INSPIRING OLDER PEOPLE TO EMBRACE ART, CULTURE AND CREATIVITY IN HELSINKI

What would the job description look like for a theatre professional, a dance instructor, an arts and culture graduate or a musician hired by social welfare and health care services for older people? The City of Helsinki has done just that, with the recruitment of permanent roles called Cultural Instructors.

The Social Services and Health Care division of the City of Helsinki provides residential services for the elderly. There are 10 senior centres in the city that offer accommodation, day activities, short-term care, evaluation, rehabilitation and service centre functions to support living at home, all under one roof. Helsinki's services for the elderly aim to provide a broad range of services to support wellbeing and functional capacity which enable older people to live a feasible everyday life of their choosing. Multi-professional teams are of vital importance in this. These teams include care personnel, social advisors, physiotherapists and cultural instructors.

ABOUT THE MODEL

“The core of the job of the Cultural Instructor is to ensure that older people are able to enjoy their cultural rights.”

Cultural Instructors are permanent employees and members of multi-professional teams based at service centres for senior citizens (see also page 50). The position is a relatively new one. As of Spring 2021, there were 12 Cultural Instructors in the City of Helsinki.

The core of the job of the Cultural Instructor is to ensure that older people are able to enjoy their cultural rights. This involves both tangible arts-based work with clients and structural development. Arts-based work involves

introducing art, culture and creativity into work with older people. This presupposes an approach appreciative of culture that governs planning, development and everyday functions in services for the elderly.

The working weeks of Cultural Instructors vary. They include group leadership, organising events, documenting work in the social welfare and health care online system, engaging in social media publicity, participating in meetings of the workplace unit or at the city level, attending training and providing remote cultural services. Job duties may also include liaising with clients' family members, attending care negotiations, organising art exhibitions, networking, their own artistic work, organising volunteer work, booking performers and tending green areas. However, the most important duty of a Cultural Instructor is to be present, engaging with clients – whether residents in a care facility or living at home – in a comprehensive way that is appreciative of their extensive life span.

A considerable number of residents at senior service centres have memory disorders or impairments of vision, hearing, cognitive ability or mobility. Work with these clients requires pedagogical competence and awareness of accessibility. However, even here, clients are not considered as *objects* of care but as *subjects*. Cultural Instructors often employ creative reminiscing methods in their group work. In many cases, Cultural Instructors based at senior service centres also work with older people in the area who live at home. In these instances, the goals and content of the work may differ somewhat, with the emphasis being on preventative action and on cultural activities fostering participation, a sense of community and meaningful experiences.

Cultural Instructors have a broad and diverse understanding of their job. Something as simple as having coffee together with everything laid out nicely is everyday culture at its finest. An excursion to the Ateneum Art Museum, a visit to a group home by a dance artist or a streamed concert from the National Opera can serve as a nourishing cultural experience. Cultural Instructors may also facilitate inter-generational encounters with children and young people in the area, for instance by building an ice castle or at a graffiti workshop, with opportunities for participation and for learning new things.

Cultural Instructors design and devise operating models where cultural content is integrated into the everyday practices of the social welfare and health care services. In practice, this can be achieved, for instance, by organising regular meetings with residents and staff to plan for seasonal or festive events or decorations for the premises.

Cultural Instructors are often ambassadors for creative practices in respect of other employees at the site, encouraging the workplace community to embrace creative methods in their interactions with residents and as an approach that promotes wellbeing at work. Arts and culture networks are an important part of the work of Cultural Instructors, who either already have connections to such networks when taking up their job or know how to network in the sector.

The coronavirus pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital vehicles in cultural activities, and services for the elderly are no exception. A fine example of this is the pilot project that brought inclusive virtual concerts to a senior service centre in Spring 2021, with the Helsinki Philharmonic and the UMO Jazz Helsinki Orchestra participating. The idea was well received by residents and care staff alike, and the aim is to continue the project.

“The job description of the Cultural Instructors is becoming standardised and the importance of the position is being established.”

WHAT NEXT?

Cultural Instructors are expert consultants on cultural matters in their respective workplace communities, introducing and facilitating various levels of and potential for cultural interaction. Their expertise is formed around a core of excellent engagement and interaction skills.

Because Cultural Instructors have qualifications and employment history in the arts, they bring a genuinely new perspective to services for the elderly. As members of multi-professional teams, they are in a position to inject this broader perspective into work with clients and into the workplace community in general. A trip to the gym can include dropping in at an art exhibition on the way, or a resident's favourite song can be played during a morning meeting. Engagement with people is the key.

Cultural Instructors see their work as meaningful. They have seen an improvement in the morale and functional capacity of residents and an increased sense of community as a result of regular arts and culture activities. A book club may help dispel stomach pains for a while, and older people with memory disorders may 'come alive' when they hear music. The networked, open-minded approach of the Cultural Instructors contributes to the potential for clients to control the content of their lives and to be full-fledged members of their respective communities.

The job description of the Cultural Instructor is in constant flux. The work will continue to be developed at the city level, with the Cultural Instructors sharing their best practices with each other. This helps broaden the palette of work methods available for engaging with a variety of older people, whether at residential facilities or living at home. So far, the Cultural Instructors have held workshops for each other, sharing ideas such as how to use creative movements in everyday encounters, or how to use photographs or visual artworks when working with older people. The main thing is to keep up the profile of the multi-disciplinary talents of the Cultural Instructors and their pioneering interactions with older people through the means of art and culture, and to share what they have learned.

Arts-based care for older people is being developed in the City of Helsinki collaboratively by the Culture and Leisure division and the Social Services and Health Care division. A working group meets regularly, and the Cultural Instructors are represented there in order not to lose sight of the practical aspects. Making cultural services genuinely accessible to older people is an important goal. In Helsinki, arts and culture organisations such as theatres, libraries and cultural centres produce large numbers of events and workshops which older people find impossible to attend due to physical, mental and financial barriers. What if workshops or performances were held at senior service centres?

Regional equality is important in services for the elderly. Ideally, every senior service centre in Helsinki should have a Cultural Instructor of its own. This is slowly being achieved as the job description of the Cultural Instructors is becoming standardised and the importance of the position is being established. The expertise of the Cultural Instructors is needed for development efforts, for highlighting the cultural rights of older people, and for a variety of encounters in everyday life. Instead of projects and experiments, we will hopefully one day have permanent structures and regular partnerships. Art and creativity can be found in every one of us, irrespective of age. As one 100-year-old participant in a visual art workshop delightedly put it: "To think that one can still learn something new at my age!"

Video calls

DIGITAL CARE AND CULTURAL SERVICES IN THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME

Finland's population is ageing at the fastest rate in Europe, creating pressures for society at large, not least in services for the elderly. How will we be able to provide services for older people equitably and in a sustainable way in the future? One approach to sustainable development is designing digital solutions and services, a trend that has been prevalent at both the national and the local level.

Some local authorities in Finland have explored digital solutions for safeguarding and improving access to cultural services and the involvement of older people in cultural activities. One of these local authorities is the City of Tampere.

ABOUT THE MODEL

“Remote culture activities aim to provide a window to the outside world, so to speak, in a local and cosy way.”

Many municipalities now use video calls on simple tablets as part of their home care service. These devices are also at the core of designing digital cultural services for older people.

There are already 141 local authorities in Finland using video phones in home care. Clients are given the device as part of the home care service; the carer contacts the client at a prearranged time and directs the client to take their medication, to measure their blood sugar or to perform other planned tasks. The home care practical nurse can monitor the client's condition via video and audio, ensure that they have their meals and support them with rehabilitation and after returning home from care. In addition to these remote sessions, the service includes contacts with family members and participation in programme activities.

In Tampere, video phones have been used since 2018 to also bring cultural services to home care clients. These 'remote culture' activities aim to provide a window to the outside world, so to speak, in a local and cosy way. The concepts of 'art' and 'culture' are considered broadly for the purpose of this service, ranging from everyday culture to individual art experiences.

The remote culture content provided is mainly interactive, with the client having the opportunity to talk to the instructor and to other participants. These cultural group activities give older people living at home a safe way to maintain social contact with other people. The groups are small, so that participating in conversation will be equally agreeable to everyone.

There are discussion groups on current affairs and newspaper headlines, memory exercises with movements and tasks, and quizzes that have proved very popular. In all of the above, participants can also talk freely amongst themselves to catch up.

Discussions can also be held at venues such as a museum collection centre, an art exhibition or outdoors in nature, but in such contexts the potential for distractions and background noise must be considered.

In Tampere, cultural content for the service is produced by the home care video phone team, which includes practical nurses and physiotherapists. The service also includes cultural programmes organised by cultural institutions and guest artists. Special attention is paid to the privacy of clients. The video calls are governed by the same ethical principles as house calls: video access is considered the same as being a guest in the client's home.



Photo courtesy of City of Tampere/ Aliisa Piirla.

The City of Tampere's culture and leisure departments, as well as the city's arts institutions, contribute by shaping their services into a form suitable for video calls. Each organisation is responsible for the production arrangements of its own productions (audio technology, venues, recruitment of performers and costs). On the programme calendar on the video phone, clients can select which events to attend; they can sign up simply by touching the title of the event on the screen. The home care nurses help if necessary. When the event begins, the video phone calls the client, who then joins the event by tapping on the screen.

In addition to interactive events, there are performances that are just for viewing/listening – generally concerts or lectures. There is no discussion during the performance, but there

may be a discussion or Q&A before or after the event. The programme calendar contains video links in addition to live performances. No advance registration is needed for watching videos; clients can select videos to watch at any time. The videos available cover a wide range of content, from sit-down exercises to visits to local sites, musical events and singalong programmes.

REFLECTIONS

Bringing culture into remote care services has required multi-professional cooperation and an understanding of how different the participating parties are in the work they do, what the rules and instructions involved are, and what kind of language they use. Multi-professional workshops have been held

to foster a common culture of conversation and to agree on shared goals. Cultural service professionals have been introduced to the everyday lives of clients, and social welfare and health care professionals have been trained in various aspects of the arts and culture sector, e.g. copyright matters. A great deal of experimentation is required to find content that it is possible to convey through the video phone application.

Questionnaires were circulated among cultural professionals in Tampere working with older people and among older people themselves in order to identify feasible content. Respondents were invited to imagine which cultural activities they would miss if they were suddenly unable to leave their home to attend cultural events and would have to rely on remote services. The questionnaire responses were inputted into the programme design. The most popular remote events were outdoor concerts, museums, nature sites, theatres and cinemas. Many respondents also requested visits to the city's parks, squares and market hall. Current affairs, daily news, the natural environment and the seasons were also suggested as conversation topics.

Exercise, in all kinds of forms, was favoured in the responses, with the majority requesting mobility and stretching exercises and sit-down exercises. "Something where you can participate in real time on camera, so you can feel you're part of a group."

We are constantly collecting client feedback and requests, but this can be challenging with older people who have memory disorders. In these cases the nurses managing the remote cultural event at the client's end will report on their observations of the client during the event.

We have aimed to share our experiences nationally and in a number of development projects across Finland. We have prepared manuals on how to organise remote services and shared experiences on the remote events we have held. Shared development is a continuous process.

WHAT NEXT?

Tampere is growing older. The population of Tampere is older than the average for the six largest cities in Finland. The City of Tampere has the strategic goal of creating an age-friendly society where older people can continue to lead their lives as they see fit and be able to live at home for as long as possible, even with impaired functional capacity. The volume and diversity of services delivered to clients' homes are growing. Home care clients are, generally speaking, in poorer health than before, and they need more assistance. All this is putting more pressure on developing a broader range of services to cater to the needs of a diverse range of clients.

Digital services form part of this trend. Remote services can at their best offer customised services for older people, conserve resources and create a channel for home care clients to have easy access to cultural content and to contributing to the improvement of services.

Cultural profiling in care planning

SUPPORTING COMPREHENSIVE CHANGE IN SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

In recent decades, there has been increasing discussion in Finland about how to ensure that services for the elderly take into account the wishes, needs and habits of older people whether in home care, in assisted living and in nursing homes. This issue has also come up in the AILI Network, which is a national network for arts-based care for older people (see page 11). We know that a client-oriented approach fosters a good life and the realisation of cultural rights in the final years of our lives. At the same time, we also know that art, culture and creativity are not equally accessible to all older people. Arts, culture, and other activities that support creativity are not properly targeted, because care services tend to focus on physical functioning.

