

M. PAKARINEN. *Experiences from the project 'LähiVerkko' (Lokal Network)*. *Gerontechnology* 2016;15(suppl):53s; doi:10.4017/gt.2016.15.s.605.00 **Purpose** The purpose of the project is to increase the participation of the elderly in digitalization and the information society in Finland. The focus group of the project consists of elderly volunteers. We developed new ways to use the Internet to implement voluntary work in communities. Another goal is to motivate elderly people to become acquainted with the Internet and with computers in their everyday lives. This project seeks ways to bring younger and older generations together with the help of technology. The project started in 2013, and it will continue to the year 2017. It is implemented by two large NGOs in Finland: the Finnish Pensioner's Federation and the Finnish Association for Substance Abuse Prevention. The project is funded by the Finnish Slot Machine Association. **Method** The project is implemented by piloting and testing different types of actions with the elderly and volunteers. Information about all the pilots is available<sup>1</sup>. **Results & Discussion** The main results of the project presented here include: (i) a new mobile application called '+60'. It is a mobile social media application developed in coordination with and geared towards use by the elderly. This application enables social interaction and familiarization between people living in the same region and community. The application is in the beta-phase and is being tested throughout the duration of the project. (ii) A model of voluntary work that uses peer-to-peer counselling to help elderly people to use and utilize technology and the Internet. The model has been successfully implemented throughout Finland. (iii) We use digital games as tools to motivate and encourage the elderly to use technology to enjoy, to have fun, to find social networks and to enhance well-being. We have also brought young people to play digital games with the elderly, and created a model of 'game workshops'. In autumn 2016, we will carry out a national game seminar for the elderly. In Finland, 56% of people over the age of 65 have played digital games during the previous year<sup>2</sup>. (iv) A new model of voluntary work called 'Muruset' (=Sweethearts). We have educated elderly volunteers to meet and communicate online with adolescents and children via social media platforms and gaming communities. The aim is to provide children a safe adult, an online-grandparent, with whom to spend time with, and communicate online.

#### References

1. [www.lahiverkko.fi](http://www.lahiverkko.fi); retrieved September 20, 2016
2. Pakarinen M. Puolet eläkeikäisistä pelaa digitaalisia pelejä [Half of Finnish pensioners play digital games]. 2016; <http://lahiverkko.fi/puolet-elakeikaisista-pelaa-digitaalisia-peleja/>; retrieved September 20, 2016

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