



VolontEurope reports on:



Active ageing and solidarity between generations:
the contribution of volunteering and
civic engagement in Europe

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About Volonteurope

Volonteurope, established on 21 May 1981 as a non-profit international organisation, is a European network promoting volunteering, active citizenship and social action across the EU and beyond. Volonteurope, together with its members and partners in the European Union and Council of Europe Member States, is committed to promoting an inclusive, diverse and tolerant society of active citizens. The network fosters collaboration between a wide array of representatives, including

citizens, civil society organisations, volunteer-involving organisations, public and private sector.

Since the early 1990s Volonteurope's Secretariat has been hosted and supported by CSV, the UK's largest volunteering and learning charity. CSV (Community Service Volunteers) creates opportunities for people to take an active part in the life of their communities through volunteering, learning and community action.

Volonteurope is also supported by the European Commission's 'Europe for Citizens' Programme.



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Guy has worked as head of strategic planning for older and disabled people's services in Adult Social Care and as strategic commissioning manager in a large urban unitary authority.

He led work on the implementation of various modernisation themes, including joint working between health and social care. This involved improving support for people with complex needs and the development of a corporate approach to raise the quality of life of older people. As well as his significant change management experience Guy also has an academic



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Foreword

The European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 is an important marker of the strategic shift in demography which is taking place across all the countries of the European Union. The gains in life expectancy have been dramatic and are set to continue, at least for the short to medium term. By 2030 for example the numbers people over 65 are projected to constitute on average nearly 25% of the population .

Unfortunately, much of the commentary in Europe about this increase in older people has been portrayed as a negative development; one which will place an unsustainable burden on health and social support systems. This report takes a very different stance and seeks to demonstrate the huge benefits to society produced by the active citizenship and voluntary activities of older people themselves. It also highlights how volunteering by and for older people contributes so much to their health, wellbeing and active ageing, at a cost which is affordable to the state.

There is a 'golden thread' running through the European Years of 2011 (Volunteering), 2012 (Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations), and 2013

(Citizens). Active Ageing relies on volunteering which in itself is an expression of active citizenship, involving people from many generations. This report gives expression to this 'golden thread' and shows how it can be woven throughout a number of the key dimensions of active ageing and intergenerational solidarity.

We are very grateful to Volonteurope members for all the suggestions for case studies, examples of good practice, and thoughts about the recommendations. Colleagues in Solidar and the European Volunteer Centre have also been very helpful in this regard.

This is a critical moment in history. Celebrating the positive contribution older

people make to society at a time of intense pressure on public resources across Europe has never been more important.

Lucy de Groot
President of Volonteurope
Chief Executive of CSV



“ As you grow older it's easy to feel, that doors are closing but you are still somebody who can be useful and helpful, that feels incredibly satisfying. ”

Louise, Volunteer with CSV's Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme, UK

European perspective

One of the acknowledged objectives of the European Union institutions for the Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (EY2012) is to raise general awareness. Therefore, we may well expect that the number of available publications on this theme would increase dramatically in 2012. Actually, the reader has one of them in his hands. Why should you pay attention to this particular report?

First and foremost, this report is very specific about which key policy themes should be tackled when trying to collaborate in the creation of an active ageing culture in Europe, to follow the language of the EU institutions. Thus, the seven intertwined themes covered throughout the document are not only relevant but pertinent for those stakeholders ready to address the challenge. Furthermore, the collection of international good practices presented hopefully demonstrates that the movement towards a more ageing-friendly Europe is on its way.

Second, this report incorporates a great deal of updated literature on active

ageing and intergenerational solidarity, and connects many scattered issues, arguments, and data. However, far from descriptive, the final result is analytic in that it does not just make the case for volunteering but it claims that change, innovation and more attention to the growing diversity among older persons are badly needed to interlink volunteering, civic engagement-citizenship, and active ageing.

Finally, the asset based approach adopted proves to be a powerful way to unveil much of the unknown but significant contributions that many older persons, both independent and dependent, are willing to make when the right context and opportunities are provided.



“The themes covered are pertinent for those ready to address the challenge.”

In a few words, this report is the kind of food for thought that we may need in the backdrop of a European Year that is requesting from all of us a self-critical, creative, and innovative commitment.

Professor Mariano Sánchez Martínez

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Introduction

The purpose of this Volonteurope report is to highlight the very important role that formal volunteering and other forms of civic engagement contribute to promoting active ageing and solidarity between generations. With an ageing population across Europe it is imperative that steps are taken to support this agenda.

Structure

The report is structured in the following way:-

Overview

The European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 and the role of volunteering and civic engagement

Policy themes

In considering the contribution of volunteering by and for older people to active ageing and solidarity between generations there are a number of policy themes which it is helpful to address:-

- The importance of an 'asset based' philosophy, which emphasises the contribution that older people make to society
- A new agenda for employee volunteering which encourages companies to focus this more on those approaching retirement, and the redefining of retirement itself through the development of more flexible opportunities to support volunteering as part of the transition out of the labour market
- Supporting the active ageing of people with dementia



- Addressing the loneliness and isolation experienced by many older people, and highlighting the role of volunteering and peer support in promoting the emotional resilience and wellbeing of older people
- The role of volunteering in promoting greater solidarity between generations and the contribution active communities and age friendly neighbourhoods can make to that agenda
- Lifelong learning and its contribution to mental, emotional and physical wellbeing.
- Innovations in volunteering and active citizenship, including the role of new technology and social media

“With an ageing population across Europe it is imperative that steps are taken to support this agenda.”

Each of these themes is addressed in a separate section.

Each section is structured in a similar way:-

- Firstly, an outline of the issues associated with the theme
- Secondly, the inclusion of a number of examples of good practice
- Thirdly, a set of recommendations, in many cases separated out to:-
 - EU institutions
 - Member states
 - NGOs / Civic Society organisations

In particular I would like to acknowledge the assistance of the following for providing or recommending examples of good practice for inclusion within this report:-

- Akademie für Ehrenamtlichkeit Deutschland, Germany
- Cancer Research, UK
- CESAVO, Italy
- CEV (European Volunteer Centre), Belgium
- European Association for the Education of Adults, Belgium
- Gemeinsam leben & lernen in Europa, Germany
- HESTIA, Czech Republic
- EUCIS-LLL, Belgium
- Humanitas, the Netherlands
- International Diaspora Development Initiative, UK
- Itinéraire International, France
- Joy of Sound, UK
- Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, UK
- SOLIDAR, Belgium
- Volunteer Now, Northern Ireland

Other organisations that have helped identify examples of good practice and other material for this report include:-

- Beth Johnson Foundation, UK
- Welsh Local Government Association, Wales
- Campaign to End Loneliness, UK
- Ageing Well Programme, UK

I would also want to thank Piotr Sadowski (Volonteurope Secretariat) and Oonagh Aitken (Director for Social Action, Volunteering, Policy and Fundraising, CSV) for their support and direction. Special thanks are also due to Naomi Robertson for her support in reviewing the text.

Guy Robertson
Author

Process

This report has drawn from a variety of sources:-

- Much of the material has been provided by member organisations of Volonteurope, Solidar and CEV (European Volunteer Centre).
- Desktop research by the author has provided a number of the examples and the majority of the facts and figures.
- Two roundtable discussions involving Volonteurope members have been undertaken (see Appendix A for further details). The roundtable discussions were particularly helpful in formulating the recommendations contained in the report.

I would like to thank all of those who have supported the development of this report through their engagement with the process and submission of good practice examples or ideas.

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Executive Summary

“ Engaging and supporting older people in volunteering and other forms of civic engagement is crucial. ”

The purpose of this Volonteurope report is to highlight the very important role that formal volunteering and other forms of civic engagement contribute to promoting active ageing and solidarity between generations. There are many forms of volunteering and civic engagement and this report attempts to highlight some of the best examples across Europe.

The year of active ageing and solidarity between generations is intended to raise awareness of the contribution that older people make to society:-

- Active ageing means growing old in good health and as a full member of society, feeling more fulfilled in work, more independent in daily life and more involved as citizens.
- Intergenerational solidarity refers to mutual support and cooperation between different age groups with a view to increasing social harmony and mutual respect.

Volunteering and later life

Volunteering by older people is fundamental to strategies to promote active ageing and intergenerational solidarity. The state has an important role, but it is the actions of older people themselves and the non-governmental organisations which support them which produce the biggest benefit. Engaging and supporting older people in volunteering and other forms of civic engagement is therefore crucial.

Research in Europe suggests that:-

- The percentage of over 50 year olds engaged in volunteering varies significantly between countries, with at one extreme, more than 20% engaged in volunteering, and at the other end some countries with about only 3% volunteering.
- Different countries exhibit different trends in the types of volunteering and social participation that older people undertake
- Volunteering appears to increase when people enter the post retirement phase (50-74) and then declines thereafter
- Educational attainment is a strong predictor of the level of volunteering
- Older citizens are slightly more likely to do voluntary work than the adult population as a whole
- Older people generally spend more hours per month volunteering than other age groups.

It is important that steps are taken to increase the involvement of older people in volunteering – for their own sake and that of society as a whole. There are a number of things that need to be done to achieve this, one of the most important of which is to engage older adults in volunteer activities early on, ideally before they retire. Research indicates that a ‘life stage model’ exists, whereby those who volunteer throughout their lives are most likely to continue or increase their volunteering post retirement. Other issues which need to be addressed are the removal of bureaucratic barriers to volunteering and the protection of volunteers from exploitation.

Whilst volunteering and civic engagement contribute significantly to society as a whole (see more below), what is more important is that all the evidence shows that there are also significant positive benefits for older volunteers themselves. Research shows a strong causal relationship between volunteering and wellbeing in later life.

The benefits to society are equally significant. Research has now begun to quantify the economic as well as social benefits. In the UK alone it is estimated that the economic value of the formal volunteering provided by older people is currently around £10bn per annum (with a further £34bn from undertaking caring responsibilities).

The case is overwhelming – volunteering is good for older people and it is good for society.

Volonteuropa recommends

1. NGOs should:-

- a. Take steps to develop and support volunteering opportunities which are particularly attractive to and suitable for older people
- b. Provide targeted information about

volunteering to older people, and in so doing make them aware that they have something very valuable to offer

- c. Emphasise the idea that volunteering can be a great path to active ageing and lifelong learning
- d. Exchange good practice on different aspects of volunteering to stimulate and inspire new ideas and promote high quality projects
- e. Agree the volunteering principles which are particularly important to allow volunteering by older volunteers to flourish, and incorporate these where possible into quality assurance systems of volunteer involving organisations
- f. Ensure that any arrangements for measuring volunteering activity take particular account of the contribution made by older volunteers
- g. Set a low threshold for recruiting older volunteers and provide possibilities for flexible ways of participation (e.g. short term projects or clearly defined manageable tasks)
- h. Ensure there is a particular focus on engaging older people at risk of social exclusion in volunteering: providing opportunities for developing new skills and competencies could be particularly effective in doing this.

“ The case is overwhelming - volunteering is good for older people and it is good for society. ”

2. Local Government should:-

- a. Recognise their central role in supporting the engagement of older people in volunteering and civic engagement
- b. Encourage and support retired and senior volunteering programmes in their areas

3. Member States should:-

- a. Recognise that volunteering by older people is a very effective means of promoting health and wellbeing in later life
- b. Develop a national strategy for increasing the engagement and support of older volunteers, taking account of the fact that older people with fewer personal resources, lower levels of education and health problems face particular barriers to engagement. The strategies should take account of the country specific dominant traditions and general culture of volunteering
- c. Develop public rewards or awards schemes for older volunteers
- d. Promote cooperation across different sectors in society (private and public) with a view to maximising the support for older volunteering
- e. Encourage local authorities to support senior and retired volunteering programmes
- f. Introduce 'volunteering by older people' as an indicator of how well local authorities are performing on promoting active ageing

ageing and incorporate this into relevant policies and strategies

- b. Publicise the benefits from volunteering to the health and well being of older people
- c. Take actions to increase the participation of older people in volunteering and active citizenship activities, by:-

i. systematically collecting comparable data on rates of volunteering by older people. This basic data should be the starting point for designing more informed and better targeted policies to support and promote volunteering by older people.

ii. collecting and disseminating examples of good practice

iii. Removing barriers preventing older people from getting involved in volunteer activities, such as age limits in insurance, etc

iv. Recognising the contribution of senior volunteers' time as an eligible contribution "in kind" co-financing in all EU funding streams

v. Simplifying current mechanisms for accessing (and reporting on) funding opportunities related to senior volunteering, taking particular account of the capacities and needs of smaller senior volunteer involving organisations

vi. Working with Member States to ensure mechanisms are in place that allow senior volunteer-involving organisations to include the value of senior volunteering effort in their P&L accounts - reflecting the immense value that older volunteers bring to communities

4. EU Institutions should:-

- a. Recognise volunteering by older people as a key element of active



- d. Ensure that European and national level funding is provided for senior volunteer-involving organisations. This should not only cover major contracts or project-based funding, but also include core funding, small grants and contracts, which also allow for full cost recovery in organisations.
 - e. Work with Member States to create infrastructures (e.g. brokers or intermediary civil society organisations) which facilitate partnerships between different stakeholders - for example, to support the involvement of businesses with senior volunteer-involving organisations, or to work across the sectors to deliver strategic responses to social, health and economic challenges faced by older people in Europe
 - f. Establish a permanent volunteering Unit in the European Commission (building on the policy recommendation from P.A.V.E.) which facilitates a more coordinated and proactive approach to volunteering policies, including senior volunteering.
- The Unit would strengthen the ongoing inter-service and inter-institutional dialogue on all aspects of volunteering policy. Work with Member States to ensure a dedicated volunteering policy government department exists in all Member States
- g. Promote the creation of senior volunteering and intergenerational exchange programmes, and establish a European network of co-ordinating organisations to support this.
 - h. Promote a vision for how volunteering and civic engagement can support the development of a society for all ages. In particular, develop a narrative and supportive policy initiatives which link the three European Years:-
 - i. *Volunteering - 2011*
 - ii. *Active Ageing - 2012*
 - iii. *Citizenship - 2013*
 - i. Undertake a media campaign to promote the above



Asset based philosophy

The rapid ageing of Europe's population takes place against a background of negative stereotypes and ageist attitudes which cause significant harm at a societal and individual level. They:-

- undermine the very essence of the concept of Active Ageing
- create significant costs through lost productivity of older workers and long term health costs of those excluded from economic activity
- deter many older people from coming forward to volunteer by undermining their confidence in what they might have to offer
- are a direct challenge to intergenerational solidarity
- can have a significant impact on the health and well being of individuals, with some studies demonstrating that older people with more negative self perceptions of ageing die on average 7.5 years earlier than those with more positive images of ageing.

This negative narrative about ageing has to be addressed. A focus on the positive contribution that older people make to society is critical if volunteering and civic engagement is to maximise its impact on supporting active ageing and solidarity between generations. In practical

terms this means that there is a need to make a shift from a 'deficit model' of working with older people to an 'asset based approach' instead.

The 'deficit' model which is prevalent in most countries focuses on the problems, needs and deficiencies in individuals or communities and designs services to 'fill the gaps and fix the problems'. As a result, an individual or community can feel disempowered and dependent, becoming passive recipients of expensive services rather than active agents pursuing their own active ageing with their families and community.

An asset based approach on the other hand represents a fundamental shift in policy and practice. It replaces the concentration on 'needs' with a focus on capabilities and resources (i.e. 'assets') that the individual or community has at their disposal. It is an approach which could make a huge contribution to delivering the outcomes which active ageing and inter generational solidarity aspire to.

The asset based approach does not however seek to replace investment in improving services for older people. Instead the aim is to achieve a better balance between providing services and building community support for active ageing.

Asset based approaches can only survive on the basis of volunteering initiatives and active civic engagement. The two are inextricably linked.

Examples of good practice include projects which:-

- Enable and support older people to participate in volunteering
- Enable older people to exchange time for services and support
- Provide community spaces for volunteer delivered support and intergenerational contact
- Develop new forms of support based on mutuality and reciprocity
- Promote individual psychological wellbeing and resilience
- Campaign to challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes
- Deploy community development techniques to empower local people
- Set out guidelines for encouraging civic engagement
- Provide opportunities for older people to influence senior decision makers

Volonteurope recommends

1. **All stakeholders should:-**
 - a. Organise courses, seminars and conferences to encourage asset based approaches to the ageing agenda
 - b. Develop and reinforce participatory structures which encourage older people's participation in decision making processes at all levels
 - c. Promote initiatives which recognise and capitalize on the experience and strengths of older people
 - d. Work with groups representing older people and the media to provide realistic and positive images of active ageing, with a particular emphasis on confronting

negative stereotypes and ageism

2. **Member states** have a particular responsibility to raise awareness of the contribution that older people make to their communities and wider society

Employee volunteering and redefining retirement

Employment in later life and the transition into retirement is one of the key dimensions of active ageing. Increasing life expectancy is challenging policies and attitudes towards retirement. Even with the raising of pension ages in many countries, older people in Europe will be experiencing much longer periods in retirement than any previous generation. In many cases this could extend to 20 years and in some cases it will be as long as 30 years.

All of this challenges the traditional view of later life - i.e. fulltime permanent work up until a person's mid-60s, followed by a sudden exit from the labour market into a 'retirement' which is generally thought of as a relatively short period of rest and relaxation before illness and then death. This picture was never true for everyone, and is patently unrealistic for the current generation of people moving into later life.

Of course this all takes place against the backdrop of the financial crisis and the associated austerity measures which are causing higher rates of unemployment amongst the 50+, and increasing the risk of poverty amongst those with inadequate pensions. Many people will need to continue working beyond 'retirement age' to augment their pensions

Financial considerations also mean that Governments will want to encourage the baby boomer generation to stay in the labour market rather than retire early. There is a growing recognition that given this shift to longer lives there is a need for a new 'life course approach' which seeks to balance the need to work with the requirements of various caring responsibilities (older parents and children) and the right to participate in local communities.

Regardless of when older people leave paid employment it is crucial for their own health and well being that they have a strong sense of purpose in life and remain socially engaged in one form or another. Volunteering can be a very important way of achieving this, especially once the 'retirement honeymoon' phase is over, when many retirees feel a void in their lives and miss many aspects of working life. Volunteering can fill that gap and give them a new sense of purpose.

This sets the backdrop for the development of new approaches to employee volunteering and the nature of retirement itself. In essence, there needs to be a shift away from viewing employee volunteering in the context of 'corporate social responsibility', towards seeing it as a way of prioritising the developmental needs of older workers.

Employee volunteering could then:-

- **Support people's retention** in the labour market by providing a welcome opportunity for new experiences which can make working life in later years more tolerable
- **Support people to develop new skills and capabilities** which they could then use to pursue different 'second careers' or entrepreneurial opportunities post retirement

- **Support 'knowledge transfer' or mentoring between generations**, within as well as outside the workplace
- **Support older workers to test out and get engaged in volunteering** before they retire and thus become much more likely to remain actively engaged once they finish paid work

Examples of good practice include projects which:-

- Provide pre-retirement courses which encourage and support older workers to engage in volunteering
- Provide an assessment of career options in their later years with the provision of training and volunteering opportunities as appropriate
- Provide 'outplacements' and short term assignments with voluntary and community organisations
- Provide a 'skills match' service allowing individuals to post what skills they would be willing to offer not for profit community organisations
- Support older people to undertake 'second careers' which combine aspects of work (some income and benefits) with a desire to 'make a difference' through socially useful activity
- Enable older unemployed older workers and young unemployed people to mentor each other
- Provide websites specially tailored to provide information relevant to older workers approaching retirement

Volonteurope recommends

1. NGOs should:-

- a. Liaise and cooperate with local employers and trade unions to introduce volunteering into the pre-retirement planning and phased retirement
- b. Recognise that they need to make a distinction between large corporations and small or medium sized enterprises (SME). The messages for the latter need to be tailored to their particular circumstances and the process for releasing and matching older employees with appropriate volunteering opportunities needs to be made very simple and easy for them to pursue.

2. Local Government should:-

- a. Promote multi-sector partnerships to further the development of employee volunteering
- b. Introduce employee volunteering as part of pre-retirement schemes in the public sector

3. Business sector should:-

- a. Promote policies which enable older workers who wish to make a gradual transition from full time activity towards retirement (e.g. through part time arrangements, flexible working, employee volunteering, tailor made training, life long learning or professional conversion programmes)
- b. Introduce employee volunteering

as part of pre-retirement schemes

- c. Foster mutual learning and skills transfer between age groups in the life course, i.e. through mentoring, coaching of younger workers, facilitating intergenerational entrepreneurship
- d. Ensure that the contribution of older workers is highlighted within measurement frameworks to evaluate the impact of employee volunteering
- e. Use the Employee Volunteering Awards to encourage and promote a focus on volunteering by older employees
- f. Provide information on the value of volunteering to older workers as they approach retirement
- g. Introduce flexible retirement schemes with volunteering as one of the options to enable older people to remain socially engaged after they leave the labour market
- h. Work with civil society senior volunteer-involving organisations to create senior community action days at local, national and European level, where media coverage would stimulate further interest in senior EV programmes

4. Member States should:-

- a. Promote a shift of focus in employee volunteering schemes to promoting the wellbeing and transition into retirement of older volunteers.
- b. Develop good practice guidelines specifically on the use of employee volunteering to foster health and wellbeing and greater engagement in volunteering post retirement



- c. Those have not yet done so, are urged to abolish mandatory retirement ages as these devalue the contribution of older people in the workplace and society in general.
- d. Develop and build on existing national community engagement and volunteering programmes with the following characteristics:
 - i. Targeted mainly at the over 50s who are not in employment or are significantly under-employed.
 - ii. Built around a cadre of volunteer organisers who have a track record of leadership activity.
 - iii. Aimed at engaging local groups of community contributors to undertake useful and developmental activities in their local areas.
 - iv. Initially piloted (by organisations like CSV) by reallocating funding from existing welfare programmes such as the UK's Work Programme.
- b. Carry out more research on how employee volunteering contributes to health and wellbeing
- c. Introduce employee volunteering as part of pre-retirement schemes in EU institutions in order to provide a good example to others

Supporting the active ageing of people with dementia

With an ageing population the number of people with dementia is set to rise significantly across Europe in future years. Any comprehensive approach to promoting active ageing and solidarity between generations therefore needs to be inclusive of people with this condition, particularly as people with dementia can experience very significant forms of exclusion and discrimination.

Within this context, volunteering and civic engagement have much to offer to support people with dementia to live better lives.

5. EU Institutions should:-

- a. Promote more flexible retirement

Key interventions include:-

- Providing 'one to one' befriending or peer support. Many people with dementia require modest levels of support to enable them to continue to engage with their normal day to day activities.
- Raising awareness and challenging myths. There is a need to mobilise a new kind of 'social movement' which is dedicated to counteracting the stigma and ignorance surrounding the illness.
- Supporting intergenerational initiatives. Most people with dementia have adult children, many of whom have children. Young people will therefore increasingly be related to someone with dementia and they can play a very significant part in creating greater awareness and empathy across generations.

Creating 'Dementia Friendly' communities

Whilst ultimately people with dementia will generally require the support of specialist health and social care services, there will always be large numbers of people living in the community with early and/or relatively moderate levels of dementia.

The concept of dementia-friendly communities is an emerging one and there is not yet an extensive body of literature. A 'working definition' of a dementia-friendly community could include a place:

- in which it is possible for the greatest number of people with dementia to live a good life
- where people with dementia are enabled to live as independently as

possible and to continue to be part of their community

- where they are met with understanding and given support where necessary.

Some of the key areas that need to be addressed in developing a dementia friendly community include:-

- **The person with dementia:** their voice needs to be heard
- **The place:** review the built environment
- **The people:** target awareness training on key individuals and groups
- **The networks:** engage all stakeholders in the work
- **The resources:** build community capacity through civic engagement

An asset based approach

People with dementia often face social exclusion and are almost always defined as people with needs, who have nothing to offer the rest of society. As with any human being, positive feelings about one's life, self-esteem, control and a sense of purpose are equally important to people with dementia, especially in the early stages. Countering the negative and deficit thinking about people with dementia can be done by adopting an approach which recognises that they have strengths and capabilities which are important to their wellbeing and which can and should be supported

“ **Stakeholders should promote 'dementia friendly' practices** ”

Examples of good practice include projects which:-

- Provide opportunities for older people to use their capabilities and experience to give to something to others in society
- Encourage students to become more involved with people with dementia
- Bring people with dementia together with children and young people
- Seek to create a climate where dementia is understood and people with the condition are supported by the entire community
- A local community takes it upon itself to self organise and take action to address the challenges facing older people with dementia in their community
- Campaign to raise awareness and better understanding of dementia
- Deliver regular support groups for people with dementia and their carers
- Provide befriending services

Volonteurope recommends

1. **Stakeholders should** promote 'dementia friendly' practices within their organisations
2. **Voluntary and community organisations should** work towards including people with mild to moderate levels of dementia in their activities and services
3. **NGOs involved in supporting volunteering by older people should:-**
 - a. Develop innovative approaches to supporting older people with dementia to make a positive contribution within their communities (e.g. working with children)

- b. Develop models of volunteer befriending which are specifically focussed on supporting people with dementia
- c. Develop and promote peer support initiatives for carers of people with dementia

4. EU Institutions and Member states should:-

- a. Promote greater awareness of dementia through the engagement of volunteer ambassadors / champions
- b. Support the development of more intergenerational initiatives to raise awareness and seek to counter the social exclusion that people with dementia can often face

Addressing loneliness and isolation

Loneliness and isolation experienced by older people is increasingly being recognised as a significant health and well being issue and one which needs to be addressed in any Active Ageing strategies.

There can be quite a lot of confusion about the issue. People who spend a lot of time on their own are not necessarily lonely; and by way of contrast, some people in a crowd can feel very lonely. Loneliness and isolation are linked concepts, but they are also separate ones. Loneliness is best thought of as "...a psychological state, an emotional response to a perceived gap between the amount of personal contact an individual wants and the amount that they have."¹ Loneliness takes different forms.

“ *Loneliness and isolation is increasingly being recognised as a significant health issue* ”

¹ Safeguarding the Convoy, Campaign to End Loneliness, 2011

A distinction is often drawn between social loneliness and emotional loneliness:-

- **emotional loneliness** - is the absence of a significant other with whom a close emotional attachment is formed (eg: a partner or best friend)
- **social loneliness** - is the absence of a social network consisting of a wide or broad group of friends, neighbours and colleagues

The prevalence of loneliness varies between countries, but has tended to remain relatively static within them. A recent survey across Europe found that almost one in ten older people felt left out of society. Whilst loneliness can and does affect people of any age, there are particular risk factors for older people:-

- low socio-economic status
- being aged 80 and over
- living alone
- having no access to a car or never using public transport
- living in rented accommodation
- living on low income or on State benefits as main income
- having no access to a telephone
- experiencing hearing and sight loss

Transitions can also trigger a loss of social and emotional connections and be a 'tipping point' into loneliness:-

- retirement
- changing housing arrangements
- becoming a carer
- developing care needs
- becoming bereaved

The links between loneliness and poor health are well established. Recent reviews of the evidence highlight that being lonely is associated with higher blood pressure and depression and leads to higher rates of mortality, comparable to

those associated with smoking and excessive alcohol consumption.

Volunteering and civic engagement have the potential to mitigate a number of the risks associated with loneliness amongst older people:-

- The act of becoming more socially engaged is a significant protective factor.
- Mentoring and befriending is an intervention particularly suited to addressing loneliness and isolation
- The psychological and emotional dimensions of loneliness can be supported by cognitive behavioural therapy and less 'medicalised' forms of peer delivered training in psychological resilience.



Examples of good practice include projects which:-

- engage volunteers to use their skills and experience to help older people become more actively involved in their community and social networks
- use volunteers to make contact with isolated older people through systematic strategies of engagement
- provide a neighbourhood based network of volunteer support
- provide social and emotional support through befriending
- act collectively to raise awareness of the issue of loneliness promote emotional resilience through peer to peer coaching in psychological coping strategies
- empower people and help build their confidence and positive mental health through educational / self development courses
- provide a wide range of activities of interest to older people who might otherwise become isolated
- address the particular challenges faced by migrant older people
- provide volunteer support to coach isolated older people 'navigate' their way back into active engagement within their community

Volonteurope recommends

1. Stakeholders need to:-

- a. Recognise the value of volunteering and active citizenship as an effective intervention to combat social isolation and loneliness
- b. Encourage socially isolated people to take an active part in volunteering and other opportunities for civic engagement
- c. Support initiatives which preserve

and strengthen local social networks and encourage daily social interaction and interdependence among young and old

- d. Ensure that older people are fully included in programmes of 'talking therapies' which provide psychological support for those with difficulties in engaging with others

2. **Member States should** take a leading role in promoting positive mental health throughout the life course by providing information and challenging stereotypical beliefs about older people and the ageing process

Intergenerational solidarity

The ageing of society and changes in attitudes and lifestyles has had a significant impact on the nature of the interaction between generations. The size of families is decreasing, the role of extended families is diminishing and perceptions between generations are changing. If left unaddressed there is a risk of greater generational segregation and growing tensions. Improving intergenerational solidarity is therefore critical to improving the health and wellbeing of older people, and indeed, of society as a whole.

Attitudes between old and young are quite mixed. On the one hand there is a view that the interests of older and younger people will necessarily diverge and that some of the emerging trends in older people's lives will have a negative impact on younger people. On the other hand there is a high degree of support amongst the young for the recognition that intergenerational tensions are exaggerated by the media. Overall, there is very strong public support for the proposition that public bodies should do more to support intergenerational solidarity.

One obvious measure of intergenerational solidarity is the amount of contact between generations. Within families this can be relatively



high (though there are big differences between countries). The picture is very different for intergenerational contact outside of family ties. Overall the number of friendships across the generations is very low.

Grand-parenting is a fundamental aspect of active citizenship. As well as providing benefits to families and grandchildren, there are important benefits for grandparents themselves, including an enhanced sense of purpose in life and of family identity. Though it also has to be recognised that there are potentially negative financial implications, and intensive support to families can increase the risk of social isolation of some grandparents.

There are a number of ways of promoting good relations and support between generations through intergenerational practice. Alongside 'stand alone' initiatives, the development of 'age friendly communities' has been found to be one of the most effective ways of integrating different generations. The advantage of this kind of approach is that it is integrated, looks in a holistic way at the dimensions which underpin successful active ageing and takes a life course perspective. This is an approach which specifically pays attention to the needs of different generations across a number of different spheres of life and seeks to ensure that these needs are catered for. A comprehensive

framework for developing age friendly communities has been developed by the World Health Organisation, and a network of age friendly cities and communities was established in 2011.

Examples of good practice include projects which:-

- harness the energy and experience of older volunteers to support young people with challenging backgrounds find work, stay in education or take up training
- create the context for socialisation and exchange of knowledge between young and old
- run creative arts projects which bring young and old together
- offer housing programmes which meet the needs of two groups of citizens: older people in need of support to live independently and younger people in need of affordable housing
- support intergenerational contact through digital inclusion initiatives
- support intergenerational contact through focussing on the history of their neighbourhoods

- develop community facilities and housing 'for all ages'
- support different sections of minority ethnic communities to come together
- focus on the exchange of skills between generations, with older people demonstrating traditional craft skills which might otherwise be forgotten
- promote community relationships, community safety and address fear of crime

Volonteurope recommends

1. Stakeholders should:

- Recognise the contribution that older people make to younger generations and society as a whole and publicise the analysis
- Promote greater social cohesion through supporting intergenerational volunteering and active citizenship initiatives
- Map good practice on age friendly communities and share experience
- Encourage older people to become role models for active ageing and to mentor young people
- Promote and support intergenerational tutoring activities among senior volunteers and youth from difficult backgrounds

2. Member States should:-

- Ensure intergenerational volunteering is promoted in education systems, thus helping to create more cohesive communities where the young and the old live in solidarity, rather than perceiving each other as troublesome or burdensome
- Raise awareness and encourage local / regional authorities to support community cohesion through the development of age friendly policies and initiatives

- Recognise the value of promoting Universities to engage with older people on issues surrounding an ageing society

3. EU institutions should:-

- promote age friendly approaches across all policy areas
- Foster collaboration between organisations which work with children, youth and older people.
- Fund intergenerational volunteering programmes in order to foster social inclusion and lifelong learning.

