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Report on Intergenerational Learning and Active Ageing
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This Report is published with the support of the European Commission through the Lifelong Learning Programme (Grundtvig). The content of this publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained herein.

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Intergenerational Learning and Active Ageing

Report for the European Network for Intergenerational Learning

1. Introduction

The following report provides an exploration of the theme of Intergenerational Learning and its contribution to active ageing in general and to promoting European Union policies in this regard. It presents the context in which Intergenerational Learning activities develop in Europe and examines some samples of practice from the field. It has been produced as the result of a study carried out between June and September 2012 at the request of the European Network for Intergenerational Learning.

To carry out the analysis, a team of four experts in the field of adult education investigated and considered the contribution of Intergenerational Learning approach and activities to active ageing, intergenerational solidarity and social cohesion in Europe.

The report presents the findings and conclusions of the study followed by a set of recommendations on the ways in which the Intergenerational Learning could be used and promoted by European institutions, national authorities, the European Network for Intergenerational Learning and practitioners at large. It also attempts to show how Intergenerational Learning could contribute to the implementation of European policies, including the Renewed Agenda for Adult Learning.

1.1 The European Network for Intergenerational Learning

The study has been produced at the request of the European Network for Intergenerational Learning, a platform gathering 25 organisations from 20 European Union member states. The Network was set up in 2011 with support of the Grundtvig action of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission. The aim of the Network is to promote Intergenerational Learning as a methodological approach and tools for its implementation. It attempts to do so by bringing together and supporting sustainable, effective practice in the field and by facilitating the exchange of ideas and expertise beyond individual projects, and by creating a mechanism for practitioners to influence policy and practice.

The Network responds to the need identified among practitioners to offer a platform and incentives for fostering new ideas and new developments in intergenerational learning across Europe, and to provide the infrastructure for on-going exchange of expertise, good practice, news, research and developments in the field.

The Network has already produced a report on the concept of Intergenerational Learning and how this is understood throughout Europe. The following definition was proposed and accepted by the Network, and has become the basis of work for promoting the concept: Intergenerational Learning is a learning partnership based on reciprocity and mutuality involving people of different ages where the generations work together to gain skills, values and knowledge. For an activity to qualify as Intergenerational Learning, the following criteria must be fulfilled:

- the activity must involve more than one generation;
- the activity must be planned in purpose and progressive;
- the activity must lead to mutually beneficial learning outcomes.

The current report represents the third major product of the Network, after an online platform with

various tools and a conceptual document defining Intergenerational Learning. The findings of the report will be used in the development of Peer Learning Activities and for advocacy purposes in the years to come.

1.2 Aim of the Report

The purpose of this report is to present the results of an analysis of the activities conducted in a sample of European countries on the theme of intergenerational learning with a view to ascertaining their contribution to active ageing in general and to promoting European Union policies in this regard. Concretely, the report will attempt:

- To show how intergenerational learning can promote active ageing and support intergenerational solidarity
- To show how intergenerational learning can contribute to promoting European and national policies, including strategic European Union policies

1.3 Study Methodology

This report has been generated mainly through qualitative analysis, focusing, amongst other things, on the relevance to policy of the Intergenerational Learning approach and on the varied forms of impact of Intergenerational Learning activities on target groups and on societies at large. Quantitative analysis was used only occasionally, to place the results of the case study analysis in the larger context of the report; overall the samples were not large enough to allow conclusions based on quantitative criteria. However, several sources have been used to present existing statistical evidence in support of the claims made in this report.

In order to undertake the study, the European Network for Intergenerational Learning assembled a team of four recognised European-level experts in the field of Adult Learning and European policy. These experts brought a unique combination of research and professional competences in the field allied to informed insights into European Adult Education policy. The Network later enlisted the support of the European Association for the Education of Adults, who appealed to its members to submit examples of Intergenerational Learning practice.

The team designed a three-phase approach to undertaking the analysis of the Intergenerational Learning context in Europe and of activities promoting Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity. This involved:

1. the collection of existing data on the concepts and policies related to the themes of the report

To allow a full understanding of the concepts involved and an easier assessment of impact emerging at national and local levels, the team carried out a review of existing European and international documents and data on changing demographics, ageing population, active ageing strategies, Intergenerational Learning and policy measures in the field of Adult learning.

2. the mapping of definitions and related policies at national level in the 20 countries involved in the Network;

The team used a structured interview guide to collect information from partner countries in the European Network for Intergenerational Learning. Information gathered during this second phase exposed the contextual subtleties and nuances within which Intergenerational Learning is implemented in the countries. It also informed the team's strategy for sampling examples of practice from the field, making it clear that the most relevant way would be the collection of a random sample of cases, self-selected, rather than trying to obtain a representative sample from across Europe.

3. a collection of case studies of Intergenerational Learning practice from the wider European context, not restricted to the members of the Network;

The next phase of the study was the design and implementation of the survey of Intergenerational Learning activities. The survey was conducted electronically, via e-mail, through a questionnaire designed by the Expert Team in line with the parameters agreed in the second phase. The questionnaire required information on target groups, achieved or potential impact and relevance to policy, as well as a description of the action and an assessment of its potential to be replicated in other context. The survey was conducted via the European Network for Intergenerational Learning and the European Association for the Education of Adults, whose members were asked to submit examples of practice. The initial response rate to the survey was encouraging, but it tailed off rather rapidly. Moreover, it became evident that a lot of the case studies submitted were not relevant to the concept of Intergenerational Learning, but were rather instances of Adult Education targeting senior learners. In the end 24 cases were retained as relevant. The expert team concluded that it was legitimate to regard this as a good level of response, not least because it had already been decided that it would be a random sample rather than a representative sample.

4. the analysis of these case studies against the background offered by the context and policy information gathered in the first stages, including an analysis of impact on target groups and society at large

On completion of the survey phase, the expert team analysed the data gathered, the examples of practice, according to a framework of analysis provided by the contextual and policy background developed in the first two phases. The findings of this analysis are presented in Section 4.

5. and the analysis of potential impact of Intergenerational Learning at individual, organisation, sector and policy levels with the aims of producing a set of recommendations to different actors.

Finally, the team met and used different methods to place the findings in the context of today's reality and immediate future, and formulated a set of recommendations that can help European institutions and actors at various levels to implement quality Intergenerational Learning activities. These recommendations are found in Section 6 of the Report.

1.3 Methodological Challenges

The identification of criteria to enable an impact assessment at individual and aggregate level of the Intergenerational Learning activities raised a number of methodological concerns. The main challenge was the establishment of causal relationships: how can reported impact and changes in practices at individual, organisational, local, regional, national or European level be attributed, in an unambiguous way, to individual activities? It is rare that it is possible to trace a direct line from the outcome of a specific learning activity to the large sector that the individual is part of. Moreover, the small number of cases retained for analysis, combined with the fact that these were all self-selected and described by the providers of the activities, amplified this challenge.

2. Context

For thirty years, demographic change in some industrialised societies, brought about by an ageing population and a low birth rate, has posed a challenge for international organisations. Political bodies have to cope with the effects of these developments in terms of the social and financial costs related to employment, social protection and public health. Meanwhile citizens know that longer life expectancy means the opportunity to live a long and healthy life well into retirement

2.1 The demographic challenge of the European Union

2.1.1. Demographic trends in the European Union

- **Population movement in Europe**

Population decline in Europe (European Demographic Observatory (ODE), 2003), reflects a variety of contrasting migrations across the continent. In fact, population decline would be much higher without migration compensating for the natural decline.

Over the whole of Europe deaths exceed births resulting in a loss of 1.1 million people, a phenomenon that is becoming more pronounced over time. However, the effect of migration on population growth in the EU is more pronounced than any natural change. After enlargement in 2002 the change attributable to migration increased to almost 85%.

There was also a greater diversity of demographic situations in the EU after the entry of Central European countries. The majority of these countries' populations were in decline, except for Cyprus, whose population growth was sustained, mainly through migration.

The EU is relying on its original members for population growth, especially those countries that are attractive to migrants. Italy, Spain, UK and France contribute most to this growth. France is a particular case as the growth here is natural. Germany, on the other hand, compensates for a sharp increase in the deficit of births over deaths through migration.

To summarise, almost half the member countries of the EU would be threatened by a decrease in population if this was not offset by positive net migration.

- **Birth rate and fertility**

The number of births in Europe has been roughly stable during the 2000s, but is nearly 40% lower than it was in the 60s. However, this stagnation hides strong disparities between one country and another. The populations of new EU entrants have declined in numbers twice as fast as the populations of older members, and, older members already have a population five times greater. In the EU, Ireland is one of the few countries where the number of births is continually rising, elsewhere, the number of births is declining, with the exception of Sweden, Spain, France, Italy and Hungary.

In Europe fertility rates vary between one and two, and this weakness in fertility is likely to have serious medium-term consequences even if the EU birthrate, specifically in the west of the EU, appears relatively good. The fertility rate is not as high as that observed in developed countries outside of Europe, nonetheless it remains close to that of Canada, but higher than that of Japan.

Births outside of marriage are on the increase everywhere, except in Denmark where the number has been stable for several years. The proportion of births outside marriage is closely correlated with the level of total fertility. In most Western European and Scandinavian countries, the proportion exceeds

40% but is tending to stabilise or even decrease. Non-European industrialised countries follow a model similar to that of Western Europe.

- **Mortality and life expectancy**

Mortality rates are in decline, with records showing slight variations over time. This trend is the same throughout Western Europe. Crude mortality rates are tending to decrease in most EU countries, though in Croatia, Hungary and Poland, where the rate was lower in the 70s, there is stagnation.

However, to make judgements about how mortality is changing, and the relative position of different countries depending on their health status, it is better to consider life expectancy at birth rather than the more crudely defined death rate, influenced as it is by the age structure of a population.

Average lifespan continues to grow steadily in almost all European countries. Life expectancy at birth has risen in the European Union to 74.8 years for males and 81.1 years for females (ODE, 2003). Analysis of how life expectancy at birth changes over time shows that population structure by age and cause of death play an important role in the ranking of countries, and what appeared to be an advantage at some point in time can turn into a disadvantage at another.

Infant mortality is used as a measure of a country's health status and population development. It has a peculiarity in Europe where the infant mortality rate can range between 1 and 20. The general trend is down, and fortunately sustainable, but the fact remains that progress is still needed in some Eastern European countries to ensure that children born there have the same chances of survival as elsewhere.

- **Population Ageing**

These different trends result in a transformation of the age structure of European populations that can add an additional layer to the population pyramid. Declining fertility and longer life expectancy will eventually result in an acceleration of the ageing population and, as a consequence, an increase in the proportion of older people. Defined as fertility decline, "**Ageing from the bottom**", an ageing trend already visible across the European Union, is amplified by the decline in mortality at older ages, "**Ageing from the top**". This is generally the situation across Europe even if the rate of population change varies greatly from one country to another. Ultimately because of the low fertility rate in the acceding countries and the widespread increase in life expectancy, the European Union will continue to have an increasingly ageing population.

2.1.2 The challenges of Europe's demographic future

As pointed out by Francois Heran¹, to analyse the reasons for EU population ageing, we need to bring into the analysis two further processes to the two processes already in discussion. The processes already in discussion are, **ageing from the bottom**, that is ageing characterised by low fertility remaining permanently below replacement (currently 2.07 children per woman), and **ageing from the top**, increased life expectancy where the effect is considerable and the increase corresponds to an additional layer on the population pyramid (the increase in life expectancy is now two to three months each year). The two new processes are, on the one hand, the consequences of the **baby boom**, i.e. **a previous period of exceptional growth in the birth rate** that lasted two to three decades before falling and returning to its downward trend, and, on the other hand, **selective emigration of young people**.

These different ageing processes, allow us to separate the avoidable and unavoidable contributions to an ageing population and thus better identify different actions that could be implemented.

¹ Note IP/A/EMPL/IC/2008-3 submitted by the Committee for Labour and Social Affairs of the European Parliament

Before going further into the analysis of the demographic ageing of the EU population, we must emphasise that ageing should be seen in a positive way, that is, it does lead to longer life.

- **The role played by the inevitable aspect of ageing is greater than the role played by the preventable aspect**

In his report, François Heran uses United Nations projections to 2050. These compare demographic trends for selected countries for three main age groups: the population of 65 and over, the intermediate-age population (15-64 years), and the under 15s, each group indexed at 100 in 2000 by setting a fertility rate which would converge to a rate of 1.8 children per woman in 2050. The assumptions made are quite conservative as they incorporate a slight reduction in the rate of increase of life expectancy for men and women, but, on the other hand, we cannot rule out the idea that life expectancy will continue to increase, for vulnerable older people in particular.

From this starting point, whatever way we look at the population curves, they all show a gradual separation of the elderly curve from that of people of working age and the young, and this gap shows no sign of narrowing over the coming three decades.

Within this widening gap, the relative increase of the elderly population is still a more important factor than the relative decline in the other two groups, in other words, increased longevity, coupled with the backlash of the baby boom, is an ageing factor that far outweighs the decline in the fertility rate. Moreover, the trajectory of the curve for people aged 65 or over is completely unaffected by the fertility rate, and any action that would affect it (all people who will be over 65 in 2050 are already born). No demographic policy can affect this aspect of the inevitable ageing process, which is the result of past demographic phenomena.

On the other hand, most European countries fall short of the line that denotes demographic maintenance which is bounded below by the evolution curve of the working age population. This zone in the graph corresponds to the preventable aspect of population ageing. "Ageing from the bottom" is caused by a low fertility rate but is more dependent on future uncertainties than on trends. However, there is a trend which remains. As women who are likely to have children in the next three decades are already born, their average fertility behaviour, as well as the number of children that will be fertile a generation later, is uncertain.

If "ageing from the top" is widespread, "ageing from the bottom" varies greatly from one country to another. In Italy and Germany it is an important factor and will result in a decline of 25% of the working age population. The introduction of a policy to support the birth rate, in addition to a policy of encouraging immigration, would guarantee a long-term maintenance of the working age population, but would have no effect on the inevitable increase in the elderly.

Poland, similar to other Central European countries, presents an extreme situation: a low birth rate and net outward migration. "Ageing from the bottom" added to "ageing from the top" means a very negative result as it compounds the effects of different forms of ageing. France, the UK and Sweden, because they have limited, as much as possible, ageing from the bottom, jointly maintain the stability of their working-age population. An active migration policy, and a prolonged surge in the birth rate could significantly increase the number of working age people, but in any event, these policies will not abolish the inevitable aspect of ageing that is at least four-fifths of all of the causes of ageing.

All these factors explain why the evolution of the dependency ratio of elderly people to those of working age, or the evolution of its inverse, the support ratio, will be much the same from one country to another, despite different histories and a great disparity in birth rates.

The support ratio will change as quickly in the next fifty years as it has in the previous one hundred: double the pace of ageing. While in 2000 there were about four people aged 15 to 64 to support every person aged 65 or older, there will be half that number in 2050. Differences will remain between medium-fertility countries and low-fertility countries, but they will be reduced, and there will be no exception to the general trend.

Finally the evolution of migration will not counteract ageing from the top, but, coupled with support for a desired birth rate, it will partially offset the ageing from the bottom.

Immigration already plays a major role in stabilising the natural population surplus of European countries. Without it, many countries would see population decline, because they have more deaths than births. There is no question that Europe will need migrants in the future to offset the drop in the birth rate: this is already happening, and there is no reason to believe that it will not continue.

It is unnecessary to have a massive injection of migrants to diversify a population, a sustained flow is enough. In this context, net migration can only strengthen its position as the engine of population growth in Europe, far ahead of the natural balance. Even France will join the norm: its natural balance will vanish, even if it does succeed in permanently keeping its sustainable annual net migration below 50,000, it will fail to stop the process that makes migration the key engine of its population growth.

