CONGENIAL

Connecting Generations: Intergenerational learning for a more inclusive Europe

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INTRODUCTION (by Glenda Galeotti[1])

This e-book represents the main product of *Connecting Generation, CONGENIAL,* an EU project, namely a LLP learning partnership, carried out by Institutions and Organizations from eight European countries plus Turkey. The realm of the project is lifelong learning and in particular Adult Education and intergenerational learning. In an ageing Europe, the project aimed at promoting innovative educational methods and processes to foster communication and understanding between different generations[2].

The main project activities were, on the one hand, testing of educational interventions aimed at young and old learners in order to support learning experimentation based on intergenerational exchange. The strategy pointed at forging new tools for promotion of youth participation and elderly social inclusion in local communities. On the other hand, all involved partners worked in their local territories, and in international synergy, for the production and sharing of knowledge, methods and educational practices that could lead to a better quality of education and training for all ages. Connecting Generation had been conceived in 2011 in view of 2012 EU year for Active Ageing and as a brick toward Europe 2020 strategy framework on inclusive growth.

In the Europe of knowledge and technology, despite the richness and diversity of economic and cultural heritages, a large slice of senior and young citizens, for opposite reasons, live at the margins of the production system, outside the labor market and are at high risk of social exclusion. Intergenerational solidarity, support and cooperation among individuals of different ages, is key toward realizing a society where people can develop their capabilities and potential, can benefit from the economic and social progress of their communities, according to a logic of fairness[3].

Consistently with the priorities of Lifelong Learning Programme/Grundtvig of the European Commission, one of the main expected results of the project was to improve and upgrade the professional skills of adult education actors, foster their professional development and guarantee the quality of educational services provided by the organizations involved[4].

In fact it is everyday more important that operators reinforce knowledge and skills they employ in their education work, including abilities to read, to interpret and to act in news cultural, social and economic scenarios. Without that, they cannot be prepared enough to perceive and respond to the challenges that Europe as a whole will be facing in the coming years.

Although the definition of adult education adopted by the LLP Program is very broad and includes not only formal qualification courses, but also non-formal learning activities or outreach and informal learning environments, training in adulthood is not just a peculiar activity

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[1] PhD, Fellow Researcher in Adult Education at University of Florence, Italy.
[2] The project was supported by Learning Partnership of Grundtvig - Lifelong Learning Program of European Union. For details of the partnership see list of participants in Annex.
[3] European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, 2011 http://www.age-platform.eu/images/stories/23781_brochure_everyone2012_A5_IT.pdf consulted 20/01/2015
[4] http://www.programmallp.it/index.php?id_cnt=131 consulted 20/01/2015

in individual life. On the contrary, it represents the primary resource for social and political action of communities and States, in order to promote inclusion of all citizens[5].

Connecting Generations was meant, therefore, to involve young and elder in training activities focused on "working together", "learning together" and "learning from each other". Such an approach is mutually beneficial for acquiring new skills and knowledge, sharing values, understanding and strengthening mutual respect. The overall result are more cohesive communities. "Intergenerational learning, aims to develop dialogue and solidarity among social groups united by the increasingly widespread condition of exclusion from a society based on productivity and efficiency[6].

Within this framework, the design of *Connecting Generations* is characterized by a specific learning vision of and the strategic role played by non profit associations to make Lifelong Learning a concrete resource for local communities.

Shared construction of knowledge, according to an approach that moves from the individual to the context in which it interacts, makes learning the front door of social innovation. In this scenario, associations, and civil society more generally, are considered the most appropriate partners to build more cohesive and fairer societies.

In terms of methodological criteria, the project as a whole promoted experiential participatory learning: both adult educators consolidated their knowledge, attitudes and competences as educators and in the contents and methods applied to the educational activities carried out by them.

The educational intentionality of the project was developed through local initiatives aimed at promoting lifelong learning for young and elder people in shared spaces, regardless of socio-economic background. The focus was on social inclusion of the elder through the enhancement of their knowledge and a renewed effort to strengthen mutual knowledge and respect. the generational link, with young people. This intentionality was also shared at the international partnership level, where peer to peer analysis and reflection on the ongoing experiences, developed in particularly during transnational mobilities, was a pillar for cooperation between different organization. It also guaranteed quality assurance of education and training system.

As part of the project, EDAFORUM, in collaboration with the University of Firenze, coordinated a qualitative study of educational interventions made by the organizations involved. The objective was to trace the peculiarities and define the characters of methodological innovation, in terms of an educational transformative action.[7] Starting from the educational practices implemented, this analysis of practices has matured into a critical-reflexive co-construction of knowledge route, that contributed to define a shared repertoire of intergenerational education practices. That also represented a training space for adult educators of partner organizations.

The research methodology included direct involvement of all operators, who provided data and evidences for their validation. The common reflection happened during 9 international meetings, during which the various educational experiences have been the subject of analysis and reflection. Operators also created thematic focus groups, on memory, participation, arts,

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[5] A. Alberici (2002), *Prospettive epistemologiche*, in Demetrio D. (eds.), *Istituzioni di Educazione degli Adulti*, Milano, Guerini Scientifica.

[6] See http://www.age-platform.eu/age-policy-work/solidarity-between-generations/campaign/928-useful-links-publications-and-documents-

[7] This project action is realized by EdaForum in collaboration with the Department of Educational Sciences and Psychology, University of Florence.

traditional knowledge just to mention a few, and compiled sheets for collection and analysis of data. All this has been possible thanks to the role of researchers and experts in the field that offered their expertise free of charge.

The research began with a preliminary investigation on already existing educational experiences that promote intergenerational dialogue, with the aim of identifying some useful criteria to assess and compare the interventions of adult education carried out by the project partners[8].

The same criteria were used to construct an analysis sheet of educational practices implemented by educators/teachers/operators in the local communities where the organizations operate. The tool has been presented in Turkey in March 2013, at a very early stage of project implementation. A series of elements to allow practices' comparison has been identified by researchers[9]. The next stage of the investigation was data collection on educational activities/practices carried out by organizations (the analysis also took place through focus groups with local operators) and on joint activities of the international partnership (analysis of the records and reports of international meetings), then moved on to the decoding of the above according to the method of "content analysis"[10].

This involved the identification of analytical units, such as results of inferential processes, and then the decoding of the aggregations of data according to two criteria: the first described the activities in specific operational contexts; the second detected the relationship between the key elements that characterize the activity under investigation. The results of this process have been assessed and validated, together with those of the project, with the focus groups with all international partners in the last meeting in Poland in May 2014.

The products of the different phases of the investigation were included in this publication. The first part begins with the illustration of the problem addressed by the project, or the identification of adult education needs in Europe, with reference to intergenerational learning and solidarity, defining the framework in which the activities took place.

The second chapter describes how the project Connecting Generations, in promoting active aging through specific educational activities is part of the European strategies for lifelong learning, in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme and later Erasmus Plus. This also contains the results of the qualitative research that has accompanied the project activities, and in particular, of the comparison between the educational practices realized for the construction of a shared vision of intergenerational education and lesson learned through local and international project experiences.

The second part of the volume collects the work of operators and educators, descriptions of adult education activities carried out by organizations in their communities and of some educational methods - Study Circles, the Word Café and Paideia Clubs - used to promote communication between the generations.

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[8] This research phase was conducted by Dr. Amerigo Bernardi for his Master's thesis. See Bernardi A., *Invecchiamento attivo, dialogo intergenerazionale e trasmissione di Saperi. Buone pratiche e linee di sviluppo*, Master's Degree in "Operator for local human development, culture of peace and international cooperation", University of Florence, AY 2012-2013.
[9] The plan for the documentation of educational practices implemented and the analysis sheet were shared during the first international meeting in Afyon, Turkey in March 2013 and then revised and updated during the continuation of the project.
[10] R. Semeraro (2011), *L'analisi qualitativa dei dati della ricerca in educazione*, "Giornale Italiano della Ricerca Educativa" 4(7), p.97-106.

In line with the objectives of the Lifelong Learning Programme, the project documentation, through quality research on educational practices for intergenerational dialogue, has allowed us to identify and circulate results, innovative products and processes, and especially good practices successfully tested that can be replicated and scaled up.

This can be seen as the main contribution that Connecting Generations has given to the development of the European system of lifelong learning, in terms of strengthening the knowledge and skills of the professionals involved in adult education and in particular in the framework of active ageing and intergenerational solidarity[11].

The attention paid to the participatory processes in education activities, in the broader work with the local communities for the construction of networks, including the activities of the international partnership, has allowed us to spread the knowledge gained at all levels of the system implemented by *Connecting Generations*: dialogue, discussion and the enhancement of experience - life, business, personal and collective, and more - have strengthened the link between specific educational action and their social impact in local communities, as well as a better understanding of new and possible forms of cooperation and solidarity between generations[12].

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[11] For objectives of LLP Program see: http://www.programmallp.it/index.php?id_cnt=44

[12] H. K. Hansen, M. Molpeceres, J. J. Rothuizen (2012), *Lifelong learning and participation: a pedagogical turn in social work and social policy*, http://www.hellekroghhansen.dk/Egne%20manus/Lifelong%20learning%20and%20participation%20a%20pedagogical%20turn%20in%20social%20work%20and%20social%20policy.pdf; L. Mortari (2008), *Educare alla cittadinanza partecipata*, Milano, Mondadori.

I. ADULT EDUCATION IN EUROPE: A CHANGING DEMOGRAPHY AND ITS EMERGING TRAINING NEEDS

1.1 New training needs and challenges for Adult Education in Europe (by Giovanna Del Gobbo[13])

The document "EU2020 - Integrated guidelines for the economic and employment policies of the Member States"[14] offers a framework for the implementation of policies in Europe that are functional to a smart, sustainable and inclusive society[15]. Out of ten guidelines contained in the integrated document, the first six are devoted to economy, while the last four focus on employment and in particular guideline number 8 refers explicitly to lifelong learning: "Developing a skilled workforce responding to labor market needs, promoting job quality and lifelong learning "and number 9 stresses the importance of improving the systems of education, training and education:" improving the performance of education and training systems at all levels and increasing time participation in tertiary education"[16].

It is not, as we know, a new position: Europe for several years has emphasized the need for high quality education and training to provide high quality skills responding to the changing needs of the labour market. In most contexts and through various financing measures Europe strived to demonstrate how a system of adequate and reliable services is crucial, indeed it is the basis to generate a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe. It is not just a matter of educating and training the staff needed for research, development and innovation, and therefore provide a productive and flexible labour force: it also means working on policies to face the impact of an aging population on the labor force, decreasing the so called "transmission of poverty" from one generation to the next. In fact poor families tend to invest less on education and training, and without adequate policies there would be no enhancement of non-formal and informal dimension of learning or other know-how.

In order to boost growth and jobs, to avoid the mismatch[17] between training and work, not only education and training systems must offer quality and accompany people to acquire the skills that pave the way for a transition to the labour market, but we also need measures and adequate tools to a more effective and more active management of competences: competences that we already have - how to recognize and exploit them - or those that are missing - with

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[13] Professor Agrégée Social Pedagogy, Department of Sciences of Education and Psychology, University of Florence.
[14] European Commission, 2020- COM (2010) 193.
[15] Ibid., p. 21
[16] Ibid., p. 22. The main objective of the EU, according to which the Member States must define their national targets, is to reduce the dropout rate of 10%, while increasing the share of the population aged 30-34 having completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 40% in 2020.
[17] As we read, for example in the Programme for Italy "Youth Guarantee" 2014-2020, published in February 2014 "To curb the chances of employment of young Italians is not only the lack of labor demand triggered by the economic crisis, but also a growing gap between the skills required by businesses and those possessed by young people entering the labour market. The so-called "skills mismatch" takes on different forms, determined by several factors (labor force too or too little trained, mismatch between training and production technologies). A bad "match" between demand and supply of labor leads to cumulative effects in the long run: working incongruously with their skills, "p. 19. The mismatch between skills acquired and activity happens also among the employed ones: many do not do the jobs for which they are prepared and would be ready to work. In Italy we face a paradox. there is an unanswered demand for labor and young people looking for a job.

particular reference to basic skills- and those to be built anew, with particular reference to key competences, often acquired in the daily life context.

Recent research results released by the OECD in October 2013 show that adult skills in countries that participated in the survey, and their use and impact, are at such a low level that enhancement of social capital is seriously limited. Unlike PISA, which measures cognitive skills of fifteen years old, the results of PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) investigate educational policies in the labor market, in welfare systems, in quality of work in enterprises, in economic policy choices. The research highlighted the ability to manage information and solve problems in technologically rich environments, in particular the ability to access, evaluate, analyse, communicate and use information through the use of tools and digital applications: all the latter are called Foundation Skills and are considered to represent the cognitive pillar to live and work in the third millennium. An individual with low-level performance in these competences faces high chances of exclusion from the workplace and in society. The survey results, echoed in the 2013 Social Cohesion Report by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, see our country ranking last in literacy, penultimate in mathematical skills (numeracy), essential for addressing and manage problems of mathematics in different situations of adult life. As highlighted in the report, "The low level of human capital is also evident from the low propensity toward education especially among younger generations. There are in Italy around 800 thousand youth between 18 and 24 years who do not participate in any training activities, of which 323 000 employed and 151 000 unemployed. Also very high is the phenomenon of early school leaving that affects not less than 800 000 young people between 18 and 24 years old or 18.2% of the total. Finally, by comparing the proportion of the population between 24 and 65 participating in continuing education activities, the low level of human capital of our country is doubtlessly confirmed. In 2011 the share of adults who participated in training activities in Italy was only 5.7%, more than three points below the European average among the 27 EU countries. But the distance from the European average grows even bigger when considering that among the 15 founding countries 10.1% of adults had participated in training activities»[18].

Those numbers and percentages, albeit from a national point of view, show the relevance of the problem and support the urgent need for interventions. Surely attention to learning throughout the course of life requires, beyond the recognition of its intrinsic value, the identification and implementation of new measures and new ways of working in line with a sound framework of theoretical and methodological reference. Its meaning, in fact, goes well beyond contingency planning and identification of intervention measures and financial constraints.

Up to the theories of the Chicago School[19], the correlation with systems of non-formal education, education and vocational training was considered functional to production and increase of income, founded precisely on the available capital in terms of knowledge. The ratio of investment in education and increased productivity was already highlighted in the Sixties: "More education should contribute to growth in two different ways. First, it should increase the quality of the workforce [...] this should generate an increase in work productivity [...] Second, a higher cultural level of the population is expected to accelerate the rate of

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[18] Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *Rapporto sulla Coesione Sociale 2013*, Volume I, p. 29

[19] G. Becker, *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis,* with Special Reference to Education, The National Bureau of Economic Research, New York 1964.

accumulation of the stock of knowledge in society"[20]. Human capital, according to this approach, differs from other resource stocks only for its structural incorporation in the individual. It is, however, of a stock by its nature subject to depreciation and obsolescence and variable returns, in need of a continuous process of updating and adaptation with respect to the advancement of knowledge, with complementary activities and parallel paths of education. If knowledge guides the production, it is the wheel of development (economic and other) and knowledge is a factor of wealth and well-being, we face a paradox: knowledge itself is reduced to a "good" that is consumed quickly and as quickly, in fact, it becomes obsolete. At the same time we start valuing and assessing the "quality" of knowledge on which to invest: many kinds of knowledge can not be recognized in their value, but they can still express a potential to be exploited. So in the Knowledge and Information Society, culture and education risk progressively becoming market products, following the rules of any other product. And knowledge is valuable to the extent that it is able to serve the production process and lead to income: knowledge thus appears as capital to invest not as "human capital", but as functional to productive development. So the so-called "intangible economy", invests in education, training, vocational training, immigration policies, improving the health of workers and other intangible factors that increase the productivity of labor. It seems to be an imperative to try to capitalize on the human capital of which a certain country can dispose. The risk is to assess human beings in terms of cost / benefit, damage / benefits, losses / gains, denying the value of the concept of human capital in its entirety.

If human capital is defined as a multidimensional and unobservable construct created by investments in education, training, health, family and socio-economic background, such as to cause an effect on productivity, observable from labor income, the evaluation of the system of knowledge of the subject has to be measured by a multi-parameter setting within which correlation with the production performance nevertheless remains central.

However, the concept of human capital in recent years drew attention to the economy of training as part of a debate increasingly connected to the development of society: it is now increasingly related to the concepts of sustainable and endogenous development and to social cohesion. The constructs "human capital" and "human development" in recent years seem to share similar paths of revision and extension of their meanings. Definitely the Human Development Index is a key step in this path with the fundamental importance given to education and literacy processes, but two other documents are certainly significant. In June 2007 the second OECD World Forum on "Statistics, Knowledge and Policy" has proven a unique opportunity to develop the discussion about the measurement of development, while also allowing the consideration of a number of observed phenomena such as climate change, health and economic globalization. With the Istanbul Declaration, the OECD, the European Commission, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank have issued a commitment to measuring and fostering the progress of societies of all sizes, with the ultimate goal of improving policies, democracy and well-being of citizens.

In 2009 the so-called Stiglitz Commission Report was published under the title of Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress. In the

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[20] E.F. Denison, "Measuring the Contribution of Education to Economic Growth", in J. Vaizey, EAG Robinson (eds.), *The Economics of Education*, MacMillan, London 1966, p. 215.

Report, edited by Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi, they highlight the indispensable need to identify indicators to measure quality of life, sustainable development and the relationship with the environment[21]. The report, rather than concentrating on production, focuses on indicators to measure the well-being "from the people's side" by identifying seven dimensions that are fundamental to the well-being of individuals: the psychophysical state, knowledge and ability to understand the world in which you live, the environment, interpersonal relationships and participation in society. To these we add two cross cutting dimensions: equity, regarded as the balance between the intra-generational relationships and sustainability, understood in terms of the balance between the generations. We refer to a fair and sustainable well-being for which not only quantitative but also qualitative variables of the human condition are crucial.

The intergenerational perspective becomes, therefore, not only a necessity for social inclusion, but also a potential indicator of well-being and sustainable development. And the knowledge that seems to be characteristic of a past generation and therefore considered obsolete (both in terms of production and social relations) may be regarded as an expression of human potential.

Speaking of intergenerational balance obviously entangles economic factors related to a relationship between "productive generations" at work and "generations" who are enjoying retirement. The boundaries between these phases, with the transformation of the labor market that we are currently experiencing, however, are very unstable and fluid. The distinction is no longer clear, if not, in some cases, paradoxically reversed. We encounter in fact more and more situations in which generations of aged parents no longer in the labor market represent an actual economic support for the young generation in employment crisis. In addition, there are also demographic considerations with respect to an ageing population.

The phrase "the future is in the hands of young people" would seem to no longer true if the majority of the population, at least in the Western world, is not so young anymore: without sharing of knowledge necessary to build a sustainable future, without a new "platform" shared between generations, there is nowadays no more future whatsoever.

All this requires a reconsideration of the meaning of intergenerational dialogue and effectively valuing the necessary collaboration and intergenerational continuity. It is increasingly evident that traditional and neat classification of the phases of life, social roles and production is losing ground. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, this is now happening in daily life: it is a phenomenon that needs to be understood and managed, that also requires the construction of new knowledge to give meaning and depth to a generational continuity that takes on new value in terms of social ties and also in terms of intergenerational solidarity. The solution seems to be horizontal collaboration and solidarity becomes a mutual need.

In a lifelong learning perspective a new need for competences to manage the continuity and attribute meanings emerges. Indeed it appears to be essential to reflect on generational transfer of meanings not only in diachronic but synchronic manners. The need for a dialogical perspective in which knowledge can be shared and placed in continuity with a future under construction appears evident.

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[21] J. Stiglitz, A. Sen, JP Fitoussi, *Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress*, 2009, in http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/documents/rapport_anglais.pdf

When we think of intergenerational dialogue, we often recall the term "transmission". The etymology of the term, from the Latin *transmittere* in fact refers to the sense of the "switch" from one person to another, from one place to another, from one time to another, from one generation to another. It suggests the idea of "pass the baton" and it brings to mind the metaphor of relay: a role game in which one enters consciously in the race to bring forward the result reached by the other and no one runs much and only for himself, but toward a "team objective." No one can stop the run. It is not a possibility. Who passes, does not "drop" the baton, but he "deliveries" to another person certain that he who receives shares the same rules of the game, recognizes the value of the sign, as well as the duty to continue on and on.

So in the action of transmitting both the one who passes and the recipient have an active role and share meanings[22]. If we return to the metaphor of passing the baton in a social context, however, we can grasp the need to consider also the need to negotiate and re-interpret meanings in the transition, which necessarily become related to the perspective from which they are interpreted. Moreover, in light of the above considerations, we understand the "race" and the "relay race" can even involve those who had already abandoned but are needed on the field again.

From the educational point of view the node appears to be attributable to the "how to" share "meanings", often between past and present, and between present and past. Surely educational practices using memories can be reviewed and enhanced. Memory should definitely be preserved, but at the same time it can be considered as a useful seed to produce an inedited future. This is to define the meaning of a "memory" that does not crystallize the memory itself, but gives shape to negotiated meanings, in the present, for the future.

"Memory" is indeed a term that we meet more and more often, sometimes abused and almost exploited in a society that often makes fashion of it: the fashion of the past is often a clumsy expression of a widespread fear of loss of roots, it seems an anchor to answer an apparent collective amnesia that disorients us on who we really are, but that is likely to stiffen the idea of identity, making it static, shut, closed in on itself. Zigmunt Bauman talks about "roots" and "anchors" in identity and socialization processes, "while the roots torn from the ground where they grew will probably will dry up and die, anchors are pulled out only to be thrown somewhere else, and can be thrown with the same ease in many different ports, at very long distances. In addition roots are part of the project and the predetermined shape of the plant, so there is no possibility that they may grow another type of plant; conversely, the anchors are only tools that facilitate the temporary docking of a vessel to a peer, and in themselves they do not affect the quality or capacity of the ship"[23]. Memory, as a possible object of an intergenerational dialogue, should probably be more about knowing we have an anchor rather than finding our own roots. Especially if, to use Bauman's words again , we should take into account more and more of a "web of continuity and discontinuity in history and a growing number of contemporary identities"[24] and parallel that "almost no affiliation can comprise the

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[22] "The meaning of any fact, any proposition or meeting is on the perspective or frame of reference in terms of which it is interpreted. [...] The interpretations of the meaning reflect not only the particular histories of individuals, but also the canonical forms in which a culture reconstructs reality. Nothing is free from cultural influences, but even individuals are simply mirrors of their culture. It is the interaction between the two things that impressions from the common to the individual thought and gives richness to an unpredictable way of life, "Bruner J., op. cit., p. 27-28.
[23] Z. Bauman, *Ethics in a world of consumers*, trans. eng. Laterza, Bari-Roma., 2010, p. 19 et seq
[24] Ibid p. 20

"whole self ", because every person is involved, not only in the course of their lives, but at any time of life, in multiple memberships".[25]

There will probably be less and less social knowledge connotations dependent on generations. We will have to re-consider and re-negotiate knowledge that, by osmosis, becomes part of the training of each subject and creates continuity: informal knowledge, stemming from everyday life can definitely be a basis for dialogue, a starting point.

Such knowledge can, better than others, be immediately be perceived as significant as they are developed and socially built to respond to the problems of everyday life. This knowledge threatens to appear less meaningful, less decisive, more interpretable and therefore not communicable and negotiable in a present so different from the past.

The prevalence of the formal dimension of learning, with its equipment and technological support, has over time led to the lack of consideration, if not to the devaluation, of informal knowledge that the subject constructs and processes within the context of his own life. He preserves memory of their training process, usually unconsciously: knowledge linked to the interpretation and transformation of their environment, to the experience of reality through the individual experience, collectively shared. Duccio Demetrio defines memory as a "network of narratives that we defend and that we have defended, showing us that we had a story, we had a plot." But this story and this plot necessarily refer to the sense of identity and belonging that develops in sharing knowledge and expertise, not only to recognize and be recognized, but also to build new knowledge. It is located and distributed knowledge, culturally connoted, featuring a local context in which to "track" treads in order to build new plots. The cultural memory or socio-cultural training is a component of that knowledge potential that enables human beings to learn and build new knowledge.

The enhancement of this heritage therefore needs to be based on the involvement of the generations. This enhancement or re-semantization cannot be delegated or assigned only to the school system. Non-formal education of adults and community education can instead play an essential role that must be recognized and supported.

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[25] Ibid.

1.2 Challenges in Hungarian Adult Education (by Edit Rohonczi)

For the past two decades, the strategy of Lifelong Learning has become the major agenda of the educational field with the objective of increasing competitiveness and employability – in a longer perspective: creating economic growth and a knowledge-based society in Hungary. Adult education being a tool for workforce development, social cohesion, and active ageing plays a determinant role in this strategy.

