

## **The Role of the Museum in an Ageing Society**

*Pia Hovi-Assad*

### **Abstract**

Finland's demographics are set to change dramatically with regards to its growing number of seniors. Pori is a midsized city with a high ageing population, and is home to a suburb in which 46% of the residents are retirees. My research focuses on the initiatives undertaken by the museums catering to the elderly population. I aim to investigate resident expectations versus museum resources, and offer guidelines for promoting equal distribution of culture amongst the older population and including them in the museums' diverse service offerings.

**Keywords:** ageing society, museum education, community, active participation and planning, senior citizens

## **The Role of the Museum in an Ageing Society**

by Pia Hovi-Assad

*Master of Philosophy, Pia Hovi-Assad has worked for the Pori Art Museum for over ten years, including six as an exhibition curator. Here, she has curated a number of individual and group exhibitions in collaboration with artists and other actors. She is completing her doctoral degree at the University of Turku with a dissertation focused on participatory approaches and innovation in museums and Finnish society. Hovi-Assad has also worked as a community support worker in dementia care in the London Borough of City of Westminster.*

In the coming decades, the age demographics in Finland will significantly change, with the number of people who are no longer of working age increasing and the number of younger people declining. While the number of people over 65 is currently only 19.9% of the population, this number will grow to 26% by the year 2030 and to 29% by the year 2060.<sup>1</sup> The city of Pori is a midsize city with 85,400 residents, with an older-than-average population compared to the rest of Finland. Currently, 22.5% of Pori's residents are over 65. The majority of this segment of the population lives in the city centre and its suburbs. Most seniors choose to live in the suburbs due to the lower costs of living here, and the fact that most apartments are equipped with lifts. In Pori's largest suburb Sampola, 46% of its 10,000 residents are retirees.<sup>2</sup>

In this article, I examine the challenges that the City of Pori and its museums are about to face presented by the growing amount of the ageing population. I investigate how the diminishing resources of the Pori museums can connect with the needs of the senior citizens living in the Sampola suburb. How can the museums obtain information on the residents' service aspirations? I aim to make a presentation of the current activities provided. I strive to answer questions of both supply and demand, and based on these, draw a vision of what needs improvement in the museum's community initiatives. In this vision, resource sharing between institutions and co-planning are in a key role.

My research subjects are the City of Pori's cultural accessibility strategies and action plans, the senior and suburban initiatives of Pori's museums, and the elderly population of the suburb of Sampola. This research has thus led me to interview Pori museums' directors and educational curators, and to map what the seniors from Sampola expect from cultural services. My research material consists of workshops undertaken during the University of Turku Landscape Studies Unit's 'Spirit of the Suburb' cultural planning project and expert interviews.

This article opens with background information on the City of Pori's cultural administration and accessibility strategies. The central focus of the article is on the museums' senior initiatives: Does these correlate with the expectations that the ageing population of Sampola suburb have on the cultural activities held in the area. The conclusion offer guidelines on a suburban working group, which would promote equal distribution of culture amongst the older population, and would be a channel how to include them in the co-planning of the museums' diverse service offerings.

### **Pori governance and cultural services**

Pori is the provincial centre of Satakunta, which encompasses 19 municipalities and 223,198 residents. The Pori city council appoints the city board, charged with administration, procurement, human resources and financial management. The city budget encompasses all of the various departments, respectively led by committees which draw up departmental objectives and initiatives.

The Cultural Affairs Office oversees Pori's museums, itself led by the Cultural Board. Alongside museums, cultural services encompass library and information services; orchestral and music services; festival and event production; cultural services for children and youth; art education; artist support; students and informal organisations (community or third sector); and the organisation of basic arts education. Within the realm of cultural activity, independently functioning specialised sectors respectively

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<sup>1</sup> Tilastokeskus, 2015. Nuorten osuus väestöstä uhkaa yhä pienentyä. [Online, 31 October 2015].

Url: < [http://www.stat.fi/til/vaenn/2015/vaenn\\_2015\\_2015-10-30\\_tie\\_001\\_fi.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/vaenn/2015/vaenn_2015_2015-10-30_tie_001_fi.html) > [accessed 1 December 2015].

<sup>2</sup> Wallin 2015a, 39–40.

hold responsibility for production and finances. The cultural services are responsible for creating and disseminating information about their offer, as well as preserving cultural assets, and are part of the service package that the city provides to residents.

