

# Strength in old age – Health exercise programme for older adults (2005–2015)

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## Background and aim

With the help of health exercise, the Strength in Old Age Programme aims to promote the autonomy and quality of life of independently living older adults (75+) with decreased functional capacity. The programme is coordinated by the Age Institute and financed by Finland's Slot Machine Association, Ministry of Education and Culture, and Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

38 municipalities were chosen for a three-year development in three stages (2010-2015). The municipalities aimed to implement the best practices developed in the first stage (2005-2009) in exercise counseling, strength and balance exercise and outdoor exercise.

## Action

Local development was done in cooperation groups including coordinators for social and health care, sports, and NGOs. Local work was supported with the interactive mentoring of the Age Institute including counseling, training, learning materials, and development tools for evaluation.

In addition, cross-sectorial collaboration improved, more target group older adults were reached and the inclusion of older people increased with the help of exercise councils. Mentoring received a grade of 3,8 (scale 1–5).

## Conclusion

Key results included cross-sectorial collaboration, increased knowhow through training, and committed decision-makers. The national programme, learning in networks and the Age Institute's three-year mentoring services seemed to have led to the permanent establishment of development work.

***"The number of older exercisers tripled by cross-sectorial collaboration".***



## Results

Results from the first group of 13 municipalities in 2010–2013:

- The number of guided exercise groups doubled (202 → 493)
- The number of gym groups tripled (52 → 184)
- The number of participants in exercise groups tripled (2763 → 7584, Chart 1)
- More groups used mobility tests (47 → 116)
- The number of outdoor assistants increased (177 → 271)
- Exercise counseling activities increased (11 → 31)
- The Age Institute's training for trainers was completed by 61 persons
- The number of people trained in local training sessions
  - 787 professionals
  - 312 peer leaders
  - 211 outdoor friends

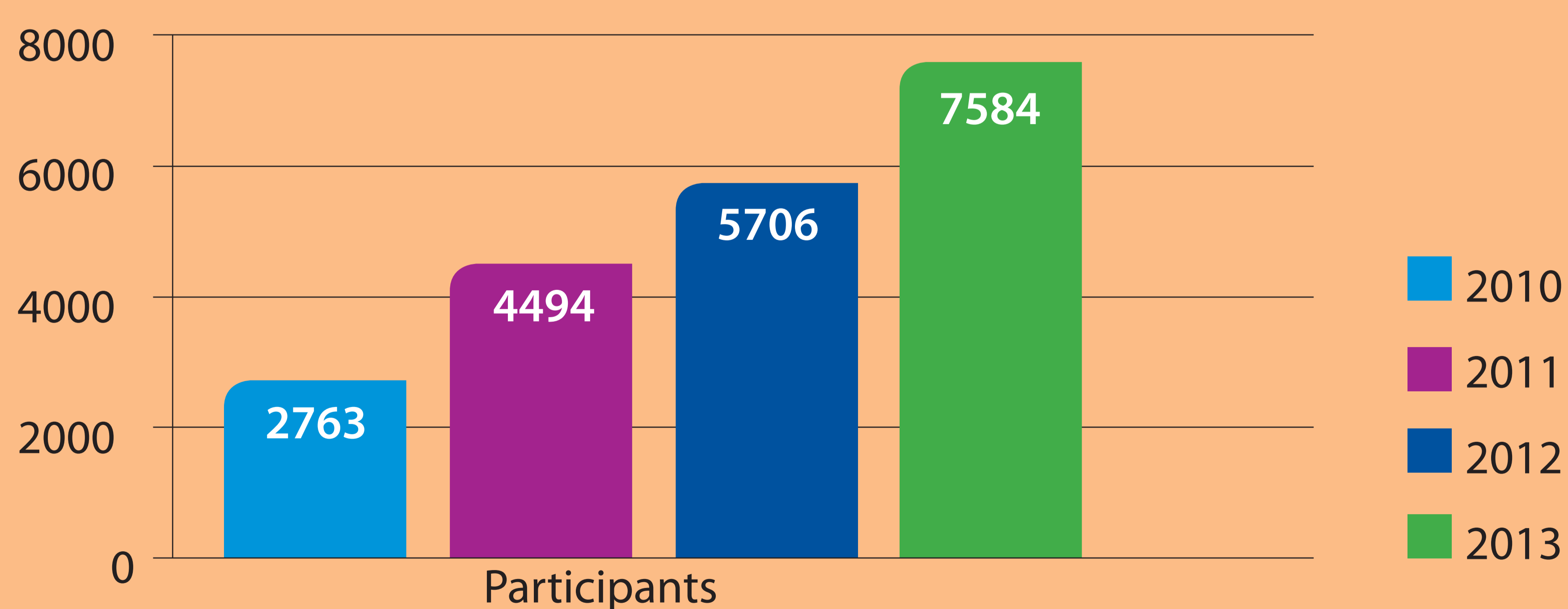


Chart 1. Participants of guided exercise groups