

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

1. Title of the practice

Active Participation Centres for older people

2. Organisation responsible for the practice

Regional Ministry of Equality, Health and Social Policies of the Regional Government of Andalucía, Spain

3. Contact person(s)

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4. Summary of the practice

In this regional initiative, a series of centres were set up to support and boost active ageing policies at a regional level by a legal modification that turned the former “Day Centres” into “Active Participation Centres” (from Decree 122/1997 to Decree 72/2012). Hence, the centres already existed and depended on the Regional Ministry, which eased their use as centres of active ageing that promote greater volunteering and participation of older people in decision-making.

It is a strategy aimed at bringing active ageing policies closer to the senior citizens, as well as enabling them to participate in the decision-making process. It has been implemented as a consequence of adapting previous structures to new needs, creating structures that are more democratic, increasing social participation, and widening dissemination of active and healthy ageing policies.

The active participation centres introduce the notion of healthy lifestyle improvements through their activities. They organise social, cultural, recreational, musical and sport activities, crafts, tourism and self-help activities. Activities are classified in three groups: mobility, handicraft skills and cognitive decline, and emotional skills. In addition to these workshops, the centres may also offer services such as legal advice, podiatry and hairdressing and interact with other initiatives such as Active Tourism run by Inturjovent (see “Links to other initiatives”). The centres also support the delivery of social services. Finally, they organise activities around key dates such as the “Older People’s Day” or the “Día de Andalucía”, celebrating the autonomy of the region. There is only one organisation involved, the Regional Ministry for Equality, Health and Social Policies.

Lessons learnt:

- The effective incorporation of older people through participation in the decision-making is a landmark in a new managerial model.
- The incorporation of volunteering activities is an important dimension in terms of participation and sustainability.

5. National/regional/local context of the practice

There is a general policy on active ageing, the framework of which was established in the White Book on Active Ageing drafted by a multi-sector team of experts and published by the regional government of Andalusia in 2010. Its main goal is to develop policies that encompass these four dimensions: security, healthy life, participation and life-long learning. This general framework was supported and complemented by the publication of the national White Book of Active Ageing, by the National Institute of Older People and Social Services in 2011. This policy document includes other aspects like the image of older people in the media or economy.

6. Staff involved

A network of 168 centres throughout the region of Andalucia promote older people's welfare by boosting their social interaction and participation, not only in activities but also as volunteers and decision-makers.

The catalogue of workshops and activities is enriched by volunteers from the members of the centres who design and lead new activities.

The new statute of these centres, passed in 2012, consider them as an essential forum for the promotion of active ageing, as a place to provide services and activities necessary for the Strategic Plans on Active Ageing approved by the Regional Ministry of Equality, Health and Social Policies.

7. Target group

The active participation centres are open to people over the age of 60.

8. Aims of the practice

- Provide older people with information, resources and opportunities to keep physically and socially active and healthy.
- Spread active ageing policies.
- Serve as community centres that bring active ageing policies approved by the Regional Ministry of Equality, Health and Social Policies closer to older people.
- Give access to services (hairdressers, podiatrists, healthy canteen) at more affordable prices.
- Involve older people in decision-making and provide opportunities for volunteering.

9. Issues for social services

Service Integration/ Cooperation across services		Service Planning		Contracting	
Technology		Skills development (of the workforce)		Quality of services	x
Prevention and rehabilitation	x	Participation of service users	x	Volunteering	x

ANALYSIS OF THE PRACTICE

10. Status

Pilot project (ongoing)		Project (ongoing)		Implemented practice (restricted areas)	
Pilot project (terminated)		Project (terminated)		Widely spread practice/rolled out	x

11. Scope of the practice

Describe the setting of the practice, considering the following criteria:

- *Micro level practice:* practice that involves individuals at local level
- *Meso level practice:* practice that involves organisations or communities
- *Macro level practice:* practice that involves large population groups

Meso level initiative, targeting older people across communities.

12. Leadership and management of the practice

Description of the leadership of the practice, considering the following criteria:

- *Collaborative management*: shared between large partnerships, often of central, regional and local representation
- *Organisational management*: by one organisation
- *Professional management*: managed by a single person
- *Shared management*: shared with no defined leadership

Organisational management: Each centre has its own director, who is employed by the Regional Ministry. The public procurement for the services rendered in the active participation centres have been centralised under a single contract managed by the Regional Ministry. That allows the Regional Ministry to optimise expenditure and ensure budget control. Daily monitoring is the responsibility of the centre director, a civil servant who reports periodically to the General Directorate of Older People within the Regional Ministry.

13. Engaging stakeholders in the practice

Description of the engagement of stakeholders, considering the following criteria:

- *Individual practice*: individuals have sought practice change
- *Network approach*: one or more organisations develop a network
- *Collaborative approach*: large collaboration with relevant stakeholders

Older people, the regional administration and providers are the main three stakeholders, although it is important to highlight that this good practice is set up on pre-existing structures dating back to mid-1980s.

Access to services: Information campaigns and meetings are carried out at the beginning of the year, with a focus on the target population. Although most participants are over 65, people can opt in from the day they turn 60.