The cultural service permanently employs 166 individuals, as well as 34 people on fixed-term contracts every year, and dozens of other arts professionals in the province. Every year, the Cultural Board of the City of Pori provides grants to local students, artists, bands and organisations, primarily supporting non-profit activities which have an impact in the suburbs as well. In 2016, the city supported associations, societies, choirs, support associations, amateur theatre, bands, musical productions and visual artists, with total support amounting to €96,300.<sup>1</sup>

### **Senior access to cultural services**

According to both the Finnish Constitution and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone has the right to participate in and access culture and the arts. The accessibility and diversity action plan of Pori's cultural services for 2014-2020 views accessibility as far-reaching and relevant to all. Facilitated accessibility is an excellent measure of how well the needs of different audiences are taken into account. As a strategy, it provides the opportunity for participation and experience, regardless of individual abilities, promoting equality and inclusion. Cultural accessibility can be enhanced by removing obstacles to participation, which may be linked to sensory, communication or learning difficulties; attitudes, physical or economic factors, or gaps in decision-making. Geographic availability and access to cultural activities go hand-in-hand. Pori's cultural services department has a broad offer from the city centre to its outskirts, from the suburbs to neighbouring villages and municipalities, while bringing residents to the cultural services offered in the city centre enhances this accessibility.<sup>2</sup>

Due to the challenges created by the ageing population, efforts are made to actively develop and promote access to cultural services geared for seniors. The City of Pori's cultural and health services working group, founded in 2006, is an 11-member body focused on senior citizens with representative from cultural establishments, elder care, volunteer groups, the Evangelical Lutheran Church and third-sector organisations. Its objectives include the implementation of cooperative projects by different associations and organisations, as well as regional networking. Furthermore, every March, the working group organises a 'Seniors' Cultural Week', as well as an annual National Elderly Week, during which the target population is offered access to free events including recreational activities, lectures, concerts and exhibitions. The working group's responsibilities also include the development and upkeep of 'Culture Lockers', a service primarily aimed for instructors and group leaders of recreational activities for older individuals, offering content for such activities at retirement homes, day centres, hospitals and clubhouses. These 'Lockers' contain pictures, traditional artefacts, artworks, poetry, proverbs, books, songs and music, assembled from the collections of the Satakunta Museum, the Pori Art Museum, the Pori City Orchestra, the Pori City Library and the Office of Culture, and may be borrowed free of charge from the Cultural Affairs Office.

### **Pori museums and their senior public**

The Pori Art Museum and Satakunta Museum (devoted to cultural history) have separate administrations, while both operate as provincial museums in the Satakunta region. The former has a single location, while the latter operates at three additional branches: the Ark Nature Centre, a natural history museum; the Renovation Centre Toivo, a resource centre for the restoration of old buildings; and the Rosenlew Museum, which presents the area's cultural industrial heritage alongside different industrial and technical subjects. There are 15 permanent employees at the Satakunta Museum, three each at the Renovation

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<sup>1</sup> Porin kaupungin kulttuuriasiainkeskus, 2016. Kulttuuriavustukset 2016. [Online, 4 May 2016].

Url: <<http://www.pori.fi/kulttuuri/kulttuuriuutiset/uutiset/2016/05/kulttuuriavustukset2016.html#.WA9cQHqnGCN>> [accessed 17 November 2016].

<sup>2</sup> Porin kaupungin kulttuuriasiainkeskus, 2015. Asiakirjat. Porin kulttuurin saavutettavuuden ja moninaisuuden toimintasuunnitelma. [Online, no date available]

Url:<[http://www.pori.fi/material/attachments/hallintokunnat/kulttuuri-toimi/saavutettavuus/DrmxNoBEH/Saavutettavuussuunnitelma\\_valmis.pdf](http://www.pori.fi/material/attachments/hallintokunnat/kulttuuri-toimi/saavutettavuus/DrmxNoBEH/Saavutettavuussuunnitelma_valmis.pdf)> [accessed 2 November 2015].

Centre Toivo and Rosenlew Museum, and four at the Ark Nature Centre. The Satakunta Museum, founded by the Pori Finnish Society in 1888, promotes and directs the activities of the cultural history museums in the region, and acts as an authority on cultural heritage and preservation. There are over 80,000 ethnological, cultural-historical and archaeological artefacts in the museum's collection, alongside collections of art, coins and medals. The museum's archives contain some 300,000 photographs, as well as maps and building blueprints, and it is home to an extensive reference library of cultural history and old books.<sup>1</sup>

Founded by the Finnish art collector and patron Maire Gullichsen (1907-1990), The Pori Art Museum is devoted to Finnish and international modern and contemporary art, and has 13 permanent employees. The Pori Art Museum's permanent collection encompasses the 545 works of the Maire Gullichsen Art Foundation's collection and the 2,000+ works of the City of Pori's art collection, complemented and supported by deposit collections in the fields of Finnish and international contemporary art. The Pori Art Museum monitors, documents, records and studies the art field of Satakunta, as well national and international art phenomena and its actors on a selective basis.