The importance of adult learning and teaching is well-known to the different players of the educational arena, i.e. decision and strategy makers, education providers, employers, etc. It is also agreed that adult education supports both social and economic objectives. There is no question that adult education needs to serve the expectations of a modern labour market. However the implementation of these concepts and the realisation of the actual adult education programmes prove to be problematic not only at national, but also at European level.

The overall Europe 2020 Strategy is focused on enhancing "smart, sustainable and inclusive growth", which requires more effective investments in education, research and innovation with a strong emphasis on job creation and poverty reduction. Within that strategy, the European Union countries have set objectives in the Strategic Framework of Education & Training 2020 to address the common challenges which include:

- making lifelong learning and mobility a reality
- improving the quality and efficiency of education and training
- promoting equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship

Pertaining to these objectives and the measures to improve indicators in education-related fields among others the following three main issues are to be addressed in the EU:

1. To meet the economic growth expectations the employment rate of the age group 20-64, which shows slow rise following the 2008 crisis, but it is still low, needs to be increased significantly *(Figure 1.)*.
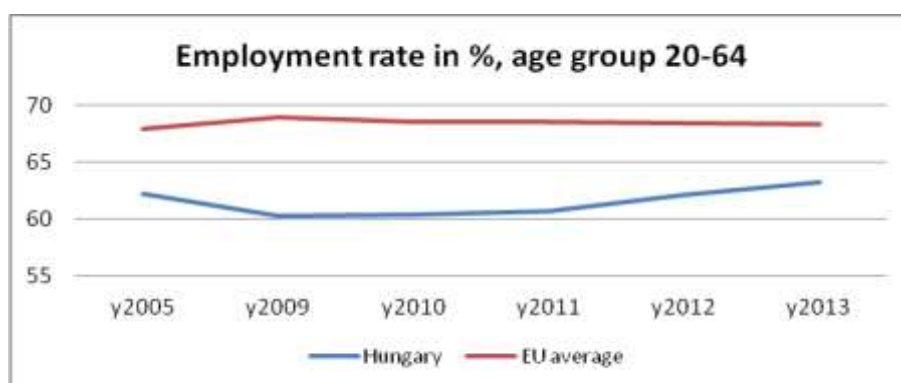
Figure 1. (data source: Eurostat)

2. In order to support social cohesion and ensure basic skills development for everyone the share of early school leavers, which is recently slightly growing again, needs to be lowered *(Figure 2.)*.
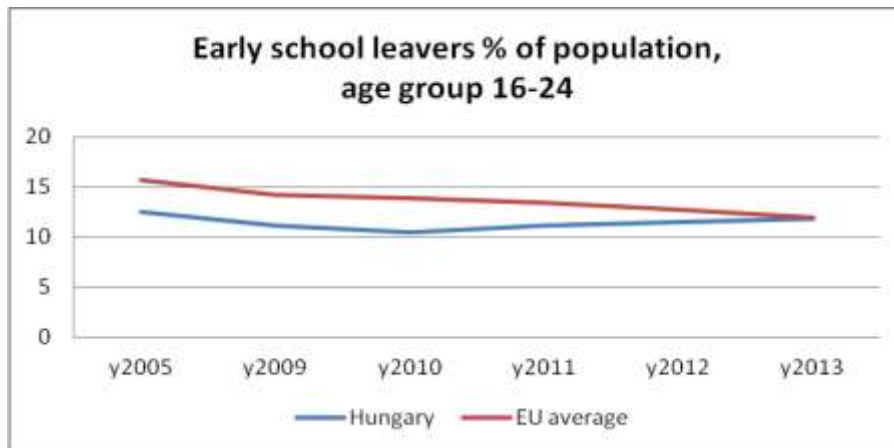
Figure 2. (data source: Eurostat)

3. Finally the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, which is currently more than it was in 2005, has to be decreased *(Figure 3.)*.
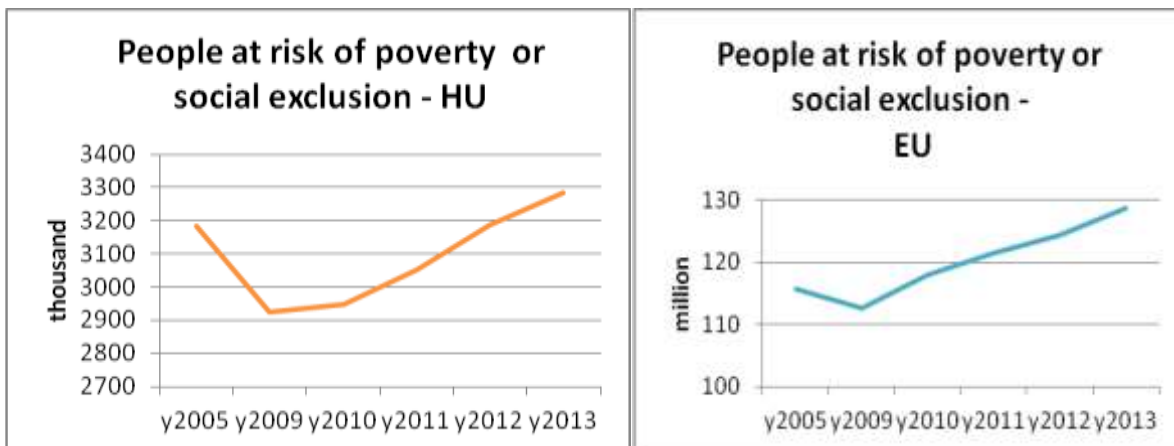
Figure 3. (data source: Eurostat)

The European Commission made measures and launched a number of programmes to facilitate improvements in these areas and set headline targets for them. It is expected that for 2020 at EU level

- 75% of people aged between 20 and 64 year old should be employed → a 12% increase
- The rate of early school leaving will be reduced below 10% → close to 2 % decrease
- at least 40% of 30 to 34 year old people have completed tertiary or equivalent education → approx. 3.5% increase
- at least 20 million people should be lifted out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion → approx. 8% decrease

To contribute to the achievement of these aims promoting lifelong learning and adult education is pivotal. The number of people participating in adult education has to be increased: it is targeted to have at least 15% of adults participate in lifelong learning by 2020.

Figures 1., 2. and *3.* also show the Hungarian data and trends in the focus areas confirming that Hungary faces very similar issues to the European ones, however the country needs to make even stronger efforts than the required average particularly in the field of employment.

Aims and objectives of Adult Education. The general aim and driving force of adult education is to "enable citizens to meet the challenges of social, cultural and technological changes and enter the world of work, be successful and improve the quality of their life"[26]. More specifically adult education serves societal objectives by delivering trainings for disadvantaged groups (early school leavers, migrants, unskilled adults thus contributing to personal development, equal opportunities and decreasing social exclusion. Beyond that it plays an important role in achieving economic goals: by improving skills and competences of wide target audiences it increases employability and enhances knowledge, creativity and innovation. Therefore the scope and operational field of adult education is extremely wide, it involves various formats and delivery modes. It is directed at special and highly diverse target groups with specific features in terms of social and geographical background, knowledge/competence level, skills, age, motivation and capacities. Their needs are strongly varied, and to address these needs adult education has to be similarly diverse, flexible and highly creative in finding tools and methods to capture and engage its target audience. The concept of lifelong learning needs to penetrate more efficiently, and it is a special mission of adult education to counter-balance the shortcomings of the education provided through the schooling systems.

Overview of adult education in Hungary. Meeting the strongly diverse needs the channels of adult education provision are numerous. Various decrees and acts regulate its delivery both within the formal education system and in the non-school/non-formal systems. In Hungary any organisations that obtain a state statute described by the Adult Education Act 2001 have the legal right to offer adult education services. Outside the state-owned bodies (vocational schools, higher education institutions and labour affairs centres), most of them are private companies, religious entities, foundations and associations. The form of education can be school-based or non-formal, featuring general, language or vocationally oriented education. Due to the wide range of providers and tracks ministries in charge made considerable efforts to elaborate a comprehensive regulation for non-formal education to establish quality standards, and govern validation and accreditation procedures, however this proved to be a long and on-going process. It is apparent that a better cooperation is needed between the stakeholders of the sector in order to develop a frame in which resources and opportunities are more efficiently utilised. Furthermore it is necessary to raise awareness to the concept of lifelong learning in order to meet the headline targets and not to lag behind the rest of Europe when it comes to education.

Specific challenges. Statistics show that in Hungary less than 4% of the potential population (aged 25-64) participates in lifelong learning, which is barely more than a quarter of the set benchmark for 2020. It is obvious that significant improvement is needed in this area: adult education has to be planned strategically, organized, implemented and managed efficiently. Beyond the low participation there are three areas in which improvement is very much and urgently needed.

The first one is the knowledge of foreign languages. Being a small nation whose language is neither spoken nor understood in any other country of the world it is essential that Hungarians speak other languages, at least one of the prevailing languages spoken in the European Union. Yet more than 60% of the adult population does not speak any other language, only about 26%

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[26] http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/index_en.htm

speak one foreign language, and less than 10% speak 2 languages in addition to their mother tongue *(Figure 4.)*. The average rates are exactly the opposite in the EU, where one third of the people do not speak another language, and 30% is able to communicate in 2 or more foreign languages.

Foreign language knowledge

% of population vs Number of foreign languages spoken
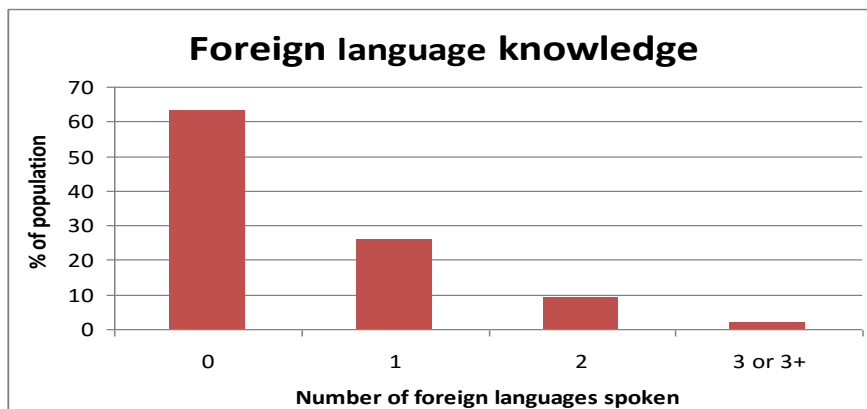
Figure 4. (data source: KSH)

Secondly, while internet penetration in Hungary is high, computer skills are to be developed. Research show that the rate of computer users in the adult population strongly correlates with the level of education completed *(Figure 5.)*, and in this respect the Hungarian research results are consistent with the European and global findings. Therefore special attention needs to be directed at computer skills development for people with lower educational attainment.

Computer users

% of population vs Level of education completed
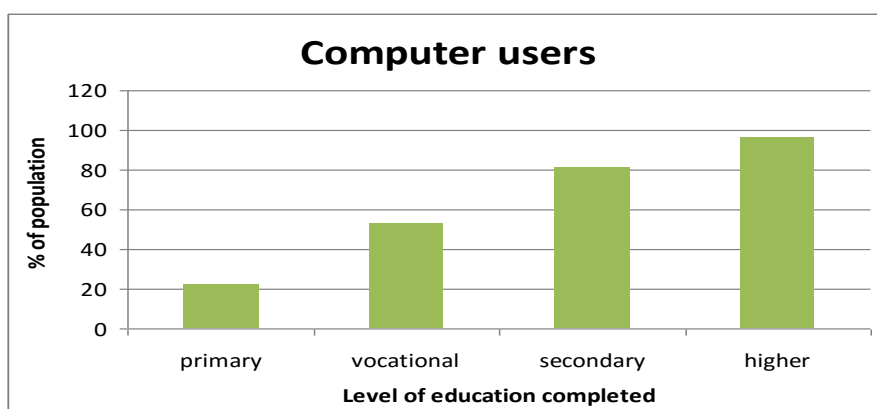
Figure 5. (data source: KSH)

The overall and most important challenge for adult education in Hungary is the low participation. While the European average participation in LLL is around 10%, the quoted rate of 4- % in Hungary is dangerously below the expectable. There are a number of reasons to explain this. Groups with accumulated disadvantages are not properly identified, approached and provided with appropriate trainings. The approximately 15% functional illiterate and 30% under-skilled population is not offered educational service according to their needs due to the lack of sufficient financial resources, distribution and readiness. Generally there is a shortage in basic skills development opportunities as the current structure of adult education centres more on vocational education and continuing professional education, however there is no visible

increase in the area of the two latter either. In addition there is a gap (for quite a while) between the educational offer and the actual demand of the labour market.
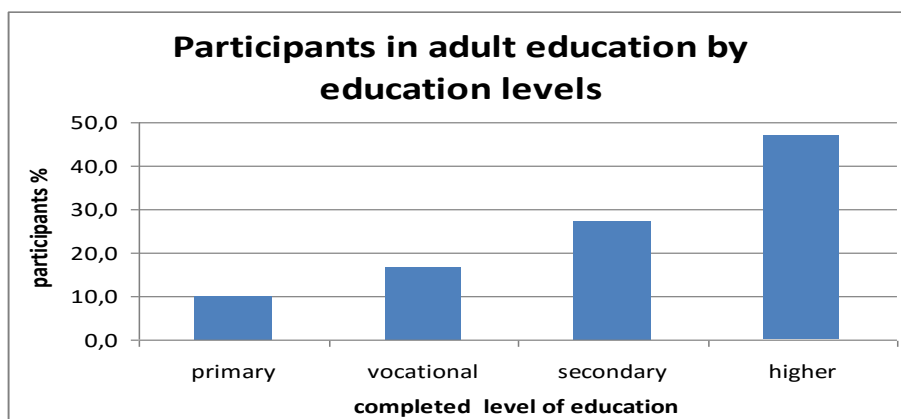
Figure 6. (data source: KSH)

Figure 6. shows that rate of participants with primary education is only 10% of the total participants, and with vocational education it is about 16 %. Almost three times more people with higher education attainment engage in some form of adult education confirming the previously identified needs for more service for the less educated groups. *Figure 2.* further substantiates this demand, showing that while in Europe there is a moderate but steady decrease in the percentage of early school leavers, their number is on the rise in Hungary.

There are some additional special challenges that seem to be global and need addressing:

- *Gender dimension* shows that there is a constant drop of male participation in adult education in spite of all efforts to make programs equally available for both men and women.
- *Entering mid career or midlife career change* has a tradition and pattern in the western part of the world, but a relatively new phenomenon and necessity in several parts of Europe.
- *Ageing societies* create the challenge of learning provision for retired and elderly people in large numbers.
- *Special fields of economic demand and workforce needs*, such as engineering, information technology, healthcare, entrepreneurship and business management need to become priorities when the vocational orientation of adult education.

National Strategy – space to develop. The country specific recommendations to Hungary issued by the European Commission to help improve its economic performance include guidance in seven areas one of which is education and training.

Hungary develops and implements its national strategy in accordance with the recommendations, and targets at strengthening the role of education in equal opportunities, developing the relations between education and economy, and improving efficiency and quality of education.

In this context specific tasks are:

- To widen the educational offer in adult education, particularly in basic skills and key competencies
- To acknowledge non-formal and informal education
- To support disadvantage groups and prevent early drop-outs and social exclusion
- To establish a new learning culture which includes the culture of quality

- To better align educational offers with labour market demands

Beyond the efforts of the national authorities, public and for-profit educational institutions, NGOs and companies contributing to formal and non-formal adult education the sector could widely benefit from national and transnational projects, collaborations, partnerships, networks in the form of knowledge and best practices exchanges and development/transfer of innovations. However the Hungarian participation in European projects focusing on adult education is not particularly high.

In CONGENIAL, activities performed by the Hungarian partner, the TELOS Education and Consulting Ltd. have addressed needs and skills development in relation to language education and information technology, which are important and should be distinguished fields of adult education in Hungary, as it has been argued in the previous sections. The purpose of TELOS to participate in the CONGENIAL project was to make a modest contribution through its own limited capacities to non-formal and partially informal adult education by creating a team which investigated innovative methods to connect generations via e-mentoring (for details please refer to the section on Hungary of this book). It is hoped that many more smaller or bigger initiatives will support the achievement of the European and Hungarian objectives relating to lifelong learning and adult education.

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The System of Education in Hungary, Published by the Ministry of National Resources, 2012 ISBN 978-963-89179-3-5

1.3 Active ageing and learning for senior citizens (by Caterina Benelli[27])

*Grandmothers pass down bits of culture from one
generation to another. They end up being repositories
of cultural artefacts such as paintings, books, proverbs …
such as complex ideas that gather spontaneously,
in distinct memorable units.
Grandmothers and grandfathers keep rituals and traditions alive,
they hold a treasure of stories from their origins on,
they live surrounded by funny objects with an unforgettable
smell which they treat as precious objects.
They have a few time to live
but a lot of time to devote to you.*
Hilman, *The Force of Character*

In the last decades old age has become a more and more extended existential phase, at least in the industrialized countries. The improvement of life conditions has contributed to the extension of life and to a rapid increase of the elderly population, at least in the West.

But who are the elderly today? The so-called 'new elderly'[28] are people who live old age with a cultural and experiential knowledge enriched by all the transformations resulting from the changes of the '900 century and that have been impetuously crossed by the new millennium. The elderly find themselves living with an undoubtedly heavy burden – the one of having lived in the '900 century-, but at the same time a precious one, which has to be embraced and examined with attention in order to better understand social history through life stories of the people who took part in it. Old age is a substantially new phase of life, it is a time of life that will not tend to end but, on the contrary, that will extend more and more, requiring more specific solutions in order to cope with problems such as the lack of self-sufficiency and the emerging need for care. The goal is to assure a more peaceful life to the elderly thanks to the attention of the caring family. The huge increase in the number of the elderly raises questions and calls into question social politics, above all at a local level, where the needs and the contradictions of this age group and the social urgencies of the population come to light with more strength.

According to the Western tradition ageing usually is associated with lost and decay situations, with a phase connected with a progressive decrease of potentiality and functions. The current social-cultural models penalize the elderly figure and his role is considered more and more unnecessary for the development of society. The technological improvements, the myth of consumerism and of efficiency that characterize our society have caused a situation of isolation and marginalization of the elderly. The ability of the elderly to adapt to new developments and more and more rapid and uncontrollable changes is substantially lower compared to the one of young people. The defects of the healthcare system, the low levels of income, the lack of significant roles in which the elderly can be involved and identified, and again, the continuous

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[27] Caterina Benelli is a researcher in General and Social Pedagogy at the University of Messina. Vice- President, member of the scientific and didactic committee of the Libera Università dell'Autobiografia di Anghiari and responsible for the advanced course *Morphosis-Mnemon* for the management of autobiographical laboratories and the for the collection of community biographies. In this matter it is possible to refer to the following text: C. Benelli (by), *Diventare biografi di comunità. La cura delle storie di vita nella ricerca pedagogica,* Unicopli, Milano, 2012.
[28] Cf. S. Tramma, *I nuovi anziani*, Meltemi, Roma, 2000.

changes that inevitably must be faced, have worsened the condition of the elderly population even more, that is increasingly destined to be more and more emarginated by the system.

Many surveys have pointed out that the *genetic factor* can be a significant element in setting the pace, the phases and the duration of the phenomenon itself. Another important influence is the *educational-cultural factor* that has a particular effect depending on the population group; in any case a good educational and cultural level contribute to a good state of senescence, in the same way as the *economical factor*: the more privileged social-economical categories face the ageing situations better than the more disadvantaged ones, resulting in usually more negative developments. The third one is the *healthcare factor,* apparently strictly connected to the economic one: pathologic events influence the ageing process in a decisive way and the situation appears even more compromised in cases of economic problems.

The word ageing (or senescence)[29] refers to the changes occurring in relation to the passing of time. We can clasify ageing according to the different ages of life[30]:

- *Chronological age* and *biological age* indicate respectively the number of years of the subject and the physical deterioration.
- *Psychological age* refers to the behaviour of the subject in relation to adaptation capability, to the subjective reactions and to self-awareness; we could say that this age is not necessarily linked to the passing of time, but it is a sequence of events lived within a personal dimension of time; therefore it is the age felt by a subject according to one's own personal perceptions and therefore not referred to the calendar days.
- *Social age* refers to the roles and social habits of a subject according to the expectations of the belonging social group; we could define it as public age, given to a subject by friends, family and acquaintances.

Biologically ageing is connected to the chronological age; when we talk about old age we refer to subjects aged more than 65, within which we can identify two sub-phases: third age including subjects aged 65-85 and the fourth age including subjects aged more than 85. Our society cannot ignore third age, being the elderly regarded as reference figures both owing to the constant numerical increase and also for the more and more incisive presence in the social, civil and economic contexts of our country. Therefore it seems necessary to carefully observe the elderly person from the different pertaining aspects in order to better understand one's own needs and desires, and moreover, to let the unexpressed potential emerge and be valued pro the whole community. Old age, as previously mentioned, is a relatively new phenomenon, we can say "groundbreaking", about which gerontologists, doctors and experts are studying from different perspectives in order to find answers and proposals for this new phase of life involving an increasing number of people and still requiring studies and research. It is an 'open' age, whose characteristics are not completely clear and ascribable to ageing people yet. The lack of reference points is partially caused by the novelty of the phenomenon, and partially to the fact that the elderly population is internally a deeply diversified group and old age is an experience influenced by the mingle of itineraries and careers, changes, questions and needs of the preceding life path.

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[29] The term 'senescence', in the most common meaning, expresses the physical, mental, psychological decay caused by ageing; it involves all individuals and all tissues and organs of the organism.

[30] Cf., M. Cesa-Bianchi, *Psicologia dell'invecchiamento. Caratteristiche e problemi*, Carocci, Roma, 1998.

The elderly must get used to their own new condition, a season of their own life that, like those passed, needs to be lived to the fullest, making use of healthcare and sanitary services that are necessary to extend life and make it better from a quality point of view. There is also the need for new energies aimed at stimulating in the elderly person the will to be present, to fight to give sense to the passing years, ignoring all the stereotypes and the prejudices about old age that restrict the development of personal potentials and that are outdated today. For these reasons, there is the need to analyse and consider old age under a new light, with an attention towards the human potential, experience and memory that the elderly own.

Therefore ageing is an expression of an interaction between an individual and one's own environment; an interaction in which the individual continuously modifies the environment, and vice versa, and the perception he has of such environment. Cesa-Bianchi maintains that it is a short step from marginality to exclusion and the elderly make it rapidly when they lose their more important social roles. As a matter of fact today it is necessary to fight against the prejudice about the elderly and that involves the whole life of citizens, from their eating habits, their interests, their ability of social participation, their family relationships, and their attitudes towards diseases, and death etc. These prejudices do not have only a denotative value with negative characteristics, but they also end up stimulating, sharpening and making irreversible the social marginalization of the elderly person, pushing them at last toward anomie.[31]. It is important to fight the risk of marginalization of the elderly, considered – as Bauman says – *waste lives[32]*: no more active subjects that often need cure and care. Therefore we should promote a countertrend against this tendency to marginalization of the subjects that are considered no more useful for the current society which tends to considerate ageing as a decadence period, in which the subject becomes unnecessary, where the abilities, potentials and functions fall into oblivion. Velocity and efficiency, fundamental values of the present time, tend to isolate and marginalize the elderly as a slower subject, who is less resistant to the continuous changes of a complex society like the one we live in. Old age is an aspect of our time that will not tend to stop, but on the contrary it will require more and more solutions to the problems that it can involve: the lack of self-sufficiency, the need for *ad hoc* cure for a ever longer life, a readjustment of care politics due to the reconfiguration of roles within the new families, a medical science that aims at prevention rather than at keeping alive[33]. These are all factors requiring a clear redefinition of the rights of the elderly and proper social politics, which are not fully carried out yet. Let's think for example to the figure of the so-called 'in-home nurse', to whom the care of many elderly people is entrusted: a private help, indeed, not public, that leaves the responsibility to the families, who not always are able to handle – especially from an economic level – these needs. On the other hand it is necessary to give them back their central role and chance to express themselves, to act, to be useful in a complex and evolving society like the one we live in. For this reason it becomes fundamental to acknowledge the *rights of active citizenship of elderly* people, that have to be supported by the whole society by complying to its duties in order to safeguard the elderly culture as bearer of local cultures and experiential knowledge. We know how much the elderly have always had the task of transmitting values, customs and traditions from one generation to the other in an almost natural and spontaneous process that made them custodians of traditions and gave them the founding role within the

[31] For follow-up materials refer to M. Cesa-Bianchi, *Psicologia dell'invecchiamento...*, op. cit., pp. 13-28.

[32] Z. Bauman, *Vite di scarto*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2005.

