

Our Life as Elderly



Current situation

Subproject 6: *Networks*

Project leader, Lars Mikaelsson

Version 1.0



LULEÅ KOMMUN

FØROYA KOMMUNUFELAG



A project within Interreg IIIB Northern Periphery Program

1	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
2	INTRODUCTION	4
3	COUNTRY SPECIFIC SITUATIONS NETWORKS	5
3.1	LULEÅ, SWEDEN	5
3.1.1	<i>Organisational and functional Networks for/by elderly of today</i>	<i>5</i>
3.1.2	<i>Technical Networks.....</i>	<i>10</i>
3.2	BODØ NORWAY	11
3.2.1	<i>Organizational and functional Network for/by elderly of today.....</i>	<i>11</i>
3.2.2	<i>Technical Networks.....</i>	<i>13</i>
3.3	FØROYA KOMMUNUFELAG	14
3.3.1	<i>Organizational and functional Network for/by elderly of today.....</i>	<i>14</i>
4	DISCUSSIONS	17

National contact points:

Sweden

-Lars Mikaelsson,

lars.mikaelsson@soc.lulea.se

The Administration of Social service, Development Unit.

Luleå municipality,

Norway

-Hanne Eriksen

hanne.eriksen@bodo.kommune.no

Helse-og sosialavdelingen,

Municipality of Bodö,

Faroe Islands

-Eyðun Christiansen

eydun@fkf.fo

Føroya Kommunufelag

1 Executive summary

Looking at the situation in each country that is participating in this project *Networks* there are similarities but also some differences. The biggest difference is in the Faroe Islands as they still have kept their informality and creative networking in their society. Where in almost all villages there exist meeting places where people come together. In these forums, the members of the local community, in the widest sense of the word, meet to discuss and exchange views on subject of common interest.

In Bodö and Lulea things rely more on the "formal networking" such as pensioner's and other organizations that indeed support elderly people but play more on political and organizational belongings. There is little cross-functional networking between these organisations. In Bodo they have an Activity Centre that plays a role of network creator in the sense of an informal meeting place. This Activity Centre offers rooms, computers, offices, telephones etc. to pensioners from the whole community.

There is very little done in Lulea compared to both Bodo and the Faroe Islands to support the creation of these informal networking situations that is crucial for the pre conditional health of elderly people

The other thing that this report highlights is that in the Faroe Islands there is little technical networking or IT solutions that could help elderly and society. In Bodo there is a strong link to the Senior University, which is indeed a global idea and is present in nearly every European country. Without the above-mentioned Activity Centre, networking would be of great difficulty for i.e., for the Senior University and different pensioner associations. In Lulea there is no Senior University, it is however active in the south of Sweden and is a part of the University of Uppsala.

In Sweden and with no exception Lulea there are a lot of efforts done to create and develop IT systems in the field of medical informatics to extract and present clinically relevant information. In this project these IT systems as networking systems are not our focus and due to this only briefly described.

DISCLAIMER:

The information in this document is provided as is and no guarantee or warranty is given that the information is fit for any particular purpose. The user thereof uses the information at its sole risk and liability.

2 Introduction

By using the word "Network", to organize a group of individuals and to describe a work procedure, there is a presumption that the organization is flat, unorganized and where ideas and communications flows that will help the individual to develop. More seldom is networks set in relation to multitude and differentiation or in as a vertical power structure. A lot of times networks are organized as prevalent project methods– or methods for co-operation in groups, this prevents the basic idea of networking. The ambition in networking should be to be a part of and learn as individual and to mobilize and increase ones personal resources as an added value. In this perspective the network can be described as: A number of people, with their own well formulated ideas, purposes and needs to share knowledge, engagement and time to perform.

The *social network* is regarded to be very important for those that are facing changes in working life or family life. There is a desire for "informal" meeting places and cultural activities that could help people that are facing changes. To increase the quality of life for old people as well as for the community in whole we might need to get influences from other cultures to learn new ways to care for the elderly.

The *technical network* will be of importance when it comes to the development of new services and new working methods for the field staff but also for present/future retired elderly persons with IT knowledge as the infrastructure for trans-national/trans-community communication. For many communities and county counsels the infrastructure plays an important role for to keep up the dialogue with their citizens and to support their E-government initiatives.

The demographic trends: An ageing population will be demanding more of our public administrations, but public administration will have to do with fewer employees. And these demographic trends will not make it easier for the public sector to withhold a position as a competitive employer to attract a new generation of employees.