Life long learning

Promoting lifelong learning is an important aspect of active ageing for a number of reasons. It can:-

- **help older people to participate longer and more effectively in the labour market** should they wish to. This can be very important for those older people without adequate financial resources in later life.
- **help to improve the health and wellbeing of older people.** The cognitive stimulation and social engagement which lifelong learning provides has been associated with greatly improved quality of life and even longevity in older people.
- **represent an important citizenship right** for older people in countries within the EU. Access to education should extend across the life course and not just be constrained to the early years

It is also seen by many as a crucial part of any strategy to meet the changing economic, social and demographic conditions that Europe is going through. It is argued that If knowledge, skills and learning abilities are not renewed, the capacity of individuals – and by extension, of communities or nations – to adapt to a new fiscal environment will be considerably reduced.

There are different forms of learning, with the distinctions often being related to whether skills are recognised or not:-

- **Formal** learning refers to learning through a programme of instruction in an educational institution, adult training centre or the workplace, which is generally recognised in a qualification or certificate
- **Non-formal** learning refers to learning through a programme, but it is not usually evaluated and does not lead to certification
- Informal learning refers to learning resulting from daily work related, family or leisure activities

Many of the opportunities for lifelong learning are delivered through NGOs and voluntary effort. This is increasingly so as public funding is constrained across Europe.

Examples of good practice include projects which:-

- Promote learning through peer to peer exchange
- Develop community facilities which are geared to support learning
- Use audio and visual media and the input of younger people to undertake local initiatives
- Facilitate exchange programmes, whereby older people undertake volunteering in a different country
- Involve universities in the promotion of life long learning opportunities
- Enable older people to provide reading and other forms of educational support to children in schools
- Where there is an exchange of learning and experience through mentoring relationships between old and young.
- Help older people to review their past experience and personal skills and

explore new opportunities for learning and volunteering

- Help older women to increase their confidence and life skills in order to develop business ideas and become successful entrepreneurs

Volonteurope recommends

1. Member States should:-

- Make basic education available to all across the whole life course
- Enable the full participation of older people in lifelong learning, which amongst other things provides older people with opportunities to develop new skills.
- Develop certification schemes for older volunteers to recognise the development of competencies through volunteering in education and lifelong learning schemes
- Encourage older people to take part in lifelong learning programmes

2. EU Institutions should:-

- Promote the value of lifelong learning to addressing the economic and social changes which are currently taking place in Europe
- Support the increased EU funds for adult learning in the EU Commissions' Erasmus for All proposal, and reject any reduction of the minimum allocation for adult learning
- Remove the cap of age 64 in the EU's lifelong learning indicator and the aspirational target in the Education & Training 2020 strategy should be revised to include no upper age

Innovation in volunteering and active citizenship

Societies across Europe are not just ageing, they are changing as well. The older people of today have some significant cultural and lifestyle differences from previous generations of older people, and the pace of change for future cohorts of older people is likely to be faster and more pervasive. Globalisation and modernisation are not just for the young, they are phenomena which impinge on the lives of older people in Europe now.

Given the scale and pace of change it is therefore vital that models of volunteering and civic engagement change as well if active ageing and solidarity between generations is to be effectively supported.

There are three broad areas where change and innovation is most important

- Firstly, the **profile of older people is changing**, particularly as the 'baby boomers' are beginning to enter 'retirement'. Amongst other things there is greater ethnic diversity and therefore a new range of issues that need to be addressed and supported
- Secondly, the **profile of older volunteers is also changing**. Many older volunteers are more active and

keener to be involved in a leadership role. There has to be the development of models of volunteering which support this type of 'active' involvement, where some volunteers are engaged in the development and commissioning of services rather than just in their delivery

- Thirdly, **technological changes** not only raise issues for older people (such as the potential for digital exclusion), they also provide the potential for new support and service models, as well as new forms of infrastructure to support volunteering initiatives.

The 'digital revolution' warrants particular mention. The ageing of Europe is taking place at the same time as the huge expansion in the prevalence and functionality of digital technologies and the internet. Promoting active ageing cannot be done successfully without looking at how best to harness these developments.

Many assumptions are made about older people's ability and willingness to engage with new technology.

Research reveals that there is a significant proportion of older people, even in the 70+ age category, using the internet and this is only going to increase.



EU actions on information and communication technology focus on the potential for:-

- **ageing well at work:** staying active and productive for longer through the development of e-skills and e-learning;
- **ageing well in the community:** staying socially active and creative, through the adoption of ICT solutions for social networking, as well as for providing access to public and commercial services, thus improving quality of life and reducing social isolation;
- **ageing well at home:** enjoying a healthier and higher quality of daily life for longer, assisted by technology, while maintaining a high degree of independence and autonomy.

Volunteering and active citizenship models need to change in order to exploit the technological and social changes which are in train. Only by doing so will they be able to promote active ageing and intergenerational solidarity effectively.

Examples of good practice include projects which:-

- address the circumstances and issues facing older people from gay and lesbian communities
- address embarrassing and taboo issues which are often (wrongly) presumed not to be relevant to older people
- provide personalised signposting and advisory support
- extend volunteering opportunities by integrating them with other non-related mainstream activities
- put volunteers (with support) in control of developing and delivering initiatives to address issues they have identified within their communities
- extend the role of volunteering into areas not previously considered
- imaginatively use public sector data sources to target voluntary interventions more effectively

- reduce the risk of digital exclusion through intergenerational initiatives
- use video and digital TV technologies to bring disparate groups of older people together
- use high speed broadband technologies and social networking models to develop new approaches to supporting older in the community
- harness existing voluntary and community networks to deliver information and support to older people at risk of digital exclusion

Volonteurope recommends

1. EU institutions and Member states should:-

- a. Recognise the key role of NGOs promoting volunteering by older people as partners and key stakeholders in programmes to stimulate social innovation
- b. Do more to support NGOs working with older people to raise awareness of the benefits of the internet and provide support in learning about and accessing it
- c. Promote more intergenerational initiatives as part of their strategies to tackle digital exclusion

2. NGOs promoting volunteering by older people should:-

- a. Be supported, including through access to funding streams, to play a full role in European innovation programmes
- b. Be able to access capacity building opportunities to strengthen their participation in social innovation

“models need to change in order to exploit the technological and social changes”

Conclusion

In reviewing the material set out in this report a number of key issues emerge:-

- There is a need to properly embed a shift away from a 'deficit model' with regard to older people towards one which is grounded in the awareness of the huge contribution that older people themselves have to make to society
- The world is changing and models of volunteering and the sorts of services that they deliver need to keep up to date
- There is huge benefit to be gained from supporting older volunteers to take the initiative and to be supported to deliver the services which address the issues in their communities
- If left unchecked, there is the potential for older and younger generations to move further apart and become more critical of each other. It is crucial that intergenerational initiatives are supported and indeed helped to make a real step change in terms of their volume and content
- Social exclusion can be effectively

addressed through active ageing initiatives. People with dementia are a group who can face particular exclusion but, as has been shown in this report, there are many effective ways of supporting them, including supporting them to make a contribution to the rest of society.

- We will not achieve the objectives of active ageing if there is not a shift away from the negative views about older people and ageing promulgated in some sections of the media. Europe can only be truly 'age friendly' once there has been a cultural shift towards valuing older people and celebrating the huge advances in longevity and quality of life.

The major message emerging from this report is that, whilst there are differences in the demographic and cultural challenges experienced by different EU countries, there are nevertheless many common issues. The range of examples from different countries are a reminder of the importance of learning from each other rather than 're-inventing the wheel'.

And finally, active ageing and solidarity between generations will only be achieved with the support of older people's volunteering and civic engagement.



Overview

Active ageing and solidarity between generations

The year of active ageing and solidarity between generations is intended to raise awareness of the contribution that older people make to society.

Active ageing means growing old in good health and as a full member of society, feeling more fulfilled in work, more independent in daily life and more involved as citizens. No matter how old people are, they can still play their part in support and cooperation between different

age society and enjoy a better quality of life.

Given the prevalence of negative attitudes towards ageing in society there is a particular challenge to highlight and support the enormous potential that older people can contribute.

The World Health Organisation (see box) has developed a policy framework for the advancement of active ageing. Promoting active ageing requires a number of its determinants to be addressed. This is a wide ranging agenda, but one where the contribution of volunteering and civic engagement has so much to offer.

Active ageing – the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. It allows people to realise their potential for wellbeing throughout their lives and to participate in society according to their needs, desires and capabilities, while providing them with adequate protection, security and care when they need assistance.

Intergenerational solidarity – refers to the mutual support and cooperation between different age groups in order to achieve a society where people of all ages have a role to play in line with their needs and capacities, and can benefit from their community's economic and social progress on an equal basis.

The determinants of active ageing²



² Active Ageing: A Policy Framework, World Health Organisation, 2002

The European Year 2012 seeks to promote active ageing in three areas:-

Employment – as life expectancy increases across Europe and pension ages rise, many older people have concerns that they will not be able to stay in their current jobs or be able to find another job until they can retire on a decent pension. Older workers require better support to remain in the labour market. They also require more flexible and creative ways for reducing their work commitments over time until they finally leave paid employment. Redefining the options for retirement will be critical.

Participation in society – retiring from one's job does not mean becoming idle. The contribution of older people to society as carers for others, typically their own parents, spouses or grandchildren is often overlooked and so is their role as volunteers. There is a need to create better conditions for active citizenship and engagement by older people to flourish even more. Moving from a 'deficit' to an 'asset based' approach to engaging with older people has the potential to galvanise a step change in the contribution that older people make to local communities.

Independent living – health generally declines as people get older, but a lot can be done to cope with or ameliorate this decline. Quite small social and physical changes in local neighbourhoods can make a big difference to how people experience various health conditions and impairments. Active ageing also means empowering people so that they retain a high degree of choice and control over their lives for as long as possible. Intergenerational solidarity (two-way giving and receiving between individuals as well as older and younger generations) are also important tenets of active ageing.

Objectives

The objectives of the European Year 2012 are:-

- To raise awareness of the value of active ageing and to highlight the useful contribution that older people make to society and the economy; leading to better opportunities for older people to play their part in the labour market.
- To promote solidarity between generations and the vitality and dignity of all people; combating poverty and social exclusion.
- To do more to mobilise the potential of older persons by fostering volunteering and active participation in family life and society; and encouraging healthy ageing in dignity.
- To promote activities which will help to combat age discrimination, overcome age-related stereotypes and remove barriers, particularly with regard to employability.

The role of volunteering and civic engagement

This report addresses the objectives of the EU Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between generations through the lens of volunteering and active citizenship. In other words it is concerned with the volunteering and active citizenship:-

- Undertaken by older people themselves
- Undertaken by other groups in society in order to support older people's active ageing
- The social and/or technical infrastructure that best supports both of the above

Volunteering and later life

Data collected by the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) gives a picture of the extent of voluntary work undertaken by older people across Europe.

	DE	DK	EL	FR	IT	NL	AT	SE
Total	9.9	17.6	3.0	13.7	7.4	21.1	9.1	17.1
By gender								
Men	10.9	18.8	3.6	16.1	8.5	19.5	10.1	20.2
Women	9.0	16.0	2.9	10.6	6.4	21.9	8.1	14.3
By age groups								
50-64	12.3	18.1	3.9	13.3	10.4	22.6	12.1	17.5
65-74	10.0	19.8	2.1	16.1	4.3	26.4	6.3	19.6
75+	1.2	12.3	2.1	8.4	1.2	8.7	1.2	13.2
Couple vs living alone								
2 adults	11.4	18.7	3.1	14.1	6.9	22.0	10.3	16.1
Single	7.0	14.7	2.9	10.2	8.2	18.2	4.6	15.0
By educational attainment								
Low education	4.8	12.1	1.8	9.6	5.1	18.6	5.4	14.3
Medium education	8.7	16.2	2.1	14.8	12.2	20.3	9.4	16.6
High education	14.9	23.7	7.8	23.0	1.2	29.1	13.7	22.9
By employment status								
Employed	10.5	17.4	4.6	11.4	12.4	19.3	13.2	18.7
Retired	8.7	17.2	2.9	15.0	7.0	20.3	8.4	16.3
Other non-employed	12.6	20.4	2.1	12.3	4.1	23.1	7.1	1.2
By health status								
Good or better	12.2	19.3	3.4	16.3	10.6	24.0	11.5	18.4
Fair or worse	7.2	13.8	2.1	8.6	4.3	15.0	5.0	14.9

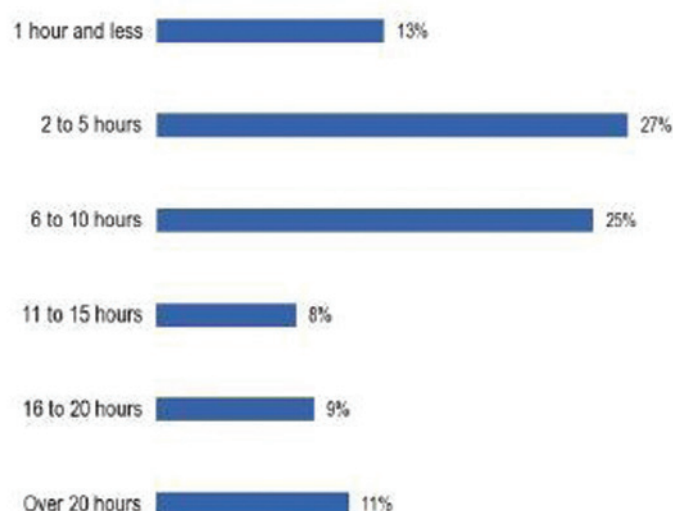
Source: Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE)

Notes: 'low education' (pre-primary, primary or lower secondary education), 'medium education' (secondary or post-secondary education), 'high education' (first and second stage of tertiary education) Figures in bold and bold italics indicate highest and lowest values for each activity.

Key points include:-

- The percentage of over 50 year olds engaged in volunteering varies significantly with the Netherlands at one extreme (more than 20% engaged in volunteering), and Greece at the other end with only 3% volunteering.
- Volunteering appears to increase when people enter the post retirement phase (50-74) and then declines thereafter (though in Nordic countries it appears to remain very high at 12-13% of people over 75 engaged in volunteering)

Hours a month undertaking voluntary work³



Source: Special Eurobarometer 378 "Active Ageing"

- Those with a partner are generally more likely to volunteer than those without
- Educational attainment is a strong predictor of the level of volunteering
- Older citizens are slightly more likely to do voluntary work (27% of those aged 55 and over compared to 26% of EU27 citizens overall)
- Older people generally spend more hours per month volunteering (14 hours per month on average compared with 12 hours average for EU27 citizens overall).

Among the 73% who do not do voluntary work, lack of time and interest are the main obstacles stopping them from taking part (although a lack of interest was more of a barrier for those aged 55 and over)

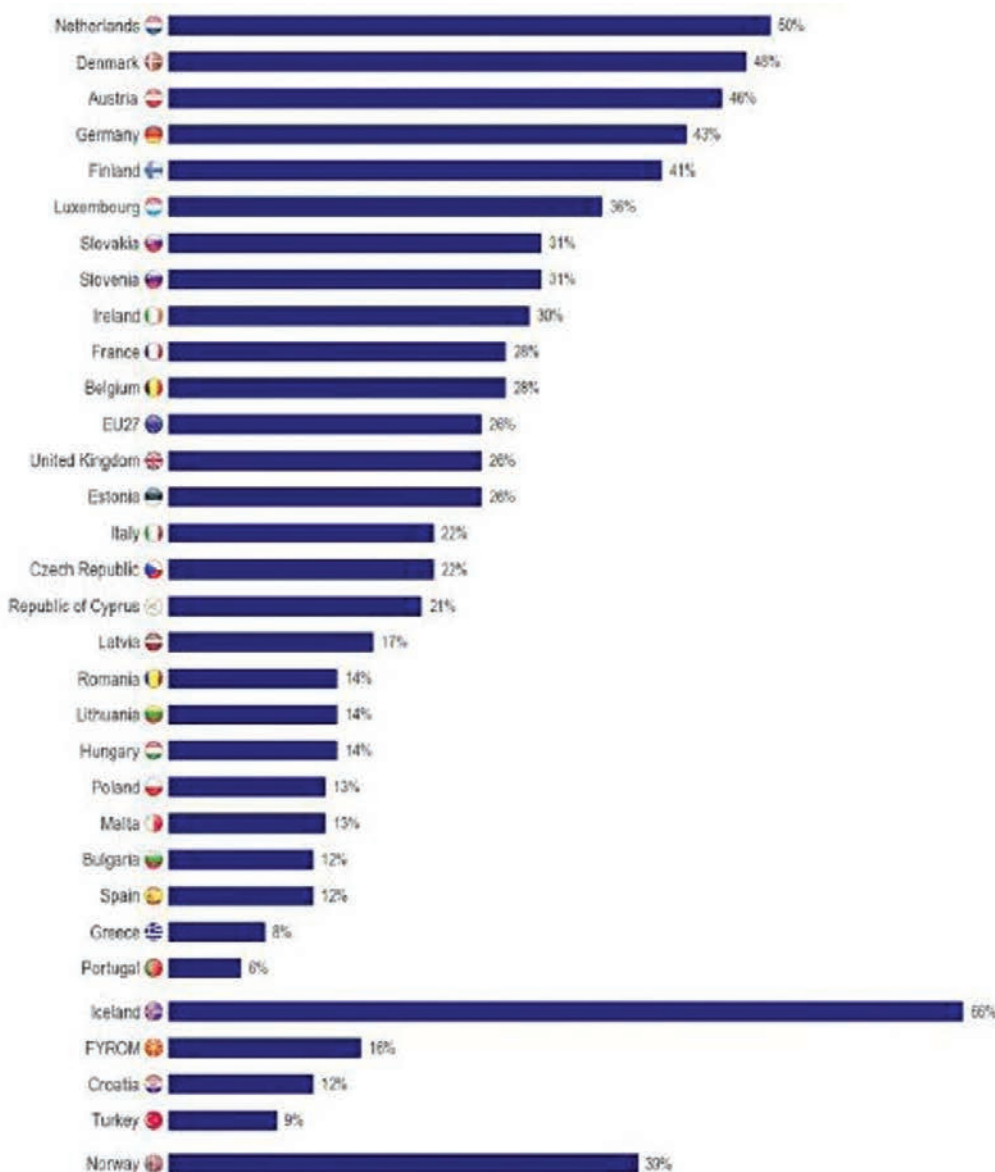
Although the majority of older people do not participate in formal voluntary work, two thirds of citizens have performed some sort of informal voluntary work in the last 12 months (defined as helping or supporting others). And there are some indications that the extent of volunteering by older people is increasing. DaneAge for example reports⁴ that the percentage of 60-69 year olds who volunteer has increased from 20% to 38% in the past twenty years.

³Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE)

⁴Co-creating welfare: Danish Volunteering perspective, la Brix Ohmann, DaneAge, AGE Platform conference, 8 July 2011

There is significant variation in volunteering between member states:-

Older people's participation in voluntary work



Source: Special Eurobarometer 378 "Active Ageing"

A recent analysis⁵ of ageing in Europe sheds some light on the reasons behind such variation. It is not just a simple issue; different countries exhibit different trends in the types of volunteering and social participation that older people undertake. For example, in the UK volunteering roles have traditionally included a

greater emphasis on providing social services, whereas in Sweden, where the state has been more dominant in providing welfare services, volunteering is traditionally more associated with 'expressive' activities such as sports, cultural activities and advocacy groups and associations.

⁵Ageing Across Europe, WRVS/DEMOS, 2012

Maximising older people's engagement in volunteering

The growth in the numbers of older people in Europe presents some very positive opportunities. For their own sake and that of society as a whole it is important that steps are taken to support an increase the involvement of older people in volunteering.

Understanding what motivates or deters people from volunteering is the first step to take. A study of SHARE data looked in detail at older people's entry into and exit from volunteering in order to assess how best to mobilise current and future cohorts of older potential volunteers. The research tried to understand older volunteers' motivation by looking at the duration of volunteer activities, the probability that older people start and stop volunteering, and the factors that significantly predict transitions in and out of volunteering. Among the findings was that those volunteers who were least likely to quit were those who contributed intensely and for many years and who were married to another volunteer. They concluded that there is a need to focus efforts on recruiting older adults in volunteer activities early on, ideally before they retire.

These findings are echoed in research commissioned by the Volunteer Now's "Unlocking Potential Project"⁶ in 2008 (which entailed a telephone survey of 350 people aged 50+ across Northern Ireland and 6 focus groups across urban/rural, volunteers/non-volunteers, socio economic status and age 50-59, 60-59 and 70+). This work suggested that a 'life stage model' exists whereby those who volunteer throughout their lives are likely to continue or increase their volunteering post retirement. This same model suggested that when people retire the first 6-9 months are a 'honeymoon' or extended holiday period when retirees enjoy spending time on hobbies, holidays and family. This supports previous findings⁷ in the UK that after an initial 9-18 month period after retirement people set a pattern of behaviours which when set are hard to shift. There is

therefore a key window of opportunity to get people involved in volunteering and their community⁸.

Research has also shed light on some of the factors which appear to discourage or encourage people to get involved. Research undertaken by Volunteer Now⁹ has highlighted some of the 'barriers' and 'enablers' to volunteering as perceived by older volunteers themselves:-

- Barriers
 - o Having to register on?line
 - o Having to complete an application form
 - o Having to attend for interview
 - o Being subject to a criminal records check
- Enablers
 - o A chance to try out volunteering
 - o Having a face to face discussion with someone within the organisation
 - o Having a discussion with an existing volunteer
 - o Have a discussion by phone with someone within the organisation

These pointers are supported by other work done at an EU level. In a review¹⁰ of the measures required to promote the social inclusion of older people through volunteering a number of additional factors which are thought to maximise volunteering were identified:-

- A low threshold for joining activities and access to voluntary organisations
- Measures which strongly reflect the country-specific dominant traditions
- Flexible means of participation (e.g. short term projects)

⁶<http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/publications/-category=11&type=7&Search.x=81&Search.y=11>
⁷Active ageing in active communities: Volunteering and the transition to retirement, Smith J & Gay P, 2005

⁸Making the Connection, Volunteer Development Agency, 2008

⁹Making the Connection 2, Volunteer Now, 2011

¹⁰Measures for social inclusion of the elderly: the case for volunteering, Eurofound, 2010

- Opportunities for self development of the volunteer
- Opportunities for gaining skills and even qualifications
- Recognition and affirmation

Of course 'active ageing' is not all about formal volunteering, it is also about civic engagement. The overall picture for civic engagement in Europe is illustrated as follows:-

Proportion of the population participating actively or working for one of the specified activities, EU-27, September-October 2011



Source European Commission, Special Eurobarometer No.378 - Active ageing

Health and wellbeing benefits of volunteering in later life

Whilst volunteering and civic engagement contribute significantly to society as a whole (see more below), what is more important is that all the evidence shows that there are significant positive benefits for older volunteers themselves.

For example, a recent UK study¹¹ involving over 5,000 older people was able to conclude – “there is strong evidence supportive of a causal interpretation of the relationship between volunteering and wellbeing in later life.” This investigation of volunteering and older people looked at a number of indicators of wellbeing – depression, quality of life, life satisfaction, and social isolation – and how these were affected

by people’s involvement in volunteering over a two year period. A number of key points are worth noting:-

- The wellbeing of older volunteers was greater than that of non-volunteers
- The strength of the wellbeing effect increases with the volume of volunteering undertaken i.e. there is a ‘dose effect’
- The relationship between volunteering and wellbeing is not present in those people who stop volunteering
- Improvement in wellbeing is only present where people feel appreciated for the efforts they put into volunteering

EU studies support the health and wellbeing benefits of volunteering. A study¹² of data from the SHARE study, analysed the relationship between volunteering and wellbeing among 30,023 Europeans aged 50 and over in 12 countries. Overall a positive correlation between volunteering and perceived health and life satisfaction was found and a negative correlation for depression. Other work¹³ also demonstrates that volunteering can be a suitable measure to reduce the risk or prevent social exclusion by:-

- Improving health status
- Reducing social isolation
- Building new contacts and social networks
- Supporting the development of new skills and competencies which can ease access back into labour markets or social services
- Gaining new confidence and self esteem, particularly from affirmation and recognition

¹¹The impact of volunteering on well-being in later life, Nazroo J & Matthews K, WRVS, 2012

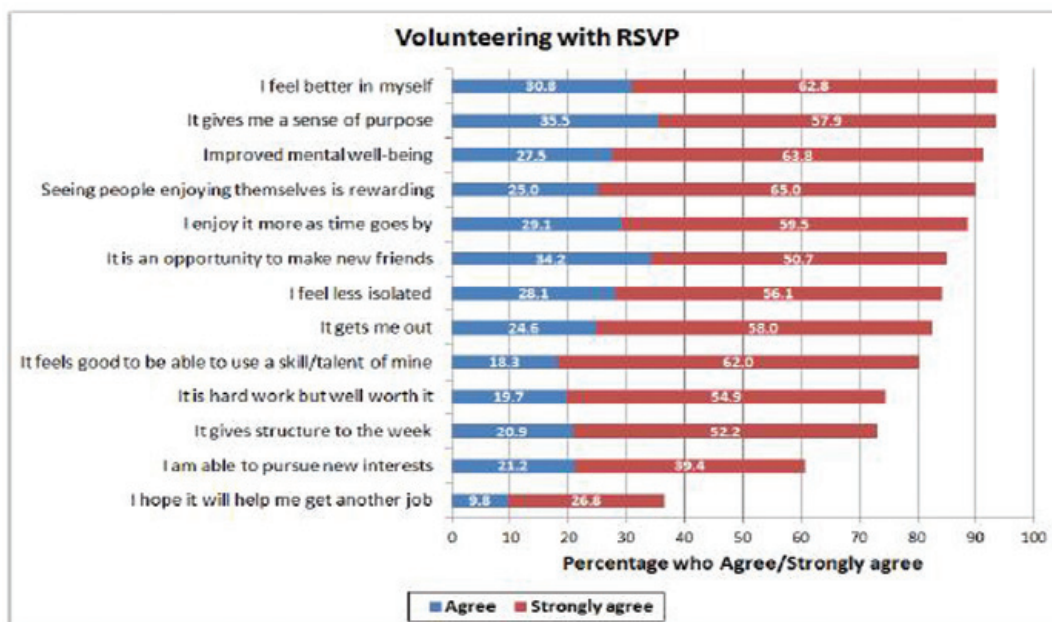
¹²Elderly Volunteering and Well-Being: A Cross European Comparison Based on SHARE Data, Haski-Leventhal D, Voluntas, 2009

¹³ Measures for social inclusion of the elderly: the case for volunteering, Eurofound, 2010

All of these national / European studies are borne out at a local level. For example, the benefits of volunteering come across very strongly in an independent evaluation of a Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme (RSVP) project in the UK. The volunteers who undertook a range of tasks throughout the project were surveyed about what they thought about their own experiences of volunteering. They were very clear that they themselves benefit significantly from their voluntary work with mental, physical and emotional well being high on the list of perceived benefits. Volunteering with RSVP was generally viewed as an enjoyable, fun and happy experience.

A number of statements (see graph below) are rated highly, especially:

Further research¹⁴ undertaken by Volunteer Now adds weight to the evidence. When a sample of 350 people aged 50+ were asked how satisfied they were with their life at present, 90% of those who volunteered formally and informally said they were satisfied compared to 72% of those who didn't volunteer but would consider it, and 68% of those who didn't volunteer and would not consider it.



- I feel better in myself (93%)
- It gives me a sense of purpose (93%)
- Improved mental well-being (91%)
- Seeing people enjoying themselves is rewarding (90%)
- I enjoy it more as time goes by (89%).

What is particularly impressive about the high levels of satisfaction is that over half (53.3%) of the volunteers reported long-term health difficulties - arthritis, mobility, heart problems and troubles hearing being the key ones.

“ **90%**
of those who volunteered
formally and informally
said they were satisfied
with their life ”

¹⁴ <http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/publications/-category=11&type=7&Search.x=81&Search.y=11>

There is, however, a health dimension to be considered as it appears that older people with poor health are less likely to volunteer. In this survey, 26% of those who did not volunteer and would not consider it described their health as 'poor' or 'very poor'. Interestingly, previous research conducted with a similar group of 50+ year olds in Northern Ireland found that illness or disability was the second most common reason why people did not formally volunteer. There is a body of international research which argues that people who volunteer are less likely to suffer ill health in later life. There are a range of different theories about why this is the case; they include the fact that people who are healthy are more likely to volunteer. There is also an argument that volunteering helps people to cope better with illness or poor health, because volunteering enables them to be more satisfied with life.

Volunteer Now's Unlocking Potential project has partnered up with the University of Ulster to undertake a longitudinal research study to investigate the relationship between volunteering and self rated health and well being of people aged 50+. Over 340 volunteers have participated in the study by completing 4 questionnaires over an 18 month period. This study has also included a qualitative aspect, with focus groups of new and existing volunteers, and a cohort of people who do not volunteer. This report will be produced in 2012, however interim findings for baseline and time point 1 has shown that over half of those who responded at baseline (55%) reported having at least one diagnosed medical condition and 48.1% indicated that physical pain prevented them from doing what they needed to do. Paradoxically, 79%, 86.3% and 90.8% respectively expressed satisfaction with their overall health, their ability to perform daily activities and their ability to 'get around'.

These findings and the other research cited here indicate strongly that involvement in volunteering can have a positive impact on older people's sense of well being and emotional resilience in relation to coping with health conditions.

Benefits for society

Whilst a principle reason for promoting volunteering by older people is to improve their own health, wellbeing and quality of life, it should be noted that there are significant benefits to society as a whole. Volunteering produces significant economic as well as social benefits by contributing significantly to social and economic activity.

Research undertaken in 37 countries by Johns Hopkins University's "Comparative Non-Profit Sector Project" examined the contribution of the voluntary sector and volunteering to national economies. It showed that volunteers represent the equivalent of up to 7% of the economically active population in many countries and make a \$440 bn US Dollar contribution to the global economy. Of course this is not all produced by older volunteers, though they will play a significant part.

More detailed work on the contribution exclusively of older people is available for the UK. Research commissioned by the WRVS¹⁵ provides a detailed picture of the economic contribution made by older people. It estimates the economic value of the unpaid work provided by older people at £44bn – informal caring for others representing £34bn and formal volunteering at £10bn. When combined with other economic transfers by older people the WRVS work out that, after taking account of spending on health and social care and other costs for older people borne by tax payers, there is a net contribution to UK society by older people of £40bn.

Other research ¹⁶ has shown that volunteering engenders a number of societal benefits:-

- Promoting economic growth through generating social capital
- Providing a dynamic contribution to economies
- Acting as a pathway to integration and employment
- Improving health and social care

¹⁵Gold Age Pensioners: valuing the socio economic contribution of older people in the UK, WRVS, 2011

¹⁶ The value of volunteering, Flanagan T & Sadowski P, Volonteurope 2011

The contribution of individual older volunteers can be profound too.

Cancer Research Volunteer (Alan Dance, 88year old) (UK)

Alan is 88 and a volunteer at the Cancer Research UK shop in Bath. He joined the team in 2005 and amongst other things he is responsible for the media department. When Alan joined the shop, this department was making a maximum of £20 per week, since that time, he has increased the takings to an average of £250 per week! Alan is an inspiration to others that volunteer in the shop, particularly the younger local job seekers and those on the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.

Everyone is motivated by his passion and energy particularly as Alan is undergoing treatment for bowel cancer. His shop manager says *"I normally have to stop Alan doing too much or staying too long – he would quite happily stay long after we have closed to finish doing things. His reliability and drive, despite his recent health problems, are second to none. In my mind, Alan is an exceptional volunteer with real passion and commitment."*

“The case is overwhelming – volunteering is good for older people and it is good for society.”

Caution

Whilst the case for increasing the participation of older people in volunteering and civic engagement is overwhelming, there are some issues which need to be kept in mind and addressed. Firstly, it is essential that volunteers are fairly reimbursed for expenses that they incur in their volunteering activities and organisations using volunteers must guard against exploiting the good will of older volunteers. Secondly it is important, as with all approaches to volunteering, not to seek to replace paid employees with unpaid volunteers. Encouraging older people to volunteer is not a means of replacing vital publicly provided and paid for services.