We have sought to identify the crucial structures that facilitate a creative everyday life and the realisation of cultural rights for clients in care. We have noted that one crucial structure is documentation and assessment of nursing. They are an essential part of social welfare and health care services: care plans and service plans govern the entire process in services for the elderly and in Finland care plans are required by law. So, we decided to look at the process of documentation from a new angle, with specific reference to creativity, art and culture. Hereafter I refer to this as **Creativity, Art and Cultural Profiling**.

ABOUT THE MODEL

Creativity, Art and Cultural Profiling is basically a way of thinking and a system for integrating the process of documentation and assessment of arts-based work with older people into the overall care documentation process. The care documentation process involves steps such as assessment of the older person, charting their overall situation, planning actions to

take, documenting their implementation and then impact assessments. Creativity, Art and Cultural Profiling involves systematically documenting the following points in the care documentation process:

1. survey of hopes, goals, background and preferences
2. participation in creative, cultural activities
3. observations during the creative activities
4. impact assessment after the activities.

The documented and analysed data is then used in the planning and evaluation of creative work with older people.

Integration of Creativity, Arts and Cultural Profiling into care work requires continuous development. One of the challenges to be addressed is that there are many ways of collecting data and many documentation systems in use in services for the elderly, and the systems differ considerably from one another in terms of content, technical concept and the quality and scope of the data collected. Efforts have, however, been made to establish standardised practices in Finland.

The following are two examples of the Creativity, Arts and Cultural Profiling practices developed in services for the elderly in Finland. These examples are included in the survey phase of documentation process, i.e. they are about collecting data on the person's hopes, goals, background and preferences.

Tree of life

The 'Tree of life' poster is intended as an aid for the older person and their caregivers to get to know each other. The picture with its different elements (e.g. the tree, its apples, birds) prompts a discussion in which the elderly person can tell us about things that

are important to them: dreams, hopes, significant events in their life, preferences and things that they do not like. The purpose of the 'Tree of life' is to gain information to inform the best possible care and service plan for that person. Once these hopes and needs have been visualised, it is easier for the caregivers to understand the client and to plan their care. The poster should be introduced when the person first becomes a client of services for the elderly but can also be filled in later and can be updated, for instance, if there is a major change in the client's functional capacity.

The client can decide for themselves where in their home the 'Tree of life' poster should be placed. It may be displayed so that every caregiver, even temporary ones, have access to the information it contains, or it may be kept in a folder or a desk drawer.

The dreams entered on the poster should not remain just dreams; attempts should be made to realise them. The 'Tree of life' is not just about the past but is also meant to guide the future. Clients have been extremely pleased to have the chance to visualise their hopes and dreams on the poster.

The 'Tree of life' is appended to the client's electronic patient records and will travel with them if they are relocated to another care facility. An image of the poster and its principal contents in text form are entered into the documentation system. The 'Tree of life' concept was created in the city of Tampere in 2015. The city of Tampere is a member of AILI network.

The Creativity, Art and Cultural Profile RAI-LTC

One of the purposes of The AILI Network is to develop Creativity, Art and Cultural Profiling. We acquainted ourselves with the documentation systems which are in use in Finland, and after analysis, we decided to apply the international RAI system. RAI (Resident Assessment Instrument) consists of various sets of questions with which professionals in services for the elderly can assess the functional capacity and service needs of elderly persons.

The assessment data gained through the RAI system is comprehensive and of high quality. The RAI system has been in extensive use in services for the elderly in Finland for many years, and in recent legislative reform⁶ its use was made mandatory for all local authorities in Finland.

In 2018, the AILI Network began to develop a special tool for Creativity, Art and Cultural Profiling based on data in the RAI system. The main feature of this tool – which is called the Cultural Profile – is preparing new compilations of data that already exist in the RAI system and enriching the use of that data. In other words, no separate data collection needs to be done for the Cultural Profile. This is important, because we do not want to add an additional burden on staff in services for the elderly by asking them to fill in more assessment forms. The RAI system is already familiar to professionals, supervisors and managers and therefore requires no technical training.

The Cultural Profile highlights the following data in existing RAI-LTC assessments (LTC = Long-Term Care):

- background data: educational attainment, former occupations, social involvement, interests, time management, etc.
- personal goals and how these have been attained
- interests
- preferred recreational activity
- social involvement and time management
- change needs relative to current recreational activities and the time spent with them
- social involvement, interests and time management before moving to a care facility

The Cultural Profile provides information which is systematic and comparable nationwide and internationally, since the RAI-system is essentially the same in all the countries where it has been deployed.

⁶ *Act on Supporting the Functional Capacity of the Older Population and on Social and Health Services for Older Persons (2020).*

REFLECTIONS

Considering clients as fully rounded individuals and facilitating a creative everyday life are essential components of work with older people. This is an aspect of care work that has not been documented as extensively as, say, nutrition or medication. Creativity, Art and Cultural Profiling can catalyse a sea change in our approach to services for the elderly, as it encourages a client-oriented approach, allows clients to gain an everyday routine consistent with their preferences and thus improves their wellbeing. Profiling helps gain a complete picture of the individual.

“Creativity, Art and Cultural Profiling can help create a shared understanding between professionals and both facilitate and standardise information exchange.”

This documentation likewise helps integrate creativity, cultural activities and arts-based care more broadly and more closely into services for the elderly and into the everyday lives of clients. The documentation helps ensure in a systematic way that clients are able to enjoy their cultural rights. It has been found in Finland that creative, culture and arts-based care for the elderly requires a smooth exchange of information between art, culture, health care and social welfare sectors and professionals.

Creativity, Art and Cultural Profiling can help create a shared understanding between professionals and both facilitate and standardise information exchange.

WHAT NEXT?

We want to achieve a more systematic and data-driven approach to managing creative, culture and arts-based care for older people while increasing the use of research-based and effective practices, methods and techniques.

In the longer-term, our goal is for this kind of profiling to be extended beyond older people to all clients of social welfare and health care services so that they too can have their individual creative and cultural wishes incorporated into their care.

CASE STUDIES

Neighbourhoods and volunteers



Photo courtesy of PiiPoo Accessible Centre for Art and Culture.

Art and Culture Companions

LET'S GO TOGETHER!

Have you ever felt you needed company or support in order to go out and enjoy cultural events? Or do you know someone who would like to have a friend go with them to visit an arts venue? If going out to enjoy arts and culture on your own feels intimidating for any reason, Art and Culture Companions will go with you free of charge. They are trained volunteers who encourage their peers to join them on trips to museums, concerts or theatre performances. They might assist people with mobility as necessary, help them buy tickets or advise them on what to do at the venue. The main thing, however, is being able to share the experience with someone and to interact with another person. Sharing a cultural experience often makes it deeper and more effective.

ABOUT THE MODEL

The Art and Culture Companion concept was created in the city of Jyväskylä in 2006 and has since been adopted in more than 20 cities and towns in Finland, under a variety of names and with sometimes differing approaches. In some communities, the Companions are available to older people and people with special needs, while in others they can be booked by any local resident.

In each case, it is agreed in advance which arts and culture venues and events will be included in the Art and Culture Companion programme. Many venues allow entry free of charge or at a concession price to clients accompanied by a Companion. Some venues are free of charge for all users, of course. Companions may be asked to accompany clients on themed walks to visit buildings and locations of historical or architectural significance.

Apart from these principal duties, Companions may contribute to local cultural pursuits in a variety of ways, for instance by compiling

objects for reminiscence sessions. Companions can use travelling exhibitions stored in suitcases to have interactive sessions with individuals or small groups at assisted living units, clubs or other locations. The Companions may also design local culture-themed walks, help manage museum collections, participate in exhibition design or take an actual artwork from a museum collection and visit someone in their home with it.

Art and Culture Companion activities are coordinated variously by employees in municipal cultural services or services for the elderly, by the third sector, or by a combination of both. A designated coordinator is responsible for providing orientation training, support, additional training and recreation for the volunteers, working with partners involved. Additional training may be provided for instance on how to interact with people with memory disorders or how to provide audio description for the visually impaired.

REFLECTIONS

There has been considerable demand for Art and Culture Companions. They facilitate access to culture for people who are unable or unwilling to venture to cultural venues without having someone with them for company and/or support. Both Companions and clients have discovered new experiences and new genres of art and culture, and their shared experiences have enriched their quality of life and excited them. We all have a need to share memories and experiences with other people, and art and culture also allow us to reflect on our lives and on our place in the world. In challenging times, art and culture can bring meaningful experiences into our everyday lives. Cultural experiences are more profound when experienced together with someone else.

The volunteers have networks of their own that help spread the word about Art and Cultural Companions and potential sites to visit, even to those who would not otherwise be reached. Not everyone is used to the idea of visiting cultural venues, and not everyone is aware of the arts and culture opportunities available locally. Also, sometimes information about cultural venues can be difficult to find. Art and Culture Companions can recommend visits to museums, concert halls and other cultural venues or events to their clients on a customised basis. Through this, a broader range of the population will have the opportunity to enjoy what is on offer.

The volunteers have found the Companion programmes to be highly rewarding and motivational, as they have discovered new arts and culture themselves. Being an Art and Culture Companion is a continuous learning process which helps volunteers to remain active and interested for as long as possible.

Volunteers must be acknowledged and thanked for the valuable work they do in order to retain them, and it is also important for them to be able to bond as a group. There are numerous ways to do this, such as having them meet for coffee to chat and exchange experiences or organising an excursion. This fosters a sense of community and pleasure among the volunteers, contributing to their wellbeing and, indirectly, to that of their clients.

It is also important to consult clients to be able to offer them what they would like to experience while also providing them with a taste of genres with which they may not be familiar. Surprising visits may have an unexpectedly motivational effect. There is an endless supply of novel content in arts and culture, and volunteers should be kept up to date on local cultural venues and events.

Photo courtesy of Hannemari Laitinen.



Art and Culture Companion activities are highly cost-effective in view of the benefits gained by the Companions themselves, by clients and by arts and culture operators. The wellbeing impacts of culture translate into savings in health care costs for local authorities. These activities have evolved differently in the various communities, making use of local strengths and cultural offerings. Flexibility is an absolute necessity, considering that the communities involved range from large to small and that the organisers involved include parties from cultural institutions to social welfare and health care professionals and also NGOs and non-profit associations.

An Art and Culture Companion programme must have a permanent employee as a coordinator whose job is to design the service in collaboration with other operators and volunteers. The existing knowledge, skills and interests of the Companions should be considered in planning. It is also important to engage in broad-based and open-minded cooperation, also involving various organisations in the health and social services sector. When launching a programme like this, it is good to recognise that it may be slow to catch on. All potential marketing channels should be used in order to disseminate information to potential customers who would benefit from the service.

The coordinators also need peer support and collaboration. In Finland, coordinators have shared experiences with each other on marketing, contracting and providing training for volunteers. There have also been joint workshops and nationwide publicity campaigns.

WHAT NEXT?

The quantity of cultural content available remotely mushroomed during the coronavirus pandemic. Going forward, it is important to develop remote Art and Culture Companion services and to train Companions in how to help clients enjoy remote cultural experiences. After the pandemic, a great deal of encouragement and outreach work will be required to find potential clients. Many will need several nudges and prompts to encourage them out and about with a Companion.

Access to art and culture and the cultural rights of the individual are still not considered self-evident. Motivated volunteers are invaluable, as they allow us to provide more meaningful experiences for those who need help or encouragement in seeking out arts and culture.

Neighbourhood Culture

FINDING VITALITY AND NEW FRIENDS THROUGH CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS

Neighbourhood Culture (Kortteleihin kulttuuria) is a group activity scheme weighted towards arts and culture, delivered through a multi-professional network. In this model, older people living at home are offered regular group meetings focusing on arts and culture held as near to their home as possible, e.g. in the housing association clubroom, at the local library or at the local service centre.

ABOUT THE MODEL

The timetable and content for the activities of each group are customised according to participants' wishes. Group meetings are about having coffee, chatting and exploring a chosen theme which might be a particular genre of art, or something different at each meeting. Participants are encouraged to contribute their own skills and to appreciate the contributions of others. The activities and content are designed according to the age and functional capacity of the participants. There is a health aspect to this: encouraging everyone to enjoy the health and functional capacity that they have and drawing on the strengths that participants have.

Each group is chaired by a professional, a peer facilitator or a volunteer, with the background organisation providing support as needed.

