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# IDEA

**INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE  
FOR EUROPE AWARENESS**

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



# “IDEA: INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE for EUROPEAN AWARENESS”: *a focus on intergenerational equity and social sustainability*

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Erasmus+ KA2  
Strategic Partnership for the Exchange of Good Practices (YOUTH)



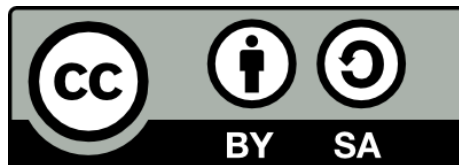


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## Project Description

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### Focus: Intergenerational Dialogue

In contemporary societies, the question of the relationship between young and elderly people is becoming increasingly important. By definition, democratic societies are inclusive, and citizens can be part of the policymaking process. However, in practice, some citizens participate more than others, with certain groups remaining largely underrepresented. Alongside this issue, the lack of dialogue between young and elderly people can lead to an inability to understand each other's needs.

A clear example of this is the case of Brexit. The Brexit referendum in 2016 illustrated very well how the participation (or lack thereof) of citizens of certain age groups in policymaking can have a huge impact on a society's central political choices. In the case of Brexit, many young people (75%, in fact) wanted the UK to remain in the European Union (EU), while 70% of elderly people voted to leave the EU. This meant that elderly people chose the future for the young people. Due to the rise in the average age of the population, the number of elderly people outweighs that of young people. This lack of dialogue between the two age groups means that young people are left to deal with the choices of the elderly, which may differ hugely from their own. For example, the elderly might not understand the needs and desires of young people to travel around Europe and identify as European citizens.

Although it would be wrong to blame demographics for everything, it is true that intergenerational dialogue can help people in different age brackets to learn from each other and prevent these polarising outcomes from happening. For example, dialogue would allow generations to exchange views on political participation and reasons for being an active citizen (e.g., the case of climate change). Since young people seem to be more in favour on the European Union, instead of leaving the older generations to define their future, intergenerational dialogue can help them build and follow more actively Europe's values. Intergenerational dialogue, and hence this project, is about intergenerational equity and, ultimately, social sustainability.

#### General Objective:

- Stimulating intergenerational dialogue and solidarity between generations and promoting European values.

#### Specific Objective:

- Collect and disseminate best practices (at least two per country) concerning intergenerational dialogue in order to compare the way in which young and elderly people cooperate to achieve a mutually acceptable frame of reference.

#### Activities:

- Training activity for youth workers in Greece to get to know the Human Library methodology (<https://www.thehumanlibrary.nl/methodology>);
- Conducting Three Transnational Partners' Meetings;
- Creating country snapshots concerning the project topic (Final Output);
- Organising at least one experience of dialogue between young and elderly people in the country with the methodology of the Living Library in a way that allows elderly people understand the difficulties of young people today and vice versa.





- Direct Beneficiaries: Young people
- Indirect Beneficiaries: Older people

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## Abstract

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This document aims to explore the relevant issues, barriers and pitfalls of intergenerational communication between young people and elderly people and, at the same time, identify best practices and positive experiences in Europe that foster intergenerational dialogue.

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## Methodology

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### ***Four country snapshots concerning intergenerational dialogue***

Each project partner has undertaken desk research to produce a short contemporary report based on existing data regarding actions taken in their country to tackle the issue of the generation gap based on intergenerational dialogue. The collected data were sent to SOMMERSO, the leading partner of this project.

### ***Report literature and other sources for desk research / Identification of relevant scientific and policy documents***

Each partner carried out secondary desk research to identify useful documents which enabled them to produce an overview of the issue of intergenerational dialogue and European values in each country, both at local and national levels.

This included collecting existing documents, reports, articles from literature, official documents, and similar analysis related to the topic of the project.

This encompassed:

- An overview of the issue of intergenerational dialogue based on a literature review and official documents in each country;
- Best practices and lessons learnt from experiences that support intergenerational dialogue;
- Case studies referring to single activities and projects that promoted intergenerational dialogue; and
- Relevant studies and research on the skills, needs and actions necessary to tackle the issue of the generation gap through intergenerational dialogue.

Each partner prepared a country report, and this publication is the result of the consolidation of these reports. It is the digital library of the IDEA project and it constitutes a part of the knowledge base of the project.





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## Secondary Research - Italy

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### 1. Summary of the dialogue between elderly and young people in Italy

*"dicebat Bernardus Carnotensis nos esse quasi nanos gigantium humeris insidentes"*

"If I have seen further, it is by standing *on the shoulders of giants*"

**Standing on the shoulders of giants** is a metaphor for "Using the understanding gained by major thinkers who have gone before in order to make intellectual progress".

This metaphor expresses a relationship of modern culture's dependence on the strength and value of past learnings.

As a result of this dependence, it is possible to see further and more clearly, not for the sharpness of our eyesight or our height, but because we are carried upwards by the greatness of revered 'giants' of the past.

**Intergenerational exchange promotes the transmission of knowledge and stimulates progress.**

**Today, however, we are facing a Generational Gap:** "Today's young people don't listen to elderly people" and "elderly people are convinced that they always know everything".

Moreover, there is an inability to build and maintain a solid and fruitful relationship based on intergenerational communication. This creates an unproductive tension between elderly and young people, instead of having a mutually respectful relationship.

Yet, intergenerational exchange is convenient for everyone. Here is an example:

A young person studying away from home might ask their parents for help understanding a rental contract or call their grandmother to get the recipe for their favourite dish, while older generations may turn to the younger ones to solve technological challenges.

This type of mutual support has been illustrated in the comic at the following link, by the cartoonist *Zerocalcare*.

<https://www.zerocalcare.it/2013/02/18/i-vecchi-che-usano-il-pc/>

Indeed, simple everyday experiences are enough to explain the advantages of intergenerational dialogue. However, also on a theoretical level, we can consider the benefits of long-term historical, cultural and ideological differences that have characterised the different contexts in which generations have been formed and developed.

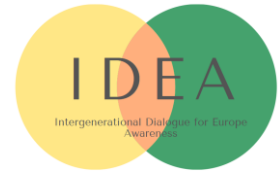
The knowledge and experiences of the older generations are hugely valuable, and younger generations should be able to benefit from them. Similarly, younger generations have skills that can benefit older generations or be used to support elderly people.

The European Commission underlined the importance of this message in 2012 by establishing the "European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations ('EY 2012')".

The year was dedicated to intergenerational solidarity in the hope that it would increase awareness of the contribution of elderly people to society and disseminate innovative measures which could help mobilise the full potential of the ageing baby-boomers (people born between 1946 and 1964).







EY 2012 also meant continuing to work on guidelines already outlined by the Vienna Plan of 1982, published by the United Nations General Assembly which declared the year 1999 as the "International Year of Older Persons", and by the subsequent Madrid Assembly in 2002 which paved the way for intervention to "build a society for all ages" (United Nations, 2002; 2006).

Active ageing also declines in social spaces that are part of people's daily lives. In particular, the different generations are often present but do not co-exist and do not co-inhabit environments and shared spaces that could become significant for bonding and building relationships towards the construction of intergenerational solidarity.