In France, as elsewhere in Europe, the idea that we would manage in the long term to reduce immigration to the position of a secondary factor in population dynamics is contrary to what the basic data shows, data already displayed in the age pyramids. Diversity exists and will continue to grow even without the pressure of migration itself. The change is due to demographic behaviour adopted long ago by Europeans, for example efforts to increase longevity, limiting the birth rate, and the unwanted repercussions of the baby boom. It follows that Europe, in the same way, and almost in the same proportions, as the United States, will continue to be a great continent of immigration, as well as an ageing continent, but that does not mean that it is worn out, lacks dynamism or is in its terminal stage. To link attitudes to ageing, to ageing demographics, is a stereotype that is difficult to overturn.

Other factors limit the birth rate, for example, excessive rigidity of family structures. Countries where it is believed couples have to be married to have children are countries with a low birth rate, as is seen in Japan and Southern Europe and, often, in Germany. Once the birth rate was linked to familism. Today, familism is a barrier to a high birth rate. Women, especially, do not object to marriage because they are opposed to motherhood; they object to the conditions placed on them by men in marriage, and in professional life. It is in this area where action should be taken to counteract avoidable ageing, while understanding that this action can only have effects in the long term.

- **What are the effects of Ageing?**

The fact that ageing is associated with the continual rise of life expectancy is part of Europe's fate. One of the major questions is how to ensure that this growth in life expectancy leads more to healthy lives than to situations of dependence. If extra years are healthy years rather than years of poor health, adding an additional level to the population pyramid is an opportunity. Then the true age of a population becomes a relative age which evolves positively if it is linked to life expectancy where health is good. The pressure on health systems because of demographic ageing is increasing, but it can also be reduced if the average age of hospitalisation and entry into institutions is pushed back.

2.1.3 The economic and social impacts of demographic changes

- **Economic impacts**

There are many implications associated with ageing. In addition to the social issues there are a number of economic issues that have to be taken into account. In fact, demographic change can completely alter the economic life of a country.

By 2020, the impact on economic activity, brought about by demographic changes, could lead to a loss of per capita GDP of about 10%. The EU would then have to support a public debt because it would be unable to meet the needs of the growing number of retired people.

To face this new situation and ensure that ageing does not have an unmanageable economic impact, European Union countries will have to adapt. According to the EU, it should not only meet but exceed the Lisbon Strategy target: an employment rate of 70% to offset the expected decline of the working age population.

However, the ageing population can also mean job creation. Indeed, as the number of elderly increases, so also do the care needs related to managing their dependency. The service sector, therefore, is bound to grow.

To meet these challenges, the EU must evaluate more accurately the recruitment need within the health and social services sector and invest in the required skills. The social services and health sectors account for between 5 and 13% of EU GDP, bringing the EU economy an added value of around 800 billion euros per year. Moreover, this is a sector of the economy with a very high density of labour, which means that labour plays a key role in providing efficient, high quality services.

- **Social impacts**

As longevity is increasing, now is the time to put in place a schedule of reforms to deal with the transition out of professional life. Any reforms will need to be spread out over time and will have to work on several parameters at once: the period of contributions, the amount of the contributions and the social basis on which they are assessed, and, not only the replacement rate, but also the involvement of the economy (business and administration) in putting together further support for pension insurance. These problems resulting from the changed ratio between generations, though mainly demographic, cannot rely exclusively on demographic solutions, and need to introduce biographical and historical approaches which allow more reliable accounts to be drawn up between genders on the one hand, and between social contexts on the other, in a search for equity that takes into account the difficulties of professional life and the numbers of healthy years in various social settings.

To ensure social stability, longer life expectancy must be accompanied by the development of new intergenerational solidarity. Changes in the age structure of the population may affect relations between generations, or even stir up conflicts between them. The sociologist Louis Chauvel even talks about the possibility of a generational conflict that would result in inequalities in the fate of those in the younger generation and those of the baby boomers.

2.2 Definition of the three main concepts

Social security, used as a buffer when an increasing number of workers, and particularly older workers, are evicted from economic activity, has, over recent years, brought a social and financial cost that is not supportable in the long term. Our ideas about ageing, therefore, have emerged in a context that is confused by demographic and social developments.

Also, the ageing demographic is exploding at a time when the start of "old age" is retreating. Two types of ageing can be distinguished :

- demographic ageing which results in more and more elderly people in society,
- individual ageing which is personal to each person and is irreversible

As we have seen the number of people over 60 keeps growing (due to the Baby Boomer effect), but at the same time and in the same proportions, the age at which people become physically incapacitated, goes up (we talk about the ageing of the aged). We therefore need to question the relevance of the age traditionally associated with the date of retirement.

Experts talk about a new third age, a period of 10 to 15 years or more during which older people are still in good health and before they enter the fourth age where they experience problems of physical incapacity.

- **Age and activity a decreasing correlation**

Until the late 80s, the cycles of life followed in stages: training, employment, retirement. Today, however, because of economic and social changes, periods of training, work, leisure and unemployment tend to overlap. The age at which workers leave the labour market is no longer linked closely to that of retirement, let alone to that of old age.

Education traditionally undertaken during childhood has become lifelong learning, a professional career has become more chaotic and alternates with downtime such as, unemployment, sabbaticals, leisure and early retirement.

This alternating downtime and professional time, as well as the decline in old age, means that retirement is no longer a final rite of passage and exit from the labour market.

In this context, changing the conditions of employment for those over 50 means reaching two groups of people:

- Employed older workers who need to stay in employment;
- Economically inactive people who though in post professional life could be offered incentives to resume employment

2.2.1 Active ageing: different viewpoints

In the late 90s, responding to the changes in demographic ageing and the retreat of 'old age', ideas about active ageing began to take root within large institutions like the OECD or the European Commission before being taken up by the UN, and defined by WHO in 2002: "active ageing" was presented as an opportunity to meet the challenges ahead (burden of ageing, pensions, ...). The researcher Alan Walker² went on to give it the status of a global concept.

In Europe "active ageing" was first understood as "active ageing in employment", due to the influence of the European Employment Strategy in the years 2000s. It was with reference to other normative approaches of ageing that the term "active ageing" developed, and although a consensus was reached on the importance of recognising the necessity of older people playing a productive role in society, the term also concerns the development of the idea of "ageing well" that is having complete physical, mental and social well-being. In this sense the term "active ageing" is a complex term.

Growing old in good health is the key to keeping seniors at work insofar as a person who is not incapacitated would have less difficulty in remaining in employment. Being active is linked to well-being, and leads to an increase in quality of life. The idea of being active can be seen as a broad framework including economic activity, whether paid or not, as well as physical activity.

The right to an active life and work, are amongst the principles established by the United Nations, and is on the same level as dignity, which must be accessible to everyone, even the most fragile. The W.H.O. in its contribution³ to the Second World Assembly on Ageing put forward the argument that Ageing should be based on three crucial principles: Participation, Health and Safety. This approach

² A. Walker, A strategy for active ageing, ISSA, International Review of Social Security, 2002

³ I. Keller, Active Ageing: A Policy Framework, International Labour Office 18 ° CEIES seminar: Active ageing statistics, The Hague, 23 and 24 May 2002, European Commission.

prioritises several objectives for the future and the role of social security. The participation of older people in economic life means we can counteract the decline in worker contributions and consequently increase the revenues for the social systems. Health spending would be reduced as the older population is healthier because they have remained active.

Active ageing policies cover many sectors. They relate to employment (training, labour costs), to social protection policies (unemployment benefits, the level of pension benefits, the legal age of retirement), public health, as well as citizenship to ensure older people as a whole remain part of society. (id. A. Walker, 2002).

This concept of "active ageing", enshrined by the European Union, has developed across the continent. For the EU, successful ageing is a process that aims to maximise equal access to health so that good health will enable older people to take an active part in society and enjoy a quality of life that includes independence and well-being⁴.

In the European Union the concept of "active ageing", rests on four "pillars": lifelong learning, high-quality working conditions, viable pension systems and combating age-related discrimination.

European policy on active ageing is targeted at three main groups:

- Individuals aged 55-65 years with a focus on encouraging employers to employ workers for as long as possible by maintaining high-quality social dialogue;
- Individuals aged 65-75 with a focus on maintaining autonomy and social inclusion, with the emphasis on preventive health care and personalised care choices;
- Individuals aged 75+ with a focus on managing the dependence of this group.

This concept promises a great deal but has limitations. These limitations become apparent as the concept of active ageing is tested against reality. It needs to be approached from a number of viewpoints in a dialectic of construction / deconstruction, as outlined by T. Moolaert and D. Leonard⁵.

2.2.2 The concept of intergenerational solidarity

• The emergence of the intergenerational concept

The word 'intergenerational' comes from the Latin 'inter' meaning among, expressing space between, distribution, or a mutual relationship, and the word generation itself has many meanings.

The first researcher who looked at questions concerning generations was Karl Mannheim (1928), he questioned the specific nature of the relationship between generations from a Marxist perspective of social class. Other work that followed often contrasted divisions by class and divisions by generation and it was not until the early eighties that more emphasis was placed on the links that connect generations, at work, in the family, environment, in politics, etc.

Today, everyone mostly agrees that the concept of generation is based on three definitions.

- The first, on which everyone agrees, is the idea of generations in families, related by descent.
- The second refers to history, a generation is a group of people who live through the same experiences (we talk about the baby boomer generation, the generation of 68)
- The third, mainly used by demographers, is generation as the birth cohort of a year.

When we use the term we bring together the three definitions: the feeling of belonging to a generation determines both our integration into a collective time and our appropriation of that time. It is

⁴ V. Gimbert, C. Godot, Center for Strategic Analysis, "Living together longer," July 2010

⁵ T.Moolaert, D. Leonard, "active ageing on European Supper", the weekly e-CRISP, No. 2105, 2011

fundamental for us to be part of our peer group and be with them in a particular society and time in history. We belong then to a family line and a given time. In addition, for sixty years, there has been a social contract between the generations that each belongs to a specific group: young people training for the world of work, workers and retired people. Generally, because of this situation, more and more often we use the expression, "intergenerational solidarity".

Solidarity is defined in the Robert Dictionary - as "the interdependent character of an obligation, the relationship between people who have common interests which leads to a moral obligation not to harm others but to help them," and also "requiring members of a collective national body to contribute to the financial and material welfare of other members."

Family solidarity and intergenerational solidarity overlap but they are not interchangeable⁶. Beyond the opposing policy arguments of fears about a weakening of public solidarity and, fears about a weakening of family because of an excessive presence of public solidarity, there is strong evidence that: the importance of meeting the needs of society and the limits on the development of the welfare state mean that there is a place for both strong public solidarity, and active family solidarity, and dynamic forms of intergenerational solidarity through local civil society.

- **The concept of Intergenerational solidarity.**

In "Eléments de sociologie", Mendras, (1984), emphasises that social life is composed of exchanges. The process of reciprocity is important for human relationships. Intergenerational solidarity can then be seen from the perspective of equality in which each person makes an exchange with another to get what he needs (Pujalon-1989).

Intergenerational solidarity is not a one-way relationship between the active young and the inactive older population. There are many interactions, both formal and informal, that take place in both directions. The sum of these interactions determines the quality of life for both the younger generation and for older people. This is why, the role of the family and the different kinds of interactions that take place there - financial, material or immaterial - should not be ignored⁷.

To implement intergenerational solidarity, it is necessary to effect a paradigm shift by considering social bonds as a global and reciprocal dynamic. From this perspective, governments should be able to implement the necessary reforms in pension and health systems to ease the burden of the public sector deficit. As for the baby boomer generation, they should be better integrated into professional and public life so that they can take part further in the growth and dissemination of their experience to younger generations.

Because solidarity, whether intergenerational or in its broader sense, implies the idea of a common and shared responsibility. It concerns both professional as well as private or family life.

2.2.2 The concept of intergenerational learning

Intergenerational learning can be considered as the reciprocal exchange of knowledge between people of all ages so they can learn together, and learn from each other and from those in a variety of sectors, such as culture, environment, sociability, education, mediation, prevention, recreation, ICT, etc.

Each field has its own requirements in terms of activities. The activity is the backbone of the venture: if bonding, solidarity, mutual exchange and the "living together" of all ages are the ultimate goals, the

⁶ M. de Montalambert, Company Report, intergenerational Society serving the family, 2006

⁷ European Commission, "Towards a society for all ages. Employment, Health, Retirement and Intergenerational Solidarity. " Reference document. <http://bit.ly/dATeDC>

action is the embodiment and its practical implementation. In addition to the operational objectives, and thanks to the interactions it provokes, the action or activity structures the interactions and exchanges between generations. It has a function of social and cultural mediation.

Different types of activities can be defined according to distinct principles, even if they overlap here and there or even share certain aspects:

- friendly and informal social encounters,
- transfer of experiences, knowledge, know-how and memories,
- mutual creations (artistic, cultural or other),
- active solidarity towards those in difficulty,
- " living together ".

Friendly and informal encounters

Activities based on friendly encounters try to deal with the loss of those moments and places where different generations meet socially. They are seen as being outstanding, unique and informal. They can of course be recreated, but capturing the moment is what is important since the objective is to share a moment of discovery and exchange in a shared time and place.

The advantage of these types of activities is their simplicity, their flexibility and their immediate impact on participants. Nevertheless, bringing together audiences of different ages, while avoiding the possible risk of the encounter being superficial, boring and cold, demand good listening skills, imagination, organisation and enthusiasm.

Transfer of experience, knowledge, know-how and memories

Activities that provide opportunities for these transfers are tributes to age and experience, a victory in a society where advancing age is clearly not valued. However, nothing is more dangerous than designing the activity around a patrimonial model, thereby reducing the elderly to a repository of memories.

Indeed, individual experience can be transmitted from one person to another, regardless of age, from the very young to the very old, and vice versa. The challenge is to build bridges between the generations and to create a continuous and interactive experience in contrast to our society which creates discontinuity, isolation and misunderstanding. This knowledge, skills, experiences and accounts, do not have to be transmitted through traditional channels, such as family, education, training, media, museums, etc. but on the other hand, nothing can replace direct human contact, practical pedagogy and live accounts with their wealth, subjectivity and narrative power.

The mutual creation (artistic, cultural or other)

These activities are joint creations of either an object (sculpture, video, photos, drawings, comic book, puzzle, guide, creating murals), or a general effort (cleaning of footpaths, to river banks, course design discovering the heritage of the city, courtyard garden), or a performance (theatre, dance and street performance).

Active solidarity towards those in difficulty

There are many activities in this area and concern groups whose common features are that they are faced with a temporary difficulty or permanent disadvantage which is not, or is inadequately, supported by the usual networks of families or public and private services. Notably school support, nourishment and inclusion, support for families in difficulties, prevention of isolation, help with everyday life, and assistance with mobility for elderly and disabled people, etc..

"Living together"

Activities where the aim and purpose is to encourage the sharing of public spaces and social centres, in villages, towns, neighbourhoods, social housing, community centres, shared housing facilities ...

The focus is on what makes, on the one hand, an awareness of the necessity of "living together" and, on the other, the importance of changing attitudes in people's daily lives.

Institutional and financial policy makers lack the tools for assessing the relevance and effectiveness of projects requiring support. From now on, the challenge is to strengthen and structure these initiatives, move to a global strategy as regards social choices, and create a partnership dialogue between decision makers and actors on the ground.

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3. Policy Background

The ageing of the EU-27 population is a success story in terms of life expectancy for women and men. It also has serious implications for all aspects of society in the EU-27 - public policies, public budgets, labour markets, product markets, workplaces, the sustainability of pensions and social security systems, access to health services, relations between generations, families and individuals.