These group activities are particularly intended for older people in challenging life situations, and therefore the client counsellors in services for the elderly and home care workers play an important part in informing clients about the activities and in encouraging them to join in.

REFLECTIONS

In an evaluation survey conducted in 2019, one in four respondents (N = 365) reported that they did not participate in any other group activities or cultural events than the Neighbourhood Culture groups, suggesting that the groups are highly accessible.

Nearly all respondents reported that participation had brought them more things to do and more meaningful content in their lives, and four in five respondents reported having found new experiences. For more than three in five respondents, participation had increased their social interactions somewhat or a lot. All respondents reported that the activity had contributed to their wellbeing, and more than three in five considered that it had been beneficial for their health.

The participants in all groups had contributed occasional programme elements, such as poetry recitation, sit-down exercises, music, stories written by themselves, etc. Some groups created paintings that were then displayed at the meeting venue. Poems and paintings created in the groups have been published in *KortteliSanomat*, the project newsletter.

Group activities take time to set up and to establish. If a group dynamic does not emerge and the participants remain distant from each other, a rushed timetable can scupper the entire group activity scheme. The venue selected may also dictate what kind of activity is feasible or even possible.

WHAT NEXT?

The groups that have emerged in the project are attached to existing structures provided by NGOs, local government actors and third-sector organisations. Each group is customised including its setting: something that works for one group meeting at a library will not necessarily work for another group meeting at a housing company clubroom.

Good results have already been achieved in establishing the group activities, with some of the groups transitioning to volunteer leadership. Volunteer group leaders are provided with material to help in leading the groups by the background organisation, along with constant support, peer meetings and retreats.

Some groups have become permanent fixtures in the operations of both cultural organisations and services for the elderly. Some groups have been adopted by community colleges, which have been fruitful collaborations, with course fees kept low and venues close to the participants' homes.



Photo courtesy of Armas Festival/Niklas Sandström.

PiiPoo

ACCESSIBLE CENTRE FOR ART AND CULTURE

PiiPoo is a centre for art and culture which aims to design and deliver accessible cultural activities and applied arts and culture services. PiiPoo operates on the principle of delivering arts and culture for everyone for every occasion. PiiPoo believes firmly in the wellbeing impacts of art and of doing things together. Our work is rooted in a strong value base centred on art and an understanding of how important the ability to exercise one's cultural rights is for participating in society and for wellbeing.

ABOUT THE MODEL

PiiPoo designs activities using arts-based methods for a variety of operating environments. Our activities are accessible and can be attended by special needs groups and people with mobility impairments. We provide services at the PiiPoo centre for art and culture in Lempäälä and make visits to clients' premises: schools, day care centres, educational institutions, nursing homes, events, facilities and workplaces.

We run our arts-based projects in collaboration with operators in the culture, social welfare, health care and education sectors and with a variety of workplace communities. Our partners include local authorities in municipalities and cities, private operators, associations, corporations and universities.

PiiPoo is an agent for art, culture and wellbeing and accessibility regionally and nationally, with a specific focus on the Tampere region.

Our activities are managed by arts and culture professionals and administered by a non-profit organisation set up in 2006 called Kulttuurikeskus PiiPoon kannatusyhdistys.

How we operate means that participation is possible for older people of all backgrounds and functional abilities. As a participant in one

age circus project said: "Don't think we have to become like a circus, but a circus needs to become like us."

The Senior Circus is a social circus operating model developed by PiiPoo, where residents and staff get to know the circus and make their own presentation at the end of the circus project. The model of the social circus reinforces an atmosphere of appreciative encounters, inclusion and activism and makes every member of the community and the community positively visible.

'The Wounded Moomin' is an excellent example of a values-based art project in which we used drama, theatrical expression and visual art. Participants decided on the theme and methods they wanted to work with. They ended up making political art and took a stand on the cultural policy of the city of Tampere and the neglect of Tove Jansson's legacy.

Another cultural programme we developed was the 60+ Concept for older people living at home, which was co-produced between the municipality of Lempäälä, PiiPoo and the Ideapark Shopping Centre. The shopping centre invites older people to meet on Tuesday mornings and to take a half an hour morning walk in the aisles of the mall, led by a physiotherapist. The participants do not have to worry about bad weather or slipperiness. There is then a coffee break and discussion followed by a 45-minute artistic workshop. The 60+ Concept has been designed with the principles of service design and together with organisations and residents advocating for older people in the area. Participants can constantly influence the content of the activity and who's involved. The participants have found the programme an important part of their daily lives and have made new friends, found joy, surprising experiences and a way to fight loneliness.



Photo courtesy of PiiPoo Accessible Centre for Art and Culture.

REFLECTIONS

PiiPoo has been promoting culture, wellbeing and social engagement for 15 years. All our new projects, operating models and collaborations are based on our extensive past experience.

PiiPoo is particularly about appreciating other people. We describe our work as being value driven. For encounters to result in interaction with mutual respect, three pillars must be present: involvement, appreciation and initiative. This also works the other way around, of course: respectful interaction facilitates appreciation, fosters involvement and encourages initiative.

Arts projects and activities in artistic environments with people of very different ages, backgrounds and capabilities form the core of what we do at PiiPoo. Art in itself in all its forms and the fostering of a respectful and appreciative ambience in arts projects are vital to everything we do.

Arts professionals with a wide knowledge of arts genres, methodological competence and the ability to apply, experiment and play with and in art guarantee the quality of our activities. They have the ability to see, hear, identify and understand the wishes, cultural identity and capacity for artistic agency of participants in our arts projects and groups.

Cooperation is an absolute requirement for success at PiiPoo. Our extensively networked approach and close cooperation with organisations in the social welfare, health care, education, local government and cultural sectors allow us to understand the potential for collaboration in a variety of operating environments. Trust, an understanding of the importance of arts and culture, and identification of the value base shared between sectors reinforce the willingness to work together and have fostered long-lasting partnerships.

WHAT NEXT?

PiiPoo is involved in a variety of local, national and international projects.

We aim to secure resources for robust basic activities in our region and to provide interesting cultural services working with a wide variety of people. We see local arts activities and working with people as a 'development lab' where our best ideas and most insightful understanding emerge. Understanding the mechanisms of real social participation and integrating innovations into how cultural services are provided, and indeed involving various population groups in the design of cultural services, are at the forefront of our future efforts.

Our regional goals include:

- reinforcing the structures of art, culture and wellbeing, fostering closer multi-professional collaboration between organisations in various sectors
- fostering customised operating models and services for various environments, developing a shared centre of excellence for art, culture and wellbeing and designing a cultural service tray for adoption by all local authorities in the Tampere Region ('Pirkanmaa').

Future goals for PiiPoo include advanced, goal-oriented international collaboration and expertise exchange.

Recent projects we have in development include:

Art Nearby

A project developing a regional Culture Service Tray with 14 arts institutions, arts festivals and five stakeholders in health and social services.

To society and home through the arts

A project where art interventions support social and cultural inclusion and integration of individual new members in communities such as homes for the elderly and communities of immigrant students. The purpose of this project is to build permanent arts-based operating models to be incorporated into social welfare, health care and education services in the future.

PiiPoo is also training professionals in various fields in how to support their clients to exercise their cultural rights and how to use arts-based working methods for supporting their wellbeing. Training for professionals working with older people is geared towards extending their understanding of the importance of arts and culture in care work and towards helping them learn how to use simple tools and existing arts materials in these activities. The training also focuses on how care professionals can use their own creativity in their work. The unit-specific and facility-specific art, culture and wellbeing plans developed during these training courses are always linked to the strategic plans and service pledges of the institutions in question. The overall goal is to identify, acknowledge and support the wellbeing impacts of culture.

RockHubs

BRINGING GENERATIONS TOGETHER THROUGH MUSIC

Changes in rapidly ageing societies have meant that older adults are becoming more and more invisible – leading to loneliness, depression, other mental and physical side effects, as well as an increased generation gap. It is crucial to find new ways to offer effective services that support independent living and quality of life among older people. According to a recent study, about a half of Finnish pensioners participate regularly in arts and culture activities, while the other half participate rarely or not at all. The same study showed a clear connection between the level of participation and the individual experience of the wellbeing effect of the arts.⁷ The arts and cultural sector has a lot to offer in terms of preventative measures and the holistic wellbeing of ageing populations.

Research has shown that positive social interaction with other people in our daily lives is crucial for our mental and physical wellbeing throughout our life course, especially in old age. Therefore, successful ageing is not only about trying to maintain physical activity and medicating the effects of aging. It's about building new networks, exploring new identities and being perceived and recognised by others in positive ways.

RockHubs is an international social enterprise service based out of Finland that works with local communities in different countries to build accessible, intergenerational music learning communities. By partnering and co-creating with senior living communities, care homes, immigrant and refugee organisations, and other collaborators, we provide a new source of agency for older adults in their local communities through participatory music learning, practising and performing.

ABOUT THE MODEL

RockHubs Inspiration Model: Create, Play, Inspire.

After finding accessible locations with our partners, we help that local community to create intergenerational bands consisting of their family members, friends, neighbours, caretakers, and colleagues. We then help them to acquire the necessary instruments and provide the professional training to get started. Our encouraging facilitators, flexible methods, and accessible learning systems allow anyone to learn to play music together immediately, regardless of their physical or musical abilities.

To ensure the bands are self-sufficient, we identify active members of the community and provide them with additional mentor training. Our primary aim is to help communities towards self-directed practice, as the band members set their own individual goals, as well as shared goals so that they can continue playing on their own. All of this culminates in relaxed public jams where the band members not only get positive feedback, but the audience are also inspired to join in the fun.

REFLECTIONS

We consider it important to find a balance between pedagogical ambitions and a relaxed atmosphere. We focus on abandoning the stereotypical scripted reality for older people on how they should participate in music activities and instead take a holistic life-course approach that takes into account not only a person's age and current life situation, but also their background, culture, and entire life story. We see the learning potential in everyone.

An older person might not have prior musical experience, but their taste in music might otherwise be very sophisticated. In the same vein, someone with a background in music might have negative or even traumatic experiences from strenuous learning, demanding teachers, or failed performances. It is important to get to know the participants and their musical life courses in order to be sensitive and responsive to their needs. Always keeping these in mind is the only way that we can create opportunities for the participants to renew their relationship to music and be free from any prejudice or expectations.

WHAT NEXT?

RockHubs already has a growing number of hubs and trained mentors throughout Finland as well as internationally in Canada, in Quebec and Montreal. We are also in talks and working to establish hubs in other Nordic countries, the EU, as well as the United States.

Some of our current projects going on over the next year include a project with the city of Helsinki where 'block bands' are being created in four senior citizen communities, as well as the creation of bands in collaboration with a local organisation promoting the integration of asylum seekers and immigrants along with meeting the native population. All of these lead to large public jams where the bands engage with each other and the public through musical performances.

We are also constantly refining our teaching systems, as well as working towards a future where we can create a digital platform and peer support channels whereby trainers, mentors, helpers, and participants can communicate regardless of their skills or technical background. We hope that in the future we can increase the social visibility of older people and intergenerational solidarity through an international network of RockHubs.

CASE STUDIES

Arts organisations



Photo courtesy of Kuopio Symphony Orchestra. (See Accessible Orchestras, page 47).

Tempest Group

ENRICHING THE EVERYDAY LIVES OF OLDER PEOPLE THROUGH DANCE AND MOVEMENT

Tempest Group ('Myrskyryhmä' in Finnish) is a contemporary dance company specialising in arts-based activities with older people, established in 2002. Our activities are based on targeted, high-quality performances, a cross-disciplinary approach and encouragement towards creative movement.

The purpose of our work is to uplift mood and enrich the everyday lives of older people while enabling them to recognise their own resources. Our artistic work showcases old age as a natural and valuable part of human life and demonstrates that dancing and creativity are for everyone irrespective of age, functional capacity or body image. We expand on conventional images of the age group in dance and in society at large.

Examples of our productions and activities:

- 12 dance works with more than 250 performances in care units
- 14 artist residencies at facilities for older people around Finland
- Five short dance films and a documentary on cultural work with older people
- development of inclusive arts practices
- development and influencing, including a project on how to earn a living in arts-based work with older people and a project on how to incorporate art into services for the elderly.