Pope Francis has described the problem in his book "The wisdom of time":

*"I have been carrying a thought in my heart for some time. I feel that this is what the Lord wants me to say: that there is an alliance between young and old people". It is necessary to commit at various levels to promote this true "alliance" which can fill the "meaningless" of indifference and help young people to "face the future".*

*A guy wrote to me: "For adults we young people are like a puzzle. To reassemble all the pieces it takes a lot of patience and passion, otherwise you give up the game. For our part, adults are like Author's Texts; to understand them in the right way, you must first know the context and circumstances in which they were written, otherwise you risk making a wrong interpretation" -Pope Francesco*

The obstacles to dialogue are represented by prejudice:

On the one hand, elderly people must overcome the temptation to underestimate the abilities of young people and to judge them negatively. Young people, on the other hand, must overcome the temptation to ignore elderly people and avoid seeing them as "old, outdated and boring people, that is wrong to always start from scratch as if life began only with each one of them".

The experiences/stories of each elderly person are like a book, but not one that we can read alone like those we find in the library: this book is in their minds and in their hearts. The only way to read it is by listening. Young people need to have the patience to give the elderly time to tell their story. Just as when we read a book that is difficult to understand, we must be patient about reading in order to understand the values of their experiences. It is important to dedicate enough time to reflect on and discover the values they try to express.

This may bring young and elderly people closer.

A good example is the movement "Friday for Future", where the elderly were mobilised by youngsters. They did not stand by but instead decided to support them by becoming one force for action. #FridayForFuture is a youth-led and organized movement that began in August 2018, after 15 years old Greta Thunberg and other young activists sat in front of the Swedish parliament school day for three weeks, to protest against the lack of action on the climate crisis. The movement is run by young people, learning from young people, and for young people. In this specific example young people are asking adults to change things to save the planet.

## 2. Best Practices & Case Studies Concerning Intergenerational Dialogue in Italy







### **a. Best Practice “Memory Project: meeting, dialogue and sharing activities between generations through innovative tools”**

**Description:** Memory Project was created by "Media, Educazione, Comunità", a Social Promotion Association formed by educators, trainers, journalists, graphic designers, media experts and technicians in the field of communication. The association is based in the Province of Udine (Friuli Venezia Giulia).

The project's fundamental purpose is to bring different generations together through the use of innovative tools.

During the activities, a series of video interviews with local elderly people were conducted by adolescents/ young people accompanied by a trainer. Initial interviews often involved grandparents and acquaintances.

During the interview, questions were asked about the lives of the elderly interviewees, and in particular about their adolescence, including conflict with parents, transgression, their peer groups, sexuality, friendship, school and related issues.

Videos were prepared in order to present and share the interviews to the community. The project is an example of intergenerational dialogue using the interview method.

These videos were presented to the interviewees and to the whole community.

The project had a duration of twelve months, including interview planning, meetings, filming and editing of the interviews.

**Objectives:** Involving young people in research on adolescence that leads them to view the elderly from a different perspective from that with which they are usually seen and perceived. This leads to the **creation and reinforcement of the sense of "community"**. Another fundamental objective is to work with images to enable young people to use media creatively following specific steps (idea/concept, choice of subject, shooting, selection of images, editing). Such activities **favour the development of creative and critical thinking**.

**Where it was used:** Udine (Friuli Venezia Giulia)

#### **Target groups:**

- Students and young people aged 14 to 20;
- Local elderly people, coordinated and organised by trainers.

#### **Innovative elements:**

Memory Project aims to experiment with innovative ways of meeting and communicating between generations through the use of a video interview. This tool is used to listen to each other and create a "space" in which to share stories and emotions between adolescents and elderly people.

Source: <https://www.edumediacom.it/progetto-memoria/>

### **b. Best Practice “Grandparents on the Internet”**





**Description:** This project, carried out by the Fondazione Mondo Digitale, is a digital literacy plan for people aged over 60 years. It has reached its fifteenth edition.

Up until the project's most recent edition, 37,000 senior Internet users have graduated from the plan (about 65% were women), and 21,800 student tutors and 2,165 coordinating teachers have led the plan. The intergenerational learning model involves 20 Italian regions.

Grandparents are offered internet courses that take place in the computer rooms of schools of all levels. The elderly participants can be the grandparents of the students or enrolled in elderly social centres or other associations.

For each school, classes of 20-25 seniors are formed. Tutors are the students who attend the school, coordinated by an expert teacher in information technology.

The course program is structured in a way to complete basic computer skills within 15 lessons, from switching it on to surfing the Internet, and the use of e-mail and social media.

This allows the elderly to familiarise themselves with new communication technologies.

Each edition is enriched with a **multimedia project** that tutors and grandparents build together to practice using the computer, for example the preparation of an online collection of games of the past and a digital photo album with vintage photos.

**Objectives:**

- reduce the digital literacy gap - the gap of knowledge between generations in terms of new technologies;
- provide the elderly with basic skills to support their use of new technologies;
- foster intergenerational dialogue, exchange and understanding; and
- create a network between the community (senior citizens' centres) and public schools.

**Where it was used:** In all Italian regions

**Target groups:** Elderly and younger people (senior and junior tutors)

**Innovative elements:** *Grandparents on the Internet* proposes a **different perspective** - grandparents who go to school, students who are teachers, and teachers who watch students teaching their grandparents.

This allows the development of new ways of thinking, acting and relating to others.

This change of perspective calls to mind the famous scene from the film "Dead Poets Society", in which Professor Keating makes the boys stand on their desks to look at the classroom from above.

In the same way, *Grandparents on the Internet* is an opportunity to look at the world from a different point of view. Taking on a completely different role has important consequences for an individual and a community.

The students experience directly the difficulty of transmitting information to their grandparents. They learn to reflect on themselves and their own challenges which are often very similar to those of their





grandparents. This new form of awareness helps students engage in more cooperative behaviours and prevent failures.

Grandparents, through this complex network of new roles and functions, find that they are still capable of doing many things for which they may previously have considered themselves too old. They are able to learn new concepts and technical skills, but also – and most importantly – to adapt successfully to new environments and relate to others. Hence, they discover that they are still capable of "growing".



Source: <https://mondodigitale.org/it/cosa-facciamo/aree-intervento/invecchiamento-attivo/nonni-su-internet>

### 3. Research available in your country on the project topic:

**Processi di dialogo intergenerazionale alla prova dell'esperienza Giovani vs Anziani: nuove relazioni tra generazioni e culture a cura di Rosita Delugi. – Intergenerational dialogue processes tested by the experience Young vs Elderly: new relationship and cultures by Rosita Delugi.**

The promotion of intergenerational dialogue between young and elderly offers an educational opportunity to create more inclusive social contexts. Through participatory planning, different generations of citizens become social agents, sharing paths of reflection and action strategies working towards the promotion of well-being and common good. There are many challenges to participation in society, including interests, motivation, mutual understanding and openness to one another. All of these topics can be exemplified in intergenerational encounters.

