

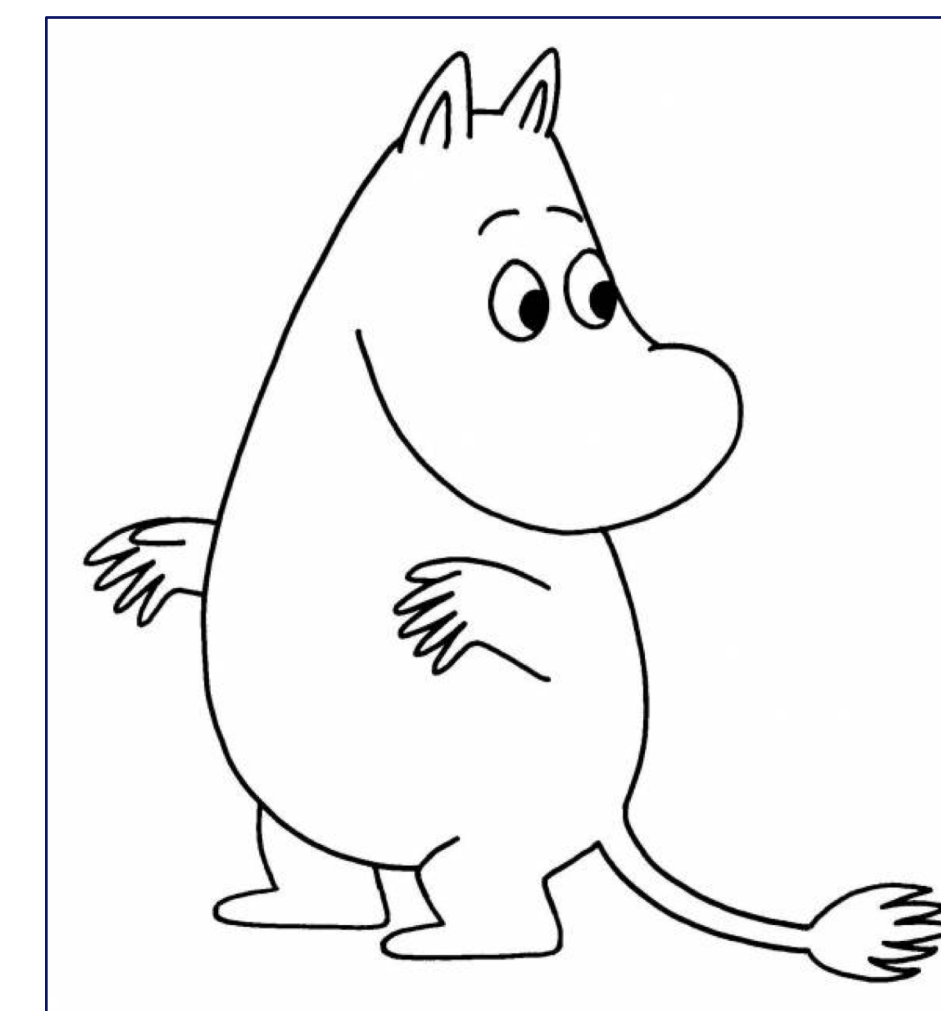


Aging in Finland and the US

Sarah Petrovich

University of Michigan School of Social Work

"Eteenpäin!" Sanoi mummon lumessa



✈️ Finland US

Is a country known for its outstanding and innovative education system and its value of universal healthcare.

Is facing a dramatic increase in older adults receiving Medicare benefits and requiring health services.

👥 **20.5%**

of Finland's population is 65 and older

19%

of the US population will be 65 and older by 2030

📍 **6th**

largest aging population in the world in Finland

19th

largest aging population in the world in the US

📍 Turku and Helsinki

Are two of Europe's fastest aging cities



📄 Qualitative Research

How universal healthcare and other policies impact the aging experience: A comparative study of older adults in the United States and Finland

A coinvented sample of 6 Finnish older adult and 6 American older adults were interviewed about their health, happiness, and healthcare experiences.

⚙️ Skills developed

- Qualitative interviewing and analysis
- Critical comparison of global healthcare systems and practices
- Cultural competence towards Finnish cultural norms and adapting to language barriers
- Professional development through connecting with Finnish social workers and researchers

🧠 Lessons Learned

Healthy Aging – In the US and in Finland, participants all claimed exercise and community kept them feeling good, despite various health concerns.

Global Citizenship – Education on how other countries practice health care and respond to the aging process is vital to implementing our own best practices.

Personal Connections Matter – I was able to connect with my participants and professionals all through a single personal connection with my host. It's a small world when you ask for help.

💡 Initial Findings

Finland Community: participants attributed their health and happiness in to community support and collaboration

Fewer doctors visits: majority of participants was the doctor once a year or less. US participants had one or more visits per year.

Activity: participants all had hobbies either physical or creative that they valued dedicating time to

United States Friends, Family, Faith: Where faith was defined as a religious practice or in a set of moral and values, participants expressed these three things kept them happy

Health is Political: participants discussed their views on healthcare as a basic human right or not

Activity: participants all had hobbies either physical or creative that they valued dedicating time to



✳️ Connections

- Classroom**
- SW 644 Policies and Services for Older Adults
 - SW 683 Evaluation in Social Work
 - SW 693 Geriatric Seminar

- Career**
- Utilizing new global connections in future research
 - Drawing from healthcare practices in Finland when creating new policies or best practices
 - Practicing qualitative research skills and cultural competency skills in potential evaluation projects

👥 Advice

1. Take advantage of every possible connection you can find to your prospective county.
2. Ask for help from anyone and everyone.
3. Being uncomfortable and afraid is apart of the experience and it makes you grow!



★ Acknowledgments

Thank you to the Office of Global Activities for funding this project. Thank you to Ruth Dunkle for advising me and helping bring this project to life. Thank you to Marja Aarnipuro for hosting me and connecting me with the Finnish people. Thank you Ari-Matti Toivonen for being my translator and adventure buddy. Thank you to Amanda Woodward and Ulla-Maja Koivula for introducing me to social work in Finland. Thank you Jessica Warrup, Jessica Gwilliams, and Sara Thane for studying Finnish policy with me. Thank you to my many professors who taught me the skills and information that made this project possible. Lastly, thank you to my parents for their unconditional support and encouragement.