3 Country specific situations *NETWORKS*

Project leader Networks:

Mr Lars Mikaelsson
The Administration of Social Service,
Development Unit, Luleå Municipality.
E-mail: lars.mikaelsson@soc.lulea.se
Telephone: +46-(0)70-5894536

3.1 LULEÅ, SWEDEN

As of today somewhat over 17% of the Swedish people are 65 years or older, this will increase and has been calculated to reach around 25% in year 2030. Swedish people have not only had a tendency to live longer they have also been a lot healthier in old age. This trend however is slowly changing and the average time of living for women does not longer increase and the health condition for men in the age groups 77-84 has decreased.¹ With this in mind work for promotion of health in old age is of great importance and, as in the above-mentioned report, for to have stronger focus on preconditioned health service and not only look at factual healthcare and care.

Our Life as Elderly will through the sub-project “Network” focus on the conditions of pre health service and the importance of social, cultural, professional and personal networks in elderly care and how to meet the future wishes and demands from these age groups.

3.1.1 Organisational and functional Networks for/by elderly of today

Organizational and functional Networks as described in the introduction text do not exist in the municipality of Luleå as independent structured networks for preconditioned health service. There are though lots of associations directly or indirectly linked to elderly people that can be regarded as informal support and activity networks for this target group. One of the strongest linked associations are the pensioner associations, there are 23 local associations in the municipality of Luleå from SPRF, SPF, PRO and KPR witch are considered the largest.

Sveriges pensionärers riksförbund (SPRF)

SPRF is Sweden’s oldest organisation for pensioners, established in 1937, SPRF is a politically and religiously independent organization and has app. 55.000 members in Sweden. SPRF, former the *association for state employees*, was changed in 1994 to become an open association and as a result their name was changed to SPRF. There are more than 90 local clubs all over Sweden. In Luleå there are app.900 members registered.

¹ folkhälsoarbete för äldre – varför och hur, statens folkhälsoinstitut 2003:63

SPRF main interest is to monitor changes and to try and look after their members' rights and benefits. SPRF also runs extensive programs to increase contacts and co-operations between their members.

Example of areas of interest:

Pensions

working for index-linked and improved pensions

working for improvement for low income pensioner's

working for increased housing allowance for pensioner's and lower taxation on housing

Elderly care

educate and train members locally to inform and guide members of rates/duties

monitor primary care and community care initiatives

run health project initiatives

run activities for members

Sveriges pensionärsförbund (SPF)

SPF is Sweden's second oldest organisation for pensioners, established in 1939. At the beginning of the 21st century SPF counts app. 228 000 members. The majority of the members are 65 years and older – the normal retiring age in Sweden being 65 – but membership is available to persons retiring before 65. SPF is a politically and religiously independent organization.

SPF acts, at various political levels, to promote beneficial treatment of issues related to the elderly. Being represented on the Pensioners' Advisory Committee appointed by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, SPF - though itself un political - has an opportunity to influence politicians and other decision-makers at the highest level. This Committee, where Sweden's five Pensioner Associations are represented, meets 3-5 times a year. A variety of questions of importance to the elderly are dealt with, for instance pensions, health care, medication issues, housing, transportation services, etc.

At the regional and local levels, SPF influences politicians through the County Pensioners' Advisory Councils and the Municipal Pensioners' Advisory Councils. In the former, issues mainly related to health care are in focus. These are, for instance, the increasing health care costs and the insufficient number of medical doctors in certain areas. In the latter, a larger variety of matters is covered, such as localization of shops, adaptation of homes to the needs of the elderly, security measures in and around the homes, public transport, recreational and educational programs, etc.

As a member of SPF you belong to a local club - there are app. 900 of them, all over Sweden! The functions of the Club are two-fold:

1. To inform its members about ongoing activities and decisions taken within the sphere of interest to retired people (pensions, health care, housing, transportation services, etc.) and to suggest appropriate action to be taken.
2. To organize activities, indoor and outdoor, for the mental and physical benefit of its members, such as:
 - Cultural events (visiting museums and art exhibitions, attending concerts, choral singing, inviting authors to lecture, sign books, etc)

- Sport events (golf, bole, skiing, orienteering), international dances, etc.
- Travel, domestic and abroad

SPF has 5 391 Members and have 22 local clubs in the district of Norrbotten.