The project was implemented as one of intergenerational exchange and research, lasting 12 months, from July 2013 to June 2014. The project took place in 19 locations belonging to: the Salesians for Social association, which led the presentation of the proposal; TGS – Youth and Social Tourism; CNOS / Sport – Salesians for Sport and CGS / Cnos; Ciofs – Cinecircoli Giovanili Socioculturali. From this direct experience, the intense participation of young and elderly made it possible to address a variety of important topics, related to one or the other group, as well as to discover traditions of the past and their evolution. The regions in which the various associations have operated are: Piedmont, Lombardy, Veneto, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Liguria, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria, Marche, Lazio, Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicily, and Sardinia.



A specific report was prepared to analyse the impact of the project, entitled: *Processi di dialogo intergenerazionale alla prova dell'esperienza Giovani vs Anziani: nuove relazioni tra generazioni e culture* a cura di Rosita Deluigi.

The "Giovani vs Anziani" (Young vs Elderly) report analyses the pedagogical logic and educational strategies that guided the intergenerational exchange, according to the approach of social animation, and evaluates the different degrees of possible participation. Hypothesised and implemented models emerge, paying particular attention to the reconstruction of the quality chain of educational processes in non-formal contexts and showing how positive intergenerational dynamics can have significant repercussions on social cohesion.

Source:

[https://www.salesianiperilsociale.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Giovani-vs-Anziani\\_Pubblicazione.pdf](https://www.salesianiperilsociale.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Giovani-vs-Anziani_Pubblicazione.pdf)

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## Secondary Research - France

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### 1. Summary of the Dialogue Between Elderly and Young People in France

In France the topic of intergenerational dialogue has been widely discussed by organisations and institutions active both in the social and in the entrepreneurial fields.

The French government faces two main issues with regards to intergenerational dynamics: on one hand, young people struggle to find employment and need better opportunities for integration into the labour market (in 2020, the unemployment rate of people aged between 15 and 24 years old was 21%), while on the other hand France has an ageing population, with 20% of people aged over 65 years in 2019.

In an effort to address this situation, intergenerational actions have been proposed by French organisations for more than 20 years. These organisations carry out activities that are explicitly aimed at bringing generations closer together in the context of a variety of cultural, educational, recreational or professional projects at a local level. The promoters of these projects come from a variety of backgrounds but are often, although not exclusively, involved in socio-cultural activities. According to Michel Loriaux and Dominique Rémy, authors of *“Rapprocher les âges de la vie: une analyse des projets intergénérationnels en Belgique”*, the majority of these actions in Belgium – but also in France and in other European countries – come from the private sector (mainly non-profit organisations), the other institutions involved being either local authorities or different groups such as family, youth, political, etc. The great heterogeneity of these initiatives contributes to the maintenance of social cohesion between generations in France.

Considering the demographic issue from a political point of view, French politicians are faced with two challenges: providing training to young generations and promoting the participation of retirees in the creation of wealth. In this case, some key solutions are being provided by the private sector. Companies have taken on the intergenerational challenge and have intensified efforts to bring together their younger and older employees. In France, between 2015 and 2020, five million senior citizens left the labour market, while six million young people entered it. A real generational changeover is taking place. But above all, there is a new situation that companies need to take into account: four generations are now working together. This multigenerational “cohabitation” in the workplace, if not managed, could lead to difficulties. However, if real cooperation is planned and encouraged, it will become a strength for companies. In 2015, the OMIG, Observatory of Intergenerational Management, revealed in a survey that 85% of companies “would gain a lot in efficiency if they better connected the generations”.

A number of interesting studies have been undertaken regarding the perceptions that French people have about intergenerational dynamics. For example, in 2020, ANPERE (Association nationale pour la prévoyance, l'épargne et la retraite) published the third edition of its *“Observatory of intergenerational links”*. This biannual research started in 2016 and has since revealed that, although the importance of the intergenerational link was not demonstrated during the 2018 edition, it has since become a popular topic among the French. In particular, 45% of the French participants surveyed feel that intergenerational dynamics have become stronger in recent years. This number is up nine percentage points, particularly among those aged 50 and over. Finally, although the French traditionally feel that solidarity between young people and senior citizens is increasing (72%, a 17% increase), conversely, and perhaps counter-intuitively, they feel that solidarity between senior citizens and young people is weaker than before, with a decrease in 17% (28%).





## 2. Best Practices & Case Studies Concerning Intergenerational Dialogue in France

### a. Best Practice “Cohabitation intergénérationnelle solidaire “

#### Description:

*Cohabitation intergénérationnelle solidaire* (solidary intergenerational cohabitation) is a solidarity system established in 2004 in France which allows a senior citizen who has a free room in their house to take in a young person. This can be done in exchange for keeping the host company, small services or modest financial compensation. Many variants of this system are possible, depending on the personalities and the bond developed between the individuals, based on reciprocity.

The Cohabitation works in the following way: a private non-profit or public coordination organisation meets the young person and the senior, puts them in contact with each other, follows the contracting process and monitors the partners once the agreement has been put in place.

The objectives of intergenerational cohabitation are to:

- Facilitate the expression of solidarity, commitment and bringing generations closer together;
- Expand the supply of housing and thus develop the mobility of young people;
- Address the isolation of senior citizens and young people and reassure their families;
- Prevent the loss of autonomy of senior citizens; and
- Optimise energy consumption by making use of rooms left vacant.

#### Where it was used:

Everywhere in France

#### Target groups:

Young people, students and older citizens

#### Innovative elements:

The establishment of a system based on intergenerational solidarity promoting mutual help and exchange of services for both seniors and young people to support each other.







Source: Fotolia

**b. Best Practice “WeGenerations” by BNP Paribas**

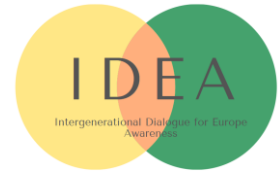
**Description:**

In 2017, BNP Paribas launched “WeGenerations”, the company’s first intergenerational network for its employees. With this tool, the bank aims to share internal collective intelligence with as many people as possible, with the objective of encouraging exchanges between generations, supporting the exchange of career experience and understanding customers' needs, both in their professional and personal lives. To achieve these goals, BNP Paribas has created WeGenerations which includes employees of all ages; a variety of approaches that will enable the bank to increase its collective intelligence by being more inclusive, creative and innovative.

BNP Paribas was inspired by the "Intergenerational Dialogue on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)" held at UN Headquarters in New York on 1 August 2017. Jayathma Wickramanayake, the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, said: "Aging populations need to work with younger populations to foster successful and reciprocal intergenerational relationships and partnerships, which will be at the heart of any well-integrated society”.







Following these recommendations, BNP Paribas created WeGenerations to facilitate exchanges between young people and seniors, with all that this entails in terms of transmitting knowledge and know-how on both sides, questioning and reinterpreting stereotypes surrounding age groups.

This network also aims to encourage the sharing of visions, experiences and complementary career paths between the different generations and to facilitate guidance and personal development in a supportive and caring environment.

**Where it was used:** In BNP Paribas branches

**Target groups:** Older and younger employees of the bank

**Innovative elements:**

The creation of a dedicated network where seniors and young employees support each other in order to improve their experience at the company and contribute to the creation of business strategies that are conceived together to respond to different needs. This capitalises on the one hand on seniors' often vast professional experience and on the other hand leverages on millennials' energy and technological skillset.