ABOUT THE MODEL

The Tempest Group has pioneered a model for artist residencies in work with communities working with older people in Finland. We had our first residency in 2010 and have had 14 to date. Artist residencies allow close interaction with older people, which has been instrumental in developing various methods of working.

Each residency is preceded by a conversation with the person in charge of the community and sharing information with the staff, residents and their family members. A residency often begins with a dance performance where the staff and residents will be introduced to the art of dance as a spectator. Then the artists spend about six hours per day two or three days a week at the facility for a predetermined period of time (one to two months). During their stay, they interact with individual residents and small groups, following the everyday rhythm of the community and the resources of the residents. The artists spend time unhurriedly getting to know people, observing the community and its practices, and working on artistic processes amongst themselves in response to thoughts prompted by being in the community.

A residency may also include workshops for staff, family members and volunteers. Performances on the themes and findings of the work done are given in the course of the residency. The residency concludes with a gala designed and produced in collaboration with the community and featuring dances and other artworks created. Often some residents participate in performing choreographies designed in collaboration with them. These galas are open to family members and other people who are interested. In addition to participatory artwork, the residencies explore cross-disciplinary connections between dance and other art forms (e.g. photography, cinema, drama, visual arts). The Tempest Group has also participated in residencies in other Nordic countries.

REFLECTIONS

These residencies are experimental environments. Their purpose is to find, test and develop new working methods. The experiments yield information about which practices work and which do not. Residencies also include a lot of reflective discussions with co-workers and collecting of feedback from participants and from other people in the community.

The practical work as a dance artist and sensitive corporeal presence is essential for the work. Thoughts, choices and communications are mainly conveyed silently. Through kinaesthetic empathy, spending time with the participants prompts feelings and moods in us that guide our choices as to how the process should unfold. Working in the Tempest Group

requires us to look at our art from a different perspective, to make art easily approachable, and to focus on the experience of encountering another person. We need to be sensitive, open and ready for any memory disorders, impaired vision or hearing, and other special needs caused by impaired functional capacity.

A human approach and being easily approachable are central in everything we do. It is important for artists not to take their art too seriously but to be ready, if necessary, to question their own artistic approach, to discuss it and puzzle over it with other participants. The plurality of dance as an art form and including also the other art forms is a benefit.

The potential for art to make a difference in everyday life arises from thinking about things together; in other words, art emerges where

Photo courtesy of Tempest Group/Johannes Romppanen.



there is time and courage for encounters and interaction, where individual personalities can be present and where the needs of older people are considered. The tiniest things may be valuable, and the tiniest moments may be significant.

WHAT NEXT?

Art has limitless potential, and our future efforts will involve reinforcing the practices that can be employed together with staff members or volunteers and residents' family members. Even a brief period of shared activity can yield information about the older person, their wishes and their ways of doing things and of understanding their environment. These experiences can be leveraged, for instance, in rehabilitation and care. Arts activities can boost wellbeing in the community – not only because the artist is a human resource and a skills resource, but also because the presence of the artist and their practices may have a positive impact on the atmosphere of the community. The presence of the artist and their practices also serve to remind staff members of the use of creativity when interacting with clients.

Inclusive dance film

'Inclusive dance film' is a concept that evolved out of the residencies and we are developing it as a separate practice. Working with film gives older people a means by which to reflect on themselves in relation to their environment. A dance film is a language-independent art form that is based on movement, touch, dance

and visual narrative techniques. The film can highlight brief moments in the lives of older people, who very often are invisible in society at large. What is important is that the film is a tangible mark of their participation in the project. It also allows the participants to revisit their creative work and to recall the process emotionally as well as factually.

The format showcases older people as creatively active through artistic means. It shows the perspective of older people on life and promotes cultural participation and wellbeing of those living at home. When a person's everyday life becomes constricted, for example, because of reduced functional capacity, an inclusive dance workshop and making a film can open up new worlds and provide new things to think about.

The inclusive dance film has proved to be a very effective way of involving people with varying degrees of functional capacity in a creative process. Digital and remote services can be included as and where possible. Older are familiar with watching TV, so contemporary dance may be easier to approach by watching it on a screen. Participating in an inclusive dance film can help improve observational skills elsewhere in life and add depth to everyday experiences such as watching TV. We will complete a new dance film called *Walks with Me (Käy rinnallain)* written using the inclusive method and shot with multi-generational participation in 2021.

Empowering puppetry with music

CREATIVE PATHWAYS TO MOMENTS OF JOY

The Maria Baric Company is an internationally operating, award-winning theatre company based in Helsinki. The Company engages in a variety of performing arts, combining elements of fire theatre, shadow play and puppetry along with music, dance and new circus. The purpose of the Maria Baric Company is to bring arts and culture to environments where people generally find it difficult or impossible to access live performances, such as hospitals and nursing homes.

ABOUT THE MODEL

Our work is rooted in the arts-based method developed over many years by the Maria Baric Company, using the visual nature of puppetry and the brain-activating properties of music. The purpose of this approach is to improve the wellbeing of older people who have memory disorders or are otherwise ill or functionally impaired through enhancing their agency, improving their quality of life and contributing to their social wellbeing. A further goal is to enliven and enable interaction between older people and their families, service employees, volunteers and the artists in new ways. Encounters between people of various ages and from various social and cultural backgrounds enriches the lives of residents of nursing homes who otherwise live very routine-bound everyday lives. This model has been honed with nursing homes and hospital wards in various cities over a period of ten years, with financial support provided from, for example, the City of Helsinki, Arts Promotion Centre Taike, the Finnish Cultural Foundation and Stea.

Our moments together are shared experiences where music and puppetry facilitate genuine encounters. Research shows that music appeals powerfully to the emotions of participants and activates the brain in exceptional ways – even

if the listener has a memory disorder. Puppetry, on the other hand, fires the imagination. The emotional impact of the music and the symbolic language of the puppets have a physiological and mental effect on participants. Together they can enable older people to recall their childhood, their youth and any happy experiences in their life. The aim is to create valuable communal moments where older people can participate according to their capabilities and to the extent they wish, either as observers and listeners, or by actively taking part in the action.

Experience has shown that people find it easier to relate to puppets than to other people. The unique power of puppetry with music stems from the fact that the puppets we are observing are 'empty'; in the sense that it is easier to project our thoughts and meanings onto them than onto human actors, with all their individual facial expressions and gestures. By identifying with a puppet, it is possible to feel or express feelings that we might not otherwise have the courage to feel or express. A puppet in a puppet show, or a shadow in a shadow play, is like a mirror. They reflect what we want to see in them. Puppets can do things that human actors cannot: fly, glow in the dark, burst into flame. A puppet can be large and powerful enough to blow away our bad feelings, or small and delicate enough to sit on our palm to make us laugh and comfort us.

“A puppet in a puppet show, or a shadow in a shadow play, is like a mirror. They reflect what we want to see in them.”

A puppet can convey emotions in its posture and movements. Joy, sadness, confusion, curiosity, impatience, fear, anger – it reflects the emotions that all of us share. Every one of us



Photo courtesy of the Maria Baric Company.

goes through the entire gamut of emotions in the course of our lifetime. Music helps awaken our imagination, thoughts and memories, sensitising us to the narrative and inspiring us to devise our own meanings for what we see and hear. Puppets come to life in the eye of the beholder.

REFLECTIONS

“We have found that even older people who are no longer able to verbalise what they see and experience can have a powerful emotional response.”

At sites where we visited once or twice a week on a regular basis over an extended period of time, there was a noticeable change

in the demeanour of the older residents. An older person staring apathetically at the floor brightened up at seeing a familiar puppet and extended a cautious hand to touch it. Residents who had initially viewed the puppets with reserved curiosity and bemusement eventually began to embrace and even to kiss the puppets. Their arrival was awaited as eagerly as visits by close friends, and residents talked to them in a low voice about what they had been up to since they last met.

The fantasy world introduced through empowering puppetry enlivens the viewer's imagination, and being carried away by that imagination allows the viewer to function in real time and in 'drama time' simultaneously. This method of empowering puppetry with music has proven to be an excellent device

for merging reality and fantasy and for evoking the world of memories, hopes and dreams and also of playfulness and silliness.

Someone may lose their memory and their mobility yet retain their sense of humour and their imagination. We have found that even older people who are no longer able to verbalise what they see and experience can have a powerful emotional response.

We have been told that our activities not only boost morale and improve participation but also have a positive impact in helping staff at nursing homes and on hospital wards cope with their work. We have also brought experiences of joy and emotional connection to the family members and also to us artists and volunteers, emphasising just how important it is what we do.

The feedback for this new, exploratory cultural activity from nurse managers, residents, family members and volunteers has been overwhelmingly positive. Puppetry with music is an emotionally appealing and powerful form of communication and interaction, particularly for those older people in institutional care with whom it is otherwise difficult to communicate because of a memory disorder or diminished functional capacity.

The effectiveness of the model has been verified through research involving two groups of people: one involved with the puppetry and a control group without such artistic activities. The older people in both groups were assessed by their primary nurses using a Likert-based assessment form before and after the activity period.

We were astonished to find that at nursing homes our activities prompted such strong emotional reactions in residents and staff alike. Many of the older people bonded with the puppets much more intensely than they ever had done with other human beings. Our visits were the highlight of the week for both residents and staff, a “ray of light in the daily routine”, as one resident put it. Nurses on

hospital wards who had been there for years were taken aback and then moved close to tears by seeing some of the older people who had not communicated with their carers for a long time suddenly begin connecting with the puppets, each in their own way. Our visits were a catalyst for wonderful, touching interactions with older people who were depressed and otherwise in a very bad way.

Significant differences between the test group and the control group, in favour of the test group, were found for instance in indicators on Activities of Daily Living (ADL), mood, level of communication (speech, singing), level of activity in observations and level of communal activity. A physiotherapist involved in the project reported that people in the test group had become physically more active.

The study found that our contribution increased wellbeing, creativity and communication in care facilities, helped staff cope at work and alleviated feelings of loneliness and depression among the older people participating.

WHAT NEXT?

The developers of this method – puppeteer Nemanja Stojanovic and artistic director, composer and director Maria Baric of the Maria Baric Company – are giving talks on the subject at professional events and are preparing an extensive publication discussing the method and the results they have achieved. This publication will present scenarios for how the creative operating model developed by the Company can be adapted for any party interested in engaging in cultural activities with older people. The method is particularly well suited to volunteers and care professionals working older people with memory disorders.

The Maria Baric Company is also training new people in the use of the model. Over its 15-year history, the company has engaged in several international collaboration projects and is interested in further international collaboration in the future.

Dance Ambassadors

DANCERS IN RESIDENCE FROM THE REGIONAL DANCE CENTRE OF WESTERN FINLAND

The Dance Ambassadors is dance-based service concept invented by Regional Dance Centre of Western Finland (hereafter the LTA). The concept is nationally known, and the Finnish term *Tanssikummi®* was registered as a trademark in Finland in 2018. In practical terms, the work involves long-term residencies to engage people in dance in range of contexts. In 2021, the Dance Ambassadors are working in for example, services for the elderly, mental health services, child welfare services and schools.

ABOUT THE MODEL

The Dance Ambassadors service was developed at the LTA, which has been delivering dance-based creative wellbeing services since 2007.

The dance artists at the LTA have a high level of bodily expertise, and we have developed several dance-based concepts, Dance Ambassadors being the most notable one. This concept was initially designed for elderly care and hospitals. We have since expanded the concept to cover day care centres, schools and other institutions, and we collaborate with NGOs in the social welfare and health care sector. The Dance Ambassadors have also produced content for research projects such as the ArtsEqual project at the University of the Arts Helsinki.

Our service relies on the core element of dance – movement. Every person has the experience of movement in their body. We all know what it is like to run, leap or hop. Even just watching someone else move offers micro-movement experiences.

Research shows that dancing and corporeality produce health benefits. Music and bodily movement can evoke memories and help us detach from everyday life. Our body memory

has stored experiences of our past movements that can be revived even just by watching someone else dancing.

Employees at nursing homes, for instance, regard dance as a form of rehabilitation. Dancing can help improve functional mobility. Dance Ambassadors approach clients by exploring and sensing the interaction, focusing on the client. Dancing can be something as minimal as just moving a hand or a foot. The aim is to create a state of creativity that allows for bodily interaction and creative encounter in dance. Dance Ambassadors find that dance and encounter often emerge spontaneously, by going with the flow of the moment.