Volonteurope recommends

1. NGOs should:-

- a. Take steps to develop and support volunteering opportunities which are particularly attractive to and suitable for older people
- b. Provide targeted information about volunteering to older people, and in so doing make them aware that they have something very valuable to offer
- c. Emphasise the idea that volunteering can be a great path to active ageing and lifelong learning
- d. Exchange good practice on different aspects of volunteering to stimulate and inspire new ideas and promote high quality projects
- e. Agree the volunteering principles which are particularly important to allow volunteering by older volunteers to flourish, and incorporate these where possible into quality assurance systems of volunteer involving organisations
- f. Ensure that any arrangements for measuring volunteering activity take particular account of the contribution made by older volunteers
- g. Set a low threshold for recruiting older volunteers and provide possibilities for flexible ways of participation (e.g. short term projects or clearly defined manageable tasks)
- h. Ensure there is a particular focus on engaging older people at risk of social exclusion in volunteering: providing opportunities for developing new skills and competencies could be particularly effective in doing this.

2. Local Government should:-

- a. Recognise their central role in supporting the engagement of older people in volunteering and civic engagement
- b. Encourage and support retired and senior volunteering programmes in their areas

3. Member states should:-

- a. Recognise that volunteering by older people is a very effective means of promoting health and wellbeing in later life
- b. Develop a national strategy for increasing the engagement and support of older volunteers, taking account of the fact that older people with fewer personal resources, lower levels of education and health problems face particular barriers to engagement. The strategies should take account of the country specific dominant traditions and general culture of volunteering
- c. Develop public rewards or awards schemes for older volunteers
- d. Promote cooperation across different sectors in society (private and public) with a view to maximising the support for older volunteering
- e. Encourage local authorities to support senior and retired volunteering programmes
- f. Introduce 'volunteering by older people' as an indicator of how well local authorities are performing on promoting active ageing

4. EU Institutions should:-

- a. Recognise volunteering by older people as a key element of active ageing and incorporate this into relevant policies and strategies
- b. Publicise the benefits from volunteering to the health and wellbeing of older people

- c. Take actions to increase the participation of older people in volunteering and active citizenship activities, by:-
 - i. Systematically collecting comparable data on rates of volunteering by older people. This basic data should be the starting point for designing more informed and better-targeted policies to support and promote volunteering by older people.
 - ii. Collecting and disseminating examples of good practice
 - iii. Removing barriers preventing older people from getting involved in volunteer activities, such as age limits in insurance, etc
 - iv. Recognising the contribution of senior volunteers' time as eligible contribution "in-kind" co-financing in all EU funding streams
 - v. Simplifying current mechanisms for accessing (and reporting on) funding opportunities related to senior volunteering, taking particular account of the capacities and needs of smaller senior volunteer-involving organisations
 - vi. Working with Member States to ensure mechanisms are in place that allow senior volunteer-involving organisations to include the value of senior volunteering effort in their P&L accounts - reflecting the immense value that older volunteers bring to communities
- d. Ensure that European and national level funding is provided for senior volunteer-involving organisations. This should not only cover major contracts or project-based funding, but also include core funding, small grants and contracts, which also allow for full cost recovery in organisations.

- e. Work with Member States to create infrastructures (e.g. brokers or intermediary civil society organisations) which facilitate partnerships between different stakeholders - for example, to support the involvement of businesses with senior volunteer-involving organisations, or to work across the sectors to deliver strategic responses to social, health and economic challenges faced by older people in Europe
- f. Establish a permanent volunteering Unit in the European Commission (building on the policy recommendation from P.A.V.E.) which facilitates a more coordinated and proactive approach to volunteering policies, including senior volunteering. The Unit would strengthen the ongoing inter-service and inter-institutional dialogue on all aspects of volunteering policy. Work with Member States to ensure a dedicated volunteering policy government department exists in all Member States
- g. Promote the creation of senior volunteering and intergenerational exchange programmes, and establish a European network of co-ordinating organisations to support this.
- h. Promote a vision for how volunteering and civic engagement can support the development of a society for all ages. In particular, develop a narrative and supportive policy initiatives which link the three European Years:-
 - i. Volunteering - 2011
 - ii. Active Ageing - 2012
 - iii. Active Citizenship – 2013
- i. Undertake a media campaign to promote the above



Policy Themes



Asset based approach: emphasising the contribution that older people make to society

Issues

This section evaluates the impact of negative attitudes about ageing in Europe before going on to make the case for a shift in policy and practice towards an 'asset based' approach. It is argued that a focus on the positive contribution of older people to society is critical if volunteering and civic engagement is to maximise its impact on supporting Active Ageing and Solidarity between generations.

Negative attitudes towards ageing in Europe

The rapid ageing of Europe's population takes place against a background of negative stereotypes and ageist attitudes which cause significant harm at a societal and individual level. They undermine the very essence of the concept of Active Ageing and create significant costs through lost productivity of older workers and long term health costs from those excluded from economic activity¹⁷. Negative attitudes are also a direct challenge to intergenerational solidarity.

Recent research has provided a comprehensive picture of attitudes to age across Europe¹⁸. For

the first time there is a research evidence on the distinctive effects of differences between individuals and differences between countries in the European region on people's attitudes toward old age (70 plus) and on their experiences of ageism. It highlights the prevalence of negative attitudes across a number of domains and illustrates the significant variation across the Member States.

Active Ageing means growing old in good health and as a full member of society, feeling more fulfilled in work, more independent in daily life and more involved as citizens.

Negative attitudes can take a number of forms:-

- How people characterise one another as young and old, and identify with their own age group.
- How high or low a status people associate with older people.
- The extent to which people perceive older people to be a threat to the health system or the economy.

¹⁷ The European Older People's Platform, 2007
¹⁸ Predictors of attitudes to age across Europe, D Abrams, C Vauclair & H Swift, UK Dept of Work and Pensions, 2011

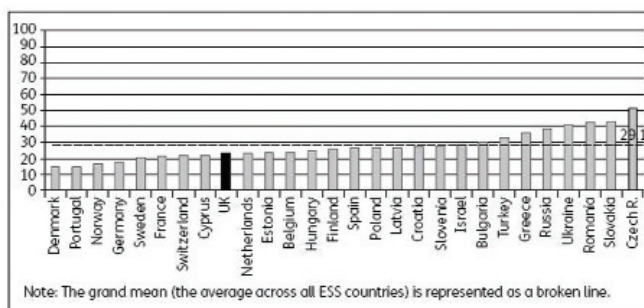
- Perceptions of stereotypes of older people.
- How positively or negatively people feel towards older people (direct prejudice).
- Older people's experiences of ageist prejudice against themselves.
- The amount of contact between older and younger generations.

Internalised negative views Older people are twice as likely as younger people to agree with the statement that 'older people are a burden on society'

Intergenerational Solidarity: Flash Eurobarometer

At the individual level about 33% of all older people responding to an EU survey¹⁹ reported personally experiencing direct prejudice towards them. There are some notable differences between countries.

Proportion of people reporting personal experiences of age discrimination by ESS countries

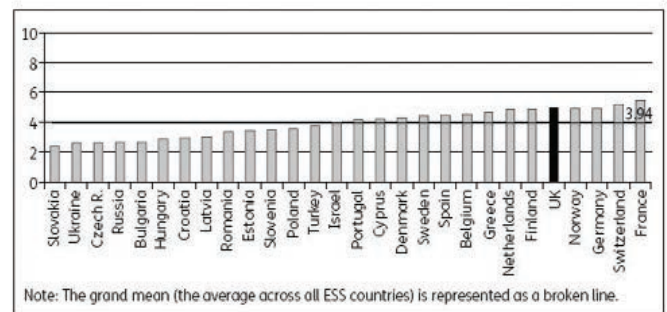


Source: Predictors of attitudes towards age across Europe, DWP Research Paper 735, 2011

The impact of ageist attitudes on older people's health and well being can be significant. A recent longitudinal study²⁰ demonstrated that older people with more negative self perceptions of ageing died 7.5 years earlier than those with more positive self images of ageing. There are many other significant impacts on the health and wellbeing and active ageing of older people from ageist attitudes.

At a societal level, there is a prevalent 'negative narrative' about older people which highlights the 'burden' they are assumed to place on society and which minimises the contribution from older people. For examples, research shows that older people's contribution to the economy is perceived to be relatively low across all EU countries (with some significant variation).

Perceived economic contribution of people aged over 70 by ESS country



Source: Predictors of attitudes towards age across Europe, DWP Research Paper 735, 2011

It is worth pointing out in this context that the constant references by EU Institutions and Member States to 'dependency ratios' when discussing demographic issues is very unhelpful and feeds into some of the negative attitudes to older people and ageing.

Research²¹ has begun to highlight how the characteristics of individuals are associated with negative attitudes in Europe towards ageing:-

The effects of individuals' characteristics can be summarised as follows:

- **Age:** Older people are more favourable towards older people, younger people are less so.
- **Gender:** Women are more favourable towards older people and regard ageism to be a more serious issue.
- **Education:** People who are better educated are more conscious of ageism but do not feel so strongly affected by it personally.

¹⁹ Predictors of attitudes towards age across Europe, Dept Work and Pensions (UK) Research Paper 735, 2011
²⁰ Levy, B. R., Slade, M. D., Kunkel, S. R., and Kasl, S. V. (2002). Longevity increased by positive self-perceptions of aging. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83, 261-270.

²¹ Predictors of attitudes to age across Europe, D Abrams, C Vauclair & H Swift, UK Dept of Wok and Pensions, 2011

- **Subjective poverty:** Those who feel subjectively poorer are also relatively less favourable towards people aged over 70.
- **Ethnic minority membership:** People belonging to an ethnic minority group within their country perceive old age as starting earlier but also perceive that people aged over 70 make a larger contribution to the economy.
- **Working status:** People who are in, rather than not in, work are more likely to believe youth lasts longer and to perceive that people over 70 have lower status, but that they make a larger contribution to the economy.
- **Residential area:** compared with rural dwellers, urban dwellers perceive old age as beginning earlier and they have less favourable views of people aged over 70, while also being less likely to have close social relationships with people aged over 70.
- **Unemployment** (unemployment rate): People aged over 70 are judged to be less competent (the most damaging feature of the elderly stereotype) in countries with higher unemployment rates.
- **Age structure:** Countries with a relatively larger proportion of their population aged 65 and over are ones in which people (regardless of their own age) hold more positive views of people aged over 70.
- **Urbanisation:** In populations that are more urbanised there are fewer people whose close friends are aged over 70.
- **Cultural values:** In countries whose values can be characterised as emphasising personal autonomy (such as individual independence), people feel more positive towards those who are aged over 70, and also experience lower levels of ageism.

Thus, whereas being older or female are associated with more favourable views of people aged over 70, being an urban dweller, in work or subjectively poor are associated with less favourable views of people aged over 70.

The effects of country-level characteristics can be summarised as follows:

- **Gross Domestic Product:** Views of people over 70 are more favourable in countries that have higher levels of GDP.
- **Inequality of income distribution** (Gini index): Evaluations of people over 70, at least in terms of status, are somewhat more positive in countries with higher levels of inequality.
- **Age legislation** (State Pension age for men): Older people's status (those aged over 70) is perceived to be higher in countries that have later State Pension ages.

Taken together, the populations that hold the most positive views of older people are in countries that have higher GDP per capita, those with later State Pension ages and a higher proportion of people aged over 65, and those that value autonomy more. This is also true of countries with greater levels of overall inequality.

Asset based approach

Negative attitudes towards older people are likely to underpin the 'deficit' model which is prevalent in most EU countries. This way of thinking focuses on the problems, needs and deficiencies within communities and designs services to 'fill the gaps and fix the problems'. As a result, individuals or communities of older people can feel disempowered and dependent, with people becoming passive recipients of expensive services rather than active agents pursuing their own lives within their families and community.

An 'asset' can be any of the following:-

- *the practical skills, capacity and knowledge of local older people*
- *the passions and interests of local older people that give them energy for change*
- *the networks and connections – known as 'social capital' – in a community, including friendships and neighbourliness*
- *the effectiveness of local community and voluntary associations*
- *the resources of public, private and third sector organisations that are available to support older people in a community*
- *the physical and economic resources of a place that enhance older people's well-being.*

An asset based approach²² on the other hand represents a fundamental shift in policy and practice. It replaces the concentration on individual 'needs' with a focus on the social, cultural and material assets that even the most marginalised communities contain. It is an approach which could make a huge contribution to delivering the outcomes which Active Ageing and Inter Generational Solidarity aspire towards.

An increasing amount of evidence is beginning to show that a focus on what individuals or communities have (their assets), as opposed to what they don't have (their needs), enables them to more effectively address their own needs. The asset based approach does not, however, seek to undermine investment in services for older people. Instead the aim is to achieve a better balance between providing services and building community support for active ageing. The extent to which people can have control over their lives makes a critical contribution to their psychosocial wellbeing and health²³.

Putting an asset based approach into practice²⁴

The asset approach is a set of **values and principles** and a way of thinking about the world. It:

- identifies and makes visible the health-enhancing assets in a community
- sees older people and communities as the co-producers of health and well-being, rather than the recipients of services
- promotes community networks, relationships and friendships that can provide caring, mutual help and empowerment of older people
- values what works well in an area
- identifies what has the potential to improve the health and well-being of older people
- supports older people's health and well-being through self-esteem, coping strategies, resilience skills, relationships, friendships, knowledge and personal resources
- empowers communities to control their futures and create tangible resources such as services, funds and buildings.

While these principles will lead to new kinds of community based working, they could also be used to refocus many existing local or national state service programmes.

An asset approach **starts by asking questions** and reflecting on what is already present:

- What makes older people strong?
- What makes older people healthy?
- What factors make older people more able to cope in times of stress?
- What makes a local neighbourhood a good place to be?
- What does the community do to improve the health of older people?

²²A glass half full: how an asset based approach can improve community health and wellbeing, Improvement and Development Agency, 2010

²³Professor Sir Michael Marmot, Chair of the Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England

²⁴The material which follows is adapted from - A glass half full: how an asset based approach can improve community health and wellbeing, Improvement and Development Agency, 2010

In practice, this means doing the following:

- find out what is already working and generate more of it
- promote local action based on what it is trying to achieve, not what the problems are
- cherish the assets – as soon as people are talking to each other they are working on the solutions
- actively build capacity and confidence among communities, older people and staff of services
- involve all the key stakeholders from the beginning – those left out will be left behind

- design in what is needed to achieve the desired future
- design out the structures, processes and systems that are stopping this future being achieved
- ensure the long-term sustainability of the solutions and the project.

The following table highlights what changes take place in moving from a deficit to an asset based approach:-

<i>Moving from a deficit approach to an asset approach</i>	
Where we are now – the deficit approach	Where an asset way of thinking takes us
Start with deficiencies and needs in the community	Start with the assets in the community
Respond to problems	Identify opportunities and strengths
Provide services to users	Invest in people as citizens
Emphasise the role of agencies	Emphasise the role of civil society
Focus on individuals	Focus on communities / neighbourhoods and the common good
See people as clients and consumers receiving services	See people as citizens and co-producers with something to offer
Treat people as passive and done-to	Help people to take control of their lives
‘Fix people’	Support people to develop their potential
Implement programmes as the answer	See people as the answer

Source: A glass half full: how an asset based approach can improve community health and wellbeing, Improvement and Development Agency, 2010

Good practice examples

Unlocking Potential Project (UK)

Volunteer Now works to promote, enhance and support volunteering across Northern Ireland. Its focus is to connect with individuals and organisations to build healthy communities and create positive change.

The 'Unlocking Potential Project' is a five year initiative which began in 2008. It was funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies and managed by Volunteer Now. The overall aim of the project is to encourage and support healthier ageing and civic engagement in Northern Ireland, by enabling and empowering older people to take part in volunteering. Over its life course the project has been informed by ongoing pieces of primary and secondary research, which continue to inform the shape and direction it takes.

The project has a number of specific objectives:-

- To challenge attitudes and raise awareness of the contribution and benefits of volunteering;
- To increase the number of older volunteers over the next five years.
- To improve access to and develop volunteer opportunities for older people that meet their expectations and positively impact on communities; and
- To enhance, older people's quality of life in relation to equality, social inclusion, support and health issues.

The first objective of the Unlocking Potential project has been to challenge attitudes and raise awareness of the contribution of volunteering (by those from older age groups). One of the findings from initial focus groups with older people was that many had a narrow understanding of what volunteering was or could be (working in a charity shop or collecting money were the two most cited examples). It was also very clear that media coverage and government messages in relation to older people tended to focus heavily on the cost of ageing

and the negative aspects of growing older. To overcome this the Unlocking Potential project developed marketing messages and promotional images that featured older volunteers to raise awareness and visibility of the role that older people already play in the community through volunteering. The 'One Good Reason' campaign took the form of a marketing campaign which included billboard, bus and radio adverts as well as a P.R campaign that showcased existing older volunteers and told their story to inspire and encourage others. A telephone survey of 350 older people commissioned after this marketing revealed that 28% of respondents had recently seen advertising of volunteering and 80% of those aged 60+ felt that it appealed to them.

Project staff consulted with older volunteers to gain an understanding of how they wished their contribution through volunteering to be recognised. As a result of this a recognition event was hosted by a member of the local devolved government during Volunteers Week in 2010 at Northern Ireland parliament Buildings. Over 200 older volunteers from across Northern Ireland attended and were celebrated at this event.

The Unlocking Potential Project has also engaged with local councils to encourage them to recognise the impact made by older volunteers in their areas. This has taken the form of sponsorship of "older volunteer of the year" awards which have been adopted by a number of local councils across Northern Ireland.

Through the Unlocking Potential Project the Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit (VIAT), developed by the Institute for Voluntary Research (IVR) has been used to measure the impact made by volunteers with particular reference to older volunteers. This process has provided clear evidence of the contribution that older people make as volunteers. This evidence will be showcased at a research event in 2013.

For further information:

<http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/volunteering/over-50s-volunteering>



Time banking

Time Banking initially started life in the USA as an intervention focusing on providing services to older adults to enable them to maintain independence and remain in their own homes. Time Banking continues to have this role today, and time banks can help older people by providing personal assistance, befriending and allowing opportunities to contribute to their communities.

Time banking is a means of exchange used to organise people and organisations around a purpose, where time is the principal currency. For every hour participants 'deposit' in a time bank, perhaps by giving practical help and support to others, they are able to 'withdraw' equivalent support in time when they themselves are in need. In each case the participant decides what they can offer. Everyone's time is equal irrespective of the activity exchanged. Because time banks are just systems of exchange, they can be used in an almost endless variety of settings.

They operate as follows:-

1. People list the skills and experience which they can offer and those that they may need.
2. Everyone's skills are valued equally - one hour always equals one time credit.
3. Everyone agrees to both give and to receive help, to earn and to spend their time credits.

4. A record is kept of all the time credits earned and spent, ideally on a computer using the 'Time Online' system.
5. Everyone is encouraged to spend their time credits to allow others the chance to make a difference and feel needed.

The more people share their time and skills, the healthier and happier the neighbourhood will become. With time banking, everyday acts of kindness are recognised as the important contribution they are to everyone's wellbeing.

Research²⁵ indicates a number of benefits for older people, including:-

- Older adults valued the high quality services provided by fellow members and reported being able to access more diverse services and valued being part of a supportive social community
- Time bank enabled the development of social capital between generations. Older people interacted with younger people, facilitating the growth of social networks and bridging the age-divide

Time banks are evident in a number of EU member states.

For further information:

<http://www.timebanking.org/about/timebanking-resources/research/older-people/>

²⁵From Timebanking UK website
<http://www.timebanking.org/about/timebanking?resources/research/older?people/>

New variants of Time banking have been created

SPICE Community Time Credits

Spice adapted the principles of time banking as a credit system for common purpose. Spice's time credits are hosted by public and community services and their main function is to credit time that people give to their community. The credits acknowledge time given by local people to support their public service and to volunteering in their local community. Every hour given (Time In), is an hour which can be 'redeemed' against a menu of local recreational services (Time Out). People may give their time to community decision making processes, to local community projects or to organising community groups and events. The credits are low cost; because redemption uses 'spare capacity' (i.e. part empty cinemas, music venues and public sports facilities). The credits are a catalyst to move beyond engaging only the 'usual suspects' to involve a much more diverse range of people. The results are positive, levels of active engagement rapidly increase and the negative cycles of dependency and inactivity begin to unravel. Furthermore, as the credits are embedded within public and community services, they are sustainable and encourage a collective approach between public service professionals and community members.

Evaluation²⁶ of the Spice initiative has demonstrated some significant benefits:-

- Increased self-esteem, confidence and well-being
- Improvement in health
- Increased skills development
- Increased motivation and access to paid employment
- A dramatic increase in social capital
- Many more people giving time to the community
- Improved relationships between professionals and members of the community
- Increased collaboration between voluntary and public sector organisations

- Improved relationships between community members and public service staff
- Indication that money is being saved as a result of the improved relationships within the community

For further information:

<http://www.justaddspice.org/time-credits.html>

Uplift Time Credits

Spice is creating a new bespoke time credit scheme for health and social care called UpLift. UpLift Time Credits engage people in communities who are socially isolated and in particular, older people, and those with long term ill-health. The credits enable participants to contribute time as well as receive support, so that they are not cast as 'throw away' people but instead as valued assets in their communities and as co-deliverers of health and social care.

UpLift Time Credits enable citizens to connect with each other and to facilitate a care-based 'credit' exchange. UpLift provides individuals with opportunities to develop interests and utilise their, as yet unrealised, personal assets to build strong and connected communities. UpLift does this by seeking out and encouraging individuals with health and social care needs to both receive customised support, but also to contribute to the community by utilising their skills and interests. In reciprocation for giving in this way, individuals are thanked with credits that enable access to cultural and leisure services to develop new networks and improve wellbeing

For further information:

<http://www.justaddspice.org/our-work/wellbeing.html>

“ *The results are positive, levels of active engagement rapidly increase* ”

²⁶Looking Back: A Review of the Community Time Credit Systems that have given birth to Spice, University of Wales, 2009

Multigenerational Houses (Germany)

In 2006 the German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth instituted an action programme - Multigenerational Houses (Mehrgenerationenhaus). By 2011 there were 450 multigenerational houses covering nearly all regions and cities in the country. A second programme started in 2012 and is expected to continue to 2014.

Multigenerational houses are community centres where different generations meet, interact and support each other. The centres offer inexpensive services and support in daily activities for older people (e.g. shopping and cleaning, food, and care services). The services provided by professional staff are heavily supported by volunteers. There is a strong intergenerational element and older people offer support to families, children and adolescents. Multigenerational houses provide concrete, practical childcare assistance, help parents gain competence, and provide opportunities for 'at-risk' families. At the same time, they create positive conditions for the successful educational development of disadvantaged children and adolescents, for example for immigrants, by promoting language skills and educational counselling. Furthermore, support is provided to help people re-enter the labour market.

At the heart of the multi generational house programme is the principle of active civic engagement and volunteering. The focus is very firmly on active ageing and solidarity between generations.

The main goals are:-

- **Support for Active Ageing:** Multigenerational homes are open to all and encourage voluntary commitment. They offer many opportunities for older people to get involved themselves, especially the 'younger generation' of old people and those in transition between work and retirement.
- **Promoting independent living:** there is a strong emphasis on improving the consistency of standards of professional

care. Multigenerational homes provide a variety of services to support independent living, including home and nursing care, advice and information etc. The houses also cooperate closely with nursing and counselling services. Most importantly there is a strong emphasis on supporting older people to make a positive contribution to others. Care of very old and frail older people is integrated into the daily life of the multigenerational homes.

- **Help for people with dementia:** An increasingly important target group of the multi-generational houses are people with dementia and their relatives. The houses offer information and counselling services and help access specialist dementia services. They cooperate with the local Alzheimer's societies and many other providers.

Seven key elements

Although the houses are principally responsive to local needs and issues there are a number of key elements which they all adhere to:-

- **Four ages under one roof**
Children and adolescents, adults, younger older people, and very old people (85+) are all involved in the multigenerational homes. The daily program is designed to be of relevance to all.
- **Intergenerational Practice**
In all activities exchanges between the different ages is of prime importance.
- **Child care**
Reconciling work and family life for many working mothers and fathers is a challenge. Multigenerational houses prioritise emergency and term time care.
- **Volunteering**
The successful work of the multigenerational homes would not be possible without the support of local volunteers. Volunteers work in partnership with paid staff to provide a team approach.

- **Information and service hub**
The multigenerational homes offer a varied range of advice and support services. The community cafe-which is part of the model ensures they are seen as local 'hubs' of activity.
- **Involvement of the local economy and system**
To assist users effectively it is really important to take a 'whole system' approach whereby all state, voluntary and private organisations work cooperatively to support the outcomes of the multigenerational houses.
- **Open meeting days**
The open meeting is the heart of any multigenerational house: it offers people of all age groups the space and the opportunity to meet each other easily and naturally. This is the place to develop the ideas and activities of the projects.

The successful work of the multigenerational houses continues with a new '2nd Programme' lasting up until 2014. The new programme builds on the success of the first phase. There is an expectation that they will now develop well and establish themselves permanently in the local infrastructure.

For further information:

<http://www.muetterzentren-bv.de/en/multi-generational-centers.html>

Not a One Way Street (UK)

Mutuality and reciprocity are very much cornerstones of an asset based framework. Not a One Way Street is a research and development study²⁷ which is exploring alternative approaches to planning, funding and providing long term care for older people with high support needs. It focuses on the various ways in which older people with high support needs take up active roles within different support arrangements based on 'mutuality and reciprocity'.

'Mutuality and reciprocity' refers to arrangements designed to enable those involved

to give and receive support, as opposed to those where one individual or group of people is intended to be the recipient(s) of services / support provided by another person or organisation. These arrangements may be formal or informal, and highly organised or fairly fluid.

Examples of mutuality and reciprocity include:-

Mutually supportive relationships. This refers to personal, often informal arrangements developed between two or more individuals (often friends, neighbours or relatives). Whilst these are typically informal in nature, such arrangements may evolve and become more formal or organised over time, for example if one of the participants develops greater need for support than the other(s).

Mutually supportive communities / neighbourhoods. Mutually supportive communities are those 'where people of all abilities live and work together, contributing whatever they can to the well-being of their fellow community members'. They are most often designed to help people develop social relationships and foster integration with the wider community, implying that these are often communities which are set apart from local neighbourhoods.

Co-housing developments. These are collective housing arrangements set up and run by their members for mutual benefit. Members are consciously committed to living as a community; developments are designed to encourage social contact and a sense of neighbourhood; common spaces facilitate shared activities like community meals; and other amenities like laundry, heating, transport, etc may also be shared. They are very much about the living arrangements and the mutuality of shared living experiences which may or may not include support.

Homeshare. Homeshare schemes involve the offer of housing in return for help in the home which is arranged on an individual basis. Most Homeshare schemes are not for or about people with high support needs (though there are some differences in Spain and Portugal).

²⁷Not a one way street: Research into older people's experiences of support based on mutuality and reciprocity, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2011

Shared Lives. The emphasis here is on the care arrangements and the carer, rather than the housing or community living arrangement. They are also mainly set up as individual rather than collective arrangements. Participants use the carer's home as a resource, and the relationship between the person needing support and the person providing the accommodation and support is key. It is the largest form of support for people with a learning disability in Belgium.

- **Time banking.** Time banking is a pattern of reciprocal service exchange that uses units of time as currency. A 'time bank', also known as a service exchange, is a community that practices time banking (see elsewhere in the report for further information).
- **Circles of Support.** A Circle of Support is a small group of people (often family and friends) who come together to help someone identify what they need or would like to do in their life, and then work out how to make it happen. Mutuality and reciprocity lie at the heart of successful circles. Co-ordination and planning are also central to success, regardless of the formality involved.
- **Volunteering.** Examples of volunteering included in this research are those where support is provided and received on a volunteer (unpaid) basis, typically through an organised scheme where the volunteer support is reciprocal in nature.

The research has already highlighted a number of issues:-

Very diverse models: There is an extremely wide range of models of mutuality and reciprocity. Whilst diversity is a strength there are issues in communicating what 'mutual support' is about and what is involved. A typology of the main categories of mutual support has been developed to help catalogue and make sense of this diversity. The typical characteristics include:- numbers of people

involved; the degree of formality or organisation required; the nature of exchange that lies at the heart of each category; and the extent to which this exchange is intentional (planned) or consequential (unplanned). Low levels of awareness about, and familiarity with, support based on mutual exchange and reciprocity. This is a concern as it is probably based on the prevailing perception of older people as 'passive recipients' for whom mutual support is not relevant or appropriate.

Different reactions: interest, enthusiasm and some scepticism: There is a great deal of interest from older people and their families about the concept of mutual support, and enthusiasm for finding out more about how to make it. Amongst professionals, however, there is some hesitation and scepticism.

For further information:

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/older-peoples-experiences-support>



Abitare Solidale: Supported Living (Italy)

In recent years there has been a growth in Florence of requests for low level support (befriending, meals, practical services etc) by older people (many of them experiencing loneliness and isolation) and living in apartments that are too big for their needs. Rather than responding with more 'retirement housing' an alternative initiative was developed which aimed instead to maximise the usage of existing housing stock.

Auser, a voluntary organisation committed to promoting 'active aging' and increasing the role of the older people in society, developed a 'cohabitation' project based on the principle of mutual exchange between older people living on their own, and other disadvantaged people such as single parent families, immigrants, students, victims of domestic violence etc. The older person provides a room in their apartment in exchange for the provision of support (e.g. shopping, companionship etc). The project makes use of a special agreement with the Housing Agency in the City of Florence by which cohabitation within public housing is allowed. The project has resulted in the creation of good relationships, which importantly are built on mutual support in times of need.

For further information:

http://www1.auser.it/IT/Page/t01/view_html?idp=288

My Life My Way / Passion for Life (UK/Sweden)

My Life My Way is a low cost, citizen empowerment model being introduced into Denbighshire, Wales, from Sweden (where it is known as Passion for Life). My Life My Way provides a framework for older people that enables them to make incremental positive changes in their lives. It looks at where people are, where they want to be, and what the gap is in the middle between these two points. People are then asked "what small steps can I make by

the next meeting that will help me narrow the gap between where I am now to where I want to be". In this way, My Life My Way encourages genuine citizen empowerment and enables the older person to take responsibility and identify their own small steps to change.

The vehicle used to enable older people to make these small steps to change is the Plan, So, Study & Act tool, or PDSA.

Sweden's Passion for Life framework is based around 4 themes

- Safety in the Home
- Social Networks
- Food & Drink
- Movement

In Denbighshire's My Life My Way a 5th theme has been added - Creativity & Growth, which focuses on age discrimination, happiness, confidence, returning to work and learning.

The Passion for Life (P4L) project began in the 'Qulturum', an internationally recognised Centre for Leadership and Improvement based in Jonkoping, Sweden. It is being introduced in Denbighshire because of the success in Sweden. Within the P4L model, participants meet in what have been termed "Life Cafes". A Life Cafe is held in relation to each of the 5 themes. The best description of a Life Cafe is that it is a "room of possibility and growth, where everybody's contribution can count towards collective change or improvements"

Denbighshire have already begun work piloting this initiative, testing the Swedish model in the Welsh context by having a series of Life Cafes under the various themes. Life Cafes can also be held in the medium of Welsh through recruitment of Welsh speakers in the delivery of Life Cafes. The first Life Cafe held was around Safety in the Home and was so successful, and supported so well by the older people that these have taken off above and beyond initial expectations.

Passion for Life is felt to be an effective initiative on a number of counts:-

- Low cost
- Addressing ageism and commonly held negative stereotypes of older age
- Empowerment of older people through exploring new ways of working, with emphasis placed on small steps to change
- Educate & support older people to maintain a full life at optimum health and maintain independence despite age or any other condition affecting them
- Can provide a structure for people at pre-retirement stage, involving delivery of pre-retirement courses
- Builds social capital to stimulate a desire in the communities to move onto other topics

For further information:

<http://www.ssiacymru.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5295>

“Talk about old age”: The campaign against age discrimination (Czech Republic)

A long-term public awareness campaign was launched in the Czech Republic in 2010 to address the negative attitudes and images of older people and the discrimination that they experience. The campaign was funded by the Elpida and O2 foundations with the aim of defining discrimination against older people, reminding people of the value and experience associated with age, awakening interest in the topic of aging and encouraging young people to engage in intergenerational discussion.

