

Preface

The present book, *Social capital as a health resource in later life: the relevance of context* demonstrates the potential of social capital for promoting health and well-being in an ageing population. Our main intention with this book was to add to scientific knowledge of the relevance of social capital for older people's health and well-being, and thanks to all our authors we have achieved that aim. However, research-based evidence needs to be better utilised in policy and practice, which was another purpose in compiling this book – to provide readers with useful evidence on how to turn knowledge into practice. The underlying question is how to increase health and well-being amongst older people, and there is no single and correct answer to that. This book, however, provides a number of important and clarifying pieces in the complex puzzle of understanding socio-environmental influences on health.

The concept for this book stemmed from a specific academic event. Several of the contributors to this book met at the Nordic Congress of Gerontology in Copenhagen in 2012, where the initial plan and thoughts of compiling a book on social capital and health amongst older people were discussed. We had noticed the spread of social capital and health research but were concerned with the lack of studies focusing on older people in particular. We leveraged each other's networks and social capital to bring together a number of researchers from around the world with a special interest in social capital research. Scholars from several countries such as Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States provide answers in this volume on how to improve health and well-being in older people by focusing on social capital as a theoretical and empirical explanation.

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