Dance Ambassadors are professional dance artists who form a ten-member team to design and develop art, culture and wellbeing services. Dance artists become Dance Ambassadors out of an interest in creating art in new environments and to create artistic opportunities with mindful attention with people who would otherwise not have access to art, while also keeping in mind the wellbeing impacts of dance. Dance Ambassadors are trained in the apprenticeship principle: trainees shadow practising Dance Ambassadors to learn the basic principles, values and approaches used in the work and the structure of the service.

What Dance Ambassadors do

The work of a Dance Ambassador comprises being attentive and present in the moment. It involves moving oneself and moving other people, both physically and mentally. Touch is an important component. A Dance Ambassador is a sort of travel guide to moments of bodily achievement, to memories and to escaping everyday life. Dance Ambassadors lead creative movement based on the possibilities of each person's body. Everyone can dance within their abilities, and the purpose of these activities is



Photo courtesy of the Regional Dance Centre of Western Finland / Rosa Huuska.

to encourage clients to move through positive experiences. The aim is to help clients discover their own bodies and movements, however large or small and of whatever kind, and learn how to sense them and enjoy them in bodily interaction.

Bodily sensitivity is an essential professional skill for dance artists. Dance artists have elevated proprioceptive observation skills and kinaesthetic empathy skills, meaning the ability to sense the postures and movements of another person in their own bodies through harmonisation of muscles, tendons, balance and motion receptors. Dance artists are thus able to enter the experiences and emotions of others. This professional skill has proved to be particularly valuable in working with older people on the one hand and with children on the other. Among other things, dance artists are excellent at establishing contact with dementia patients. The work of Dance Ambassadors is intended to improve the wellbeing of individuals and groups by introducing professional dancers to a variety of social contexts. Mental and social wellbeing and participation in activities such as this are components of subjectively perceived

quality of life. When culture and its wellbeing impacts span an entire lifetime, when art and culture are understood as forming part of a good quality of life and of lifelong learning, and when individuals of all ages are seen as having active agency, creative wellbeing can be said to have been achieved.

REFLECTIONS

Development of the service has progressed in waves due to the chronic uncertainty of funding. We are now at a point where the service has a robust structure and a framework that allows us to deliver it to a variety of environments. The most important thing we have learned in recent years is how to verbalise our sense of uncertainty with both the Dance Ambassadors and the client organisations as, although we can describe the service framework, it can be difficult to describe in advance what exactly will happen on site. Art lives in the moment and is unpredictable, and it is precisely because of this unpredictability that what we do is valuable and innovative and has the potential for attracting attention. Dance Ambassadors keep a diary as in which their encounters are

documented. These diaries are a vital tool for coping with uncertainty and, on the other hand, for recording important moments, experiences and engagements.

Secondly, we have learned how to establish a dialogue between the party commissioning and receiving the Dance Ambassador service on the one hand and the organisation providing the service on the other. We must be aware of how the client organisation operates and adapt our service to its operating environment. While requiring dance artists to learn how to deal with constant change and new environments, it also offers new opportunities and new connections for art in a new space, fostering a new operating culture and an arts-based approach for workplace communities. In a community setting, an interaction is never just about an individual client; instead, the Dance Ambassador service is conceived as facilitating new ways of thinking for indirect target groups – clients' family members and multi-professional workplace communities. Through the evolution of an arts-based work approach, our service can have far wider indirect impacts.

Thirdly, collaboration with staff in institutional environments is an important factor in highlighting the effectiveness of our work at the individual level. Dance Ambassadors make brief notes on their engagements with clients and patients and report to the coordinating nurses, who in turn record the meetings in their client and patient information systems. This means that the record of an older client will show that they have met a Dance Ambassador, and the impact that encounter had on their wellbeing can be assessed.

Fourthly, we provide training for the workplace community in the receiving organisation alongside our Dance Ambassador activities. The idea here is to coach the community in creative wellbeing, an arts-based approach and bodily interaction alongside the actual Dance Ambassador encounters with clients or patients. This leaves an awareness of the importance of bodily interaction at the client organisation even if there are no more Dance Ambassador visits.

The challenge in this service structure is that our Dance Ambassadors are freelance artists who work in other sectors of the arts as well. Some occupy hybrid roles out of choice and have limited time to spare, while others are happy to commit to Dance Ambassador services for a longer period of time. The uncertainty of funding is a major challenge at this point in the life span of the service. Project funding is not a guaranteed thing, and thus Dance Ambassadors are obliged to work elsewhere as well.

WHAT NEXT?

In the future, the LTA will continue to build up the service structure, building on the points identified above. Our goal is to offer steadier employment to our Dance Ambassadors, to find ways of establishing outsourced service agreements with local authorities in our region, and to secure regular, long-term funding for our activities in various operating environments. One way of establishing Dance Ambassador activities at the municipal level would be for a local authority to allocate a specific Dance Ambassador resource that could be applied to any site in the municipality: schools, day care centres, services for the elderly or special needs units. It would also be interesting to offer Dance Ambassadors to ordinary business workplaces.

The LTA will continue to share its expertise and to provide training and exchange of ideas in networks in the field, besides searching for new partners. The LTA operates in Southwest Finland and Satakunta but also has a link to the national Taikusydän coordination and communication centre. There have been impact assessments carried out on Dance Ambassador activities, from the perspective of employees and client experiences. The newest study was published in June 2021.

In the field, a Dance Ambassador can be recognised by their green shirts and by the fact that they have permission to bring bodily play, interaction, innovation and new perspectives to the community, using art of dance as a tool for this purpose.

By Sanna Meska, Executive Director & Rosa Huuska, Media Coordinator and Communications and Publicity, Regional Dance Centre of Western Finland.

Touring Stage of the Finnish National Theatre

BRINGING THEATRE TO YOU

The Finnish National Theatre set up its Touring Stage in 2010. Its mission is to take performances and workshops to locations where people cannot otherwise easily access live art. The Touring Stage performances and workshops can be booked for service centres for the elderly, in residential units for people with learning disabilities or people recovering from mental illness or addiction; in hospitals; in prisons; or at immigration reception centres. It also produces documentary theatre projects, created in collaboration with marginalised communities. The Touring Stage aims to reinforce the relationship between the National Theatre and society at large, and with specific communities.

ABOUT THE MODEL

“One of the aims of the Touring Stage is to give voice to marginalised population groups and to participate in social debate through art.”

Our model involves bringing art to social welfare and health care units, exploratory field work, close contact with audiences and low-threshold arts activities with residents of care facilities. Art emerges and happens where people live. The Touring Stage works closely with residential units and prisons, aiming to keep up to date with what is happening in these various closed or semi closed communities. One of the aims of the Touring Stage is to give voice to marginalised population groups and to participate in social debate through art.

The Touring Stage is part of a national arts institution, and as such its activities are arts driven. It aims to take performances of high artistic quality to communities to challenge

viewers and offer not only aesthetic experiences but also food for thought and alternative world views – which indeed is the purpose of all the art performed at the National Theatre. We aim to question the idea of arts having only specific instrumental values: art affects everyone in various ways, and no impact can be guaranteed. The Touring Stage believes that the active ingredient in art is, ultimately, art itself. Art is an extremely big tent that accommodates innumerable ways and styles of doing things. What is essential for us is to engage with other human beings and to promote equality in and through art.

The National Theatre subsidises performances at care facilities and prisons so that the cost to those institutions remains reasonable. A fee is charged, but it varies depending on the production. Social welfare and health care service providers are sought as partners for project design and delivery. Safeguarding the cultural rights of residents of care facilities and inmates of prisons is a shared responsibility of the arts and culture sector and the social welfare and health care sector.

REFLECTIONS

In bringing performances and workshops into residential units, the Touring Stage is effectively entering people's homes. Over the years, we have learned a lot about how to organise our performances so that residents and staff can enjoy them in as many ways as possible. It is important to consider how the performers approach the viewers, how they incorporate the units' everyday objects into the stage setting and how they interact with the audience at various points in the performance.

We have evolved a three-phase operating model for Touring Stage performances. A visit begins with getting to know the residents and preparing the performance space. The residents may contribute to the preparations if they wish. In the performance itself, the performers offer the spectators various viewer roles in which to participate. After the performance, the performers discuss the viewers' experiences and observations with them, and the audience thus has the final word. It has been interesting to see how the same production can be different each time, depending on where and to whom it is performed. The circumstances are different each time, and so are the interactions with the audience. It is most successful when the event can be prepared with the unit staff unhurriedly in advance, and the performers can look around the facilities available at the unit.

Everyone has different tastes in art, whether they are living at home, in a residential care unit, in prison or in a reception centre. Because of this, we aim to select a diverse range of productions for the Touring Stage repertoire. Clients may choose dance, circus, music and poetry performances in addition to drama. We design our productions to be as portable as possible. We invest in costumes rather than sets, because sets are far more difficult to transport. We invest in audio design rather than lighting design, because effective lighting calls for a blacked-out performance space.

In our documentary theatre projects, the stories of differently marginalised or stigmatised people are translated into performances on stage, with members of a particular community joining professional performers. In this process, non-professional performers with different backgrounds embark on a journey alongside the professionals, in close cooperation and on a foundation of mutual trust. The contributions of all participants are vital for creating a shared experience. There are numerous ethical challenges and potential hierarchies involved here. It is essential for everyone to understand that they are involved in creating a public artwork featuring some of their personal stories.

We have worked with several communities in our projects. Social exclusion is often viewed as an inexorable process, and social stigmas can govern our actions more than we realise. Art offers means for opposing stigmatisation and for seeking equal encounters between people from different backgrounds. Theatre is an art form that is all about putting yourself in the position of someone else, and it has potential for fostering feelings of understanding, empathy and community. Publicity can help marginalised communities be heard, but it can also have adverse impacts on individuals. We have come to understand that the community art approach calls for a special kind of commitment from artists and arts institutions to acknowledge our responsibilities towards the people that we work with.

WHAT NEXT?

The Finnish National Theatre is a publicly funded arts institution whose purpose is to create art for all people. It seeks to engage new people as audience members and as creators and performers. Our imagination is the only limit to envisioning how this could be achieved. There is still a long road to be travelled before theatre actually reflects our society as a whole and until its structures, seemingly cast in concrete, shift to better address the world we live in.

Once the pandemic is finally over, we will hopefully come together again. This will be a good time to revise our old practices. What are the current needs of people living in different housing units after the long isolation? What has happened to our artists many of whom have been out of work because of the regulations? There is also a growing need for cooperation between different art institutions and art forms in considering the cultural needs of different communities. Theatre itself is about the strength of joining forces. In art, diversity is a resource, not a problem.

By Jussi Lehtonen, actor, director and artistic designer of the Finnish National Theatre's Touring Stage.

Accessible Orchestras

CREATIVE EXCHANGE BETWEEN FINNISH AND BRITISH ORCHESTRAS

In both Finland and the UK, the population is ageing. This is stretching resources and posing questions for society as we seek to support long lives, lived well. In Finland, cultural services are considered to belong to the individual's fundamental rights and, for example in Helsinki, cultural engagement of older people is systematically embedded as a common entitlement by cultural, social and health providers.

Whilst the UK lacks the extensive shared delivery mechanisms seen in Finland, arts organisations are initiating work themselves and amongst these, orchestras are undertaking particularly innovative and creative work with older people. Some of the best examples have been collected in the online publication *From Bingo to Bartok: Creative and Innovative Approaches to involving older people with Orchestras* commissioned by the Baring Foundation⁸. A recent report *Orchestras in Healthcare*⁹ portrays the UK picture of orchestras' engagement in the health and wellbeing sector also in a wider perspective.

The idea for Accessible Orchestras came when we discussed about these matters with Sarah Derbyshire, CEO of Orchestras Live, and Emilie Gardberg, who at the time worked as the Director of the organisation formerly known as the Finnish Institute in London, during my Producers' House residency in London in Summer 2019.

Together with Helena Värri, Executive Director of the Association of Finnish Symphony Orchestras, we decided to conduct a series of exchange meetings and practical events that support the orchestra producers' skills development through targeted interventions

by experts in relevant fields, trial practical initiatives to test and assess new ideas that increase accessibility and enable sharing skills and ideas.

ABOUT THE MODEL

The Accessible Orchestras project coordinated in Finland by the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra in collaboration with the Association of Finnish Symphony Orchestras aims to develop the work of orchestras with older people in Finland and Great Britain. In the UK, the project is coordinated by Orchestras Live in collaboration with the Finnish Institute in the UK and Ireland.