The campaign had a high profile media element with nationally distributed posters with the slogan “Let my grandmother in the room!”. The campaign was particularly keen to foster a mature discussion between generations with an emphasis on responding to the person, not the age. Those behind the campaign believe

“ *Let my Grandmother in the room!* ”

that it is very important to talk about old age. As with many other countries, in the Czech Republic the ageing society is often referred to as a threat, with old age being perceived as something negative. The campaign wanted to show older people in a positive light and address the discrimination against them.

A number of national celebrities were involved in the campaign, with the band ‘Please The Trees’ led by Vaclav Havelka becoming particularly prominent. They recorded songs with a choir of twenty older women and have gone on tour with them.

In addition to the Talk About Old Age campaign, Elpida runs a number of other initiatives to improve the quality of life of older people:-

- **Senior Line** – a free telephone crisis hotline for older people providing high-quality counselling, information on health and wellbeing and access to social care services.
- **Elpida Center** – a modern educational and social centre, meeting place for older people offering counselling, exercise, computer and language classes in a pleasant environment. The pace of teaching is tailored to the needs of older people.
- **Vital Plus** - most read magazine for older people in the Czech Republic. It focuses on promoting older people’s role in society and includes interviews, reports, commentaries, and health and wellbeing advice.

For further information:

<http://www.elpida.cz/page.php?page=130>

Health Empowerment Leverage Project (UK)

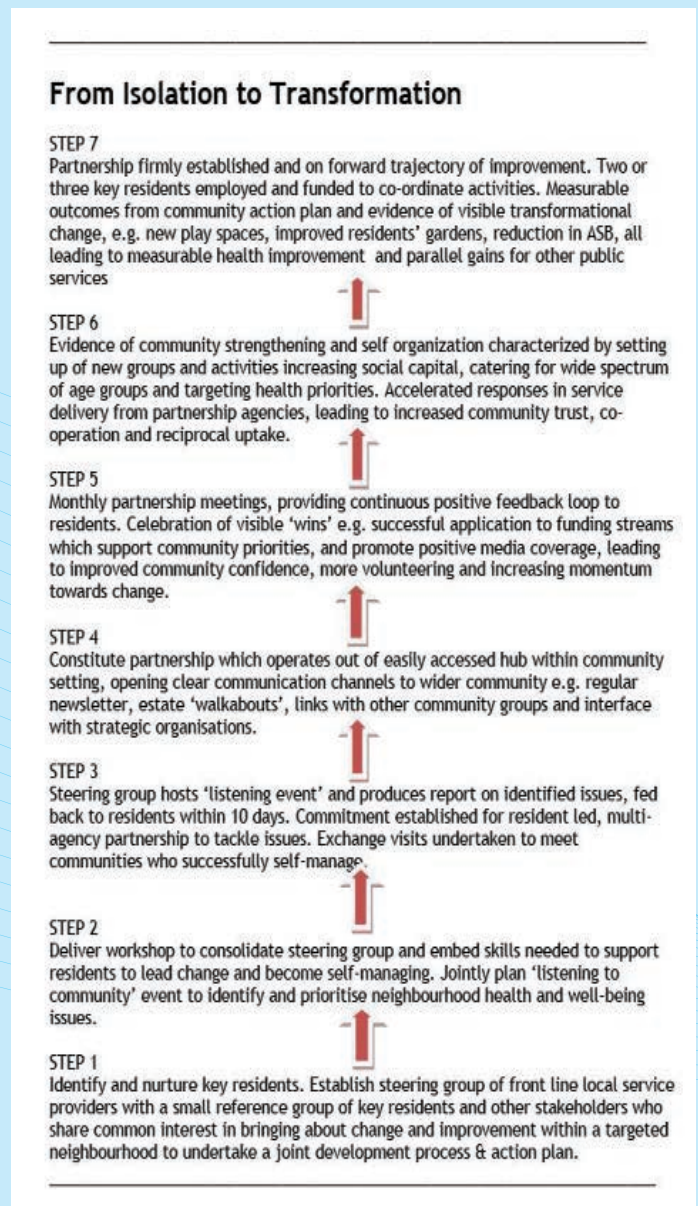
Working with communities is a fundamental aspect of the asset based approach. The Health Empowerment Leverage Project (HELP) is a well evidenced²⁸ example of the effectiveness of this kind of approach. It is not specifically focused on older people, but it is inclusive of this section of the population.

The HELP method connects communities in three ways:

- within themselves – networks and cooperation amongst local residents
- with local service providers and public agencies – building a parallel community of interest amongst the front-line workers
- with other communities – getting and giving inspiration directly from one place to another.

The seven step model

At the heart of the HELP process is a framework of seven steps. The seven steps are expected to take between one and two years to carry out on the ground, but are open-ended in the sense that their legacy is a functioning neighbourhood partnership which goes on under its own steam to produce new community action and new benefits. The figure below sets out a basic description of the seven step model. The aim is to bring together residents and service providers around the joint purpose of making the neighbourhood a better place in which to live and work. The approach can be described as a process of building community solidarity from the inside out, while simultaneously building agency solidarity from the outside in.



Source: *Empowering Communities for Health: Business Case and Practice Framework, Health Empowerment Leverage Project, 2011*

Key success factors

HELP is based on the experience that all local communities contain people who are capable (if necessary with support) of leading changes to improve their neighbourhood conditions and relationships. It also shares the conviction that the necessary changes are likely to be a mixture of internal change – relationships within the community itself – and negotiation with the public services, who control so many important features of the locality.

²⁸ *Empowering Communities for Health: business case and practice framework, HELP, 2011*

Particular features of the HELP approach include:

- the central objective of establishing a dynamic neighbourhood partnership within a two-year timeframe;
- seeing the front-line workers of the local public service as themselves likely to be in need of being brought together as a community of practice, developing their relationships both amongst themselves and then interactively with the residents;
- combining complete openness to residents' priorities with the knowledge that neighbourhood conditions are always to a large extent combinations of the social factors addressed by the major public agencies, and anticipating a coming-together of community and agency perspectives.

The method approaches both residents and agency staff as human beings and dynamic players in local development. It fosters, in fact, not one community but two: the community of residents and a parallel local "community of practice" populated by professionals from local agencies. But since the professional agencies have a 'head start' in terms of organisation and resources, getting a true balance requires building up the leadership of the community participants. On the other hand, because agencies are institutions with fixed structures and rules, it can take more effort to introduce flexibility into the agencies' process, whilst residents, once active, can move flexibly to expand their horizon and agendas. But these two communities are welded together through the partnership mechanism so that, in the words of one community leader, they become 'us and us' instead of 'us and them'. Evaluation of the HELP approach claims a return on investment of

1:6.4 in terms of savings to health services (in the UK context).

For further information:

<http://www.healthempowermentgroup.org.uk/>

Practical guide stimulating civic engagement by senior citizens (Netherlands)

The Dutch NGO MOVISIE is currently developing a practical guide for stimulating civic engagement by older citizens. This guide will be based on the experience and output of the national programme "The Value of Silver" (Zilveren Kracht). The guide focuses on how to make use of and how to appreciate the talents, knowledge and experience of older citizens. It is aimed at municipal officials, welfare organizations, volunteer organizations and senior citizens who, in cooperation with each other, would like to work on improving the active ageing agenda. The guide will be published in the autumn of 2012 and will be available online.

The initiative has been stimulated by concern regarding the following²⁹:-

- average time spent on voluntary work by people aged 65 plus decreased from 2.2 to 1.8 hours a week between 2000 and 2005
- engagement in volunteering is increasingly suffering from competition from the need to continue with paid employment, caring for grand children, and care of other family members
- volunteering rates are much less by those with health problems or low incomes.

For further information:

<http://europa.eu/ey2012/ey2012main.jsp?catId=975&langId=en&mode=initDetail&initiativeId=182&initLangId=en>

²⁹The value of silver in figures: Civic engagement of senior citizens- a fact sheet, MOVISIE, 2009



Volunteers - Ambassadors of Change (Romania)

The project "Volunteers - Ambassadors of Change" run by The Princess Margarita of Romania Foundation aims to:

- Fight against solitude and poverty by offering assistance to older people who are confined at home or in retirement homes
- Encourage older people to participate in and contribute to society by offering them the chance to take part in cultural and social activities, including volunteering initiatives
- Promote intergenerational activities and exchanges
- Raise awareness among the general public regarding the needs and realities of older people
- Promote volunteering activities and train and assist volunteers who offer assistance to the elderly.

During the EY2012 the Princess Margarita of Romania Foundation commits to:

- Conducting a public campaign to raise

awareness on ageing issues by designing a photographic exhibition that will be shown in public space.

- Carrying out the project "Our stories", an endeavour that entails bringing together older people and people from other age groups to create a common set of written, audio and visual testimonies and memories, through interviews, photo sessions and written correspondence between volunteers.
- Hosting training sessions about delivering services for older people. These sessions aim to improve the active involvement of older people in society.

For further information:

<http://www.fpmr.ro/index.php?page=aproape>

Senior Community Development and Favour Bank(Hungary)

Drawing older people into community programmes can be challenging, especially for those new member states with a recent collectivist past where citizens commonly hold a negative association about participating in any kind of community activities. However community development is an increasingly accepted method for enhancing older people's activities and participation.

The Senior Community Development Project in Hungary was launched in 2008. The primary objective was to develop social capital, stimulate social interaction and reduce loneliness and isolation. There was also a strong emphasis on supporting older people to make a positive contribution to their communities.

Key elements of the programme included:-

1. **Over 60 and Neighbourhood Volunteers:** the neighbourhood volunteers are older people who want to volunteer to take action for each other and for the closer community. Media Workshop: older volunteers undertook writing, radio work and photography. The local authority supported the publicity and publication of their work in the local press or exhibitions.
2. **Senior Art Camp:** the Senior Art Camp enables older people to pursue self-development and leisure activities. The one week boarding courses introduced the participants to the basics of several art forms (acting, painting, pottery, etc.).
3. **Favour Bank:** known as LETS (Local Exchange Trading System) was established. LETS schemes are built on the fact that everyone has some skills as well as unused belongings others might need. The "transactions" use the local resources thus stimulating the community and enhancing its power and capital. The Favour Bank is a database of services which support older people's independence.

For further information:

http://www.qageing.eu/QAGEING_Toolbox_webx.pdf

Older Persons' Council (UK – Wales)

The Older Persons' Council was formed in 2005 to further the aims of the Neath Port Talbot Strategy for Older People. To ensure that the voice of the residents of Neath Port Talbot was heard, a series of "Have Your Say" events was run, and the idea of an Older Persons' Council emerged from the discussions.

The Older Persons' Council is an independent body of twelve people over age 50, who are

appointed following the Public Appointments Process. Representatives have support and training to encourage them to contribute to the process of policy development and contribute to and influence the provision of services within Neath Port Talbot. They challenge and discuss policies and sit on a range of partnership groups to facilitate information and idea exchanges. They focus on both local and national issues of practical significance to older people, facilitate information and idea exchange, and provide an 'older person's' perspective. A unique feature of the OPC is that they have regular bi-annual meetings with the Leader of the Council, other Cabinet Members, the Chief Executive and Heads of Corporate Services, where issues relating to older people are discussed. Representatives recognise and act within the spirit of equalities law and good practice guidance.

For further information:

<http://www.ssiacymru.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=4409>

Volonteurope recommends

1. All stakeholders should:-

- a. Organise courses, seminars and conferences to encourage asset based approaches to the ageing agenda
- b. Develop and reinforce participatory structures which encourage older people's participation in decision making processes at all levels
- c. Promote initiatives which recognise and capitalise on the experience and strengths of older people
- d. Work with groups representing older people and the media to provide realistic and positive images of active ageing, with a particular emphasis on confronting negative stereotypes and ageism good practice; recommendations

2. **Member states** have a particular responsibility to raise awareness of the contribution that older people make to their communities and wider society

New agenda for employee volunteering, and redefining the concept of 'retirement' itself

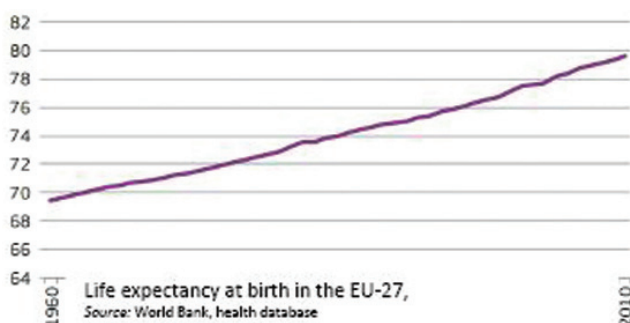
Issues

Employment in later life and the transition into retirement is one of the key dimensions of active ageing. There are many issues associated with it which need to be addressed.

Life expectancy across Europe has increased dramatically and is expected to continue to grow for the foreseeable future. It rose by 8 years between 1960 and 2006 and is expected to increase by another 5 years by the middle of the present century. As of 2009, a newborn girl in Europe could be expected to live, on average, 82.6 years, and a boy 76.7 years.

Even with the rises in pension ages in many states, older people in Europe will be experiencing much longer periods in retirement than any previous generation. In many cases this could extend to 20 years and for some people it will be as long as 30 years.

All of this challenges the traditional view of later life - i.e. fulltime permanent work up until a person's mid-60's, followed by a sudden exit from the labour market into a 'retirement' which is generally thought of as a relatively short period of rest and relaxation before illness and then death. This picture was never true for everyone, and is patently unrealistic for the current generation of people moving into later life.



“ Life expectancy rose by 8 years between 1960 and 2006 and is expected to increase by another 5 years ”

- *Older generations have the potential to provide considerable resources in terms of labour market input causing higher rates of unemployment as there were 37.2m economically inactive 50-64 year olds and a further 81.2m over 65*
- *There is evidence of some progressive and phased retirement options but the evidence suggests that they are more common in some sectors than others; the greatest prevalence is evident in education, financial, health and social care.*

Of course this all takes place against the backdrop of the financial crisis and the associated austerity measures which are causing higher rates of unemployment amongst the 50+, and increasing the risk of poverty amongst those with inadequate pensions. Many people will need to continue working beyond 'retirement age' to augment their pensions.

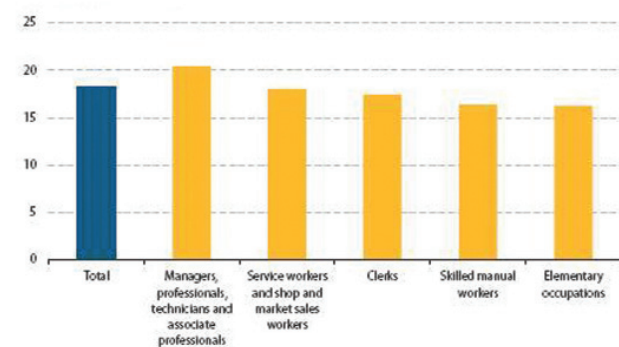
Financial considerations also mean that governments will want to encourage the baby boomer generation to stay in the labour market rather than retire early. Indeed in 2001 (Stockholm) and 2002 (Barcelona) the EU set targets to ensure that half of the 55-64 year olds were in employment, and to increase the average age of exit from the labour market by 5 years by 2010 (a target which no EU country has achieved). Given that roughly half of women and just over a third of all men aged 50-64 were not in employment in 2010, there appears to be considerable untapped potential for increasing employment among older generations.

There is a growing recognition that given greater longevity there is a need for a new 'life course approach' which seeks to balance the need to work with the requirements of various caring responsibilities (older parents as well as children) and the right to participate in local communities.

Flexibility in employment policies appears to be the key here. Surveys³⁰ show that 70% (across all age groups) thought that a lack of flexibility with respect to reducing working hours, exclusion from training schemes, and the negative attitudes of employers were all 'very or fairly' important reasons why people stopped working.

However this is not a policy area which finds much support from older people themselves. Fewer than 25% of 50-64 yr olds³¹ that were employed planned to continue after 65 even if there were more flexible working arrangements, and there were important differences between types of workers (see below).

Employed persons who would stay longer at work if more flexible working time arrangements were available, EU-27, 2006⁽¹⁾



(1) Survey conducted among persons who were aged 50-69 (and who had worked at least up to the age of 50). Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfso_06flexiscc)

There are a number of important labour market policy issues which need to be addressed:-

- There is no place for mandatory retirement ages and it is regrettable that a number of Member States still have one. These devalue the contribution of

older people in the workplace and society in general and mitigate against the development of flexible approaches to retirement.

- Steps need to be taken to enable older workers to remain in the labour market.

Current attitudes to 'retirement'

- *In 2009 the average exit age from the labour market was 61yrs*
- *61.3% of older workers retired because they had reached statutory retirement age. One in six had lost their job or were facing problems at work*
- *33% of those 15 and over said they would like to continue to work after the age when they were entitled to a pension. Amongst 55year olds and above the proportion reached 41%.*
- *43% of those over 15 agreed that many of their fellow citizens retired too early.*
- *There is overwhelming support for the idea that it is important to force employers to offer easier access to part-time working for older employees. 34.9% thought it 'fairly important'; 42.6% thought it 'very important'.*

Source: Special Eurobarometer 378

- Some older people will require appropriate support to return to the labour market, for example after having spent time caring for families or older relatives
- Approaches to retirement need to be much more flexible. Creative ways need to be found to enable people to gradually reduce their work commitments over time until they finally leave paid employment i.e. through part time arrangements, flexible working conditions, lifelong learning and professional conversion programmes

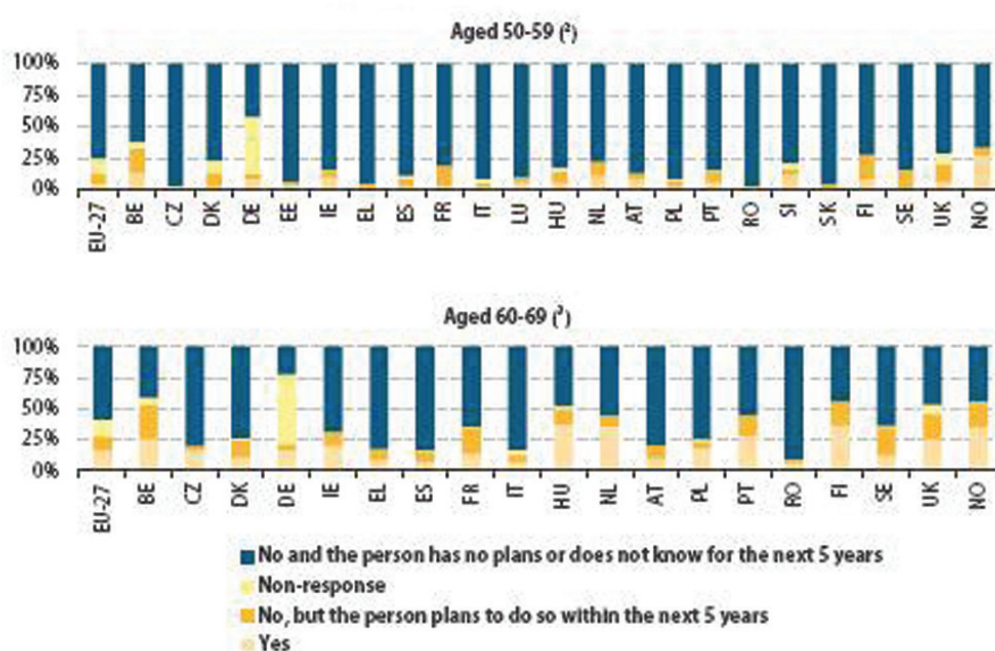
³⁰Eurobarometer on Ageing 378
³¹European Statistical Analysis: Active Ageing and Solidarity between generations, 2012

- The huge potential benefits of supporting 'knowledge transfer' between generations, within as well as outside the work place (e.g. mentoring/coaching of younger workers by their older peers), need to be realised.
- Recognise that there are many older people amongst the unemployed and underemployed who are used to undertaking leadership roles, while there are many more who are capable of being mobilised to the benefit of themselves and their communities but require leadership and organisation for this to happen (and to avoid the decline referred to in the previous paragraph).

Any policy response needs to:

- Recognise that the economic crisis means that there are now significant numbers of people across the EU who are at pre-retirement age but for whom unemployment or underemployment may lead to mental decline and, for many, a state of un-employability lasting for many decades until their death.

Number of employed persons who reduced their working hours in a move to full retirement, by age groups, 2006⁽¹⁾ (% share of those employed for the given age group)



⁽¹⁾ Survey conducted among persons who were aged 50-69 (and who had worked at least up to the age of 50); ranked on the sum of those who reduced their working hours and those who planned to do so in the next five years.

⁽²⁾ Bulgaria, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania and Malta, incomplete or not available.

⁽³⁾ Bulgaria, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovenia and Slovakia, incomplete or not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: Ifso_06redefpt)

What is the role for volunteering and active citizenship within this area of policy?

Although many people view an immediate and complete release from the labour market through retirement as being both desirable and 'good for their health', the reality can be very different. The traditional 'cliff edge' retirement (where someone is fully employed one day and fully retired the next) can cause significant problems through loss of social networks, identity and sense of purpose.

There is a growing body of research which demonstrates the vital importance of purposeful activity and meaningful engagement to health and well being. For example, a recent comparative study³² across a number of EU countries "identified strong positive and statistically significant correlations between ratings for well being and for social participation. This indicates that the higher people aged over

65 rated their wellbeing, the more social activities they participated in." This is not just about volunteering, but volunteering is a key element.

It is clear, therefore, that regardless of when people leave paid employment it is crucial that they have a strong sense of purpose in life and remain socially engaged in one form or another. Volunteering and civic engagement have a huge potential to provide this. Engagement in volunteering can be very important once the 'retirement honeymoon' phase is over³³, when many retirees feel a void in their lives and miss many aspects of working life. Volunteering can fill that gap and give them a new sense of purpose.

In this context it is interesting to note the extent to which people say they plan to engage in volunteering after they retire (see below).

Once retired, would people consider community work or volunteering, September 2008. (%)

	Notretired: would consider doing this	Retired person: have done this	Retired person: plan to do this
EU-27	72.8	33.8	10.1
BE	64.4	28.3	9.2
BG	53.1	11.8	10.8
CZ	27.7	12.0	12.6
DK	78.4	32.6	24.2
DE	83.1	45.0	7.2
EE	52.6	20.0	8.5
IE	88.8	37.8	11.0
EL	71.8	18.7	18.7
ES	73.5	19.8	10.4
FR	83.1	44.4	10.5
IT	76.2	32.2	13.4
CY	71.3	20.8	17.4
LV	38.1	20.6	8.3
LT	44.8	22.0	14.6
LU	80.2	45.4	9.3
HU	61.3	22.8	15.3
MT	68.0	24.5	7.1
NL	79.4	52.2	6.3
AT	73.4	36.8	9.8
PL	45.5	21.5	10.3
PT	78.7	18.4	12.5
RO	45.0	16.7	12.0
SI	64.9	34.8	13.3
SK	50.6	14.2	11.1
FI	82.0	50.3	10.5
SE	83.5	36.7	12.3
UK	82.5	42.0	6.7

Source: European Commission, Flash Eurobarometer No. 247 - Family life and the needs of an ageing population

It is instructive to note the huge difference between those who, before retirement, say that they will volunteer (average of 73% across all EU states), compared to those that actually do (an average of 34%).

³²Ageing Across Europe, WRVS, 2012
³³ Tapping the potential of volunteering, UN Economic Commission for Europe, Policy Briefing 2011

The transition out of paid employment is therefore a very important policy issue in the context of an ageing society. Employee volunteering has an important role to play in this. Much could be gained by re-focussing employee volunteering as a way of supporting olderworkers to make the transition into a fulfilling and healthy later life. Traditionally employee volunteering has concentrated on supporting younger employees to develop as individuals, learn new skills, build their confidence etc, and through this boost staff moral and improve staff retention within the workforce. As well as providing these benefits to the company it has largely been seen as a part of a company's 'corporate social responsibility' strategy of supporting their local community or wider society. This approach is worthwhile and laudable. However within the context of an ageing society there are good reasons to change this model and instead prioritise the developmental needs of older workers. In this model, releasing older workers to engage in volunteering can support them to make the transition from paid work into civic engagement / volunteering post retirement. As the research from Volunteer Now shows (see box), timing is important. Engaging those coming up to retirement in volunteering is much more likely to result in their subsequent participation later on.

Refocusing employee volunteering on the developmental needs of older workers could :-

- Support people's retention in the labour market by providing a welcome opportunity for new experiences and developing new skills – all of which can make working life more tolerable. The exclusion of older workers from training or outplacement schemes have been reported by retirees as 'very or fairly important' reasons why they stopped working. Employers who wish to

Research commissioned by Volunteer Now's Unlocking Potential Project found that those who volunteer throughout their lives are likely to continue or increase their volunteering post retirement. This same research found that when people retire, the first 6-9 months are a 'honeymoon' or extended holiday period when retirees enjoy spending time on hobbies, holidays and family. However the 9-18 month period after retirement is a key window of opportunity before people become set in their ways.

encourage older people to remain in the workforce could offer employee volunteering programmes as a means of increasing retention rates. The case examples of GDF SUEZ and Galilei-Randstad and ToolBox show how some employers are beginning to do this.

- Support new 'post retirement' careers. Some forms of unpaid / part paid work after retirement are beginning to be conceptualised as kind of second 'career' – which provides meaning, personal development, and a means of working in a field of activity which one is passionate about. The emergence of Encore Careers in the USA is one of the most developed examples of this trend. Employee volunteering could enable older workers to gain new skills and competencies in preparation for this.
- Support 'knowledge transfer' between generations, within as well as outside the work place – e.g. mentoring/coaching of younger workers by their older peers.
- Support older workers to test out and get engaged in volunteering before they retire and thus become much more likely to remain actively engaged once they finish paid work



It is important to note that in seeking to promote the kind of approaches to employee volunteering outlined above, NGOs need to recognise that they need to make a distinction between large corporations and small or medium sized enterprises (SME). The messages for the latter need to be tailored to their particular circumstances and the process for releasing and matching older employees with appropriate volunteering opportunities needs to be made very simple and easy for them to pursue.

Whilst this report seeks to highlight the value of volunteering, there is no doubt that supporting older people to become self employed entrepreneurs should also be part of the 'mix' of support they receive from organisations with them. With many older people's pensions being less than required or expected, the route into part time self employment can be very attractive. And, even for those with no pressing financial worries, becoming self-employed offers many benefits, from being their own boss and to working flexible hours, to being able to make money out of their passions. Volunteering can provide an important stepping stone in the process.

Summary

Volunteering is a very effective means of providing people with the meaningful civic engagement and a sense of purpose which is so important in later life. It can support people to remain in work for longer by providing greater interest and new experiences alongside 'the day job'. Employee volunteering could also increasingly become a means of preparing for life after paid employment by introducing people into the possibilities early.

Volunteering can also provide a stepping stone into a new (unpaid or paid) career in later life.

“
*Employee
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preparing for life after
paid employment*
”

Examples of good practice

Flex-Seniority (Denmark)

Flex-Seniority is intended to improve age-friendly practices in companies and to encourage older workers to stay longer in the job. FLEX-SENIORITY is a concept that complies with the older workers' needs for FLEX ibility, and at the same time which appreciates their experience. The initiative in the City of Aarhus is a new approach at local level and is thus an important supplement to national campaigns undertaken by the Danish Government.

The heart of the initiative is the running of pre-retirement courses for senior workers . An evaluation of a pilot set of courses for older workers in the public sector showed that after five 2-days courses with 100 older workers:-

- 38 decided – to stay in the job longer
- 44 decided – to spend more time as volunteers
- 45 decided – to improve their health habits

For further information:

<http://europa.eu/ey2012/ey2012main.jsp?catId=975&langId=en&mode=initDetail&initiativeId=3&initLangId=en>

GDF SUEZ initiatives (France)

In December 2009, GDF SUEZ, a French-based multinational corporation, signed a General Agreement on Senior Workers whose main goal was to keep its employees aged 55 years and over in work and increase the proportion of these workers by 30% by 2012. Actions included:-

- Each worker aged between 45 and 55 years having an interview which focuses

on the second half of their career, and allows the worker to express their expectations and future career plan.

- Promoting and facilitating knowledge and skill transmission in all its forms (tutorships, in-house trainers, in-house consultancy);
- Improving a worker's employability throughout his/her career, particularly by enabling workers aged over 50 to attend professional training courses and undertake volunteering opportunities

Galilei-Randstad and ToolBox (Belgium)

Galilei-Randstad is a major provider of career services such as outplacement, career development and leadership coaching. ToolBox is a non-profit organization aiming at supporting the management of voluntary organisations by offering pro-bono professional consultancy.

The two organisations have partnered in order to offer outplacements with a community organisation to executives who are close to retirement and approaching the end of their professional career. This will give them a unique valuable learning experience and raise awareness of volunteering amongst the target population. As well as providing benefit to the individual the programme also matches the demand of local community organisations for temporary assistance.

For further information:

<http://europa.eu/ey2012/ey2012main.jsp?catId=975&langId=en&mode=initDetail&initiativeId=147&initLangId=en>

Unlocking the Potential (UK – Northern Ireland)

The Unlocking Potential Project run by Volunteer Now has engaged with public and private sector employers to deliver information on volunteering to employees approaching retirement as part of pre-retirement planning seminars. This has allowed information in relation to positive health and social benefits of volunteering in retirement to be disseminated. The intention is to get the idea and habit of volunteering embedded in people's thinking as part of how they can be healthy and happy in retirement. Engaging with employers is equally important and the project has also informed employers about the positive impact that volunteering can make on the lives of their employees after retirement.

Volunteer Now has also developed a 'Skills Match' service via the volunteernow.co.uk website. This allows individuals to post what skills they would be willing to offer to local not for profit organisations by way of voluntary consultancy or short term project volunteering. This mechanism is particularly suitable for skilled volunteers who may be retired or approaching retirement and who want to get involved in volunteering by using their skills in a format that suits their work and social commitments.

For further information:

<http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/volunteering/over-50s-volunteering>

Encore Careers (USA)

The 'baby boomers' make up the largest, healthiest, best-educated population in history. Those on the leading edge of the generation are pioneers in a new stage spanning the decades between middle and late life.

Neither young nor old, they represent an extraordinary resource. Millions of them are determined to apply their experience to make a difference for others. Some are able to do so as unpaid volunteers. But most are looking to combine aspects of work – income and benefits – with elements of service through what some are calling "encore careers".

Such careers combine social impact, personal fulfilment and continued income – "purpose, passion and a paycheck" – enabling people to put their experience to work for the greater good. Unleashing this vast potential requires fresh attitudes, policies and practices that welcome the contributions of older people who want work with meaning, and who want to create a world that is better than the one they were given. Encore.org has set out to define this new stage of life and work – and to change policies and create new institutions that will help older people make the transition. People who plan to continue working say it is important that the work gives them a sense of purpose, keeps them involved with people and helps them improve the quality of life in their communities.

For further information:

<http://www.encore.org/learn>

Echanges et Consultations Techniques Internationaux (France)

Ecti is an Independent Non-profit making association which recruits, supports and deploys around 3000 senior volunteers providing advice and assistance to small and medium sized enterprises (SEMs), public organisations and developing countries.

The volunteers are:

- Former managers and executives from private companies, government departments or public services, technicians, craftsmen, etc.
- from various educational backgrounds
- with experience in a range of business functions : managerial, marketing/sales/trade, commercial, production, maintenance health & safety ; insurance, quality, finance, accounting, human resources, legal, research & development, etc.

Ecti deploys them to provide assistance and advice to companies, public services, local

authorities, associations, as well as national and international organizations. There is a particular focus on initiatives aimed at creating jobs and/or maintaining employment. Ecti cooperates with developing countries in the fields of economy, science, technology and culture.

For further information:

<http://www.ecti.org/3-24575-Home.php>

17/70 – Young ‘Godfathers’ and ‘Godmothers’ for Senior Citizens (Germany)

The project supports the acquisition of vocational qualifications by long-term unemployed young people, whilst at the same time facilitating the re-employment of long-term unemployed older workers. This intergenerational approach utilises the skills and competences of older people to vocationally train unemployed young people in real life work settings. Each ‘tandem’ twins one young and one older employee, with the expectation that the older mentor trains the trainee for the entire vocational qualification process until they gain their qualification. In so doing there is an expectation that the older person will gain skills and experience which will also improve their employment opportunities.