Constance Chalchat, Head of Change Management BNP Paribas CIB, presents "WeGenerations":  
[https://youtu.be/QsKq\\_MzCvOY](https://youtu.be/QsKq_MzCvOY)



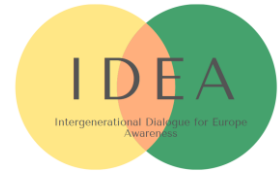


Source: BNP Paribas

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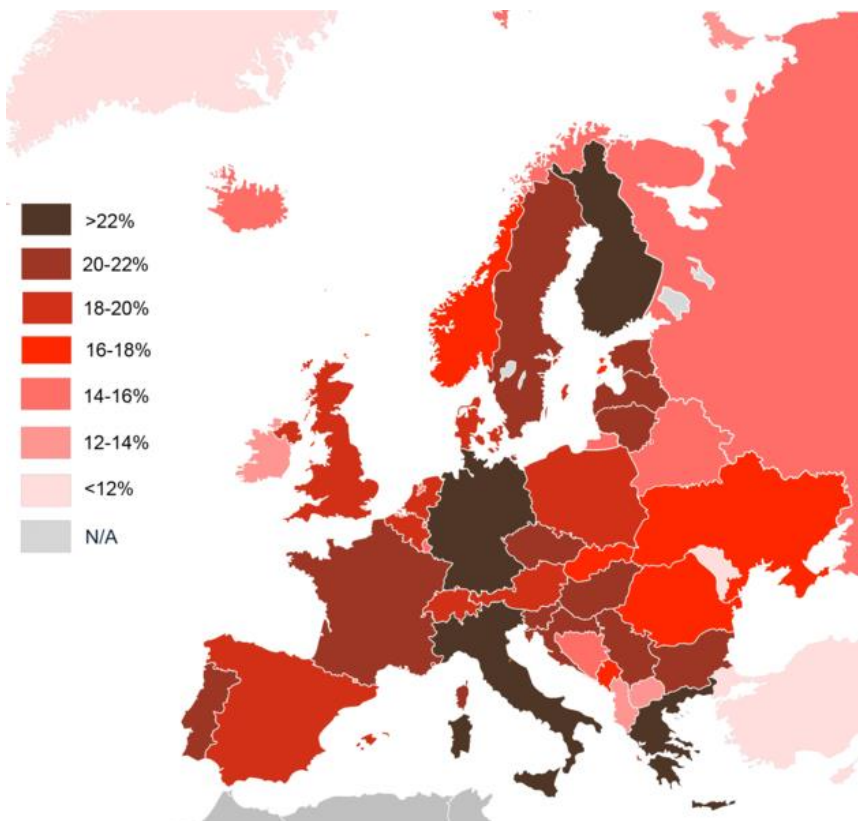


## Secondary research - Greece

### 1. Information about dialogue between the elderly and young people in Greece - an overview

Greece is a country with one of the largest age gaps between young people and the elderly.

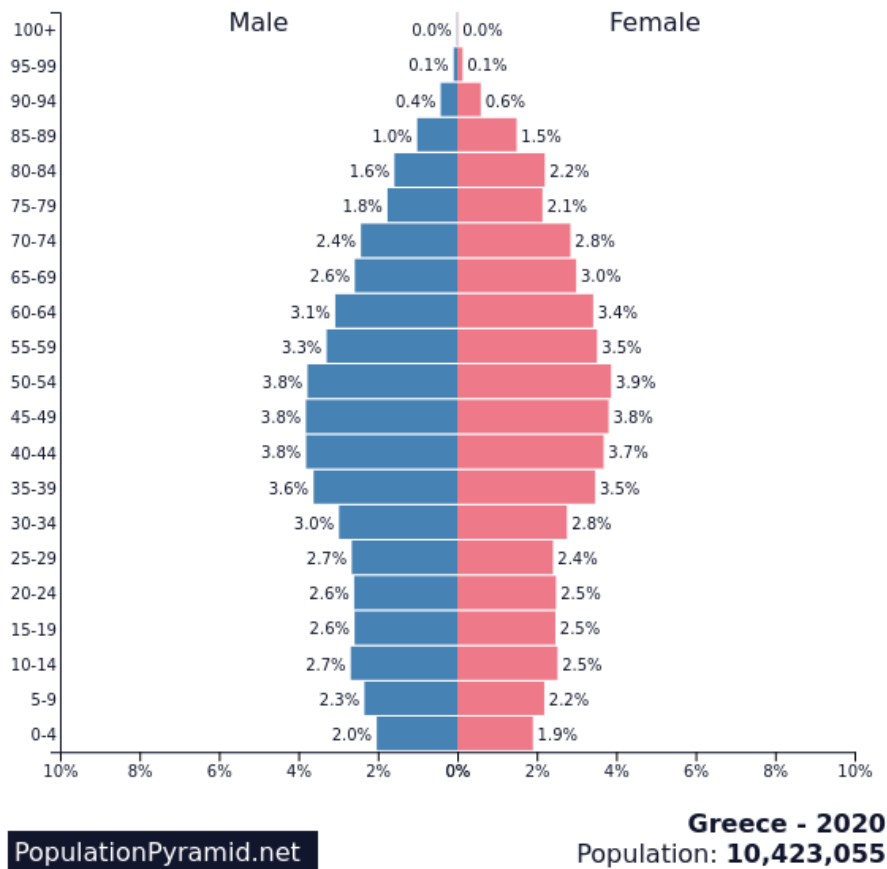
Percentage of the population over 65 in Europe in 2020



Source: *Blank\_map\_europe.svg*: PNG author: San Jose, 19. July 2006. SVG trace by RedHotHeat 06 August 2006 derivative work: Underlying Ik, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Distribution of ages across the population in Greece (2020)





Source: Populationpyramid.net

**Greece Demographic Profile - Age Structure**

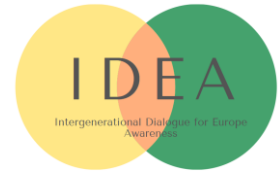
- 0-14 years: 14.53% (male 794,918/female 745,909)
- 15-24 years: 10.34% (male 577,134/female 519,819)
- 25-54 years: 39.6% (male 2,080,443/female 2,119,995)
- 55-64 years: 13.1% (male 656,404/female 732,936)
- 65 years and over: 22.43% (male 1,057,317/female 1,322,176) (2020 est.)

Source: Indexmundi.com

The generation gap is connected to the age difference between younger people and the elderly in the community. This age difference represents different cultural characteristics resulting from different historical experiences which, unavoidably, lead to variations in perspectives of social issues and life in general. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the biological factors of age difference may cause subconscious jealousy from older people towards younger generations (Andreas Michailidis- Nuaros, 1972). Demographic developments present the elderly as the structural “problem” of lower economic growth, meaning the elderly become considered as the “burden” of the community. The different roles assigned by society, either in the family or school environment, generate more tensions and those who “hold the







power”, usually parents and teachers, put pressure on younger people. Parents have authority, obligations and rights over their children and the social environment requires younger people to respect this authority. However, often a young person faces a difficult situation because they are obliged to obey three or four different authorities simultaneously: parents; the school; society in general; and the needs of their friends. Thus, conflicts often arise, because the young person struggles to satisfy everyone's needs (*Andreas Michailidis- Nuaros, 1972*).