Pensionärernas riksorganisation (PRO)

The National Organization of Pensioners, PRO, is the largest association for pensioners with 380 000 members from 26 districts registered. One of these districts is Norrbotten, this district has 79 local associations (15 situated in Luleå) and 18 380 members. (4200 in Luleå.)

At the regional and local levels, PRO influences politicians through the County Pensioners' Advisory Councils and the Municipal Pensioners' Advisory Councils. In the former, issues mainly related to health care are in focus. These are, for instance, the increasing health care costs and the insufficient number of medical doctors in certain areas. In the latter, a larger variety of matters is covered, such as localization of shops, adaptation of homes to the needs of the elderly, security measures in and around the homes, public transport, recreational and educational programs, etc.

As a member of PRO you belong to a local club - there are app. 1 550 of them, all over Sweden! The functions of the Clubs are more or less the same as SPF:

- To inform its members about ongoing activities and decisions taken within the sphere of interest to retired people (pensions, health care, housing, transportation services, etc.) and to suggest appropriate action to be taken.
- To organize activities, indoor and outdoor, for the mental and physical benefit of its members, such as:
 - Sport events (Qi Gong, gymnastics, walks, bowling), Senior dance, line dance, etc.
 - Travel, and sightseeing

Kommunala pensionärsrådet (KPR)

(Municipal Pensioners' Advisory Councils)

In the Municipality of Luleå there are app. 11 000 persons aged 65 years or older. The Municipal Pensioners' Advisory Council acts as a body to which a proposed measure is referred for consideration by all pensioner associations and political parties. 15 members and 15 substitutes compose this advisory counsel, the pensioner associations elect nine and six are elected through politics.

(Excerpt from the regulations for the Municipal Pensioners Advisory Councils.)

The Municipal Pensioners' Advisory Council acts as a body to which a proposed measure is referred for consideration by all pensioner associations and political parties

Purpose

To strengthen involvement of elderly, and to ensure their influences in issues concerning them
To participate in and give advice when purchase care services
To initiate and raise questions that concerns elderly in committees and central government. To act as a forum for opinions and knowledge sharing

Others

Other associations and public bodies that serves as informal support and activity networks for the elderly in the Municipality of Luleå

Non-profit and sports associations

In Luleå there are numerous sports and non-profit associations that serve as contact points and activity centres for elderly people. They function as strong age integration associations as well as pre conditional health policy makers as they in many ways activate people in all ages.

The Red Cross

The Swedish Red Cross is the country's largest humanitarian volunteering association with app. 300 000 members. The foundation of their activities are their local and regional presence, there is app.1500 local and regional organizations around the country. The Red Cross serves as a complement to the regular safety net of the society. The work is based on volunteering and peoples interest in the support and engagement to and for the Red Cross.

One of the Red Cross's fundamental pillars in Sweden is their social support work. The Red Cross offers human support for akin to old, sick and handicapped in need as a complement to regular society support. . Volunteer friend visitors and support persons visit homes and institutions to bring recreation to the lonely and people in poor health, to listen and to help in small duties. Volunteers are also needed to support immigrants and prisoners. Many branches also organize recreational activities for the elderly and handicapped. Since the 1960's the Red Cross is represented as support units at different hospitals in Sweden, their main duty is to give support to elderly people and to help them in their contacts for medical care.

Though in Luleå their humanitarian activity is less active, here they only have telephone support for emergency.

Migrants and Minorities

The Municipality of Luleå has an agreement with the Swedish Migration Board to accept 120 refugees annually. For this purpose an organization is set up by the Municipality, this organization will help and guide them in their integration phase. Along with basic support in accommodation and service Invandrarservice also help the refugees through a host family network. This is a good way to integrate and help these that come to Sweden without their own families, it is however important that the refugees themselves are positive to this arrangement.

An important part of the integration is also at the compulsory Swedish language courses that are held by Komvux, here contacts are initiated with both between Swedish and non-Swedish people in a more informal way. As this group of cultural diversity grows they are an important resource in the future care of our elderly.

Religious institutions.

Religion connects our individual existence with a wider and deeper reality. It aims to touch some of the deepest and most powerful values in the human spirit. Today, religious institutions fulfill many roles within the community - as civic centers, day care centers. In Luleå as well as in any other parishes most churches have persons in service either employed or on a volunteer basis that act as a Diakons, their primary tasks are to act as the contact point for their congregations as counselors and spiritual care for people in need.