For further information:

<http://bit.ly/PGZUpn>

SECOT: Agile Entrepreneurship (Spain)

SECOT (Spanish Seniors for Technical Cooperation) has launched a social platform called "Emprender Diferente" (Agile Entrepreneurship), addressed to the 55+ population and which offers technological resources and services for their cultural, social and business initiatives.

The platform contains links to services of interest to older entrepreneurs. Any registered user may access the contents of the website, participate actively in any proposed initiative and benefit of

the range of services and information that is available. At present, a number of initiatives are already active, on subjects ranging from photography to literature, navigation and coaching to wine and blogging.

"Emprender Diferente" is supported by the Spanish government within the context of Plan Avanza 2, which aims to bring new technologies closer to citizens. SECOT is a Spanish not for profit association. The older people involved in the initiative are mainly qualified retired or early retired professionals and executives who are willing to voluntarily offer their expertise in business management to new entrepreneurs. They offer confidential advice, provide diagnosis and propose actions for business development. SECOT also collaborates with public institutions in the development of projects aimed at improving the lives of older people.

For further information:

<http://www.emprenderdiferente.net/>

Volonteurope recommends

1. NGOs should:-

- a. Liaise and cooperate with local employers and trade unions to introduce volunteering into the pre-retirement planning and phased retirement
- b. Recognise that they need to make a distinction between large corporations and small or medium sized enterprises (SME). The messages for the latter need to be tailored to their particular circumstances and the process for releasing and matching older employees with appropriate volunteering opportunities needs to be made very simple and easy for them to pursue.

2. Local Government should:-

- a. Promote multi-sector partnerships to further the development of employee volunteering
- b. Introduce employee volunteering as part of pre-retirement schemes in the public sector

3. The business sector should:?

- a. Promote policies which enable older workers who wish to make a gradual transition from full time activity towards retirement (e.g. through part time arrangements, flexible working, employee volunteering, tailor made training, life long learning or professional conversion programmes)
- b. Introduce employee volunteering as part of pre-retirement schemes
- c. Foster mutual learning and skills transfer between age groups in the life course, i.e. through mentoring, coaching of younger workers, facilitating intergenerational entrepreneurship
- d. Ensure that the contribution of older workers is highlighted within measurement frameworks to evaluate the impact of employee volunteering
- e. Use the Employee Volunteering Awards to encourage and promote a focus on volunteering by older employees
- f. Provide information on the value of volunteering to older workers as they approach retirement
- g. Introduce flexible retirement schemes with volunteering as one of the options to enable older people to remain socially engaged after they leave the labour market
- h. Work with civil society senior volunteer-involving organisations to create senior community action days at local, national and European level, where media coverage would-stimulate further interest in senior EV programmes

4. Member States should:-

- a. Promote a shift of focus in employee volunteering schemes to promoting the wellbeing and transition into retirement of older volunteers.
- b. Develop good practice guidelines specifically on the use of employee volunteering to foster health and wellbeing and greater engagement in volunteering post retirement
- c. Those have not yet done so, are urged to abolish mandatory retirement ages as these devalue the contribution of older people in the workplace and society in general.
- d. Develop and build on existing national community engagement and volunteering programmes with the following characteristics:
 - i. Targeted mainly at the over 50s who are not in employment or are significantly under- employed.
 - ii. Built around a cadre of volunteer organisers who have a track record of leadership activity.
 - iii. Aimed at engaging local groups of community contributors to undertake useful and developmental activities in their local areas.
 - iv. Initially piloted (by organisations like CSV) by reallocating funding from existing welfare programmes such as the UK's Work Programme.

5. EU Institutions should:-

- a. Promote more flexible retirement ages to enable older workers who wish to remain in the labour market and to help those who have reached pension age combine their pension with paid work if they chose or need to
- b. Carry out more research on how employee volunteering contributes to health and wellbeing
- c. Introduce employee volunteering as part of pre-retirement schemes in EU institutions in order to provide a good example to others

Supporting the active ageing of people with dementia

Issues

With an ageing population there will be a consequent rise in the incidence of dementia. Although largely seen as an issue for specialist health and social care services, there is a growing realisation that dementia is 'everybody's business' and that much can be done to make communities more 'dementia friendly'.

Volunteering and civic engagement has a lot to offer, as does the involvement of young people in intergenerational initiatives to work with older people with dementia.

Prevalence

It is estimated³⁴ that in 2006, 7.3 million Europeans (across the 27 Member States) had some form of dementia. Within this group, more women (4.9 million) than men (2.4 million) are affected and it is expected that by 2050 the number of people with dementia in the EU will have grown to 15 million. The prevalence rates³⁵ across Europe are estimated as follows:-

Total Population Age Range	Prevalence (% of pop)
60-64	0.6
65-69	1.6
70-74	3.5
75-79	7.4
80-84	15.7
85-89	26.2
90-94	41.0
>95	46.3

Many individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia remain undiagnosed across all member states and therefore the

“ there is a growing realisation that dementia is 'everybody's business' ”

number of people affected is probably significantly higher than the official figures³⁶. It is also worth noting that there are likely to be some variations in the prevalence rates across different Member States.

Many countries are recognising the need to take a strategic approach to dementia and the development of national action plans across the EU has increased, with plans evident in France, the United Kingdom, Norway, the Netherlands and Italy. Even those countries with national strategies recognise that there is a lot more that needs to be done.

Given the prevalence of dementia, any comprehensive approach to promoting active ageing and solidarity between generations needs to be inclusive of people with this condition. This is particularly important because people with dementia can experience significant forms of exclusion and discrimination. There is a lot of fear surrounding dementia in society in general and people with this condition tend to be seen in a negative light. This response is unhelpful and can even serve to undermine their citizenship rights.

Within this context, volunteering and civic engagement have much to offer to support people with dementia to live better lives. Key interventions include:-

- Providing 'one to one' befriending or peer support. Many people with dementia require modest levels of support to enable them to continue to engage with their normal day to day activities. Much of what is needed is relatively straight forward human interaction rather than medicalised or professional interventions.

³⁴ A problem shared is a problem halved- Dementia: Learning opportunities from Europe, International Longevity Centre(UK), 2010

³⁵ Rates from Alzheimer Europe from a systematic review of papers reporting on the prevalence of dementia, undertaken by Alzheimer Europe with guidance from members of the EUROCODE prevalence working group

³⁶ Communication on a European Initiative on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, European Commission, 2009

- Raising awareness and challenging myths. There is a need to mobilise a new kind of 'social movement' which is dedicated to counteracting the stigma and ignorance surrounding the illness. This is about civic society playing an active part in 'rehabilitating' a group of people who would otherwise face social exclusion.
- Supporting intergenerational initiatives. Most people with dementia have adult children, many of whom have children. There are therefore very strong arguments for taking an intergenerational approach to dementia, which would include the following³⁷:-

1. Raising awareness of dementia across all generations
2. Encouraging early diagnosis and treatment of dementia
3. Improving clinical and social care training on dementia
4. Providing flexible services for families caring for relatives at home
5. Providing respite care for families caring for relatives at home
6. Providing dementia friendly services and dementia friendly communities
7. Involving younger people in delivering services to people with dementia
8. Fostering innovative partnerships in the community to bring people with dementia into contact with younger people

"Society has an important responsibility to create a positive environment which supports families affected by dementia. This has to start with creating greater awareness and empathy across all generations for dementia and what it entails"

Dementia in My Family, ILC, 2007

large numbers of people living in the community with early and/or relatively moderate levels of dementia. There is much that can be done through civic engagement and volunteering to promote social environments which are more supportive of people with dementia.

The concept of dementia-friendly communities is an emerging one and there is not yet an extensive body of literature. A 'working definition' of a dementia-friendly community could include a place:

- in which it is possible for the greatest number of people with dementia to live a good life
- where people with dementia are enabled to live as independently as possible and to continue to be part of their community
- where they are met with understanding and given support where necessary.



³⁷Taken from - Dementia in my family, Alliance for Health and the Future, ILC and Alzheimer Europe, 2007

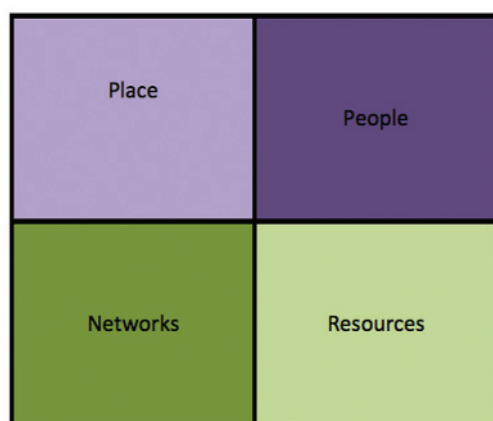
Creating 'Dementia Friendly' communities

Whilst ultimately people with dementia will generally require the support of specialist health and social care services, there will always be

Work in the UK³⁸ has come up with a possible model for understanding some of the key areas that need to be addressed in developing a dementia friendly community:-

- The person with dementia: their voice needs to be heard
- The place: review the built environment
- The people: target awareness training on key individuals and groups
- The networks: engage all stakeholders in the work
- The resources: build community capacity through civic engagement

The Four Cornerstones Model



Source: *Creating a Dementia friendly York*, Crampton J, Dean J, Eley R, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2012

An asset based approach

As noted above, people with dementia often face social exclusion and are almost always defined as people with needs, who have nothing to offer the rest of society. As with any human being, positive feelings about one's life, self-esteem, control and a sense of purpose are equally important to people with dementia, especially in the early stages. Countering the negative and deficit thinking about people with dementia can be done by adopting an approach which recognises that they have strengths and capabilities which are important to their wellbeing and which can and should be supported.

Good practice examples

Asset based approaches

The Intergenerational School (USA)

Seeing people with dementia as people with something to offer is very rare, and it is even rarer to see this approach combined with intergenerational practice. The Intergenerational School is one example of putting these two approaches into practice.

The Intergenerational School in Cleveland in the USA is an innovative school whose mission is "to empower students of all ages to be lifelong learners and spirited citizens."⁴⁰ What is most remarkable about the school is the way in which it has created a formal mentorship role for people with dementia. Older people, some with dementia, are woven into the classroom curriculum. Whilst those with dementia have impairments in their short-term memory, they can still tell stories from their own lives and engage in discussing children's literature as well as other arts or nature-based parts of the curriculum.

The school is unique in having conducted a randomised control study of the benefits of intergenerational involvement for people with dementia. They undertook a five month, mixed methods intervention study to quantitatively and qualitatively evaluate whether a structured intergenerational volunteering program could enhance the quality of life of persons with mild to moderate dementia. Fifteen participants were recruited from a local care home based on approved inclusion criteria (over 50 years old, diagnosis of mild to moderate dementia, basic literacy, willingness to read children's books, ambulatory or able to be easily transported) and exclusion criteria (severe depression or anxiety, problems working with children, agoraphobia) and randomized into intervention (n = 8) and control groups (n = 7).

³⁸http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=0a7a291b7d6a374df6793527e2f3232db943&groupId=10171

⁴⁰http://www.innovationsindementia.org.uk/projects_communities.htm#communities
⁴¹A Model of Intergenerativity: How the Intergenerational School is bringing the generations together to foster collective wisdom and community health, George D, Whitehouse C and Whitehouse P, *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 2011

Across the weeks of the trial, participants alternated between hour long visits with the younger primary classroom during which they interacted with children by engaging in singing and small-group reading and writing activities and an older elementary classroom where they broke into smaller groups with two to three students and participated in intergenerational, life-history reminiscence sessions and guided conversations about politics, the environment, and other salient issues. All activities involved an intergenerational exchange of narrative, whether through the sharing of personal stories, books, songs, or collaborative craft-making.

The results of the study⁴¹ showed that the people with dementia involved with the Intergenerational School were found to have reduced stress levels and they also reported an increase in their quality of life; specifically (a) improved cognitive stimulation and improvement in mood, (b) an increase in sense of purpose and sense of usefulness from contributing to the educational process, and (c) the development of meaningful and enduring relationships with children.

Although not formally part of the study, it was also clear that the students involved in the intergenerational work demonstrated increased tolerance for the physical, behavioural, and cognitive challenges the older people with dementia faced.

For further information:

http://www.healthandenvironment.org/uploads/docs/WhitehouseA_Model_of_Intergenerativity.pdf

Intergenerational approaches

The graduate students' volunteer scheme (Malta)

The Malta Dementia Society runs an initiative designed to encourage recently graduated students to become involved in dementia care. After training, the students are invited to befriend people with dementia in a nursing care setting. The aim is to help people with dementia to interact more during the day and to introduce an active daily routine on the wards. The

students are encouraged to co-ordinate activities with each other and work in groups, for example, playing card games, reading newspapers and talking to people with dementia. The initiative has met with considerable success. Participants are given a certificate to feature on their CV, giving them something back for their efforts. In addition, organisers feel the scheme has set an example of good practice to the rest of the hospital staff and is improving attitudes and standards of care.

The 'Dragonfly Club' music and education evenings (Czech Republic)

The Czech Alzheimer Society organises regular concerts in schools for people with dementia and their families. The music is performed by school children who volunteer from a number of schools. As the event provides entertainment and a chance to socialise, other people less affected by dementia also tend to come along, for example, family and friends of the volunteer school children. Because of the close groupings of families often found around primary schools, the concerts provide a good opportunity to educate local communities on dementia. Volunteers hand out leaflets and information packs to the audience. Fund raising is also part of the activity and helps to keep the initiative self-sufficient

Kindergarten and dementia day care centre join forces (Portugal)

Alzheimer Portugal has been running a weekly linkup between participants at a dementia day centre and a local primary school since 2006. Every Wednesday, the children come to the centre to play with 'os avo-s' (the grandparents), as the children call them. Carers feel that the interaction is beneficial for both age groups, but brings particular benefits in psycho-motor stimulation, verbal and non-verbal communication and the expression of affection for older people with dementia. The centre has also teamed with the primary school to organise local events, including a sports day for grandparents and grandchildren from the neighbourhood.

⁴¹ Intergenerational Volunteering and Quality of Life for Persons With Mild to Moderate Dementia: Results From a 5- Month Intervention Study in the United States, George D & Singer M, *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry* 19:4, April 2011



Dementia friendly communities

Together for a dementia-friendly Bruges (Belgium)

Within Bruges there is a long-term awareness-building project in which all relevant partners, such as healthcare services, socio-cultural associations, local businesses (e.g. restaurants, shopkeepers), educational organizations, public and private services (e.g. police), are invited to make an active contribution, both individually and through partnerships, to creating a dementia-friendly community. The project aims to extend its influence into the city and all its structures in order to create a climate where dementia is understood and people with the condition are supported by the entire community. Examples of initiatives undertaken include the creation of a website, the wide distribution of a free 'dementia guide', organization of basic workshops on dementia and a protocol for finding missing persons. The project is underpinned by strong values which seek to promote respect and tolerance for people with dementia.

For further information:
<http://www.dementievriendelijkbrugge.bel>

Debenham Project (UK)

The village of Debenham in Suffolk is an example⁴² of a local community taking it upon themselves to address the challenges of ageing

(particularly dementia) in their community. It is an example of civic engagement at its best. In 2009 a public meeting took place which led to a project in which the community has taken responsibility for the welfare and support of those who are family carers looking after someone with dementia, and of meeting the health and social needs of those that they care for.

The project has developed a comprehensive range of local volunteer-based services which "draw in" the best professional support. It plans to further evolve and develop its caring approach (which has the slogan "Caring in the Community, Caring for the Community, and Caring by the Community"). Their plans are ambitious, and they state that their aspirations are governed only by one key sentiment - "If it is not good enough for my mother, it is not good enough". The Debenham Project relies totally on the dedication and support of volunteers, professional co-workers, and partner voluntary organisations.

There are around 80 registered volunteers, of whom 30 help out on a regular basis. The role of the volunteer is to support the carer, to create a friendly and social atmosphere and to know how to advocate on their behalf to get the best professional care and support. Overall they are critical to improving the quality of life of people with dementia and their families.

⁴² From – This is the Debenham Project. www.the-debenham-project.org.uk

The Debenham Project currently provides a wide range of support:-

- Confidential Telephone Support Line: to provide a listening service for carers who are finding it hard to cope with the practical and emotional difficulties of looking after someone with dementia. It is staffed by trained volunteers, most of whom have experienced, either professionally or personally, the difficulties and traumas of being a carer of someone with dementia.
- Activities and Social Support Sessions: regular sessions aimed at encouraging all sorts of activity, but mostly about getting together and having fun. They also give carers and cared-for the opportunity to meet and interact with others. The sessions are designed to cater for a wide range of interests, and to assist in reducing isolation. They are a joint venture with a local community organisation and the local church.
- Food and Friends Luncheon Clubs: a number of lunch clubs (usually only for a small number of guests) which offer a friendly, chatty, and comfortable occasions to relax and be with others.
- Information and Advice Centre: a website, phone line, leaflets, library, staff-assisted access and one-to-one confidential assistance. It can also link people to professional support workers when people need detailed advice and information. This has been achieved with the support of the local Library and Post Office
- Medication and Pharmacy Support: The Pharmacy offers a personal service providing help to carers. In addition, the pharmacist can assist in liaising with the GP surgery, and signposting to other forms of professional support. This service is very important given the need to ensure that the person with dementia is taking the right medication at the right time.

- Carers Club and Info Cafe:- offers carers a fortnightly friendly and social atmosphere where people can meet with other carers and can talk with a professional support worker.
- A Specialist Memory and Support Clinic: Working closely with the local mental health provider the project has arranged for monthly clinics to be held in a local venue to provide:-
 - o diagnostic assessments
 - o longer term monitoring of patients
 - o memory screening
 - o clinical information and advice
 - o social and health care information and advice
 - o support information and advice
 - o informal drop-in advice

This goes well beyond the clinical services that would normally be provided

The project has managed to make a real difference to a significant number of those who, otherwise would have been just about coping, and it has gone a long way towards ensuring that many others know that they are not alone.

The longer term vision of the project is one in which:

- No one should have to leave their friends, family and neighbours in order to be cared for with love and dignity
- No matter how frail we might become, we will still be able to be part of our community – to visit the shops and cafe, to have our grandchildren pop in, and to pass “the time of day” in the High Street.
- No one should have to be admitted to hospital, or stay in hospital when they can be cared for in the community, by the community

For further information:

<http://www.the-debenham-project.org.uk/>

Dementia Without Walls - York (UK)

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation commissioned work in York to investigate how to approach the development of a dementia friendly community. The project "Dementia Without Walls" set about tackling the task and has highlighted much scope for supporting local communities, organisations and businesses to become more aware and understanding of dementia, and more inclusive.

The project believes that communities which are dementia-friendly have more opportunity to support people in the early stages of dementia, maintaining and boosting their confidence and their ability to manage everyday living. By working with and listening to people, the York Dementia Without Walls project shows how many of the resources and services in a place can be harnessed for the benefit of people with dementia, provided there is sufficient awareness of what dementia means for them, their carers and families, and provided that professional and community networks help people to access the support they need.

Some of the key pointers from the project include:-

- What is good for people with dementia is good for everybody. Places and neighbourhoods that provide good housing, transport and facilities will not only be more dementia-friendly but will also make life easier for other older people, disabled people, families... in fact for everyone.
- Training for people at all levels and in all sectors should be easy to access and well promoted. This should enable people who provide everyday services (e.g. banks, shops, transport and leisure) to understand better what people with dementia need, and it should also assure the best levels of service and care for people with dementia.
- Leisure, cultural and spiritual resources can help people with dementia to live richer, fuller lives. This might require some adaptation, but communicating

that people with dementia are welcome would be a good first step.

- Health and social care services will need to change over time to ensure there is enough support for people living in the community. People with dementia should be central to helping to plan for this. The final project report setting out the full learning and recommendations is due to be published in September 2012.

For further information:

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/creating-dementia-friendly-york>

Awareness raising

Campaign to understand dementia and build community networks (Japan)

In Japan dementia is no longer seen as "somebody else's business" but a challenge for the whole nation. There has been a recognition that social attitudes can have a big impact on the lived experience of people with dementia. This has led to a growing recognition in Japan that society should not simply leave the care of people with dementia to specialist health and social care services. It is now considered crucial that citizens should have a proper understanding of dementia, and should support people with dementia in the community in which they live. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, together with organizations concerned with dementia, launched a 10-year nationwide public campaign called the "Campaign to Understand Dementia and Build Community Networks". The campaign has a number of elements, one of which is called "The Nationwide Caravan to Train One Million Dementia Supporters". The idea is that volunteer dementia supporters will receive training and support in the nature of dementia and how best to provide support for people with dementia and their families. Volunteering and civic engagement are therefore seen as central to this national strategy to respond to the growing number of people with dementia.

For further information:

http://longevity.ilc-japan.org/f_issues/0603.html

Campaign Dementia (Austria)

Campaign Dementia aims to create conditions in the Austrian state of Vorarlberg that enable people with dementia to participate in public and social life. The programme supports communities that wish to create a friendlier environment for people with dementia and their families. 23 model communities (out of 96, and almost 60% of the inhabitants of Vorarlberg) have joined the programme since 2008.

Countrywide, they also want to sensitise the general public and increase awareness of dementia by informing (e.g. through press relations and conferences, brochures, events, movies, art exhibitions, lessons in schools and kindergarten) and educating (e.g. neighbourhood assistants, policemen, salespeople, bus drivers, bank employees). The organisation promoting the programme, Connexia Gesellschaft fu-r Gesundheit und Pflege – gem GmbH, is succeeding in mobilizing a number of communities around Vorarlberg to fight the stigmatization that surrounds the world of dementia. This approach involves all actors of civil society, draws upon the expertise of Action Demenz in Germany, and develops original and effective programmes.

For further information:

<http://www.connexia.at/?content=internationale-erkennungfueraktiondemenz>

Befriending and one to one support

Better together than alone! (Germany)

In the past decade, various means of support have been established for people with dementia and their families in the Lubbecke region of Germany (e.g. specialised dementia service centres, respite care, day care, carer support groups). The 'Better together than alone' initiative is the first one to focus explicitly on people in the early stages of dementia. The project consists of bi-weekly support groups, a sports programme and a monthly activity programme. A network of volunteers has been created to support the engagement of people

“Befriending can help by alleviating feelings of isolation or a lack of stimulation”

with dementia. All the volunteers have either a professional background in dementia care or have been trained specifically for the task. The project demonstrates an innovative approach in offering support for people in the early-stages of dementia.

Better Understanding of Dementia for Sandwell - BUDS (UK)

BUDS Befriending Service offers the opportunity for a person with dementia to receive a weekly visit for a couple of hours from a volunteer. Befriending can help to improve the well being of a person with dementia by alleviating the surrounding conditions they may experience, such as feelings of isolation or a lack of stimulation, particularly if they live on their own. Befriending also offers the opportunity for a family carer to have a regular break from the caring role.

I did not remember being beautiful (Italy)

This initiative is carried out by Associazione Aida (Assistenza Integrale Demenze Alzheimer). The Project aims to help caregivers of people with Alzheimer's disease in the difficult times faced after diagnosis. The slogan of the association is "Not to feel alone anymore", and it works with specialised personnel and trained volunteers.

The idea behind "I did not remember being beautiful" is to help older women with Alzheimer's by providing beauty treatment in an effort to help them rediscover some of their past self. This activity is made possible through the effort of volunteers, who are amazed at the effect their treatments have on the older women. They become joyful, their eyes brighter,

and they spend time admiring themselves. The volunteers stress the fact that this doesn't "cure them of Alzheimer's", but it makes them more resilient, giving them back the desire to feel beautiful and take care of themselves. In this way it makes them become better equipped to deal with the some aspects of the condition.

For further information:

http://www.volontariato.lazio.it/documentazione/documenti/47804780RetiSolidali_4_2011_NonRicordavoDiEssereBella.pdf

Volonteurope recommends

1. **Stakeholders should** promote 'dementia friendly' practices within their organisations
2. **Voluntary and community organisations should** work towards including people with mild to moderate levels of dementia in their activities and services

3. NGOs involved in supporting volunteering by older people should:-

- a. Develop innovative approaches to supporting older people with dementia to make a positive contribution within their communities (e.g. working with children)
- b. Develop models of volunteer befriending which are specifically focussed on supporting people with dementia
- c. Develop and promote peer support initiatives for carers of people with dementia

4. EU Institutions and Member states should:-

- a. Promote greater awareness of dementia through the engagement of volunteer ambassadors / champions
- b. Support the development of more intergenerational initiatives to raise awareness and seek to counter the social exclusion that people with dementia can often face

Addressing the loneliness and isolation experienced by many older people

Issues

Loneliness and isolation experienced by older people is increasingly being recognised as a significant health and well being issue and one which needs to be addressed in any active ageing strategy. It is triggered by particular risk factors, many of which can be addressed through volunteering and civic engagement. Identifying lonely older people is a challenge given the stigma surrounding the issue, but once identified there are interventions which can make a real difference. An important dimension, which is only now beginning to gain recognition, is the psychological/emotional side of things and innovative volunteer led courses and peer to peer initiatives are now emerging.

Defining loneliness

There can be quite a lot of confusion about the issue. People who spend a lot of time on their own are not necessarily lonely; and by way of contrast, even in a crowd some people can feel very lonely. Loneliness and isolation are linked concepts, but they are also separate ones.

Loneliness is perhaps best thought of as a subjective state— a response to people's perceptions and feelings about their social connections – rather than an objective state.

“Loneliness is a psychological state, an emotional response to a perceived gap between the amount of personal contact an individual wants and the amount that they have.”⁴³

Loneliness takes different forms. A distinction is often drawn between social loneliness and

“ *Identifying lonely older people is a challenge given the stigma surrounding the issue* ”

emotional loneliness⁴⁴:-

- **emotional loneliness** - is the absence of a significant other with whom a close emotional attachment is formed (e.g. a partner or best friend)
- **social loneliness** - is the absence of a social network consisting of a wide or broad group of friends, neighbours and colleagues

Risk factors

Whilst loneliness can and does affect people of any age, there are particular risk factors for older people, in particular⁴⁵:-

- low socio-economic status
- being aged 80 and over
- living alone
- having no access to a car or never using public transport
- living in rented accommodation
- living on low income or on State benefits as main income
- having no access to a telephone
- experiencing hearing and sight loss

Transitions can also trigger a loss of social and emotional connections and be a 'tipping point' into loneliness:-

- retirement
- changing housing arrangements
- becoming a carer
- developing care needs
- becoming bereaved

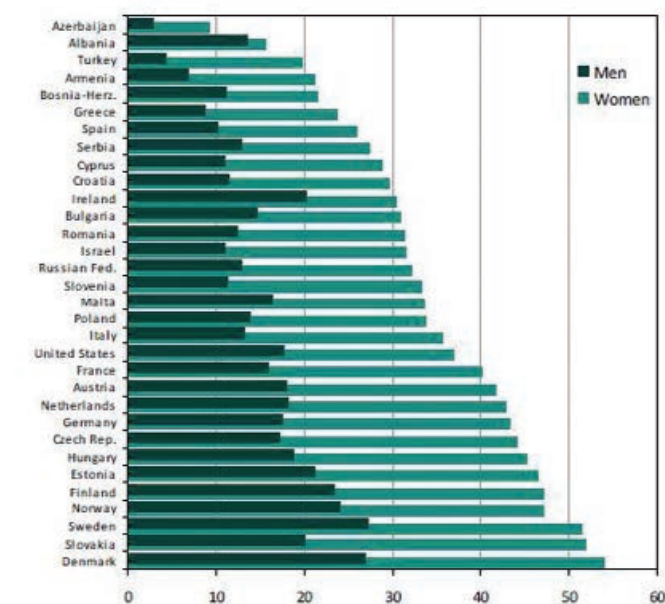
⁴³Safeguarding the convoy: a call to action, Campaign to End Loneliness, 2011

⁴⁴ibid
⁴⁵Combating Loneliness: a guide for local authorities, Ageing Well Programme of the LGA, 2012

Ageist attitudes which erode older people's sense of identity and role in community can exacerbate all of these risk factors.

One of the most obvious risks to loneliness is that of living alone. As the graph below shows, the situation across Europe varies dramatically – with a range between 10%-over 50% of older people living alone. There is a significant gender issue as well, though it can't be assumed that because there are more women who live alone that the risks of loneliness are greater for them. Women often have stronger social networks and therefore living alone can be less of a risk factor than it is for men.

Percentage of men and women 65 or older who live alone, 2001-2008, latest available year (100%= all people 65 or older.)



Source: Calculations from the UNECE Statistical Database, accessed on 30 April 2010.

Impact on health

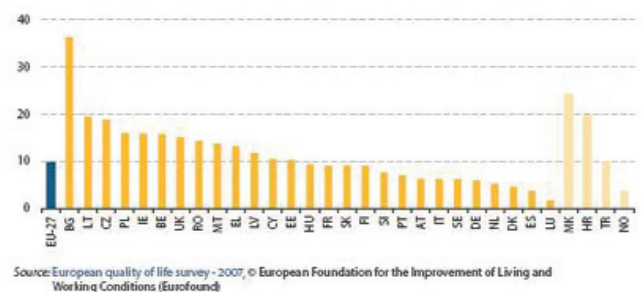
The links between loneliness and poor health are well established. Recent reviews of the evidence on loneliness highlight that being lonely has a significant and lasting effect on individuals' health. It is associated with higher blood pressure and depression, and leads to higher rates of mortality – comparable to those associated with smoking and obesity. It is also linked to higher incidence of dementia, with one

study reporting a doubled risk of Alzheimer's disease in lonely people compared with those who were not lonely. As a result of these health impacts, lonely individuals tend to make more use of health and social care services, and are more likely to have early admission to residential or nursing care. Loneliness can also be inextricably linked with depression among older people, much of which is frequently undiagnosed. According to the World Health Organisation the prevalence of depression in those over 65 in the European Region is estimated⁴⁶ at 2– 15%.

Prevalence and identification

The prevalence of loneliness varies between countries, but has tended to remain relatively static within them. A survey conducted in 2007 found that almost one in ten of people 65 and over in EU27 felt left out of society, one of the indicators of loneliness.

Proportion of the population aged 65+ agreeing or strongly agreeing that they felt left out of society, 2007



Source: European quality of life survey - 2007, © European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)

In looking at variations between countries there has tended to be some assumptions that the prevalence of loneliness will be higher in more individualistic societies (such as the northern European countries). Contrary to this belief, some findings⁴⁷ show that "older adults in northern European countries tend to be less lonely than those in the more familialistic southern European countries. The scarce data on Central and Eastern Europe suggest a high prevalence of older adult loneliness in those countries".

⁴⁶<http://www.euro.who.int/en/what-we-do/health-topics/Life-stages/healthy-ageing/factsand-figures/risk-factors-of-ill-health-among-older-people>
⁴⁷ Eur J Ageing. 2009 June; 6(2): 91–100, 2009, Older adult loneliness: myths and realities, Pearl A. Dykstra

clear evidence for the promotion of volunteering as a vehicle to address loneliness and social isolation among older people. In a survey⁴⁸ of 350 people aged 50 and over:-

- 59% of older respondents indicated that as a result of volunteering their network of friends had increased
- 69% agreed they had more interaction with people from different age groups
 - o 54% felt they had more interaction with people from a different community
 - o 29% had greater contact with those from a different religious background

Supporting people experiencing loneliness to engage in volunteering and civic engagement is therefore very important.

Mentoring and befriending

Mentoring and Befriending Foundation is an intervention that is widely used to address the support needs of vulnerable people and is particularly well suited as an intervention to address loneliness and isolation amongst older people. For people in receipt of befriending the social and emotional support they receive from a volunteer befriender can often be their only opportunity to make contact or communicate with another person or be able to access local community resources or amenities. Without befriending support many would experience long periods of isolation, feelings of loneliness and social exclusion.

The term befriending is given to the development of a relationship in which one individual, who is not family, a close friend or under a professional obligation, voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another during a time of transition or crisis. The voluntary and regular nature of the relationship is highly valued by those befriended who regard them as distinctively different from those formed with professionals. It is often considered to be a

mutually beneficial relationship whereby both the volunteer befriender and service user gain from the relationship.