The challenges arising are even more pressing in today's economic and financial environment. EU Member States spend, on average, more than a quarter of their gross domestic product on social protection, most of it for older people in the form of pensions, health care, and long-term care⁸. The economic crisis has resulted in large public deficits and a huge public debt burden in Member States at a time when the large cohorts of the post-war baby boom generation are entering their 60s and starting to retire from the labour market. The ability of the economic and social models of the past fifty years to face up to these changes is under question.

The dominant response to these challenges is the concept of 'active ageing' with an emphasis - in the rhetoric - on social, civic, cultural and economic policies and initiatives. In practice, the majority of policies and initiatives tend to be more focused on working longer, later retirement and postponed pensions.

3.1 United Nations – Madrid International Action Plan on Ageing (MIPAA)

Ageing is not just an EU issue. Activities of the United Nations over the past thirty years period show the emergence and growing awareness of the importance of intergenerational solidarity and social cohesion at a global level. In 2002, the UN Second World Assembly on Ageing⁹ adopted the Madrid International Action Plan on Ageing (MIPAA), which includes as a main development objective the recognition that persons, as they age, should enjoy active participation in the economic, social, cultural and political life of their societies.

MIPAA was the first global agreement to recognise older people as contributors to the development of their societies. It commits governments to including ageing in all social and economic development policies, including poverty reduction programmes. MIPAA was agreed by 159 governments which for the first time committed to linking ageing to other frameworks for social and economic development and human rights, but its implementation is voluntary.

MIPAA's core concepts include:

- A *development approach* to population ageing, through the mainstreaming of older persons into international and national development plans and policies across all sectors. Ageing policy should not be treated as merely the concern of the social ministry;
- A *life-course intergenerational approach* to policy that stresses equity, reciprocity and inclusiveness of all age groups through all policy areas.

In September 2002, EU Member States gathered in Berlin endorsed the MIPAA Regional Implementation Strategy for Europe and committed to promoting active ageing by integrating the rights and needs of older persons into their national economic and social policies and by promoting a society for all ages. 2012 marks ten years since the adoption of MIPAA. The second MIPAA review took place in 2011 with governments undertaking national appraisals. To mark the 10th Anniversary

⁸ <http://journal.aarpinternational.org/a/b/2012/02/Active-Aging-Good-for-Older-People-Good-for-Society>

⁹ United Nations Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8-12 April 2002 A/CONF.179/9. <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/397/51/PDF/N0239751.pdf?OpenElement>

of this key political commitment, the European Union declared 2012 as the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (EY2012).

3.2 European Union Policies

The issue of ageing has been explicitly at the heart of the European debate since 2000. Primary competences in the field of active ageing lie with the Member States and their local and regional authorities, but there is also a role for the European Union which complements or coordinates national policies in areas such as employment, pensions, social protection, public health, information society, transport and social inclusion. The EU identifies four “pillars” to active ageing, namely: high-quality working conditions; viable pension systems; combating age-related discrimination and lifelong learning,

European policy on active ageing is targeted at three main groups:

- Individuals aged 55-65 years with a focus on encouraging employers to employ workers for as long as possible by maintaining high-quality social dialogue;
- Individuals aged 65-75 with a focus on maintaining autonomy and social inclusion, with the emphasis on preventive health care and personalised care choices;
- Individuals aged 75+ with a focus on managing the dependence of this group.

3.2.1 Overarching Approaches

A number of overarching approaches bear testament to the EU’s efforts to develop an integrated old-age policy since 2000.

The European social agenda adopted in 2000 proposed six social policy objectives, three of which related to demographic ageing. In the same year the Lisbon strategy set out measures on pensions, healthcare and long-term care. The Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC) was implemented in social affairs. The OMC relies on soft-law instruments such as guidelines and indicators, benchmarking, and sharing of best practices and it supports Member States to set common objectives and engage in policy learning. The Stockholm European Council¹⁰ meeting in 2001 sought to encourage Member States to raise employment rates and productivity and reform pensions, healthcare and long-term care systems.

In April 2005 the Commission published the Green Paper *Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations*¹¹ which highlighted the challenges to be confronted by the EU: falling populations, continuing low birth rates and continuing increases in longevity. It considered that to meet this challenge, the Lisbon Agenda must be resolutely implemented, in particular those policies focusing on getting people into jobs, on innovation and on increasing productivity. At an informal summit held at Hampton Court in October 2005¹², Heads of State and Government recognised that demographic ageing would be one of the main challenges facing the EU in the years ahead

The period 2006 – 2009 saw a range of Communications from the European Commission and a Resolution and Conclusions from the Council on the subject of demographic challenges. In October 2006, the Commission presented its views on these challenges in the Communication *The demographic future of Europe – from challenge to opportunity*¹³. The Communication announced the setting up of the European Demography Forum and of the Group of Experts on demographic issues

¹⁰ http://consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/00100-r1.%20ann-r1.en1.htm

¹¹ Communication from the Commission, Green Paper "Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations" [COM(2005) 94 final)
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/situation_in_europe/c10128_en.htm

¹² http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/lsa/87464.pdf

¹³ COM (2006) 571, 12 October 2006. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0571:FIN:EN:PDF>

and it identified five policy responses through which Member States could respond to demographic change, namely:

- promoting: demographic renewal through better support for families;
- employment – especially through more jobs and longer working lives of better quality;
- a more productive and competitive Europe;
- the receiving and integrating of immigrants in Europe;
- sustainable public finances in Europe – guaranteeing adequate social security and equity between generations.

As a follow on, in February 2007 the Council adopted a Resolution on *The Opportunities and challenges of demographic change in Europe: the contribution of older people to economic and social development* which emphasised the need to increase the possibilities for active participation by older people¹⁴.

The 2008 Communication: “*Renewed social agenda: opportunities, access and solidarity in 21st century Europe*”¹⁵ stressed that Europe’s ageing society called for a wide range of measures, from supporting research into how information technology can improve the health and well-being of older people, to assessing what healthcare and pension reforms are needed to meet the needs of an ageing population while ensuring the sustainability of public financing. In June 2009 the Council adopted Conclusions on *Equal Opportunities for women and men: active and dignified ageing*”¹⁶ which recognised that, throughout the EU, older women and men face serious challenges as they seek to live active lives and to age with dignity and proposes a number of actions to Member States and the Commission.

Solidarity between generations is formally named for the first time as one of the objectives of the European Union in Article 3. 3. of the Lisbon Treaty (2009)¹⁷. Article 25 of the Treaty states: “The Union recognises and respects the right of elderly people to lead a dignified and independent life, and to participate in social and cultural life.”

Active ageing and intergenerational solidarity are key aspects of *EU 2020 - a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth* launched in March 2010¹⁸. *Europe 2020* stresses the importance of the European Union’s ability to meet the challenge of promoting a healthy and active ageing population to allow for social cohesion and higher productivity. Five main areas of reform are defined so as to create a Europe which:

- encourages demographic renewal by improving the work-life balance;
- adds value to work by creating jobs and enabling people to lead longer active lives;
- is more productive and efficient as a result of the change in the focus of the Lisbon strategy since 2005;
- is organised to welcome and integrate immigrants;
- has viable public finances.

One of the five headline *Europe 2020* indicators is to reach an EU-27 employment rate of 75 % for those aged 20 - 64 by 2020. Achieving this target means that a higher proportion of the population needs to remain in employment up to a later age. It also has implications for re-skilling and up-skilling existing older workers.

¹⁴ Council conclusions of 22 February 2007. 6216/1/07REV 1. <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st06/st06216-re01.en07.pdf>

¹⁵ COM(2008) 412 final <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0412:FIN:EN:PDF>

¹⁶ Council Conclusions on Equal opportunities for women and men: active and dignified ageing 2947th Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting, Luxembourg, 8 June 2009 http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/108375.pdf

¹⁷ www.lisbontreaty2009.ie/lisbon_treaty.pdf

¹⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

3.2.2 Specific policy areas

Parallel to EU-level overarching initiatives to address demographic change, the period since 2000 has seen the emergence of a diverse range of policies and initiatives for the same purpose across a variety of policy fields, including: employment and pensions; anti-discrimination and access to services; volunteering; health; information and communications technologies (ICTs); intergenerational solidarity; and lifelong learning.

Employment and Pensions

EU employment policy is considered the first and most urgent strand of active ageing policy as the baby boomer cohorts approach retirement. Some progress has been made in the area of employment among older workers in the EU-27 with the proportion of people aged 55–64 in employment increasing from 36.9 % in 2000 to 46 % in 2009¹⁹.

The *European Employment Strategy* (EES) was established in the early 1990s and a focus on older people appeared in the employment guidelines for the first time in 1999. Two years later, a specific guideline “Developing a policy for active ageing” was adopted at the Stockholm Council. Member States agreed the first European employment rate target for the over 50s, namely, an average of 50% for 55-64 year-olds by 2010. A second quantitative target of “65 as the average exit age by 2010” was adopted a year later (Barcelona target)²⁰. The EES has a range of actions and guidelines targeted at older people, including measures calling for improved (occupational) health status. The guidelines also promote social protection systems based on financial sustainability, so as to support participation and retention within the labour market and longer working lives.

Pensions are a key instrument for dealing with ageing workers and old age security at the national level and one of the main policy issues relates to the establishment and maintenance of adequate and sustainable retirement systems. Each Member State has responsibility for its own retirement systems which are across the EU by a framework of activities spanning from policy coordination to regulation.

A Green Paper on pensions, published in summer 2010, looked at a wide range of policy issues and triggered a major debate on how the EU could build a comprehensive policy response to the challenges confronting European pension systems. The responses included the need for pension reforms to support the sustainability of public finances and adequacy of pensions and the need for higher effective retirement ages²¹.

Anti-discrimination and Access to Services

Discrimination based on age in employment is prohibited under EU law. The Amsterdam Treaty first called for the combatting of discrimination based on age. Up to then the focus of anti-discrimination legislation was nationality and gender. As follow-on the EU established a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation²² which also prohibits discrimination on the grounds of age. A recent Commission proposal for a directive on equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation could potentially contribute to better accessibility of goods and services for older people²³.

¹⁹ Andor, L. (2011) The European Union's Employment Initiatives <http://journal.aarpinternational.org/a/b/2011/03/8878375a-42ab-4387-ab59-0572c614f540>

²⁰ <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2002/03/feature/eu0203205f.htm>

²¹ <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/10/302>

²² Council Directive of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, OJ, L 303 of 02 December 2000. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32000L0078:en:HTML>

²³ COM (2008) 426 of 2 July 2008. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2001:0723:FIN:EN:PDF>

Volunteering

Active ageing is not just about employment. In a survey carried out in 2008²⁴, almost 75% of Europeans who had not yet retired said that they would consider participating in voluntary work. Among the retired, 34 % said that they had engaged in volunteering and another 10 % said they were planning to do so. In 2009 the European Parliament produced a report on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion²⁵. 2011 was declared the European Year of Volunteering and in September of that year the European Commission presented a Communication on *EU policies and volunteering: recognising and promoting cross-border voluntary activities in the EU*.²⁶ In October 2011 the Council agreed Conclusions on *The role of voluntary activities in social policy*²⁷.

Health

Active ageing, both in employment and after retirement, will only happen if people age in good health. Member States have the main responsibility for health policy and provision of healthcare to European citizens.

The 2001 Communication, *The future of healthcare and care for the elderly: guaranteeing accessibility, quality and financial viability*, underlined the fact that health care systems in the European Union face the challenge of attaining at the same time the three-fold objective of access to health care for all; a high level of quality in health care; and ensuring the financial viability of health care systems. Demand and supply of health care is heavily dependent on the standard of living and the level of education. Patients are better educated and are able to adopt healthier lifestyles and a prevention-based attitude which in the long run makes it possible to avoid the use of intensive and costly care. Health care systems are thus prompted to increase their drive on the education and prevention side within the overall context of public health policy²⁸.

In 2007 the European Commission presented a White Paper *Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013*²⁹. The paper called for a new health strategy in Europe based on shared health values. The first strategic objective of the new health policy was identified as 'fostering good health in an ageing Europe'. The Commission committed to taking measures to promote the health of older people and the workforce, including health literacy programmes for different age groups.

Active and healthy ageing is a key objective of *Europe 2020* and is supported by various flagship initiatives (New skills for new Jobs, Platform against Poverty, Digital Agenda, Innovation Union). The European innovation partnerships (EIPs) are key elements of the Innovation Union designed to provide a framework to bring together all relevant stakeholders across policies, sectors and borders to speed up innovations that address a major societal challenge. The first EIP³⁰ (February 2011) is a partnership for active and healthy ageing. It has three main objectives, namely to:

- enable EU citizens to lead healthy, active and independent lives while ageing;

²⁴ Flash Eurobarometer (2008) Family life and the needs of an ageing population. Analytical report. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_247_en.pdf

²⁵ European Parliament (2008) Report on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion (2007/2149(INI)) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2008-0070+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

²⁶ COM(2011) 568 final http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/doc1311_en.pdf

²⁷ Council of the European Union (2011) The role of voluntary activities in social policy - Council Conclusions - 3114th Employment, Social Policy, Health And Consumer Affairs Council meeting Luxembourg, 3 October 2011 <http://ec.europa.eu/volunteering/en/download/file/fid/7223>

²⁸ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - The future of health care and care for the elderly: guaranteeing accessibility, quality and financial viability /* COM/2001/0723 final */ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52001DC0723:EN:HTML>

²⁹ COM(2007) 630 final http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/doc/whitepaper_en.pdf

³⁰ European Commission (2012) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. Taking forward the Strategic Implementation Plan of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing. COM (2012) 83 final. http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/active-healthy-ageing/sip_communication.pdf

- improve the sustainability and efficiency of social and healthcare systems;
- boost the competitiveness and markets for innovative products and services that respond to the ageing challenge.

Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs)

ICTs can provide the tools for greater independence and a more active life especially for the disabled, the unemployed and, more pertinently, in the context of this report, for intergenerational learning, older people and the young³¹. Intergenerational learning, as a means to responding to labour market inequality, increases cross-age participation in training and in the labour market³².

Some 30% of Europeans - 150 million - have never used the internet and a reason given frequently is that they have no need to or that it is too expensive. This group is largely made up of people aged 65 to 74 years old, people on low incomes, the unemployed and those with low levels of education. In many cases the take-up gap is due to lack of user skills such as digital and media literacy, not only for employability but also for learning, creating, participating and being confident and discerning in the use of digital media³³.

i2010 was the EU policy framework for the information society and media (2005-2009). It promoted the positive contribution that information and communication technologies (ICT) can make to the economy, society and personal quality of life³⁴. The 2007 Communication from the Commission *Ageing well in the Information Society - An i2010 Initiative - Action Plan on Information and Communication Technologies and Ageing*³⁵ recognised that ICTs can help older individuals to improve their quality of life, continue working, remain active in their community, stay healthier and live independently longer. The Communication presented an action plan to accelerate the introduction of new technology-based solutions for ageing well at home, in the community and at work.

The 2010 successor to i2010, *Digital Agenda for Europe*³⁶, one of the seven flagship initiatives of *Europe 2020*, defines the key enabling role that the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) will have to play if Europe wants to succeed in its ambitions for 2020. The objective of this Agenda is to chart a course to maximise the social and economic potential of ICT, most notably the internet, for doing business, working, playing, and communicating. Harnessing the full potential of ICT is seen as having the potential to better address some of Europe's most acute societal challenges, including an ageing population and rising health costs. A key to achieving the goals of the *Digital Agenda for Europe* is supporting individuals, especially older adults, to learn how to use ICTs, especially computers.