Trade and Industry associations

Luleå Näringsliv AB is a development agency with a purpose to stimulate growth through development of existing and future businesses, run development projects and actively work for to help new business. The company shall, as a unique authority, co-ordinate resources within the local industry, Luleå municipality and Luleå technical University to enable a growing Industry. For to be successful in this work, different advisory boards have been set up.

Their strategy is to:

Identify present and future areas of growth

Work for increased attractiveness for new businesses

Initiate and participate in market activities.

The increase in locally owned companies

Improve and develop communication with these companies

Through proactive actions create conditions for the development of existing and new businesses.

The Federation of Private Enterprises in Sweden, Företagarna for short, is a non-government organization for entrepreneurs and business owners.

55 000 owners of small and medium sized private enterprises are members in Företagarna. Företagarna also encompasses an additional 25 000 small businesses through 30 affiliated trade associations. In total Företagarna represents 80 000 businesses with some 450 000 persons employed. That means that roughly every tenth business in Sweden is a member in Företagarna or one of its trade associations. Together these companies employ a little more than 16 percent of the total workforce in private employment.

The overall aim of Företagarna is to improve the climate for entrepreneurs through lower taxes, less bureaucracy, an improved venture capital market, and an effective labor market.

The two main tasks of the organization are to give advice and service to members, and lobbying.

Företagarna is represented in public commissions and presents its views on committee reports and directly to politicians and official authorities.

3.1.2 Technical Networks.

The overall purpose of most IT-systems that are developed in the field of medical informatics is to extract and present clinically relevant information. Methods to attain new types of information are continuously being developed and are increasing rapidly. This development has led to a situation where we are at risk of drowning in the in information. Efficient solutions of this problem will be crucial components in future health care. Many of these initiatives are welcome from the employee's point of view but might be seen as a threat to personal integrity by those receiving care or their relatives.

One specific e-Home Healthcare project in Luleå at the moment is an Interreg 3 project with partners from Sweden, Finland and Norway. This project with it's common basis of trials to solve the problems of getting updated information on the present situation of the care of home health care clients, services and security situation in a right place and at the right time.

By mapping the needs of the elderly living at home and by developing and testing the solutions of *mobile information transmission* in the North Calotte region these trials will give the home health care professionals, the staff, clients and their immediate family members empowerment and competence.

The current need among all healthcare (and home care) professionals in Luleå/Boden is for relevant, accurate and up-to-date information to be available to the right person in the right location at the right time. Various solutions to this need lead to the idea of a flexible system which has mobility, a comprehensible client interface, freedom of movement of data and acceptability by the people using it. In order to realise the development of this kind of system, all participants in the home care process are to be identified and involved: this includes healthcare professionals, administrators and customers of the service (and their relatives).

This trial aims, in a field application, to integrate and test various *existing* systems into the home care service, including data storage and transfer, client interface and mobile data transmission tools. Existing systems like "Time care", "MEDDIX" and "Smith" data storage/updating system.

3.2 BODØ NORWAY

“Networks for the Elderly in The Municipality of Bodø - a small research on current systems, procedures and organisations”.

In 2002 Norway had 475 000 people between 65-79 years. This will increase and has been stipulated to 780 000 in 2050. The next 50 years 25 – 30% of the Norwegian people will be pensioners. In Bodø persons are aged 65 years or older. To meet this challenges it is not enough to have a strong factual healthcare, we also need a stronger focus on preconditioned health service.

“Network” as a sub-project, focus on pre health service and the importance of social, cultural, professionals and personal networks in elderly care. The purpose is to meet the future wishes and demands from these age groups.

The preconditioned health service in Bodø

3.2.1 Organizational and functional Network for/by elderly of today

The Senior University of Bodø

The concept of a place of learning for older and mature citizen with more leisure time at their hands was born I France in 1972. This was followed by the creation of the International Association of U3A (The University of the Third Age). The idea spread throughout the world. In Scandinavia we can find U3A in Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland. In Norway the first Senior University started in Oslo in 1984. Today we have 42 Senior Universities in Norway.

The membership of this organization does not require for any academic qualifications, and none are given. The University is a place where people organize themselves to the purpose of learning and for social contact. To quote one of the founders of the movement, Peter Laslett, “Those who teach shall also learn, and those who learn shall also teach”.