There are a variety of befriending models⁴⁹ currently in use by the voluntary and community sector to support individuals. The table below illustrates the various delivery models and how they are being used to provide preventative support to vulnerable individuals.

Model of befriending	Use
One-to-one	Widely used throughout the sector to provide regular face-to-face contact to those who have become, or are at risk of becoming, socially isolated. Can play a strongly proactive, preventative role in helping to develop new horizons, social skills and encourage friendships when undertaken by peers. Can be used to support older people who have become isolated due to mobility issues, bereavement or recent hospital discharge. It is also used to support younger people with learning or physical disabilities, or those with enduring mental health issues to help build resilience and enable them to participate in social or mainstream activities. This model is commonly used by voluntary, community and user-led
Telephone	Typically used to provide regular one-to-one or social group support to a service user or group of users in their own home via a telephone link. Often delivered by volunteers and facilitated from either the office of the host organisation or a volunteer's home. Frequently used to support older people living in rural areas for which geographical barriers limit opportunities for face-to-face volunteer support. Also used by national organisations to provide specialist targeted support/ advice and guidance to those individuals or families recovering from, or learning to live with, a specific health condition.
Group	Provides service users or individuals with a shared interest or similar concern the opportunity to meet with one another on a regular basis in an informal and friendly environment. Group befriending provides opportunities to exchange information and share worries with others who have a shared understanding and can offer solutions based on their own experiences. Often facilitated by volunteers and usually takes place on a weekly basis. Frequently used to support individuals who face similar problems, for example a specific health condition or for carers responsible for the support of a family member with a learning or physical disability. Also widely used to help promote active living for those at risk of developing a long-term health condition.

From Befriending Works: building resilience in local communities, Mentoring and Befriending Foundation

⁴⁸ Making the Connection, Volunteer Now, 2010
⁴⁹Befriending works: building resilience in local communities, Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, 2010

Psychological and emotional dimension

One element about loneliness which, paradoxically, is often overlooked is the psychological / emotional aspect. Many people are lonely, not because they don't have access to other people, but because internal mental processes prevent them from having the kind of relational contact they want. So for a number of older people loneliness is related to depression or other mental health problems. It is therefore important support is given to address the causes and consequences of loneliness. For some people psychological therapies, such as cognitive behavioural therapy, may be effective. Unfortunately older people are often denied proper access to these services⁵⁰ because of a failure among professionals to refer to these services, due to a lack of appropriate provision, time pressures or misconceptions that some treatments do not work for older people⁵¹. On the positive side, there is the emergence of less 'medicalised' forms of emotional support and training in psychological resilience.

Cross cultural issues

The following section sets out a number of examples of good practice and these provide some very interesting models. However care has to be taken when considering importing models from other countries. A recent study⁵² of the wellbeing of older people (including issues around loneliness) across a number of European states uncovered some interesting questions about the different cultural characteristics, different social expectations and the extent to which older people value various types of social interaction. These differences suggest that – “policy initiatives to combat social isolation that might be successful in one country would not necessarily transfer easily to another society. Therefore while we can learn from other countries' approaches to promoting social inclusion in old age, it is essential that policy responses are appropriate to the particular needs and characteristics of the specific populations they are serving.”

Examples of good practice

Brighter Futures (UK)

Brighter Futures was a Mental Health Foundation (MHF) peer mentoring initiative for isolated older people in the Scottish regions of Glasgow, Renfrewshire and South Lanarkshire. The basic idea was for volunteers to use their skills and experience to help older people become more actively involved in their community. The project was set up after a research project revealed that older people's mental health problems were not being addressed sufficiently.

Both the volunteer and the older person receiving the service had to be at least 50 years old and the service was free of charge. In practice, most participants were over 70 and living with one or more physical health problems that meant that they were housebound and suffering from mental health problems. Most volunteers were aged from 50 to 60. Participants mainly came from referrals from medical staff and social workers. It proved difficult to find participants because of the stigma that people associate with someone having mental health problems. Volunteers were mainly recruited during events run by the MHF in which people, mainly other older people or care professionals, gave talks on subjects such as wellbeing, loneliness and isolation. Volunteers were often reluctant to sign up initially because they did not feel that they had the necessary skills.

A key part of the project was a free training programme for volunteers to learn about mentoring skills so that they could help older peers set themselves goals. The programme lasted for one day per week for six weeks. The volunteers had typically just retired from work and were anxious about what to do with the rest of their lives. They got a lot out of helping someone in more difficult circumstances than themselves. It was good for their mental health as it improved their mood and confidence.

⁵⁰ Scharf, T. (2011) in *Safeguarding the Convoy – A Call to Action*, Campaign to End Loneliness/Age UK Oxfordshire, 2011

⁵¹ *Combating loneliness: a guide for local authorities*, LGA Ageing Well Programme, 2011

⁵² *Ageing Across Europe*, WRVS/DEMOS, 2012

The costs of the project were largely related to the volunteers' training programme and to pay for mentors to visit other people's homes; there was also the cost of paying for one full-time member of staff to coordinate the volunteers. Additional staff members were seconded from mental health providers. The project is felt to be very transferable to other EU countries. It is a very cost-effective model because it involves volunteers. It is important to harness other older people's skills to work with other older people. According to a report on the project, 69 of the 78 older people recruited and trained as volunteer peer mentors went on to actively support older people as mentors while 96 participants were provided with a peer mentoring service and supported to engage with a wide range of community resources (e.g. universities, arts groups, bowling clubs).

For further information: http://www.causeway-ramh.org/brighter_futures.php

North London Cares (UK)

In January 2012, North London Cares embarked upon a project in partnership with Islington Council and Age UK Islington. Funded by the Department for Health, their aim was to improve the health and wellbeing of older and vulnerable people across the London Borough of Islington during the coldest months of the winter. The methodology was to recruit young professional volunteers to knock on 3,600 doors in four neighbourhoods in order to identify those most vulnerable to the extreme cold weather, to encourage and better enable people to stay warm, and to raise awareness of the various support services and networks available to them. Over the following eight weeks, North London Cares volunteers exceeded targets, eventually knocking on 4,002 doors, delivering leaflets, and creating thousands of interactions and over one hundred on-going relationships to support those most at risk in the borough. As a result of these new interactions, 100 elderly and vulnerable people were identified as being in need of

additional support not provided by statutory services.

Volunteers from various professions and backgrounds were recruited using new social media techniques. The volunteers participated in door-knocking sessions, normally lasting between one and three hours. Volunteers were instructed to introduce themselves by name and organisation, and to inform their neighbour about the purpose of the visit and the various services on offer, including:

- Delivering blankets, coats and jumpers to people's doors;
- In very cold weather, delivering hot meals to people;
- Supporting people against drafts and providing extra heating;
- Ensuring people have access to the services they need;
- Arranging transport and/or escorts to the doctor or hospital.



If the neighbour was an older person or lacking in confidence, the instruction to volunteers was to ask whether the individual was warm enough and whether they had family and friends nearby who visit. Where there was a need that could be fulfilled by the volunteers, names and contact details were recorded, and follow-up calls were made to arrange for that service to be delivered.

The details of 100 people were recorded in this way, and support will continue to be offered to those people in the future.

Many of the doors that were opened to the volunteers were done so with at least a small measure of initial trepidation; some people were visibly sceptical, and many were anxious or even scared at the prospect of encountering a stranger on their doorstep. Few expected to see a neighbour asking whether they were safe, warm and well. However, there was frequently a change in attitude when volunteers introduced themselves and spoke about the purpose of their visit.

The majority of people who opened their doors to our volunteers were warm and well and did not require any specific support – but were nonetheless happy to be approached by someone who cared whether they and their neighbours were equipped to deal with the cold weather.

When volunteers talked about the general vision of North London Cares – strengthening the bonds of community – people responded even more positively. Almost without fail, the person accepted an information leaflet and, if they weren't elderly or isolated themselves, promised to keep an eye out for their vulnerable neighbours. It is believed that the project will have contributed to a greater sense of neighbourliness. As the project progressed, it became clear that there was a latent desire throughout the area for increased interaction between neighbours and to build, as one older woman put it, "a sense of community that has long since gone and seemed unlikely to ever return."

For further information:
<http://northlondoncares.org.uk/>

FriDA – Freiwillige in der Alltagsbegleitung (Germany)

The project (Voluntary support with daily living – activating elderly people) is delivered by a partnership of various church groups and the local volunteer centre with the aim of enriching and broadening the social engagement of older people in the town. The project is based on the idea of a neighbourhood based network of volunteer support for older people to promote active ageing and self determination. The idea behind FriDA was that older people who are in little need of care could take part in everyday public life the help of volunteer support. This would enable them to stay active, stay in touch and participate in social gatherings in the neighbourhood.

Through the FriDA programme, the Volunteer Centre trained volunteers to be available to provide 1:1 support for older people in a variety of daily activities:

- accompanying older people when they go shopping or deal with public authorities,
- making contacts with and taking part in activities with other people in the community
- engaging in social activities - going walking together, playing games, talking, reading a book,
- Initiating or facilitating their contact with organisations and institutions.

The Volunteer Centre promotes the project, identifies volunteers and matches interested people to specific services.

For further information: <http://www.pfarre-sankt-vitus.de/leben-in-der-pfarre/frida.html>

“ The project is a neighbourhood based network for older people to promote active ageing and self determination ”

Life Choices Befriending (UK)

Age UK North Tyneside supports individuals 50+ who have a range of mental health needs, physical disabilities, learning difficulties and dementia. The scheme was initially a visiting scheme but now encompasses an enabling aspect. The scheme addresses the growing isolation amongst older people by offering a bespoke befriending and support service to meet individual's needs and aspirations to improve quality of life. The clients supported by Age UK North Tyneside demonstrate various impairments which prevent them from leaving their home. Impairments include dementia, mobility difficulties, difficulty reading and writing, deterioration in sight and/or hearing. These impairments can sometimes lead to other issues such as depression and isolation. Key factors affecting the client group include:-

- Isolation
- Poverty and deprivation
- Reduction in social networks
- Breakdown of family structures
- Transitional issues
- Bereavement
- Deteriorating health.

Outcomes from working with the service users:

- Reduced isolation
- Increased social networks
- Increase/ maintained independence
- Improved confidence and self esteem
- Reduced likelihood or relief from depression/anxiety
- Carer relief for their loved ones which has an overall positive impact on the service user
- Individual goals and aspirations met (e.g. developing life skills, cookery classes, reading and writing, etc)

For further information:

<http://www.mandbf.org/guidance-and-support/what-is-mentoring-and-befriending>

Les petits frères des pauvres (The Little Brothers of the Poor) (France)

Les petits frères des pauvres works with people over the age of 50 who suffer from isolation, solitude, poverty, exclusion, and disability. These people are treated as 'old friends' rather than 'beneficiaries'. The association's mission is to accompany, to act collectively, and to bear witness and raise the alarm.

Accompanying

This involves creating trusting and enduring relationships, facing insecurities, restoring social ties, and mending the social fabric. Les petits frères des pauvres seeks to engage with isolated older people and part of the goal is to help people gain access to services, engage in citizenship and feel safe.

Acting collectively

Team work is essential, and volunteers and employees work in synergy. The 'territorial actions teams' focus on different geographical areas, whereas the 'specific actions teams' focus on different issues (e.g. homelessness, long-term health problems). Les petits frères des pauvres also works in partnership with other organisations in the health and social care sectors. They hold regular local, regional and national meetings in order to co-ordinate their actions, share good practice, etc.

Bearing witness and raising the alarm

Les petits frères des pauvres aims to give people a voice, influence public opinion, and raise the alarm by bearing witness to the situations in which the older people they work with live.

For further information:

<http://www.petits-freres.org/en/news/recherche-benevoles-pour-les-vacances.html>

Unlocking Potential Project(UK)

The Unlocking Potential Project has carried out outreach work by visiting older people's groups, church and community groups and attending community events. The social benefits of volunteering have been actively promoted to the public at these events. A 'Taster session' and 'Action day' model that has been adopted by the Unlocking Potential Project has also attracted many people who have taken part by themselves and have never volunteered before. These one off group activities provide a relaxed environment whereby participants can very quickly feel part of a team.

The Unlocking Potential project has also linked in with local housing associations to provide mobile volunteering opportunities that residents can take part in together. This has ensured that older people who may cite health or mobility issues as the reason why they cannot or have stopped volunteering can take part in one off group activities. This has often resulted in residents who are living in sheltered housing for instance having more interaction with their neighbours.

For further information:

<http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/volunteering/over-50s-volunteering>

Detecting Lonely People (Belgium)

The purpose of this project run by the Red Cross is to detect lonely and vulnerable older people with a view to alleviating their social isolation. There is a structured approach to identifying lonely people:-

- referrals from professional care and support staff who go into people's homes
- informal carers: supported by an NGO who provide information and signposting
- distribution of leaflets in places vulnerable people are thought to frequent (e.g. pharmacies, doctors etc)

People who are identified through any of these means receive one to one befriending support to help them get out and about, attend

appointments, and join in social activities in the local community.

For further information:

<http://www.wedo-partnership.eu/good-practice/hesteria-detecting-lonely-older-people>

Voluntary Support Service (UK)

The Voluntary Support Service supports individuals with mild to moderate mental health problems who are finding it hard to cope. The scheme provides one-to one befriending support to help individuals reduce barriers to good mental health and improve their local understanding of mental health issues in order to increase independence and reduce isolation.

Many of the clients supported by the Voluntary Support Service experience difficulties ranging from levels of anxiety or depression which can make life extremely difficult to people who have become housebound as a result of their difficulties. Outcomes for service users:-

- Improved confidence
- Improved relationships
- Improved emotional health and well-being
- Increased independence
- Increase self-worth
- Increased social networks
- Reduction in hospital admissions

For further information:

<http://www.mandbf.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Befriending-works-building-resilience-in-local-communities-FINAL2.pdf>

Case study: Client J

J is in her 60's and has suffered from chronic ME for 10 years; she lives at home with her son, who has physical disabilities, and her husband, who has a terminal illness. J and her husband moved to Devon from the city just before J became ill. Unfortunately as a result of the move J found it hard to fit in and make new friends and as a result felt isolated and cut off which led to her becoming emotionally distressed. J was suffering from fatigue and became bedridden for a long period of time. ME was later diagnosed. J has had her befriender for the last 10 years. Initially J hoped a befriender would help motivate her to get better quicker but unfortunately J's condition has deteriorated over the years. J's befriender visits J once a week to listen and have a chat with her. Social outings are rare due to J's fatigue but together they have set up a local community group in order to bring members of the community together. They have also set up a ME support group. Despite J's deteriorating health as a result of ME, J and her befriender have a unique relationship which both have benefited from. J now has access to new social networks and feels part of the community that she felt so isolated from. "Being able to get out of the house and have a coffee with someone else rather than sitting at home on my own is absolutely wonderful. Since having a befriender the days seem shorter now I am less socially isolated. I am more confident in myself and look forward to going to the self help group."

Buddy-Buddy Service (Netherlands)

Volunteer Emergency Service Eindhoven (VES) is a charity developed as a direct response to a very specific need – the prevalence of many socially excluded and lonely older people whose only human contact was limited to professionals. These older people, many with long term conditions and mental health problems, only interacted regularly with people like social workers, doctors and therapists. Their social networks had entirely collapsed. It was recognised that it is very difficult to move from contact with a professional to friendship with other people, largely because the relationship with a professional is not reciprocal.

VES was established to match volunteers to older people in this group. The volunteer acts as a 'buddy', a carefully prescribed role – neither friend nor professional but someone in between – whose sole job it is to help that person develop or rediscover their social networks. For example a volunteer might work with a recently widowed woman to help her rediscover her interests, and then join a related neighbourhood organisation.

The volunteer signs up to spending time with the 'client' for four hours a week for a period of one year. That time period is both a minimum and a maximum: long enough to build a relationship, but not long enough for

the client to become dependent on them. The charity has 320 active volunteers, 200 of whom are working

with a long term buddy. The charity's half dozen staff members focus their efforts on the matching process and receiving referrals. The staff also provide key support for and constant coaching of volunteers who are often placed in demanding situations with clients which they don't necessarily know how to manage.

Network Coach (Netherlands)

Humanitas has a similar scheme entitled the 'network coach'. This is a trained volunteer who spends time with someone who is socially isolated and helps them to start making contacts or to build or expand on the contacts they already have. They also help the person to better articulate their needs and access support from the mainstream services. The coaching is undertaken in a person centred way starting from the needs, strengths and abilities of the individual.

For further information:

<http://www.mandbf.org/news/policy-and-evidence-news/a-netherlands-befriending-project-find-out-more-about-humanitas-tandem>

Full of Life (UK)

Addressing loneliness is not all about needing to find out about local activities to join. For many older people there are psychological and emotional components which need to be addressed. Supporting older people's emotional resilience is therefore very important, and the Full of Life project has shown that volunteers can play a huge part in this.

Full of Life is a peer-to-peer community based project to promote emotional resilience skills for older people. The project, supported by the Young Foundation, has developed and piloted a service to improve the wellbeing and resilience of people aged 65 and over who were experiencing isolation, mild anxiety or depression. The project is a collaboration between the Young Foundation, Age UK and Dr Chris Williams, Consultant Psychiatrist to the University of Glasgow.

Local volunteers, recruited through existing Age UK networks and wider local outreach, have been trained to run local peer discussion groups around a set of supporting materials. The course has been developed specifically for older people, based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Positive Psychology methods of 'helping people to help themselves'. Components of the course include identifying and challenging negative emotions, developing coping strategies, social problem solving skills, negotiation and relaxation techniques.

For further information:

<http://www.youngfoundation.org/publications/talks/full-life>

Ageing with Confidence (Ireland)

Ageing with Confidence is a course designed to support people to make a positive transition into later life. It is a proactive attempt to build up the resilience of older people to deal with the challenges of later life, including the risk of loneliness and social isolation.

It was developed by Age and Opportunity in 2001 as a community education programme. The impetus for the initiative arose from a perceived need for an educational/self-development course targeted at older people

to counter negative perceptions of ageing, lack of confidence and to empower them to improve their health and wellbeing. As a means of achieving this goal Ageing with Confidence develops life skills and promotes positive mental health. The programme enables participants explore their own ageing; challenge the myths and stereotyping that lead to ageism; and provides information on physical, psychological and social aspects of growing older.

The programme consists of 8 weekly two-and-a-half hour sessions. Each session is delivered by two facilitators trained by Age & Opportunity and consists of information on aspects of ageing such as:

- o Self-Confidence and Ageism
- o The Components of Self and Physical Ageing
- o Psychological Aspects of Normal Ageing
- o Self-Knowledge and Stresses in Later Life
- o The Emotional Self
- o Improving Self-Confidence
- o Isolation, Loneliness and Sexuality in Later Life

Importantly the course tackles some of the internalized negative thinking that can be a barrier to ageing well or to getting involved in the wider community.

For further information:

<http://olderinireland.ie/node/54>

Active Ageing Project (UK)

The Active Ageing Project is run by Retired Seniors Volunteer Programme (RSVP) which has a significant impact on reducing social isolation. The overall objective of the project is to improve the mental and physical wellbeing of as many older people in the area as possible. In achieving this, the aims are to:

- Provide a range of activities led by volunteers
- Recruit older people to participate in those activities
- Reduce social isolation among older people
- Improve mental and physical wellbeing

among older people

- Ensure that the activity groups are self sustaining – i.e. will continue after the end of the funding round
- Enable volunteers to attend different types of training and have opportunities for skill development

The range of activities offered through the scheme is significant and provides good choice to potential participants. Most of the activities address physical as well as mental wellbeing in a number of ways. The types of activity on offer include:

- Exercise /Activities Classes - weekly classes for a range of healthy activities, supervised by a Qualified Instructor, also opportunities for having fun socializing and getting fitter
- Substance Abuse Drop In - specially trained older volunteers act as mentors for men over 25 with drug and alcohol problems, providing support groups, focus groups. 1:1 sessions and a range of leisure activities
- Schools - Volunteers go into nursery, primary and secondary Schools to assist with Maths, Reading, Information Technology Gardening, Woodwork, Cooking, and Languages.
- Walkers & Strollers Groups - meet weekly and have two levels of walks to accommodate member's abilities. The group hires a Mini Bus to give the walkers the opportunity of walking in areas which are not easily accessible to them.
- Teleconferencing Book Club - a group of people and a facilitator read a mutually agreed selected book and once a month they have a Telebook Conference, which lasts about an hour. The local libraries supply the books, which are delivered to the member's home. It is an ideal opportunity for residents, who are socially isolated to take part in a regular event.

- Carers Group
- Social (Friendship/ Arts & Crafts) Groups

There are two separate targets for the amount and kind of help to older people to be delivered – 1100 older people to be less isolated; and 2010 more active. It is almost impossible to separate out these benefits/outcomes, because the social benefits of all the exercise related activities are valued highly and commented on by all stakeholders, but especially the beneficiaries and volunteers. In fact, less isolation was mentioned by almost every participant in the activities whom we spoke with in some shape or form; and making new friends was one of the top reasons for going to the activity they had chosen.

Latin American Golden Years Day Centre (UK)

Isolation can be particularly acute within migrant communities and for asylum seekers⁵³. The Latin American Golden Years Day Centre in Lambeth, South London, supports Chilean refugees and asylum seekers aged 55+. Initially set up for Chilean refugees, the centre now works mostly with economic migrants from Latin America. Its 120 users are members who participate in running the services, guided by 3 paid staff. Many members have been with the centre for more than 8 years. The principal aim of the centre is to combat isolation among older Latin Americans, and to support those with mental health problems. The centre receives referrals from local doctors and hospitals, and also provides outreach work for people with mobility problems. Its activities focus on using arts and crafts as therapeutic tools, in addition to offering day trips to museums and gardens, plus English and IT classes. The centre has been particularly effective in:-

- Involving users (as members) in the day to day running of the centre which has contributed to making older people feel valued and needed.
- Developing a therapeutic focus on art activities which has proved effective in two ways: it helps

⁵³ Older refugees in the UK: A literature review and interviews with refugees, Age Concern/Refugee Council, 2008

members increase their mental wellbeing and develop their skills in new areas.

For further information:

<http://www.thebasisproject.org.uk/casestudies/goldenyears>

Active Friends (UK)

The Age Concern Southampton Active Friend service is designed to reach older people who have become lonely and isolated and who have no regular support from either family or friends. Very often its clients have lost their confidence or have reduced mobility. Its aim is to help and support people to get back out into the community, to join a social or physical activity group and make new friends. Clients are referred to Active Friends by social services, mental health teams, GPs, nurses, family members, church groups, housing support workers and via self referral. The service is promoted through the press, talks to groups at events and through networking. Once referred, older people are seen by the visiting services coordinator and matched with an Active Friend volunteer. Wherever possible the scheme tries to find Active Friend volunteers who share the same interests as their clients, or who live in the neighbourhood. Active Friend Volunteers work with older people to support them to identify local opportunities for social or physical activity, and to give them the confidence to get involved. The volunteer will talk through the older person's interests and preferences and discuss local options, they will then go along with the older person to whatever groups or activities are identified. Once the older person has started to engage with these activities, and feels confident enough to meet up with new friends on a regular basis, the Active Friend will move away. The service is managed by Age Concern Southampton, who work closely with specialist organisations such as Alzheimer's Society, Solent Mind, Dementia UK, and Steps 2 Wellbeing (IAPT) Service, as well as Southampton City Council, Homesafe, Southampton Health Trainers etc. Links with specialist organisations are particularly important when client assessments reveal issues which require professional

intervention, such as depression, panic attacks, dementia etc.

For further information:

<http://www.ageconcernsouthampton.org.uk/active-friends.html>

Volonteurope recommends

1. Stakeholders need to:-

- a. Recognise the value of volunteering and active citizenship as an effective intervention to combat social isolation and loneliness
- b. Encourage socially isolated people to take an active part in volunteering and other opportunities for civic engagement
- c. Support initiatives which preserve and strengthen local social networks and encourage daily social interaction and interdependence among young and old
- d. Ensure that older people are fully included in programmes of 'talking therapies' which provide psychological support for those with difficulties in engaging with others

2. Member States should take a leading role in promoting positive mental health throughout the life course by providing information and challenging stereotypical beliefs about older people and the ageing process

Intergenerational solidarity and 'age friendly' communities

Intergenerational Solidarity – refers to the mutual support and cooperation between different age groups in order to achieve a society where people of all ages have a role to play in line with their needs and capacities, and can benefit from their community's economic and social progress on an equal

The ageing of society and changes in attitudes and lifestyles has had a significant impact on the nature of the interaction between generations. The size of families is decreasing, the role of extended families is diminishing and perceptions between generations are changing.

If left unaddressed there is a risk of greater generational segregation and growing tensions. Improving intergenerational solidarity is critical to improving the health and wellbeing of older people, and indeed, of society as a whole. This was recognised strongly in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Intergenerational transfers

One of the most important intergenerational transactions is that of care and support. Traditionally, the fact that older and younger people mostly lived together allowed for lifelong arrangements whereby adult children provided care for their older parents in return for parental support in their earliest stages of life. In other words, informal care systems are largely built upon intergenerational transfers of time and money. With changes to household composition

these arrangements are being challenged.

The content of intergenerational exchange in families varies in different European countries⁵⁴: "transfers of time and money are more frequent in the Southern European countries and less frequent in the Nordic countries, while Central European countries are somewhere in between". Attitudes

As might be expected, the attitudes between young and old are quite mixed. On the one hand there is a view that the interests of older and younger people will necessarily diverge and that some of the emerging trends in older people's lives will have a negative impact on younger people:-

- 69% of EU citizens agree⁵⁵ that "young people and older people do not easily agree on what is best for society".
- 56% EU citizens agree that "as older people work until a later age, fewer jobs will be available for younger people" (large variation – 78% Greeks to 26% Danes)

⁵⁴ "Advancing intergenerational solidarity", United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2010
⁵⁵ Intergenerational solidarity, Flash Eurobarometer No 269



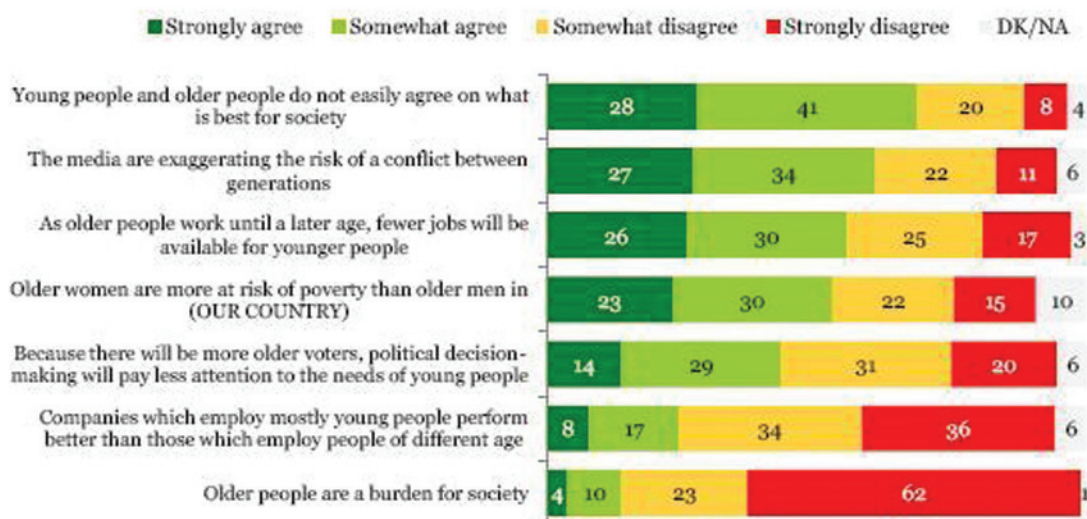
On the other hand there is a high degree of support amongst the young and the recognition that intergenerational tensions are exaggerated by the media:-

- Majority thought that “the contribution of older people who care for family members or relatives is not sufficiently appreciated in their country” (variation: 58% Luxembourg to 91% Portugal)
- Majority thought that “the media are exaggerating the risk of a conflict between generations”

Overall there is very strong support for public bodies to do more to support intergenerational solidarity:-

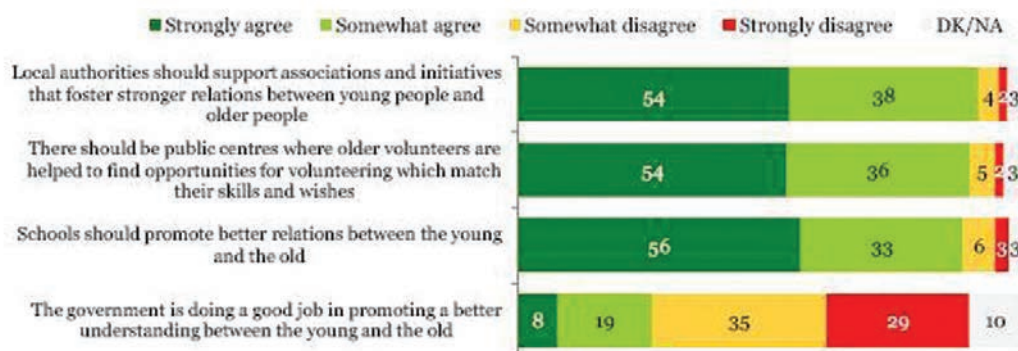
- Majority felt that “there are not enough opportunities for older and younger people to meet and work together via associations and local community initiatives”
- More than 6 in 10 thought that their “Government was not doing a good job in promoting better understanding between young and old”
- 85% agreed that “local authorities should support associations and initiatives that foster stronger relations between young and old”

Perceptions regarding the relations between younger and older people



Q1. I am going to read out a number of statements about relations between younger and older people. For each one, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.
Base: all respondents, % EU27

Perceptions about the role of the state

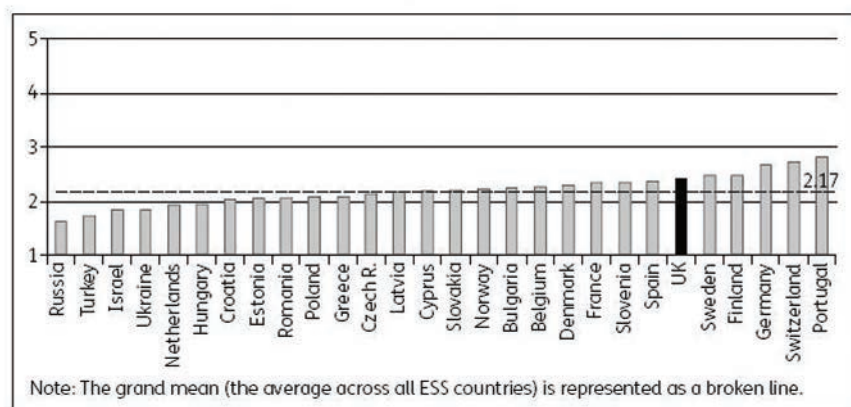


Q5. Finally I would like to ask about the role of public authorities. Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.
Base: all respondents, % EU27

Contact

One obvious measure of intergenerational solidarity is the amount of contact between generations. Outside of family ties the number of friendships between generations is very low – standing at around 2

Number of friendships with people aged over 70 (other than family members) by ESS country

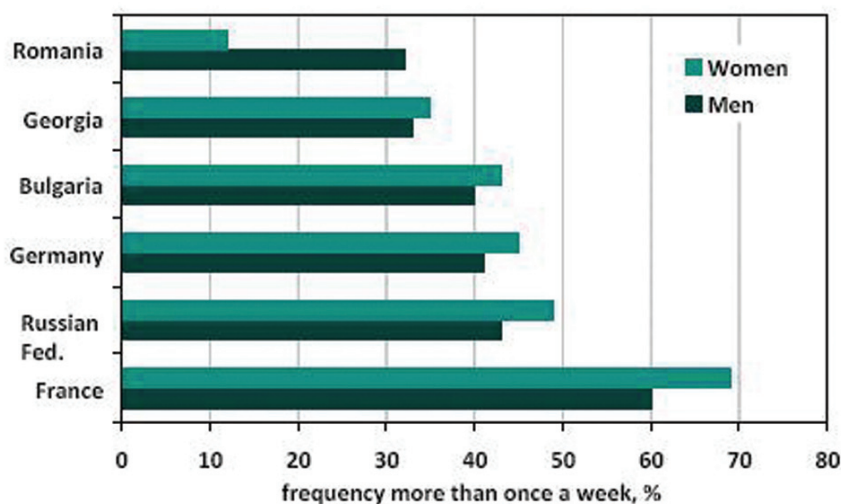


Source: *Predictors of attitudes to age across Europe, Dept of Work and Pensions (UK), 2011*

Grandparents

Grandparents play a crucial role in intergenerational solidarity and the contact within families this can be relatively high (though there can be big differences between countries).