Seniors make up a notable portion of the visitors to the Satakunta Museum. Services geared for this population include a strong social dimension, and the museum organises monthly Senior Afternoons (a time of day selected based on a survey conducted prior to the launch of the Senior Programme in early 2008). The programme is typically connected to the exhibitions on display, and participation is free of charge and open to all. The majority of senior visitors to the Satakunta Museum are 65 to 75 years old, well-off, digitally-minded and active individuals who look forward to taking part in the museum's activities. According to the museum's director, Juhani Ruohonen, seniors represent an opportunity for the museum: they are interested in the Satakunta Museum, cultural heritage, their own local history and recent past; they are willing and enthusiastic to talk about the history of Pori, which is why 'remembrance evenings' are organised; and they also take part in other Satakunta Museum activities and events (one active senior's clothing collection was used in conjunction with an exhibition presenting the history of fashion and costumes, for example.<sup>2</sup>)

Since the early 1990s, the Pori Art Museum has developed constructive pedagogical methods for contemporary art in which the focus has been on children and young people. Within this context, the child is broadly understood as a part of the family entity, of which one part is constituted by grandparents; overall, the museum's strategies are founded on a broad base, serving different age groups. Participation and inclusion in community-based interfaces and their effects on the interactive phenomena are key issues in assessing the museum's activities and, in particular, their long-term impact. In general, the services offered by the Pori Art Museum attract strong participation.<sup>3</sup>

The museum's senior services were launched due to high demand among seniors. The Pori Retirees Association (Pori Ruskat Ry) contacted the museum in hopes that it would begin to organise activities aimed at seniors in the daytime, as this timeslot would increase their ability to participate. The 'Seniors Orientation to Contemporary Art' service package was created in 1997, and included an exhibition presentation open to all without advance registration. The presentations are free of charge, which promote accessible museum services. Despite a challenging economic situation, activities geared for seniors are increasingly aimed to be kept free of charge, which, according to Mirja Ramstedt-Salonen, head of educational services, is an important consideration for accessibility.<sup>4</sup> An accessible museum serves a wide range of audiences and strives to ensure that financial obstacles do not hinder participation.<sup>5</sup> The Pori Art Museum's senior services are a long-term undertaking and are largely determined by seniors themselves. For example, the seniors participate in developing the programmes by organizing courses, workshops and events, which enable them to share their skills. According to Ramstedt-Salonen, senior services must be based on the demands of seniors' own lifestyles and degree of participation. For the most part, those taking part in the senior services are recent retirees who retain their mobility, typically 60

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<sup>1</sup>Satakunnan Museo, 2015. Kokoelmat. [Online, no date available].

Url: < <https://www.pori.fi/kulttuuri/satakunnanmuseo.html> > [accessed 2 November 2015].

New Url: < <https://www.pori.fi/kulttuuri/museot/satakunnanmuseo/kokoelmat.html> > [accessed 25 October 2016]

<sup>2</sup> Interview, 2 November 2015, Pori, Ruohonen and Tulkki.

<sup>3</sup> Interview, 9 November 2015, Pori, Nummelin.

<sup>4</sup> Interview, 17 November 2015, Pori, Ramstedt-Salonen.

<sup>5</sup> Kaitavuori 2007, 291.

to 80 years old. A museum tour specifically targeted at seniors is offered for every exhibition; indeed, art and exhibitions are the primary starting point for senior services, with activities focused on being together. Event participants can enjoy the experience of belonging to a group, although they might have come alone. These activities also include seniors who do not wish to identify themselves as seniors. As a result, in identifying the service, the use of the word 'senior' is reconsidered now and again. However, the definition has nevertheless been maintained as the service has become familiar to customers over the years. Nevertheless, some seniors do not necessarily want to be in the company of their peers, or to recollect the past, even though these are the characteristics that we associate with them, says Mirja Ramstedt-Salonen.<sup>1</sup> The social, psychological and physical features of people can differ considerably from what their chronological age entail. Therefore, it might be more beneficiary to perceive museum visitors as individuals, rather than as representatives of an age group, or a specific group of citizens.

Over the years, the Pori Art Museum's outreach and senior services have changed, gradually growing to encompass workshop activities in order to meet demand among seniors to play a more active role. During the exhibition 'Street Art – The New Generation' (2012), artist Veera Pekkinen (formerly Jalava) organised the 'K-65' (Forbidden for those under 65) workshop, where seniors learnt about graffiti art. In connection with the 'Bodies – Borders-Crossings' exhibition (2013), a combination of three workshops was organised, one of which was conceived by artist Anne Roininen as a performance workshop. It was attended by seniors interested in studying performance art, and who founded a seven-member 'Butterfly March'<sup>2</sup> performance group, supervised by Roininen. 'Butterfly March' has performed at the Pori Art Museum's events, nursing homes and in public spaces such as the Pori Market Square. The group's activities are a good example of cultural services developed by seniors on their own terms. Their operation is not defined or controlled by any external party, as the group itself designs and implements its own pieces.<sup>3</sup>



The "Butterfly March" performance group performing on the Pori market square. The banner states "neglected at home". The performance is a statement about the state of elderly care and home care in

<sup>1</sup> Interview, 17 November 2015, Pori, Ramstedt-Salonen.