[33] S. Tramma, *Inventare la vecchiaia*, Meltemi, Roma, 2000.

family and the society. Instead in this period this passage of knowledge is underestimated, and considered only as unproductive. The poor value the elderly are given has undoubted consequences in their personal wellness: inactivity, apathy, depression are typical of elderly people surrounded by a close and little stimulating environment. The attitudes that should be transmitted and valued through support to the elderly are: being aware of living a new age, in which it is possible to have more time to devote to oneself, to develop one's own potentials and a newly rediscovered energy, removing that persistent prejudice that the society wants to stick on them.

Old age seems to be an opportunity of life, a precious time to experience what one is and what one loves most; but often this can be considered a vain opportunity, a freedom perceived as a conviction, a time that: «[…] if it does not turn out to be rich of plans and activities, risks to be experienced as a signal of depletion of social and human functions, as an empty time, becoming a culturally and psychologically pathogenic factor»[34].

The moment of retirement tends to define the entrance in the world of the *over*, which often is the equivalent of perceiving oneself outside of society: contacts become fewer, one feels lonesome, useless, inadequate, disgraced, without perspectives; the tendency is to get isolated rather than to devote oneself to one's own interests. «A project of education to the elderly can involve actions aimed at retirement orientation, to the setting up of different instructive, educational and recreational activities: food and health education initiatives, entertainment with reading, theatre, music, ecological activities, research projects and intervention in the field of cultural assets, organization of social voluntary work, etc.»[35]. The aim is to recover space and time in which the subject can limit the physical and intellectual deterioration and foster one's own self-esteem.

An important factor is the awareness increase by the society as regards old age in order to develop a feeling of solidarity among generations within the community. To this end the elderly can attend to therapeutic activities using memories in order to stimulate cognitive capabilities, as for example the *reminiscence therapy* [36], which uses beloved objects and pictures to revive past memories, objectifying the memory and building a bridge, a continuity between the present and the past.[37]

Today's elderly live with a huge heritage, the one of a century, the Nineteenth Century, rich of stories and changes: a burden however precious that deserves importance; stories of a small group can give a more in-depth interpretation of the history of a wider context and manage to develop a reflection, individual at a first step and collective in a second step.

If it is true that wellness in old age builds itself during the entire life of an individual, it is also true that the elderly can participate in educational and training projects in order to fight against physical and psychological decay, with the intent to create chances of meeting that foster new relationships, reduce the sense of uselessness and distrust often typical in elderly people and to fill those spaces of free time. To this end we must underline the importance of services and initiatives in the social field, such as for example the aggregation centres, associations of voluntary work that can help in socialization and in the management of free time.

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[34] Ivi, cit. p. 8.

[35] F. Pinto Minerva, *Imparare a vivere, imparare a invecchiare*, in G. Abate, M. Del Re, M. Aveni Casucci, E. Spedicato, F. Pinto Minerva, *La terza età futura. Teorie e prospettive*, Mursia, Milano, 1994, cit. p. 137.

[36] Ivi, op. cit. 94.

[37] L. Leonini, *Gli oggetti del ricordo, il ricordo degli oggetti*, in P. Jedlowski, M. Rampazi (by), *Il senso del passato. Per una sociologia della memoria*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 1991, op. cit. p. 53.

The fundamental requirement for living old age as a new time phase, as a personal growth and change is to accept what this life time involves, such as physical and relationship-wise changes and different social and familiar roles. Accepting the signs of time and considering them positively, with a way of thinking open to creativity and ready to adapt to new learning. It is clear that the capability of fulfilment and the will to reinvent oneself day by day, in order to live one's own life in all its richness and potential, as a resource and not as a time with no sense, involves – and here we must refer to the pedagogical sciences – the possibility to resort to a pedagogical plan focused on opportunities of permanent education and training. In this way the elderly subject can use spaces and times for recreational activities against the physical and intellectual decay, which can foster trust in the future and self-esteem. For this reason centres for elderly people, rest homes, associations for voluntary work, third age university and much more can represent pre-emptive chances to fulfil the need to learn, to feel emotions and new and different sensations, a way to resume unsatisfied aspirations or desires.

Among the different projects promoted within the national territory about the development of social memory thanks to life stories of elderly people, I would like to recommend in this paper an interesting project begun in 2000 which became an intervention model still present in the Pistoia territory (and not only): *L'ora del té* [38] an example of a good development and promotion practice of local knowledge through the intergenerational transmission of local stories as a heritage of the community. An experience of narration of stories of one's own life and of one's own town, with a sharing of spirit and intimacy facilitated also by conviviality almost as a recollection of the ancient waking time of the Tuscan tradition, narrated and transcribed by competent volunteers, in order to avoid their fall into oblivion. Personal memories get together and help us to understand what we are now, the past gets together with the present and the future composing a whole theme.

«Indeed it is a cliché to think that the elderly have a substantial past, a fragile present but a non existent future. The promotion of the narration of the here and now is aimed at helping the elderly to see a self that does not identify itself with the past but that finds itself in the present as a result of past experiences: a self, that looking at itself in the present, can also ask himself about the future ».[39]

Stories and narrations by the elderly have the need to find a voice and an ear by their family members, but also by a different audience, maybe belonging to other generations, so that we can all have the chance to reflect, to remember, to be moved and to get better «The narration of the self, the autobiography, can become self-curing practices with wide prospects».[40]

Going back to the past with one's own mind, digging deep in the meanderings of memory is fundamental for the elderly to preserve the integrity of their own Ego. «Getting access to one's own previous life is an important part of the concept of the self as a person and the disorientation of those who realize to have forgotten results in a deterioration of behaviour and self-care »[41].

A frequent problem in old age is the oblivion that damages the memory: in reality the memory lapses concern the close past, whereas the 'long term' memories remain vivid like those of young age and childhood. It is particularly during old age that one tends to feel the need to

[38] C. Benelli, G. Clemente, *L'ora del tè. Incontrarsi per raccontare*, Edizioni del Comune di Pistoia, 2003. A project carried out with the social services of the Municipality of Pistoia.
[39] Ivi, cit. pp 63-64.
[40] S. Tramma, *Inventare la vecchiaia*, cit. p. 97.
[41] E. Calamari, *I ricordi personali. Psicologia della memoria autobiografica*, Edizioni ETS, Pisa, 1995, p. 94.

take stock of one's own existence and the memory turns out to be of primary importance. Duccio Demetrio, one of the most important scholars of the pedagogy of autobiography in Italy, underlines the centrality of a *pedagogy of the memory*[42], that should develop from a young age in order to embrace those ways of remembering and narrating the past within the family unit as a resource both for the present and for the future. The devaluation of life stories within the family tends to deprive the children of methods and models of self-identification and damages their future growth as adults,[43] depriving them also of those generational and cultural exchanges that would find plenty of space until fifty years ago. We must reflect and think of a new cultural position of the elderly, starting from the idea that today getting old is not an extension of old age of the past times, but an age rich of new contents, without forgetting that this age is lived depending on the way people have emotionally thought and imagined it during their life. Therefore the aim is to guarantee to our elderly people and to those who will come afterwards, a more peaceful "glimpse" of life by taking the responsibility of the elderly by the private and the public, by the family and institutions.

In conclusion, we can identify the need of proposals and provisions aimed at: curing, caring, accompanying the active and participated ageing process. A process that should consider solidarity as a debit-credit between me and the other, between the young and the elderly, therefore between different generations, without forgetting that everybody owes one's own existence to those who have preceded and to many others more met during life. We all have therefore the task and the responsibility to do our best to guarantee a better tomorrow for an increasing number of people.

For the elderly of today and of tomorrow, new choices, new needs and proposals by each one of us, but also and above all by the representatives of regional and national politics that should analyse the current situation in order to carry out politics in support of the elderly, of their lack of self-sufficiency, in protection of young couples, and again in the assurance of an equity among generations for a certain future, as less precarious as possible, which allows a serene old age also to the new generations. Therefore there is the need of provisions aimed at: curing, caring, accompanying the active and participatory (not waiting) ageing process, and that involves the solidarity among different generations in the name of an intergenerational dialogue and of a model of listening of experiences and life stories.

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[42] D. Demetrio, *Pedagogia della memoria. Per se stessi, con gli altri*, Meltemi, Roma, 1998, p. 41.
[43] A. Smorti, *Il sé come testo. Costruzione delle storie e sviluppo della persona*, Giunti, Firenze, 1997.

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II. Connecting Generation in the framework of European Lifelong Learning

2.1 The EU Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 and Connecting Generations (by Gilda Esposito[44])

The project "Connecting Generations" is a learning partnership funded under the European Commission Lifelong Learning Programme 2006-2013 (LLP) and Grundtvig sub-program dedicated to adult education.

As of 2014 LLP no longer exists and has been replaced by Erasmus Plus, whose lemma is "changing lives and opening minds".[45] The brand new Erasmus+ programme aims to boost skills and employability, as well as modernising education, training, and youth work. The seven year programme has a budget of €14.7 billion; a 40% increase compared to LLP, reflecting the EU's commitment to investing in these areas. Erasmus+ over seven years will provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad. Erasmus+ will support transnational partnerships among education, training, and youth institutions and organisations to foster cooperation and bridge the worlds of education and work in order to tackle the skills gaps we are facing in Europe. It will also support national efforts to modernise education, training, and youth systems. In comparison with LLP, in the field of sport, there will be support for grassroots projects and cross-border challenges such as combating match-fixing, doping, violence and racism. Erasmus+ brings together seven existing EU programmes in the fields of education, training, and youth.

Coming back to LLP, it was established by a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on 15 November 2006. It replaced the previous program Socrates and Leonardo, and gathered all initiatives of European cooperation in education and training from 2007 to 2013. LLP has as its overall objective:

"[...] To contribute through lifelong learning to the development of the Community as an advanced knowledge society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, while ensuring good protection of the environment for future generations. The goal of the program is, in particular, to promote trade within the Community, cooperation and mobility between education and training so that they become a landmark of world quality. "[46].

In other words, The Lifelong Learning Programme was designed by policy makers to enable people, at any stage of their life, to take part in stimulating learning experiences, as well as developing education and training across Europe. Citizens could participate in LLP both as students (of formal and non formal education), members of associations, professionals in different fields of education but as well as individual citizens, through their LLP National Agencies.

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[44] PhD, Coordinator of the project for Edaforum
[45] See http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm
[46] Decision No 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006 establishing an content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32006D1720

With a budget of nearly €7 billion, the programme, which ran from 2007-2013 (and is still going on with projects funded in 2013), funded a range of exchanges, study visits, and networking activities. Over the course of its lifespan, LLP provided support to school pupils, university students, adult learners, and a variety of projects under four main sub-programmes:

-   Comenius for schools
-   Erasmus for higher education
-   Leonardo da Vinci for vocational education and training
-   Grundtvig for adult education (where Connecting Generations was awarded funding in 2012)

The programme also included the "Jean Monnet" actions, designed to stimulate teaching, reflection, and debate on European integration. In particular the Grundtvig sub-programme focused on the teaching and study needs of adult learners, as well as developing the adult learning sector in general. Adult learning is definitely a need for a Europe of knowledge and its citizens but with some exceptions in Scandinavian countries, it is poorly exploited by European member States.

According to EUROSTAT the average rate of participation in adult education[47] in Europe (28 member states) is 10.5. The countries involved in Connecting Generations, in alphabetical order, present the following rates:

1. Greece: 3%
2. Hungary: 3%
3. Italy: 6.2%
4. Poland: 4.3%
5. Romania: 2%
6. Slovenia: 12.4%
7. UK: 16.1%
8. Turkey (not in the EU): 4%

In the Grundtvig sub-programme the following were considered as priorities. Covering teachers, trainers, staff, and adult learners, among others, the programme aimed to:

-   increase the number of people in adult education
-   improve mobility conditions in adult learning
-   improve the quality and cooperation between adult education organisations
-   develop innovative educational and management practices
-   ensure social inclusion through adult education
-   support innovative ICT-based educational content, services, and practices

In fact, the Lisbon Strategy of the year 2000, expressly launched the challenge to make EU the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy by 2010. It contained a strong emphasis on reform of the European system in its economic and productive dimension, but central was also the "vision" of Europe as a "knowledge society", i.e. a society based on knowledge as a driver of all other developments of human society.

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[47] According to EUROSTAT statistics, Lifelong learning refers to persons aged 25 to 64 who stated that they received education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator consists of the total population of the same age group, excluding those who did not answer to the question 'participation in education and training'. Both the numerator and the denominator come from the EU Labour Force Survey. The information collected relates to all education or training whether or not relevant to the respondent's current or possible future job. http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/education-and-training/data/main-tables

At a distance of fourteen years, almost six years after the outbreak of the international economic crisis (considered 2008 in the US and 2009 in Europe), it appears clear that unfortunately, the objectives of the Lisbon strategy have not been achieved while the challenge of a knowledge society, and more recently a data driven economy inserted in the digital agenda of Europe 2020[48], remains standing in the new seven-year 2014-2020 whose objective is to foster a smart, inclusive and sustainable Europe[49].

In President Barroso's words:

"Europe 2020 is the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade. In a changing world, we want the EU to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. These three mutually reinforcing priorities should help the EU and the Member States deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. Concretely, the Union has set five ambitious objectives - on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy - to be reached by 2020. Each Member State has adopted its own national targets in each of these areas. Concrete actions at EU and national levels underpin the strategy."

In the Commission Communication of 2010 Europe is asked not only to face and overcome the ongoing crisis afflicting the economies of many countries, but also fill in the gaps of the European model of growth and create conditions for a different model of economic development, which shall be more intelligent, sustainable and inclusive.

In particular with regard to Lifelong Learning, Europe adopted a new strategic framework "Education and Training 2020" (ET 2020) for European cooperation in education and training, which builds on the progress made in the framework of the program "Education and Training 2010" (ET 2010).

ET 2020 builds on the achievements of the Education and Training (ET 2010) work programme, with a view to responding to the challenges that remain open in creating a knowledge-based Europe and making lifelong learning a reality for all, with no distinction among countries or social status.

The main aim of the framework is to support Member States in further developing their educational and training systems. These systems should better provide the means for all citizens to realise their potentials, as well as ensure sustainable economic prosperity and employability. The framework should take into consideration the whole spectrum of education and training systems from a lifelong learning perspective, covering all levels and contexts, including non-formal and informal learning. In particular, informal learning is becoming more important every day in how young people, but not only, learn. Many organizations are working on reference systems with the aim of capturing the great potentialities of informal learning. Let us think of the Internet, travelling or peers, in building a personal educational project.

The conclusions set out in ET2010 foresee four strategic objectives:

- making lifelong learning and mobility a reality – progress is needed in the implementation of lifelong learning strategies, the development of national qualifications frameworks linked to the European Qualification Framework and more flexible learning pathways. Mobility should be expanded and the European Quality Charter for Mobility should be applied;

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[48] See the communication https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/communication-data-driven-economy consulted on 7th september 2014.
[49] See http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm consulted on 7th september 2014.

- improving the quality and efficiency of education and training – all citizens need to be able to acquire key competencies and all levels of education and training need to be made more attractive and efficient;
- promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship – education and training should enable all citizens to acquire and develop skills and competencies needed for their employability and foster further learning, active citizenship and intercultural dialogue. Educational disadvantage should be addressed through high quality inclusive and early education;
- enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training – the acquisition of transversal competences by all citizens should be promoted and the functioning of the knowledge triangle (education-research-innovation) should be ensured. Partnerships between enterprises and educational institutions as well as broader learning communities with civil society and other stakeholders should be promoted.

In order to measure progress achieved on these objectives, they are accompanied by indicators and European benchmarks (set out in Annex I of the conclusions).[50] Therefore, in a Europe already shaken by the economic and financial crisis, the European Year of Active Ageing, 2012, aimed to raise public awareness about the profound demographic changes under way in Europe and on the contribution that older people can make to European companies. Far from considering the progressive aging of the population only as a "problem" to be solved, a threat to the economic stability of countries and for the national welfare systems, the European Year set out to encourage and urge decision makers and stakeholders to launch broad and specific actions to improve the quality of life of seniors and at the same time identify concrete opportunities for solidarity between the generations, as witnesses of social cohesion and mutual respect.

At the basis of the strategy of active aging, or ageing in good health, there are some key factors:

1) fully participate in community life and be socially engaged

2) feel more fulfilled at work, for those who are still working with full or part time responsibilities

3) be more independent in everyday life.

Europe has therefore set three strategic challenges: employment , participation in social life, in particular through solidarity and voluntary work, and maintaining autonomy as long as possible.

The Connecting Generations project has focused mainly in the second of the three challenges mentioned above and identified in non-formal adult education in its many possibilities to build not only knowledge but also social capital, an instrument not only to ensure opportunities for participation but also to create new ones and attract new citizens.

Among the objectives of the European Year was also taking an updated picture of the demographic changes taking place in Europe and understand the implications for the entire population.

Regarding the member states involved in Connecting Generations we can appreciate the following situation, which is very diverse and poses very different challenges for partners:

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[50] See http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/general_framework/ef0016_en.htm

Year 2013/Member State	Population Total	Over 65	Less than 15	Percentages
Europe (28)	507,162,571	92,257,825	79,157,686	18.2 vs 15.6
Greece	11,062,508	2,226,134	1,622,022	20.1 vs 14.7
Hungary	9,908,798	1,701,675	1,430,865	17.2 vs 14.4
Italy	59,685,227	12,639,829	8,348,338	21.2 vs 14.0
Poland	38,533,299	5,487,713	5,796,614	14.2 vs 15.0
Romania (2012)	20,095,996	3,242,349	3,184,249	16.1 vs 15.8
Slovenia	2,058,821	352,145	298,095	17.1 vs 14.5
Turkey	75,627,384	5,487,713	18,857,179	7.3 vs 24.9
UK	63,905,297	10,986,368	11,260,549	17.2 vs 17.6

(Eurostat, own elaboration)

As we can see Italy is by far the "eldest society" with 21.2% of inhabitants older than 65 years old especially when compared to Turkey who has only 7.3%, almost a third of the Italian percentage.
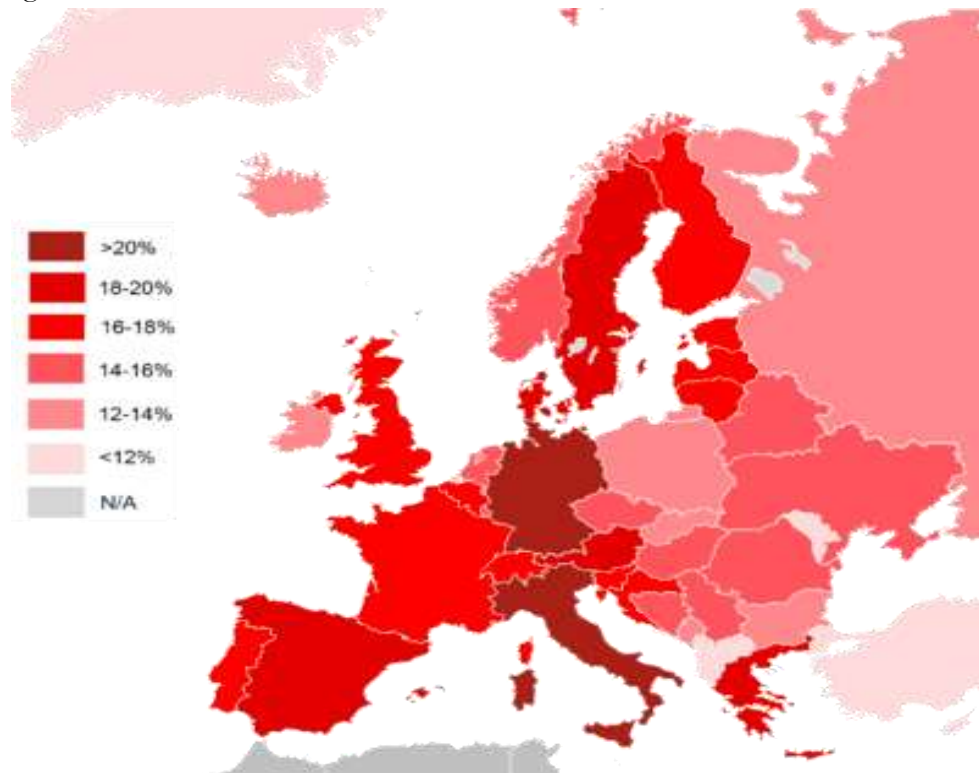
We can also appreciate in the figure above the aging index in Europe. It is a statistical indicator designed to measure and describe the weight of the elderly population in a given population. It estimates the degree of aging of a population defined as the relationship between the composition of the elderly population (65 years and older) and the younger population (0-14 years). Italy is the second European country with the highest aging index, after Germany. According to "We Italy" by Istat, 2013, in Italy the relationship between the elderly and young people has become a major noteworthy and attention, reaching, at January 1, 2012, 147.2 per

cent share. The demographic processes that persist for several years and that influence the aging index are attributable to the following factors:

- The increase of the population in older age due to longer life expectancy, especially for women.
- The reduction of the population at a young age, mainly due to the reduction of fertility, well below the replacement level of generations (2.1 children per woman) and only partially mitigated by the migration to Italy which has been noted from the second half of the 80s.

According to the census ISTAT 2012, in the context of the Italian Liguria, represented in the project by the Connecting Generations partner AIDEA has the aging index in the absolute highest in Italy, 240 compared to an average of 213, albeit in decrease compared to the 2002 census data, still higher than the average German, and so consequently, probably the highest in Europe. No doubt this data demonstrates the relevance of the project in the two regions. But what are the characteristics of the project Connecting Generations and how it contributes to the reflection of a profound transformation in society?

With a duration of 24 months, with the participation of 9 organizations from 7 different European countries plus Turkey, namely Greece, Italy, Poland, UK, Romania, Slovenia, Hungary, 6 of which have been encountered in Villasimius (so to all exception of Romania and Slovenia), the project began in August 2012, disposed of a budget of about a hundred and eighty thousands Euro and ended in August 2014.

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen a network of European exchange and at the same time help to create an environment conducive to listening and attention to the educational practices of solidarity between the generations already in place, and to new experience, in the community local associations involved.

The specific objectives of the project are in fact all about Connecting Generations:

- Linking educational practices and interchange between the associations involved to develop innovative methods of generative communication and create opportunities for attractive learning and stimulation for both the young and seniors.
- realize at least 120 mobility between seven European countries and Turkey to learn from each other and develop together good practices in intergenerational pedagogy.

2.2 Connecting Generations (Congenial) Learning Partnership: creating common practices and a shared visions in intergenerational education (by Glenda Galeotti)

This section presents the main results of project documentation, through the analysis, comparison and evaluation of intergenerational education practices, realized by each organization involved and shared within the international partnership.

Such activity has assumed the character of a qualitative research, where the object of investigation was the educational processes that involved youth and adults, while its aim was to make explicit complexity of the contexts in which they occurred, to define elements of methodological innovation, in terms of transformative educative action[51].

In this framework, the construct of educational practice is central, coherently with complex actions that want to achieve an educational purpose, or, in other words, an activity consists of actions and choices intentionally made to achieve one or more learning objectives. The key feature of educational practice, compared to other types of practices, is the special relationship between the educator, or educators, and learner, or learners.

In CONGENIAL, such an educational relationship aimed at the construction of intergenerational dialogue and the enhancement of positive resources that young and old citizens can offer to each other and to the communities where they belong

To read and de-construct a practice means, in fact, to make explicit its constituent elements, to bring out less visible dynamics, to be able to report the empirical evidence, in short to provide a feedback from data collected in the field in order to guide the process of understanding and interpretation[52].

The focus is not so much on the result or the product achieved, but on the processes that have been activated and their dynamics, the system of shared meanings, the methods of interpretation and intervention on concrete phenomena. Following Gregory Bateson, each practice can be understood as a system and therefore from a point of view which is qualitatively different, definable as "meta" with respect to the internal properties of its structure, a meta-structure or the structure of structures that are connected [53].

According to an integrated logic, the analysis of CONGENIAL educational practices was carried out, at the level of the international project group, to know complex dynamics of education: how educators act in certain contexts, and to achieve certain goals; central was also the meanings attributed to the actions realized, hopes and expectations that animated them, all tacit knowledge involved. Overall the methodology was questioning and problematizing in order to improve practices and to define new models of quality education.

Thanks to a set of criteria identified by a preparatory study on similar activities and interventions[54], research has developed a comparative analysis of the educational activities

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[51] This project action has been realized by Edaforum in collaboration with the Department of Science of Education and Psychology, University of Florence

[52] C. Laneve (2005), *Analisi della pratica educativa. Metodologia e risultanze della ricerca*, La Scuola, Brescia; Roig Vila, R., Laneve, C. (eds. 2011), *La pratica educativa nella società dell'informazione. L'innovazione attraverso la ricerca*, Brescia, La Scuola Editrice.

[53] G. Bateson (1979), *Mind and Nature*: A Necessary Unity, Dutton, New York.