Percentage of people aged 60-79, living separately from their children, who meet at least one of their children more than once a week. Selected countries



Source: Calculations based on data from Generations and Gender Surveys.

Grandparents play an important role in family life including-

- Providing financial and practical support to families
- Supporting children with special needs and disabilities
- Providing support during and after family breakdown
- Providing childcare
- Becoming primary carers when parents are unable to provide this role

Grandparenting is a fundamental aspect of active citizenship. As well as providing benefits to families and grandchildren, there are important benefits for grandparents themselves – “Grandparents who actively contribute to families’ well-being and provide care and support to grandchildren benefit from an enhanced sense of purpose in life and of family identity, even where they are emotionally drained by childcare demands.”⁵⁶ Though it also has to be recognised that there are potentially negative financial implications, and

intensive support to families can increase the risk of social isolation of some grandparents.

At a European level there is a wide variation in how different states have responded to supporting grandparenting through family policy. “In some states family policy actively recognises and supports the grandparental role. In others the state presumes it is the grandparent’s responsibility to support the family and there is little if any formal provision in place.”⁵⁷

Action to promote intergenerational solidarity
Intergenerational practice can be defined as:-
“Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contributes to building more cohesive communities. Intergenerational practice is inclusive, building on the positive resources that the young and old have to offer each other and those around them.”⁵⁸

The main categories of intergenerational practice are⁵⁹:-

- Intergenerational volunteering, within which mentoring, skill sharing and coaching are the main subcategories
- Programmes to promote community relationships and promote community safety and address fear of crime
- Programmes to promote Active Ageing and improved health and wellbeing

- Programmes to support young people and families through both older family members and volunteer support

There are a number of ways of promoting good relations and support between generations through intergenerational practice. These broadly fall into two categories:-

- Discreet ‘stand alone’ projects
- Development of ‘age friendly communities’

Age friendly communities

The development of age friendly communities can be one of the most effective ways of integrating different generations.

“Creating an Age-Friendly European Union means fostering solidarity between generations and enabling the active participation and involvement of all age groups in society while providing them with adequate support and protection. This cannot be achieved through isolated initiatives. It requires a wide commitment and common vision.”

Marjan Sedmak, AGE President, speaking on behalf of EY2012 Coalition, ahead of the EU Year’s official launch

This is an approach which specifically pays attention to the needs of different generations across a number of different spheres of life and seeks to ensure that these needs are catered for. A comprehensive framework for developing age friendly communities has been developed by the World Health Organisation⁶⁰, and a network of age friendly cities and communities was established in 2011.

⁵⁶Grandparenting in Europe and the US, Kings College London and Grandparents Plus, 2010

⁵⁷ ibid

⁵⁸ From Beth Johnson Foundation, 2009

⁵⁹ Intergenerational Programmes and Practice: Briefing Note, Beth Johnson Foundation

⁶⁰ WHO Global Age Friendly Cities Guide, WHO, 2009

The key features of the age friendly approach which are relevant to promoting solidarity between generations include:-

- Promoting 'inclusive design' in urban and other developments, which meet the needs of young and old
- Public spaces should be designed to allow people of different generations to gather and enjoy green spaces together
- Planning of the physical environment should concentrate on facilitating contact and mutual support between generations
- Ensuring that cultural and other activities attract all generations by accommodating age specific needs and preferences
- Encouraging schools to provide opportunities to learn about ageing and older people and involve older people in school activities
- Local organisations should act to strengthen the bonds between social groups and foster exchanges between different generations
- Supporting volunteering which involves groups of different ages
- Local policies and services which support grandparents who are providing significant levels of caring for children.

The location of an intergenerational perspective within the 'age friendly' movement is gaining ground. For example, the UK Urban Ageing Consortium⁶¹ is quite explicit about this approach:-

Our vision is to provide a society where people can take control of their ageing and be valued, supported and informed. The advantage of the Age- friendly City and Community structure is that it is integrated, looks in a holistic way at the dimensions that underpin successful active ageing and takes a life course perspective.

Intergenerational solidarity is most likely to be advanced in communities which explicitly consider the different stages of the life course

and make a conscious effort to respond to them. AGE Platform's policy paper "Towards Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Places for All Ages" highlights the need for this inclusive and intergenerational approach. And there is a growing recognition that intergenerational practice can produce better outcomes for community cohesion. Relations between young and old can be improved this way, leading to a greater understanding and interaction between groups in the community. Positive attitudes and beliefs about others in the community contribute to community cohesion and to residents' willingness to participate fully in the community⁶²

Good practice examples

Grandmentors (UK)

CSV Grandmentors is an innovative project harnessing the energy and experience of older volunteers (50+) to support young people to find work, stay on in education or take up training.

Many of the young people (age 16 to 25) do not have positive adult role models, others lack direction, some have been in trouble with the police and others have been homeless.

The Grandmentors scheme matches older volunteers with young people experiencing these kinds of difficulties. Mirroring the grandparent-grandchild relationship, "grandmentors" give practical advice, support and companionship, for instance helping a young person plan a career, get back into education, or make the transition from care to independent living.

Those participating are expected to commit for a minimum of one year. Mentors and mentees meet weekly for at least three hours. Activities undertaken together vary but may include chatting, playing sport, entertainment such as cinema or theatre, or working together on practical tasks such as job applications. RSVP covers travel expenses and small extras such as coffee.

⁶¹ <http://www.bjf.org.uk/age-friendly/projects/uk-urban-ageing-consortium>

⁶² *Intergenerational programs, intergenerational solidarity and social cohesion*, Hatton-Yeo in Sanchez, M. (Ed), *Hacia una sociedad para todas las edades. La vie d los programas intergeneracionales*, (2007)

Grandmentors receive a range of support:-

- initial and on-going training
- individual support from the project manager
- regular group support from other mentors
- travel and out-of-pocket expenses

A grandmentor:

- visits a young person regularly (once a week / fortnight)
- helps work towards goals
- builds relationships based on trust and mutual respect
- acts as a positive role model

Grandmentors have helped young people:

- find an apprenticeship
- get on a college course
- find work experience
- write application forms and CVs
- increase confidence & self-esteem
- try new things
- have fun

For further information:

<http://www.csv.org.uk/volunteering/mentorin-g-befriending/grandmentors>

Pedibus: Promotion of sustainable school mobility (Italy)

The city of Udine, Italy, launched the initiative "Pedibus", as a service designed to accompany children on their way to school in the morning. The "walking buses" run daily until the end of the school day as if they were ordinary school buses with stops and traffic signs. The walking bus is attended by a group of volunteer carers of different ages, hence the subtitle of the project — "three generations are mobilizing". Carers may be parents, or older people. One of the objectives of the project is to create an environment for the exchange of knowledge between young and old with a view to increasing intergenerational interaction.

Magic Me (United Kingdom)

Magic Me is the UK's leading provider of intergenerational arts projects. The organisation runs creative projects which bring together young people aged nine plus and older people, 55 plus, for mutual benefit, learning and enjoyment. Based in Tower Hamlets, East London since 1989, they have worked with individual older people and with groups over 50's in clubs and resource centres, nursing homes, day centres and community or cultural organisations. Local school students and young people participating in their own time are partnered with the older adults, and the mixed groups come together regularly, usually on a weekly basis. Participants are encouraged and supported to work together, so that real relationships can develop. The activities are designed to stimulate both age groups, fostering conversations and an exchange of ideas. Projects are led by a team of freelance creative artists: musicians, dancers, photographers, printmakers, writers and drama specialists. They design activities to stimulate conversation and an exchange of ideas.

Participants are often diverse in culture and faith as well as age group.

For further information:

<http://www.magicme.co.uk/>



Homeshare International (EU)

Homeshares are housing programmes established worldwide which meet the needs of two groups of citizens: older people in need of support to live independently and younger people in need of affordable housing. The mechanism behind these programmes is quite simple: an old householder provides free or low-cost accommodation in exchange for an agreed level of support from their home sharer. The support may include household tasks, gardening, care of pets, companionship or whatever is needed. Established already in more than 10 countries (in the EU in Belgium, Netherlands, France, Germany, Austria, Ireland, Spain and the UK), Homeshare is essentially an exchange that recognises that two people have needs and something to offer. These programmes: meet the needs of people excluded from the housing market, such as students and young working people, and at the same time enables older people to live independently for longer. They also break down barriers between generations and support the inclusion of older people in their communities.

For further information:

<http://homeshare.org/>

Grandparents & Grandchildren (EU)

The Pan-European Grandparents & Grandchildren initiative is aimed at promoting digital and social inclusion of older people. Young people who assume the role of 'grandchildren' assist older people, 'grandparents', on a one to one basis teaching them basic internet browsing and e-mail skills. The initiative is active in a number of countries including Estonia, Greece, Finland, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, France, Germany, Sweden, Romania and Latvia.

For further information:

<http://www.geengee.eu/geengee/>

Volunteers train seniors in basic computer skills (Romania)

The project took place in Resita, Caras-Severin County, southwest Romania, with various

partners including Caras-Severin County Library and the Volunteering Centre of Resita. The project consists of basic computerclasses for older people delivered by young volunteers from the community. With the decline of the local and national economy, part of the adult population in the city (as well as in other parts of the country) emigrated to other EU countries or sought employment in the richest areas of the country, leaving behind a very high proportion of children and young people, and older people. With such an unbalanced population mix, solidarity between generations and mutual understanding was even more important. An intergenerational process which supported older people to gain computer skills was helpful, particularly as it allowed them to communicate with family members and friends who had left the city.

The two fold objective of this project was therefore:

- to facilitate the interaction between young and older people and the transfer of experience and knowledge between them,
- to support older people to gain basic digital competence

The role of the young volunteers was to assist older people in learning and performing basic computer tasks using a computer, accessing information online, using electronic mail and programmes that enable real time communication, such as Skype. The course was based on common curricula, adjusted to each person's needs and interests. Older people were first of all impressed that young people would take the time and have the patience to volunteer and to assist. As far as the younger volunteers were concerned, it was a surprise to them that older people still have enthusiasm for learning, that they have interests and passions, and that they can be fun, ambitious and friendly. It was an intergenerational exchange that went beyond knowledge and the computer skills, and changed perceptions between generations.

Social Web Skills (Austria, Slovenia, Germany)

transfer their skills using new information and communication technologies (ICT), especially web 2.0 technologies, to older people. Older people should be supported to use the internet in order to participate in social networks, blogs, wiki and digital picture and video platforms. In the course of the project the older people produced digital products (e.g. Facebook profiles and wikis) for themselves, and used them to share their experiences. While older people have learned to make use of Web 2.0 and how to use digital social networks, the project opens new learning opportunities also for younger people. Acting as tutors they take responsibility and learn about the social value of older people as well as their historical backgrounds. In this way the project contributes to promoting dialogue and understanding between young and old and thereby reduces prejudice and increases tolerance between generations.

For further information:

<http://www.sowskills.eu/21-0-Startseite.html-clang=1>

History Pin (UK)

The starting point for the development of Historypin was a concern about the state of inter-generational relationships, particularly the lack of contact and negative perceptions that appear to have developed. The developers of Historypin state that they “set out to create something that, in the short-term, could bring people together in ways that created new, positive associations and, in the longer-term, could help shift the negative perceptions of different generations, cultures or communities. Ultimately, we wanted to build something into the heart of communities, online and offline, that could grow and grow and become a natural, permanent incentive to come together, collaborate and reach out across these gaps and differences.”

Historypin is a global archive where millions of people can come together around the history of their neighbourhoods, from across different generations and cultures, to explore and create

communal archives and build stronger communities. This Historypin experience takes place online at Historypin.com, and via Historypin community projects all over the world.

Individuals can add photos, videos, audio files, stories and recollections, pinning them to a particular point in place and time, for other people to add to, learn from, debate and use to build up a more complete understanding of the world. The Historypin website gives local groups, schools, businesses and whole communities the tools to run their own projects in their local areas.

For further information:

<http://wearewhatwedo.org/portfolio/historypin/>

Kindergarten for all Ages (Spain)

OFECEM is a small non-for-profit association based in Granada, Southern Spain, devoted to promote active and productive ageing practices among older people. Granada Educa Foundation is a body managed by the local City Council and focuses on educational policies and programmes for children 0-6 years old. The Foundation runs four kindergartens located in different neighbourhoods in Granada. In 2010 they initiated a programme with the key distinguishing feature of involving older people in a service which has previously been thought of as exclusively for the benefit of very young people.

The programme challenged the local community to think of kindergartens as places for all ages, within multi and inter-generational contexts, instead of “just-for-children” services. The main purpose of the project was:-

- To find new ways for older volunteers to get involved in significant social participation in their community;
- To support educational endeavours of local public kindergartens, eager to establish links with the outside community in order to enrich the scope of learning among children 0-6 years old.

For further information:

[http://www.emil-network.eu/res/documents/resource/Kindergarten for All Ages.pdf](http://www.emil-network.eu/res/documents/resource/Kindergarten%20for%20All%20Ages.pdf)

Coming Ready or Not (UK)

This project brought together two groups of older people from the Asian community in Halifax - men from the British Muslim Association and women from the Asian Women's Resource Centre. The aim was to two-fold, to give the older people an enjoyable creative experience - doing a range of activities and celebrating their stories and reminiscences - and to bring them into contact with younger people from two local primary schools – to learn from each other and to build dialogue and understanding between communities across generations.

The proposal built on over 10 years creative work supporting older people from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and in a variety of settings. It is a direct response to meetings with a number of community development workers who expressed concern about the problems faced by older people in migrant communities in the UK. Children have very little idea of what it was like growing up in another time, in another part of the world over 60+ years ago; what would the towns or villages have looked like-

The project wanted to show how it is possible to build a better understanding and appreciation of others and help make communities better, friendlier places. The project involved two groups of Year 6 primary school children and around 15 older people from various minority communities in the area. In the early stages of the project, it was very difficult to gain access to older people from some minority communities. In one case it took over 6 months of patient approach and discussion before the project was 'allowed in' to meet and work with the older people. The project involved week-long arts residencies in each school – the older people (men and women) came in to each school to meet and share their stories and experiences with the young people, and a 'Coming Together' celebration weaving together memories from the older people, and a performance of the dance work made by the young people.

For further information: <http://www.emil-network.eu/res/documents/resource/Coming Ready or Not.pdf>

Skills swap (UK)

Skills Swap is a Retired and Senior Volunteers Programme (RSVP) project based in Rhondda Cynon Taf, in the South Wales Valleys which focuses on the skills that bring the generations together. RSVP developed the idea from considering how to ask older volunteers to demonstrate traditional craft skills to young people. They came up with the idea of "skills swapping" after recognising the great enthusiasm of young people for showing off their technology skills. It is a unique scheme that bridges the generation gap and creates a brighter future for residents of all ages in some of the County Borough's most deprived areas. The project is delivered as a partnership between the Retired Senior Volunteers Programme (RSVP) and the Council's Equality, Diversity and Social Justice Team.

The project is an attempt to break down the barriers between generations and celebrate how they can learn from each other and provide positive role models. It has been an outstanding success, with young and old residents coming together for weekly sessions in which they learn from each other. Younger participants, aged between 15-16 years from local schools, are paired with older volunteers RSVP's oldest volunteer, 81-year-old Marion Morgan, taught the youngsters calligraphy, which she herself learned as a child more than 70 years ago. Marion was surprised at how well the children took to this once-popular pastime. In this way the project has ensured that traditional crafts and skills are passed on to future generations. These skills boost the confidence of non-academic children as it gives them the opportunity to achieve at something where they otherwise might not. This increases social and personal confidence and creates a brighter outlook for the future in terms of employment, training, skills and community participation. Contemporary skills are met with the same enthusiasm by the older volunteers. Trying out modern gadgetry gave confidence in areas where previously they have struggled. Older people can now not only use various functions on their mobile phones, the children also teach them how to use computers

For further information:

<http://www.csv.org.uk/volunteering/mentorin-g-befriending/schools/case-studies/marion-morgan>

Intergenerational Affordable Housing in Mulhouse (France)

Near the city centre of Mulhouse, a block of eight flats, which is specifically designed to facilitate intergenerational mingling, is being built. The building will accommodate four families. Each family will have two flats (one for older members and one for younger members) that are separated by a common room. The idea is to create a space where generations can interact while also giving all family members privacy. The common room is separated from the apartments by sliding doors

Experience in Saint-Apollinaire (France)

In order to address the combined issues of housing, early years support and an ageing population an innovative project called “Generations” was initiated in the community of Saint-Apollinaire in France. The project took the opportunity presented in creating a new neighbourhood of 2,000 people to develop an intergenerational approach. It is based on the philosophy of creating various services within the same place that would serve several generations, with a focus on creating spaces for ‘intergenerational encounters’.

“Generations” is made up of:

- 76 identical flats, half of which are rented to retired people over the age of 60 and half of which are rented to young couples with at least one child under the age of five
- Sheltered housing for six people with dementia
- Sheltered housing for 14 older people who are physically frail
- Two ‘respite’ places for temporary overnight accommodation for those requiring a break from their relatives
- Day centre for thirteen people with

dementia

- An all-purpose, multi generational community centre
- An early years day care centre
- School restaurant
- Toy library
- Welcome and services centre, which is staffed full time by an employee who also mediates between tenants, coordinates with city services, and uses a budget of around ?9,000 to organise activities aimed at promoting intergenerational mingling, etc.

All residents sign a ‘Hello Neighbour’ Charter, which is a moral agreement to support the other generation and act in a ‘neighbourly’ way.

For further information:

<http://journal.aarpinternational.org/alb/2012/05/da101ab0-cf48-40c1-b5d2-667921e2c45e>

Age friendly communities

Urban Ageing Consortium (UK)

The UK Urban Ageing Consortium is a collaborative partnership between Keele University, Manchester City Council and the Beth Johnson Foundation that actively supports the development of age-friendly environments. Building on the combined expertise of its partners, the Consortium develops and shares learning around ‘age-friendly’ cities, advancing the practice and debate on urban ageing. A growing number of cities are using age-friendly approaches to respond to the twin trends of demographic ageing and urbanization.

The Consortium is taking a national lead on these developments: providing a strong research base for developing understanding around age-friendly concepts and testing out different age-friendly approaches on the ground.

The Consortium is currently:

- Developing a strong research and evidence base to inform the development of age-friendly policy and practice;
- Working practically at a local level to test out different age-friendly approaches;
- Supporting researchers and practitioners by gathering age-friendly resources in one place;
- Networking with other UK cities to establish a range of shared learning models including action learning approaches to age-friendly principles;
- Collaborating on research proposals to strengthen the practice evidence base;
- Developing a narrative for government and policy makers to refer to when considering ageing in the UK;
- Offering its research and practical expertise through consultancy services
- Building a Research and Evaluation Framework for age-friendly cities; and
- Encouraging private and public sector partnerships.

For further information:

<http://www.bjf.org.uk/age-friendly/projects/uk-urban-ageing-consortium>

Age Friendly City: Brussels (Belgium)

The Belgian city of Brussels is one of the WHO age-friendly cities and became so through a Belgian Ageing Studies research programme. The project provides a framework for systematic evidenced-based community planning.

Organised around a scientific survey process now completed in multiple cities (including Brussels), the model has the potential to provide the comprehensive information needed to assist city councils in rational planning toward improved environments for older people. Through a participatory method, older people are actively involved in all stages of the project. They play a crucial role in the planning, the design, and the

research, as well as in developing local policy/plans. Alongside local associations, community centres and other stakeholders, older volunteers create opportunities for active ageing and social change in their neighbourhoods. A survey instrument measures the living conditions and aspects of quality of life of older people, including aspects such as housing and neighbourhood conditions, feelings of loneliness, care, social networks, physical and mental health, feelings of (un)safety and social/cultural/political participation.

For more information see:

<http://www.belgianageingstudies.bel>

Age-friendly Cities (Czech Republic)

Republic. It is one of the most active members of the Healthy-Cities-Network in Europe and they have produced a leaflet on an "Age-friendly-City" and collected good examples on this topic from all over the country.

For further information:

<http://healthycities.cz>

Age Friendly City: Velenje (Slovenia)

Velenje, an old Slovenian town, became a modern city after the Second World War. But while it was once a symbol of youth its baby-boomer inhabitants are now seniors. As one of the pioneer age-friendly cities, it became a member of the Slovenian Network of Age-friendly Environments in 2009. In Velenje, local government works with city stakeholders such as social and city services, police, tourist organisations, banks, railway, health care, pharmacies and others to improve the town for older people. Intergenerational work plays a key part and a guide for older people with useful information about different social services, where to ask for help and whom to talk to in case of need has been produced.

For further information:

<http://www.inst-antonatrstenjaka.si/repository/datoteke/proj>

Age Friendly City: Manchester (UK)

The Valuing Older People partnership is an initiative to improve life for older people in Manchester involving a number of different services, organisations, agencies and most importantly, older Manchester residents. It was launched in 2003 by Manchester City Council, NHS Manchester and community and voluntary organisations. The first strategy, "Quality of Life Strategy for Manchester" was produced in 2004 and since then the city has made important and significant progress in many areas. The revised strategy, "Manchester :

A Great Place to Grow Older 2010-2020" presents a vision of Manchester as a place where older people are more empowered, healthy and happy. The VOP approach has been characterised by:

- older people as leaders, with older residents only on the VOP Board;
- high level political and chief officer support with a central team developing capacity and expertise;
 - community anchored- building from the ground up with a community of interest in ageing issues across the city and a citizenship perspective on engagement and positive images of older people.
- cultural and architectural projects

The city promotes older people's champions and a council-wide approach to ageing which includes sexual health and leisure. It has ring and ride schemes to support existing public transport networks, befriending schemes and neighbourhood networks. Manchester strives for constant improvement and its work has encouraged academic and expert partnerships and external scrutiny and validation. The city's ageing strategy aligns with the WHO age-friendly city themes, and Manchester is the only city in England to currently be designated as a member of the World Health Organisation Global Age--friendly City Network.

For further information see:

http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/500099/valuing_older_people/3428/valuing_older_people_vop/1

Volonteuropa recommends

1. Stakeholders should:-

- a. Recognise the contribution that older people make to younger generations and society as a whole and publicise the analysis
- b. Promote greater social cohesion through supporting intergenerational volunteering and active citizenship initiatives
- c. Map good practice on age friendly communities and share experience
- d. Encourage older people to become role models for active ageing and to mentor young people
- e. Promote and support intergenerational tutoring activities among senior volunteers and youth from difficult backgrounds

2. Member States should:-

- a. Ensure intergenerational volunteering is promoted in education systems, thus helping to create more cohesive communities where the young and the old live in solidarity, rather than perceiving each other as troublesome or burdensome
- b. Raise awareness and encourage local / regional authorities to support community cohesion through the development of age friendly policies and initiatives
- c. Recognise the value of promoting Universities to engage with older people on issues surrounding an ageing society

3. EU institutions should:-

- a. Promote age friendly approaches across all policy areas
- b. Foster collaboration between organisations which work with children, youth and older people.
- c. Fund intergenerational volunteering programmes in order to foster social inclusion and lifelong learning

Lifelong learning and its contribution to mental, emotional and physical wellbeing

Promoting lifelong learning is an important aspect of active ageing for a number of reasons. It can:-

- Help older people to participate longer and more effectively in the labour market should they wish to. This can be very important for those older people without adequate financial resources in later life.
- Help to improve the health and wellbeing of older people. The cognitive stimulation and social engagement which lifelong learning provides has been associated with greatly improved quality of life and even longevity in older people. Informal learning has huge benefits for older people, promoting self-development, confidence and wellbeing. Recent UK research found strong evidence that for older people, participating in music, arts or evening classes had a significant impact on wellbeing over time, equating to no longer being troubled by pain⁶³
- Represent an important citizenship right for older people in countries within the EU. Access to education should extend across the life course and not just be constrained to the early years.

It is seen by many as a crucial part of any strategy to meet the changing economic, social and demographic conditions that Europe is going through.

“If knowledge, skills and learning abilities are not renewed, the capacity of individuals – and by extension, of communities or nations – to adapt to a new environment



will be considerably reduced, if not cut off entirely. Lifelong learning is a survival issue. The importance for persons to continue learning throughout their active working life, and even beyond, will increasingly move to the top of individual, national and international agendas in the future.”⁶⁴

Vocational learning is important for promoting longer working lives⁶⁵. With only 46% of Europeans aged 55-64 currently in work⁶⁶, more vocational learning for older adults is needed to reach the 75% employment target the EU2020 jobs & growth strategy.

The European Commission adopted a Communication on adult learning in 2006 which was followed by an action plan endorsed by Member states in 2008. The action plan called for:-

- Skills to be upgraded so that potential labour market shortages due to demographic changes could be met
- Action to reduce poverty and social exclusion through the promotion of adult learning to improve skills and personal autonomy
- Increased participation in lifelong learning, particularly among older workers, as the average working age is likely to rise across Europe in the coming decades

⁶³ Participation in learning and wellbeing among older adults, Jenkins A, Institute of Education. International Journal of Lifelong Education, Volume 30, Issue 3, 2011

⁶⁴ Lifelong Learning in the Twenty First Century: the Changing Roles of Educational Personnel, International Labour Organisation, 2000

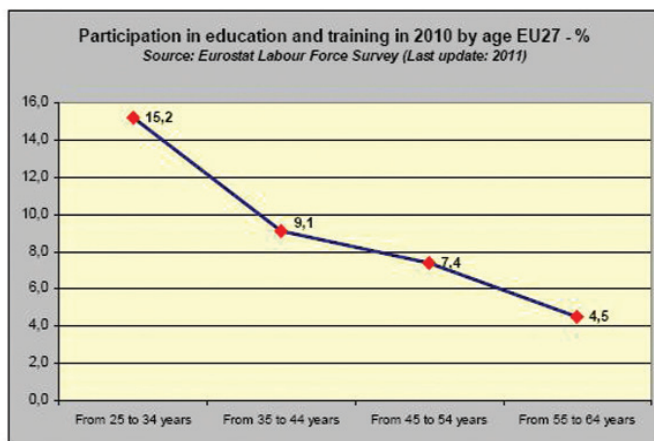
⁶⁵ Making lifelong learning truly life long: EU briefing and recommendations, Age UK, 2012

⁶⁶ Eurostat figures from 2009, as set out in the 2011 EPC report Working Away at the Cost of Ageing

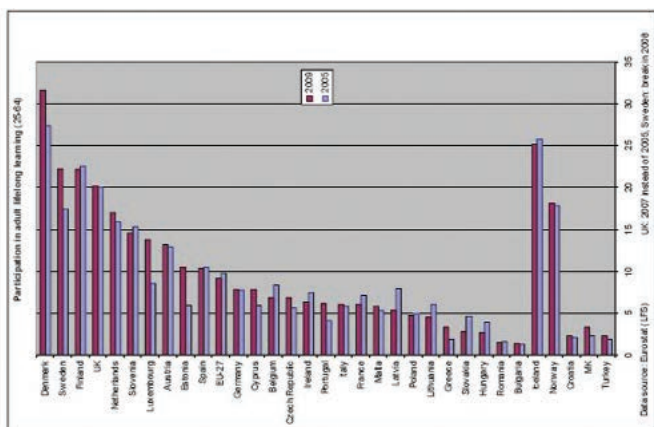
There are, of course, different forms of learning. It is important to be clear about these distinctions as they are related to whether skills are recognised or not. There are three main ways of acquiring learning⁶⁷:-

- Formal learning refers to learning through a programme of instruction in an educational institution, adult training centre or the workplace, which is generally recognised in a qualification or certificate
- Non-Normal learning refers to learning through a programme, but it is not usually evaluated and does not lead to certification
- Informal learning refers to learning resulting from daily work related, family or leisure activities

It is very clear that participation in learning declines steeply with age.



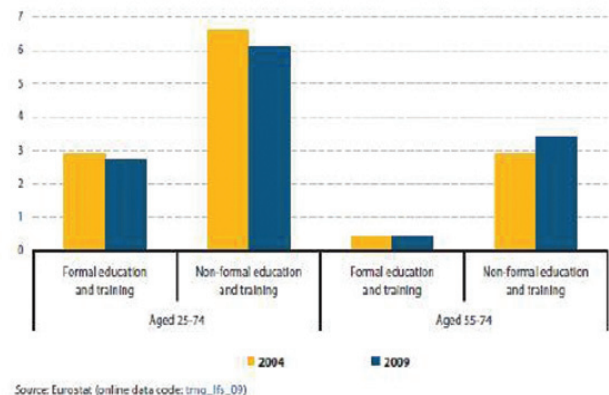
As might be expected participation rates of older people in educational opportunities varies significantly across EU countries. Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway and the UK are the only countries to achieve rates in double figures.



Participation in adult lifelong learning

As indicated in the graph, lifelong learning is not constrained to formal education and training. There are 'non-formal' and 'informal' opportunities for learning. Amongst older people the rates of participation in either form are relatively low, though non-formal/informal opportunities appear to be more popular with older people.

Participation in education and training, EU-27 (% of persons in specified age group)



Within all of this there are gender imbalances to be noted. Older women have lower levels of upper secondary and tertiary education attainment than the male population of the same age in 22 of the Member States⁶⁸.

Role of volunteering and civic engagement

Many of the opportunities for lifelong learning are delivered through NGOs and voluntary effort. This is increasingly so as public funding is constrained across Europe. Three key strands emerge:-

- Peer to peer learning – as with the well established "University of the Third Age"
- Exchange programmes – which support older people to undertake volunteering in a different country
- Intergenerational initiatives – where there is an exchange of learning and experience through mentoring relationships between old and young.

⁶⁷New OECD Activity on Recognition of non-Formal and Informal Learning: Guidelines for Country Participation, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2006

⁶⁸Active Ageing and Solidarity Between generations: A statistical portrait of the European Union 2012, EUROSTAT, 2012

Good practice examples

Universities of the third age (Ukraine)

Universities of the Third Age (U3A) originated in France in the early 1970s and have now spread across many countries in Europe and beyond. In Ukraine the development of U3A is very closely connected with the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and is supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Ukrainian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Whilst in France U3As have a special curriculum for foreign languages, literature and other cultural areas of study, in Ukraine they more generally provide a place for older persons to meet and communicate. By 2009, four U3As had been implemented with the following main targets:

- All-around development of older people
- Older persons' adaptation to modern living conditions
- (Re)integration of older people into the active life of society
- Education in principles of healthy lifestyles in older age

The interest in the U3As is high and the project is by now continued by NGOs.

For further information:
<http://worldu3a.org/>

Old'Up (France)

Old'Up is a non-profit French organisation which has been operating since November 2011. Old'Up has set up a number of life-long learning activities for its members. Taught by the younger generations, more than 250 senior citizens are getting lessons on all aspects of modern life: from buying transport tickets from a vending machine, to online buying, communicating through Skype or using a state-of-the-art camera. Generations are thus brought together on a teaching experience, as younger

students become the teachers and senior citizens go back to. More than 1.000 candidates have sent their application form to participate on this initiative, from Medicine, Law or Psychology students. Forty students are already participating in the Ile-de-France area.

Old'Up is preparing a forum about active ageing and solidarity between generations which will be held in 2013.

For further information:
<http://www.old-up.eu/>

Silver Age Centre (Slovenia)

Older people often face barriers which do not allow them to participate in society as active members of it. Silver Age Centre Butterfly is a joint initiative of the Municipality of Slovenska Bistrica, social care organizations and older citizens to provide space and opportunity for active ageing in the local community with an emphasis on lifelong learning. The municipality provided the infrastructure for the centre while the content was discussed with the local older citizens and representatives of the different stakeholder groups. Based on the needs, wishes and proposals of all stakeholders the programme was developed in order to promote life-long learning and active participation of older people in society. Older people themselves were strongly involved in the whole process. With the support of two co-ordinators, a promotion campaign was undertaken to attract local citizens, but personal contacts were important as well. From the very beginning a weekly programme was offered which included promotion of healthy living (bowling, belly dancing, swimming, exercises, running, Nordic walking, healthy eating seminars, etc.), consolidation of existing competences and learning of new skills (baking, knitting, gardening, creative workshops, computer literacy, etc.) and promotion of social inclusion

(visits to care homes and intergenerational centre, holidays at the seaside, intergenerational celebrations, etc.)