The two-year project supports equal accessibility to culture and the arts by seeking ways of bringing orchestra activities closer to those among the older population who are unable to attend concerts in person. The aim is to promote a sense of community and the active inclusion of older people through art.

In addition to the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, other Finnish orchestras participating in the Accessible Orchestras project include the Kuopio Symphony Orchestra, Lapland Chamber Orchestra, Tapiola Sinfonietta – the orchestra of the City of Espoo, and Turku Philharmonic Orchestra. The producers of these orchestras have convened during the 2020–21 season to pilot new ideas and share ideas with each other. Participating orchestras in the Accessible Orchestras project from the UK include the City of London Sinfonia and Manchester Camerata.

⁸ *From Bingo to Bartok: Creative and innovative approaches to involving older people with orchestras*, Orchestras Live, 2019. Available at: baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/from-bingo-to-bartok.

⁹ See: *Orchestras in Healthcare* report launch, Orchestras Live, www.orchestraslive.org.uk/news/orchestras-in-healthcare-report-launch.

The Accessible Orchestras project has received a special subsidy from the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture for 2020–21. The project's evaluation and research are supported by Metropolia University of Applied Sciences.

REFLECTIONS

This learning exchange program for orchestra producers has strengthened our understanding of and skills for active engagement with older people. We have included the use of innovative practices, such as digital platforms, to enable better accessibility and improve health and wellbeing outcomes. This has been crucial for our project since it has been delivered during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Each participating orchestra in Finland has received peer-to-peer support from the Producers' meetings, which strengthened the pilots they ran in Spring 2021. Alongside these meetings, most of the producers have also been able to get support from their city's representatives in the AILI Network. AILI is a network of experts from culture and social and health services for older people in 13 cities in Finland. (For more on the AILI Network, see page 11.)

Without the support of these experts or other key workers in the field of creative aging, it would have been much harder for the producers to carry out the practical initiatives that enabled them try new formats of work in their orchestras. These initiatives took place in 24-hour care (Helsinki and Turku), day activities (Kuopio), home care (Lapland) and hospital (Espoo). The orchestras developed digital content (Helsinki, Kuopio and Espoo), creative artwork (Turku) and possibilities for voluntary work (Lapland).

“This project offers producers of Finnish orchestras the chance to learn from each other and their British colleagues, as well as to share Finnish practices in cross-administrative cooperation between culture on the one hand and social affairs and health on the other.”

Helena Värri, Executive Director of the Association of Finnish Symphony Orchestras.

WHAT NEXT?

My colleague Maria Mäkinen and I wrote the first two parts of a handbook, *Age-friendly orchestra*, an online publication that can be found on the website of the Association of Finnish Symphony Orchestras¹⁰. This publication will expand to include also the case examples from the Finnish partner orchestras of the Accessible Orchestras project in November 2021. The final publication will also be available in English.

Through the Accessible Orchestras project, together with Sarah Derbyshire from the Orchestras Live, we have begun to develop a pattern for creative exchange in the future. We have ambitions to develop a formal network for Finnish and UK orchestral producers to learn from their different approaches to creative ageing. We think that this sector-specific network could contribute to the cultural capital of local communities and develop an infrastructure to support orchestral activity at all levels of the community, across all age groups.

By Annika Kukkonen, Education Producer, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra.

¹⁰ Suomen sinfoniorkesterit ry (Association of Finnish Symphony Orchestras), www.sinfoniaorkesterit.fi/en.

CASE STUDIES

Other organisations



Photo courtesy of My Library Project/Tiia Suorsa.

Service centres

FACILITATORS OF COMMUNITY CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Finland as a whole is ageing, and its capital Helsinki is no exception. Since the turn of the millennium, the number of Helsinki residents aged 65 or over has grown by 52%, relative to an overall population increase in the city of about 19%. The increase in the percentage of older people was higher among women than among men, nearly 61%. Since 2010 Helsinki has had the oldest demographic profile among all Nordic capital cities.

Being Finland's capital and largest city, Helsinki is paying particular attention to the social, mental and physical wellbeing of its ageing population, which includes aspects of inclusivity and agency. One way in which this issue is being addressed is in the city's 15 service centres, whose purpose is to help older people continue to live at home, to promote wellbeing, to maintain functional capacity and to alleviate feelings of loneliness.

Publicly funded and administered by the Social Services and Health Care division, these centres offer older and unemployed residents of Helsinki advisory services and guidance, physiotherapy consultations, digital support, peer group activities, volunteer activities, recreational pursuits from exercise to crafts, and a wide range of events. There are also various services that facilitate older people to continue living at home, such as café and restaurant services, access to computers and library services.

Service centres can be found across the city, and the services they offer are principally free of charge. In 2019, about 13,500 Helsinki residents had a service centre card making them eligible for the services offered.

ABOUT THE MODEL

Clients come to the service centres independently or with a friend or family member. Some clients are referred to the service centres by partners such as health centres, home care or hospitals. Clients are free to come and go, to join groups and participate or not, as they choose. Many clients have come to regard the service centre as an extension of their homes, a meaningful community that they enjoy for many years. Within the service centre, clients can – according to changes in their functional capacity or life situation – move from one leisure activity group to another, perhaps to a peer support group for clients requiring more assistance.

“Many clients have come to regard the service centre as an extension of their homes, a meaningful community that they enjoy for many years.”

The service centres cater to the needs of a diverse clientele spanning a wide age range with both individual and collective cultural experiences, designed to provide special moments or to give an additional boost to everyday routines. Clients may attend talks, concerts, daytime dances and singalong events. There is also a wide range of hobby and study groups available, in areas as diverse as watercolour painting, ceramics, sewing, woodwork, metalwork, drama, etc.

The service centres also offer cultural experiences for those who could not independently access them or who would not otherwise go. Arts-based and activity-based methods allow clients to enjoy their cultural rights even with diminished functional capacity due to a memory disorder or severe mobility or communication impairments.

These cultural services are produced on a multi-professional basis involving cooperation between educational institutions, arts and culture organisations and volunteers at the service centres. The service centres also partner in various grant-funded projects.

In keeping with the goals of the service centre operations, clients' agency and inclusion are essential. Clients are encouraged to produce cultural content themselves, according to their abilities, whether by chairing a book club, creating a collage artwork for a clubroom, organising an exhibition or creating content for social media. The impact of the art created in a group on the creators and its interaction with the environment is the greater the more the art can be made visible or audible in public premises or at events. Culture is an essential part of an independent, rich and meaningful

life, and participating in cultural activities – as a creator or an observer – yields memorable experiences and a sense of belonging and equality.

REFLECTIONS

Service centre clients are not a homogeneous group but a collection of individuals with differing needs, histories, interests, hopes and dreams. Life history and identity must always be considered when engaging with clients. Activity content is planned with clients so that everyone can participate according to their abilities. Promoting equality and diversity is a crucial part of a high-quality client-oriented approach that makes services available and accessible to all.

Photo courtesy of Helsinki Service Centres, Sirkus Femina.



Rainbow Certification, which was implemented in collaboration with Seta, an organisation advocating for equal rights for sexual and gender minorities, is a concrete example of efforts taken to promote equality and non-discrimination. Rainbow Certification focuses particularly on senior citizens falling into these categories but also takes a broader view of plurality. Rainbow-certified service centres are committed to promoting equality and non-discrimination among clients and employees in all activities, in compliance with legislation, the equality principles of the City of Helsinki and a client-oriented and inclusive approach. Service centres are meant to be safe for clients and employees, whatever their personal characteristics or background may be. Clients are invited to understand and appreciate diversity and to contemplate the thoughts and feelings prompted in them by this, whether in respect of attitudes to culture or attitudes to other clients.

“Group activities with support at service centres help fragile clients live at home for as long as possible.”

The multi-professional skills and special expertise of staff and the potential for shaping activities to match the functional capacity and needs of clients make it possible for clients with memory disorders, for instance, to participate in these activities as much as possible. Group activities with support at service centres help fragile clients live at home for as long as possible, and when combined with other support services such as short-term rehabilitation, home care visits and/or informal care, this approach can postpone the time when long-term institutional care becomes necessary.

WHAT NEXT?

The service centres aim to be a community known to all and easily approachable, enabling every resident to have a meaningful and good life. This requires a capacity for constant renewal and adaptation to changes in the clientele and in society at large. The coronavirus pandemic that gripped the world and the digital leap that resulted from it have placed service centres in a very new situation. During the more than 18-month lockdown, the service centres developed remote activities and considered how to support clients even when it is not possible to be physically present or to meet clients in person at the service centre.

Approaches and attitudes appreciative of culture and creativity and of a wide range of diversity feed into a positive workplace and management culture and thereby into concrete everyday activities. Culture and equality are considered in the design and delivery of service centre operations, whether programmed activities or group coaching methods. The impact of culture and creativity in maintaining and promoting health and wellbeing is acknowledged in the goals of service centre operations. Diverse in form and in touch with the times, service centres and their cultural activities are attentive to the wishes and needs of clients as they engage in goal-oriented and systematic development efforts for the long term.

Espoo hospital

PROMOTING ART, CULTURE AND WELLBEING IN HOSPITAL CARE

Espoo is Finland's second-largest city, with a population of about 293,000, located immediately to the west of the capital, Helsinki. The purpose of the Healthy Espoo programme run by the City of Espoo is to improve the opportunities of Espoo residents to promote their health and wellbeing and to bring the city's districts by increasing communality and participation. One of its major achievements is increasing awareness of the importance of mental wellbeing and improving expertise in the resources supporting that wellbeing. Art and culture are seen as playing a role in this trend.

Espoo Hospital specialises in care for the elderly and in rehabilitation. It also provides support services for older people living at home. The hospital has 247 beds and employs more than 400 nursing and rehabilitation professionals, including one music therapist. Espoo Hospital also has a home hospital, a geriatrics outpatient clinic and a palliative care outpatient clinic. The health care and rehabilitation services provided by the hospital under primary health care are mainly intended for older people.

ABOUT THE MODEL

Espoo Hospital has made a commitment to investing in art and culture, as this is seen as conducive to patient recovery, amongst other things. For instance, an extensive collection of artworks from EMMA, the Espoo Museum of Modern Art, are on display in the public premises and on the wards. The collection is described in a printed leaflet called *Taidepolkuopas* (Art path guide), which introduces patients to the artworks in detail and prompts reflections on their various aspects. Young people working at the hospital in the summer have used the guide eagerly, walking around the hospital with patients to see the artworks. Art has thus contributed to inter-generational engagement and interaction.

In 2018, Espoo Hospital ran a project entitled 'Art supporting recovery', involving a lot of performers, music and dancing. Music therapy was given on the hospice ward to comfort family members, and an informal carers' art group opened up new perspectives on their work as a morale booster. Creativity training for employees, led by an actor, improved their coping at work. Dance rehabilitation was also introduced. The musicians who performed on the wards enjoyed performing at the hospital, and patients were cheered up. A workplace choir was set up at the hospital too.

In 2020, Espoo Hospital received support for promoting art, culture and wellbeing from the City of Espoo's wellbeing programme. The purpose of this project was to outline specific processes for the various wards, so that patients and employees would get used to regular activities and feel comfortable about participating in arts sessions. Artists with considerable experience in combining art and wellbeing were involved in the project.

This eventually focused on one previously tried and tested activity and two pilot concepts:

1. the songdrawing method for psycho-geriatric and neurological patients
2. a pilot of Music for Life by hospital musicians for patients on the infectious diseases ward
3. a pilot of hospital clowns visiting adult patients on the wound care ward and the neurology ward.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, all art encounters in the project had to be arranged via remote connections.

Songdrawing is an experiential activity where participants are invited 'to draw songs', combining singing and visual expression simultaneously and in a mutually supportive way. The aim is to foster a sense of achievement and involvement, to enable interaction and to

improve functional capacity. The activity is suitable for people of all ages who need special support. In this project, songdrawing was explored in individual sessions over a remote connection for the first time.

In the Music for Life programme, hospital musicians improvised on instruments and voices, and also engaged patients in conversation. The musicians evoked a variety of moods in their sessions on the wards, and patients could join in, improvising on their own instruments. An impulse for improvisation might be taken from the music-making of a patient, with the musicians and other participants taking up the idea and joining in. The sessions also included talking about the experience and reinforcing the patients' sense of coping. Because of the extraordinary circumstances, these sessions were held over remote connections.