[54] Qualitative research began with a preliminary survey of existing and educational experiences aimed at encouraging dialogue between generations, to identify some key indicators to assess and compare the CONGENIAL actions of adult education. With these indicators, we have built a form to collect information and data on the experiences, to make a systematic account of the educational practices, from some fields and criteria

carried out, which share the same initial problem - the dialogue between generations - within the same area of intervention - adult education - for the development of a shared methodology.

The theoretical assumptions of this qualitative study are that the fundamental way of knowledge building is essentially linked to the direct experience of the subjects, and much of the learning comes from practice. Human beings face similar situations trying to select the solutions and procedures that proved more effective in the past and adapting them to the new task to perform[55].

One must also consider that often experiential learning is distinguished by its experimental character and a significant part of tacit knowledge, and therefore, greater awareness of action can be produced by introducing reflective and comparative moments on experiences. Reflexivity is based on repertoire of cases and experiences of the past that allow to act on assumptions and to move into problematic situations, identifying possible solutions[56]; instead the comparison relates to production of knowledge through the detection of similarities and differences between those situations that are under lens.

Both of these processes allow reaching a higher level of knowledge, thanks to:
- the comparison between different points of view that allows the transition from the subjective dimension to inter-subjective validation of acquired knowledge[57];
- the overcoming of the false idea to formulate general laws and theories that can be applicable in every context,
- that mechanic transfer of knowledge is not possible because what we know is the result of a unique understanding of a specific situation[58].

A certain degree of replicability and scalability is related to understanding actions undertaken in different contexts and their fundamental characteristics. That can make interventions recognizable outside and comparable with similar experiences. So the analysis of practices that a specific professional community realizes, as in the case of Connecting Generation, intends to find their own features and identify common elements that can revise the theoretical and/or methodological models of reference: from a significant number of experiences that have been valued positively a sort of meta-model can emerge, as a basis for the definition of "good practices".

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that make them comparable with each other. The operators involved in educational activities have carried out the compilation of the form through a group effort that involves three basic steps: the description of the activity, the analysis of some of its features, the interpretation/reflection on the elements that define the activity itself. The activity description is primarily to provide some qualitative data to narrow the experience (title, objectives, target, duration, etc.); the analysis phase focuses on three main elements: the learning needs of participants, networks enabled by the implementation of activities, the educational methodology adopted. In particular, the training needs are identified with the analysis of the context at two levels: the demographic changes in European society, the youth issue and other social challenges that Europe is facing; the specificity that these changes acquire in different countries involved in the project. In the third and last step of reflection on educational practices implemented, operators have reinterpreted activities from some key concepts to highlight their intergenerational and innovation elements, to check the consistency of the results achieved with objectives proposed, to define the learning of the operators in the specific educational sector. The results of data analysis have been validated in a participatory way through local and international focus groups, that have involved representatives and members of all the partner organizations.

[55] J. Dewey (1933), *How we think*, Heath, Boston.

[56] D. A. Schön (1983), *The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action*, Temple Smith, London

[57] L.Mortari (2009), *Ricercare e riflettere. La formazione del docente professionista*, Roma, Carocci; L. Fabbri, M. Striano, C. Malacarne (2008), *L'insegnante riflessivo. Coltivazione e trasformazione delle pratiche professionali*, Milano, Franco Angeli; M. Striano (2001), *La razionalità riflessiva nell'agire educativo*, Napoli, Liguori Editore.

[58] A. Calvani (eds., 2007), *Fondamenti di didattica. Teoria e prassi dei dispositivi formativi*, Carocci Editore, Roma.

A good practice means a clear, practical and sustainable solution to address a specific educational problem, in a given context, with a specific learning goal: usually it is a method or technique that has been more successful than others, but that may be susceptible to further developments through the experience.

Although it is not automatically replicable, a good practice can be a model to follow that integrates professional skills and knowledge with the best available empirical evidence to support the learning processes. Given the characteristics of CONGENIAL partner organizations, the contexts where they operate and the heterogeneity of the activities carried out, the possibility of generalization and transfer will not involve "whole practices", but rather some of their segments which however may stimulate discussion with other stakeholders who faces similar challenges.

From the analysis of collected data with the qualitative survey, therefore, it is possible to have a shared description of intergenerational education, declined in its basic elements and that highlights some methodological and operational criteria.

Starting from the objectives pursued by CONGENIAL's activities, a first definition of intergenerational education highlights its strongly social mark. In the development and support to dialogue and mutual understanding between generations, this education contributes: to fighting social, cultural and technological isolation and marginalization, to recalling and sharing memories, values, cultural and local heritage among generations in order to improve the quality of life in the local community.

One of the objectives of intergenerational education, on the side of the research, is to experience innovative practices, methods and activities of intergenerational learning in formal, non-formal and informal education. A vision of learning as a means of social and community cohesion emerges, rather than being geared exclusively to individual development: the exchange of knowledge between older and younger is central to counter marginalization, in particular, but not only, technological marginalization, and at the same time to enhance the traditional knowledge of older generations in training of young people. In reference to the target of intergenerational education, there are no specific restrictions, except those relating to a consistent choice of beneficiaries with respect to educational and social goals to achieve. In addition to training of trainers on specific methodologies, CONGENIAL's educational activities involved two types of beneficiaries:

- Direct target: children, youth, seniors, university students, volunteers, who live in a common territory and share common interests or problems of social inclusion, identity, solidarity.
- Indirect target: educators, high school teachers, primary and pre-primary teachers, university early researchers, policy makers, families, members and activists of partner organizations.

In line with intergenerational educational objectives, we could identify social, educational and community needs. In particular, with the first group we refer to phenomena of social and generational isolation that affect young and old, especially drop outs, unemployed, socially excluded, computer illiterate, etc. Hence the need to strengthen knowledge and skills of learners, through educational opportunities that foster dialogue, exchange and daily interaction between people of different ages, sexes and ethnic origins.

From the point of view of educational needs, this type of intervention can be used to introduce elements of non-formal education and divergent thinking in formal education, especially for

youth with learning and adaptation difficulties to the school system. At the same time, this education meets specific training needs such as knowledge of a foreign language or ICT, particularly for the older generation, or for the acquisition of soft skills such as the ability to cooperate and collaborate, problem solving, etc. Then there is a knowledge need of methods and techniques of intergenerational education for educators that work in the formal, non-formal and informal sectors, including those on innovative technologies, such as e-mentor.

The third type of need, those of communities, refers to the loss of cultural identity, like local knowledge and expertise, which puts at risk the indispensable resources for endogenous development of the territories, and to the need of mutual understanding, active citizenship and solidarity to build fairer and more cohesive societies.

As for the educational methods used in CONGENIAL, teaching activities for stimulating dialogue between generations, each partner has worked on a specific proposal, defining their characteristics and testing their application procedures. These can be grouped into a few main categories, starting from the methodological approach that characterizes them, although many of these can belong to multiple groups. The table below proposes a classification of them based on the elements emerged from the activities experimented.

Teaching Method	Educational Methodology of Reference
Workshop	Learning by doing/action learning methodologies
Traditional Lectures Storytelling Historical Research Valuing local traditions	Biographical and Historiographical approach
Community Mapping World Café Paideia Club	Participatory methodologies
E-mentoring	E-learning through ICTs
Peer to peer learning Discussion Groups/Focus Group Learning Circles	Working group methodologies
Role play	Active and interactive methodologies

Moving on from the descriptive level of intergenerational education activities to one more interpretive about data collected in research, there are three reflection axes developed. The first one focuses on the main methodological and operational elements that create solidarity between generations. The second one concerns the most innovative elements of the experiences carried out. The third axis refers to the lessons learned from the partner organizations through the developed activities and intergenerational education.

Beyond the different educational methods used to build bridges between generations, the analysis shows that some methodological and operational criteria useful to define a methodological framework can extend to all activities carried out and bring them back to a common framework.

First, there is the required reading and interpretation of social and educational needs of participants, but also their expectations. The purpose of this initial activity is to create favorable conditions to pursue effective actions, to build cohesive work groups, to propose topics that affect all participants, capturing their attention and their motivation.

A second element concerns the reciprocity of learning and the enhancement of generational knowledge. The elders are the custodians of traditional knowledge and trades that are

disappearing and losing their value, especially among the younger generation. Their collaboration in educational activities aimed at youth can spread this knowledge and traditions, avoiding its loss. Likewise the young are able to offer in exchange their knowledge on non-traditional communication means linked to the digital world. This aspect leads to another element that characterizes intergenerational learning, as it was interpreted by CONGENIAL: it is the importance of "working together", as a formative moment based on practical testing of knowledge and on individual learning strongly linked to experiences of intergenerational dialogue.

In intergenerational education, the sharing of knowledge, thoughts, dreams and ideas, can be directed towards common objectives and/or planning projects that benefit the local community. In this sense, collecting vision of the local community of young and old, identifying common problems to be addressed through consultation, so that the voices of all generations are heard, can drive the collaboration and the joint working to find shared solution. This process helps to break down the barriers that prevent active participation, strengthening the sense of responsibility and leadership among young people and the elders. So, solidarity between generations is designed to enhance skills and knowledge on its territory, raise awareness about critical issues and local resources, identify new development opportunities. The sharing of information and the establishment of a community dialogue aimed at advancing their issues to local policy makers can increase motivation and active participation of citizens in the public affairs as well as their trust in democratic systems.

These elements decline intergenerational education according to some criteria that guide the actions of education and training, in addition to those that characterize the role of the trainer in this type of activity. First, the intergenerational trainer must be able to "facilitate" the intergenerational exchange process, which concerns acquisition by some participants of knowledge and expertise held by others, creating a virtuous reciprocity movement between the parties involved.

The trainer must be able to conduct sincere and deep discussions with the group of participants, so that they can experience active and mutual listening, for inclusion of different points of view and identification of shared solutions. This helps to achieve another aim of intergenerational education, i.e. the deconstruction of stereotypes and prejudices that separate generations in order to increase mutual respect.

Analysis of CONGENIAL's experiences shows the innovative values of intergenerational education at different levels, especially in non-formal adult education in the framework of lifelong learning. The first element relates to the dialogue between tradition and innovation using the knowledge and skills of older and younger people. This is the case in e-mentoring, where a group of elder educators have acquired computer and multimedia skills that allowed them to discover new channels of communication with young people, to restore their leadership role and to share knowledge and experiences[59].

During the training in fact, if young people were able to appreciate the value of knowledge and stories of older people, these latter themselves had come to realize how important they are, even in the digital age, the maintenance of traditions and building bridges to transmit knowledge, memories and experiences that would otherwise be lost.

In order to share knowledge, the project used social media and other forms of digital communication that offer significant potential since they are widespread among the younger

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[59] See: *Sharing e-mentoring techniques with 50+ educators* (by TELOS Education & Consulting, Hungary)

generations[60]. The elderly, for their part, possess a load of information about historical events and local knowledge in danger of disappearing: their interaction is necessary to create the system of collection of this knowledge.

This store of informal knowledge, too, can become the object of formal education activities and educational institutions in particular, which are too often shut into their spaces, be they physical or educational, and are far from the different components of local society. Intergenerational learning can make study experiences more real, fun and exciting, especially for those students who have more difficulties in adapting to the system and learning at school, because it responds to basic needs, with a simple and understandable language, it puts everyone in a position of ease and avoids the hierarchy among "good" and "bad" students.

The activities experienced by CONGENIAL that go in this direction have also proven not only to promote intergenerational learning, but also intercultural openness. Contemporary society does not always allow young people to have easy access to their grandparents, or older people in general, and the stories of the past that they carry. This is especially true for young people who are in a foreign country and have lost contact with their elderly who remained at home, as well as having too superficial relationships with their parents, as they often work all day. Educational activities on food as a means of intergenerational and intercultural communication showed their powerful universal value and its strong cultural dimension intrinsic to human communities, as food represents a fundamental, vital, human need[61].

Educational activities aimed at changing people and relationships in training contexts and community education experienced in CONGENIIAL, also has effects on the welfare of the community and the quality of life of its inhabitants[62].

In addition to the rediscovery of the values and local history, which could also become the subject of economic activities, such as the production of syrups with local herbs[63], this educational work aims to develop and strengthen the skills of democracy and active participation, its public agora, thanks to the use of methods that favor the establishment of non-hierarchical and horizontal relationships between participants[64]. That allows everyone to voice their opinions, thoughts, ideas. Innovative methods and technologies tested in CONGENIAL are also useful to ensure the participation of cross-cutting areas of the local community (children, parents, families, the elderly, community leaders) decisions and projects that relate to the community itself and its well-being, as happened with the community maps[65].

Monitoring training activities has shown how they were able to produce change in the persons who participated in the working group. Young people involved in the project have expressed a genuine interest in dialogue with older people, intrigued by the stories about their lives and experiences, especially when they were also given the opportunity to experience and get involved through practical activities. Even older people during the activities have become increasingly passionate and showed a high interest in telling their experiences and teaching young people their knowledge on crafts or other activities. This allowed elders to feel useful

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[60] See: *Intergenerational integration and memories for posterities* (by University of the Third Age in Białystok, Poland)

[61] See: *Traditional food of La Spezia and Liguria: a pathway toward intergenerational learning* (by AIDEA La Spezia, Italy)

[62] See: *Romanian Paideia Clubs* (by Students Forum from Faculty of Education, Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University, Romania); *Life Couching: practical personal life & education couching to connecting generations* (by Mercan Uluslararasi Gönüllüler Derneği, Turkey)

[63] See: *Intergenerational learning through preservation of traditional knowledge of homemade syrups* (by Posoški Razvojni Center, Slovenia)

[64] See: *World Café: a tool to open up meaningful dialogue between generations* (by Living Values In Education, Greece)

[65] See: *Connecting generations through Community Mapping* (by Merseyside Expanding Horizons, United Kingdom)

and reduce the feeling of loneliness that often accompanies their days; young and old generations, through education, have had the opportunity to gain confidence in themselves and in their abilities. Perhaps one of the most interesting results of the activities was the contribution to raise awareness and to create the conditions for the recognition of the indispensable role of the elderly for the proper relation of the younger generations, and vice versa: each of these two generations in fact possesses a wealth of knowledge and skills to provide to each other.

This exchange can have repercussions from the professional point of view of the participants, as in the case of teachers of a certain age, who, eager to connect with the younger generation outside the formal teaching process, but with little knowledge of the digital world, participated in a special training to become e-mentors. In this, as in other experiences of CONGENIAL, it is clear that ICT is now considered among the main obstacles to mutual understanding between different generations, it has become a tool of collaboration between generations: a bearer of knowledge regarding the media and contents to preserve and spread.

It is in this virtuous and fruitful exchange that Connecting Generation became more successful: it fostered self-esteem of young and old participants, as the protagonists of the activities, but also on the side of their training and professional educators who have participated in international mobilities and the activities carried out at their organizations.

Beyond the educational gains regarding the specificity of each of the activities carried out by the various adult education organizations, all educational paths have tried to develop the following skills:

- to adopt an attitude of active listening;
- to deconstruct prejudices and stereotypes;
- to communicate with people bearing different experiences;
- to use tools and spaces for democratic participation in the life of the local community;
- to cooperate and collaborate with others;
- to use ICT;
- proficiency in English language.

At the level of local working groups, one of the most significant results achieved was the establishment of positive dynamics within citizens, about their views, learning about the positive effects of collaboration, cooperation and intergenerational learning. Many of the experiences show that through respectful dialogue all the members of a social group, regardless of age, can harmoniously and creatively work together to achieve significant objectives. In particular, this occurred mainly in the working groups that involved teachers, students, seniors and educators / trainers and other members of the local community and civil society, who with their contribution contributed to open schools of different types and levels (colleges and universities) to the requests of a social complexity.

From the point of view of the local community, the added value of many of the practices implemented was to be significantly linked to it in different ways: through the opening of the institution, as in the case of school laboratories; assuming the local community, its needs and the identification of development proposals as the object of the training; using local history as a space for dialogue between people of different ages, professional backgrounds and different cultural origins; building networks of collaboration between the project activities and local organizations. This close integration of training activities within society makes possible a continuation and follow up to some of them after the closure of the project, further

encouraging the participation of citizens to carry forward and address the specific issues of the local working groups.

The impact of greater interaction between different generation in a geographically limited area mainly create knowledge about the communities and their own territory and its history, local problems faced by different generations, the increase of knowledge of services, opportunities and resources. Thus, education can support intergenerational social change in the community, through increased communication skills between young and old, a willingness to learn from each other and the establishment of a positive relationship with the natural environment and cultural reference, in terms of learning for sustainable development.

At the level of the international working group, which brought together members of the partner organizations of the project, the reflections inspired by the analysis and comparison of educational practices implemented, have assumed the character of a shared assessment of the activities carried that led to the following results:

- The definition of a common vision on intergenerational learning
- The identification of methodological operational criteria in non-formal adult education, in view of lifelong learning;
- The identification and systematization of "lessons learned" from the activities of the project
- The transfer of knowledge and practices among participating organizations
- The construction of a stable network between actors involved at local and international levels, for the realization of future projects.

In particular, the international working group has created a realistic learning community, whose members have been able to upgrade their skills and qualifications in non-formal adult education through the exchange of experiences during international mobilities, work research that accompanied the project and were made available to group work.

Even at this level of the structure of the project, therefore, a training program has been developed and demonstrated the added value of training for the qualification of human resources and for the construction of a European vision starting from specific local stories and experiences.

In conclusion, intergenerational education experienced within CONGENIAL revolves around two key concepts: caring for others as an educational key which is the basis of human experience and allows the establishment of adult identity[66]. Caring in education involves shared objectives from which to think about social and individual bonds. The other key concept is reciprocity that characterizes inter-generational learning, which is a fundamental process of alliance, networking, meeting and exchange of knowledge among citizens of different ages. In fact, they may experience inclusive paths through construction of educational relationships that animate the participation and cooperation between the different segments of the society.

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[66] G. Bertagna (2010), *Dall'educazione alla pedagogia. Avvio al lessico pedagogico*, La Scuola, Brescia, p. 39

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2.3 A glance to the past and one to the future. Telling the story of Connecting Generations and drawing lessons learnt for a transformative adult education (by Gilda Esposito)

The following reflections stem from a collective and extended dialogue among all nine partners of Connecting Generations Learning Partnership which developed throughout the project implementation, from the kick off meeting held in Budapest in November 2012, to the final meeting at the University of Third Age in Bialystok at the end of May 2014. I personally facilitated the final exercise in Bialystok in May and mediated its story telling, which is contained in this article.

Since the beginning of the project in fact, as a coordinator, *primus inter pares*[67] I mainstreamed a reflective approach to learning and therefore to project implementation, which is not always so common in Grundtvig Learning Partnerships. We intend here as "reflective practice" what Donald Schon introduced at the beginning of the Eighties as "the capacity to reflect on action so as to engage in a process of continuous learning" [68]. The results of reflecting and examining, or in more European jargon, measuring the impact of, our own practice is to keep theory and action entangled and complementary. Analysing our actions, individually and collectively, we demonstrate or refute parts of the theory we have made explicit since the formulation phase.

At the heart of the theory lies of course "lifelong learning", as developed especially since the Lisbon Conference in 2000: lifelong learning represents the key EU strategy to build a knowledge society and a knowledge based economy. Lifelong learning is a powerful road for change which is potentially open to all: it enhances and develops strategies for self-empowerment, valuing of tangible and intangible heritage, social inclusion, active citizenship and finally, as stated more recently, a more intelligent, cohesive and sustainable Europe.[69] Lifelong learning is also, as focused in particular in the Connecting Generations project, a space for facing intergenerational learning and solidarity: in the shift, consolidated as it is, from education to learning every single citizen, not withstanding age, gender, or ethnical/cultural identity is entitled to play both the role of learner and facilitator of learning, which happens in formal, non formal and completely informal contexts.

Traditionally, with few exceptions, learning partnerships during the Lifelong Learning Programme 2006-2013 focused more on exchange of experiences and building of human capital and social relations, during international mobilities, rather than to the experimentation and systematization of the transformative dimension of learning or to the production of intellectual outputs. The later were tackled by multilateral projects, directly financed by the EACEA and comprising of more sophisticated partnership, often including Universities and Research Centres, and disposing of more important funding.

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[67] Grundtvig Learning partnerships, as better explained above, are characterized by a high degree of democracy and horizontal management. Project coordination is both an organizational tool, but also a symbolic charge. Project coordinator should belong to the applicant organization, in this case, EDAFORUM, she/he is not paid an extra grant and while keeping the threads of communication is also responsible for final report.

[68] Schön, D., *The Reflective Practitioner, How Professionals Think In Action*, Basic Books, 1983

[69] As it is widely known, these are the lemma of Europe 2020, as launched by President Barroso in 2010 with the communication from the Commission EUROPE 2020 A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth / COM/2010/2020 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52010DC2020&from=EN

That is why we consider this e-book a good practice. It contains the bulk of reflections and lessons learnt developed by small organizations that seldom have the competences or the time to write about what they do: their members are mainly volunteers and activists, often very rooted in their local territories: they prefer to realize activities rather than "recount how they did it". In our opinion, this e-book is a very fortunate combination that might not be possible anymore in Erasmus Plus[70]: KA2 actions, whose objectives are to foster cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices among EU members/organizations, present serious difficulties for smaller organizations to win a bid. If there are no changes in the actual policies, we risk losing the dimension of change where Connecting Generations could develop and thrive.

In fact, the purpose of collecting lessons learnt is to bring together all, or the majority of, insights gained during implementation that can be usefully applied on future projects. Lessons learnt can make a great difference for future projects and help practitioners to make them succeed as well as strengthen their competences. However logical that might sound, it is not always the case in projects: first, lessons learnt must be audited and documented correctly, without fear of recording also the weakest parts of the project life. Learning comes from failures as well as success, even more from the first than the second. The key verb, and action, is, for sure, "to reflect" on them. Often, we don't allow ourselves to experience deep reflection as much as it would be necessary, because we are too busy getting to the next task, or completing a report in time for the next deadline.

All partners, for a total of 12 people physically present but representing many more, conveyed together in Bialystok that although lessons have been learnt at the local level, and had been outlined in the sheet analysis collected in the first part of this volume, it was also necessary and useful to draw some key conclusions of the results of the partnership as a whole. Such an exercise could serve as a reference for future projects, especially for the ones of us who were interested in applying for Erasmus Plus[71], but also for those organizations that will continue working on intergenerational solidarity in their localities in the future.

Considering also that participatory approaches have been mainstreamed throughout the two years together, and they are in fact one of the distinguishing marks of Connecting Generations, we also decided that it was important to dedicate a specific space in the agenda of the final meeting to a generative dialogue facilitated by the project coordinator. We chose the method of "generative word"[72], borrowed from the Freirean approach to adult literacy education, which bases the content of language lessons on learners' cultural and personal experiences. Instead of using generative words to learn how to read and write, as in the original Freirean mission, we used them to deconstruct and reconstruct key concepts that have been strategic in our work, trying to understand them from multiple cultural perspectives. Paraphrasing the famous "learner centred approach" we tried to mainstream a "practitioner self-evaluation approach".

The objectives of the common exercise were the following:

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[70] See the Erasmus plus web page and http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/erasmus-plus-in-detail_en.pdf

[71] Coming back to some lines above, no one felt ready to present a project for Erasmus plus in the first deadline of 30/04/2014, due to the enormous difficulties of the application form and a certain degree of confusion on the actual objectives.

[72] This method is adapted by the most famous "palabra geradora" of Paulo Freire. See P. Freire, Pedagogia do oprimido, New York, Herder & Herder, 1970

- Identify key words that had characterized our project, be they specific per country or in common, i.e. with a EU dimension
- Draw lessons learnt in terms of strengths and weaknesses of the selected approaches
- Deepen our mutual understanding on key words, or better concepts, that had emerged during our work.

As an introduction we went through the very story of the project implementation, in order to co-construct together a common "lived experience". We noticed that Connecting Generations had not only connected generations in seven EU partner countries plus Turkey. It also connected Municipalities and Regional Governments, public and private sectors, professionals and volunteers, local population and migrants and especially different visions of, and actual living in Europe. We all shared a common objective: recognizing how Europe has dramatically changed in its demographic composition, we made a sincere effort to imagine, build, experiment and test innovative practices of intergenerational learning and solidarity that could enhance an enriching dialogue between youth and senior citizens.

Some of the countries involved, Italy most of all, faces an urgent problem in terms of welfare for senior citizens and Connecting Generations was in itself an opportunity to test how, at the local level, lifelong learning policies, can contribute, consistently with economic and social policies, to improve the quality of life not only for the elders but for all.