The Senior University in The Municipality of Bodø is a place where women and men from all walks of life, no longer in full-time gainful employment, generally from the mid-50s upwards, to meet likeminded members to expand their *knowledge*, share interests and acquire new skills. The interest of learning leads to new friendships based on new social experience. The Senior University therefore has an important *social dimension*. The ambition of this kind of networking is both lifelong learning for older people and to stimulate and personal resources as an added value.

The Senior University is an educational organization with charitable status. It is an ideal and non-political organization which purpose is to work for a better society for the generation of the elderly. The University in Bodø has 135 members. The functions of the organization are:

- Study groups, with and without teachers
- Social activities
- Cultural activities

- Lections
- Courses

All these activities are carried out on a completely voluntary and unpaid basis. The Senior University of Bodø is an autonomous self-help organization, whose individual activities are planned and undertaken according to the wishes of their members. The Municipality of Bodø, Bodø University College (BUC), and Tusenhjemmet Activity Centre play an important role in this work.

Tusenhjemmet Activity Senter

This centre is crucial to the preconditioned health service in Bodø, and of great importance for the social, cultural and professional and personal networks in elderly care. Tusenhjemmet offers rooms, computers, offices, telephones etc. to pensioners from the whole community.

Without this centre networking would be of great difficulty for i.e., for The Senior University and different pensioner associations. The centre also offers activities as concerts, teaching, lectures, café, hairdresser, handicraft activities etc. BBL Housing Service runs Tusenhjemmet, but the Municipality of Bodø is responsible for 75% of the costs.

Sport activities (Aktiv Hverdag)

The Municipality of Bodø offers a lot of networks related to every day physical activities for the elderly. Aktiv Hverdag is run by The Cultural Office (Kulturkontoret) of the Municipality, and offers different kind of sports every day. In Avisa Nordland, the local newspaper, you will find a presentation of these activities five days a week. This is an important and popular kind of networking, and it gives the elderly people an opportunity to both increasing their health and meeting other pensioners.

The Pensioners Associations

NPF is The National Organization of Pensioners in Norway, with approximately 150 000 members from 19 districts. The pensioners organizations are politically and religious independent, and open for all the pensioners. In The Municipality of Bodø we have 8 local pensioner associations registered. Besides there are a lot of occupational pensioner organizations, but they will not be paid attention at this stage of the project.

NPF is the only Organization for Pensioners in Norway with the possibility to influence politicians and decision-makers at the highest level. This kind of networks want to increase the quality of life for old people, by taking care of their social, economical and cultural interests. The activities are more or less the same all over the country:

- Social and cultural activities, like travels and sightseeing, concerts, sports, lectures etc.
- Give information to their members on important matters as pensions, health care, service for the elderly, taxes, important research, etc.
- Political activities.

The Municipal Pensioners Advisory Councils

In the same way as Luleå The Municipality of Bodø has their own Advisory Council, with 7 members. This is a kind of network where some of the members are elected through the political organizations and others through the pensioner organizations. This kind of councils you will also find at a regional level in Norway. The Pensioners Advisory Council of Nordland has 7 members and works for the pensioner rights in the district where they belong. The purpose of these councils will be the same as in Luleå.

Others

- The Voluntary Central of Bodø
- Red Cross
- Sanitetsforeningen, a voluntary organization for women
- Religious network
- Other voluntary organizations

3.2.2 Technical Networks

A social network can be described as; *a number of people, with their own well formulated ideas, purposes and needs to share knowledge, engagement and time to perform.* The idea of networking is to meet the demands and wishes of elderly people in social, professional and personal matters. In the same way the technical network will be of great importance to the elderly, because IT-knowledge is regarded as the infrastructure of trans-national and trans-community communication.

The Seniornett is a meeting place for people from the mid-60s on the internet, and it is a part of the Norwegian Governments IT-Politics. The purpose of this technical association is to work for more seniors in The IKT-Society. www.seniornett.no offers a great deal of articles, interviews, pictures, information, shopping, links, The Senior Surf day, etc. to their members. The Seniornet has it own board, with 7 members who are elected for 2 years, and women must be represented with 40%.

The Seniornett has a lot of local clubs, and we will find a club in The Municipality of Bodø too. All members of the local clubs have to be members of The Seniornet of Norway. More information about how the local club in Bodø is organized and how it works, we will have to come back to later.

3.3 FØROYA KOMMUNUFELAG

Faroe Island has gone through a development that in many ways is exceptional in the western world.