The purpose of hospital clowns is to improve the patient experience. They help patients forget their illness for a while, introducing silliness and laughter into their daily routine. Clown doctors visit selected wards at the hospital; this was the first time that hospital clowns interacted with adult patients. In this project, the arts encounters designed by the hospital clowns were held via remote connection, featuring customised armchair journeys and arts sessions suitable for group activities, such as lunchtime orchestra rehearsals.

REFLECTIONS

The projects implemented at Espoo Hospital have proved that engagement with the arts brightens up everyday hospital routines. Methods suitable for patients' needs can be developed through experience, information-gathering and long-term processes. In 'Promoting art, culture and wellbeing at Espoo Hospital', patients gave feedback commending the project for "lifting spirits", "joy" and "nice band rehearsal!", while employees noted how the arts experiences affected patient behaviour: the patients were quick to engage in interaction, they were empowered and became inventive when encouraged by the artists interacting with them. The hospital clowns interacting with adult patients reported a feeling of mutual cultural awareness, allowing an unforced and natural interaction with older people.

The projects also increased the understanding of hospital staff of how art and culture can enrich patients' lives.

'Promoting art, culture and wellbeing at Espoo Hospital' demonstrated that communication is important. The artists prepared brochures describing their activities; these were given to the nurse manager at ward meetings. Ward selections, timetables and session durations were negotiated separately. Once the selected wards knew exactly what was going to happen and when, therapists discussed the event in advance with the patients to find out whether they would be willing to participate in the arts event. The positive feedback received from patients was down to good planning and to actively involving the ward staff in organising the sessions.

“The positive feedback received from patients was down to good planning and to actively involving the ward staff in organising the sessions.”

WHAT NEXT?

The consideration of culture as an element in improving patients' wellbeing, interaction and perceived capabilities has increased at Espoo Hospital as a result of these projects. Staff training on the wellbeing impacts of arts sessions will be continued. The hospital now has a workplace band as well as a workplace choir. The overall aim is to share experiential information with staff so that as many patients as possible will have the opportunity to participate in arts events if they so choose.

Espoo Hospital continues to network with music institutes and arts institutions in the city. Goal-oriented music therapy is included in patient rehabilitation. Mobile devices and remote connections allow access to art independent of the patient's location.

Art and culture are understood to be an integral part of the structures of the City of Espoo. Ensuring that hospitalised patients have access to art is the responsible thing to do, because it contributes to good care and rehabilitation.

‘Sound museums’ and museum packages for lending out

EVOKING MEMORIES WITH AUDIO COLLECTIONS

It is important for museums to devise a wide range of accessible services. In recent years, particular attention has been paid to services for people who are unable to visit museums themselves. In the city of Tampere, this includes ‘sound museums’ for lending out.

ABOUT THE MODEL

For older people in nursing homes, and particularly those with memory disorders, it is important to be able to recall past events from their lives with others. Recalling the past exercises the mind and the memory and helps reflect on a person’s life journey up to the present day. Sharing memories boosts self-esteem and fosters a sense of safety and bonding. Every one of us sometimes recalls something we have not thought about for decades. How did that suddenly come into my mind?

Old objects, sounds and artworks are excellent tools for unearthing memories of the distant past. In Tampere, concepts called ‘sound museums’ and ‘museum packages’ have been developed, along with a free lending service. Staff at nursing homes or day centres can check out material from the Cultural Education Unit TAITE for a period of about two weeks. There are three sound museums that contain digital audio and video recordings: sounds of people working, of animals and of nature; music; voice clips by famous Finnish radio hosts and actors; and sounds of mechanical household devices and tools. Some are historical sounds that can rarely be heard in everyday life today, if at all.

In addition to the sound museums, which travel in briefcases, there are ten museum packages containing objects and photographs offering

inspiration for reflection and exploring various themes in art and cultural history. The museum packages draw on the handling collection of Tampere Museums, which consists of items that can be freely handled and examined, and also contain plenty of photos and documents from the archives in digital form.

The Museum Educator at the Cultural Education Unit TAITE has been in charge of designing, delivering and lending out the sound museums and museum packages for the past 10 years. The principal partners in this project are archive and museum staff and a technical designer with a background in industrial design. Experiences in hosting memory sessions with older people and in collaborating with professionals in social welfare and health care services have been of immense value.

So far, Tampere is the only community in Finland where sound museums have been created. The sound museum concept dates from 2011, which is when Rupriikki Media Museum and media artist Matti Niinimäki first unveiled a desktop sound museum, or sound table. Made of wood, this table is still in use, inspiring the residents of a large care home to reminisce about the sounds of work and recreation in rural and urban environments of the past. Subsequently, design work has focused on how to make the content varied and how to make the whole thing portable. The briefcase design incorporates an attractive audio device made of wood and about 30 ‘records’ each made of plywood and containing an RFID chip that contains the actual sound clip. Sound museums can also be requested for checking out at one special library collection in Tampere.



Photo courtesy of Sound Museum/Teppo Moilanen.

REFLECTIONS

The design process and development of the lending service involved close interaction with staff in services for the elderly and with prospective users themselves. Feedback from users is the foundation of the design work. For the museum packages to work as intended, bringing variety to and increasing interaction in everyday life, the topics include: local history and changes in occupations; old coffee cups and textiles; the contents of a woman's handbag in the 1960s; and childhood clothing and toys. At some sites, the museum packages have prompted community initiatives such as residents and staff setting up exhibitions consisting of their own memorabilia, as well as items from the museum packages.

Staff members have particularly praised how easy the museum packages are to use and how well designed they are. Both the sound

museums and the museum packages include written material with tips or instructions, simple texts and images to support and encourage staff members to explore the material together with residents. One of the sound museums even includes instructions for exercises that can be done to the sounds in the sound museum while seated.

The lending service includes an advisory service and training to encourage borrowers to be bold and inventive in using the materials. As a result, staff members have not just followed instructions but also come up with innovative ways of using the museum packages. Students can also check out museum packages for a concrete opportunity to see in their job training what a positive impact reminiscing can have on older people. The museum packages have expanded and diversified cultural work with older people in social and care services.

“Staff members have not just followed instructions but also come up with innovative ways of using the museum packages.”

The success of the lending service is largely due to publicity. News items and articles in the local press, on TV and on the radio have attracted the attention of family members of older people in care, and visits to educational institutions in the social welfare and health care sector and in the arts sector along with social media updates have made students more aware of and interested in the sound museums and museum packages.

WHAT NEXT?

The newest product in this selection is an Arts Card Deck based on artworks in the collection of the Sara Hildén Art Museum. The images are large (A4 size) and laminated to make them durable and easy to clean. They allow care home residents to discuss contemporary art, to explore shapes and colours, to compare artistic techniques and to enjoy the play of light and shadow. A set of high-quality art supplies is included so that users can also create their own art. Human beings never stop being creative as long as they are alive, and it is important to offer opportunities, guidance and the means to explore individual creativity even in care institutions.

The next addition to the sound museum series is called ‘Nature Moment’ and will be completed in Autumn 2021. Many Finns have a close connection to nature, and the background research for this material involved

surveying older people on their experiences of the natural environment and what kind of materials related to nature they’d like to see. Although it is often not physically possible for residents of senior citizens’ facilities to go out into the natural environment, it is important for them to be able to remember their experiences of nature with others. Opening the Nature Moment briefcase will reveal nature photos and sounds of birdsong, water, forest and meadow and allow users to recall favourite places under trees or in an open landscape, rowing and swimming, or observing animals or natural phenomena. The physical material of the package is the smooth wood or plywood familiar from the sound museums. In addition to the digital materials, there are round Nature Cards made of cardboard that emulate looking at a forest through a telescope to see berries and flowers, mushrooms, trees and animals. The reverse sides of the cards feature Finnish poetry and folk traditions. The Nature Cards also have an educational dimension, including 12 exercises that users can do on their own or with others and are intended to facilitate new nature-related experiences.

The MyLibrary Service

ACCESS TO CULTURE FROM HOME

The City of Turku's MyLibrary Project started with a project in Spring 2018 that found ways to bring culture and leisure services home to those who had difficulty in getting out to those services because of their advanced age, illness or disability. The principal target group were older people living at home and in nursing homes. The outcome of this project was a service offered by the Recreation Division in the City of Turku that allows residents to enjoy culture even when access to services is difficult. The service is free of charge for maximum accessibility.

The population of the Turku region is more than 300,000, with nearly 200,000 living in the city of Turku itself. The demographic profile is the oldest of all large cities in Finland, and this trend will continue to accelerate. The increasing need for accessible services adds resourcing pressures on local authorities. The MyLibrary service is one of the schemes addressing these challenges.

The city's Recreation Division has five service areas: library services, museum services, sports services, youth services and the Turku Philharmonic Orchestra. All services except youth services were involved in developing the MyLibrary service.

There are many libraries in Finland that offer a home service, with library materials delivered to the homes of clients who are unable to visit a library in person, for instance because of mobility issues. With MyLibrary, this service was extended to include digital content made to be accessible to the target group.

ABOUT THE MODEL

The digital services of the Recreation Division have been brought together on an accessible website (omakirjasto.fi). Some third-party services of high quality and free of charge

are also included. The aim was to make the website as clear, easy to use and attractive as possible. MyLibrary provides access to the selected services even for clients who have no previous experience of Internet use. The service can also accommodate a client's possibly diminished ability to use the service due to a memory disorder or decline in motor functions, etc. Navigating the site has been made as easy as possible. Many clients have a hard time finding interesting and high-quality content online, so the selection in this service is deliberately limited on the principle of 'less is more'. Having a clearly defined selection also makes it easy for staff in nursing homes to find digital cultural content.

The website allows access for instance to audio books, e-books, concerts of the Turku Philharmonic, photograph collections of the Turku Museum Centre and exercise activities. The service is principally meant for older residents of the Turku region and therefore focuses on content from that region. However, MyLibrary has been discovered and is being used in other municipalities across Finland too.

Omakirjasto.fi is a website, not a separate application, so it can be used on any device with which the client is familiar, whether that's a tablet, a smart phone or an old desktop computer. MyLibrary also lends out tablets to clients to try out the service if they have no Internet-capable device of their own.

The website can be used independently, but for clients who need help and support, the library offers personal assistance and simple instructions on paper. Older people who do not have family members to support them are the most challenging sub-group, and a cooperation programme with volunteers from the Finnish Red Cross has been launched



Photo courtesy of MyLibrary Project/Tiia Suorsa.

to assist them. A volunteer assistant may visit a client to instruct them in basic skills around how to use the device and the service.

REFLECTIONS

Clients themselves were included in the design of the service from the start. We acquired tablets at the start of the project, and students in social welfare and health care were recruited to help trial clients explore various digital services. Through this, we gained information on what services clients were interested in and how competent they were in using them. We also gained information on the sort of devices that clients were likely to have and what instructions and support they would need.

These experiences gave us benchmarks for service development: we eliminated services that were too complex to use, improved our instructions and designed support functions. We also noticed that not all older people have the capability to use digital services even if

they have the motivation to do so. On the other hand, we discovered that motivation depends crucially on having a genuine interest in the content of the services available, because interest will inspire clients to learn new things. Paying bills or managing a pension online are not particularly inspiring reasons for learning digital skills, but pleasant and interesting online content helps lower the threshold for using the Internet for other things as well.

WHAT NEXT?

The current MyLibrary operating model is a solid foundation for further development. The project has facilitated long-term development of the service, and awareness of the service has increased among professionals and clients in services for the elderly. Collaboration with third sector organisations in the city also helps disseminate information, enrich the content and improve the potential for interactive operations to evolve in MyLibrary.