<sup>2</sup> In Finnish: Perhosmarssi

<sup>3</sup> Interview, 1 December 2015, Pori, Roininen.

Finland.  
Photo: Anne Roininen

## **E.U. projects and senior initiatives**

The Satakunta Museum and Pori Art Museum were included in the national 'Open Museum' project of 2010-2012, which aided museums in developing open and attractive learning environments for various adult groups. The project was coordinated by the Finnish Museums Association, and co-organised by the museums of Tampere, the museum pedagogy TAITE unit, the Museum of Technology, and the CICERO Learning Network/University of Helsinki. The project was partly funded by the European Social Fund. Satakunta Museum's sub-project, 'Museum Energizing Grown-ups'<sup>1</sup>, motivated the ageing population and professionals who work with seniors and volunteers to take advantage of the diverse opportunities offered by the museum.

Services targeted at adults, as well as adult pedagogical skills for museum staff, were developed through diverse training and cooperation. The project sought an industrious 20-to-30 strong trailblazing group for the museum through a public announcement, which would become familiarised with the activities of the Satakunta Museum and the Pori Art Museum, and carry out exhibitions at both museums. Over the course of the project, seminars were organised for museum and healthcare professionals working with older people, and museum services were developed with cross-sectoral cooperation. The Satakunta Museum's project also included a small touring exhibition that visited nursing homes, drawing residents of the homes and their families, with a multiplier effect that spread beyond the care home to a wider audience. A museum educator and project worker visited the nursing homes and presented a slideshow, which was carried out in conjunction with reminiscence sessions. Further information has come out in connection with the reminiscence sessions that may be recorded and used in connection with photographs included in the Satakunta Museum's collections. A network was created during the project among activities coordinators working in care homes. However, after the completion of the project, there were no longer resources for this type of work, although a museum educator did visit nursing homes a few times after its completion.<sup>2</sup>

The 'Open Museum' project expanded the senior services and provided the starting point for the association 'Friends of the Satakunta Museum' (Satakunnan Museon ystävät ry), whose members are mainly retirees and seniors. Its purpose is to support the Satakunta Museum and organise a variety of activities for its members: the museum's volunteer activities have developed substantially; the association has taken over the responsibility for the museum tugboat Santtu under conservator guidance, with members having cleaned, renovated and opened the tug during Pori Day festivities; the association is currently excavating a former beacon (situated on land due to the rise of the ground level) in close cooperation with a Satakunta Museum archaeologist and the Pori City Park Services, with support from the Finnish National Board of Antiquities; and, in addition to these two projects, volunteers are digitalizing photos on a weekly basis. The members themselves have taken the initiative for the volunteer work at the museum and, according to museum director Juhani Ruohonen, the operation is mutually beneficial.<sup>3</sup>

The 'Open Museum' project was ongoing during celebrations of the Pori Art Museum 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The museum tested new approaches to audience development in pedagogical exhibitions, with research conducted using the collection of the Maire Gullichsen Art Foundation. In 'Experimental SPACE! Pedagogical Process and Exhibition' (2011), the exhibition space was divided into two parts, the first of which was called the 'process'. The space was designed with adult and senior visitors in mind, although it was used by all visitors to the museum, children and adults alike. The design of the exhibition benefited all age groups due to hands on design, digital material and interactive games. During the process mode, museum visitors were introduced to participatory pedagogical methods. In conjunction with experimental guided tours, process was followed by an 'exhibition' of the audience's favourite pieces. In practice, the Experimental Space aimed to investigate the participation and involvement of the public in content production, enabling the audience to influence the content of the final exhibition through voting. An example of a planning model through which the public voice can find expression in an exhibition, the

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<sup>1</sup> In Finnish: Museosta virtaa varttuneille

<sup>2</sup> Kivimäki 2012, 50–61; Interview 2 November 2015, Pori, Ruohonen and Tulkki.

<sup>3</sup> Interview 2 November 2015, Pori, Ruohonen and Tulkki.

Experimental Space provided the impetus to enhance such forms of cooperation.<sup>1</sup>

The 'Seniors Orientation to an Art Collection' study circle was born from the notion of closer cooperation between the museum and the public, while deepening the participatory, self-motivated and experiential learning environment. The nine participants were selected in accordance with the 'Open Museum' target group as defined by the project, with the aim of engaging senior citizens interested in art and familiar with the museum's exhibition history. The study circle focused on issues related to exhibition curation in a manner enabling seniors to participate in planning the exhibition theme, artwork selection and exhibition design. At the meetings, discussions were held on curating artworks, museum work, the making of exhibitions and issues of audience development and accessibility. This experience paved the way for the exhibition 'Maire's Colours' (2012), part of the Maire Gullichsen and Modernism Exhibition Series.<sup>2</sup>