Intergenerational Solidarity

According to a 2008 Eurobarometer, 85% of the EU citizens consider it important to use public budgets to support initiatives and projects which bring together young and elder people³⁷.

The concept of intergenerational solidarity was developed in the 1999 Communication of the European Commission *Towards a Europe for all Ages – Promoting Prosperity and Intergenerational Solidarity*³⁸ which was the Commission's contribution to the UN International Year of Older Persons. The Communication sought to promote a 'Europe for All Ages' with a strong sense of intergenerational solidarity as well as intergenerational equity. It set out the implications of the ageing

³¹ Eagle Desk Research Synthesis Report Intergenerational Learning in Europe Policies, Programmes & Initiatives. <http://www.eagle-project.eu/welcome-to-eagle/policies-programmes-initiatives/>

³² Eagle Desk Research Synthesis Report Intergenerational Learning in Europe Policies, Programmes & Initiatives. <http://www.eagle-project.eu/welcome-to-eagle/policies-programmes-initiatives/>

³³ COM(2010) 245 final/2 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0245:FIN:EN:PDF>

³⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/index_en.htm

³⁵ COM/2007/0332 final. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0332:FIN:EN:HTML>

³⁶ COM(2010) 245 final/2 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0245:FIN:EN:PDF>

³⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc/10th/susmuth_en.pdf

³⁸ COM(1999) 221 final http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_situation/docs/com221_en.pdf

population for employment, social protection and health and social services and proposed a strategy for effective policy responses in these fields.

Intergenerational solidarity featured in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), in the 2005 Green Paper *Confronting Demographic Change: A New Solidarity between the Generations*³⁹, in multiple other communications from the European Commission and in the Lisbon Treaty (2009).

In 2007 the European Commission issued the Communication *Promoting solidarity between the generations*⁴⁰ which stresses the importance of promoting employment and equal opportunities in public policies in support of family life in the context of demographic ageing.

As a follow-up to a Slovenian Presidency conference, in 2008 a coalition of European NGO networks organised for the first time, on 29 April 2009, a European Day on Solidarity between Generations. On the same day, the Commission issued a Communication⁴¹ which stressed the need to introduce further reforms to counter ageing-induced budgetary costs in the future, notably for pension and healthcare spending programmes and encouraging people to stay in the labour market rather than retire early.

Lifelong Learning

The participation of older workers in training is low, with fewer than 5 % of workers aged 55- 64 years in the EU-27 taking part in training in 2008⁴². Participation in structured learning declines with age, but the prospect of longer average careers and the fast pace of the modern, information-based society, mean that training and retraining are an important tool to avoid obsolete skills and indirectly prevent premature retirement.

The European Commission's work on education and training follows a dual approach of policy cooperation with EU Member States on the one hand and the implementation of the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007 – 2013) on the other. Lifelong learning policy initiatives highlight the need to promote a culture of lifelong and life-wide learning – formal, non-formal and informal - in European society which will support individuals at all stages of life for economic, social, cultural and political purposes. In the context of active ageing this includes learning for skills acquisition and updating, socio-cultural participation, individual well-being, intergenerational solidarity and social inclusion.

The European Commission's Communication on adult learning (2006)⁴³ and the Action Plan on adult learning (2007)⁴⁴ both emphasised the Europe-wide need to provide adequate learning opportunities for older adults. The Council Resolution of 15 November 2007 on new skills for new jobs, stressed the need to anticipate skill needs and raise overall skill levels, giving priority to the education and training of those with low skills and at the risk of economic and social exclusion⁴⁵. In the 2008 Communication, *New skills for new jobs – anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs*⁴⁶ the European Commission sought to present an assessment of the skills requirements in Europe up to 2020, taking account of the impacts of technological change and ageing populations. The Communication decried that fact that 'too little is done to increase and adapt the skills of an ageing workforce' throughout Europe.

³⁹ COM(2005) 94 final <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2005:0094:FIN:EN:PDF>

⁴⁰ COM(2007) 244 final.

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/situation_in_europe/c10128_en.htm

⁴¹ COM (2009) 180, 29 April 2009 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2005:0094:FIN:EN:PDF>

⁴² http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/report09/report_en.pdf

⁴³ COM(2006) 614 final http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0614en01.pdf

⁴⁴ COM(2007) 558 final http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/adult/com558_en.pdf

⁴⁵ Council Resolution of 15 November 2007 on the new skills for new jobs (2007/C 290/01) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:290:0001:0003:EN:PDF>

⁴⁶ COM(2008) 868 final <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0868:FIN:EN:PDF>

In November 2011, the Education Council adopted a Resolution which lays out a renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning⁴⁷. The resolution provides specific priorities for the adult learning sector as part of the overall strategy for European cooperation in education and training. It calls for well-developed learning provision for seniors, in order to promote active, autonomous, and healthy ageing which uses older people's knowledge, experience, social and cultural capital for the benefit of society as a whole. It highlights the need of the strong commitment to promote adult learning as a means of fostering solidarity between different age groups (for example, by means of an "intergenerational pact").

While initially focusing on the period 2012-2014, the Agenda will endeavour in the period up to 2020 to raise the sector's profile in general and, more specifically, among other goals to:

- make well-developed learning provision for seniors, in order to promote active, autonomous, and healthy ageing, and which uses their knowledge, experience, social and cultural capital for the benefit of society as a whole;
- make a strong commitment to promoting adult learning as a means of fostering solidarity between different age groups (for example, by means of an 'intergenerational pact') and between cultures and people of all backgrounds."

In relation to the priority areas for the period 2012-2014 Member States are invited, where appropriate with the support of the Commission, to focus on the most relevant for them of a range of areas including:

- enhancing learning opportunities for older adults in the context of active ageing, including volunteering and the promotion of innovative forms of intergenerational learning and initiatives to exploit the knowledge, skills and competences of older people for the benefit of society as a whole."

The 2012 *Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET2020)*⁴⁸ emphasised the slow progress towards the establishment and implementation of lifelong learning strategies. The coming period will therefore be critical to adapting the lifelong learning systems to respond to the challenges of the demographic changes and to ensure that they are aimed at sustainably equipping the entire population, including the older cohorts, with competences and opportunities for self-directed learning throughout life.

In April 2012, in the context of the European Year 2012, the Adult Education Unit of DGEAC of the European Commission stressed that intergenerational learning has an important role to play in supporting the active participation of older people in society. Seniors have much-needed knowledge and skills, and should therefore be provided with incentives to return to or stay in, work. More generally, intergenerational learning is essential in fostering positive relations between people of different ages and life-situations and in supporting the transmission and exchange of human capital, life skills, culture, values, and knowledge within society⁴⁹.

3.2.3 Policy Supports / Instruments in the EU

The EU policies on active ageing are supported by research and development programmes, among which the Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme (2007 – 2013), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the E-QUAL programme explicitly identify and address intergenerational learning.

⁴⁷ Council conclusions of 22 May 2008 on [adult learning](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:140:0010:0013:EN:PDF) [Official Journal C 140 of 6.6.2008]. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:140:0010:0013:EN:PDF>

⁴⁸ 2012 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) "Education and Training in a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe" http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/progress-reports_en.htm

⁴⁹ <http://www.nordvux.net/object/31494/2012theeuropeanyearforactiveagingandsolidaritybetween generations solidarity and attitude s.htm>

The EU provides financial support to projects that contribute to active ageing mainly through the European Social Fund⁵⁰, the EU's main financial vehicle for supporting employment. Out of this fund, 1.01 billion Euro are being devoted to measures to promote active ageing and a longer working life in that period and older workers can also benefit from active labour market measures that represent about 29 billion Euro for the current programming period, 2007–2013.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)⁵¹ has addressed infrastructure challenges arising from population ageing in the framework of active ageing, e.g. lifelong learning infrastructure, health infrastructure, ICT infrastructure, and infrastructure for the provision of key services in demographically declining areas or the restructuring of social service facilities and care services for older people.

In addition, activities promoting active ageing are receiving funding under the Community programme for employment and social solidarity, PROGRESS⁵². PROGRESS' mission is to strengthen the EU contribution supporting Member States' commitments and efforts to create more and better jobs and to build a more cohesive society. It supports the development of EU policies in areas such as: employment, working conditions, gender equality, social protection and social inclusion, non-discrimination and diversity.

Grundtvig, the EU's adult education programme, provides important financial support for learning and volunteering opportunities for older people. It has funded more than 400 projects aimed at learning for older people and intergenerational learning.

Various EU agencies promote mutual learning on policies and best practices that contribute to active ageing. For example, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)⁵³ has developed a number of measures for an ageing workforce relating to active labour market policies, lifelong learning, age awareness in management, and more flexible working time and leave arrangements.

3.3 National Policies

The picture of ageing in EU Member States is diverse. Differences exist in relation to: demographic profiles; labour market conditions; retirement ages; national ageing policies; fiscal constraints and lifelong learning participation. Adapting to demographic trends is a political priority in a growing number of Member States and policies have reversed the trend towards earlier retirement, with the EU-27 average employment rate for people aged 55-64 years increasing from 36.9 % in 2000 to 46.0 % in 2009⁵⁴. Many Member States have increased incentives to work longer through measures such as increasing retirement age, flexible retirement options, increasing contributory periods needed for a full pension, and designing work incentives into pension schemes⁵⁵.

There also appears to be increasing readiness among policy makers to promote voluntary work by older people. A recent survey found that older people are willing to participate in volunteering, with nearly half of those who had retired stating that they had already volunteered or that they planned to (Flash Eurobarometer n° 247, 2008). Equally, nearly one in four retired people polled stated that they had already or planned to enrol in education courses

⁵⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf/index_en.htm

⁵¹ http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/job_creation_measures/l60015_en.htm

⁵² <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=987&langId=en>

⁵³ <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/activeageing.htm>

⁵⁴ Commission Staff Working Document Ex-Ante Evaluation Accompanying Document to the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Year for Active Ageing (2012). SEC (2010) 1002 final. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=SEC:2010:1002:FIN:EN:PDF>

⁵⁵ *Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2010* [From AGE website <http://www.age-platform.eu/en/age-policy-work/solidarity-between-generations>]

The Flash Eurobarometer *Intergenerational Solidarity*, conducted during March 2009, presents the perceptions on intergenerational solidarity of about 27,000 Europeans across the EU-27⁵⁶. Only 27% of EU citizens overall believe that their national government is doing a good job in promoting a better relationship between the young and old. The citizens of Eastern European were particularly strong in criticising the performance of their government in this respect. National organisations focusing entirely on intergenerational learning exist in only Germany and the United Kingdom.

The recent ENIL survey linked to this report described a range of policies and initiatives related to active ageing in a number of countries. In **Austria** a comprehensive federal law was introduced in 2011 which included among its objectives that extension of the working careers of older people. The *Seniorenplan* is a federal plan for the social integration and quality of life of seniors in Austria. The plan provides objectives and guidelines to ensure the active involvement and participation of older people in all spheres of life. As a contribution to the European Year 2012 the provincial government of Styria has launched the programme *Learning and living in a multigenerational context* to fund initiatives by NGOs designed to encourage a region-based dialogue between generations.

Bulgaria is among the few European countries, and the first of the recent EU Member States, to put in place a long-term demographic strategy. The strategy which is based on the concept of “population balance” seeks to ensure a better quality of life and well-being for all Bulgarians. Guidelines on identifying opportunities to promote active ageing are presented in the *National Concept for the Promotion of Active Ageing* which will be adopted in the European Year 2012. Through the *National Concept* Bulgaria aims to create the conditions for economic growth, sustainable social development, improved quality of life and a cohesive society. The National Employment Strategy to 2015 has a focus on older workers and workers aged 55–64 years are targeted by all initiatives within the Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2007-2013.

In April 2012 the government in **Germany** approved a new strategy on demography entitled *Every age counts* which includes proposals on how the country can take advantage of future opportunities and the potential of demographic change in order to secure long-term growth and prosperity. At a conference on demography held in Berlin on the day prior to the approval of the strategy by ministers, the Chancellor discussed the strategy with leaders from cities and towns across Germany, academics and elder care experts.

The concept of active aging and intergenerational learning is very much in its infancy in **Ireland**. However, there is a commitment in the *Programme for Government 2007-2012* to set out an approach to developing a national *Positive Ageing Strategy* and this has taken place through a number of consultations with the general public and organisations engaged in working with older people. NGO's including *Age Action Ireland* and *Older and Bolder* have been involved in engaging and consulting with their client group in preparing submissions to the *Positive Ageing Strategy*.

In **Italy**, the economic crisis has generated a lively debate in the media on the need for greater solidarity and intergenerational equity to be achieved through the transfer of resources – increasingly scarce – from employed adults / elders with secure jobs to the young unemployed or to young workers with insecure jobs. The International Conference “Life span: a paradigm for the dialogue between generations” (Genoa, May 2012), provided an important platform to discuss intergenerational solidarity and equity at regional, national and international levels.

Since the 1970s, Italy has had a formal education network of Public Adult Education Centres throughout the country, providing adults and seniors, including elderly migrants, with the opportunity to access all levels of education and to gain qualifications. Over the last ten years, entry has been simplified through the introduction of a system of recognition of previous learning (formal, non-formal and informal).

⁵⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_269_en.pdf

On the basis of the 1991 Italian Act on Volunteering, the regional and provincial councils have enacted laws which encourage senior volunteering in the social sector: In Liguria the 2009 *Regional Law 3* sought the promotion and enhancement of active ageing.

In **Malta** www.ey2012.gov.mt – click Main State Initiatives; Older persons can still receive pension, whilst still working after pensionable age;

In **Romania** successive Governments in the period 2005 – 2011 have sought to increase the participation of older workers in the labour market through three main activities:

- increasing the flexibility of contractual arrangements;
- extending the duration of active life by raising the statutory retirement age, reforming pensions and discouraging both early retirement and retirement based on invalidity;
- providing incentives to encourage employers to hire older workers.

The most successful measures by far have been those aimed at reform of the pension system, which have been pursued with considerable determination over an extended period and therefore have managed to yield various results. However, various challenges have prevented any substantial progress in the area of active labour market policies.

In **Spain** a White Paper on Active Ageing was published in 2011.

In the **United Kingdom** the Government's commitment to active ageing has been in place for over five years. The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations legislation was introduced in 2006 and incorporated into the Equality Act 2010. The key age-related employment issues cover direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived age; and victimisation of anybody alleging or complaining about, discrimination because of age. The Government set up the National Careers Service for England in April 2012 which is targeted at people of all ages⁵⁷.

In 2010 the Government launched the *Big Society* initiative which has volunteering at its heart, i.e. citizens taking an active role in society. In response to this initiative, ResPublica and Independent Living produced a report, *Age of Opportunity*, to encourage the Government to rethink policies for supporting volunteering among older people. Recommendations from include: changing the voluntary sector's contracting and service agreements with local government to include performance indicators for involving volunteers. In addition, pension providers should include links to a portal with information about volunteering opportunities and other civic engagement⁵⁸.

In addition, many other publicly-funded bodies promote active ageing. The UK Commission on Employment and Skills has contributed to debates on how to involve older people in the workplace. One of their reports (2011) identified the impact of economic changes on older people and their opportunity for training in the workplace⁵⁹. The *Ageing Well* programme which was funded by Local Government Association raised awareness and led debates on wellbeing, employment and accessible housing and care for older people⁶⁰. The *Full of Life* team at the government Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) is leading the *Big Skills Share* campaign⁶¹ which encourages activities throughout the country on 1st October 2012 to give older people an opportunity to share their skills with each other and other age groups, and to celebrate their contribution to society.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has a mandate from Parliament to challenge discrimination, and protect and promote human rights, including for older people. As part of their work

⁵⁷ <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/further-education-skills/national-careers-service-for-england>

⁵⁸ http://www.independentage.org/media/130109/respublica_age_of_opportunity.pdf

⁵⁹ <http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/ukces/docs/publications/equality-older-people.pdf>

⁶⁰ <http://www.local.gov.uk/ageing-well>

⁶¹ <http://campaigns.dwp.gov.uk/campaigns/olderpeoplesday/index.asp>

they have commissioned research on the poverty of grandparents and research on issues such as the concept of intergenerational equity⁶².