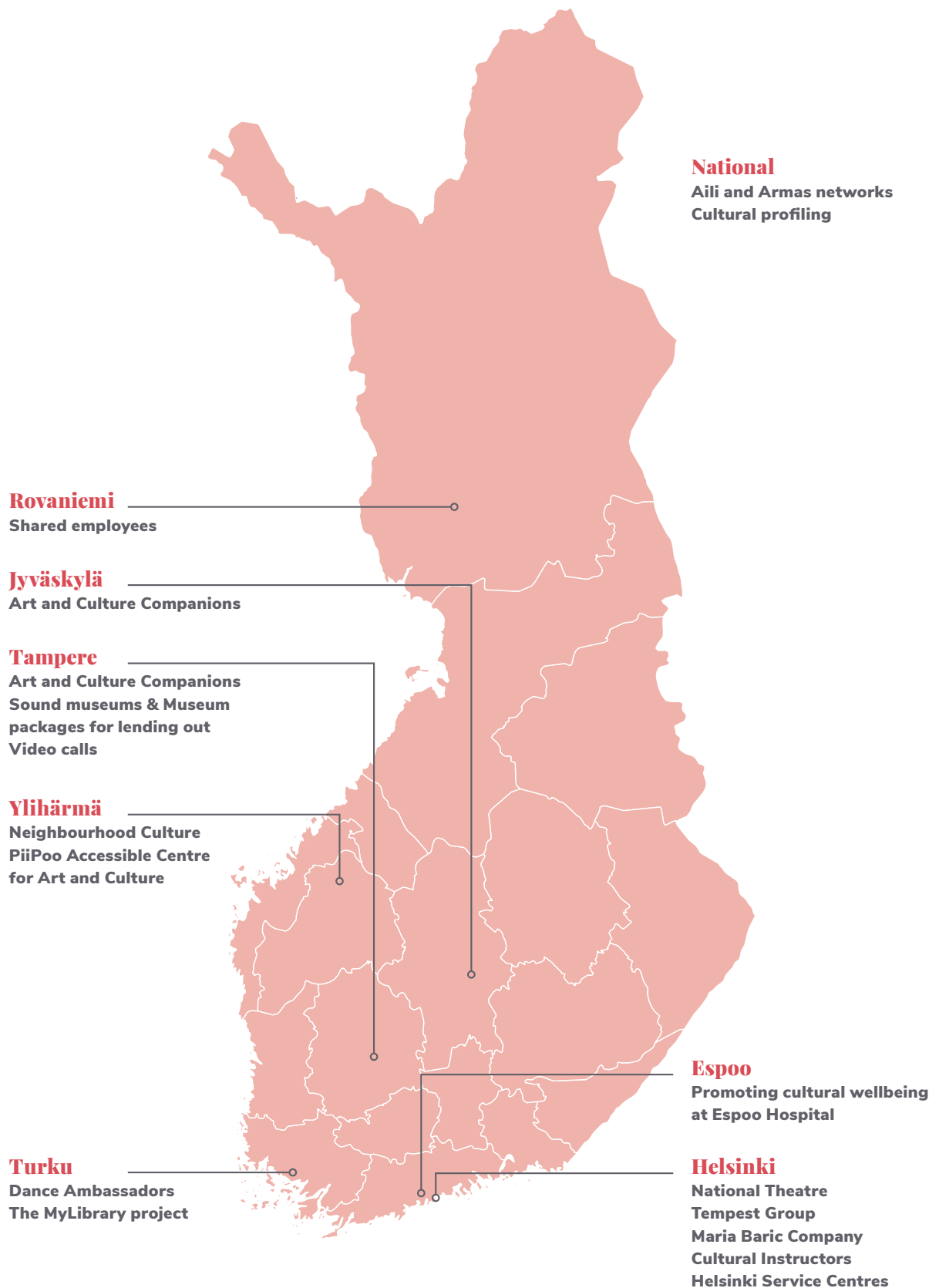
MyLibrary will continue as a service provided by the Recreation Division of the City of Turku while also linking to new projects. The Turku City Library is launching a new project named 'Digisakki' (Digicrowd) with several third sector parties which aims to prevent digital exclusion. Senior citizens are one target group in this scheme. The project is designed to introduce clients to new digital services and means of communication while contributing to social interaction.

The City of Turku Services for the Elderly and the Turku City Library are jointly running a project where library staff are training staff in services for the elderly in the use of the MyLibrary service as part of the daily recreational activities for senior citizens.

In Spring 2020, the coronavirus pandemic confined older people to their homes without access to services. MyLibrary quickly responded by increasing its content with its own productions – streamed events and recordings. The organisation is lightweight and allows

such rapid responses. Loneliness is the main challenge in society today, and older people have a desperate need for human contact. Accordingly, MyLibrary's development is currently focused on interactive services. There are similar development efforts at the national level. In the future, MyLibrary will form part of a national digital service platform for older people, currently under development in the 'Lämpö' (Foyer) project jointly run by five major Finnish cities.

Map of projects



Conclusion

*“I see the sea foaming
and I stop here.
I smell the waves of the fading sea.
I taste the salty skin of the herring.
I hear the life of the fishes.
I feel the spirit of the breeze that passes
through my skin.
I remember the song of the sea.”*

Text about the sea jointly written with older residents

Creative ageing in Finland and the UK – similarities and contrasts

There are a number of ways in which creative ageing provision and activity in Finland bears a strong resemblance to what is happening in the UK. Sometimes this has been due, at least in part, to the power of international exchange. For instance, the national creative ageing festival in Finland, Armas (page 11) which launched in 2017 as part of celebrations to mark the centenary of Finnish independence, was modelled on Luminare, the national festival in Scotland, a similar sized nation. (Luminare itself owed its origin to the older Bealtaine festival in the Republic of Ireland.)

Another good example of a similar model is the use of ‘art and culture companions’ in the cities of Tampere and Jyväskylä amongst others (page 24) which is highly comparable to the long-standing model of Cultural Champions in Greater Manchester. Different but related are the Neighbourhood Culture groups (page 27) which don’t have a precise British equivalent but are reminiscent of the many organisations that are members of Voluntary Arts (now Creative Lives) and of the University of the Third Age. PiiPoo has much in common with a number of multi-arts centres across the UK such as The Mac in Birmingham and The Albany in South London which have an especially strong interest in older community members as part of their inclusive approach.

When adding the intergenerational approach of the RockHubs which is reaching out beyond Finland, a strong theme of work that involves the community using the arts is evident in both countries.

There has been some interest in creative ageing in hospitals in the UK as part of a vibrant ‘arts and health’ movement. So, the examples of work in Espoo (page 53) would not be unknown; however, it is rare for a British hospital to specialise in the care of the elderly.

The work of either arts companies with a strong focus on working with older people (see for example, the Tempest Group or Maria Baric’s Puppetry Company, see page 36 and 39 respectively) or broader companies with an important strand of work, such as the Touring Stage of the Finnish National Theatre (page 45) and Accessible Orchestras (page 47) would have many comparable examples in the UK, some of which are listed in Baring Foundation reports such as *Older and Wiser?*.¹¹ The work of the Dance Ambassadors (page 42) may not have a precise British equivalent but there are a number of projects in the UK around dance including the Company of Elders at Sadler’s Wells, Dance On by Yorkshire Dance and Green Candle Dance, some of which will work in care homes occasionally. Another case study with which is hard to find a comparison is the innovative RockHubs (see page 33) bringing together the generations around a love of rock music, a model which is already gaining interest around the world.

Similarly, there has been a lot of work by museums and art galleries in the UK to make them accessible to older people. This has come from several different drivers. The family-friendly museums movement in Britain has been highly influential, as has the initiative by the Metropolitan Museum in New York to reach out to people living with dementia which was called Meet me at MoMA. Among many

¹¹ *Older and Wiser? Creative Ageing in the UK 2010-2019*, Dr Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt, King’s College London, 2019. Available at: baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/older-and-wiser-creative-ageing-in-the-uk-2010-19.



Photo courtesy of the Finnish National Theatre/Sanna Breilin

examples in the UK has been the Age Friendly Museums Network led by the British Museum and the House of Memories developed by the National Museums Liverpool and now replicated around the world. So the Sound Museums initiative in Tampere (page 55) would find itself in good company, although the use of sound tracks is a clever twist!

The major contrast between Finland and the UK is the role and resources of the state, especially at local government level. In the UK local authorities have lost roughly half their budget in the last decade or so and have concentrated heavily on statutory duties, such as child protection. (It is also important to remember that the UK is formed of four 'home nations' with somewhat different funding and arrangements for local authorities in each.) There has been some involvement of UK local authorities which we explored in a Baring Foundation report in 2017 called *The role*

*of local authorities in creative ageing*¹². This has been especially true of Greater Manchester and the small network of 'Age Friendly Cities' which might be compared to the ALLI Network (page 11), but with fewer dedicated resources. A highly significant difference is that Finnish cities are responsible for both health and social care with an integrated budget. Although there are differences between the local authorities in the four nations of the UK – in England for instance they are only responsible for a very small budget for Public Health – primary and secondary health services are not funded by local authorities and are delivered through the separate National Health Service. It is therefore a very different framework.

It is true to say that the impetus for creative ageing in the UK has largely come instead from arts organisations. There are several factors behind this: the large number of arts organisations across the UK and their strong

¹² *The role of local authorities in creative ageing*, David Cutler/The Baring Foundation, 2017. Available at: baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/the-role-of-local-authorities-in-creative-ageing.

tradition of community participation, as well as the influence of the four national Arts Councils as funding and development agencies.

The relative prominence of the state in Finland has a number of important consequences. Firstly municipalities can take a leadership role, for instance by making organisational changes such as shared employees working across the culture and social and health departments (page 8). Secondly there are local authority services in Finland which simply don't have an equivalent in the UK. The most relevant example here are the Service Centres (page 50).

Thirdly and linked to this, are the very different ways in which social care in the UK and Finland are provided. Both have home or 'domiciliary' care as well residential centres called care homes or nursing homes, depending on the level of nursing need. However, in the UK it is widely recognised that social care is severely and chronically underfunded. As in Finland, there is a mixed economy of provision, mainly by for profit and not for profit organisations, and to a decreasing extent by local authorities. But in Finland the role of the state is much greater and leads to a more coherent and collaborative approach within a clear framework. So, although there is a great deal of interest in providing creative activities to older people using social care, it is hard to organise in the UK, particularly at scale. Arguably this has led to the UK lagging behind Finland. A good example of this is Finland's development of the new role of Cultural Instructor in Helsinki. Where once these roles would have been similar to Activity Providers in Britain, the Cultural Instructors come from arts backgrounds and are more specialist.

It has been estimated that budgets for public libraries in the UK have been reduced by over a quarter in the last ten years, and so it is again interesting to see the role that a well-resourced, dynamic library service can play in creative ageing (see the MyLibrary Project, page 58). There are exceptions in the UK such as in Gateshead which has led a similar project.

Finally, although by necessity there has been a huge expansion in the provision of digital creative ageing in the UK during the pandemic as documented in the 2020 Baring Foundation report, *Key workers: Creative ageing in lockdown and after*¹³, it is hard not to think that Finland is further ahead here (see page 17, for example). The ubiquity of the use of ipads or other tablet devices as part of the organisation of home care services in Finland makes them an ideal conduit for cultural services too. This also relates to the desire in Finland to make the best possible use of data, which is significantly assisted by widespread use of digital technology in care. As far as we are aware the Resident Assessment Instrument (RAI) (see page 20) is not widely used in social care in the UK. However, the integration of culture could still take place in the care planning that does take place in British care homes and it would be a major step forward.

All this together prompts the conclusion that the Finnish way of developing creative ageing has been much more **systematic** than in the UK, using the strong state levers of policy creation and unified delivery. This can be seen at the policy level in the Municipal Cultural Activities Act 2019, organisationally through unified health and social care budgets with joint staffing on social welfare and culture, and in delivery through the city/municipality-owned Service Centres and the new posts of Cultural Instructors with their professional arts backgrounds.

Creative ageing must always be a product of the society in which it is developed, although the value of culture as a human right is universal. We hope that the case studies in this report shine a light on the rich array of work taking place in Finland and act as an inspiration for others and a prompt for further dialogue and exchange.

¹³ *Key workers: creative ageing in lockdown and after*; David Cutler/The Baring Foundation, 2020. Available at: baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/key-workers-creative-ageing-in-lockdown-and-after.

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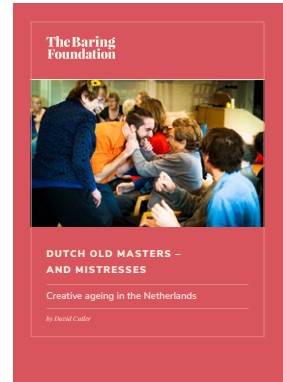
Older and wiser?
Creative ageing in the UK 2010-19
Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt, King's College London
2019



Key workers: creative ageing in lockdown and beyond
David Cutler
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