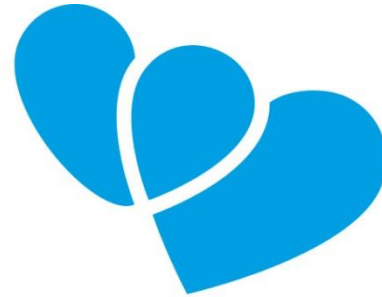


**Omais-
hoitajat
ja läheiset
-liitto ry**



The Central
Association of
Carers in Finland

October 2014

Lähellä ja tukena

The Central Association of Carers in Finland



- Established in 1991
- 70 local carer associations covering most Finnish municipalities
- About 11 000 individual members (2014)
- 21 staff members (2014)
- Funded mainly by Finland's Slot Machine Association RAY
- NonprofitNGO; www.omaishoitajat.fi

The Central Association of Carers in Finland

- National advocacy and support organization for carers and care receivers, irrespective of age, gender or illness
- Active cooperation with patient, pensioner and senior organizations, parishes, rehabilitation institutions as well as political decision makers at national and local levels
- Member of EuroCarers since 2007
- Member of IACO in 2014

Finnish Carers Movement Background

Progress in organising and finding a voice for carers:

- Increasing social discourse on caring issues from 1980s
- First **statute on informal care in 1982**
- Two carer associations emerged in 1991:
 - The Central Association of Carers in Finland, and
 - The National Family Association Promoting Mental Health in Finland.

Legal milestones

- Act on Informal Care Support 2006:
Informal care support **may** be granted by a municipality; includes support services and care allowance for the carer (minimum €381 per month in 2014) and services for the care receiver
 - Carers entitled to 3 days-off / month
 - Statutory accident insurance
 - Receive pension due to caring
- Amendment to Employment Contracts Act 2011:
 - Right to request leave for caring purposes
 - Respite care an option to organize 3 days-off

Finland's National Development Programme for the support of family care

Current state of affairs:

- According to a population survey (2013), there are over 1.2 million people in Finland who provide assistance to their family members and friends
- Some 350,000 of these people are so-called principal assistants (population 5,4 million)
- Informal care support is a statutory social welfare service that the municipalities grant at their discretion
- The coverage of the support and eligibility for it vary from one municipality to another.
- In 2012, informal care support was granted to care for 40,600 people.

Finland's National Development Programme for the support of family care

- The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health *appointed a working group* to prepare a *national programme for developing informal care in 2011* →
- Group's proposal for a *National Development Programme* for the support of family care was completed in March 2014
- Sets out the *strategic goals and measures* for developing informal care.
- The Programme contains the *definitions of informal care under an agreement and other informal care*
- Gives a proposal *for a new act*.

Current activities of our Association:

1. Ovet (“Doors”) training programme

- 16-hours *training programme for carers* developed and implemented in 2010-2012
- The programme meets the various needs of carers, e.g. acquiring skills essential in care work
- Emphasis on the reflection of the role of a carer and the value of *voluntary decision*:
- Carers should *have a say* whether they want to become carers and how long to keep doing it.

1. Ovet (“Doors”) training programme

- The Central Association of Carers has so far trained some 160 volunteers *to organize and run the training groups locally.*
- Material comprising a book and a booklet as well as an extensive slide package are provided for the training.
- *The training is cost-effective:* much of the work is done on a voluntary basis with local associations’ volunteers.

1. Ovet (“Doors”) training programme

- Carers who have taken part in the programme have reported having experienced *beneficial impacts* on their well-being as well functional capacities.
- After the training, they e.g. *take more time-off for themselves, feel more empowered, share their thoughts and feelings more openly and know more about the available support services.*

Current activities of our Association:

2. OMAISOIVA - Working together with and for carers

- The Central Association of Carers in Finland together with eight of its local associations is initiating a joint activity *to support carers' resources and social inclusion*.
- The activity seeks to provide carers with *early information, guidance and peer support* in a manner that is long-term and readily available to carers close to their homes.
- The activity gives the local associations a stable operating framework basing on the needs of carers.

2. OMAISOIVA

Working together with and for carers...

The activities comprise:

- A) 16-hours training programme for carers – in cooperation with municipalities, associations and parishes.
- B) Open or closed, regularly meeting peer support groups.
- C) Get-togethers for people interested in caring issues.
- D) Short-term information disks e.g. in shopping centers.
- E) Activity relating to local good practise or special need.

Current activities of our Association:

3. OPASTAVA-project 2012-2016

- Collaboratory project with The National Family Association Promoting Mental Health in Finland
- The project is funded by Finland's Slot Machine Association (RAY).

3. OPASTAVA-project 2012-2016

The goal of the project is:

- A) To develop new and improved services for caregivers and their families e.g. finding new service innovations, improving the quality of existing services, facilitating the use of technology.
- B) To find new ways to facilitate carers' participation in service development, e.g. how they can take more active role in service planning and quality assessment, influence decision making etc.

3. OPASTAVA-project 2012-2016...

- Opastava will run four individual pilot projects in four major cities in Finland in collaboration with local service providers, caregivers and local carers' associations.
- The project is about to start a pilot that will train caregivers to perform experience based quality assessments of local health and social services.