### **Museum activities in the suburbs**

In 1986, the Satakunta Museum and University of Turku interviewed residents of Sampola and documented their homes as part of an extensive research project. The research focused on questions related to their satisfaction, in particular with regards to their housing and residential environments. Subsequently Satakunta Museum began to cooperate with the University Consortium of Pori, University of Turku Degree Program in Cultural Production and Landscape Studies. Follow-up documentation was completed on some of the original participating households, and the Sampola area was photographed to map landscape changes. The Satakunta Museum participated in the 2011 TAKO project (a national network for museums' data collection and collection co-operation), monitoring and recording the activities of one Sampola family over a period of 24 hours.<sup>3</sup>

The Satakunta Museum has also conducted visits to other Pori suburbs and presented slideshows, which has led to growing interest among residents to visit the museum. Museum director Juhani Ruohonen has voiced the hope that suburban residents could be transported to the museum's various branches, but so far this has not been realized due to lack of financial funds and resources. The museum is exploring possibilities for working together with residents to produce a local history of the suburbs and present the results in the form of an exhibition.<sup>4</sup> This would be important as suburban architecture is less researched by historical museums. By familiarizing oneself with local history, one may start to appreciate more the living environment, and the sense of community can be strengthened.

According to Esko Nummelin, director of the Pori Art Museum, the museum's resources are nearly insufficient for creating productions within the museum's walls. No to mention, that these diminishing assets would be transferred to the suburbs along with the museum staff. Nummelin's opinion is that the museum is best able to serve visitors in the actual museum premises. It would be important to maintain a presence there, where people live, but the current economic situation goes to other direction. At present, every visit to the museum costs the city of Pori some 15 euros. The question is then how to finance targeted customer segment services if the museum produces services in the suburbs. Nummelin's view is that it is essential for the museum to offer stimulating content which is then transmitted more broadly, for example, by training the staff employed by the City of Pori. In this way, the museum could reach the widest possible group of people, with the help of cross-sectoral organisation facilitating cooperation for content management, service delivery and service intermediaries, including visual artists.<sup>5</sup>

The Pori Art Museum has tested a variety of initiatives bringing its services to healthcare establishments. According to the head of education, Mirja Ramstedt-Salonen, it is very possible that the museum will be able to provide services in the suburbs in the near future under the stability of a new operational model. The museum is currently running an artists' employment project and the cultural producer has developed activity packages to enhance well-being in cooperation with artists. These packages have already been offered to the museum's stakeholders and the staff of day-care centres and schools. In Ramstedt-Salonen's view, this is the kind of approach that could also be used in the suburbs in future. The project is based on training healthcare professionals to enhance their care skills by

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<sup>1</sup> Venäläinen and Ramstedt-Salonen 2012, 64–75.

<sup>2</sup> Venäläinen and Ramstedt-Salonen 2012, 64–75.

<sup>3</sup> Jakomaa and Raike 2011, 24–25.

<sup>4</sup> Interview 2 November 2015, Pori, Ruohonen and Tulkki.

<sup>5</sup> Interview 9 November 2015, Pori, Nummelin.



incorporating artistic and recreational aspects into their everyday work at nursing homes. Work is already underway in the testing phase of a service package, with feedback to be collected that will shape its further development. The actual end product will be produced in the field by an artist who will receive an artist's fee.<sup>1</sup>

### **Suburban resident aspirations for cultural services**

For the 'Spirit of the Suburb' research project, the University of Turku Degree Program of Landscape Studies collected information from residents in Sampola suburb on the pros and cons of their residential area, and their hopes for future development in relation to the area. This information, notably collected through residents' evenings and workshops, aimed at preventing a top-down approach to addressing issues. The workshops, held between November 2014 and May 2015, used cultural planning as a method involving residents and other actors. Discussions focused on cultural services, parks and habitat-related issues. Workshop participants were primarily active retiree women from the Sampola suburb who participate in the area's network of retired women, and who regularly visit the clubhouse in the area.<sup>2</sup> My role as a project researcher in the workshops was to facilitate discussion, responding to questions and providing expert information. I drafted a preliminary manuscript for the discussions, which was loosely followed.

Residents raised public transportation as an important issue. For many, it may be impossible to participate in cultural events in the city centre on Sundays because the last bus from the centre to Sampola leaves at 7:15pm – too early to attend an event or concert starting at 6pm. Residents voiced a desire for more communal activities in their neighbourhood, for opportunities to work with different population groups, and for immigrants living in the neighbourhood to participate in residents' activities. Residents wondered whether the Multicultural Association of Satakunta could be a cooperation partner and if it would be possible to have one individual coordinating and implementing a range of activities in the area. Residents also expressed a wish for coordinated activities geared for young people.

Residents are not of the opinion that it is necessary to improve transportation to and from the city centre for cultural activities; rather, they wish to see organised activities take place in their own residential area. Film screenings held at Sampola Hall are very popular, but no concerts are currently held there and the inhabitants miss them; young people would furthermore like to practice and play their music at Sampola Hall, where there are musical instruments available. The Sampola youth band has performed at various events, and the residents' association provides financial support for this activity.

