



O4O : Older People for Older People
Independent living • active communities • flexible services

Finland



In Finland, management of **O4O** is undertaken by a business development organisation called *Pielisen Karjalan Kehittämiskeskus Oy* (PIKES), based in Nurmes. This organisation has experience of working with the municipalities in North Karelia and employed a Project manager to work with communities to develop the **O4O** concept. Volunteering has a low profile in

Finland where, currently, less than 10% of services for older people are organised through the voluntary sector. As a consequence, **O4O** is working with existing voluntary and community organisations to increase their capacity and has created a volunteering model to make it easier for people to volunteer through **O4O** structures. An increase in volunteering activity will help older people in remote and rural villages.





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Ystävänpysäkki – Nurmes

In Nurmes, the O4O project team is working with the Ystävänpysäkki (Place of Friendship) which is a social meeting place and activity centre run by volunteers, for older citizens. The O4O Project Manager is working with this established social organisation to develop the profile and support structures for volunteering with the aim of increasing the amount of volunteer time available. It is anticipated that this will have a knock-on effect on the range and capacity of services designed to enable older people to live longer, healthily and happily in their own homes and communities. O4O is also aiming to create and implement a volunteering model that can be replicated in different towns and to create a mobile Ystävänpysäkki that can be taken to older people living in the most isolated communities.





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Lieksa Municipality

In consultation with older people in the villages of Vuonislahti and Koli, the **O4O** project manager identified the need for transport for older people who were to be enabled and 'helping' services if they were to remain in their own homes and villages. The **O4O** project team worked alongside the Vuonislahti Village Association and a group of villagers in Koli to explore alternative models for providing these services and to develop transport in Koli.





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Partnership working

In addition to working with existing voluntary and community organisations, O4O in Finland is collaborating with the Social Services department of North Karelia University of Applied Sciences. University students have interviewed older people in Nurmes, Lieksa and the municipality of Valtimo about their needs, and the university held a recreation day with O4O participation, for people who are carers of close relatives. Students at the university are able to use themes from O4O initiatives as part of their theses and to undertake work placements with O4O as part of their studies.

The future

The O4Os in Finland will need funding support, increased volunteer capacity and someone to coordinate activities in order to continue - Ystävänpysäkki has made a funding application for a volunteer support and development. There are also plans for mobile Ystävänpysäkki to visit the more remote villages and premises for a new Ystävänpysäkki in Valtimo have been found. In Lieksa and Koli transportation issues are being addressed by Rural Transport Solutions, another NPP funded project.