In fact, the project started in Italy under a very lucky star: it all began in Villa Simius, Sardinia, in October 2011 during a three day contact seminar organized by the Italian LLP National Agency in order to promote 2012 as the EU year for active ageing. In that environment, six out of nine partners met and had the chance to breath a truly European atmosphere and hear directly from the LLP National Agencies about objectives and priorities of the LLP. After being sensitized on the challenge of an ageing Europe, torn by the economic crisis, professionals and volunteers from Italy, Hungary, Poland, Greece, Turkey and UK worked on a common proposal, which was presented to the entire group of participants, coming from more than twenty different EU countries, and then transformed into a project application and submitted in February 2012 to the Italian National Agency. Slovenian, Romanian and another Italian partner joined the proposal and made the partnership even more diverse. Those contacts were brought to the project by EDAFORUM via the University of Firenze, Department of Education and Psychology, which since the very beginning has served as a "silent partner" but contributed greatly to the quality system of the project.

During the project life, which started in August 2012, we did mainly three things:

a) Organize and participate in EU project meetings in eight countries, each with a different subject and in a different location: 1) November 2012 in Budapest, Hungary; 2) March 2013 Ayfon, Turkey; 3) April 2013 Bucarest, Romania; 4) May 2013 Tolmin, Slovenia; 5) August 2013 Liverpool, UK; 6) October 2013 La Spezia, Italy; 7) November 2013 Athens, Greece 8) April 2014 Ermioni, Greece and 9) May 2014 Bialystok, Poland. Three out of nine meetings have been managed as project meetings: kick off meeting n Budapest, mid term meeting in Tolmin and final meeting in Bialystok. The other seven meetings were dedicated to the following thematic focus: 2) community development 3) *paideia* and early childhood development 5) community social services 6) memory and the sea 7) distance learning and intergenerational learning 8) participatory methodology. Beside eight official meetings all with mobilities from partners countries, one national conference in Italy on lifelong learning was organized and considered as part of the project: "Learning cities" in Scandicci, Italy, organized

by the Municipality of Scandicci and EDAFORUM in December 2013. This conference reserved a special session to intergenerational learning and solidarity with participation of national stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and the main Italian Trade Unions.

b) Formulate and develop innovative practices of intergenerational learning in the local territories covered by the associations. This has been a key strategy in the project designed in the project document: while exchanges happened at the international level, action had to be locally based and had to be concrete, with measurable impact on local communities. This was as important as the EU dimension, and in fact the soul of it, since many territories involved already had their own experiences in active ageing and lifelong learning that this project contributed to innovate and to make emerge. Materials were therefore produced in English and in six EU languages to make them available to everyone who had been involved, be it the partnership or the local users, in particular local entities. We always adopted a researching approach: we wanted to test what worked and was appreciated by the public, youth and seniors, so that we could keep replicating or scaling up good practices in the future. This is a golden opportunity to test practices that is granted by Grundtvig: once we experimented with a particular practice, we were able to evaluate it not only as a single association, but also as an international partnership. Partners could appreciate, and simulate, practices during mobilities and lived them directly. The most appreciated practices were world cafe, storytelling and the valuing of local heritage and memory.

c) Systematize and record the experiences on the web site, in video clips and in a final e-book: this part of the project has been particularly demanding and challenging since it needed much more work and human resources that those available in the project. Especially the e-book would not have been possible without the voluntary support of the University of Firenze. We basically produced three results: an e-book collecting all experiences and lessons learnt, plus a theoretical introduction by professors and researchers from the University of Firenze, video clips of the project activities and a website with links to each organization. Not all partners were ready to fully participate in this part, due to their lack of familiarity with M&E and research. This has been quite an interesting lesson learnt in fact: as mentioned above, learning partnerships were meant to give an opportunity to smaller organizations to strengthen an EU dimension also. The latter are not always prepared to keep pace with the research. They often do not have the intellectual tools to do that since their mission is quite different. On the contrary, bigger organizations, less used to research, might not be so "grass-root" and have still a lot to learn from smaller field based organizations. Nevertheless, all tried to contribute and certainly, although to different degrees, learnt new skills and competences that will be useful in other EU projects, or in local interventions, especially in terms of self-evaluation.

Last but not least, it emerged from this exercise of "rewriting our common story" that the human dimension of the project was partly an unexpected, but very welcome result: participants in the project became in many cases friends and exchanged visits beyond the project activities. Some ties have been particularly intense and will definitely not die with the end of the project. As a consequence, more projects have been formulated together and this EU network of people, organizations, ideas and values remains as the strongest result of Connecting Generations. In other words, another brick of the desired "Europe of citizens" was built and will have, we all hope, a long and healthy life.

After this common effort of memory, and at the same time confirming the project identity, we identified in circle common key words of the project. The most recurrent ones are, strictly in alphabetic order:

Action research: there is a growing need for research in Europe, in order to understand on-going changes and be better prepared to face them, as citizens as well as practitioners. Unfortunately research is too often realm for "experts" that produce long and difficult to comprehend reports that end up in some drawer. Action research is an approach to co-construction of knowledge that is people-centred. Action Research must be qualitative and quantitative and put citizens in the condition to understand what is happening in EU societies at large, and in their own territories in particular. Action research works through dialogue between disciplines and privileged witnesses that are the very protagonist of change.

Active listening and empathy: no healthy communication can happen without listening and in absence of empathy. In the era of social media and "social shouting", listening is a revolutionary tool for intergenerational and intercultural understanding. During the project activities, both children, youth and the elders have been motivated to listen to each other, without prejudice and pre-concepts. Listening carefully opens windows and doors.

Ageing: the demographic phenomenon of ageing Europe is a fact, demonstrated by hard data. We can see ageing population from two different perspectives. On one side we see individual elders that are every day more lonely and disconnected from the community and in need of societal help and specific welfare policies. But there is also an issue of power: in countries like Italy for instance, political and economical power is held by the elder generation which is not helping, generally speaking, the youth to find their place in society. Young people, as demonstrated in some interviews conducted in La Spezia, do not see a bright future in terms of social mobility, while elders do not feel respected by the youth. This is connected with a lack of mutual knowledge, as a result of absent generative communication.

Community and collectivity: if we could go back by a time machine to fifty years ago, we would find a very different Europe. Although still scattered by the consequences of Second World War and the Cold War, we would find more cohesive communities, built on non-monetary bounds and fed by a sense of mutual trust and solidarity. The rise of consumerism has coincided with mounting individualism, which is at the opposite end of the continuum with community and collective resilience strategies. Elders and youth are lonelier than in the past: youth have found an alternative, virtual, community on social networks while elders can scarcely count on their families. The on-going crisis put belonging to and striving for a community under the light again: a community of people who can identify alternative solutions to economic scarcity in, for instance, a social and solidarity economics based on people's resilience and respect for Mother Earth.

Creativity: Traditional education and training has amply demonstrated its limits both in formal and non-formal education. Especially schools and universities are tailored upon the needs of an Industrial Society that no longer exists. Creativity and creative people are able to create values and are the real pioneer of social and educational innovation. Creativity was a key word

in Connecting Generations and it represented a solution: where traditional means failed, teachers, educators, facilitators and volunteers looked for alternative ways that had values.

Crisis: if we could "google" everyday chat in markets, workplaces or bars since 2008, it would be very likely that the word "crisis" would be among the ten most pronounced words. As French M. Serres[73] clearly elaborated in 2003 the on-going social, economical and ecological crisis can be compared to the crisis of a seriously ill person: it is a transitory phase which cannot but transform itself and the bearer: either he dies or overcome the illness and "change". That is a similar situation for the world society: we are deeply sick (do we need more evidences than climate change, ISIS and the bleeding of African youth, just to mention a few?) and we should either extinguish or change. In Chinese ideograms crisis, as often recalled, is the results of two items: risks and opportunities. We should take our risks and welcome crisis as an opportunity for transformation.

EU dimension: it should not be taken for granted as May 2014 elections are there to remind us. EU should be built from grassroots, via the experience of its citizens. It should not only be a paragraph in EU project formats, but a vision of a multicultural, multi-age and diverse society that values differences, instead of shunning them. We dare to say that one of the most felt impacts of Connecting Generations was in fact strengthening EU citizenship: through mobilities we could appreciate and exert hospitality and genuine, positive, curiosity for cultures diverse from ours. The project also consolidated some EU promoted key competences: speaking foreign languages, cultural awareness, social competences and entrepreneurship.

Innovation: it means not only doing or creating something new, but also performing new tasks with new attitudes and applying new competences. We focus on social and educational innovation in particular. According to the EU, social innovations are innovations that are social in both their ends and their means – new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations. They are innovations that are not only good for society but also enhance society's capacity to act. Social innovations take place across boundaries between the public sector, the private sector, the voluntary sector and the household.[74] According to Murray in his "Open Book for Social Innovation" in 2010 innovations are new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new relationships or collaborations. In other words, they are innovations that are both good for society and enhance society's capacity to act. [75] This has done quite a lot during the project: new methods have been experimented with and demonstrated the urgent need to respond to new challenges, with new tools.

Local and global: in the era of irreversible globalization there is a mounting need, and desire, to affirm the local dimension of change. While we seem to have very few instruments to affect global dynamics, we, as citizens, feel much more empowered in taking decisions, and taking

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[73] Serres M., *Temps de Crise* , Le Pommier, Paris, 2012

[74] http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/policy/social-innovation/index_en.htm

[75] Murray, Caulier-Grice, Mulgan, The Book of Social Innovation.pdf, 2010 (open educational resource available at NESTA http://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/the_open_book_of_social_innovation.pdf

part in innovative projects, at the local level. Without forgetting the international EU dimension, project like Connecting Generations value the local experience and bring that to the common learning space. So that we could rephrase famous lemma "think globally, act locally" and the contrary is also true "think locally and act globally". They both show the validity of crossing perspectives in projecting: fostering intergenerational learning is a EU challenge that develops in different national contexts. Comparing situations and practices made the project concretely "glocal". In particular elder people can be considered as guardians of traditions, mainly local, while youth tend to be virtually connected to the world dimension of education and communication.

Network: there is an immense amount of literature about networking, network societies, social networks and network analysis that would be impossible to list here. One of the most famous gurus of networking is Spanish sociologist Manuel Castell[76] who defined a network as the new social morphology of our societies. "A network" was also the shape of our collaboration: a network of knots we were during project implementation and each knot also belonged to other networks different from the Connecting Generations one. In other words, the ties through which any given social unit, in this case project partners, connects, represent the convergence of the various social contacts of that unit. The enormous potentiality of networks is their scaling up power. Grundtvig learning partnerships have great potential for building strong and sustainable EU networks: unfortunately, interests at stake often differ and only networks with a strong common identity and a truly felt mission survive. We will have to wait and see what will happen with Connecting Generations in the coming years.

Participation is also another, often controversial, key concept of our times: it is invoked by all, in different degrees, but very little practiced beyond certain circles. There is, according to the dialogue in Connecting Generations, a high degree of hypocrisy about participation, due to the great allure of the word. It is used by EU policy makers, national politicians, NGO and Associations leaders as well as others, but it is often just a mask of a very evident failure of citizens' organizations. In times of crisis and disaffection in the public space, traditional participation intended as a set of mechanisms to express one's own opinion and exert influence on political, economic, management or other social decisions often remains at the level of consultation or information. Even in EU projects participation is often on paper rather than in reality. Participation and sharing could have been stronger also in Connecting Generations: in particular some of the partners involved had less familiarity with the concept of participating not only in mobilities, but also in the governance of the project and the monitoring of its objectives and expected results.

Sharing is, with creativity and solidarity, one of the three "solution concepts" agreed upon by Connecting Generations partners. We belong to a future of shared knowledge, shared economy and most of all, shared destiny. Unless we contribute to change from the local dimension, with shared solutions, no one will do it in our place. A project like Connecting Generations can also be seen as a socio-economic system built around the sharing of human and physical resources:

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[76] Castells M.,*The Rise of the Network Society,* The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture *Vol. I.* Cambridge, MA; Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1996

it shares creation, production, distribution, and consumption of intellectual goods and services by different people and organisations, in eight different countries. Sharing always existed in human cultures and youth and elder have lived different experiences of it: our elders shared the burden of reconstructing Europe after the Second World War while youth is building a shared global knowledge repository through open access and crowd sourcing.

Solidarity. According to US activist Paul Hawken we are experiencing a rise of a blessed unrest multitude who is, collectively, claiming for change and for a more solidarity based social fabric and a more ecological and sober living (in other words in solidarity not only with fix spacing here and below other humans, but also to all sentient and living being). In his words, from billion-dollar non-profits to so called "single-person dot causes", these groups collectively comprise the largest movement on Earth. It is a movement without leaders, largely ignored by politicians and the media and organizing, like in nature, from grassroots. [77]It is happening around us and our role as social innovators, and educators, is to spot change based on solidarity and give it the visibility mainstream media would never agree to do. Connecting generations was mainly about intergenerational solidarity: it recognizes conflicts-of interests, of priorities, but defended the primacy of bonds and common objectives. According to a UN paper of 2007, the challenges of strengthening bonds and building bridges among generations and age groups in human society has to face the "inner contradiction of ensuring group continuity and safeguard of traditions over time as well as adaptability and innovation in the face of time-related changes"[78]. It is a contradiction, a dilemma that only dialogue and learning can resolve.

There are many more words, which came out during the session, but it is impossible in this article to report such a very enriching dialogue, and the vitality of it. The facilitator focussed on creating bridges among words, people, countries and facts. It was evident at the end that many

[77] Hawken P., *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Social Movement in History Is Restoring Grace, Justice, and Beauty to the World*, Penguin Books, New York, 2007
[78] http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/egm_unhq_oct07_bengtson.pdf

of the challenges were very similar from the United Kingdom to Turkey and the EU dimension of active ageing, intergenerational learning and lifelong learning is shared by all participants. The main lessons learnt therefore have been identified as follows:

1) Europe is built from grassroots, not only by EU or member states bureaucracy. People meet each other, mutually learn and change their practices and beliefs accordingly. Mobilities have been the heart of the project: while sometimes it was not easy to maintain a steady communication by e-mail, when people were physically together the learning experience became very intense. Mobilities made it possible for teachers, educators and learners to learn about new cultures, new practices and a transforming vision of education and Europe. That otherwise would not have been accessible to any of them, not only for economic reasons, but also for the lack of networking especially affecting smaller organizations. Travelling, by all means, opens minds and hearts: it contributes to the fight against stereotypes and prejudices and offers people concrete space for making new friendships.

2) In a rapidly changing society, transforming under our eyes as never before, it is of uttermost importance to focus on memory and local heritage. In a globalized time, where our children drink the same Coca Cola from Hawaii to South Africa, creating dedicated spaces for our elders to tell their "own stories" to children represents a wonderful opportunity to preserve our identity, while being open to innovation. Societies always change, *panta rei (*everything flows, as ancient Greek philosopher Eraclitus used to say*),* but the great challenge of Europe is to embrace change and the future, while not forgetting the past. As an example, the intergenerational learning realized with AIDEA's research on Istrian refugees after the Second World War, permitted young and old to remember a past that is not so far away, but seems buried in history texts. It was particularly enlightening how, during the presentation of the research in October 2013, at the Liceo Classico L. Costa, many partners participated in the remembering of the atrocities of the World Wars. Hungarian, Slovenian, Polish people in particular share the same grief from the past: on this grief, and the refusal of all wars, young and elders should feel their common belonging to Europe.

3) Intergenerational learning needs new, innovative, methods and techniques to foster participation and commitment to change by all generations. Traditional lectures are not an option anymore and creative methods stem from art and nature. Moreover, in the era of the Internet and social networks, the digital divide is everyday deeper between the digital generation, or digital native as defined by Prensky [79] and the rest of the population, roughly divided into digital immigrants (people born in the sixties-seventies) and digital retarded (the elders born before 1960). New intergenerational learning methods must include a great attention to participatory techniques and a digital dimension. The World Cafe, as developed by the Greek Living Values, was a very successful experience of innovation: while the World Cafe method has existed many years, the Greek educators succeeded in transforming it into a tool of dialogue between old and young, also creating a simplified version for children.

4) Interweaving the local and EU dimension of learning is key to developing a conducive environment for all learners. Learning indeed happens everywhere and since the best adult educator is, as everybody knows, a lifelong learner himself or herself, the stimulation to

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[79] Prensky M., "*Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants*". *On the Horizon, 2001, available at http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Digital%20Natives,%20Digital%20Immigrants%20-%20Part1.pdf*

learners comes from the very example of educators that are able to seize opportunities for learning under any conditions. Spaces of learning have been identified in the project in a wide variety of situations. Just to mention a few:

- Mother Earth and the natural environment (Slovenia with conservation of traditional knowledge in medical herbs),
- Music and Dance (Poland with its accent on traditional dances and songs)
- Urban Community Centres for people with special needs (UK with community based meeting involving people with special learning needs)
- The early childhood development activities (Romania with PAIDEA)

5) The exchange of knowledge and the systematization of knowledge and practices in this publication, although complex and time-consuming in a small project like this, were the hallmark of the project. They allowed a fruitful encounter between theory and practice with a focus on solidarity between generations. As demonstrated in the article by Glenda Galeotti, analysis of best practices allows us to deconstruct, compare, weave together and to reconstruct common variables between the countries and territories and to identify common areas of problem solving and joint solutions. Developing criteria to monitor and evaluate their own practices has helped all partners to behave as "reflective practitioners" and enrich each other. Unfortunately, this path is not obvious, especially when, even with the best intentions and mutual respect, practitioners and researchers move in different fields and at a different pace. On one hand, activists see in actual practice the heart of the project and on the other technical experts underline the risk of the lack of impact of activism left to itself, without the guidance of a theory of reference. The need for listening to each other and building a common space still has a long way to go, and it certainly does not end in a project of twenty-four months, but has pushed everyone to bring out critical issues and conflicts that transformed communication and mutual understanding.

Overall, this project opened many more questions of research than expected and deeply enriched its participants in a double dimension: as individual citizens, as well as educators within an education institution, be it private or public. It is useful to remember that, thanks to the Greek partner, it was possible to develop a logo for the recognition of the project. In the logo there are two oaks, a bigger one embracing the smaller one, recalling belonging to a common Mother Earth and the comparison / juxtaposition between generations and different stages of life, showing that despite the differences, the human condition share similar roots and therefore face similar problems, comparable and can create shared solutions.

To conclude and slotting a final reflection, it is important to go back to the origins of the word "project" in response to a "problem": according to the Greek etymology, derives from the verb προβάλλω, which means putting in front of an obstacle to overcome it. The etymology of the word project is similar but is also leading to the Latin verb *proicere,* translated as "to throw forward". The direction of the push is always the same: to the future, gaining strength in the momentum, and in lessons learned from the past. Even projects as small and relatively unimportant as Connecting Generations, at least compared with much ampler EU projects, represent important steps towards the construction of Europe that we would like, in which co-constructed knowledge, education and training are pillars.

III. PRACTICES OF INTERGENERATIONAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

3.1 World Café: a tool to open up meaningful dialogue between generations (by Living Values in Education, Greece)

Objectives
- to initiate and sustain dialogue among three generations, bridge social isolation & find commonalities
- to open up dialogues that bring to the fore learning from a values based perspective
- to actively listen between generations and in so doing learn from each other and gain greater respect of one another
- to stimulate activities
- World Cafe as an evaluation tool
- Shared wisdom
- Grassroots with no authority figure, no holder of knowledge, democratic process – a leveler
- Everyone has a voice, every opinion counts
- Create new perspectives
- Problem solving
- Graphic recording

Target
Stimulate projects that connect various ages of adult groups and that connect children to grandparents: ie. 6-12 yr old and 20-30 yr olds with 60-70-80 year olds. World Café, as an education tool that initiates projects, creates connections and helps us evaluate progress. World Café, as an educational tool that opens up conversations on themes common to each generations and brings these generations to greater understanding in objectively listening to different perspectives.

Duration: October 2012- September 2014

Partners/networks:
Schools at all levels, both formal and non-formal,
SMEs with adult education portfolio,
Retirement homes.

Key words of activity: World Café, Active Listening, Mindfulness, Communication, Dialogue, Cooperation, Values, Shared Goals, Graphic Recording, Evaluation

Description of Action
As an organization, we have organized Word Cafe events to specifically test its use in connecting generations, but also invited to organize World Cafe events by member organizations on themes related to connecting generations. An essential part of an effective World Cafe is the preparation. Preparation for participants includes if possible when time allows, an experiential Workshop on Active listening. (input on active listening)
Preparation for the hosts,
- taking time to prepare the right questions
- explicitly explaining the procedure
- setting the right tone

Cooperation among three generations can ensure a deepening of the sense of respect for the timeless and unending efforts for ongoing personal development that life-long learning ensures. This cooperation inspires a fertile interaction among varying age groups with unity and purpose. Through the World Cafés, we organized social happenings. Our events and activities were announced through social media and media (radio, TV, newspaper etc). Actions:
- Workshops on Active Listening
- In preparation for participating in World Café
- World Cafe workshops aimed at initiating projects
- World Cafe as an educational tool that connects a variety of ages from pre-teens to 50+

World Cafe as a tool in Connecting Generations:
- kick off World Cafe, allowed for synergies that gave birth to ongoing projects
- one of those projects Digital Stories themed on the love stories of the third generation narrated into digital format by the 1st generation (Ag. Dimitriou)
- ideas for activity based e-books using nature themes (the sun, wind) combining culture with sciences to inspire activities between generations (work on these books has begun and will likely continue beyond CG).

- mindful nature walks
- World Cafe @ Xatzivei opened up conversations that brought about better understandings between generations and ideas for multi-generational projects, including a bicycle ride that will take place this spring.
- Theater group (Eleni Angelopoulou)
- Brought together in a very innovative way the 3rd and 1st generations to talk and play through games of past and present

Which needs the activity addresses.
Breaking 'generational' social isolation, transmission of cultural and historical values within the same society.

Methodology
An effective and simple process for bringing people together around questions that matter. Small, intimate conversations link and build on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas and discover new insights into questions or issues that really matter in their life, work or community.

Why this activity connects generations. Why it entails solidarity.

World Cafe engages its participants in sincere and deep discussion, sharing of thoughts, dreams and ideas, goal-setting and co-planning of projects of benefit to the participants' larger community.

The main lessons learnt
Through respectful dialogue all members of a social group, regardless of age, can cooperate harmoniously and creatively. Their project work can be enjoyed by many.
- learning to listen
- open mindedness
- dispel prejudices

Innovative features
Gathering large groups of people successfully, especially. in urban areas, graphically recording, interpreting and assessing.
- A tool in non-formal education
- Democratic process, no hierarchy, everyone has a voice
- Tapping into innate wisdom
- Conversations without prejudice
- Mindful conversations-focus is on dialogue, communication and deep understanding
Creating a ripple effect into the community at large

3.2 Traditional food of La Spezia and Liguria: a pathway toward intergenerational learning (by AIDEA La Spezia, Italy)

Objectives
- To experiment an innovative way of intergenerational learning through cuisine and local food
- To enhance the key competence of cultural awareness and value territorial heritage in professional schools
- To challenge the idea of diversity across ages, times and cultures
- To foster active listening among different people of different ages and nationalities

Target
VET students in the tourism school and senior volunteers of AIDEA

Duration: Three months

Partners/networks:
Private School CIOFS of La Spezia

Key words of activity: Learning by doing, traditions, food as a common space for co-construction of knowledge, active listening, diversity, formal and non formal education

Description of Action
During three months, once a week, a senior journalist, Gabriella Molli, expert in traditional local food visited the class and worked with teachers, senior volunteers, and an AIDEA English teacher and the students. Prof. Gabriella Raschi, teacher of Italian, and also a senior, prepared the class and accompanied students in the adventure with learning materials, web researches and an in and out test. Gabriella Raschi showed pictures of traditional foods and recipes, from pesto to anchovies to mesciua and explained the anthropological, historical and cultural origins of each one of them. She mentioned the Arabic and Spanish origins of many of them and showed how the mixing of cultures started well beyond the actual globalization era. After the theoretical part, they effectively cooked traditional recipes together in the school kitchen and shared impressions on tastes smells and colors. Those were particularly attractive to the students, who could use their emotional intelligence and all their senses in the learning experience. With the help of the English teacher, the students finally translated every recipes into English and created a booklet of Ligurian traditional recipes in English. They also prepared a PPT with pictures, thoughts and recipes, which is attached to this e-book.

Which needs the activity addresses.
The need to look into the near and farther past, with the guide of elder people and not be confined in the present as in a cage without escape. The need to listen to each other carefully, deeply and overcome superficiality and gap of attention through mutual respect and curiosity. The need to find common spaces of dialogues and comparison through daily experiences, such as food with its smell, taste and colours that have remained the same over time. The need to recognize the local territory where one lives and appreciate its richness. The need to learn and remember how our society lived before the industrial boom of the 1950s and the consumerism that followed, compared to the sobriety and sometimes even hunger, of the past. The need to bring non formal education and divergent thinking, and therefore learning, into formal schools, especially VET.