Residents are highly satisfied with the library and the services it offers. A 'guerrilla gardening' programme that started in the area has been popular, and residents are hoping that it will become a permanent feature. The desire for course offerings was also voiced: residents would like to see IT courses and participatory performance art courses, as well as song evenings. The area has seen a certain amount of voluntary activity such as biannual organised markets, where residents sell homemade products; residents are also hoping to see an increase in flea market activity. They are interested in activities at the area's shortwave radio station; expressed the opinion that their area was lacking in terms of public art, colour and plants; and stated that access to the Koivisto outdoor area and Sculpture Park is a problem, in addition to the fact that the sculpture park has no benches where seniors can rest.

Based on this information, the aim of 'Spirit of the Suburb' research project's community arts scheme was set to bring together different age groups, as there have been some confrontations between teenagers and seniors in the area. 'The Friendship Bus Shelter' project turned out to be a good way to cross the borders between these age groups. Young people and senior citizens fixed up together a ragged bus shelter, which became a symbol of friendship and suburban community spirit.

### **A vision for senior-g geared cultural activities**

During cultural mapping workshops held in Sampola, it grew apparent that there is a strong need for a community spirit among the residents. As well as, a desire for services and activities to come to the area,

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<sup>1</sup> Interview 17 November 2015, Pori, Ramstedt-Salonen.

<sup>2</sup> Wallin 2015b, 56.



which would facilitate ties between generations. However, older individuals and museums directors have differing ideas when it comes to the types of activities museums should provide for senior citizens in the suburbs. The director of the Satakunta Museum would prefer that residents of the suburbs to be transported to the museum's different branches, and the director of the Pori Art Museum believes that residents are better served at the museum itself than in the suburbs. Neither of the museums have the resources to host museum activities in the suburbs. Seniors living in Sampola, meanwhile, find it difficult to participate in museum activities organised in the city centre due to reduced mobility or the aforementioned transportation obstacles. The cultural opportunities for Pori's ageing population are contingent upon the area of residence, with those in good health and living in the centre enjoying museum services, and those living on the outskirts cut off from museum services in proximity. Yet services provided by museums are essential for elderly people, providing them with social activities, opportunities for reminiscence and more, while likewise, elderly people can be an asset for museums by providing oral history. The role of museums as memory-based institutions is highlighted by the fact that many visitors are older people.<sup>1</sup>

### **Satakunta Museum**

The Satakunta Museum's current activities in the suburbs of Pori are sporadic due to a scarcity of resources. Residents of the area have called for more collaborative action and the collection of more historic data on the area's shortwave station, which is of cultural, historical and architectural significance, and counts as one of the province's valuable cultural landscapes. It has an important position in the history of post-war Finland, and issues pertaining to its history and conservation could therefore be addressed in school history lessons. To facilitate the enhancement of this heritage and encounters between generations, in collaboration with the University of Turku Degree Program of Cultural Production and Landscape Studies, Satakunta Museum could launch a collection of memory based data involving local schools and the clubhouse (provided by health service).