Volunteers: The catalogue of workshops and activities is enriched by volunteers from the members of the centres who design and lead new activities.

14. Involvement of service users and their families

Description of the involvement of service users, considering the following criteria:

- *Team involvement*: service users and carers were part of the practice team
- *Consultative*: a consultative body of users was set up for an on-going dialogue and feedback
- *Involvement in care*: person-centred approaches to care/support

Team involvement and consultative: Participation of older people is not only limited to being recipients of the activities and services. Older people participate in the active ageing policy design through the Andalusian Older People's Council; in the management of the centres through the Participation Board; in specific areas of the organisation of programmes through Commissions; and in the selection of the members of the Participation Board through the General Assembly.

15. Costs and resources needed for implementation

Description of how the practice is financed, considering the following criteria:

- *Within existing resources*: staff time and other resources are provided 'in-house'
- *Staffing costs*: costs for staff investment
- *Joint/Pooled budgets*: two or more agencies pool budgets to fund services
- *Funded project*: external investment

The annual budget of the network of centres, including staff (more than 600 employees), management and activities amounts to EUR 45 million for the whole region. It must be taken into account that Andalusia is a region with more than 8.5 million inhabitants, 16 percent of whom are over 65. This percentage is expected to rise to 30 percent by 2050.

16. Evaluation approaches

Description of the evaluation method of the practice, considering the following criteria:

- *Multi-method*: use of both a qualitative and a quantitative approach
- *Single method*: qualitative or quantitative approach
- *Audit*: looks at data sources such as existing medical records, and/or other routinely collected service data.
- *Informal*: refers to in-house service evaluation using locally designed tools and/or collecting opportunistic feedback
- *No evaluation*
- *An evaluation is planned*

Audit and informal: Annual memos and regular satisfaction surveys are conducted for service assessment, but these were only introduced recently.

Mostly evidence has been obtained through informal feedback. A new team is in the process of creating standard feedback mechanisms. Changes have started with the single centralised procurement procedure.

17. Measurable effects of the practice and what it has achieved for...

Service users	<p>Perceptual/measurable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people's participation and autonomy is increased. • The centres seek to ease the pathway to ageing. • It guarantees a broad spectrum of activities and services that can meet the needs of a variety of beneficiaries. • It keeps older people connected to networks not only inside the centre, but also to other environments and agencies, with a focus on prevention and an intergenerational perspective.
Formal care givers	n. a.
Informal carers	<p>Measurable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal caregivers' time spent caring for the service user is reduced.
Organisations	<p>Perceptual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations are experiencing increased opportunities for interacting with this segment of the population. This is happening alongside the current move to integrated health and social care agencies which may reduce the burden on the care system.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The establishment of a communication channel between the public administration and older people to ease policy design and implementation in the field of active ageing.

18. Anticipated or 'aspirational' effects of the practice and what it has achieved for...

This category can include outcomes which are not documented, quantified or properly evaluated. They can include such elements as improved knowledge, quality, workforce, etc.

Service users	n. a.
Formal care givers	n. a.
Informal carers	n. a.
Organisations	n. a.

Other	n. a.
19. How the practice has changed the way the service is provided (lessons learned)	
<p>The need for care can be delayed by keeping older people active and healthy for longer. It also encourages them to take a more proactive role in their care.</p>	
20. Sustainability of the practice	
<p><i>Description of whether the practice is sustainable, considering the following criteria:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Potential for sustainability:</i> practice was newly started or is on-going/not yet mainstreamed. How could the practice be sustained (in terms of resources)? • <i>Organic sustainability:</i> service users have been empowered to take the practice forward • <i>Established:</i> the project has been operational for several years 	
<p>Potential for sustainability: this is possible since the procurement mechanism has been improved towards a more efficient and durable (2-year period) model and the contribution of volunteers have increased. However, in some cases the infrastructure (old buildings) needs to be improved and often technological equipment is obsolete and requires new investment.</p>	
21. Transferability of the practice	
<p><i>Description of whether the practice has been transferred, considering the following criteria:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Transferred:</i> transfer to other regions, countries, service user groups, etc. • <i>Potential for transferability:</i> there is interest from the outside; elements of the practice have been taken up and used elsewhere; material for transferability (for ex. training material) has been developed 	
<p>The initiative has not been transferred elsewhere.</p>	
<p>Potential for transferability: this is possible although it needs a considerable initial investment. In the case of Andalusia, the centres were built and belong to the regional government, which made it easier to organise the centres and define their aims. However, similar initiatives could be carried out in partnership with other entities (for instance older people's associations) for them to establish permanent collaboration with the public administration and a commitment to the active ageing policies through a memorandum of understanding. Public funding to ensure steady and quality activities is advised in any case. The central headquarters are in the process of compiling this information, since local initiatives have not been reported in a systematic way. A specific training for directors of these centres was conducted in 2009, when policies started emphasising the active and healthy ageing. Specific material on management, active ageing and sociology was design in a set of three different 60-page booklets.</p>	
22. Further information	
<p>Encuentros de Mayores. INTURJOVEN. https://www.inturjovent.com/actividades/encuentros-de-mayores</p>	