In general, there are policies and practices in place to involve older people in shaping policies and services that affect them. All public authorities have to implement equality duty, i.e. they have duties and responsibilities to promote age equality, including among learning providers. When developing new housing, for example, all public bodies with planning responsibilities need to focus more closely on demographic issues and housing needs of local older people. Public authorities must ensure that they have sufficient information about equality issues to make informed choices and decisions, and in some cases it will be necessary to consult relevant groups who are likely to be affected by a decision. Voluntary and community organisations and statutory bodies such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission undertake consultations with older people as part of good practice. Thus development of new or improved services related to active ageing and intergenerational practice is likely to involve engagement and consultation with older people.

3.4 Conclusion

This review of EU-level policies and initiatives and, to a lesser extent, national policies and initiatives provides a brief overview of the context in which initiatives and projects aimed at promoting and supporting intergenerational learning take place. Clearly the achievement of many of the policies will depend on the active learning of older adults - formal, non-formal and informal - and the provision of education, training, information, guidance and other opportunities to promote and support that learning. The next sections will demonstrate the extent to which intergenerational learning does and could and / or should form part of older adults' learning so as to contribute to active ageing.

⁶² <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/key-projects/just-ageing/>

4. Analysis of Practice in Intergenerational Learning

The overview of policy and the survey of existing funding programmes for Intergenerational Learning formed the background against which the good practice examples received from the field were analysed. A number of 22 case studies were submitted by members of the European Network for Intergenerational Learning and of the European Association for the Education of Adults. Being self-selected good practice, the case studies do not represent a comprehensive picture of the Intergenerational Learning arena in Europe; however they are a representative sample of what practitioners themselves, and in some cases policy makers, consider to be worth retaining from the activities implemented in the field.

A number of 14 of the 22 case studies were sourced from eight European Union countries, with the highest number being submitted from France with six case studies, followed by Italy and Sweden with two case studies each, and one case study each from Malta, the Netherlands, Romania and Spain. These case studies were often used against the national policy backdrop, but also to some extent to assess the implementation of European policy through national level projects. The rest of the case studies submitted, eight in number, are examples of transnational cooperation and consequently could not be allocated to a certain country, but included partners from 26 Member States of the European Union. There were used against the background of European policy, and have formed the basis for many of the conclusions and recommendations related to furthering Intergenerational Learning at European level.

The good practice examples came mainly from non-governmental organisations and private foundations, representing a wide range of civil society actors. Some of the were large pan-European organisations, others were small providers at local level. There spectrum of organisations involved in the case studies covers, in fact, all levels of action, from local to regional to national and, finally, to pan-European. However, only three case studies were submitted by government authorities, and all three were examples of good practice implemented at local or regional level; the national government perspective is missing.

In terms of thematic coverage, the case studies submitted are mainly related to Active Ageing alone, with only three identified as focusing on Intergenerational Learning. Six case studies focus on using Intergenerational Learning in order to promote Active Ageing. This situation qualifies to a certain extent the analysis of the findings below, in the sense that the majority of case studies are not linked to Intergenerational Learning, therefore the concepts and criteria related to the Intergenerational Learning approach are not reflected in many of the projects described.

The good practice examples analysed had as main outcomes networking between individuals (17) or between organisations (12) and health or wellbeing activities (10). Fewer focused on producing learning curricula or materials or on providing cultural or multicultural activities. Only five case studies identify labour market activities as an outcome. The evident focus on networking and wellbeing of the analysed activities qualifies further the findings below, in the sense that there will be less tangible outcomes to transfer and the focus will be on identifying experiences and personal or cultural benefits.

4.1 General observations

As a general comment, before going into a thorough analysis of the findings of the survey, it must be pointed out that in most cases the implementation of the projects described did not have all the elements associated with the criteria for Intergenerational Learning accepted as the premises for the study: involve more than one generation, be intentional in terms of learning outcomes, and include mutual learning experiences between participants. All the projects submitted involved more than one generation, yet the learning processes identified within them are rarely reciprocal. However, the

organisations submitting the case studies considered them to be representative for the Intergenerational Learning approach, which seems to indicate that (1) there is only a partial understanding of the concept of Intergenerational Learning, and this aspect will be taken up later in the study; and that (2) there is a limited number of practitioners who are implementing genuine Intergenerational Learning activities, in spite of the fact that, as we have seen in the previous sections, there are numerous policies and programmes in place to support them. This points to the fact that the policy and practice level may be disconnected, with relatively ample policy initiatives in place both at national and European level, but with few practical measures and tools to support its implementation.

Another common feature of all case studies is that is that the organisations who submitted them were positive about the impact of the activities on all target groups involved, irrespective of the regular lack of reciprocal learning. The general observation is that the main, planned benefits of a project are often assessed as minimal, and sometimes the projects submitted have even failed to reach their initial objectives, yet the good practice in terms of Intergenerational Learning resides in the unintended benefits, the additional and often unforeseen impact on the different generations involved. As we will see in more detail below, it is commonly stated that activities involving more than one generation bring about personal, cultural and political benefits to the target groups, even if these were not planned.

These main, unplanned benefits of Intergenerational Learning projects are identified, on a general level, as the contribution to remedying a societal split between generations. As the previous sections demonstrate, a fast ageing process affects the demographics of Europe. This is combined with a situation in which generations live apart from each other, disconnected, and with an increasing phenomenon of social isolation, due to which more and more individuals in each generation find themselves in isolation or excluded from mainstream society. Rough estimates show that more than 1.2 million elderly people in the UK alone are living isolated and lonely lives; the figure represents a significant percentage of the age cohort, and corresponds to the more general estimates that between 2 and 20% of the older people in Europe today live in isolation, with up to 35% in the case of older people in care facilities⁶³. At the same time the polarisation of the types of chances life offers to different groups of young people is also increasing: estimates in Finland, for example, show that 50,000 young people are excluded from the mainstream activities of their communities. The case studies recognise benefits in relation to this situation.

The underlying theme in the case studies is that if people become reconnected to schooling and further education, and thence to the labour market, they are likely to pose less significant problems for welfare systems and society as a whole. Because older people often identify social inclusion as important to their quality of life and independence, they want to have a role, to feel useful and to be treated with respect. Opportunities to participate and make a positive contribution to community and society are integral to their autonomy and therefore dignity. Participation will, in itself, provide meaningful activity and a role in the community for those members of the target groups who become involved. The inclusion of older people in such projects ensures that they can contribute their own knowledge and expertise, and the feeling that they can make such a contribution is definitely beneficial in terms of reducing their isolation. In terms of the young generations targeted, the case studies identify as major, unplanned benefits the easier entry into the labour market, based on additional education, training or experience.

⁶³ Greaves, C.J., & Farbus, L. (2006). Effects of creative and social activity on the health and well-being of socially isolated older people: Outcomes from a multi-method observational study. *Journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health*, 126, 134-142.

Social inclusion can be considered therefore as one of the central upshots of the projects presented as good practice, reflecting well the European policies towards young people and the elderly, especially in relation to employment, lifelong learning and social welfare. It appears, based on the case studies received and analysed, that providers of Intergenerational Learning activities aim at bringing older and younger people back into mainstream society and at reducing the risk of a societal conflict between generations. The immediate framework of projects may be that of a learning situation, where hard skills are transferred from one generation to another, yet the activities singled out as good practice are primarily important steps forward in creating a culture of generations working together, remedying thus a situation that was brought about by the disintegration of the extended-family culture. Many are major opportunities for two or more generations not only to learn one from the other, but to contribute together to social innovation and development, thus being empowered as full contributors to society, irrespective of age and age difference.

Example 1

The project “Active Ageing in Vital Villages” proposed by Doarspwurk in The Netherlands targets both older and younger volunteers of organisations for community development, who want to learn how to make Village Development Plans or a Village Vision in their own rural community. The final aim is to support the community to make a Village Vision for their own village or region with an intergenerational approach and with the active involvement of the local ageing population. Participants experience that by mobilising virtually all inhabitants of a village around a Village Development Plan. The pooling and exchange of knowledge, experience and expertise of different generations should make it possible to stop a process of decline, allow the community to discover new opportunities and perspectives for the village and its inhabitants, and to develop strategies to realise new plans to increase the liveability of the area. Participants train together skills that are necessary in the rural development context. The expected impact is both at the level of transfer of expertise, so concrete learning, but also in relation to social inclusion and economic benefits.

More information at www.doarspwurk.nl

However, there are several observations to be made in relation to the case studies analysed. The involvement of older people at all levels of service planning and delivery is key in most case studies; fewer focus on younger generations. Secondly, there seem to be no measures to guarantee that the learning needs of all generations involved will not be overlooked, and that they will all benefit in terms of learning from the experience; most case studies seem to place learning on a secondary level in relation to the more general objectives of social inclusion of the elderly. And last, there seem to be few concrete measures in place to guarantee that the generations involved are brought closer together beyond the learning situation, reducing thus the societal rift between generations. These aspects will resurface in the analysis below.

4.2 Target groups

Considering the limited sample of case studies analysed, any statistical information regarding the target groups will be irrelevant. However, from a qualitative perspective, it is worth mentioning that 9 of the 22 projects have retired employees or employees about to retire as their primary target group. A relatively high number, seven, focus on lonely elderly or lonely youth, while the other groups conventionally called “with fewer opportunities”, i.e. ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, migrants and people with low education skills, are also regularly targeted. The direct targets of projects are, therefore, the groups that are not catered for by the state due to a lack of resources. This may lead to the conclusion that Intergenerational Learning activities are seen as remedial activities by most providers, and less as a genuine tool for educational purposes. Although partly explained by the current economic situation, this presents the risks that (1) Intergenerational Learning on the whole

becomes associated with the social, rather than the education, sector, and (2) the projects themselves could have a fairly condescending approach to the target groups.

However, even considering the focus on social benefits justified and necessary, one of the main target groups in need of support at the moment, according to recent policy documents, is young people, who are affected by both high rates of unemployment, increasing school abandon and risk of social exclusion. Almost all case studies, with few notable exceptions, target primarily old people. They use an intergenerational learning framework to create opportunities for seniors to age actively and to benefit from the opportunities provided by lifelong learning. This is well in line with the main objective of the study, which was to demonstrate the link between Intergenerational Learning and Active Ageing, and show its benefits. However, from a conceptual intergenerational learning perspective and in view of background policy, the situation is not in line with the objectives of the European Intergenerational Learning Network and its definition of Intergenerational Learning.

Although they are using an intergenerational learning framework, most case studies do not focus enough on the interaction between generations, and do not target equally two or more age groups. There is insufficient emphasis on the planned, explicit learning outcomes for young people and as a result, inevitably, there will be no reciprocity at the level of immediate learning. Although benefits are identified also for younger generations involved, these are by-products, unplanned benefits that are not recognised or validated. While in almost all cases involving direct learning experiences the older participants get some type of certification to validate their learning outcomes, younger people are often seen as secondary beneficiaries, developing soft skills that are not certified.

Consequently, it can be stated that providers of Intergenerational Learning do not organise these activities fully within the limits of the concept. More often than not, the Intergenerational Learning activity benefits directly the older generation, while the younger generations are incidental beneficiaries. The risk associated with this is the instrumentalisation of young people, which can be either the result of a misunderstanding of the policy and context related to Intergenerational Learning, or a conscious approach to policy implementation. In the latter case, there is an additional risk that, while claiming that the ultimate results of their activities are higher level of social cohesion, the providers undermine the use of the concept and devalue it by ignoring the reciprocal learning element. Moreover, as shown earlier in the section on Context, the generations of the elderly, retiring now, have benefited from good social and economic conditions that are not present now for the younger generations. Therefore, considering that in many of the projects analysed the young people become vehicles for responding to the needs of the same elderly groups, while their own benefits in the process remain secondary, there is a risk that the ultimate aim of increasing intergenerational solidarity is not achieved.

In spite of these limitations, there are several cases of real mutual learning, where the younger generations are directly targeted and they can identify concrete learning outcomes at the end of the activity. If combined with a form of validation of acquired competencies, be it formal or non-formal as, for example, the one provided by the LEVEL5 instrument, such activities can develop into genuine Intergenerational Learning activities that benefit both generations involved and bring about wider societal benefits.

Example 2

The project “Inter-generational Learning: from Diagnostic to Impact Evaluation – CROSS AGES”, a Learning Partnership funded through the Lifelong Learning Programme, Grundtvig Action, and involving partners from France, Germany, Italy and Romania, developed approaches and methods that show how younger people can support senior citizens to join the world of Internet-based social networks. Although this was the primary aim, the project aimed in the long run to promote the dialogue between generations. It developed a training concept that shows how younger people can transfer their skills in using new information and communication technologies (ICT), especially web 2.0 technologies, to senior citizens. Older people learn to use the Internet in order to participate in social networks, blogs, wiki, and digital picture and video platforms. However, there was an intended learning outcome for younger generations, too: while older people learned how to make use of Web 2.0 and how to use digital social networks, the project provided young people with opportunities to learn to act as tutors, to learn to take responsibility for their actions, and to learn how to manage situations. At the same time they learnt about the social potentials and historical backgrounds of the seniors they were working with. Thus the project contributed to promote the dialogue between young and older generations, to reduce prejudices, and to increase the tolerance between generations.

More information at www.crossages.uv.ro

Another observation is that the gap between the target groups in the case studies analysed is large, all targeting (very) young people working with (very) old people. None of the examples identified and analysed brings together adjacent generations, but focus on the extremes of the spectrum. This may be the result of the same misinterpretation of the definition of intergenerational learning, or to the understanding of the term “generation” as being far apart, when, in fact, there are generations close to each other in terms of age that are very far apart in other aspects, as evident from the contextual analysis in Section 2 above.

As a rule, there seem to be few neutral venues for Intergenerational Learning activities. The locations for the cases, the settings, do not create generally the conditions for different generations to meet in neutral venues. The case studies analysed rarely take education out of school, out of classical learning settings, and do not therefore lower the barrier to increase participation in education. They are either venues where young people learn and older people are brought in to take part in the learning process, or then they are traditional living and meeting places of the elderly where young people are brought in to take part or organise activities. This may have the benefit of improving one generation’s knowledge and understanding of the other, but it can only prove fully beneficial if the venues are swapped, so that both generations get to know the real context in which the other generation lives or works.

Thought-provoking examples are those provided by projects that have been trying to create intergenerational spaces for the activities to develop, rather than using already existing venues. Apart from the project “Active Ageing in Active Villages” described above, also the French project on intergenerational housing developments is worth considering as an example of good practice that could serve as model in other parts of Europe.

Example 3

A project on “Intergenerational Co-habitation” was set up in Nantes and Saint-Aignan de Grand Lieu, in France, following the partnership signed by the Regional Council Pays de la Loire, the Foundation of the French Railway Services (SNCF) and the Association Nantes'Renoue. These actors worked together to kick off extensive project focused on intergenerational living, i.e. people of different generations sharing lodgings and the entire associated environment. It will enable to connect seniors - who have a space in their homes - with young people looking for housing. The idea goes beyond simple sharing of a house in the sense that it attempts to (re)create a link between generations, in particular through the implementation of common leisure activities, first-aid training, but also through the development of a meeting space to host activities and encounters between tenants of all ages.