In a very short period, from after world war two until to day, the country has developed from a pre-industrial peasant community to a highly technological, fully industrialized and rationalized society. A development that in period of time only is in comparison by Greenland in the western world. People have changed their lifestyle completely, in just one or two generation. “It was like changing Shirts” says the faroes writer Heðin Brú (1958;259).

The old Society was symbolised by very strong informal networks, the family and the surrounding community.

The new society was symbolised by the state taking away“affairs” that formerly was regulated by the family and the community. Informal networks where replaced by more professional networks.

In German Sociologist Ferdinand Tonnis words, human relationship transformed from unions of *Gemeinschaft* to association of *Gesellschaft*. The three pillars of *Gemeinschaft* are kinship, neighborhood and friendship. *Gesellschaft* on the other hand, symbolizes according to Tonnis, the modern economic enterprise that resides in a network of legal and contractual relations. Tonnis meant that the western society moved from unions and kinship and friendship, to association based on rationality and calculation.²

But in many ways the development of welfare institution in Faroe Island didn't follow the development of the society in general, and on the other hand the informal system of networks didn't disappear.

We have a situation sociologist calls “non-simultaneousness in society”. We have social structures, lifestyles etc. that in reality belongs to days gone by.

Many sociologists, anthropologist etc. has called the Faroe Island for a unique social laboratory. You have a massive development in a very short time of period, and you have a small and very transparent community. This gives a unique opportunity to see the population's reaction and stately to meet changes in social and economic structures.

We will use this potential in our subproject. We will try to identify the existing networks among elderly in the community. We will identify the boundaries and the interaction between professional and personal networks in community. Examine which new more functional and inter personal relations may have been established, which other types of primary groups may have come into being, replacing those which prevailed in the old community.

3.3.1 Organizational and functional Network for/by elderly of today

In Faroe Island lived 31-12-2002 47.704 people, of these 6338 or around 13 % was aged 65 and more. This age group 65 and more will increase the next 25 years. But the fertility rate in

² Tonnes ???

the Faroes has been between 2,3 and 2,6. the last 25 years. This mean that it is not going to be any alarming changes in the age groups

AGE/YEAR	2002	2007	2012	2017	2022	2027
00-19	14.625	15.079	14.669	14.803	15.273	15.900
20-64	26.741	28.365	30.195	31.220	32.063	32.434
65 o.e.	6.338	6.732	7.527	8.530	9.347	10.204
Total	47.704	50.176	52.392	54.552	56.682	58.537

The group aged 65 and more, will increase from 13% to 17 % in year 2027.

Landsfelag Pensjónistanna (LP)

LP is the national organization for the local pensioners organizations. LP is a politically and religiously independent organization. Members of the organization are 14 local pensioners organizations, and has total around 1200 members of the around 6000 persons over 65 in the Faroe Island, or 20 percent of the total population over 65.

The Purpose of LP is to work for the welfare of elderly. The organization has a direction of 5 persons. To support and advise the direction every local organization chooses a member into advising committee.

LP gets support from the government. In 2003 the support was 250.000 D.kr.

The organization organize ones a year a festival where all pensioners from local organizations comes together for one evening. The organization also arranges “elderly days” ones a year. Pensioners come together for one or two days. Professionals give information or lessons about health care, pensions etc.

Politicians are invited, and the minister of social welfare always makes a speech on this occasion.

LP publishes a newspaper informing the members about ongoing activities, and has articles about health and care issues.

The eldrely advisory counsel

The Minister of Health and Social Affairs elect a counsel to advice the ministry in question concerning elderly. The advisory council has 5 members. 4 of the members are chosen by the LP, and the last member is chosen by FKF.

The council has for some reason, not been active for the last 4 years.

Local pensioners organisations

There are as mentioned above 14 local pensioners organizations spread around the country. These organizations are more and less active.

Typical activities are traveling both national and international, concerts and cultural events. Weekly there is a typical cart evening, bingo etc.

Another activity is to visit other local pensioners organization.

All Local pensioners organizations are political and religiously independent.

Sport activities

There are around 100 sport clubs in Faroe Island. Some of the gymnastic and swimming clubs has special teams for elderly, and Most sportclubs also have some kinds of oldboys or oldgirls team.

The sports clubs are in the same way as the municipality in the Faroe Island, organised in very small units. Almost every village or island has its own sports club. These clubs are very important for most of the peoples everyday life, and identity in general. The clubs are important for the network in the municipality. Because of the size of clubs, most of the economy is based on voluntary work. The support in the local community is massive, and many activities are connected to the clubs.