Methodology
10 seminaries of one hour each, during school time, with multiple participants, coming from different professional backgrounds. Description of a particular kind of food with a multidisciplinary approach: from history to sociology to biology and cuisine. Learning by doing: they effectively cooked the food and ate it together. Communication dynamics based on active listening and action learning.

Why this activity connects generations. Why it entails solidarity.
This series of activities taught youth and elders to listen to each other with an open

mind and to ask questions and do research. As in action learning, powerful questions entail a discussion and a dialogue that go beyond the very subject approached. The trip went from food to history of the territory and its people. At the beginning the students did not have great expectations from this activity but then learnt day after day how much knowledge elder people owned and could share. The students also learnt to respect the elders and sincere esteem grew in both directions. Elder volunteers could also appreciate the open-mindedness of the students, who asked many questions and really seemed to appreciate the exercise. That contributed to de-constructing stereotypes and prejudices from both sides: on one side students believing that seniors were boring and out of fashion, while on the other senior believing youth to be too disinterested and lazy to learn about different times

The main lessons learnt.

Young people are eager to learn more about the past and when given the opportunity, they participate enthusiastically in activities, especially when followed by action and experimentation. Sometimes young people do not have easy access to their grandparents or elder members of the family that can tell them stories of the past. That is particularly true for young migrants who are in a foreign country and have lost contact with their elders in the home country and have

superficial relationships even with their parents, that often work all day and cannot dedicate much time to their offspring. Food is a powerful means of communication that is universal and can be exploited in very diverse situations. It is a key to success in attracting attention and interest. The cultural dimension of food is intrinsic to human communities, since it represents a basic, indispensable, human need. Working on basic needs, with an easy and comprehensible language, put everyone in a condition of ease and avoided hierarchy among the "good" and "bad" students.

Innovative features.

In this activity we could foster not only intergenerational learning, but also intercultural pedagogy. The added value of this practice is that local history offered a space of dialogue to people of different ages, professional backgrounds and cultural origins. Around 60% of the class was composed of non-Italian students: they were from Dominican Republic, Morocco, Albania, Romania, Moldovia and Tonga. All students passed the final exam on traditional cuisine and they realized how intergenerational learning can make studying more real and even more fun. On the other side seniors realized how important they are, even in the digital and information era, in maintaining traditions and building bridges, not rivers, among generations.

3.3 Intergenerational integration and memories for posterities (by University of the Third Age in Białystok, Poland)

Objectives

To create in our local communities an enhancing environment conducive to intergenerational communication and mutual understanding that will lead to a better quality of life for all. Non-formal and informal adult education activities carried out by the participants of the project. To produce and transfer knowledge, methods and good practices for senior citizen education and intergenerational learning through mobilities and a shared on line platform at the European level. To develop innovative methods to foster communication and create learning opportunities between older and younger generations based on exchanging good practices of the partners' organizations.

Target

Mutual /reciprocal/ teaching of seniors, members of the University of the Third Age /the UTA/ in Białystok and the schoolchildren and students:

Polish seniors, members of the University of the Third Age, were involved in 30 meetings with younger generations in mutual teaching and learning, connected with digital technology communication, cultural heritage and other things in order to decrease the gap between generations

Creating by the UTA seniors memories edited as a website's stories and as the books:

- their biography or the most interesting facts from their life;
- the family histories and the genealogical trees of their families
- old customs and traditional relics of our region.

Memories were written and they were put on the website in a special base of memories of the UTA seniors. (and also were edited as 3 books. All these memories were transmitted by our seniors to their descendants /their grandchildren and great grandchildren/. They will also be given to the children and students from the cooperating schools and will be passed to the Białystok University Library.

Duration: October 2012 - September 2014

Partners/networks

- The Clothes School/designing and sewing clothes, fashion show
- High Cosmetics school
- Gastronomic School /traditional old dishes for Christmas and Easter, recipes done by seniors and transmitted to the schoolchildren and vice versa.
- Electrical School/computer science, working with mobiles, smartphones
- The Child Centre in Supraśl.
- Backyard Tutors
- Plastic Liceum
- Radio Białystok
- Prof. Dobroński editing „Regional Kramik" in the local newspaper „Kurier Poranny".
- Website of the UTA in Białystok
- Local project BASE website

Key words of activity: Intergenerational meetings for learning and teaching, memories, creativity, cooperation, values, traditional knowledge, dispelling stereotypes and accepting diversity, interaction with people of different ages and backgrounds, dissemination, CONGENIAL website (in Polish and in English), English language studies.

Description of Action

1. Mutual /reciprocal/ teaching of seniors, members of the University of the Third Age /the UTA/ in Białystok and the children from the Child's Centre and backyard children with their tutors, students of Gastronomic School, Electrical School, Higher Cosmetics School Clothes School and Art School.

- The youth taught our seniors how to use a computer and a mobile phone.
- Whereas our seniors taught the children different skills and abilities, such as crocheting, embroidery, painting, sewing, singing, cooking, making toys and decorations. They helped them to learn foreign languages.
- Our seniors did their best to show the children the beauty of our region, flora and fauna, different places of interest by organizing common excursions and nature

walks on location, by common meetings, bonfires, dancing and singing together.
- They taught children to sing old scout songs and traditional folk songs.

Links:

Intergenerational integration - PART I:
http://utw.uwb.edu.pl/index2.php?p=426
- Cooperation of the UTA with younger generations
- Inter-generational pancake day in the child's centre
- Inter-generational classes at the Cosmetics Faculty of the medical University in Białystok
- The second meeting in the studio of the Cosmetics Faculty
- Palm sunday in Supraśl
- The integration party "old and new songs"
- Meeting in the Creche
- The fairy - tale corner
- The integrational nature walk with the children
- Inter-generational craft workshops
- Fashion event

Intergenerational integration - PART II:
http://utw.uwb.edu.pl/index2.php?p=442
- The language cafe
- Three-Generational Integration / during the jewellery workshop/
- Holiday visit in the Child's Centre
- Successive generation craft workshops / doing beads, knitting and crocheting/
- Excursion to nature reserve
- Workshop in gastronomic school
- Inter-generational painting classes
- Computer consultations in the technical electric school in Białystok
- Chestnut beads

Intergenerational Integration - PART III:
http://utw.uwb.edu.pl/index2.php?p=499
- Christmas aroma of honey-cake
- Christmas decorations
- Integration meeting
- Carnival cakes
- Intergenerational meeting connected with memories

2. *Writing memories for posterity*

a/ Histories Of Our
Life http://utw.uwb.edu.pl/index2.php?p=346
- Memories From My Childhood
- My Life On The Borderland

- Successful Descent

b/ Polish Traditions
http://utw.uwb.edu.pl/index2.php?p=419
- Tradition: What Does It Mean?
- Fat Thursday
- Forty Days Lent
- Easter Holidays
- "Śmigus-Dyngus" /Wet Monday /
- Studniówka

c/ Useful Advice
http://utw.uwb.edu.pl/index2.php?p=422
- Tips To Keep You Healthy, Strong And Bright
- Positive Thinking
- How To Be Self-Confident

d/ Podlaskie Cuisine
http://utw.uwb.edu.pl/index2.php?p=423
- About Podlaskie Regional Cuisine
- Recipe For Potato Kishka
- Sękacz
- Pea Soup
- Tomato Soup
- Potato Babka by Jagoda

e/ Rites And Habits Of The Region Of Podlasie
http://utw.uwb.edu.pl/index2.php?p=492
- Baptism of my Great - Grandson

f/ Recipes Of Our Partners
http://utw.uwb.edu.pl/index2.php?p=439

3. *Improving the English language*

4. *Developing and improving ICT skills. Creation and modification of the website (*Polish version http://www.utw.uwb.edu.pl/index2.php?p=286; English version http://www.utw.uwb.edu.pl/index2.php?p=344)

F. *Organizing the international meeting of the participants of the project in Białystok: "The UTA Activities Decreasing the Intergeneration Gap"*

G. *Dissemination:*
- information about the Grundtvig project given by Danuta Sajur during the conference of the Universities of the Third Age from Podlasie in Białystok (17.11.12)
- link; http://www.utw.uwb.edu.pl/index2.php?p=356
- information about the Congenial project tasks on the website: utw.uwb.edu.pl
- 14 articles about the tasks and project meetings in the newsletter "Forever Young"

- paper chronicle of the "Congenial" project.
- information about the project on the radio Białystok-special programme about the CONGENIAL project (it is now in preparing).
- films about CONGENIAL project activities on our website and on YouTube.
- 4 articles about CONGENIAL project activities in the local newspaper "Kurier Poranny".

Which needs the activity addresses
- decreasing the gap between seniors and other generations,
- breaking 'generational' social isolation,
- transmission of cultural and historical values within the different generations

Methodology
- 30 different meetings with the younger generations and seniors, the participants of the project Congenial.
- Memories for posterity were written and put on the website, later 3 books were edited.
- The website was created, where all our activities and all our impressions about project meetings in partners' countries were described. (link:.
- 30 mobilities to partners' countries were done with the aim of acquaintance with other methods of intergenerational integration.
- 14 articles about project activities were written in our monthly newsletter „Forever Young".
- Films were created and put on the website and YouTube.

The special edition of the newspaper "Forever Young" was written in English and dedicated to the project meeting held in Bialystok, which contained the main aspects of the activities in the project made by our seniors. The aim is the dissemination of Polish methods.

Why this activity connects generations. Why it entails solidarity.
The UTA seniors and younger generations were much interested in common meetings and integration. Our memories had a great success among children and other generations. Prof. Dobroński, a well-known historian, showed a great interest in seniors' memories for prosperity, he wrote some articles about it in our local newspaper "Kurier Poranny" in the special part "Regional Kramik".

The main lessons learnt.
- Older generations are indispensable for the right workings of younger generations and vice versa. These generations possess huge knowledge and skills for mutual transmission.
- Older generations possess the informative base of knowledge about historical events. Often after the death of those people their knowledge disappears. That's why it is necessary to create the system of gathering of this knowledge.
- Common Europe must tend to create common history of its countries.
- Our seniors' activity in the CONGENIAL project gave the feeling of their self-confidence, reduced the feeling of loneliness, increased the physical condition and lasts their life.
- Nowadays the main barrier of mutual understanding between different generations is very fast development of informatics and informative technology. That's why our Polish participants of the project developed their computer skills.
- The same is true about the English language. We must continue improving it.

Through respectful dialogue all members of a social group, regardless of age, can cooperate harmoniously and creatively.

Innovative features
Writing memories' books on the website and next editing 3 books afforded to transmit our knowledge, our memories and our experience among different generations. The use of social media in sharing knowledge gives big possibilities for wide dissemination among generations.

3.4 Romanian Paideia Clubs (by Students Forum from Faculty of Education, Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University, Romania)

Objectives

Students Forum from Faculty of Education, *Dimitrie Cantemir* Christian University has developed intergenerational culture within this project based on the concept of Paideia. Paideia is a form of lifelong learning and a form of learning present in the public "agora" whose ethical, spiritual and cultural values are transferred from generation to generation as a continuous human memory. The objective of Paideia clubs are:

- transferring ethical, spiritual and cultural values from one generation to the next through investment in human capital with information technology and training;
- learning to generate and exploit knowledge and progress for humanity by sharing innovative methods, by dialogue inside and outside the project;
- promoting and disseminating a Paideia forms in the public "agora" as a continuous human memory involving parents and children to build together.

Target

Target group: students, decision makers, teachers for primary and pre-school, parents, other interested individuals

Duration: October 2012 - September 2014

Partners/networks:
- Students Forum of UCDC,
- kindergartens and primary schools of Bucharest and Ghimpati (Giurgiu county),
- parents associations,
- School Inspectorate of Bucharest and Giurgiu county,
- UNESCO Chairs network

Key words of activity: transnational project on intergenerational culture, Paideia club, impacts, learning local community, social dimension of Bologna process

Description of Action:

The terms of reference of the content and the activities of Paideia Clubs are designed on four levels:

(1) How could the contents, activities and results of Paideia Clubs participate in the sustainable development of kindergartens, schools and local communities?

- Parents circle involvement in the children training
- Transfer of Paideia know how to other kindergartens and schools
- Awareness building in local district or local community through public project events and articles publication
- Awareness building upon decision makers through public project events, dissemination and reports

(2) How was the training of students forum directed? Support activities are more successful than others in use?

- Main formative support : *Connecting generations* project exchanges and training stages
- Support activities: public communications sessions of students, exhibitions on Paideia clubs

(3) What was the impact of the project on kindergartens and schools, communities and target groups? What are the factors of success or failure?

Factors of success:

The first tangible impact was empowering students with integrated key competences, particularly, the entrepreneurial competences. We note the acquisition of new key competences and change in learning behaviour, such as: to seek; to process information; to familiarise with Paideia techniques; to relate with local and international partners; to know the ways of ensuring sustainable development of school unit and local community; to identify human resources and project finance; establish the purpose and objectives of the project from analysis of local needs and aspirations. The second tangible impact was positive change of attitude. The project resulted in increasing militancy of the action, increasing the potential for networking and cooperation in kindergartens, in schools, in the community, and

also in European partnerships. We're talking about cumulative impacts, expanding exponentially in time. The third level of impact was related to the motivation of target groups: increasing confidence and motivation of the target groups for reprinting such learning behaviours. Not surprisingly, the specific content of project *Connecting Generations*, which is ongoing, generated intangible benefits, cumulative learning which opens opportunities of living and social integration quicker for direct and indirect project beneficiaries. Another impact is related to enhanced levels of social and professional recognition and personal development and socio-vocational of teachers included in the project. Project records prove change in internal context (kindergarten and school teachers, students), and also in external context of the partners of the project *Connecting generations* through*:*

- Change in learning behaviour;
- Implementing Paideia rules;
- Factors of continuity and sustainability;
- Socio-economic impact factors;
- Factors of reading the expectation and need ;
- Transfer of best practices;
- Plus amount of personal, social and vocational training;
- Added value for human resource training.

Factors of failure:
Social feed-back in requested time
(1) What are the added values in terms of life long and wide learning that could be attributed to the students, kindergartens, schools, local community?

-   individual and group cognitive structures from European exchanges on connecting generations : the acquisition of new specific skills, change of learning behaviours, personal development and success motivation;
-   socio-cognitive construction of individual and group: elements of e-inclusion and social inclusion, learning of entrepreneurial and marketing techniques, intelligent knowledge based on local economy development;
-   individual and socio-affective group building: practices of self confidence, self esteem, social ethics, local enthusiasm and emulation, activity and group solidarity, horizontal management;
-   convergence of practices on connecting generations and adhesion to European values

through local community projects: freedom and peace, personal expression, property, openness to each other; awareness building of collective values: membership, belonging to the European social harmony; practices of materialistic and post-materialistic values: money and productive work in projects, local social cohesion and e-inclusion, leisure, voluntary work, education for all, e-inclusion and social inclusion, tolerance and reciprocity, intercultural education;
-   validation forms of anthropocentric European matrix around the local educational community as an emergent local development;
-   perpetuating the ecosystem by learning women emancipation, connecting generations at local level, ethic change in learning behaviour;
-   validation forms of the comprehensive development based on changing trends: criticism, historiography of concepts, balance between local traditions and modernity; contribution to the social dimension of Bologna process;
-   group creativity associated to the socio-emotional and cognitive construction of individual and group, intelligent and inclusive knowledge-based economy ;
-   building individual and socio-affective group are defining and necessary re-defining a local community ethos and competitive market: practices and self-confidence in others, self-esteem and respect for others, social and economic ethics, enthusiasm and emulation versus the passivity and inertia slope, group solidarity, networking;
-   adhesion and aggregation of actual values through community projects with funding sources; identification of key success factors in achieving impact;
-   equality on grounds of age, gender, level of empowerment;
-   identification of the gender emancipation factors for women in rural and small-urban and urban; intergenerational culture, youth and seniors working together;
-   ascendancy and complexity of lifelong and life wide learning

The five Paideia clubs of the Students Forum are exploring new values of the European concept of *Paideia*, this expressing, currently, lifelong

learning and learning Agora forms whose ethical, spiritual and cultural values are transferred from generation to generation as continuity form of humanity memory. The clubs of the Forum of students and teachers of the Faculty of Education, the *Dimitrie Cantemir* Christian University are supported by students and teachers of this faculty, both in urban and rural areas:

(1) **Local memory Club**
School of Ghimpati, Giurgiu county
Local project promoters: lecturer, Marin Tudor, Ph.D

(2) **Research mysteries of the universe**
Secondary School no. 168 with preschoolers, district 6, Bucharest
Local project promoters: Mihaela Gavan, student

(3) **World's Pacala** (ceramic workshop)
Goethe German College, district 1, Bucharest
Local project promoters: Ingrid Târzioru, student

(4) **Laboratory of jam and cakes**
Kindergarten No. 44, district 1, Bucharest
Local project promoters: Ionela Turita, student

(5) **All about Romanian festivals** (management and marketing)
Kindergarten *Stropi de Roua*, no. 199, district 4, Bucharest
Local project Promoter: Elena Rasnita, student

Which needs the activity addresses
- connecting generations
- connecting social disparities
- generations and social disparities working together
- lack of together entrepreneurship
- enjoying each other's success

Methodology
- Thematic and iterative training and working
- Joint work plan adults and children
- Meeting the target group (educational project presentation)
- The Paideia civic exercise
- Role play
- Travel, observing the hosts country culture.

- Fieldtrip to the Village Museum
- Application and research plan
- Entrepreneurship and producing
- Working together
- Make an in-house traditional craft contest
- Exhibition with sale
- Mini dramatization
- Celebration
- Assessment methodology: impact questionary, interviews, testimonial documents (impressions, photo portfolio, crafts etc.)

Why this activity connects generation. Why it entails solidarity.
Project records prove change in internal context (kindergarten and school teachers, students), and also in external context of the partners of the project *Connecting generations* through:
- Exchanges and change in learning behaviour;
- Implementing Paideia rules;
- Reading together the expectations and needs;
- Building together parents and children
- Enjoying together in the school community or local community
- Transferring best practices and knowledge;
- Plus amount of personal, social and vocational training and self-esteem;
- Added value for human resource training.

The main lessons learnt
- All exchanges have innovative sides for our daily experiences
- Patience with the social time
- Building together is important for generations
- Working together is essential for community

Innovative features
- Cultural values of craft market
- Re-discovering the public small and local agora Methods of social complexity out the school space
- Paideia clubs
- Valorisation of all local testimonials

3.5 Intergenerational learning through preservation of traditional knowledge of homemade syrups (by Pososki Razvojni Center, Slovenia)

Objectives

Traditional knowledge of using herbs in home cooking has played an important role in our mothers' and grandmothers' lives. Unfortunately, a lot of this knowledge has already been forgotten. By researching and implementation of gathered recipes into practice participants contribute to preservation of cultural and ethnological heritage.

Target

Participants of the programme Project Learning for Young Adults and the elderly from the same local area

Duration: December 2012 – June 2014

Partners/networks

Local institutions and community centres

Key words of activity Intergenerational learning, traditional knowledge, dispelling stereotypes and accepting diversity

Description of Action

Project activity was accomplished through the following steps:

1. Setting up a target group (participants of programme Project Learning for Young Adults)
2. Research on medicinal herbs (borrowing some books from the library, researching websites, interviewing our mothers and grandmothers);
3. Meeting of the groups (the young ones and the elderly): exchanging ideas, picking up the herbs and trying out some of the recipes, learning how to digitally form the recipes and post it on Facebook;
4. Forming a book or CD with the recipes in Slovenian and English language and with photos of the project activities.

Participants of the project (aged 15 to 25, uneducated and unemployed) together with the older ones used the collected herbs for preparing syrups, bread and some pastry. Parallel with these activities we have established a new website subpage (http://pum-tolmin.weebly.com/aktivnosti.html), in which we've put descriptions of the herbs (in Slovenian and English) and its photos. We've also published project activities on the project's Facebook wall. The main product of these activities is a book of recipes, in which we gathered all the recipes we tested.

Which needs the activity addresses

Described activities also serve as a tool to achieve several goals, such as:

- to improve language skills,
- to develop and improve ICT skills,
- to accept diversity and abate stereotypes,
- to change the attitude towards different group of people.

Methodology

Implementation of traditional recipes into practice can be equaled with the method "learning by doing". Such a specific group as the participants of Project Learning for Young Adults are (drop outs, unemployed, socially excluded) rejects traditional methods of learning. However, several years of working with this target group show the positive effect of using this specific method "learning by doing" in the programme, where the participants gain their skills, develop and learn new knowledge throughout different projects. In this particular activity participants through researching and testing traditional recipes in home cooking improve their language and ICT skills, and most important they preserve traditional knowledge of using medicinal herbs in cooking.

Why this activity connects generation. Why it entails solidarity.

Nowadays different crafts and traditional knowledge in general, such as recipes for homemade syrups and other usage of herbs in home cooking, are losing their value, especially among younger generations. To learn about it and to ensure these traditions don't disappear we need to cooperate with the elderly. They are the only ones who still cherish it. Our participants, as a Facebook generation, can offer in exchange

a teaching course how to electronically process the recipes.

The main lessons learnt

Throughout the project activities participants developed their communication competences on two different levels: they improved their native speaking skills and learned some basics of foreign language. In parallel, they developed or improved their ICT skills while electronically processing the recipes. Perhaps most important lesson of all: participants changed their way of accepting different groups in a positive way. They learned how important for all of us intergenerational learning is.

Innovative features

This specific project activity offers many opportunities at different levels. Participants learn and develop positive relationship with nature and what she can offers to us. Activity can be developed and upgraded in terms of organic gardening, eco learning or sustainable development.

3.6 Life Couching: practical personal life & education couching to connecting generations (by Mercan Uluslararasi Gönüllüler Derneği, Turkey)

Objectives
- To connect generations;
- to encourage deep listening,
- to learn different experiences,
- to understand each other,
- to improve entrepreneurship of peoples at different age level,
- to share experiences between different generations,
- to improve communication skills of young people,

Target
- Young students who have no father/mother or separated,
- University students who have free time and have youth counselling lessons,
- Middle aged people interested in education, life couching,
- Seniors who know pedagogy and are working/worked as a teacher,

Duration: October 2012 - September 2014

Partners/Networks
- Zubeyde Hanim Vocational and Technical School for Girls - Student Counselling Service,
- Afyon Kocatepe University - Physical Education Department,
- Afyon Kocatepe University - Sociology Department,
- Umit Voluntary Educators Association,
- Youth Center in Afyonkarahisar City
- Dilek Hobby Center,
- Afyonkarahisar Visual Arts Association,

Key words of activity: Communication, Connecting, active citizenship, personnel life couching, couching for education, connecting generations, learning to learn, social entrepreneurship,

Description of Action
Practical Personal Life & Education Couching To Connecting Generations`is an applied activity that created a very huge synergy, positive approaches, social and personnel benefits for the

partners organisations and the target group. The activity idea was a goal for our association 3 years ago before Connecting Generations With the approval of the project we had a chance to realize our dream of adding more to have a better social life.

The partners and social supporters of this activity were very eager to be involved in this activity, which will generate an important results and outcomes for social life. In the beginning of the activity we have preparatory meetings with the partners and social supporters at local level in our association and at youth center. We detailed our programme, activities that will do, time table, potential results and outcomes, responsibilities of each organisation. Our organisation contacted with the target group and selected the trainers, councillors, final beneficiary list from young students. We had a reverse discrimination for the young girls who are very disadvantaged because of emotional situations that need help so much. 22 students, 16 counsellors, 4 trainers and 2 mentors were very active at this study during the activity. We had to our computer systems and technical arrangements. Our project team designed and printed materials, an education tool kit, notes for trainings and presentations.

We had oral interviews with the students and counsellors who will take part at the activity as project coordinator and with a professional Psychology-Guide teacher to determined the list for the activities.

After than we started to the trainings firstly to the improve social communicating skills of the candidate counsellors. There were four training activities;
- Overcoming the Stress and Anger Management (24 hours),
- Communication Techniques (24 hours),
- Psychological Counselling and Guidance(24 hours) ,
- Alternative Teaching Methods (16 hours),

During the training and at the activity our mentors and advisories supported and helped to our counsellors that how can manage it easily and successfully.

We delivered these to the counsellors:

- Key Notes,
- Control Forms for the activities,
- Surveys,
- Training Tool Kit,
- Dissemination stickers,
- Observation forms as weekly.

We decided 42 key activity for the counsellors-target students that they can participate in during this study. Then we matched to the students and counsellors. We cared about to deliver to one counsellor to a one student. And 1 mentor and advisory to 10 counsellor.

After all training activities and studies all counsellors started to guide for social life and educational life counselling. We checked to the process with monthly meetings and observations.

At the end of the activity we had evaluation forms and surveys from the target group.

`Practical Personal Life & Education Couching To Connecting Generations` was a great activity that created many beneficial results and outcomes.