More information (in French only) at www.nantesrenoue.com

As a generic conclusion in relation to the groups targeted by Intergenerational Learning activities, the evidence shows that seniors are the main immediate beneficiaries in terms of learning outcomes. However, from the perspective of Active Ageing, learning is not sufficient. Giving senior citizens active roles and the opportunity to transfer the wealth of expertise and knowledge to younger generations is crucial. This will benefit both the seniors themselves and the younger generations who are in need of additional competencies, but also the society at large, by reducing the burden on the social care and education budgets and by decreasing the rift between generations. As already mentioned, one of the reasons behind the current situation is that there is no clear, generally known, definition of Intergenerational Learning, and this poses difficulties for those attempting to implement the policy through specific activities. At the same time, a clear understanding and acceptance of policy and of its aims is necessary for the development of practical strategies or activities that further those aims.

4.3 Relevance to national and European policy

In many ways Intergenerational Learning is not a new situation, although its definition and current use are the product of recent policy decisions. Until recently, and in some regions still today, different generations lived together, sharing a habitat and daily activities, and thus allowing for a transfer of skills, knowledge and expertise to happen naturally. The gaps between generations were smaller, and the conflicts appeared to be born out of outside factors rather than intergenerational dynamics. Due to the changes brought about by the spreading of the socialist welfare model, generations have outsourced part of their previous mutual responsibilities to the welfare system, generally run by the government or, in fewer cases, by the third sector. Consequently, modern society does not have the opportunities for intergenerational learning that might have occurred naturally in the past when extended families were the norm. Hence the policy level was harnessed to remedy the situation.

The current policy context appears to be trying to restore what was the norm a few generations ago in terms of transfer and support between generations. Intergenerational Learning appears to be, in most countries and at European level, a policy-driven concept rather than a bottom-up process that was later taken into policy. Apart from the policy documents existing at national and European level, and detailed in Section 3 of this study, in November 2011, the Education Council adopted a Resolution which lays out a renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning⁶⁴. The resolution provides specific priorities for the adult learning sector as part of the overall strategy for European cooperation in education and training. It calls for well-developed learning provision for seniors, in order to promote active, autonomous, and healthy ageing which uses older people's knowledge, experience, social and

⁶⁴ Council conclusions of 22 May 2008 on adult learning [Official Journal C 140 of 6.6.2008]. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:140:0010:0013:EN:PDF>

cultural capital for the benefit of society as a whole. It highlights the need for a strong commitment to promote adult learning as a means of fostering solidarity between different age groups (for example, by means of an "intergenerational pact").

Intergenerational Learning appears to be expected to repair a social break caused by a discontinuity between generations, by the changes in the family structure, and the individualist dimension of modern society. However, apart from this role, Intergenerational Learning also has as purpose the sharing of knowledge, the transfer of hard and soft skills, and the transmission of historical experience. The case studies submitted for analysis have partially understood these roles, with a focus on the first category, that related to social objectives.

Overall projects appear to come under the area covered by social welfare policies, and where they do fall under other policy areas, issues and activities are generally still seen from a social perspective. Intergenerational Learning consequently appears as a deficit model, responding to the lack of resources that governments have to cover the cost of providing social services. With the numbers of older people increasing, the need for such services becomes greater, and the European Union and Member States have limited resources to direct. Consequently Intergenerational Learning is used to a large extent in the projects analysed to provide, under the pretext of learning activities, services that would release pressure on other sectors of society, mainly health and social care. This proves that the projects are relevant to these policies, reflecting fairly well the situation in countries the cases were sourced from.

Example 4

The project Nonni su Internet started in 2002 after the request of the Italian Minister of Innovation to plan activities addressing the problem of the digital divide. The Mayor of Rome asked Fondazione Mondo Digitale to create a project that could meet these needs, inviting them thus to respond to a clear policy initiative. The service was developed not only as an educational service, but using the Intergenerational Learning approach in order to respond also to other needs related to social isolation or school abandon. Schools become a hot spot not only for education but also for exchanging experiences, a point of reference for all the local community. People who had dropped their studies have been back to school. ICT has been used to support pupils to rediscover the pleasure of staying at school and strengthen their self-esteem, and consequently increase their chances of social integration and success.

More information at www.nonnisuinternet.it

The case studies also portray Intergenerational Learning primarily as a charitable model, a type of activity in which, again under the pretext of learning, people give their time for the benefit of others. For the same reason as above, i.e. the scarce resources available to governments today, volunteering has become a major driver of social cohesion, and the third sector is gradually taking over the running welfare society services which had been in place but can no longer be funded. Hence it appears natural that the implementation of such policies through Intergenerational Learning activities is being done by non-governmental organisations rather than governmental ones.

Through the activities organised, many projects are in fact providing services using volunteers rather than paid employees, or preparing volunteers to provide such services. From this perspective, all projects reviewed are relevant to European policy. And even if generally an older person's reason for volunteering is to keep themselves active and therefore the projects are relevant to Active Ageing policies, the relevance to other policies at national and European level comes also from the fact that Intergenerational Learning activities enabling older people to contribute to social and economic cohesion. Several case studies exemplify this. One of them is the initiative of the French government, taken up by big corporations like Orange, to encourage economic agents to set up foundations and

allocate a percentage of their pre-tax profit to fund their activities. Orange has chosen to focus on Intergenerational Activities, allocating the time of workers about to retire to their foundation: people about to retire are paid by Orange to give their expertise to support youth organisations to implement social and start-up projects. The senior workers themselves become part of the project, which thus contributes to social cohesion, while bringing direct economic benefits to the younger generations involved.

Example 5

The project Sustainable Learning in the Community (SLIC) directly addresses the educational challenge of responding to an ageing population in Europe. Being actively involved in the local community and society after retirement 'adds life to years' and quality of life to the individual. The SLIC project emphasises the role of adult learning as one major factor of active ageing. It addresses the priority of teaching and learning in later life by opening a specific liberal adult education centred approach to validating informal and non-formal learning. It contributes to an open learning environment through supporting older people to assess their experience and know-how that they have acquired over the course of their life. Furthermore the concept of 'peer education' aims at increasing acceptance of messages through avoiding hierarchy or socio-cultural traps. A substantial part of the learning process was the promotion of active citizenship and active ageing. It was shown that the SLIC-workshop as well as the peer facilitator training provide a tool to address the transition between full time employment and active retirement effectively. It also served to acknowledge prior experiences and formal as well as informal education and support older participants to find new opportunities for learning and engagement.

More information at www.slic-project.eu

Overall, from the examples given, Intergenerational Learning appears to lie within the social sector, with occasional elements within the education sector; but it does not cover other policy sectors. Although cases in evidence signal that Intergenerational Learning has a huge potential, this has not been mainstreamed across all sectors. It can be concluded that we identify, in the cases provided, only a partial implementation of the policy, bordering on a deficit or charity model, as it facilitates the provision of services that the state no longer can fund directly.

Although relevant to several policy areas, the examples analysed focus less on the learning outcomes. In order to correct this, the charity model and a deficit model need not be necessarily avoided, but the learning element needs to be strengthened. Otherwise, what is designed as an educational approach becomes void of its educational purposes. Even if this conclusion appears drawn from a random sample of cases, not a representative sample, this point would appear to be borne out by a survey of summaries of LLP Grundtvig, Youth in Action and Europe for Citizens projects, where the Intergenerational Learning element is also used as a deficit or charity model, rarely having genuine learning outcomes for both generations involved. Also the countries surveyed have different approaches to implementing their various policies through Intergenerational Learning, yet the focus tends to be less on learning outcomes and more on social and economic policy.

Moreover, the case studies show, also from the perspective of relevance to policy, that not only is learning limited, but the focus tends to remain one way – older people being helped by young people or old people helping young people. Any intergenerational benefit is incidental, not planned, or tends to be a planned as a one-way exchange and not in the spirit of reciprocity that is intrinsic to Intergenerational Learning. This is also only partially implementing policies related to social cohesion, where the aim is to create visible mutual benefits for all generations. It remains to be seen when innovative uses of Intergenerational Learning will develop to encourage demographic renewal by improving the work-life balance, and will develop tools that re-engage generations and families in

supporting each other genuinely to take off some pressure from economic problems in providing public services.

4.4 Impact on target group

The study attempted to identify and analyse impact on the ageing target group from several perspectives, starting from generic impact envisaged in policy documents and continuing to personal, small-scale benefits. Due to the focus of the report on Active Ageing, the impact on younger generations was not investigated.

The Madrid International Action Plan on Ageing (MIPAA) makes clear reference to two core concepts, which, at least in principle, form an intrinsic part of intergenerational learning activities. The first one is a development approach to population ageing, through the mainstreaming of older persons into international and national development plans and policies across all sectors. Considering that very few cases were submitted by governmental organisations, and that the data available at national level in Member States was very limited, this concept is only reflected in a limited manner in the projects analysed. Their focus remains on social concerns, in spite of the fact that the policies at European and national level attempt to shift the focus towards other aspects, such as economic growth or environmental issues and lifelong learning. Social cohesion remains a major aim of almost all case studies identified, as they try to repair bonds that have been broken in today's society. Consequently the mainstreaming of older people into national plans cannot be identified in the evidence collected for the report.

In spite of the significant potential impact of using Intergenerational Learning in the economic sector, the case studies presented show that, in fact, apprenticeships continue to lack an intergenerational element, and there is a one-way transfer of information. What could become a very effective way of upgrading old people's knowledge and skills to respond to today's challenges is not efficiently used – a mutual mentoring approach appears to be much more beneficial to both generations involved. However, the model recently proposed by the French government and known as “Contract between Generations”, although not yet fully integrating Intergenerational Learning and its two-way learning outcomes, can be easily modified to guarantee mutual learning benefits. It is in itself a powerful tool for maintaining people longer into work, promoting social inclusion of young people, and providing clear economic benefits to both participants themselves and the society at large. Adding a two-way learning process will only increase its added value. The model is just being implemented, so no assessment of impact is available, yet its potential impact is significant.

Example 6: Contract between Generations (Contrat de générations)

This new instrument will allow companies to hire on the basis of a permanent contract young people who will be mentored and monitored in their initial years by a senior worker, who continues in employment until his or her retirement. The "Contract between Generations" will differ depending on the size of companies, and aims to address two major problems of the French labour market: low employability of young people and the high level of unemployment among seniors. The "Contract" aims to encourage companies to hire young people entering the labour market. By financially assisting companies that are using their senior employees to train the young, the contract of generation also works to maintain the employment of seniors. The instrument will consist of a contract between the employer and two employees: a young one, under 30, and senior over 55 years. Through this contract the company would commit to train young employees using the experience of older employees. The senior employees should devote part of their working time (a quarter or a third of the time) to train and guide the young employee. The senior would be responsible for teaching his trade to the young. The only element currently missing from an Intergenerational Learning perspective is the reciprocal learning outcomes, and this could be easily corrected to guarantee that the senior employee also learns from the young co-worker skills that would benefit him or her after entering retirement, ranging from the use of social networking to foreign languages.

More information available on the website of the Government of the French Republic

In the cultural sector the mainstreaming of older people seems to have had a certain degree of success. There are numerous cultural activities that demonstrate this, both in the individual case studies analysed and in the overview of the European Union's funding programmes (Culture, Lifelong Learning, Youth in Action, Europe for Citizens). The activities include reading, theatre, preserving cultural heritage (passing on skills), environmental culture. However, in this sector, too, the mutual learning process is generally missing, the focus being on a one-way transfer from one generation to another.

The second point in The Madrid International Action Plan on Ageing (MIPAA) refers to a life-course intergenerational approach to policy that stresses equity, reciprocity and inclusiveness of all age groups through all policy areas. The stress on equity, reciprocity and inclusiveness is missing in the case studies analysed. Intergenerational solidarity continues to be seen as a one-way path, where younger generations are expected to do something for the benefit of the elderly. Although noble in intention, the approach is inequitable. The benefits for younger generations of the intergenerational learning projects identified are secondary, often limited to the development of some skills that could also be learnt in school, under formal circumstances. This is not to say that the approach has no added value for the younger generations, but the principle of reciprocity is not a major concern in the projects analysed. One significant exception remains the project on "Intergenerational Co-habitation" described above, which can serve as an example of all three elements mentioned in the Madrid Action Plan: it encourages equitable sharing of resources, it guarantees reciprocal benefits, and it promotes inclusiveness.

Yet overall, while there is potential for such Intergenerational Learning projects to allow older generations to take away some of the tasks of young people, e.g. support young parents in bringing up children or teach hard skills to young colleagues, this does not happen within the framework of the projects analysed.

Apart from the generic impact resulting from the policy document above, the study looked at impact of the projects at personal, political, economic, social and cultural level on the individuals targeted directly by the projects. Again a caveat is needed: the basis for the analysis is the information provided by the organisations themselves, and no additional data was sought from the source.

In terms of personal benefits, the case studies point out a wide range, from health and well-being to stimulation, enjoyment, reduction of loneliness and increase in self-confidence. Several case studies identify also clear psychological improvements among the elderly participants: a new sense of purpose improves the general condition of the elderly who have often lost purpose in life following retirement or bereavement. The impact at this level is particularly important in the case of the personal identity crisis, particularly for men who are living through their professional life and then they find themselves alone, isolated from the world they used to be part of. Re-engaging such seniors with learning through intergenerational activities appears to be a successful method.

Example 7

The project “Seniors in Europe Learn in Networks” shows how, through the setting up of social networks, seniors who are not used to learning in later age, will become acquainted with processes of education and learning. The goal of the project has been to attract lonely seniors to take part in learning processes, based on the setting up of networks. The target group strengthens their competencies of learning and action, and is encouraged to participate in social life and, consequently, to make a significant contribution to social change. The basic concept is that seniors who are not used to activities and learning outside work will be willing to participate in social networks if, through such activities, they will become able to improve the quality of their life. This model has different variants, in accordance with the region and the requirements of the target group, and put best into practice with an Intergenerational Learning dimension.

More information at www.seelernetz.eu

Such activities are also deemed to have an impact on many old people who lose their status when retiring, and Intergenerational Learning helps them re-gain some status. The examples above contain ample illustrations of this observation.

In terms of political impact, see as political participation and taking part in decision-making, many of the case studies identify significant impact. ICT skills have become an essential competence for participation in society, from writing a blog to reading news online and to mobilising a group. A great part of the projects focus precisely on transferring IST skills to seniors, which vital for older people to make real political impact in today’s society.

Example 8

Nonni su Internet, also mentioned before, is an educational programme, promoted by Fondazione Mondo Digitale, addressing senior citizens at risk of exclusion from the benefits of the knowledge society. The intergenerational learning model means that the teachers are school students led by an experienced ICT teacher. Since 2002 the project has had a huge impact graduating more than 16,000 seniors, led by 13,320 student/tutors aided by 1,150 coordinating teachers only in Italy. This model proves very effective in the learning process while supporting the elders to become e-included.

More information at www.nonnisuninternet.it

The Intergenerational Learning approach is used also extensively in the Europe for Citizens Programme, where small-scale Citizens’ Meetings bring together young and older generations to learn from each other about rights, obligations and practices, political participation, and the European Union. This model is highly efficient and cost-effective, and a survey of several project summaries

shows that Intergenerational Learning is seen to have an important impact on a person's participation in government.

In terms of economic impact, the study was looking mainly for income generation or income maintenance, understanding this as a benefit to a person that can be measured in financial terms. Such direct economic impact is not really expected, as generally these policies come from the Ministries of Labour, and are often run at much wider policy level, not through small projects. Retirement age and income generation or maintenance are too wide to be addressed exclusively through learning projects. Consequently, the case studies demonstrate that Intergenerational Learning outside the workplace does not generate economic benefits. These are not encouraged through Intergenerational Learning but rather through incentives, by changing pension age, by part-time arrangements. So bigger measures, not small Intergenerational Learning projects, will generate income to the target group, i.e. ageing people.