Furthermore, according to psychologists, **technological developments tend to create larger generation gaps**. Younger people become more and more impatient, while older people fall behind on these developments, as well as other issues which require the use of new technologies. Finally, the general change in the pace of life and everyday activities has alienated people from each other, increasing the gap and thus also tensions between different generations.

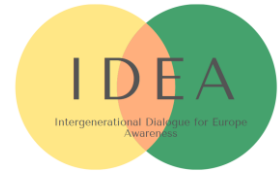
Overcoming this issue and acquiring competencies that are useful in cases of social tensions (such as empathy and active listening) could be achieved through activities that foster “encouragement” instead of “punishment”, as well as the application of more democratic forms of dialogue between the members involved (e.g., family and school councils, group discussions and consultations). Sharing experiences between different generations may encourage the use of such methodologies and therefore the development and/or improvement of such competencies.

In Greece, in line with the declaration of 2012 as the European Year of Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity, the spirit of volunteering was encouraged. For example, teachers and students in the primary and secondary education system developed initiatives and actions that promoted the principle of intergenerational solidarity. Students in primary and secondary school, as well as university students, worked with adults of all ages with great success. They participated in discussions and collaborative activities, interacted with each other, learned together, shared life experiences and built relationships of mutual respect, understanding, acceptance and trust.

These activities are part of a process called "intergenerational learning". This process describes the way in which people of all ages can coexist in the same "learning environment", thus learning from and with each other. The logic behind intergenerational learning is not complex. Each generation can offer to others a new form of knowledge, ranging from the field of technology and the modern way of life held by the young to the wisdom of the logic and perception held by the elderly. Shared experiences and lifestyles can unite people in this process, empower them and help them understand what they are experiencing in the social context, both positively and negatively.

There is no long-term programme in Greece working on intergenerational dialogue. Instead, schools and university research centres focus on the issue of intergenerational dialogue in collaboration with municipalities and ‘Open Care Centers for the Elderly’ to organise short-term projects that facilitate intergenerational learning. Schools may develop subsequent long-term collaborations with Open Care Centers for the Elderly, but this is dependent on school teachers’ willingness to participate in and foster such collaboration. Below, we present best practices that have been proposed based on academic research, that happen regularly and that can easily be replicated. Also included are stand-alone activities and projects that could be explored further as case studies.





## 2. Best Practices & Case Studies Concerning Intergenerational Dialogue in Greece

### a. Best Practice “Grandpa, talk to me about your life” - Digital Storytelling

**Description:** High school students direct documentaries starring seniors and their memories. Students, playing the role of director, record the life experiences of seniors, edit the video and together choose the music to accompany the video. Then, the videos are screened to an audience. In this activity, both students and seniors learn from each other. Students, while acting as the directors, listen to the seniors’ stories and develop their social competencies and documentary skills. At the same time, the seniors working together with the students develop their digital skills. This experiential workshop was organised by the University Research Institute of Applied Communication and the Laboratory of New Technologies in Communication, Education and Media of the University of Athens in order to explore the possibilities of familiarising the elderly with the digital world and to promote collaboration between high school students and seniors to create a digital inventory through their memories.

Source: <https://seniors.ntlab.gr/news/2/>

### b. Best Practice “The Game Continues Digitally”

**Description:** In this workshop, students of the 4th High School of Maroussi and members of Nikaia’s Open Care Center for the Elderly worked together in front of the computer screen to cultivate a virtual farm. The students who joined the activity were able to increase their ability to run online games, while on the other hand the elderly gained valuable and rewarding experience. In the workshop, both parties participate and join forces to play the virtual game. The activity was part of the "Usability and Accessibility Days" on the topic of digital social networking games, organised for the third year running (2008, 2009 and 2010) by the University Research Institute of Applied Communication and the Laboratory of New Technologies in Communication, Education and the Mass Media of the University of Athens, under the direction of Professor Michalis Meimaris.

Source: <https://mmeimaris.gr/gr/s50/>

### c. Best Practice “Stay Active Festivals”

**Description:** 50+ Hellas NGO organises the Stay Active Festivals, an initiative that aims to inform society and raise awareness about the importance of an active lifestyle for over 50s and foster solidarity between generations. The festivals are funded by sponsors in collaboration with local government and related bodies. 50+ Hellas NGO is a non-profit organisation founded in 2005 and based in Chalandri. It is the first national organization that provides a focus on people over the age of 50. Its aim is to improve the quality of life of people aged 50+ through actions for empowerment and integration, training programmes for professionals, counselling agencies and scientific research, as well as intervention at the political level for a just society for all.

Source: <https://www.50plus.gr>







#### d. Case Study “The Knowledge Volunteers (TKV) project”

**Description:** 50+ Hellas NGO participated in The Knowledge Volunteers (TKV) project, funded by the European Commission’s LLP Grundtvig Programme. 50+ Hellas NGO is a non-profit organisation founded in 2005 and based in Chalandri. It is the first national organisation that focuses on people over the age of 50. Its aim is to improve the quality of life of people aged 50+ through actions for empowerment and integration, training programs for professionals, counselling agencies and scientific research, intervening at the political level for a just society for all. TKV promoted the acquisition of digital competencies by elderly people at risk of social exclusion, as well as fostering intergenerational relations that also support the education of young people. The project essentially gets younger generations to educate the elderly on the use of new technologies. This didactical inter-generational approach is based around the active involvement of young students, who act as individual tutors for the elderly. A special didactical toolkit has been set up and is free to download via this link: <http://tkv.mondodigitale.org/pages/courses.html>.

Sources: <http://tkv.mondodigitale.org/>

#### e. Case Study “European events and workshops”

**Description:** In 2012, the ESF Actions Coordination and Monitoring Authority, in cooperation with the University of Athens Department of Communication and Mass Media, the NGO 50+, the Youth NGO AEGEE-Athina (European Students Forum), along with the support of the Representation of the European Commission in Greece and the European Parliament Information Office, organised an event to celebrate the Seniorforce Day on 24 October in Athens. During the event, teenagers, university students and elderly people worked alongside each other in interactive creative workshops and discussions with the aim to demonstrate the importance of youth volunteer work for intergenerational dialogue and solidarity. The event included two workshops and a panel discussion on the topic of intergenerational dialogue. The first workshop resembled the “Grandpa, talk to me about your life” activity described above. In the second workshop, participants created different crafts with recycled materials. Pillows made of old t-shirts, lamps of buttons, and chairs created from palettes were the impressive results of this two-hour-long workshop.

Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1709&furtherNews=yes>

#### 3. Any research available in your country in the project topic:

- Dissertation on Digital Storytelling and intergenerational dialogue  
<https://eclass.uoa.gr/modules/document/file.php/MEDIA153/%CE%B4%CE%B9%CF%80%CE%BB%CF%89%CE%BC%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AD%CF%82%20%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%B3%CE%B1%CF%83%CE%AF%CE%B5%CF%82/Mouchtari-2012.pdf>
- The [Laboratory of New Technologies in Communication, Education and Media of the University of Athens](#) have worked on the issue of intergenerational dialogue and digital storytelling

#### 4. Bibliography





- Andreas Michailidis- Nuaros, Adolescents and education, problems of adolescence in the past and today, Thessaloniki 1972, pages 125-126
- [Ioakeimidou, Manousou, & Papadimitriou. Alternative teaching and learning processes: digital storytelling in an intergenerational connection program. International Conference on Open & Distance Education, 9, 2017, 185-198.](#)
- [Kotronidou Ioanna, Intergenerational communication, collaboration and learning in the kindergarten. A work plan prepared in a Kindergarten of Thessaloniki, Proceedings of the Hellenic Institute of Applied Pedagogy and Education \(HELLIEPEK\), 6th Panhellenic Conference, 5-7 October 2012](#)

## 5. Links

- <https://www.vlioras.gr/Philologia/Composition/Xasma.htm>
- <https://www.kathimerini.gr/opinion/interviews/561076837/michalis-meimaris-stin-k-eimaste-amfivia-metaxy-dyo-kosmon/>
- <https://seniors.ntlab.gr/news/2/>
- <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1709&furtherNews=yes>
- <https://mmeimaris.gr/gr/s50/>
- <http://kosmoslarissa.gr/blog/larisa/diageneaki-mathisi-sto-laografiko-moyseio>
- <http://tkv.mondodigitale.org/>
- <https://www.50plus.gr>

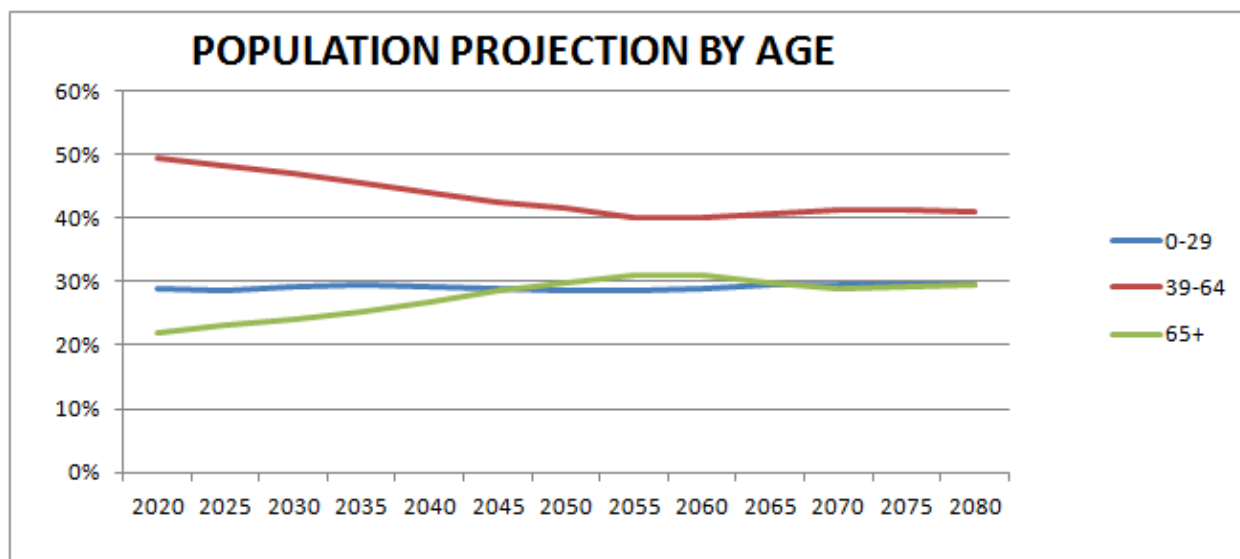




## Secondary Research - Bulgaria

### 1. Information about dialogue between elderly and young people in Bulgaria – an overview

In Bulgaria, there is a clear trend of population ageing. In the next 50-60 years, the proportion of people aged 65 and over will be about 30 per cent of the whole population, according to data from the National Statistical Institute in Bulgaria.



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Source: *The National Statistical Institute of the Republic of Bulgaria*  
<https://www.nsi.bg/en/content/6727/population-projections-sex-and-age>

This leads to the logical conclusion that an increase in both the life expectancy of the population and the proportion of older people in the population necessitates the development of tools to involve this group of the population more actively and for a longer period of time in the labour market, as well as in other activities, such as:

- learning (to ensure that they have the set of skills demanded by current and potential future employment),
- participating in civil society (in order to make sure their rights are supported and opinions heard)
- accessing health-/social care and other services in order to ensure a decent quality of life. This final point is especially important, taking into account the fact that due to labour migration, it is highly possible that the younger family members live far away from their parents and grandparents and are therefore not able to take direct day-to-day care of their elderly relatives. For this reason, it is crucial to provide as many opportunities as possible to ensure better health, necessary for elderly people to enjoy independent and active lives for as long as possible.

Intergenerational dialogue and the improvement of relations between different age groups are considered priorities within Bulgaria's national-level policies.





The Updated National Strategy for Demographic Development of the Population of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012 - 2030) identifies four main priorities for action. The one of these priorities is “Overcoming the negative consequences of the ageing of the population and improving the quality of human capital”. This involves activities in several key areas:

- The introduction of a complex cross-sectoral approach supporting an active and productive life for healthy older people. Adaption of social systems (labour market, pension system, social assistance and care, healthcare, education, culture, etc.) to the demographic changes in the population (specifically, population ageing);
- Measures aiming at supporting solidarity between the generations, which involves: support of the voluntary participation of people of retirement age in the social life of the community; the development of civil society and encouragement of young volunteers to be involved in more activities aimed at the help and support of older people; and
- Increasing the general educational, spiritual and cultural development, qualification, abilities and skills of all ages of the population.

Based on this Strategy, the National Concept for Support of the Active Ageing of Older People in Bulgaria (2012 - 2030) and the National Strategy for Active Ageing in Bulgaria (2019 - 2030) were developed. Both of these programmes identify policy areas and guidelines on how to achieve these priorities. Progress is monitored through Progress reports, issued every two years.

## 2. Best Practices & Case Studies concerning Intergenerational Dialogue in Bulgaria

### *a. Best Practice: National Campaigns organised by Tulip Foundation*

**Description:** Tulip Foundation traditionally organises and supports activities aimed at the social inclusion of various groups of people. Thus, the foundation’s idea to celebrate both intergenerational dialogue and solidarity between different generations was a natural outcome in its development.

Since 2009, the organisation has held an annual campaign on October 1, known as the International Day of Older People. In addition, since 2010, the foundation has hosted different events on April 29, the European Day of Intergenerational Solidarity.

Most commonly, the foundation hosts discussions about intergenerational dialogue. However, the more significant action is in collecting information about different local events which take place in various areas throughout the country in honour of these occasions. In this way, the foundation acts as a platform for the exchange of ideas and inspiration between different organisations.

**Target:** Representatives of different organisations and institutions

#### **Innovative elements:**

For more than ten years, the foundation has gathered a wide range of ideas and best practices about different approaches to celebrate October 1 (International Day of Older People) and April 29 (European Day of Intergenerational Solidarity).