Methodology
- A detailed planning of activities,
- Contacting with the related organisations and target group,
- Training people to counselling to very young peoples,
- A long counselling time as applied
- Observations, evaluations

The main lessons learnt
- Connecting generations can create a social sustainability,
- People feel themselves more beneficial and happy while they are doing a voluntary activity

Innovative features
- Trying an applied activity between the generations with supporting trainings and mentoring.
- Testing to the activity at vulnerable disadvantaged target group as successfully.

3.7 Sharing e-mentoring techniques with 50+ educators (by TELOS Education & Consulting, Hungary)

Objectives
To develop and share innovative methods in order to enhance dialogue and two-way learning opportunities between older and younger generations:

- to investigate how e-mentoring techniques and methods can facilitate connecting generations
- to equip the 50+ generation of teachers/tutors with e-mentoring expertise as part of their professional development and also 50+ individuals who are interested in the methods to share their knowledge and life experience with younger generations

Target
To adapt e-mentoring tools so that they can be utilised for specific adult education purposes. Target group: 50+ educators and interested individuals, and also students as target audience for mentoring.

Duration: October 2012 - September 2014

Partners/networks
Local elementary and vocational schools, SMEs with adult education portfolio, higher education institutions with continuing education profile.

Key words of activity: e-mentoring, intergenerational learning, connecting digital natives and illiterates, foreign language learning, training educators and parents.

Description of Action
In the 21st century which has become the age of digital culture the elderly generations who have specific knowledge or expertise in a given area find it more and more difficult to share their treasures with the young generations. Therefore tools need to be identified and used to facilitate the communication between digital natives and digital illiterates. To teach the basics of e-mentoring seems to be an ideal start for an educator to connect with a generation which ties itself to the virtual world. In our local project a few basic e-mentoring techniques have been explored and adapted to make them utilisable in the context of informal education. For the purpose of this project a team has been set up consisting of representatives of the 16-20 and the 50+ generations so that the team members could jointly investigate the potentials of e-mentoring in the process of informal language learning. The following topics have been discussed by the participants:

- The basics of e-learning and its environment
- What is e-mentoring?
- Required skills and competences for a mentor
- Resources and tools for an e-mentor
- Potential channels for an e-mentor
- Motivating students
- Evaluating students and giving feedback
- Application of e-mentoring techniques

Participants exchanged their knowledge and shared their experience and ideas along those topics, gave practical advice on how to use specific tools taken from the formal education and adapted to informal learning situations. The following activities have been carried out by the team members in order to implement the team's work plan and the project:

- research on available resources in e-mentoring
- development of the necessary technical competence that is required for functioning as an e-mentor, updating computer skills offered by university student team members to the 50+ participants
- determination of steps of acting successfully as an e-mentor, compiled jointly by the team members:
  - identification of the learning process
  - identification of the segments in which learners need help
  - identification of learning sections and tasks which are suitable to be supported by e-mentoring
  - selection of communication channel (email, Facebook group, etc.)
  - discussing the method chosen with the learners
  - continuous presence in the learning process via the selected channel

- continuous provision of feedback
- collection of examples of assignment types in the area of language teaching that work well for e-mentoring purposes:
  - story writing
  - exploring the internet on a given topic
  - debating (for and against type of reasoning)
  - electronic tests
  - description of pictures
  - review/analysis of video clips, short films
  - language games
- gathering examples of motivational tools suggested partially by the 50+ participants and partially by the young members:
  - continuous acknowledgment of performance
  - focus on topics related to learners' life situation, social interest or hobbies, or on breaking news, current hot issues of everyday life
  - frequent use of language-bound internet games
- identification and presentation of potential channels of communication initiated by the 16-20 generation representatives
  - email
  - facebook/google group
  - skype

Which needs the activity addresses

Overall need: to connect generations in particular learning situations. Specific need: to adapt e-mentoring techniques and utilize their benefits in the context of informal adult education with a special focus on language teaching.

Methodology

- conducted research on available e-mentoring tools and methods
- identified the lack of these methods being used in the context of adult education/informal education
- consulted experts on the transferability and applicability of these methods in informal learning environment
- formulated discussion groups to analyse the issues of e-mentoring
- adapted e-mentoring techniques for using them to create opportunities for intergenerational learning

- tested the adapted methods in the focus group

Why this activity connects generation. Why it entails solidarity

Young generations in our era use increasingly non-traditional communication channels that are linked to the digital world. Teaching e-mentoring techniques to elderly people will enable them to maintain active communication with the young, enter their world and utilize this channel to share knowledge and experience with them. The discussion/focus group created for this project embodied the intergenerational dialogue in the selected topic and yielded outcomes that reflect an intergenerational approach to e-mentoring.

The main lessons learnt

- Educators of elderly age are eager to connect with the young generations outside the formal teaching process, but the unfamiliarity of the digital world builds barriers in the intergenerational communication; - there are limits to what the 50+ generation can absorb in terms of technical knowledge, therefore the level of technicalities regarding e-mentoring needs to be kept low; - the common way of using e-mentoring techniques, i.e. applying them in the framework of a complete learning management system, does not work in the case of informal education, as such a system is usually not available for the users therefore the known techniques need to be tailored to the specifications of the given learning environment. - The benefits of e-mentoring can best utilized as a supplementary tool to support on-going learning activities organized either in face-to-face or in blended learning delivery mode; - e-mentoring can help to make self-directed learning processes more efficient; - e-mentoring in the context of language teaching can prove to be highly effective in developing reading, listening and writing skills (with limited effect on speaking abilities)

Innovative features

The use of social media in sharing knowledge and connecting with youngsters has proven to be a milestone.

3.8 Connecting generations through Community Mapping (by Merseyside Expanding Horizons, United Kingdom)

Objectives
Community Mapping methodology allows learners from different generations to explore their local area and discuss the issues facing their area. Learners will further their understanding of the local situation through gathering data, sharing knowledge and local perspectives to help facilitate discussion amongst the different generations within the local community.

Target
Learners from different generations and backgrounds living within the same geographical location and a common interest or issues affecting a particular locality e.g. antisocial behaviour in the local community.

Duration: October 2012 - September 2014

Partners/networks
- Local community centres,
- non profit organisations,
- NGOs,
- adult education organisations,
- local authorities and neighboured councils/ forums

Key words of activity intergenerational learning; peer learning; community networking; interaction with people of different ages and backgrounds; community participation and engagement

Description of Action
Pre activity - Introductory session to allow learners to know more about each other and their experiences in order to facilitate and encourage further dialogue between the different learners.
Main activity
1. A map of the local area is drawn before the session begins. The map has the words "What Does (name of the area) Mean to You?" displayed underneath or above the image.
2. The pre drawn map is displayed within a community area.
3. The group of learners will mark key points of reference on the map using 'Post-it'

notes (plain and coloured ones). The Map will refer to and highlight: a) what is important to you in the area and b) why.
4. The aim is for the group to also interact with other members of the community – young people, senior citizens and families and invite the local community to also write comments on the map.
5. At the end of the exercise the learners will feedback what they have put on the map to the Practitioner and rest of the group. The Practitioner with extensive knowledge of the area will contribute. Learners can ask questions about the map and add further comments about the local area, analysing the information and images displayed on the map.
6. The map can be hung up in local community centre or community space to provide further opportunities for members of the community to participate.
7. The map will be developed continuously through the learners own discussion and also interaction from people in the community who will comment on the different areas, what features of the map they like or what they want developed. Places of importance.
Evaluation
Feedback session will involve the core group of learners and practitioner. The learners will be encouraged to say 1 thing they have learnt about their local area or 1 thing that has made them think differently about their local area from taking part in the community mapping exercise

Which needs the activity addresses
Objectives are to;
- Foster intergenerational informal learning and peer learning through interaction with people of different ages, gender and backgrounds
- Raise community awareness and understanding between local community members through community participation and engagement

Methodology
Community Mapping methodology is an effective participatory informal way of finding

out how people view their area and a good way of gathering and presenting knowledge, information, understanding differences in perception and stimulate debate as a basis for joint planning and problem solving amongst people from different generations and backgrounds. It can also take on an advocacy role as it stimulates community decision making and action.

Participatory maps provide a valuable visual representation of what a community perceives as its place and the significant features within it.

Why this activity connects generation. Why it entails solidarity.

Community Mapping connects generations through encouraging different members of the local area regardless of age to get to know each other. Importantly it is a collaborative process that helps to identify different perspectives on the local community that may be apparent within different generations and it seeks to identify problems in the community that need addressing by consulting and allowing voices form all generations to be heard. This process helps to break down barriers to participation and instil leadership amongst young and older people.

Community Mapping entails solidarity by;

- Skills development and information sharing for locally based decision makers and active citizens
- Encourage the use of local resources
- Develop links with organisations and enterprises leading to new opportunities
- Increase community dialogue
- Improved knowledge and understanding of local area
- Raise awareness of pertinent local issues

- Increase local people's confidence and motivation to participate and have a voice.

The main lessons learnt

Community Mapping can lead to increased interaction amongst different generation of one geographical area and increase community knowledge amongst learners relating to their local area, local history and issues facing the different generations. It can support increased understanding on how to effect change in the community amongst young and older people. It achieves increased knowledge of local services and resources by exploring and visualising the community and local environment within the activity. Communications skills and increased competencies in gathering data and research are amongst the different generations and willingness to learn from each other is facilitated through community mapping.

Innovative features

We have carried out the mapping activity during community events held at the Joseph Lappin Centre in Liverpool and this is a great innovative way to ensure that a cross sector of the community i.e. children, parents, families, older people, community leaders etc. will be present and able to participate together with the local group initially involved in the activity. A large visual map was displayed and used during the activity. Afterward the map can be displayed within the centre, place of activity for continued activity in this theme and encouraging further participation from local people.

IV. Educational methods for enhancing communication between generations

4.1 The World Cafe (by Living Values in Education, Greece)

The Grundtvig Connecting Generations learning partner ship has been embraced by young and old with love and enthusiasm and, in so doing, demonstrates the need that exists for generations to communicate, the need to understand one another, and to recognize what each generation has to offer. Regarding our activities in Greece, the partnership has allowed for the voice of the third generation to be heard, not only Athens, but also in Chios, Patras and Kavala and at the same time, has given youths the opportunity to voice their needs and concerns. The World Café methodology has stimulated open communication and a dialogue of equals between generations, from which has emerged the need for activities that bring generations closer and reinforce the timeless values of cooperation, responsibility, honesty, love, peace, tolerance etc.

I.   A Word On What The World Café Is And Its Process

As Margaret J. Wheatey says: "*In this troubling time when many people are so disconnected from one and other, I keep searching to find those ideas, processes and behaviors that can restore hope for the future. The World Café does just this! It reintroduces us to a world we have forgotten, a world where we enjoy a good conversation, where we are not afraid to talk about things that matter most to us.*"

The World Café is about conversations that matter: a simple process for bringing people together around questions that matter. The World Café provides a safe and secure environment with boundaries and at the same time provides individuals the space and anonymity they need.

The World Café process is based on 7 core principles:

1. Set the context
2. Create hospitable space
3. Explore questions that matter
4. Encourage everyone's contribution
5. Cross-pollinate and connect diverse perspectives
6. Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions
7. Harvest and share collective discoveries

Preparation:

The organizers must set up a large area with cafe tables and chairs for the number of participants expected. Each table must have a large sheet of meter paper on it and 3 colors of markers. Small stickers (approx. 3-5 per participant are needed for Voting phase). Approximately the same number of participants are seat at each table. Minimum time needed: One and a half hours for the entire process, which includes three rounds of questions, voting and the final stage, where results are presented.

The Three Rounds:

In the three rounds, the participants explore three sequential and carefully-articulated questions—the questions invite the participants to go deeper and deeper into the issue/theme being discussed.

We adapted the Etiquette Rules/Guidelines:
- I listen with respect.
- I speak, draw and doodle to express myself.
- My words are accurate.

One important guideline is to change the seating arrangements after each round; in order to ensure cross-fertilization of ideas, participants move to different tables before Rounds Two and Three.

One representative stays at his/her table to act as "host " and report briefly to the newcomers what was discussed by those at the table in the previous rounds. This representative can refer to the notes and graphics written on the table.

Voting:

The Voting stage is when participants are given time to read and reflect silently on what the entire group has expressed on the papers of each table. As individuals, they chose statements, drawings, and ideas that they like the best and show their preference by placing a sticker by them.

Harvest:

During the Harvest or final stage, organizers create a Graphic Recording (either on a poster on the wall or on a PowerPoint presentation), by counting the stickers of what participants found to be their best ideas, i.e. the group's consensus.

Purpose and Philosophy of THE WORLD CAFE:
- to give everyone a chance to express themselves,
- to help people work in groups,
- to have ALL participants express themselves,
- to generate ideas,
- to enhance collaborative learning,
- to come to a democratic consensus about issues that matter to them.

As a teaching tool, the World Cafe can be adapted to provide learners of all ages with the opportunity to:
- revise material,
- do research,
- consolidate information and facts,
- conduct peer/group evaluations.

II. Greece's Connecting Generations World Cafes

Greece's Connecting Generations World Cafes were used for a number of purposes: brainstorming project ideas, sharing knowledge and reflecting on our experiences as partners of this programme and conducting group evaluations.

We will present a brief report of our Connecting Generations World Cafes:

1. January 19, 2013 At Agios Dimitrios Primary School, the World Cafe theme was "The Importance of Creativity for Learners of Every Age".

Connecting Generations and Living Values in Education, Greece, were introduced to the public at this kick-off World Cafe event. The participants, representing four generations, included senior citizens from Love and Protection Centers for the Elderly (KAPi) of Agios Dimitrios and Agios Ioannis, Rendi, educators of different levels, and children from both districts. The

ideas that came forth from this World Cafe gave birth to "Living Together" the theme we would use to thread-all of our projects together; that is, at this event.
Living Together Footprint was created.
One outcome of this World Cafe provided the seminal idea for the project activities at Agios Ioannis, Rendi Senior Center and High School under the title "Connecting Grandparents with Teens through Theatre and Song". Eleni Aggelopoulou, facilitator and member of the association of
Living Values, connected teenagers and senior citizens from the Municipality of Agios Ioannis, Rendis. Elders shared their knowledge and experience, and in turn were inspired by the optimism, the energy and the enthusiasm of the teenagers who were there.
The outcome of these teenagers' and senior citizens' work together was the performance at the Connecting Generations' Athens meeting on April 11, 2014. Their hour-long program of choral arrangements of Greek popular songs from the 1930's to present and of theatrical sketches, depicting scenes which the songs were about, were enjoyed by the visiting members of the Connecting Generation partner-countries.
A second outcome of this World Cafe was the Digital Stories, which will be discussed in detail separately in the article below. In the Municipality of Agios Dimitrios, Gelly Manousou, member of the board of the association of Living Values in Education, created a footprint for "Living Together" in modeling a wide range of projects and activities where senior citizens connected with young people to share stories and experiences, sing songs past and present, cook and celebrate festivals together. [See article titled: **"*Love Stories from Another Time": from Oral to Digital Story Telling*]. An unexpected event at this World Cafe was that one participant, an elderly woman, cried with joy because she felt that the others were truly listening to her. It was a very moving moment for everyone.

2. February 9, 2013 At Hatzibei Private School in Nea Philadelphia, the World Cafe theme was Parents' Cafe: Young, old …and older.
The World Cafe as a methodology has been embraced by participating groups and organizations and in some circumstances has been adapted to include small children, as was the case in Nea Philadelphia where, the World Cafe had the theme: Parents' Cafe:
Young, old …and older. The broader title: "The Significance of Connecting Generations" lay the foundation for Connecting Generation events and celebrations to be organized in the area. Participants--grandparents, parents, educators and pupils—discussed what each generation must do to foster the intergenerational 'connection' and specified in which activities, based on love, cooperation, solidarity, etc. each could participate.
Of the 43 in attendance, there were 15 children, 20 parents and 8 elders or grandparents.
From the World Cafe Harvest, there were ideas for projects/activities in which all generations could participate:
1. Children write thank-you letters to their grandparents
2. Treasure hunt in the forest
3. "Digital Stories from Another Era"
4. All could help at a soup kitchen
One challenge that was overcome was the participation of pre-school aged children, who were unaccustomed to the World Cafe procedure of dialoguing with members of other generations.

Despite these children's initial reluctance, they were very expressive and spoke freely with their grandparents and other adults.

Two adaptations to the World Cafe were employed:

(1) Rounds were shortened length so as not to tire the very young.

(2) The pre-schoolers were asked to draw and then speak about their drawing, in case they felt reluctant to participate in face-to-face discussions.

3. Chios Project-2013: Games from the past to today

The delightful project by Louiza Michalakopoulou, a physical education teacher and member of the association of Living Values, had senior citizens (6 total, average age 65) and children (17 total, aged 7-12) connecting through the joy of play. Using the World Cafe as a teaching practice/educational tool, generations connected to talk about games from the past and the values to be learned in the playing of games. In addition to discussion of the games, they played them together-each generation teaching the other their favorites.

As an extension of the work done in Chios, at our Ermioni meeting on Monday night, April 14th, all our partner-country participants shared Children's Singing Games from their respective countries.

4. Ermioni CG Meeting: World Cafe as an Evaluation Tool

The World Cafe was also used during the Greek project meeting in Ermioni as an evaluation tool to review and share the projects being run in all the partner countries.

Some special adaptations were needed to accommodate the multilingual participants. These included giving more time for expression and in some instances, translation into English, which was the working language of the group, by other members of a team. Another adaptation was that the three questions were given, before the actual Cafe, to be translated into the mother tongue of those participants whose use of English was of an elementary level. The use of doodling/drawing to aid communication was vital at this particular Cafe.

III. Challenges for the Future use of World Cafe for Connecting Generations

Challenges for Future Use of World Café

1. Seeking appropriate Venues

2. Anticipating participants' interests, language abilities, social maturity

3. . Training of World Café question writers

4. Choosing suitable dates for desired participants

There are four major challenges to be met for the continued use of the World Cafe methodology with participants of all and varying generations.

1) Seeking appropriate venues. Organizers will need to have a preregistration so as to know the approximate number of participants. Any venue used for the World Cafe will require ample space for chairs and tables for all participants.

(Tables must be able to accommodate 4-6 chairs.)

2) Creating a profile of participants. Organizers need to assess, beforehand, what the needs, interests, language abilities (esp. if a 'lingua franca' needs to be used, as in the case of participants who may not share the same mother tongue). Also, in World Cafes with participants from varying age groups, social maturity and communication skills must be considered so as to decide on

procedure and duration of the structured conversations. The profile of the participants should contribute to the choice of the World Cafe theme.

3) Training of future World Cafe organizers. An essential part of future World Cafes will be the organizers' familiarity with the World Cafe ethos and prescribed procedure. Given that and the assessment of the participants' needs (mentioned in #2 above), the organizers will require guidance on how to adapt the questions for discussion so as to delve into deep and meaningful communication.

4) Selecting suitable dates and hours. To ensure that participants from varying generations can attend, some consideration must be given to school schedules and holidays and working days and hours.

Also, the availability of venues (discussed in #1) must be negotiated along with the time set. Duration of the World Cafe is another consideration; it may be taxing for the elderly and the very young to be required to participate for over two hours.

IV. Opportunities and Suggestions for the World Cafe Methodology with Active Ageing Groups

Listening well is one of the most important qualities of an adult educator or a coordinator of groups of participants of all ages. Listening is the axis around which the World Cafe moves. Hence, the World Cafe can be used as a precious tool for active ageing and learning for European citizens.

Where some adults, who may carry negative experiences from their school years, may feel ill at ease in a classroom, the World Cafe provides them with an alternative learning environment. As we

experienced in the World Cafes we conducted, adults are very comfortable in the social and physical space of the 'cafe table'.

In a classroom space, not all adults feel the same ease.

As we demonstrated in the initial World Cafe within the CG project, this methodology can be employed to enable groups to discuss projects they would like to see happen and formulate plans for doing so. The World Cafe as a teaching tool can be used to enable groups of senior citizens to share with members of younger generations, offering the young opportunities to explore, question and delve into the past. Members of all generations are allowed to connect and learn from each other on a specific topic. In the final CG World Cafe in Ermioni, partners had the opportunity to talk about projects in a different way and to evaluate their experiences and outcomes from different perspectives.

Suggestions are:

(1) Dissemination of the link to the **CONNECTING GENERATIONS e-book** accompanied by a letter to the Hellenic Adult Education Association (HAEA) http://adulteduc.gr/eng/index.html

Contact Information:

Address: P.O. BOX 13692, 10310, Athens,

Greece Website: www.adulteduc.gr e-mail:

adulteduc@adulteduc.gr, adulteduc2@gmail.com

Also, to Greece's public vocational schools and universities and other teacher's associations.

(2) Presentations of our collective work at Professional conferences held in 2015 and beyond--especially teachers' conferences.

(3) Fishbowl demonstrations as part of the training in the use of World Cafe Methodology , i.e. A World Cafe is conducted while spectators, who are those being trained to employ the World Cafe Methodology look on, listen and, afterwards in a workshop situation, brainstorm and formulate their own World Cafe projects.

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www.theworldcafe.com

Living Values in Education, Greece

http://www.axieszois.gr

4.2 "*Love Stories from Another Time*": from Oral to Digital Story Telling
(by Evangelia Manousou, Vasiliki Ioakeimidou)

Methodology: Digital Story Telling
Target group: Children between the ages of 10-12, Grandparents, Trainers
Regions: 2 Municipalities in Athens, Municipality of Ermioni, Peloponissos
Duration: Planning started September 2012. Action from November 2013 – July 2014
Outcome: Over 40 stories submitted, 9 audio stories have been recorded, selected stories will be collated into an eBook this summer.
eBook available via the LVE Greece website- http://www.axieszois.gr

From World Café evolved the idea of using digital stories as a learning tool that would connect generations, through interview style narratives of how grandparents fell in love and got married. Using a system of action-research, that followed circular and repetitive steps (Robson, 2007), and a variety of teaching practices including interviews, discussions, mind-maps, role playing and evaluations, children interpret and retell these stories, transforming them into digital formats that will make up an eBook titled "*Love Stories from Another Time*".

The project has been an integral part of Connecting Generations in Greece and has allowed us to test new training skills that have provided innovative and productive means of expression through various contexts.

By gradually merging and moving from older and more traditional forms of story telling to digital formats, the third generation finds a comfort zone, connects with younger generations and enjoys experiencing technologies that otherwise alienate them. Generations connect and reconstruct the concept of learning through life, learning and living together, bringing together the past with the now, and experiencing the stories in new dimensions.

"We constantly test other people's experiences in these fundamental relationships to affirm our own." Lambert (2010: 7)

Storytelling is part of people's lives, evidence of storytelling can be found in the history of every nation and civilisation (Barthes, 1977 as cited in Meliadou, Nakou, Gouskos & Meimaris, 2011). According to Roland Barthes (1981 as cited in Meimaris, 2013) there is not and there will be no society without storytelling. There are various kinds of storytelling, like a simple message just for fun, information related to attitudes, beliefs, ethics, rules and norms. They work as a means of meaning-making and-meaning transmitting; interpreting and understanding the world; being connected to the world (Meliadou et al, 2011). Storytelling has been a means of communication, a teaching tool connecting generations and transmitting messages in different civilizations, in different eras (Mello, 2001 as cited in Meliadou et al, 2011).

Narration is defined as a sequence of events, sometimes deliberately set in motion by the heroes that change the way things are at the beginning of the story. It is obvious that narration is an "art" manipulating time (Politis, 2006). It is a cultural process that characterizes each culture. In today's world, narratives surround us, in the movies, theatre, advertisements, TV, social media, websites, blogs, apps, e-books... As the digital world has evolved so too has story telling for the digital medium. We have evolved into a digital world and storytelling goes through every product in the media and the digital civilization (Bordwell, Thompson, 2009 as cited in Meliadou et al, 2011).

As Meimaris (2013) comments storytelling promotes the knowledge and the wisdom transmission through time. It is a global mass medium that connects different civilizations, but also generations, carrying values, traditions and social practices. Hamilton & Weiss (2007) also note that:

"Storytelling is the oldest form of education. Cultures have always told tales as a way of passing down beliefs, traditions, and history to future generations. Stories are at the core of all that makes us human".

The diachronic presence of storytelling in our lives today has been facilitated in the easy access and use of digital cameras, video recorders, cell phones, tablets, the internet, wifi-giving us another way to tell a story in a digital era (Meimaris, 2013).

Description of Action

A process of action-research in circular and repetitive steps that can be tracked to 11 stages:

1) Experiencing the methodology:• reading the book "The Storyteller Grandfather", listening to the story as an audio book and viewing excerpts from the TV series version, • exploring historical and social contexts using mind maps, role playing, drawing...

2) Discussing project goals together: how the project would evolve and what would be required.

3) Interviews between the grandparents and children, note-taking and collecting media such as photographs and invitations to illustrate the eBook.

