

# Omais- hoitajat ja läheiset -liitto ry



The Central  
Association of  
Carers in Finland

Young Carers Conference, Malmö 31.5.2017

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[www.omaishoitajat.fi/jangsterit](http://www.omaishoitajat.fi/jangsterit)



## Young carers – Youngsters – Jangsterit: On their way to become visible in Finland

- Until recently, the concept *young carer* virtually unknown in Finland and informal care associated primarily with elderly people; organisations working with mental illnesses use the concept *children as next of kin*
- In legislation: the Act of Informal Care Support from 2005 does not mention children or youth with care responsibilities at home.
- Child protection policies and authorities are presupposed to intervene when the parents are not able to secure a safe environment/childhood for the child
- Lacking or insufficient awareness about young carers among professionals in social and health sector, public at large and researchers \* as illustrated by the comment on slide 3
- Ngo's the first actors with YC on their agendas (FinFami, Carers Finland, Alzheimer Society)
- Finland on **level 6 (i.e. second lowest)** in Leu&Becker country classification (Leu, A., & Becker, S. 2016. A cross-national and comparative classification of in-country awareness and policy responses to 'young carers'. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 1–13.)
  - Awakening, embryonic awareness of YC as a distinct social group within “the vulnerable children” population

*” I had never thought that children under 18 would be part of care.”*

”I have never thought of the term young carer. It’s normal to ask the young for some small chores - like taking out the rubbish, passing the remote control, keeping company- but I have never thought under 18-years olds as being responsible for caring. For that reason, it was very difficult for me to answer this. ***I had never thought that children under 18 would be part of care.***”

Online survey 4/2017 to investigate awareness about young carers among social and healthcare professionals making house calls





## Project Jangsterit – Young Carers in Finland and abroad (2016-2018)

- Aim: based on international examples, experiences, research and cooperation initiate the process of identifying young carers and children as next of kin and start working towards means of support measures
- The underlying logic: **Why would Finland be any different from Sweden, UK, Ireland etc?**  
**What can we learn from the others to hasten the process in Finland?**
- No data on the number of YC in Finland available, but in 2015 statistics (Statistics Finland, Population statistics) tell that
  - Population 5,5 million
  - Some 571 000 families with over 1 million children under 18
  - **2 % equals some 21 000 children under 18**
  - 104 000 mothers with children under 18
  - 16 700 fathers with children under 18

# What we have started and what we need to do

## Key factors that influence a country's awareness and response to YC: Agnes Leu in YC-seminar in Helsinki on 11.5.2017

### 1. Role of individuals and young carers themselves:

**"It brought lots of responsibilities and worries.** My sister and I have gone through feelings such young persons should not have nor understand. At times both parents were at hospital for long periods of time. Despite that they were more at home than the parents of other children. That was the positive side of illnesses. The family became a very tight unit." Alma, 21 years old singer in leading Finnish newspaper in Feb 2017

**"My childhood ended there and then and I took on the role of a gutsy girl"** Tiia, thinking back of the time when she was 10 years old and her father was diagnosed with Alzheimers and mother being dead (blog on radio company site)

**"Nobody asked my opinion about my parent's care or how I was doing."** Kirsi, video on Jangsteri-website

### 2. Reliable research evidence base - a «door opener» for policy transfer

- Information about research from other countries + Finnish research needed!

### 3. Legislation and initiatives - a commitment to children's rights

- e.g. Ombudsman for children

### 4. Leading role of key NGOs and media

- Projects and dissemination of information through several ngo's

- SuomiAreena in July



*Thank you!*

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