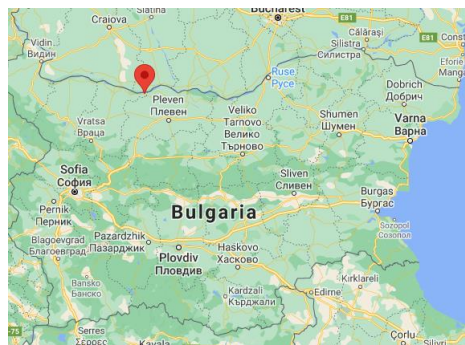
**Where it was used:** All over Bulgaria





## b. Best Practice: "Village on Loan" Initiative

**Description:** "Village on loan" is an initiative by the community centre (chitalishte<sup>1</sup>) "Saznanie-1927". The idea began during an eco-campaign that took place very close to the village of Dolni Vadin. Many young people came to help clean the shores of the river Danube located nearby as part of the campaign and discovered this beautiful little village.



Some subsequently expressed their wish to come back, so the team at the community centre in Dolni Vadin decided to organise a short-term summer project to facilitate their return. In the summer of 2015, the first group of young volunteers arrived. The volunteers spent about a week in the village helping out in the community centre (i.e., painting the walls and doing some minor renovation activities), as well as lending a hand to the local people with gardening work, taking care of the animals and so on.

The locals (usually older and lonely people who do not get visited often by their children and grandchildren) were very happy to host youngsters in their homes. Besides being grateful for the practical help with household activities, they felt appreciated and connected with their young guests. Equally, the young volunteers enjoyed their time, made friends from the villages and many of them still keep in touch with their hosts. The following year, the volunteers built a big stage in the centre of the village, where different cultural events and performances could take place.

Since its inception, the initiative has taken place every summer and, in 2021, will host its 6th event. The village has about 150 inhabitants, and yet for the last five years it has hosted more than 60 volunteers.

**Target:** The hosts are older people living in the village, and the guests are young people coming from the big cities who are eager to experience the charm of life in the village.

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<sup>1</sup> A *chitalishte* ([Bulgarian](#): читалище, pronounced [tʃiˈtaliʃtɛ]. Derives from the verb "чета" - "to read" or "читател" - "reader") is a typical Bulgarian public institution and building that fulfills several functions at once, such as a community centre, library, and a theatre. It is also used as an educational institution, where people of all ages can enroll in foreign language, dance, music and other courses. (source [Wikipedia](#))







Source of the image: ["Village on Loan" official Facebook group](#)

**Innovative elements:** Every year the volunteer programme is structured in a different way and involves different activities. Interestingly, in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic it was not possible to organise face-to-face activities, so the programme went online ("Village for rent is a click away") and instead of visiting the village, volunteers filmed different activities and/or hobbies which they enjoy and shared them in the project's Facebook group, so that all of its members could watch the videos (*the older people living in Dolni Vadin have access to the Internet and use it regularly, sometimes with the support of the team at the community centre*).

In the Project's 2021 edition, its motto is "Village on Loan - old friends". All participants will be volunteers who have attended previous editions and will come back again.

**Where it was used:** Dolni Vadin Village, North-west Bulgaria

### c. Case study: First Aid Competitions for Seniors

**Description:** For three years in a row (2017-2019), seniors from different regions of Bulgaria took part in several-month-long training programmes in order to prepare themselves for the National First Aid Competition for Seniors. This process involves many younger volunteers participating as trainers who teach and prepare the teams for the competition and as subjects (people acting out different injuries who are 'treated' by the first-aiders). The process is very beneficial for all, firstly because of the interpersonal/intergenerational connections that emerge from it, but also because these activities improve the readiness of the population to act in an appropriate way in different emergency situations.



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, these activities were suspended for 2020 and most likely will also be suspended for 2021.

**Target:** Older people and young volunteers



Source of the image

<http://yambolpress.bg/%D1%81%D1%8A%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B1%D1%87%D0%BA-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%B2%D1%8A%D0%B7%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D1%85%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B0/>

**Innovative elements:** The Bulgarian Red Cross traditionally develops activities for youths (young people teach each other different skills: first aid, drug abuse prevention, prevention of STDs, etc.) but, here, the innovative element is that the young people teach older ones this knowledge and these skills.

**Where it was used:** All over Bulgaria: teams of older people throughout the country first get trained in First Aid in their individual regions, and subsequently they all attend a national competition which takes place near Sofia.

**d. Other examples:**

- “Grandma Residence” Project by Ideas Factory (a Bulgarian Youth NGO located in Sofia, but which organises initiatives in different places in Bulgaria) – this is similar to the “Village on Loan” Initiative in Dolni Vadin, although in this case the young volunteers who take part in the project are hosted by older people living in different villages throughout Bulgaria.







- Occasional visits to elderly people's homes – various youth organisations hold meetings and conduct different activities with these institutions. Sometimes young and elderly people simply sit and discuss a certain topic, and sometimes they teach each other something (young people usually teach seniors computer skills, or elderly people may teach their guests how to play a traditional game).

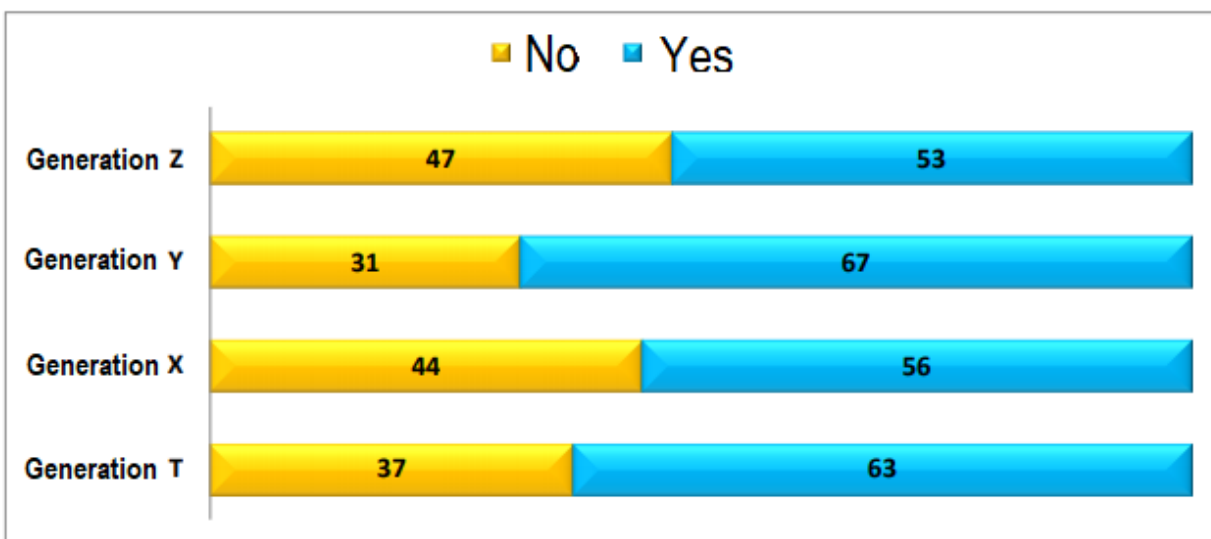
### 3. Research in Bulgaria examining intergenerational dialogue

So far there is no research available on the topic of intergenerational dialogue in Bulgaria. However, some research which focuses on specific age groups (e.g., seniors or young people) present findings which are related to the topic.