4) Writing up the stories.

5) Sharing stories between peers, fact checking (dates, places, occupation..).

6) Digitally recording the stories into .doc formats. Translating selected stories into English.

7) Evaluating together, through discussion about which of the stories best fulfilled the criteria, specified as project goals in Step 2, selected stories will be collated into an eBook.

8) Using programs, such as Audacity and Movie maker, to produce multimedia recordings.

9) Collating materials to produce an eBook.

10) Presentation of eBook using tele-conferencing to connect the three regions that took part in the project.

11) Final evaluation, using discussions and interviews to explore the thoughts and feeling of participants.

11 stages: Oral to digital story telling.

Strengths

The project has so far proven to be ideally suited to both exploring innovative learning experiences and establishing and enhancing communication between generations. Story telling has always had the power to connect and engage people at all levels, doing so digitally by engaging generations not only in the telling of stories but the process itself multiplies the learning process. More specifically it has shown to enhance:

- communication skills
    - listening mindfully,
    - interview skills that inspire enquiring minds,
    - interpreting and processing information, so as to be able to retell stories accurately
    - evaluating,discussing and exploring the stories, facts and traditions
- interpersonal skills
    - working collaboratively both inter-generationally and within peer groups
    - developing empathy and expressing this narratively
    - the story telling process broadens understandings and allows for greater respect with deeper connections
    - for the children, honouring and respecting their elders,
    - for the elders, connecting with the young, feeling less isolated
- cultural and historical connections
    - who we are, where we come from
    - connecting the past with the now
    - meaning-making and meaning-transmitting, gaining new perspectives for both generation in understanding both the past and present
- exploring and sharing new technologies together

- children learn how to access and use new technologies in a healthy and safe environment that is guided and monitored by adults,
- the third generation gets to experience new technologies from another perspective and through the eyes of children.

Difficulties

Limited budgets and funding, the project relied on volunteerism and open source software. Whilst the spirit of volunteerism is as always heartening, it did create issues with scheduling, timing and resourcing.

Opportunities

Story telling has evolved through the ages, digital media, simply adds a functionality that makes it a more dynamic and powerful tool. It provides perfect opportunities to connect generations and engage the actively ageing on topics that cover every spectrum of life, history, traditions, nature; it allows elders to share their experiences and know how; building relationships of shared experiences; allows for a comfort zone that decreases the "generation gap". World Café as a methodology, is the perfect space for project themes to evolve and interested participants to emerge.

As a model, digital story telling has been an enriching experience. It is a continuously evolving format with new software emerging that makes it easier for almost anyone to not only use, but also produce. Story telling is as old as time itself, it is what connects us with the past and helps us to better understand our world today. For the third generation, technology can often seem daunting; however, connecting in this way with younger generations, is a unique way of helping them connect with a changing world, merging old and trusted formats into new and emerging technologies.

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4.3 Study Circles as a creative way of learning for active elderly people (by Posoški Razvojni Center, Slovenia)

Study circles are a special form of adult education programs that are known and implemented all over the world. They represent a creative way of spending one's old age in a quality manner. Slovenia has twenty years of experience in implementing this program. The Soča Valley Development Center's experiences are not as long-standing as that, but they are nonetheless valuable and respected. Among all of the educational programs it offers to active elderly people, this program differs significantly from the others. It is informal, voluntary, free of charge, and aimed at adults that want to spend their free time actively and productively.

One of the basic characteristics of the study circle is the equality between the participants and the mentor. This is why the atmosphere is relaxed and friendly, which consequently leads to more creative work. Each participant is involved in the work to the best of his or her ability. They not only learn, but also contribute their knowledge and experience to the wellbeing of the entire local community. The democratic way of learning allows participants to decide what and how to learn, and when and where to meet. The role of mentors is also not the same as in other programs. Their role in the study circle is to coordinate work, to motivate the participants when needed, and to provide the required material. They are specially trained to perform this kind of work, which is really not suited for everyone. They do not have to know everything about the topic the group chooses, but must have the empathy and desire to work with people—and, even more importantly, they must be respectful and open-minded.

It is also important to emphasize that the number of participants in a study circle should not be more than twelve. This fosters communication and equal participation. Second, the main learning method is dialog. Not lectures or individual work or some other popular new-age method, but just simple dialog. This is why the number of participants is so important.

The group follows several goals that are set at the beginning of the sessions. These are educational or action goals that focus on the things the group will learn in the sessions. On the other hand, the action goals focus on the result of the knowledge and skills obtained that is introduced to the local community at the end of the program.

The study circle *Between History and the Present*, which was carried out last year, proved to be the most successful so far. On the 300th anniversary of the Tolmin peasant uprising, the participants studied the clothing culture of that period. In order to take as professional an approach as possible, the curator of the Tolmin Museum helped them do the research so that they could create women's work dresses from that time. At the end, the group was so successful that it participated at the final and main event of the anniversary celebration, and it continues to be invited to various events throughout Slovenia.

Analysis of the Slovenian project activities. Traditional recipes: the pum pharmacy

The Connecting Generations project is a new experience for the Soča Valley Development Center in Slovenia. The center operates at various levels and has several organizational units: the business and regional development department; the environmental, spatial planning and rural development department; and the human resources department. The Project Learning for Young Adults (PUM) program has been carried out as part of the human resources department since 2004. It targets vulnerable 15- to 25-year-olds that left school for various reasons, and are

thus uneducated and currently unemployed. They are socially excluded and often stigmatized. The program seeks to help them at various levels: to pass their school exams, to go back to school, and to find a job. By taking part in different projects, participants learn and develop new skills (communication in Slovenian, basic communication in a foreign language, ICT skills, intercultural and social skills, basic mathematics, etc.) that are important in their everyday lives, career, and so on.

The mentors working with this particular group are adult education experts that have been trained to work in this program and have at least five years of experience in working with vulnerable young people. Mentors in the Project Learning for Young Adults program need to be not only teachers, but also communicators, motivators, and learners with good interpersonal skills. Last but not least, they need to be innovative, flexible, and creative.

Participants in the Project Learning for Young Adults program usually refuse to follow the standard methodology used in school. This is why this program mainly uses methods that focus exclusively on practice. In this regard, the use of traditional recipes to make new products can be compared to the "learning by doing" method, in which participants develop new skills and learn new things in the process. In the case described, they learned various types of skills.

The desire to offer innovative ways of learning was one of the reasons we applied for this particular project. Not knowing what "awaited us around the corner," we started to prepare the draft program of our activities. We first focused on the traditional knowledge of preparing homemade syrups. During the activities, this was expanded to using herbs in home cooking—that is, not only for preparing syrups, but also for preparing food, such as pastries, bread, and so on.

However, there is a long way before you can finally try out the product you have made. It takes a lot more than just going for a walk and picking some plants or herbs you have never heard of or seen before. This can also be dangerous.

To avoid any problems, we first did some research. We visited our local library and borrowed books on using herbs in home cooking and medicine. We also asked our mothers and grandmothers which recipes were used in the past and which ones they were using now. We were also interested in any differences between them (ingredients, preparation, etc.).

Did you know that spruce-tip syrup alleviates coughs and treats colds? And that it also stops bleeding and cleans the blood? Until we did the research, we did not know that it helps with stomach problems and indigestion. There are so many medicinal herbs growing just a few meters from our homes. All you have to do is go out and pick them. And, after doing some research, that was exactly what we did. Picking herbs is a great excuse to get out of the office and enjoy some fresh air. Furthermore, not every medicine tastes awful. On the contrary, all the recipes we tried were delicious in the end. To present our project activities, we prepared a "banquet" for our partner guests that visited us last May, when we hosted the midterm project meeting.

While carrying out the project, the participants informed the public about their activities by presenting the herbs, their medical use, and the recipes on the website http://pum-tolmin.weebly.com/aktivnosti.html. They named the project *Pumova lekarna* (the PUM Pharmacy). In that way, the participants had the opportunity to develop their ICT skills. Furthermore, all of the project material was written in Slovenian and English. In this way, the participants practiced their native and foreign-language communications skills.

One of the final project results is a book of all the recipes we tried out during the project activities. However, perhaps the most important result is the preservation of traditional knowledge that would otherwise be lost.

4.4 Romanian Paideia Clubs (by *Dimitrie Cantemir* Christian University, Romania)

The transnational project *Connecting Generations* is designed as a conceived form of participative learning structuring European experiences on solidarity and innovation, providing a common sense and community, but also a form of reification, using many types of communication, direct and *online* (web-sites, e-mail, Facebook, Dropbox). The merger between the two ways of communication, face to face and *online*, through which learning behaviours evolved and were shaped became the main feature of this transnational project. The project is a learning community whose the partners are: Eda Forum – Italy; Merseyside Expanding Horizons Ltd – U.K.; Telos Provider Cultural Partnership – Hungary; Living Values – Greece; Mercan Uluslararasi Gönüllüler Derneği – Turkey; The University of the Third Age in Bialystok – Poland; AIDEA Associazione di Educazione degli Adulti La Spezia – Italy; *Dimitrie Cantemir* Christian University, Faculty of Education, Students' Forum – Romania.

The stakes of our local project Paideia Clubs were the European context on intergenerational culture and trends to widening participation in higher education so that the diversity of the population is reflected[80] – the Paideia Clubs is such an educational space generated by the university for local parents community around the schools and kindergartens. It is understood as a different mechanism through which the goal of widening participation is addressed, and also, in our particular way, to reach a ration to put in place the private and public sector working together.

Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University, Faculty of Education, Students' Forum - Romania participated in this European project with our brand *Paideia Clubs* inside which the students have developed the general concept of intergenerational culture based on the concept of *paideia*. *Paideia* is a form of lifelong learning and a form of learning present in the public agora whose ethical, spiritual and cultural values are transferred from generation to generation as a continuous human memory.

In the 21st century which has become the age of digital culture the elderly generations who have specific knowledge or expertise in a given area find it more and more difficult to share their treasures with the young generations. Therefore tools need to be identified and used to facilitate the communication between digital literates and digital illiterates. To teach the basics of (e)-mentoring seems to be an ideal start for an educator to connect with a generation which ties itself to the virtual world. In our local project a few basic Paideia mentoring techniques have been explored and adapted to make them utilisable in the context of informal education. We identified the community needs around the school and kindergartens. For the purpose of this project a team has been set up consisting of representatives of the 16-20 and the 50+ generations so that the team members could jointly investigate the potentials of e-mentoring in the process of informal language learning.

The terms of reference of the content and the activities of Paideia Clubs are designed on four levels:

(1) How could the **contents**, activities and results of Paideia Clubs to participate in the sustainable development of kindergartens schools and local communities?

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[80] European Commission, *The European Higher Education Area in 2012*: *Bologna Process Implementation Report*, Brussels, April 2012.

(2) How was directed **training of students forum**? Are support activities more successful than others in use?

(3) What was the **impact** of the project on kindergartens and schools, communities and target groups? What are the factors of success or failure?

(4) What are the **added values** that could be attributed to the students, kindergartens, schools, local community?

Contents, activities and results of Paideia Clubs

The five Paideia clubs of the Students Forum are exploring new values of the European concept of *Paideia*, this expressing, currently, lifelong learning and learning Agora as the memory of humanity. The clubs are supported by students and teachers of this faculty, both in urban and rural areas, are focused on the European values of solidarity, such as: altered perspective of the future, values inter-generational, transfer, (e-) social economy; and under innovation trends, such as: working on social dimension of Bologna, - expanding higher education in a time where labour markets and the knowledge- based economy require diversity in the learning contents, cooperative intergenerational learning, complementary private/public learning, discovering traditional values to the future.

Our local project is to what extent educational attainment is passed down through generations starting from the brand *Paideia club* to up objectives:
-   (e)-transferring ethical, spiritual and cultural values from one generation to the next through investment in human capital with information technology and training through *Paideia club* working in schools and kindergarten;
-   involving local community, especially, parents and children working together and promoting Paideia forms in the public agora as a continuous human memory;
-   (e)-disseminating by learning to generate knowledge and progress for humanity, by sharing innovative methods, by dialogue inside and outside the project;

The following topics have been discussed by **the students Forum**:
 •   The basics of (e)-learning and its environments;
 •   What is Paideia (e)-mentoring? ;
 •   Required skills and competences for a mentor;
 •   Resources and tools for learning;
 •   Potential channels and learning environments;
 •   Motivating children and parents;
 •   Evaluating children and parents and feed-backing;
 •   Application of Paideia e-mentoring techniques;

Participants exchanged their knowledge and shared their experience and ideas along those topics, gave practical advice on how to use specific tools taken from formal education and adapted to informal learning situations. And then we could formulate **the grass-rooted curricula and project indicators** (see *Annex 2*):
 (a) **Local memory Club**
School of Ghimpati, Giurgiu county
Local project promoters: lecturer, Marin Tudor, Ph.D
 (b) **Research mysteries of the universe**
Secondary School no. 168 with preschoolers, district 6, Bucharest
Local project promoters: Mihaela Gavan, student

(c) **World's Pacala** (ceramic workshop)

Goethe German College, district 1, Bucharest

Local project promoters: Ingrid Târzioru, student

(d) **Laboratory of jam and cakes**

Kindergarten No. 44, district 1, Bucharest

Local project promoters: Ionela Turita, student

(e) **All about Romanian festivals** (management and marketing)

Kindergarten *Stropi de Roua*, no. 199, district 4, Bucharest

Local project Promoter: Elena Rasnita, student (see *Annexes3a, 3b, 3c, 3d*)

The following activities have been carried out by the team members in order to implement the team's work plan and the project:

- (e-) dialogue and connections to the *Connecting Generations* project framework and partners;
- mapping available needs and resources in the Paideia clubs (e-) mentoring;
- development of the necessary key competences that are required for functioning as an e-mentor, updating computer skills offered by university student team members to the 50+ participants and other vulnerable categories;
- determination of steps of acting successfully as *Paideia club* mentor, compiled jointly by the team members:
  - ✓ identification of the needs and learning process;
  - ✓ identification of the segments and methodology in which learners need;
  - ✓ identification of learning sections and tasks which are suitable to be supported by (e-)mentoring;
  - ✓ selection of communication channel (email, face-book group, etc.) ;
  - ✓ discussing the method chosen with the learners;
  - ✓ continuous provision of feedback from the Paideia clubs;
- collection of the best practices:
  - ✓ testimonial analysis;
  - ✓ impact questionnaire;
- gathering examples of motivational tools suggested partially by the 50+ participants and partially by the young members:
  - ✓ continuous acknowledgment of performance;
  - ✓ focus on topics related to learners' life situation, social interest or hobbies, or on breaking news, current hot issues of everyday life;
  - ✓ frequent use of language-bound internet games;
- identification and presentation of potential channels of communication initiated by the 16-20 generation representatives:
  - ✓ email
  - ✓ Face-book/Google group
  - ✓ Skype

1) **How was the training of students forum directed? Are support activities more successful than others in use?**

We periodically had the meetings with the students forum**,** we build up Paideia clubs curriculum, including indicators, evaluation and methodology. Support activities are more

successful than other usual ones, such as pottery, cake activities, exploring the Universe, festivals etc. More successful activities were practical activities and mobility programme.

2) **What was the impact of the project on kindergartens and schools, communities and target groups? What are the factors of success or failure?**

We gave an impact questionnaire to the parents involved in the Paideia clubs following theirs project impressions and gains. The project measured the impact of dissemination / promotion **Connecting Generations-Club Paideia** process referred to the opportunities and ways to do. The space where they disseminated is rather familiar and large extended to the work places, neighbours, friends, through non formal and informal activities. The parents appreciate any experience accumulated in this project, such as: working together parents and children, sharing experiences each other, handcraft and entrepreneurial activities. They felt useful to the school community, proud to share their life or hobby experiences. The European values shared in this project were participation, volunteering and market education. They follow up the project **Connecting Generations - Club Paideia** working inside these Paideia clubs. We noticed that the clubs diversified their activities, they over passed the initial curriculum. Factors of success were related to the usefulness of the Paideia club activities, and the failure ones were related to the time of parents to participate in the activities of the project, in urban area, and in rural area, lack of mentoring experiences of parents.

We add here the invisible impact activities promoting and disseminating the project - access to all persons entitled or interested in its content, results and products

- Project web-site *Connecting Generations*
- Menu web-site- of the Faculty of Educational Sciences, *DimitrieCantemir* Christian University www.ucdc.rohttp://grundtvig.ucdc.ro/contact.
- Blog of the involved kindergartens and schools http://clubulpaideea.blogspot.ro/2013/03/prima-intalnire-cu-membrii-clubului.html
- TV programs (TV România de mâine, MoneyTV)
- Promotional magazine of the Faculty of Educational Sciences, *DimitrieCantemir* Christian University
- Brochures of International Conference *Education in the Future and* International Workshop Grundtvig
- 15 articles in Euromentor no. 2 and 3/2013 - http://euromentor.ucdc.ro/en/arhiva.html
- Menu web site *Dimitrie Cantemir* Christian University - www.ucdc.ro http://grundtvig.ucdc.ro/contact
- Periodical activities of students Forum of Educational Sciences Faculty
- National Agency Group: grundtvigers@yahoogroups.com
- The partners communication was varied: face to face: meeting of staff, during the mobilities, public meetings, field trips (local projects and reports); e-group: connectinggenerations@googlegroups.com; Drop-box; Face-book; mobility communication.

3) **What are the added values that could be attributed to the students, kindergartens, schools, local community?**

All values of European partnerships were shared in our local projects**:** bringing community together (UK); experiential learning – community activities as a formal training stories (Greece); memories for posterity, food, fashion (Poland); solidarity for social life, open to helping others

(Turkey); elders and young know to live with nature (Slovenia); local history (Italy - Edaforum); research and systematisation, international activities partnerships, common generations connections (Aidea - Italy); respect, working together children and parents within the Paidea clubs, reciprocity of knowledge and skills, transferring values to each other (Romania).

Learning results of Paideia clubs achieved in terms of life long and wide learning:

- **individuals and groups cognitive structures**: the acquisition of new specific skills, change of learning behaviours, personal development and success motivation;
- **socio-cognitive constructions** of individuals and groups: elements of e-inclusion and social inclusion, learning of entrepreneurial and marketing techniques, intelligent knowledge based on local economy development;
- **individual and socio-affective group building**: practices of self-confidence, self-esteem, social ethics, local enthusiasm and emulation, activity and group solidarity, horizontal management;
- **convergence of practices** on connecting generations and adhesion to European values through local community projects: freedom and peace, personal expression, property, openness to each other; awareness building of collective values: membership, belonging to the European social harmony; practices of materialistic and post-materialistic values: money and productive work in projects, local social cohesion and e-inclusion, leisure, voluntary work, education for all, e-inclusion and social inclusion, tolerance and reciprocity, intercultural education;
- **validation forms of European anthropocentric matrix** around the local educational community as an emergent local development;
- **perpetuating the ecosystem** by learning: women emancipation, connecting generations at local level, ethic change in learning behaviour;
- **validation forms of the comprehensive development based on changing trends**: criticism, historiography of concepts, balance between local traditions and modernity; contribution to the social dimension of Bologna process;
- **group creativity** associated to the socio-emotional and cognitive construction of individuals and groups, intelligent and inclusive knowledge-based economy ;
- **defining and necessary re-defining a local community ethos** and competitive market: **practices and self-confidence** in others, self-esteem and respect for others, social and economic ethics, enthusiasm and emulation versus the passivity and inertia slope, group solidarity, networking;
- **adhesion and aggregation** of actual values through community projects with funding sources; identification of key success factors in achieving social impact;
- **equality on grounds of age**, gender, level of learning empowerment;
- **identification of the gender emancipation** factors for women in rural areas;
- **intergenerational culture** based local economy, youth and seniors working together;
- **exchanging experiences and pract**ices to each other
- **perceptions of ascendancy and complexity** of lifelong and life wide learning (see *Annex 6 -Intermediary Report; Annex 7 – Bucharest meeting*).

In conclusion, our common project *Connecting Generations* is very useful project, is a good practice where we found together the old European values and we had the opportunity to cooperate on the European Values and to innovate, especially, on methodology which is more and more near to the individual, European common new practices and experiences on

intergenerational culture. We consider that our project contribute to building the culture of lifelong learning in the academic area. We underlined the necessity to enhance the development of flexible learning pathways, to create opportunities for recognition of prior learning for each from us, to build up closer cooperation between academic institutions and various community partners open to learn lifelong from each other, such as parents and children together in the Paideia paths.

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CONCLUSIONS

From different perspectives in terms of disciplinary approaches and concrete experiences, in this collective and choral work we have aimed at contributing to the debate on the policies and practices of lifelong learning. We tried our best to illustrate our different paths in designing, experimenting and evaluating our practices. We also meant to make explicit the different theories behind them. We collected the main lessons learned, at different levels, involving a wide range of stakeholders. Last but not least, we humbly proposed a few key words/concepts and ideas to other citizens and scholars who might be interested in intergenerational learning. We paid attention to the key dimensions of replicability and "scalability" of interventions in different contexts, with diverse scope and objectives.

The result is "a toolbox" rich of insights and operational tools, with valuable contributions from the academic world (Italy, Romania and Greece), from actors of civil society with a large participation of elders and teachers (Italy, United Kingdom, Turkey, Poland, Greece, Hungary), and also from local development agencies that have put education at the center of their sustainability strategy, as in the case of Slovenia.

The starting point of the project and the reflections proposed here convey the finding that demographic change and the inexorable aging of the European population pose communicability and solidarity challenges between generations, in a continent in profound transition, at risk of economic, but even more critically social default. Our theoretical and political fonts are many: we always refer to the goals of lifelong learning, as set by Lisbon 2000 first and Europe 2020 then. As Europe has strongly underlined and demanded from all member states, we pretend to offer a small but significant contribution in training competent citizens of a Europe who sees herself as a "knowledge and inclusive society built on sustainable innovation".

In the volume we put emphasis on analysis and reflection on practices piloted by CONGENIAL in order to draw lessons learned and inspiration for the future
The latter has led us to produce some significant considerations: first of all, that intergenerational approach, with its strong component of solidarity and building a common identity, is an asset for strengthening of human capital in a vision of sustainable development, quite from functionalist, economicist or other reductive approaches.

The heritage of knowledge possessed by all generations helps to weave the "textile of well-being" in a society whose formative project cannot be left only to formal education agencies. In fact Europe needs to focus strategically on non-formal and informal education interventions that are able to experiment new dialogic and transformative models and to create opportunities to exchange of knowledge and skills. Nonetheless, there is still a long way to go in front of us as the statistic figures on participation in adult education show[81].
We also took note of the need for workers and educators to think in a systematic and rigorous way about their practices, as reflective practitioners, basing their interventions on a scientifically valid method and making use of common analysis schemes.
The reflective exercise that led to this volume lasted for almost two years and was not obvious, or to be kept for granted, especially for smaller Associations, less accustomed to scientific

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[81] In Hungary only 4% of the population participated in the adult education activities, while the figure for Italy is not much more comforting and is around 7%.

research and to use storytelling about their experiences. This offered a series of suggestions, both for the evaluation of the practices of intergenerational learning and to allow operators to experiment as "reflective practitioners" and not only as "activists for change".

Putting forward social and educational innovation remains the essential goal of this project that builds on the past, but always with an eye to the future. This is particularly evident in educational methodologies adopted (world cafe, club paideia, digital storytelling and study circles) that tried to overcome lack of communication between generations, the isolation of the elderly and the loss of the intangible heritage of knowledge of an increasingly large population. Some practices and tools are more consolidated while other are cutting-edge, born or reformulated in recent years from an established tradition: all have demonstrated the fertility to create spaces of positive contamination between knowledge of the elderly, adults and children.

Therefore the book aims to present, through various contributions intertwined for disciplines, experiences and geographies, the main results of Congenial project, and how to "take care" of them in order not to disperse such a promising European network of people and practices.

In conclusion our best results were first of all a shared vision of intergenerational learning that is based on the centrality of trainees, their innate creativity and respect and recognition of differences; then we also valued the identification of common indicators to systematize and evaluate our work, in various contexts and in order to make it comparable with other educational agencies. We focused on innovation and traditions as complementary and finally, we are proud to have tried at our best to create a Europe of citizens, from the bottom up, suitable for everyone, through unconventional, cutting edge, transformative and, more than anything, brave educational processes.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

1. EDAFORUM, Italy

2. Merseyside Expending Horizons Ltd, United Kingdom

3. Living Values in Education, Greece

4. Mercan Uluslararasi Gönüllüler Derneği,Turkey

5. The University of the Third Age in Białystok, Poland

6. AIDEA Associazione di Educazione degli Adulti La Spezia, Italy

7. Universitatea Crestina Dimitrie Cantemir, Facultatea de Stiinte ale Educatiei, Romania

8. TELOS Cultural Provider partnership, Hungary

9. Pososki Razvojni Center, Slovenia