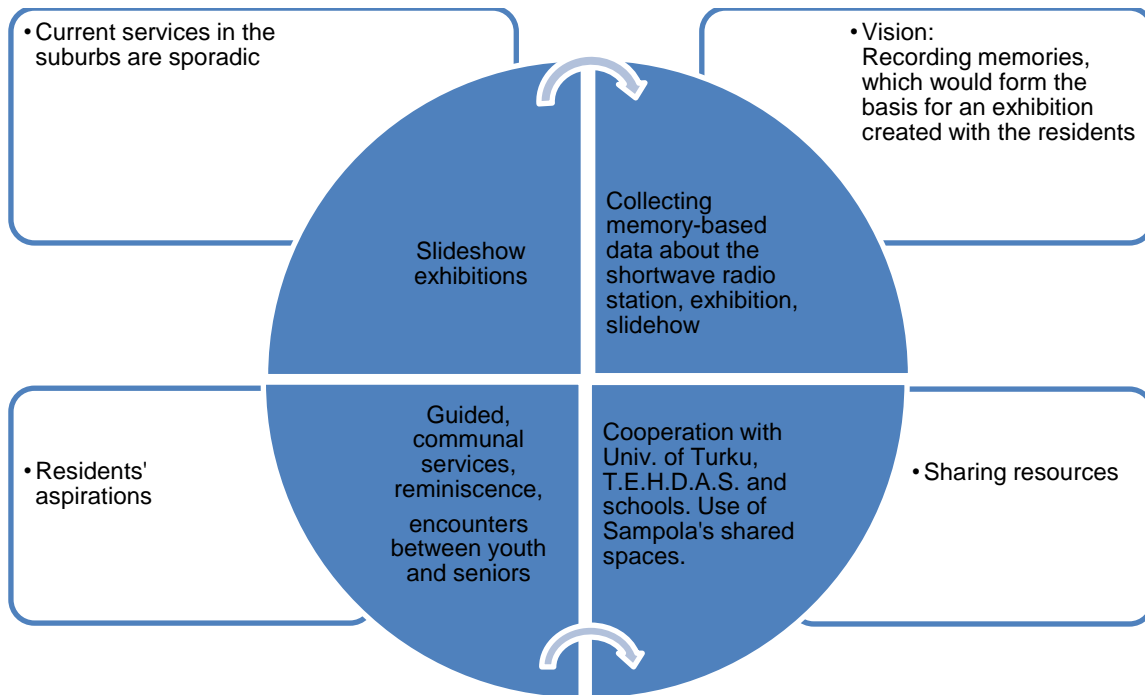
The elderly people of Sampola could be involved in school learning, for example, through the use of information brought about by their reminiscences in teaching, given that many of them once worked at the shortwave station. For Finland, and from the perspective of local history, it is important to collect this memory data. The same material could be used to create an exhibition, which could be presented both in the suburbs and at the Satakunta Museum, and produced as a touring exhibition. The Sampola business centre, the Sampola library and the shortwave station offer free exhibition spaces. The museum could produce slideshows in cooperation with residents and University of Turku students, using old photographs and newspaper clippings of the area belonging to the residents, digitised at the clubhouse with the help of students. These two projects would create encounters between the generations, allowing for the transfer of knowledge and skills. They are based on the cultural planning method theory of Gordon Waitt, which promotes social justice, a sense of belonging in a community and the strengthening of the identity of a location. The projects could improve the reputation of the suburbs, increase residents' awareness of their own neighbourhood's uniqueness and give different age groups positive experiences and encounters through common action.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 1** Left side: Shows the current activities that the Satakunta Museum provide in the suburbs. Below this are the aspirations that the residents' have towards the services. Right side: Shows a vision of the Satakunta museum's activities in the community that could be realized by sharing resources.

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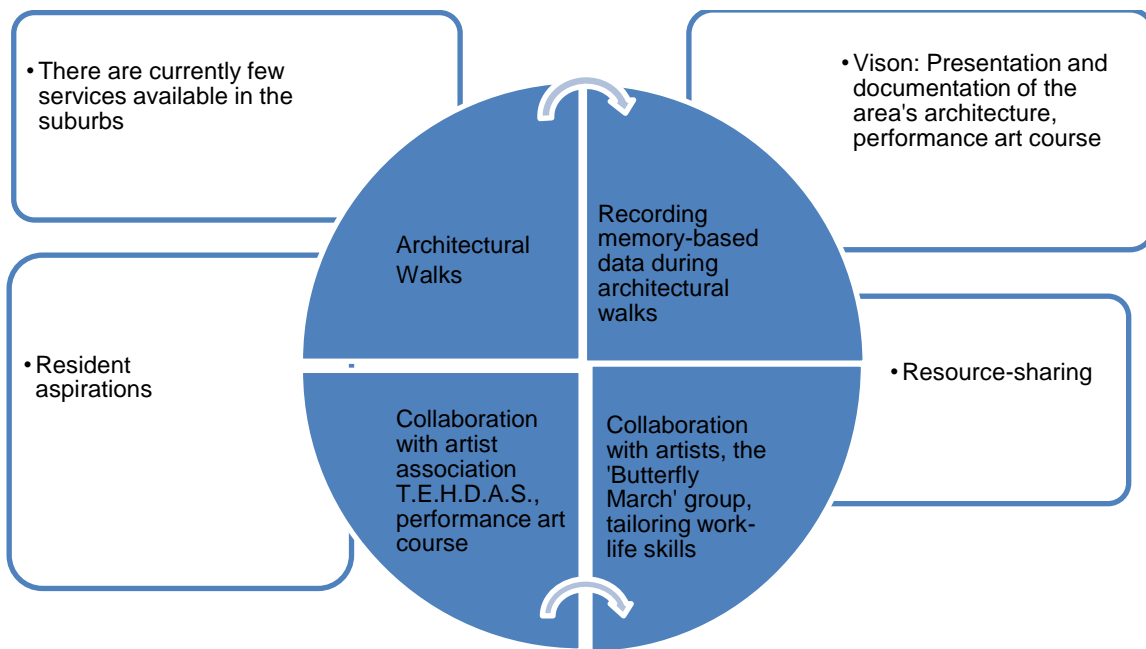
<sup>1</sup> Kavanagh 2000, 35, 57, 69.

<sup>2</sup> Waitt 2006, 181–182.



