



# Let us be active!

Social inclusion of older people through volunteering in Estonia, Latvia and Finland

Aija Vecenane  
Welfare Department  
Riga City Council  
Latvia  
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## “Let us be active!”

- May 2015 – 28 February 2017
- Problem: **social exclusion and loneliness of older people**
- Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association, Pärnu, Riga and Turku
- Co-financed by Central Baltic Program: EUR 264 007 EUR (85%/15%)





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## What did we do?

- Mapped the already existing volunteering activities available and suitable for older people
- Conducted surveys and interviews with seniors and professionals to find out how they can be involved in volunteering
- Organized workshops and trainings for seniors and social workers
- Developed new volunteering activities for seniors (Tripfriend activity, call centre)
- Created an information and support system for seniors (call centre, online platforms)





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## Case study of the Volunteer call centre in Riga

### Rationale:

- 148 865 people of retirement age (23 %) of Riga residents (2014)
- Women in Latvia live on average by 10 years longer than men
- Seniors often feel lonely and socially excluded that affects their health and wellbeing
- Seniors with their skills and knowledge can make significant contribution to the society





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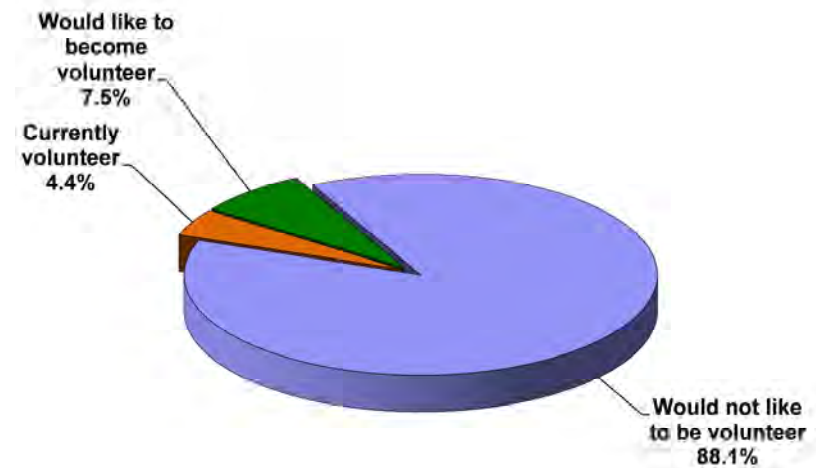
## Survey

### Interviews:

- 300 seniors (direct interviews)
- 50 social workers (Internet)

### Results:

- 4.4% currently volunteer
- 7.5% would like to volunteer





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## Volunteer call centre

- Established in February 2016
- 4 hours every weekday
- 3 mobile phones
- Riga 1st Hospital
- Call-back
- Topics of calls: cultural events, social issues, simple chat, volunteering, dating





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## Challenges

- Wrong expectations based on the survey results
- No previous operators' experience
- Difficulties to reach lonely, socially excluded people at home:
  - specific features of Latvian mentality
  - promotional ads (TV, radio) rather expensive
- Commitment and motivation
- Involvement of men





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## Success

- New and innovative service established
- 70 volunteers
- Strengthened cooperation with the local libraries, day care centres and NGOs
- Raised awareness about volunteering
- Sustainability







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## Lessons learned

- Seniors have a strong need to be socially active
- Volunteering can improve life satisfaction of older people
- Daily communication is very important
- «Thank you!» and bonuses increase motivation
- How to activate those really excluded – partly unsolved





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## Future

*«Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts».* (Winston Churchill)

Volunteer Call Centre in 2018:

- new premises
- computer/Internet
- activities to attract new volunteers
- other municipalities/countries interested





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# Thank you!