However, two projects identified that they had had individual economic impact. One of them is the "Intergenerational Co-habitation" project, where the pooling of resources through an intergenerational approach leads to less pressure on the individual budget and, therefore, higher buying power. Another project is CRISOL, promoted by the Spanish Ministry of Labour, which is a large scale project focusing mainly on employment and employability, therefore having not only personal economic benefits, but also wider economic impact.

Example 9

CRISOL is an initiative promoted by the Spanish Ministry of Labour. It aims to develop and validate a model to exploit new employment opportunities for seniors over 50 years old. It also focus on new entrepreneurship opportunities offered by current Web 2.0 and social networking tools. Although it does not have an explicit Intergenerational learning dimension, the project facilitates the exchange of expertise between the seniors targeted and young people familiar with the modern communication tools. The model is built to offer CRISOL participants a complete route and technical assistance to move them towards the development of specific businesses as joint initiatives. The CRISOL model is currently being assessed through a validation action, with a set of indicators related to employment maintenance, job creation and business success expectations.

More information at www.crisolemlpeo.es

A fourth type of impact identified, and already discussed at length in other parts of this report, is social benefits. Although a set of social inclusion indicators exists, that was considered too complex to use with the limited data available. Consequently the social impact was assessed from the perspective of the projects' contribution to the social inclusion, the increase in social capital, and supporting individuals' experience of social cohesion. All projects identify social impact.

An important condition for social inclusion today becomes mastering modern communication skills, including IT. Several projects have identified this as their main impact. They have already been described at in above. However, it should be pointed out here that this impact refers exclusively to older people, and it might be overestimated in terms of ultimate impact on the social inclusion of the elderly. Although important for participation in modern society, IT is not a sine qua non for inclusion. Numerous studies demonstrate that young people have high IT skills, yet the percentage who feel excluded from society is very high. So unless combined with other envisaged outcomes, these projects are likely not to reach the wider impact estimated.

Social impact is achieved also by preventing social exclusion. By giving old people the chance to take part in various activities together with younger generations, the project "Never alone" in Romania has not only direct impact on the senior citizens targeted, but also contributes to the creation of social capital by encouraging young people to develop skills needed in working with the elderly, and

enhances social cohesion. In spite of its simplicity as method of work, the case study indicates significant impact at several levels.

Example 10

The Princess Margarita of Romania Foundation runs the project “Never alone - volunteers close to the elderly”. Its aim is to fight isolation and solitude among the elderly population in Romania. This is done through regular visits by young volunteers in retirement homes and to the homes of lonely elderly, visits which include socialising activities, games or discussions, as well as through excursions, trips, and through artistic events. This leads to an improvement in the quality of life of the elderly and to their active involvement in society. It also encourages the interaction between young volunteers and the elderly, which is a good opportunity for intergenerational solidarity and dialogue, for promoting intergenerational solidarity and social responsibility.

More information at www.fpmr.ro

In general, there are two levels of impact identified in the projects studied in terms of social benefits. There is an immediate level, which aims at preventing the social exclusion of the individual; the project above and many others work at this level. Yet there is a second level, which aim at encouraging social inclusion, which is much more difficult to achieve: once the person has dropped out from society, it proves difficult to bring them back into the mainstream. None of the projects studied indicate impact at this second level. It appears therefore that more work needs to be done to promote the use of Intergenerational Learning for bringing back people into society, a challenging tasks that would address different policies and which would bring about wider benefits.

Cultural impact is the last type of impact analysed in the context of the current study. Intergenerational Learning is considered to have potential benefits in terms of cultural engagement and intercultural competence. Although none of the case studies submitted identify specifically benefits in this area, it is evident that intercultural competence is developed in the European Union-funded projects, particularly the above-mentioned Citizens’ Meetings in the Europe for Citizens Programme, where young and older people from two or more communities develop participatory activities together. Apart from this, also the LLP Grundtvig action has funded numerous projects that focused on the development of intercultural competence in an intergenerational setting.

Example 11

A specific example of cultural impact through Intergenerational Learning is provided by the project “Intergenerational Practice in Museums”, run by the Museums Galleries Scotland. The Museum developed activities which allow older and younger people to share activities in a creative and safe environment. It provides excellent resources for intergenerational learning, having a clear impact at a cultural level. The promoter indicates that intergenerational groups come to the museum to learn something new, to enjoy themselves, and to spend quality time together, and that benefits from museum visits come from relationship-building – learning from and about; gaining knowledge and skills and from the opportunity for creative play, fun and enjoyment.

More information at www.museumgalleriesscotland.org.uk

4.5 Wider impact

As seen above, the impact related to the Intergenerational Learning projects studied can be significant on individuals and, to some extent, on groups of people collectively taking part in projects. Outcomes and impact tend to be in the personal, social and cultural domain and mainly for senior participants. There may be benefits for younger people or other generations and other types of impact, but they are not explicit.

However, at the level of the wider society this impact remains small scale. Interestingly, at this level impact is often beyond the immediate objectives of the projects, it is many times incidental, and unplanned. Even when planned, this stays outside the traditional form of learning outcomes, which can be measured, validated and recognised, and it touches mostly on the social domain. However, it cannot be ascertained that Intergenerational Learning has wide social benefits. There are indeed structural problems today that Intergenerational Learning could attempt to repair: different generations cannot live one without the other, but they do not meet naturally any longer, and Intergenerational Learning could be harnessed to eliminate or reduce the rift, to ensure that the wealth of knowledge resulting from the interaction between generations is not lost, and that society and the economy can benefit from it. Nevertheless, the best we can identify at this stage is a form of “social impact light”, in which small-scale projects can, through the power of example, generate wider benefits. The simplicity of the methods used to achieve the types of impact described here makes it relatively easy to transfer them to other contexts, provided that similar enabling factors exist; this could lead to a multiplying effect, and to wider impact in other sectors and countries.

The wider economic advantages of Intergenerational Learning are debatable. However, we cannot ignore in this case some of the potential economic benefits. The knowledge of older persons is disappearing, while new knowledge and skills are not easily accessible to them. Young people also have knowledge that the elderly do not have. The structure proposed by Intergenerational Learning allows for an exchange that cannot otherwise take place, and this exchange could benefit both the economic sector, by providing companies with a tool to upgrade their workforce with minimal costs, and the society at large, by releasing pressure on budget lines related to training and reintegration in the labour market.

An increase in economic cohesion can be no doubt linked to the cases analysed. The activities presented as intergenerational learning contribute to the overall harmonious development of European society, and to a reduction of disparities between the level of development and access to economic benefits of the target groups involved. As a consequence of this, the level of economic equity can also be affected, as the apportionment of access to services of different generations becomes fairer. These types of wider impact are likely to be minute, proportional with the minimal investment associated with such small-scale Intergenerational Learning projects. However, the potential wider impact should not be underestimated, and the potential success of the French model of “Contract between Generations” might prove that such impact is possible. An in-depth study of such potential impact might shed light on many possible avenues for using Intergenerational Learning to promote economic benefits.

In conclusion, the collection of case studies have given adequate examples to support some of the claims generally associated with Intergenerational Learning, and it has helped identify the way in which policy is reflected in activities in the field. The case studies have indicated that there are major challenges in understanding and implementing the concept and the related policies, due to a lack of information and a lack of tools. The benefits identified by providers are however significant, and directly related to some of the major policies at European and national level. Yet the characteristics of Intergenerational Learning as an overarching approach are not always reflected in the activities.

5. Conclusions

This section summarises the main findings of the study, on which the recommendations for future action are formulated. Although the findings of the report are complex, access to data has been limited. The conclusions are therefore based on the limited information available to the expert team. The examples, on which the conclusions are based, are also drawn from a limited number of good practice case studies. These were made available to us through members of the European Network for Intergenerational Learning (ENIL) and the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA); it does not mean, however, that there are no other, possibly more relevant, examples that could illustrate the findings.

The field of Intergenerational Learning is extremely **complex, scattered**, and there is very **limited data** on what has been done. In the course of the study, information received from ministries and practitioners in targeted countries was not sufficiently detailed to give a clear image of each country's policy and projects. It can be seen, however, that the situation across the countries covers a wide spectrum of development. There are different levels of policy direction, different levels of available funding, very different institutional frameworks for implementing existing policies, and very different levels of provision of Intergenerational Learning. A tentative conclusion is that the level of policy and provision is directly proportional, and thus reflects, the imbalances in the demographic pyramid of a country: the higher the proportion of the ageing population, the higher the attention and resources allocated to Intergenerational Learning: this seems to be the case in countries like Finland, Romania, Sweden, Slovenia. However, countries where the percentage of the population over 65 is still smaller but likely to increase, have also implemented, or started implementing, policies that use Intergenerational Learning to encourage active ageing and to maintain senior citizens in workplaces. But beyond these evident, objective aspects, enabling factors of success in the different contexts of the case studies have not been identified, and they would need to be the object of a wider and more in-depth study.

The concept of Intergenerational Learning is only **partially understood**, both at policy and practice level. This leads to policies and activities focusing on a one-way transmission of skills, values, and attitudes from one generation to another. The great majority of the situations analysed are **multigenerational** rather than intergenerational, in the sense that the teaching party in the learning process is of a different generation to the receiver; which in fact is typical of almost all learning situations encountered in our society. This situation needs urgent clarification, to guarantee that the concept does not become void of meaning, but also to make sure that the aims of policies around Intergenerational Learning reach their aims.

Intergenerational Learning appears to be, in most countries and at European level, **a policy-driven concept** rather than a bottom-up process that was later taken into policy. This is caused by social and demographic development. The policy level appears to be trying to restore what was the norm a few generations ago. Modern society does not have the opportunities for intergenerational learning that might have occurred naturally in the past when extended families were the norm; hence the policy level was harnessed to remedy the situation from a top-down perspective. In many ways, therefore, and almost contrary to what is stated above, Intergenerational Learning is not a new situation, although its definition and current use are the product of recent policy decisions.

In November 2011, the Education Council adopted a Resolution which lays out a renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning⁶⁵. The resolution provides specific priorities for the adult learning sector as part of the overall strategy for European cooperation in education and training. It calls for well-developed learning provision for seniors, in order to promote active, autonomous, and healthy ageing which uses older people's knowledge, experience, social and cultural capital for the benefit of society

⁶⁵ Council conclusions of 22 May 2008 on adult learning [Official Journal C 140 of 6.6.2008]. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:140:0010:0013:EN:PDF>

as a whole. It highlights the need for a strong commitment to promote adult learning as a means of fostering solidarity between different age groups (for example, by means of an "intergenerational pact"). This policy, although coming from a European level, is also present extensively at national level, with most of the countries surveyed having in place some type of **policy aimed at eliminating or avoiding a worse rift between generations**, and thus pre-empting a large-scale conflict between generations. Intergenerational Learning has the potential to do this better than activities for specific, individual, and separate target groups. Intergenerational Learning is therefore expected to repair a social break caused by a discontinuity between generations, by the changes in the family structure, and the individualist dimension of modern society.

However, to date, Intergenerational Learning is only a **partially implemented** concept. Possibly because it is policy driven and does not, as yet, have a broad practice base, it is not fully understood by practitioners, who do not have the skills nor the conditions to design or implement practical activities for intergenerational learning. Apart from the fact that the structure of Intergenerational Learning activities analysed is generally one-way, clear learning elements are often missing from the situations analysed. Intergenerational Learning is often implemented only, or primarily, as an act that supports intergenerational solidarity in itself, generally an act implemented to respond to the needs of a group of people, generally seniors, by using other people's skills and availability, generally younger people's. This one-way transmission is often built into the structure of the projects and cases analysed, which shows that projects are not trying to implement Intergenerational Learning and failing, but rather that they are implementing a concept that is wrongly perceived to be Intergenerational Learning. Although such activities are often vehicles for achieving laudable social goals, they lack specific learning outcomes for all the target groups involved, which is a *sine qua non* in order to qualify as an intergenerational learning experience. While there are some examples among those analysed where intergenerational learning outcomes are present, even incidentally, in most cases they are missing.

Most case studies analysed are **attempts at implementing national policy**. The study shows that where national policy is in place, the concept works better, particularly where the methodology for implementing the policy specifies the limits within which Intergenerational Learning should be understood. However, European policy instruments are not very successful in directing genuine intergenerational activities: most cases analysed that have been funded through the Lifelong Learning Programme, Youth in Action or Europe for Citizens, although they identify Intergenerational Learning as the main aspect of their project, fail to put in place the conditions for genuine mutual learning benefits.

The implementation of the concept is partial, not only due to a limited understanding of its meaning, but also because there are very **few tools available to practitioners**. The tools identified have mainly been developed through transnational cooperation projects, and they are not always of demonstrated quality. Moreover, when quality tools do exist as a result of European Union-funded projects, they are not well known, nor adequately exploited by their authors.

The limited implementation of the Intergenerational Learning concept is visible also in the fact that, in the countries surveyed, **no specific initial or in-service training** in the field is available to adult educators. The LLP Grundtvig Action has funded several projects that developed in-service training courses in intergenerational learning skills, but these are limited in number and duration, and their impact cannot be considered significant due to the small sample of the target group reached.

The **lack of adequate quality control and quality assurance mechanisms** to ensure the quality of Intergenerational Learning activities is a cause for concern, especially in the context of the European focus on improving the quality of adult learning provision, and particularly considering the potential ability of Intergenerational Learning to promote an active and healthy ageing population as foreseen in the objectives of Europe's Growth Strategy EU2020. Evaluation of the quality of the offer needs to include a robust investigation of what was actually learned in each activity, where/how it was used and the long term impact at different levels. This type of quality assurance requires robust,

transparent and comparable criteria that can be applied across all Intergenerational Learning activities, irrespective of their specific themes and objectives. Some attempts at developing such tools have been funded at European level⁶⁶, but they have not been taken further into developing a framework for quality implementation. The absence of this, to date, has precluded participants in the study from any systematic assessment of the quality and performance of Intergenerational Learning activities in terms of outcomes and longer-term impact.

Most cases studies analysed are **projects run by non-governmental organisations** and rarely by traditional adult education providers. They are very **simple, straightforward methods or tools**, lacking intrinsic complexity, which makes them easily transferable and easy to replicate; however, they are often used in very complex settings, and the implementation takes into account national and, only to some extent, European conditions. Therefore, before any attempt to transfer such methods and tools through Peer Learning Activities or other channels is made, enabling contextual factors need to be identified and taken into consideration. Some of the projects are very context specific, and as such, their transfer as a method of work might not work adequately.

In terms of places for Intergenerational Learning, **activities have been developed in non-neutral settings** from the point of view of the target groups directly involved in the activities. Thus they take place either in schools and educational institutions for young people, or in older people's settings, like care homes or clubs for the elderly. This seems to reinforce the fact that one target group remains the main beneficiary of the action, while the other is only a secondary, if at all, beneficiary of learning. However, this might also be a positive thing, although not identified as such in the study: the accessing of settings that are not part of a generation's regular surroundings may help reduce intergenerational tension to a certain extent, but that is already a planned aim that did not seem to be part of the case studies analysed.

In terms of the different generations involved in the activities examined, it is evident that the age groups most often targeted are older people and youth. There is virtually no interaction between generations closer together, only the **"border generations" seem to be brought into contact:** grandparents and grandchildren, school children and seniors in care homes. This leaves out the "intermediate" generations, who are often those that are about to retire and need to be kept active and healthy for a longer period. This could be due to the fact that the employment and business sector are rarely involved in this type of activities, and non-governmental organisations rarely have the working population as target groups. Another explanation might be the fact that the great majority of activities are funded through social projects, and social sector funding is rarely available to people in employment. This situation would need to be corrected in order to reflect the priorities of the European and national policies related to Active Ageing and Adult Learning.