A study on the generational characteristics of the labour force in Bulgaria conducted from November 2019 - March 2020 presents information about how representatives of generations Z, Y, X and T behave in the labour market and inside their organisations, including interaction with representatives from other generations.

The chart below presents the proportion of representatives of the different generations who believe that they get along well with representatives of other age groups. Almost half of the respondents from generations Z and X admit to having communication difficulties with colleagues who are not from the same age group.

**"I can easily communicate and get along very well with people, who younger or older than me" (%)**



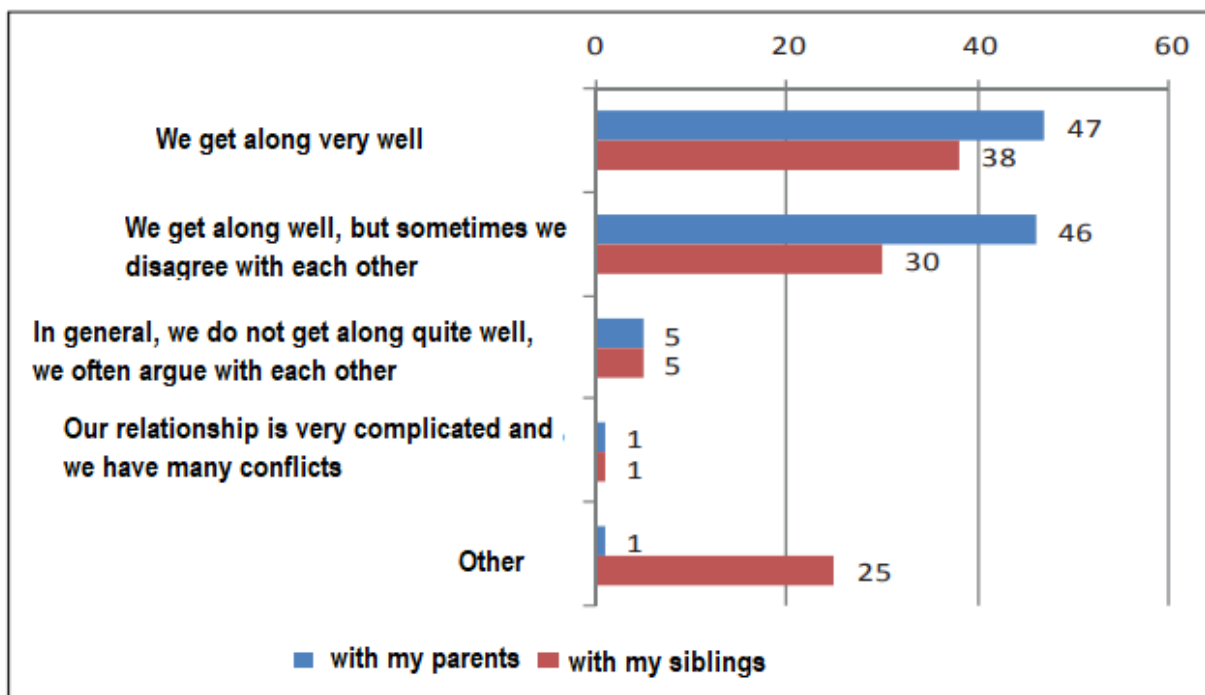
Source of the information: A Study of the generational characteristics of the labour force in Bulgaria, conducted in the framework of Project № BG05M9OP001-1.051-0006-C01 "Joint actions of the social partners for adapting the working environment to the specific ageing needs of different generations with the aim to promote a longer working life and workability". <https://activeageing.bia-bg.com/bg/analyses/generations/>





Another analysis on young people is entitled “Young people in European Bulgaria<sup>2</sup>: A sociological portrait in 2014” and supported by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Bulgaria. One of the aspects of the research which has been observed is the behaviour and attitude of young people within their families: more specifically, how well they get along with their parents and with their siblings. The results are presented in the chart below, which clearly shows that in families, the representatives of similar age groups do not always interact better than those from different age groups (for example, parents with their children).

### Family relations (%)



Source of the information: “Young people in European Bulgaria: A sociological portrait in 2014”, supported by \_\_\_\_\_the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Bulgaria <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/sofia/12568.pdf>

#### 4. Bibliography

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- Bulgarian National Strategy for Active Ageing (2019 - 2030) <https://mlsp.government.bg/uploads/1/national-agieng-strategy-2019-2030.pdf>

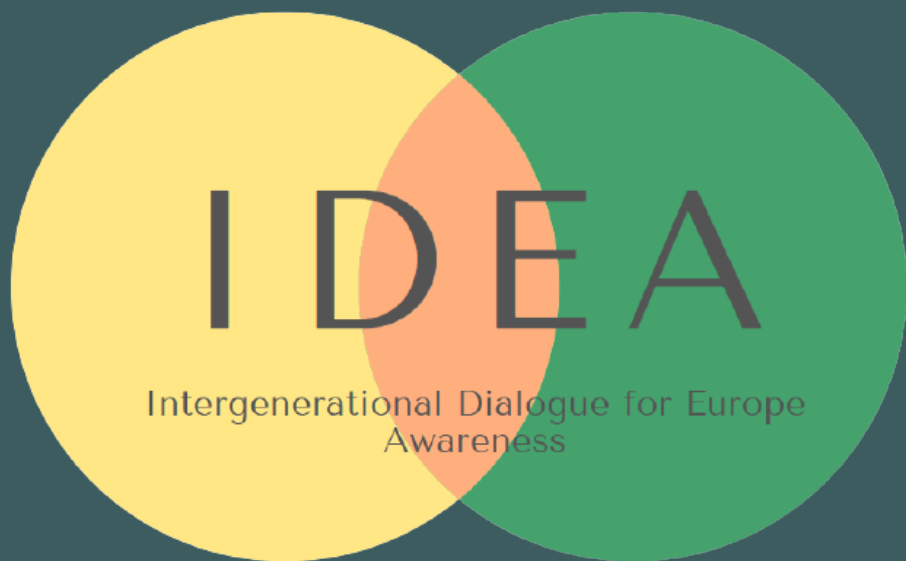
<sup>2</sup> The research was conducted in the context of the European integration, which was taking place in Bulgaria in the early years after the entering of Bulgaria in the EU





- National Concept for Support of the Active Ageing of Older People in Bulgaria (2012 - 2030) <https://www.mlsp.government.bg/uploads/1/active-ageing-concept-2012-2030.pdf>
- Progress Report of the Implementation of the National Concept for Support of the Active Ageing of Older People in Bulgaria (2012 - 2030) for 2017 - 2018 <https://mlsp.government.bg/uploads/3/zhrdpsi/otcheti-i-planove/report-ageing-2017-2018.pdf>
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