## The Pori Art Museum

The Pori Art Museum does not currently offer any services in the Sampola suburb. In the autumn of 2015, in cooperation with the City of Pori's Office of Urban Planning, a Sampola architectural walk was organised. Such walks can be important sources of information for residents, helping unlock the unique features of suburban architecture. As pertains to the desire voiced by Sampola residents for a performing arts course, the Pori Art Museum has been closely cooperating with the Artist Association T.E.H.D.A.S. (Factory), which operates at the shortwave station, to carry out a performing arts recording and archiving project as well as an exhibition, to publish a book and hold a variety of events. In addition, the seniors' 'Butterfly March' performance group has worked closely with the museum. Going further, the Pori Art Museum could tailor work-life skills activities and include a performance art course targeted at residents, which could be implemented in cooperation with T.E.H.D.A.S. and the 'Butterfly March' group. Tailored work-life services could also be offered to staff of care homes in the suburbs and to caregivers.



**Figure 2** present the activities, which are offered by the Pori Art Museum in the suburbs. The residents' aspirations could be realized by sharing resources with the local Artist Association T.E.H.D.A.S. (Factory).

## Conclusion

This research has enabled the emergence of information that is potentially useful for planning the senior initiatives of the Pori cultural centre, the Satakunta Museum and the Pori Art Museum. The museums activities in the suburbs are sporadic due to a scarcity of resources. How can the museums obtain information on the residents' service aspirations instead of only assuming which cultural activities the residents want to have in their area? The museum directors of both the Satakunta Museum and the Pori Art Museum view working cross-administratively and cross-sectorally, and cooperating with the health, social care and third sectors, as one solution to the question of resources. Satakunta Museum director Juhani Ruohonen believes that the City of Pori's health services should invest more in leisure activities, bringing museum and culture professionals into the health and social care sector. This could benefit all parties involved, meeting health, social and cultural aims and functioning as a preventive, action-oriented operation.<sup>1</sup> How can this be achieved?

Suburban residents believe that closer cooperation and development in the flow of information between administrative bodies would create a good channel for promoting interaction between residents and city officials. According to my own observations and experiences during the cultural planning project, services geared for the suburbs do not necessarily require large sums of money, but require more diverse cooperation and the readiness for a new kind of approach. Several of the city's administrative bodies are working in the suburban areas, each of which have their own planning models and well-established division of labour. The City of Pori does not have a separate strategy for the development of suburbs, nor are there administrative bodies in the area working within any permanent cooperation structure. Rather, the administrative bodies cooperate on a needs basis.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the city of Pori should establish a cross-sectoral and administrative suburban working group, which could, for example, contain one or more representatives from Pori museums. With the aid of the suburban working group, it would be possible to work together, share resources and allocate financial responsibility for the work among the different actors and administrative bodies, to define responsibilities and areas of collaboration. By being in direct contact

<sup>1</sup> Interview 2 November 2015, Pori, Ruohonen and Tulkki.

<sup>2</sup> Häyrynen 2015, 69–71.

with the residents and residential actors in the suburban working group, information can be obtained, which will help to develop and connect the services to the needs of the residents. Activities and services organised in the suburbs call for optimising coordination in order to avoid any duplication of efforts. The working group would focus on the foundation of a suburban strategy, which would help the administrative units create their own suburban programme and cooperate across administrative borders. In this way, territorial segregation could be addressed and equal distribution of culture among the population, including senior citizens, would be promoted. The suburban working group can also inform of current activities and effectively reach residents that maybe out of reach of traditional means of media.

The participation of elderly people in voluntary work have proven to be a valuable asset in the operations of the Satakunta Museum and the Pori Art Museum. A great deal of volunteerism in the cultural sphere takes place in the 'third sector', in associations, clubs and organisations, but also in the museum sector. The relative importance of the ageing population is highlighted as a resource for the future. However, this also creates precedents in terms of needs for the development of leisure services for the elderly, as has already been noted in Pori-area museums. According to the Finnish Elderly Barometer, social activeness among older Finnish people was high when compared to similarly aged people in other European Union member countries. Activeness among Finns over 60 has continued to grow, which is mirrored in older people's growing interest in various social issues. Participation in the activities of interest groups, voluntary organisations or congregations has also increased significantly, and voluntary work is felt to be, at the very least, a fairly important area of life for some 40% of those aged 65 or over.<sup>1</sup>

Changing social trends affect the operations of museums as well as the circumstances in which museums operate as organisations: the occurring demographic changes in Finland will invariably impact the museums' operating outlook for the future, while technological developments will fundamentally change museum practices and formats used for disseminating information.<sup>2</sup> Despite this development, the aging population is more an opportunity than a burden for museums in Finland.

The Finnish museums need to take an active role in the Finnish society. Essential is to plan and to realize the museum programme together with the residents, so that the activities provided address the local scene. This enables the museum to be the heart of the community. The museums' administration need to co-operate closely with the other sectors, so that the museum institution is a respected authority, and the humanistic values that they represent will be a real alternative.

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<sup>1</sup> Pynnönen 2011, 19–20.

<sup>2</sup> Karvonen et al. 2007, 4, 10–11.

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