Almost all instances of Intergenerational Learning examined are **publicly funded** and they have a limited duration. Most cases studies also point out that there is no immediate achievement of aims, possibly due to the lack of enabling factors, even if there are additional, wider benefits for the target groups. Consequently, they rarely become part of the structural offer of an organisation, and often have a very **short lifetime**, without the possibility of sustaining significant impact.

The **impact** related to the Intergenerational Learning projects studied is often beyond the immediate objectives of the projects, it is incidental and unplanned. Outcomes and impact tend to be in the personal, social and cultural domain and mainly for senior participants. There may be benefits for younger people or other generations and other types of impact but they are not explicit.

Economic benefits are almost never identified at the level of target groups; only in some cases do older people signal income maintenance after retirement. However, the general comments in the case studies and our observations allow us to claim that **Intergenerational Learning has indirect**

⁶⁶ EAGLE - European Approaches to Intergenerational Lifelong Learning (2006): toolkit for intergenerational learning activity, project funded through the Grundtvig Programme

economic impact. By keeping older people mentally and physically active for longer, it reduces the cost burden on the medical and social systems, and it also potentially provides support to younger generations, who are supported with family responsibilities, for example, by elderly members of the family rather than by services provided through public funding, e.g. child care. There is no comprehensive data on the situation in the countries studied, only scattered cases that prove that there is potentially good, high impact, but these have not been analysed, and it seems they are not replicated nor mainstreamed. This claim needs, however, to be interpreted in the context of the limited data available. A more in-depth qualitative analysis would be needed to understand the implications of and reasons for these findings, and consequently present the macroeconomic benefits of Intergenerational Learning.

6. Recommendations for Promoting Intergenerational Learning and Enhancing its Links to Active Ageing

The recommendations are oriented towards the Europe 2020 strategy for 'smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' overall and, more specifically, to those policies, actions and actors that relate directly to learning in any form and to Intergenerational Learning and, to a certain extent, Active Ageing:

- the institutions in charge of planning, approving, implementing and monitoring the European Union budget for the period 2014–2020, specifically the next generation of cohesion funds, the European Social Funds and the follow-up to the Lifelong Learning Programme
- The European Commission, specifically the Directorate-General Education and Culture and the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
- national ministries and agencies in charge of labour market and educational policy
- the European Network for Intergenerational Learning and practitioners within and outside the Network

The recommendations are structured to support these actors in making best use of the opportunities provided by Intergenerational Learning as an approach that can contribute to social cohesion, solidarity, active ageing, and not least to economic growth. Thus, by implementing these specific recommendations, the European Union institutions, national ministries and agencies, as well as practitioners at different levels can:

- support actions and projects that explore and encourage the links between different generations' participation in learning activities and economic competitiveness, social cohesion and social welfare;
- use Intergenerational Learning to design concrete policies, practices and actions linked to the Europe 2020 Strategy
- ensure sustainability and transferability of good practice in the field of Intergenerational Learning between sectors and across countries.

In the context of the recent developments of new European Union funding programmes, such as the 2014–2020 cohesion programmes and the wider education programme, it appears that there will be funding directed specifically to Intergenerational Learning projects. In light of this, the recommendations will also pinpoint some effective strategies for Intergenerational Learning projects that can help facilitate higher and better levels of policy implementation and reduce the leaking of funds towards projects that use Intergenerational Learning purely as a brand for accessing resources.

The recommendations are targeted at different actors: European Institutions, Member States' National Authorities, and The European Network for Intergenerational Learning and its Members.

6.1 Recommendations to European Institutions

Recommendation 1

Establish a clear policy definition for Intergenerational Learning that is accepted across European countries. We propose that Intergenerational Learning should be defined as: 'creating the conditions for people of different ages to work together in order to transfer from one to the other specific skills, knowledge and abilities in a mutually beneficial way'.

The following three elements must therefore be seen as an integral part of the definition of Intergenerational learning in order to maintain the specific character of the concept:

- it involves two or more generations in the learning process
- the learning process and learning outcomes are intentional rather than incidental, therefore planned in their purpose, and progressive

- there is mutually beneficial learning, or reciprocal teaching, in the sense that generations involved transfer skills, knowledge, abilities from one to the other, and both will be able to identify learning outcomes throughout the process and at the end of it.

Based on commonly accepted learning theories, Intergenerational Learning is defined here broadly enough to include the different forms of learning and learning activities from the diverse traditions across Europe. Thus it blends the formal and non-formal traditions of education; it covers the vocational and non-vocational sectors; and it can apply to learning situations within schools but also outside schools, particularly in workplaces. However, the definition does not encompass all forms of learning, since informal learning situations are excluded due to the fact that they are not planned in purpose. The boundaries of Intergenerational Learning in our understanding are set by the intentional learning outcomes that would underpin the activities; activities that are not underpinned by this characteristic are considered to form actions that are defined as, informal learning in general, which happens to involve more than one generation.

Recommendation 2

Introduce in policy documents and calls for proposals for funding the concept of “Multigenerational Learning” as an overarching concept different from Intergenerational Learning. This restriction will emphasise that Intergenerational Learning refers to a separate, specific situation as described above and not to any of the multitude of learning situations in which only the first two of the characteristics above occur. Hence, Multigenerational Learning defines a learning situation that includes more than one generation and is intentional in purpose, but where there is no reciprocal transfer between the generations involved.

Restricting the terminology thus will allow for a clearer benchmarking of progress in the implementation of policies related to Intergenerational Learning in different sectors, be it in education, labour, healthcare, or social services; will allow funders to better direct the resources available for the implementation of these policies in different sectors; and will allow practitioners to develop quality programmes that promote, through real Intergenerational Learning, key national government and European priorities, such as keeping people longer in work, reducing the costs of initial training, reducing the duration of initial vocational education, building active communities, promoting active ageing, regenerating neighbourhoods, and addressing the issues of family fragmentation.

Recommendation 3

Place Intergenerational Learning at the core of policies designed to facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET2020). Promote the fact that Intergenerational Learning is primarily a purpose-driven activity and not an informal exchange, and encourage its use in enhancing partnerships between education and training institutions and the broader society. This will help reach several of the benchmarks set in the ET2020 strategy, including reducing the share of early leavers from education and training and an increased participation of adults in lifelong learning. It will also use the results of the European Year in Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012) to offer senior citizens more chances to stay involved in society and to contribute to its development. At the same time it will help reach the main aim of the Youth on the Move Initiative, by putting young people at the heart of education and learning, making sure they receive the knowledge, skills and experience they need to find their first job while giving them the opportunity to share their own knowledge and feel empowered as full participants in society.

Recommendation 4

Provide more long-term strategic and sustainable funding for projects, organisations and programmes on Intergenerational Learning. In the context of the financial crisis, educational projects are being cut and both private and public sector organisations are focused on survival. In this context the European Commission can, through the cohesion funds, provide more long-term support to ensure sustainability

of genuine Intergenerational Learning initiatives.

The evidence from country policies and programmes has shown that governments have reduced state funding to the very sector and projects that facilitate Intergenerational Learning. However, it is questionable to what extent the private sector, without incentives and without sustainable co-funding, can or will use scarce resources to promote learning activities whose immediate benefits are not monetary. Equally, the effectiveness of non-governmental organisations and public institutions is questioned when they have to spend most of their efforts on fund-raising.

In this context, examine the work of the Thematic Working Group on Quality and Financing in the Directorate General Education and Culture to see how the group could address the Intergenerational Learning aspect

6.2 Recommendations to European Institutions and National Governments

Recommendation 5

Ensure a long-term strategic approach to Intergenerational Learning that promotes the links between Intergenerational Learning, social solidarity, active ageing and economic competitiveness as a necessary foundation for building a strong and cohesive Europe. Use as a basis the Renewed Agenda for Adult Learning, which makes specific references to seniors and to a pact between generations, monitoring its implementation and reflection in national policy.

Recommendation 6

Use the new generation of European Union education programmes to guarantee that the EU institutions and national governments help tackle the barriers and key challenges identified in this study by providing:

- **A much clearer, stronger and better defined Intergenerational Learning element**, with clear benchmarks for implementation of the approach, and **with clear quality assurance and quality control mechanisms** – Ensure adequate support is given to Intergenerational Learning processes in all learning contexts, to ensure the quality and consistency of the learning experiences that underpin Intergenerational Learning. Focus the resources on learning in order to enhance the individuals' quality of engagement in the labour market and society in general.
- **Increased co-ordination and facilitation** – Bring together actors (countries, sectors, organisations) that have used Intergenerational Learning, encourage cross-European sharing of information, solutions and good practice through Peer Learning Activities. Also encourage a pan-European approach to Intergenerational Learning that involves working with other European institutions and European countries beyond the EU, especially through the neighbourhood policies. The results of previous projects co-funded by the European Commission should be made known and available to the wider community, so that their potential can be fully exploited.
- **Continued strategic funding** – Ensure continued strategic funding of projects and programmes that create spaces for more intergenerational dialogue and two-way transfer of knowledge, skills, abilities, values and experience. Provide greater information and access for young people and hard to reach groups. Be more specific in directing funding so that projects and activities that genuinely use Intergenerational Learning to support and promote national and European policy agendas get priority in accessing resources.
- **A strengthened evidence base** on which to make policy decisions in the area of Intergenerational Learning - Encourage the sharing of experiences and solutions through exchange programmes and the funding of more cross-sector, cross-border, and cross-Europe research. It is important to **monitor the effectiveness of specific Intergenerational**

Learning programmes (in schools, in workplaces and in communities) that enhance the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed for engagement in the labour market and in society in general. It is also important to identify the added-value resulting from Intergenerational Learning as opposed to benefits from pure adult learning activities.

6.3 Recommendations to Member States' National Authorities

Recommendation 7

Have Intergenerational Learning as a precondition for funding social projects. Use Intergenerational Learning to target those groups and individuals who engage the least in society and who are most at risk of unemployment and social exclusion. This will help practitioners assist hard-to-reach and disadvantaged groups, including young people, especially in the context of the current economic crisis. It is crucial for a healthy economy that all groups are ready to engage and it may well improve social cohesion in times of economic difficulties if disadvantaged groups and mainstream groups are involved together in learning activities, especially if these learning activities happen outside the formal education sector.

Projects should be funded that use this approach to enable young people and adults to engage with each other and learn from each other how to participate together in society, in decision making, in economic governance issues, and in contexts that are part of their daily lives and experiences, particularly at work and at community level. In order to ensure the worthwhile use of tight resources, funding should be focused on methods that have been demonstrated to be effective. The current report provides several such models.

Recommendation 8

Adopt the model, already implemented partly in France, of using Intergenerational Learning to promote longer working lives and the transfer of skills, including soft skills, between generations. The model of 'Contract between Generations' ("Contrat de génération"⁶⁷) needs to be reinforced with a more powerful transfer of skills towards the older generation, and as such can serve as an incentive for companies to hire young people entering the labor market. Indeed, many companies are reluctant to hire beginners, and prefer hiring people who already have experience, making it difficult for young people to enter the world of work, especially if they have insufficient training. By financially assisting companies that are using their senior employees to train the young, the model also helps to maintain senior workers in employment until their retirement and possibly beyond. This model should be fine-tuned into an intergenerational learning contract in enterprises, where Vocational Education and Adult Learning organisations are brought in to support the mutual learning.

Recommendation 9

The French model of encouraging big corporations to establish foundations to promote the involvement of their senior workers in civil society and charity work should also be considered as a potential means of boosting Intergenerational Learning. Encouraging seniors to support young people in their endeavours to take part in society is considered good practice for young people but also for adults. The role of Vocational Education and Adult Learning organisations must also be defined as promoters of the learning objectives envisaged in each individual case.

Recommendation 10

Provide funding for Intergenerational Learning projects that encourage collaboration across sectors, between different types of partners that have different expertise and resources, including sustainable tripartite partnerships between the education and training sector, the business community and third sector organisations. These partnerships would enable a genuine sharing of expertise, resources and

⁶⁷ <http://www.gouvernement.fr/gouvernement/le-contrat-de-generation>, in French only

responsibilities, and can provide young people and older generations with real and significant mutual learning benefits. Such partnerships between diverse actors can also provide the spark for social innovation and encourage social cohesion, intergenerational solidarity and the active ageing of Europe's population.

6.4 Recommendations to The European Network for Intergenerational Learning

Recommendation 11

Promote clarity and balance in the concept of Intergenerational Learning. It should not only be understood as a an educational concept and model where one generation transfers knowledge to another, but as a transversal model underpinning potential changes in our contemporary ageing societies, one where generations work together to develop social capital and social cohesion. Intergenerational Learning must be understood as a concept that is used not only in the education sector, but also in the labour market, in healthcare and social services, to make best use of the positive resources that both the younger and older generations have to offer to each other and to society.

Disseminating information on the definition, specific components of and restrictions associated with the terminology should help to emphasise this. This function should be one of the main priorities of the network, and specific conferences and training events should be organised for the promotion of the definition and of the concept, within and beyond the education sector.

Recommendation 12

Strengthen the evidence base on which to make recommendations for policy decisions in the area of Intergenerational Learning and to back up future advocacy activities. Carry out a study of the real and potential impact of Intergenerational Learning on economy (economic development, economic benefits, social care budget) in order to identify the added value resulting from Intergenerational Learning activities as opposed to benefits from pure adult learning activities. Identify also data on how Intergenerational Learning policies have been implemented in different countries in order to facilitate a more efficient transfer of good practice in policymaking and implementation.

To this end, identify potential funding resources through the European Union's Framework Programme for Research and by involving major research institutes at European and national level.

Recommendation 13

Organise training activities to up-skill the practitioners involved in Intergenerational Learning activities, or who might be promoting such activities. Use the expertise of members to develop training courses that are offered both at European level (e.g. Grundtvig or Comenius In-Service Training Courses) and at national level, in the context and language of the beneficiaries.

There are numerous tools for Intergenerational Learning in different countries, many created through European Union-funded projects. These tools could form the basis for the development of training activities.

Recommendation 14

Develop a Quality Assurance Framework for Intergenerational Learning activities, and propose clear criteria for quality control. Define also within the framework criteria for what constitutes impact in terms of Intergenerational Learning activities. Such a framework and criteria are increasingly necessary in order to support organisations in accessing funds and organising activities, but also in order to assess the impact and benefits of these activities and provide funders with feedback and progress in relation to existing benchmarks.

The results of the EAGLE Project⁶⁸ should be examined as a potential starting point for such a Framework.

Recommendation 15

Increase the visibility of Intergenerational Learning in general and improve the concept's "brand" by giving it a higher profile. Clearly defining the concept and identifying new, additional and specific benefits need to be accompanied by major visibility campaigns and advocacy measures. The current situation, when Intergenerational Learning seems to encompass every activity and it is perceived increasingly as a buzzword, diminishes its status, and does not encourage its development to its full potential. Focus clearly in the advocacy work on the three thematic areas that the report has found to experience significant impact: personal benefits, political benefits and cultural benefits of Intergenerational Learning.

The possibility of organising conferences, dissemination events, information sessions and advocacy campaigns in cooperation with European Institutions, national authorities and private sector organisations should be explored. Also accessing funds through the LLP Grundtvig Accompanying Measures should be considered.

⁶⁸ EAGLE - European Approaches to Intergenerational Lifelong Learning (2006): toolkit for intergenerational learning activity, project co-funded by the European Commission through the Lifelong Learning Programme