



Univerza v Ljubljani



# Social isolation of older men and ways of overcoming it by involvement in community

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OLD GUYS SAY YES TO COMMUNITY  
Final Conference, Ljubljana, 11. May 2019

DEJAVNEJŠA UDELEŽBA STAREJŠIH  
MOŠKIH V SKUPNOSTI  
Zaključna konferenca, Ljubljana, 11. maj 2019

# Background facts about „Old guys“ in Estonia

**39 interviews in East**

**Estonia: 150 000**  
inhabitants, 80% of non-  
Estonians

**61 interviews in South-**

**Estonia: 100 000**  
inhabitants; mostly  
Estonian speakers



# Background facts about „Old guys“ in Estonia

**36 passive**

**64 regularly active in  
NGO or in a paid work or  
in a informal activity**

39 from the cities

61 from rural areas



# What kind of active ageing Estonia is supporting:

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2012: the Ministry drafted an adequate development plan for active ageing, **but this was left without a budget.**

2016: the Active aging development plan was integrated with the Welfare development plan, **but only partially.**

It covers older people learning only **in the context of labour market.**

The Strategy of LLLL defines “all adults as the learners”, but the learning goals are limited to individuals **up to 64 years.**



# Some facts about 60+ Estonian men

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Life expectancy: men **73** yrs women 82 yrs

55–64 year old : **87%** live with a partner (74% of women)

65–74 year old: **83%** live with a partner (50% of women)

Educational gap in the 65+ age group is either absent or in favour of men

55–64 year old: 72% are working, 12% working pensioners, 12% non-working pensioners

65–74 year old: 6% are working, 39% working pensioners, 55% non-working pensioners

# Some facts about 60+ Estonian men

## Health rating:

	Very good, good	Not good not bad	Bad, very bad
<b>Men</b>			
55–64	34	46	20
65 and older	18	50	32
<b>Women</b>			
55–64	38	45	17
65 and older	17	47	36

Allikas: Statistikaameti andmebaas, 2018

## Poverty and deprivation:

	Men		Women	
	50–64	65 and older	50–64	65 and older
Relative poverty rate	20	36	18	53
Material deprivation	14	11	15	17

# What is the 60 Estonian male like? (SHARE, 2017)

Age group	Voluntary work			Courses and trainings			Activities in clubs			Local management		
	M	W	SHARE M	M	W	SHARE M	M	W	SHARE M	M	W	SHARE M
55-59	11.1	17.3	14.6	19.9	34.0	14.1	17.9	27.2	26.4	4.4	5.5	7.1
60-64	6.9	14.2	14.9	14.1	26.9	10.8	14.4	23.1	25.5	5.0	3.5	7.5
65-69	9.5	11.3	16.1	9.5	16.1	7.0	16.4	19.4	26.1	5.6	3.1	8.0
70-74	7.9	9.5	16.5	5.4	7.0	6.5	13.9	22.1	27.5	4.3	2.8	8.0
75-79	7.1	7.9	13.9	4.1	4.0	4.4	12.0	17.3	25.0	4.1	3.0	6.8
80-84	5.6	5.8	9.5	3.5	2.5	2.9	6.6	11.7	20.8	2.5	2.2	5.5
Total 55-84	8.2	11.0	14.7	10.0	14.9	8.0	14.1	20.2	25.6	4.5	3.3	7.4
55-64	8.9	15.6	14.8	16.9	30.1	12.2	16.1	25.0	25.9	4.7	4.4	7.3
65-74	8.8	10.5	16.2	7.7	11.8	6.8	15.3	20.7	26.7	5.0	3.0	8.0
75-84	7.1	7.9	13.9	4.1	4.0	4.4	12.0	17.3	25.0	4.1	3.0	6.8
75+	4.7	4.2	7.5	3.0	1.7	2.5	8.3	9.7	17.3	1.8	2.5	4.3

SHARE 2017

# Some observations of social health

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**The most active provider of activities for men is the Chamber of Disabled People.**

Men's opportunities **to prevent** physical and mental decline are smaller compared with the opportunities **to relieve the consequences** of physical and mental disabilities.

**Choirs and dance clubs are popular but *only* among those few men, who have been exercised this in their middle age.**

Municipality officers frequently referred to the choirs and dance groups which were prominent in their region, believing that through these groups all social needs of older people in this region are met.



# Getting older does not make one immediately active

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1/5 of men had never attended any organisation and do not do so currently

Many passive men mentioned their previous membership in communist league, communist party, law enforcement or other organisations, which no longer exist.

*I was a trade union member in the Soviet period. Everyone had to belong back then. I do not want to belong to anything now.*

The compulsory nature of membership in Soviet organisations has had rather negative effect on their today's decisions related to community involvement.

# Lack of time and lack of provision as obstacles

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Rural men have many duties at home.

On the other hand, the argument of lack of time was also **used as an excuse** revealing the real reasons like:

- available local activities are too frequent
- the man does not actually believe that he could take part.

For many older men the reasons of passivity are  
the absence of provision of activities attractive for older men  
difficulties in overcoming logistical problems.

# Bad health as explanation of passivity

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The most frequent explanation of lack of activity is bad physical health.

Health in turn was often viewed as a synonym of old age. The desire to be active has disappeared due to age rather than health.

- *Currently not attending any training. In the future? .... Well, no. Health does not allow. Cannot say anything more. I would have enough time and everything.*

The need to keep arguments „old age“ and „bad health“ separately

# Recommendations to municipalities

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**Map** the older men: how many live alone, what are their skills and interests.

Determine the **channels of communication** suitable for the target group

**Recruit** more active older men to invite their passive friends to attend activities

Review **transport** issues.

Find opportunities for older men for **using their skills**.

Organise events for **meeting other (unfamiliar)** men.

Recognise older men for their life's work, e.g. display memorial plates on buildings or localities where people have built or achieved something.

# Invite older men to your undertakings

Vlog: Ageing for beginners

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vxi01PePhRs>

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