Education

The faroes Folk high school has every winter a 2 weeks course for pensioners. The cost is 3.200 Dk. Kr. including a single room and meals.

The course is very popular, and there is a long waiting list every year.

Other organizations

There are many other organizations with associations directly or indirectly linked to activities for elderly people.

The strongest are perhaps the traditional folk dance organizations. These organizations are spread around the islands. People meet to dance especially during the winter. A big part of the people is middle aged or elderly.

Many religious organizations also have activities for groups of elderly. Both the church and other religious community have special evenings or weekends where the elderly meet. Many of the elderly are also involved in charity work for religious organizations.

The public sphere

Besides the so-called Bourgeois public sphere which includes the authorities and others controlling institutions, there exist a popular public sphere. This sphere has to do with everyday life. In these fora, the members of the local community, in the widest sense of the word, meet to discuss and exchange views on subjects of common interest.

The communication can go on in the village hall, during cultural evenings, birthdays, weddings etc.

But in almost all villages there exists meeting places where people come together. Some of them are for both men and women, as in the village hall. But many is divided into men's and women's sphere. The men's meeting place can be at the harbor, in this sphere everyday events are discussed, the fishery, the weather forecast, politic etc. Informal decisions concerning the area are made, when to start communal work and have to arrange it etc.

In the women's sphere it is typical the privately organized and anonymous knitting clubs. These clubs are more concentrated on social issues.

The informal fora are perhaps of greater importance than the formal ones in this subproject.

Especially the form of communication in this sphere differs fundamentally from that of the Formal sphere. The form of communication is collective, and it is the collective itself, which is the producer, communicator and receiver in the process. In the popular cultural process of communication the entire process takes place within the collective itself. There is direct connection between transmitter and receiver who often changes roles during the process and all communication is based on direct feedback.

4 Discussions

Relationships are critical to success; so often, knowing the right person to ask is as valuable as knowing the answer yourself, if not more so. The exchange of information and resources, on a casual basis like this reaps rewards just as much as the structured environments from active professional networking. Certain things are true about both personal and professional networking. It is essential to get into a networking frame of mind. That frame of mind is simply the desire to help others as much as possible.

Personal networking is an excellent way to expand your circle of contacts, which also might lead to more business information contacts as well. Once that happens, networking has become a way of communicating- no longer a process that needs to be learned, but an avenue of effective communication.

The *social network* is very important for those that are facing changes in working life or family life. There is always a desire for "informal" meeting places and cultural activities that can help and activate people. To increase the quality of life for old people as well as for the community in whole we might need to get influences from other cultures to learn new ways to care for the elderly.

The biggest differences, regarding *social networking*, between Lulea, Bodo and the Faroe Islands is that in the Faroe Islands they still have kept their informality and creative networking in their society. Where in almost all villages there exist meeting places where people come together. In these forums, the members of the local community, in the widest sense of the word, meet to discuss and exchange views on subject of common interest.

In Bodö and Lulea things rely more on the "formal networking" such as pensioner's and other organisations that indeed support elderly people but play more on political and organisational belongings. There is also very little cross-functional networking between these organisations.

There is very little done in Lulea compared to both Bodo and the Faroe Islands to support the creation of these informal networking situations that is crucial for the pre conditional health of elderly people.

The *technical network* is of importance when it comes to the development of new services and new working methods for the field staff but also for present/future retired elderly persons with IT knowledge as the infrastructure for trans-national/trans-community communication. For many communities and county counsels the infrastructure plays an important role for to keep up the dialogue with their citizens and to support their E-government initiatives.

The Faroe Islands does not seem to have prioritised technology, as there is little technical networking or IT solutions that could help elderly and society as whole. In Bodo, there is a strong link to the Senior University, which is indeed a global idea and is present in nearly every European country. In Sweden the Senior University is however only active in the south of Sweden and is a part of the University of Uppsala. Bodo also have an Activity Centre that is an important link between the community and this University, this plays a role of network creator in the sense of an informal meeting place.

In Luleå there has been a lot of initiatives to develop the technical conditions for e-health and the use of shared systems for the primary care as well as the municipality care. The focus have mainly been on how to share information in healthcare situations that both groups of care personnel needs in order to give quality in *actual* care situations. This has of cause generated in kind informal networks, especially for the situations that has been the issue in those particular projects, but has had hard to survive as functional networks in any longer period.