



## THE FREDERICIA LIFE LONG LIVING PROGRAMME

### SECTOR

Long-term care (social care, rehabilitation and re-enablement, prevention, independent living)

### COUNTRY

Denmark

### LEAD ORGANISATION

The [Municipality of Fredericia](#), in contact with [AGE Platform Europe](#), the European network of non-profit organisations of and for people aged 50+

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### DESCRIPTION

Like many other cities in Europe, the municipality of Fredericia is undergoing a rapid process of demographic ageing. Fredericia expects an increase in its spending in care services of about €6.1 million by 2020. This pressure on human and financial resources led the authorities of the municipality to profoundly rethink their perspective on care delivery to older people. The ambition was to bring an overall paradigm shift in the sector.

In this context, the Life Long Living Programme was set up in 2008, with the aim to replace a system based on passive service delivery and compensatory care with one driven by the concept of "re-enabling" care. Through this project, the Fredericia municipality has turned the interaction between citizens and the

municipality 180 degrees. The municipality now focuses on the resources presented by older people, instead of looking at their limitations. The intention of this new way of interacting is to assist older people in having control over their own lives.

Older people are helped and trained so that they can regain their autonomy to perform various daily tasks such as cleaning, dressing, shopping, cooking, watering flowers, taking a bath, enjoying leisure activities or socialising with friends and family. Thanks to this support, they gain confidence in their own capacity to live autonomously and remain active in society. Little by little, older people increase their physical abilities and start coping on their own or with less help from the Elderly Care Department. Several partners were involved in the project and



brought their expertise to its design, including the Council of Elderly Citizens of the municipality of Fredericia, several civil society organisations representing older people, as well as researchers from University College Lillebaelt. Caregivers' trade unions were also consulted, and have been involved in the implementation phase as well as assessment of the programme.

### **A SOCIAL INVESTMENT APPROACH**

Empowerment and participation are founding principles of the Life Long Living Programme.

As they gain freedom and independence in performing everyday life activities, older people become able to actively participate in society. Thanks to the programme, they feel empowered; rather than being perceived as a burden, they can be considered as strengths to their community.

Older people also fully participate in the implementation of the programme. A Citizens' Involvement Group, made up of ten senior citizens, has been given the responsibility of providing constructive input into and criticism of the initiative, and to bring feedback from their peers. This Group is vital to promote the engagement of older people in this process that directly affects them and would not work without their support.

With this focus on empowerment and participation, the Fredericia Life Long Living Programme is a brilliant example of good practice in terms of social investment. By

investing in people, improving their lives and preventing hardship instead of trying to repair its damaging consequences, it saves significant costs in the long-term. The fact that every individual's desires, resources and possibilities are taken into account is also essential, since the initiative can only be successful if it is considered to be meaningful by every beneficiary.

### **MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS**

The greatest achievement of this new rehabilitative and practice-oriented approach is of course the satisfaction of older people in the municipality. The results of an evaluation of the programme are extremely encouraging; 84.8 % of the beneficiaries have improved their quality of life, with 45.9 % of them being completely empowered and becoming able to live an independent life again, and 38.9 % of them needing less help than previously required. Employees in the Elderly Care Department also expressed significantly greater job satisfaction and are more engaged with the new working methods and the new interaction with senior citizens. A decrease in sick absence has been observed as well.

Moreover, the project brings very tangible financial gains. The cost of services provided by the municipality has decreased significantly by approximately €170,000 per month – more than €2 million per year. The saved money is directly used to cover the growing number of people in need of rehabilitation services due to an ageing population. Therefore, with the same

amount of money, support is provided to more people.

Finally, the success of the programme also convinced the Danish government to set up a commission to revise the laws on social services in order to incorporate the Life Long Living approach in the legislative framework. Since 2012, the Fredericia Model has been integrated in the Danish national budget as a model of good practice for all Danish municipalities.

### **LOOKING FORWARD**

The approach promoted by Life Long Living in Fredericia could be easily applied to other countries and regions, if care providers receive appropriate training to be able to properly communicate competences and skills.

The city of Fredericia is currently in contact with other municipalities outside of Denmark, including in Finland, Norway, Sweden, France and the Netherlands, all of which show great interest in the project.