For further information:

http://www.qageing.eu/Q-AGEING_Toolbox_webx.pdf

Moving Stories and Generations (9 EU Partners)

The Crosstalk project is aimed at giving seniors, schoolchildren, young people and migrants the skills and confidence to communicate effectively, and thus to make an active contribution to their own-community. The project was designed and carried out by a team of 9 European partners in 7 countries which included community media practitioners, adult education specialists and university researchers. The 'Moving Stories and Generations' subproject promoted and sustained genuine cooperation between old and young via media production. It targeted senior citizens; children and young people who live in close proximity but rarely communicate with each other, and allowed them to come into contact and exchange stories about their youth. The first phase of the project consisted of a media education course which provided different generations with the desire, self-confidence, and necessary expertise to be involved in local media production and to tell stories about their lives. In its second phase, participants practiced the skills they had learned. Senior citizens and children/young adults visited their favourite places, interviewed each other in turn and produced an audio guide. Results of the project include 3 audio-guides, interactive maps (available online and on CD) and a manual with course materials. A handbook gives examples and course schedules which can be used by youth centres, school teachers or by others working with elderly people. Key outcomes of the project included:

- Relationship between generations - Inhibitions and distances that stand in

the way of communication between the old and the young were overcome through interviewing and questioning techniques. Instrumental to this was the replacement of traditional roles by functional roles; and direct intergenerational communication on equal footing changed perspectives. Furthermore, as the participants got to know each other through working together, they were able to create a sustainable and trust-based relationship.

- Increase in media competence - None of the participants had ever done interviews. After a practice phase, everyone was capable of doing interviews independently and with self-confidence, and increasingly they moved away from prepared questions. Recording technologies did not pose a problem after a short period of time. Everyone learned how to use the microphones confidently and rapidly showed a lot of creativity in developing texts for the radio programme.
- Knowledge acquisition - Participants developed their knowledge of local history and current events.

For further information:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/project_reports/documents/grundtvig/multilateral_projects_2008/grundtvig_gmp_141823_crosstalk.pdf

SEVEN: Senior European Volunteers Exchange Network

This thematic network was the result of several pilot projects that experimented in transnational exchanges of older volunteers from Europe. These proved to be powerful educational tools not only for the older volunteers taking part, but also for the civil society organisations and the local communities hosting them. The network mainstreamed international voluntary service

with specific reference to the contributions that senior citizens can give, to the social, cultural and environmental policies. The partnership of SEVEN was largely diversified; it included regional and local governments, network of associations dealing with active ageing and international voluntary service, universities, research institutes and a great variety of civil society organisations dealing with social, environmental and cultural activities. Some of the main outputs of the project were:-

- research on the impact of international voluntary service on the lives of the older volunteers and on that of the hosting organisations
- a website that includes a range of training and information material including a database with all the opportunities of international voluntary service for older volunteers and a “partner finding service”.

With over 40 000 contacts since 2008 the website has become a reference point for organisations and volunteers interested in international voluntary service for older people.

- 2 handbooks in 4 languages and two 30-hour training courses offered to all organisations willing to organise an exchange of older volunteers.

The idea behind SEVEN was to set up a platform where organisations could easily exchange information and take part in a common project-implementing framework. More than 300 volunteers have taken part so far in volunteer exchanges abroad and SEVEN has shown that a period of voluntary service abroad represents an important mutual learning experience. The process addresses not only active citizenship and active ageing but also social cohesion and gives birth in many cases to intergenerational experiences.

For further information:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/project_reports/documents/grundtvig/networks_2007/grundtvig_gnw_134682_seven_final.pdf

Think Future Volunteer Together (Italy)

The objective of Think Future Volunteer Together was to promote the active involvement of older people in volunteering in Europe, through the creation of an international exchange program. The project was funded by the European Commission. Think Future Volunteer Together has involved around 100 volunteers aged 55 or over from Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Romania and Italy. During the project each participant has been involved in voluntary activities in partner countries and been through a two week training course preceded by three days of introduction to the language and culture of the host country.

Think Future Volunteer Together was sponsored by Spes Centre for Voluntary Service in Lazio, in collaboration with CEV - European Volunteer Centre and the national centres for volunteering: CARDO (Slovakia) Slovenska Philanthropy(Slovenia), O-nke-ntes Ko-zpont Alapi-tva-ny (Hungary), Provobis (Romania) were also partners with the Italian associations for the quality of life in old age ADA - Association for the rights of the elderly, ANTEAS -

National Association for the Third Age Active Solidarity and AUSER - Association for the Self-management services and Solidarity, along with the Councillorship for Social Policies of the Municipality .

One of the principal outputs of the project has been practical guidance⁶⁹ on how to promote senior volunteering through international exchanges. It has a very helpful series of recommendations, good practice and check lists.

For further information:

<http://community.cev.bel/projects/view.html?id=6>

⁶⁹Think Future Volunteer Together: Promotion of Senior Volunteering through International Exchanges – Practical and Policy Recommendations, ENEA Project, 2007-2009



Volunteering and lifelong learning in universities

The overall aim of the VALUE network is both to facilitate and stimulate the development of cooperation between universities and the volunteering sector in the delivery of University Lifelong Learning (ULLL) to volunteers and staff in volunteering organisations. VALUE is a project supported by Grundtvig and brings together 20 organisations representing universities and the volunteering sector from 13 European countries.

They share a belief that volunteers' own development can play a key role in the development of European society as a whole. This large-scale partnership has been instrumental in sharing ideas and models of working together, and in exploring the potential for developing new university lifelong learning opportunities for both volunteers and staff in volunteering organisations.

For further information:
<http://www.valuenetwork.org.uk/>

Lire et Fair Lire, senior volunteering for learning to read (France)

This project aims to develop the pleasure of reading and inter-generational solidarity amongst children attending primary schools, recreation

centres, kindergartens or libraries. It is supported by a national association of the same name which was established in 1999 and it is implemented in each French Department. A committee of writers with more than 120 members has been supporting "Lire et Faire Lire" since its creation. At the request of teachers, 50year old plus volunteers offer their free time to stimulate children's interest in reading and encourage their approach to literature. Reading sessions are organised in small groups, once or several times per week. In 2009-2010 more than 800 training days were organised to train the volunteers. The number of educational structures involved in implementing the project and the number of volunteers involved is regularly increasing. More than 12,000 volunteers were active in almost 6,000 educational institutions in 2011.

For further information:
http://www.enilnet.eu/Dossier_ENIL_EN2.pdf

InterGen (EU)

InterGen is a two-year project, which began in 2010 and was funded through the European Union's Leonardo programme. The project aimed to facilitate the active involvement of older people in society, with an added focus on

mentoring children. In doing this, the project addressed two issues:

- Support for older people who often suffer from feelings of low esteem, low confidence and low status within society
- Support and encouragement to disadvantaged children by helping them to develop and grow.

Most of the older people were initially engaged through community contacts or older people's groups, or other networks and agencies. The children were engaged through direct contacts with schools, child-care settings or care facilities. InterGen created and tested new approaches to the training and support of professional forms of 'intergenerational mentoring'. This consists of one-to-one sessions for an average duration of three months where older people spend time with children who need support. A pan-European training Handbook has been produced and made available to future users. The learning from the project and the sustainability of the approach are therefore assured beyond the end of the project. Older people were also able to pass on their experience by delivering training to a following cohort of older people willing to become mentors.

Two particular groups of older people participating in the project can be distinguished:

1. Those who still work and who wanted to improve their competencies and general education: this group tended to enjoy the formal learning in the training sessions.
2. Those older people who are retired and were looking for a civic engagement through voluntary work: they tended to enjoy the mentoring and the one-to-one sessions in which they passed on their experiences in an informal way and they also learnt from the children. The 'peer to peer' learning

with other older people was also found to be important

Through an intergenerational approach the project has been successful in helping to break down ageist attitudes and have noticed an increase in respect and understanding between generations.

For further information:

<http://www.intergenerations.eu/>

LIC – Sustainable Learning in the Community (EU)

The SLIC II project "Valuing older people's skills and experience: Training peer facilitators" is a European project funded within the GRUNDTVIG-programme. It started in January 2011 and addresses the issue of increasingly ageing societies and the promotion of active ageing. The SLIC II project builds on the previous SLIC I project (Sustainable Learning in the Community) which developed an innovative workshop model to help older adults to review their past experience and personal skills and to explore new opportunities for learning and volunteering. The SLIC II project aims at broadening this to develop a training programme for older peer facilitators to run SLIC- workshops. The project looks specifically into how to adapt the existing workshop model to the needs of certain target groups so that a wider range of older people can be empowered to take on an active role in the community with the help of peer facilitators, and in so doing, also raise their self-esteem and their interest in personal development.

In the first phase of the project crucial points were explored in depth:-

- looking at the specific needs of older migrants
- creating a stronger focus on community involvement
- networking and cooperation with other organisations

- exploring how the workshops can be embedded in organisational policy regarding older volunteers
- improving the process of accompanying participants after the workshop
- using the workshops to prepare older volunteers in going abroad.

Based on this work the peer facilitator training was developed to include modules on the individual steps for preparing and running the workshops. One peer facilitator training course was run in each partner country and 69 older people were trained as peer facilitators. As a practical part of the training peer facilitators ran trial workshops themselves and 9 trial workshops in 5 countries were delivered. A concluding transnational peer facilitator workshop was organised in Budapest in June 2012 where 25 peer facilitators from the partner countries exchanged the experience of their training and trial workshops and elicited what needs to be improved within the tool-kit (which will be available as a CD-Rom at the end of 2012).The project develops 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. Within the organisations, plans are already being made to implement the workshops as a permanent offer and a host of partnerships have been launched at national and local levels.

For further information:
<http://www.slic-project.eu/>

Volunteer Seniors in Schools (Denmark, Latvia and Sweden)

The principle of "Seniors in Schools" allows older people to work voluntarily in schools as mentors, role models and guides, supporting the teachers but not substituting for them. It has been developed by a formal project between Denmark, Latvia and Sweden. The Volunteer

Seniors in Schools (VSIS) project benefited from experiences in the partner countries by gathering older people from two countries (Latvia and Denmark) and letting them work together. The main goals of the project are to keep older people in active contact with people from all age groups (teachers and students and fellow older people) and to create solidarity between people from different generations. The project's target group was older people, preferably with varied social and educational backgrounds, who had energy and motivation to work with the younger generation. They first of all helped teachers voluntarily in a school in their own countries and then they undertook a 3 week exchange in a different country. In these different environments older people were able to provide useful ideas and perspectives. In the international meetings, the cultural and social differences in the school environments were discussed thoroughly. Both the seniors and the schoolchildren benefited from the project.

Participants have expressed satisfaction about the fact that meetings with the young students have made them more enlivened and increased their self-confidence. Most of the older volunteers continue helping in the schools after the end of the project and many of them still have contact to their counterpart in the other country.

New Horizons for Active Seniors (Germany and Czech Republic)

The project was an intercultural initiative designed to promote lifelong learning by older people in Germany and the Czech Republic. It focussed on highlighting the positive contribution that older volunteers make to society. The exchange of volunteers between the two countries was supported by a well developed training and support programme which helped the volunteers to set up their own projects and initiatives and to be more professional in their work. Taking part in an exchange of this nature is hugely beneficial to

older people and helps them develop as people. They learn how to tackle problems in a strange country, even when they understand very little of the language. This can enhance self esteem, build self confidence and open up new possibilities in this stage of life. The older volunteers not only pass on knowledge to their host country, they also transfer newly gained knowledge back to their home country.

For further information:
http://www.gemeinsam-in-europa.de/exchange-program-for-seniors_en.html

Womango 50+(Austria)

Womango offers women aged 50+ the possibility to undertake an intergenerational and cultural exchange, to know new countries, different languages and to live an unforgettable and enriching experience. This Austrian initiative helps older women to live abroad, with a host family or helping in a social project.

The aim of this exchange is to create a better mutual understanding of other cultures and social lifestyles.

There is no exchange of money in the agreement, which is not based on an employment relationship. Stays last between 3 to 12 months, and for the duration of their visit, families or collaborating partners supply their guests with accommodation and meals.

The first Womango exchange travelled to London in January 2012, and was expected to be living with a host family with 4 children for 6 months. Another is going to Cape Town in June, and there are ongoing plans to collaborate with social projects in Trinidad & Tobago and Cameroon.

For further information:
<http://www.womango.at/>

fe:male (Female Entrepreneurs: Mentoring And Lifelong Learning across Europe) (EU)

fe:male (Female Entrepreneurs: Mentoring And

Lifelong Learning across Europe) is a EU-funded initiative aiming to support potential women entrepreneurs across Europe, particularly those facing extra challenges such as being from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background, over 50, a lone parent or long-term unemployed. The network helps women increase self-confidence and life skills in order to develop their business ideas and become successful entrepreneurs. fe:male is run by a consortium of organisations across five European countries who are working together to develop vocational and personal development training in order to support women and give them the skills needed to start up in business.

The project is also piloting Mentoring Circles™, designed to support women facing an additional barrier to further develop their soft skills; an online network to connect female entrepreneurs across Europe and e-learning tools to develop business skills.

fe:male is committed to:

1. Actively targeting older women who are considering setting up a business, to support their training needs.
2. Supporting older women to explore and develop business ideas, and improve the personal skills needed in the early stages of set up
3. Through the website, connect older female entrepreneurs across Europe with other women facing an additional barrier in setting up their business, to support each other, share experiences, and find opportunities to trade
4. Provide e-learning opportunities for older women to improve their soft skills and confidence in setting up a business

For further information:
<http://www.femaleproject.eu/>

Volonteuropa recommends

1. Member States should:-

- a. Make basic education available to all across the whole life course
- b. Enable the full participation of older people in lifelong learning, which amongst other things provides older people with opportunities to develop new skills.
- c. Develop certification schemes for older volunteers to recognise the development of competencies through volunteering in education and lifelong learning schemes
- d. Encourage older people to take part in lifelong learning programmes

2. EU Institutions should:-

- a. Promote the value of lifelong learning to addressing the economic and social changes which are currently taking place in Europe
- b. Support the increased EU funds for adult learning in the EU Commissions' Erasmus for All proposal, and reject any reduction of the minimum allocation for adult learning
- c. Remove the cap of age 64 in the EU's lifelong learning indicator and the aspirational target in the Education & Training 2020 strategy should be revised to include no upper age

Innovation and new models of volunteering and active citizenship



Societies across Europe are not just ageing, they are changing as well. The older people of today have some significant cultural and lifestyle differences from previous generations of older people, and the pace of change for future cohorts of older people is likely to be faster and more pervasive. Globalisation and modernisation are not just for the young, they are phenomena which impinge on the lives of older people in Europe now.

Given the scale and pace of change it is therefore vital that models of volunteering and civic engagement change as well if active ageing and solidarity between generations is to be effectively supported.

There are three broad areas where change and innovation is most important

- Firstly, the profile of older people is changing, particularly as the 'baby boomers' are beginning to enter 'retirement'. They have different values and expectations of later life and what if any support they require. The other major change is in relation to diversity. Transnational population movements mean that all societies have much more ethnic diversity than before and present a new range of issues that need to be addressed and supported
- Secondly, the profile of older volunteers is also changing. Many older volunteers are more active and more keen to be involved in a leadership role. There has to be the development of models of

volunteering which support this type of 'active' involvement, where some volunteers are engaged in the development and commissioning of services rather than just in their delivery

- Thirdly, technological changes not only raise issues for older people (such as the potential for digital exclusion), they also provide the potential for new support and service models, as well as new forms of infrastructure to support volunteering initiatives.

There are already indications that these issues are being addressed and this section presents some examples of innovative practice. However, before going on to these, it is worth looking in a bit more detail at the issues surrounding the 'digital revolution'.

Digital Technology and the Internet

The ageing of Europe is taking place at the same time as the huge expansion in the prevalence and functionality of digital technologies and the internet. Promoting active ageing cannot be done successfully without looking at how best to harness these developments. Older people are at risk of a new form of exclusion if steps are not taken to support their access to the digital world.

In 2007 the European Commission adopted a Communication on "Ageing well in the information society". This presented an action plan for information and communication technology (ICT) and ageing, with the goal of accelerating the introduction of new technology

based solutions for:

- ageing well at work: staying active and productive for longer through the development of e-skills and e-learning;
- ageing well in the community: staying socially active and creative, through the adoption of ICT solutions for social networking, as well as for providing access to public and commercial services, thus improving quality of life and reducing social isolation;
- ageing well at home: enjoying a healthier and higher quality of daily life for longer, assisted by technology, while maintaining a high degree of independence and autonomy.

Many assumptions are made about older people's ability and willingness to engage with new technology. A survey conducted by Volonteurope member Volunteer Now cuts through the stereotypes and uncovers the real situation. The survey of older people aged 50+ in Northern Ireland (n350) revealed interesting trends in internet usage. When asked if they used the internet 55% of respondents said they did, however within this there were clear differences between age groups. 69% of respondents aged 50-59 claimed to use the internet, dropping to 58% of those aged 60-69 and further to 28% of those aged 70+. Internet usage was higher among those from higher socio economic groups (66% ABC1) than those from lower socio economic groups (49%).

One quarter of those who claimed to use the internet also said they used social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Of those who said they used the internet 35% indicated that they had a disability, of these 34% said they used social media which is slightly higher than non disabled internet users who said they used social media (29%). Less than 1 in 5 of internet users aged 70+ indicated that they used Facebook or Twitter (17%) compared to 28% of both 50-59 and 60-69 year olds.

Respondents were asked how they accessed information on local events and activities. After local and regional newspapers, friends and relatives, the internet/emails were jointly the most popular (24%). However, again internet/emails reduced with age with 33% of 50-59 dropping to 18 and 17% for 60-69 and 70+ respectively. Interestingly when asked where they would find out more information if they were considering volunteering the internet was the most common response at 27%.

When asked what the key enablers and barriers were to volunteering, 'having to register online' was the most commonly cited barrier (57%). When asked about internet usage, focus group respondents indicated that they were happy to use it as a source of information but did not feel comfortable providing their details via the internet. This has been borne out by the volunteernow.co.uk website. The volunteering for those aged 50+ pages are among the most visited on the site but very few people from older age groups register their interest in volunteering through the online mechanism in comparison with other age groups.

These findings reveal that there is a significant number of older people, even in the 70+ age category, using the internet and this is only going to increase. Whilst these levels of engagement are positive, there is nevertheless a significant number of older people who remain excluded from the digital revolution. As is shown in the good practice examples which follow, there is much that volunteering and civic engagement can do to address this.

“
Many assumptions are made about older people's ability and willingness to engage with new technology
 ”

Good practice examples

Innovation to support diversity

Pink 50+(Netherlands)

The Netherlands is home to about 400,000 gay and lesbian people over 50, meaning that 7% of the population older than 50 is experiencing homosexual, lesbian or bisexual feelings. These so-called 'pink elderly' are in many ways similar to heterosexual older people. Nevertheless, they often have a different way of living. Many of them have walked a different (and more difficult) path in life, compared to heterosexuals. Recent studies have shown that pink 50+ are at great risk of social exclusion, feelings of rejection and loneliness.

Pink 50+ Consortium aims to raise awareness among institutions who provide services to older people, to increase their understanding that they have LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) clients with special needs. In a 4-year project, the consortium is developing several initiatives, including:

- The Pink 50+ ambassadors. The ambassadors make up the grass-roots structure of the Alliance. They carry out their own agenda within the Consortium 50 +, known as the "inside-out vision", and are effective in increasing the visibility of Pink Elderly and Alliance activities as well as lobbying on the local or regional level. They are a crucial part of the consortium.
- The Pink Passkey. Developed by COC Nederland and KIWA (a certified institution specialised in quality care), this tool is a tolerance scan for institutions to determine to what extent their offer of care corresponds to the issues related to the pink target group. The scan involves an audit carried out by KIWA and follow-up tool kits, training, and consultancy provided by the Consortium and its ambassadors. In 2011 en 2012,

65 institutions have become eligible to the start audit, thanks to the contribution of various funds and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

- The network www.roze50plus.nl. This web community is a virtual meeting place for the elderly, as well as a knowledge centre for the target group itself, as well as for care professionals, municipal officials, politicians, etc.

For further information:

<http://www.coc.nl/50plus/roze-ouderen-willen-meer-zichtbaar-zijn>

CSV 'Stripping It Bare' (UK)

Much attention has been paid to addressing embarrassment and taboos in relation to younger people. However, contrary to many of the negative stereotypes about older people, sex remains an important part of later life, and there are many physical conditions which are as embarrassing to older people.

A highly innovative project by Community Services Volunteers addresses this situation. The Stripping it Bare project is designed to break down taboos and get everyone talking about embarrassing illnesses, such as prostate and bowel cancer, sexual health in the over 50s.

Teams of volunteers are trained to talk to groups and individuals about the importance of getting checked out early, taking precautions and seeking help.

CSV Action's partnership with BBC Local Radio helps get these vital messages across to the right people. For example, on Valentine's Day the project ran a campaign across many BBC radio stations that involved the airing of very explicit stories about sexual health in the over 50s, just when those people might be listening.

The Community Outreach Manager was interviewed about the 'sexual health box' he was working on. He invited listeners to help spread the message of sexual awareness in their local

community by either coming forward with their personal stories to be recorded on to CD for the sexual health box (all stories would remain anonymous) or to help distribute the sexual health box to local hairdressers, social meetings and community centres etc.

The Sexual Health Box contains a CD with interviews from Health Champions consisting of sexual health professionals and people with experience/stories of sexual health issues. It also contains literature about local sexual health support services. The box is then distributed by volunteers (Health Messengers) to spark dialog and discussion on sexual health at coffee mornings, hairdressers and community centres.

The volunteers are recruited and managed by CSV's Community Outreach Managers who are based within the BBC. Volunteers are called Health Champions and their main roles are to:

- Encourage people to get health screening earlier and more regularly, in many cases for the first time
- Show people what help is available locally
- Enable people from different communities to find the right source of help for themselves and their friends, reducing the social stigma in certain communities
- Build up a group of local health messengers who can become trusted advocates and intermediaries.

The volunteer Health Champions attend community events and meetings, meet individuals and talk to groups to break down some of the taboos that are still prevalent about health.

For further information:
<http://www.csv.org.uk/campaigns/csv-action-network/csv-stripping-it-bare>

Senior Advisors (Netherlands)

Many older people are not familiar with the services and support which are available for them, nor how to access them. It is important to ensure that older people have access to such 'preventative initiatives' at the right time so that their situations don't deteriorate unnecessarily.

Volunteer 'Senior Advisers' provide a cost effective way of addressing this issue. A Senior Adviser is a trained volunteer who undertakes visits to older people in their own homes. They provide information, advice and sign posting to sources of help and support for older people. All people over 75 living in an area (a district or village) are sent a letter with an enclosed reply card. This enables those wishing a visit to indicate this. Those not responding at all are visited anyway as their non-response is taken as a potential risk indicator.

For further information:

<http://www.hetoudeambt.nl/p/15/204/ms4-61/seniorenavoorlichting>

Silver Song Clubs (UK)

Participation in the arts has become more acceptable and prevalent amongst older people in recent years.

Singing and participation in musical activities has been found to be a key intervention to improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life of older people. A model has been developed in which song clubs for older people (60 plus years) take place in community settings with an experienced facilitator and accompanist and volunteer support from a local choral society or singing group. The purpose of the Song Clubs is to provide regular opportunities for older people to come together to make music and sing. A network of over 45 Silver

Song Clubs is now delivering singing sessions to 2000+ older people each month, in a range of community venues across the South East and South West of England. The clubs are managed and supported by a registered charity 'Sing For Your Life'.

Session content is guided by the most recent developments in the field of singing and health and each session is tailored to meet the individual needs of participants. Songs are used as starting points for activities which include movement, percussion, Suzuki hand chimes and activities designed to stimulate cognition.

Reminiscence is an integral part of Silver Song Clubs as music, arguably the most evocative of the arts, often triggers memories.

Each Silver Song Club session is designed to achieve 11 key outcomes as detailed below:

- Initiate one-to-one welcoming
- Invoke memories
- Stimulate fine motor skills
- Stimulate grand motor skills
- Encourage social interaction
- Encourage client leadership
- Provide progressive learning outcomes
- Provide platforms for reminiscence dialogue
- Give free choice
- Cover multicultural material
- Encourage shared performance

Research and evaluation⁷⁰ work has linked participation in Silver Song Clubs with reduced depression, improved optimism, increased social integration and improved self-rating of physical health. In 2007 Sing For Your Life was chosen by the Centre for Health Service Studies as a UK example of best practice in the European healthPROelderly programme looking at innovative models of health and social care for older people.

The long term aim is for 'Singing on Prescription' to be an integral part of the health and social care of older people throughout the country.

Funding comes from a range of sources including private trusts, health and social care bodies and public sector commissioning.

For further information:
www.singforyourlife.org.uk

Innovation to support the changing profile of volunteers

Good Gym (UK)

Good Gym provides meaningful ways to exercise. It connects people who want to get fit, with physical tasks that need to be done, and which benefit the community. The volunteer runners can do anything from shifting rubble, and planting gardens to making deliveries and friendly visits to older people. There are regular running groups which at some point during their run stop and help local community organisations by undertaking a range of tasks such as clearing land for a community garden, tidying up community centres, helping a school to make a new vegetable patch etc. Volunteer runners can also be paired up with isolated less-mobile people in their area. Runners jog to their house, deliver something nice, have a brief chat and are on their way again. It helps people get fit by providing a good reason to go for a run and it helps the person being visited by providing them with some friendly human contact and a newspaper or piece of fruit. The timing is up to the runner and the person they're visiting. Runners commit to at least one run per week. The Good Gym finds someone in the runner's area, gives them some advice and running tips and a list of phone numbers to call in case they need help. The pair are introduced to each other and the Good Gym checks in with both parties from time to time to make sure that all is going smoothly. Good Gym has a rigorous safety policy that ensures that everyone using Good Gym is safe. Runners are interviewed by the Good Gym team and require a Criminal Record Bureau enhanced check. Good Gym is

⁷⁰<http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/Research/Centres/SDHR/Documents/FormulativeEvalFull.pdf>

running in East London, in partnership with the Olympic Park Legacy Company, before launching a version that can be used more broadly.

For further information:
<http://www.goodgym.org/>

Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme (UK)

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme (RSVP) encourages the growing number of over 50 year-olds to volunteer in their local area. Well over 14,000 elderly people now participate in community work throughout England, Scotland and Wales. Activities are organised and led by volunteers, with no limits in terms of project sector or type. Nor are there restrictions as to who can join in: disabled volunteers are welcomed, and there is no upper age limit. RSVP's policy is that "no one is rejected".

Staffed largely by volunteers, RSVP was set up in 1988 within Community Service Volunteers or CSV, the UK's leading volunteering and training charity. CSV had offered opportunities since the 1960s, but RSVP was its first programme dedicated to older volunteers. It aimed to address the isolation and sense of purposelessness often felt by the elderly and the retired, while harnessing their skills and experience for the benefit of local communities. This clearly reflects a basic principle of RSVP/CSV: that volunteering not only helps those at the receiving end, but also those who are giving their time. Many volunteers say their work is a reason to get up in the morning.

Community projects are initiated by volunteers themselves, meaning opportunities with RSVP are as diverse as the people running them, covering sectors from health to environment to education to cultural heritage. For example, a

project in London matches senior citizens with medical students to help the latter understand the physical and psychological difficulties faced by older people. Another involves 1500 volunteer drivers throughout the UK who transport patients and carers to their appointments, offering not only practical help but also regular social contact – someone to talk to when doctors may be too busy to listen. Many more activities – knitting circles, cooking clubs for men, dance classes and telephone book clubs – take place around the country. Some RSVP projects benefit entire families. For example, the volunteers behind City Can Cycle, on a housing estate in the West Midlands, provide struggling families with refurbished bicycles that have been abandoned or damaged. On average two bikes find a new home each week – over 120 in total so far. The scheme also offers work experience to young people at risk of dropping out of school, giving them concrete skills and boosting their confidence. Another project places some 2000 volunteers in local schools, where they are paired with a student for one-to-one reading lessons. An independent evaluation indicated that when reading regularly with RSVP, children's reading age went up by an average of one year in under three months.

Teachers further report that the time spent with a volunteer has helped kids' self-esteem and improved their concentration and performance in other subjects. Volunteers also benefit. Says Doreen, aged 90, who helps children with reading every week: "I love the idea that at my age, I still have a contribution to make to society."

For further information:

<http://www.csv-rsvp.org.uk/site/home.htm>

Care Home Visiting Scheme (UK)

This scheme was set up by Retired Senior Volunteer Programme (RSVP) in 2011. It was developed by a retired social work manager who during his career in social work had become more and more concerned about how older people were placed in care homes, and unless they had a strong minded relative who visited frequently, they were often left without a voice to express their experiences and problems. Over the years, he saw many concerns and complaints, some very serious, pass across his desk and, although some care homes were very good, many had difficulty providing a consistently high enough standard of care and some were clearly not fit for the work they undertook. Local authority and government inspections consisted of one off visits and they would not be able to gain the trust of residents sufficiently to enable them to talk about their problems with confidence. Care home residents are amongst the most disempowered and vulnerable people in society and many are not able to challenge their carers or pursue complaints.

The pilot scheme was one where a volunteer visitor would visit a care home regularly over a period of months to get to know residents, gain their trust and begin to understand the resident experience in the home. Whilst listening to individual concerns and complaints they also looked for the patterns of the care arrangements and the resident experience as expressed by the culture in the home. The aim of service was not to inspect and find fault, but to communicate and work with staff and managers in a positive and constructive way to try to ensure that the resident voice was heard and that individual problems were reconsidered by staff and managers. It was also felt to be important to gain the trust of the care homes by making it clear that the service was independent and did not report back to any of the statutory bodies.

A small team of seven older volunteers were selected, recruited, and given three days training to undertake this work. They were also encouraged to attend regular support meetings to learn from each other and to develop the scheme. These meetings were a great success and the commitment and positive attitude of the volunteers was inspirational.

The pilot was very successful in two of the homes. The third home was not so successful, having residents who were highly dependent, having high levels dementia or end of life care and the visitors were not able to establish sufficiently strong relationships to enable them to take up the residents' concerns.

The pilot was a learning experience for the organisers, volunteer visitors, and managers and staff in the homes. From the pilot RSVP decided to continue the main scheme in other homes and to try another approach where volunteers would be recruited from the area directly around the homes to act as the voice of the resident, to befriend residents and to liaise with the community- in other words bring 'the care home into the community' and 'the community into the care home.'

The scheme is not without its challenges. Although the pilot was supported by the local authority and encouraged by the national inspectorate of care homes, home owners and managers have not been easy to engage with, although most have said they welcomed the scheme and saw it as an important initiative. When resident experiences are raised with staff and managers, however sensitively and gently this happens, the visitors were often met with defensive responses or denial, and the care culture in homes was often well embedded to the extent that changing it would be a long term task probably beyond the remit of this service.

However, with the work of a committed group of volunteers and with more engagement with the local authority the project is confident that this work will continue to develop and become

more effective. Further training is being provided to volunteer visitors on working with people with dementia and importance of a resident's life story.

For further information:

<http://www.csv.org.uk/facility/csv-rsvp-bristol>

Senior volunteers guide tours at the Museum of Art in Timisoara (Romania)

This is a project, initiated and coordinated by Museum of Art in Timisoara, where the museum's curator took the initiative of approaching older people's organisations and agencies involved in the delivery of services to older people. The proposal was to train older people as museum guides and offer twice weekly volunteering opportunities to lead guided tours in the museum. The project targeted people over 55, either retired or in the pre-retirement phase, aiming to provide them with an opportunity to learn, interact and engage in activities that would keep them active, involved and with a better attitude towards life. Various modules of training were provided to enable them to undertake guided tours. Many of the tours were targeted at other older people, some of whom were living with Parkinson's or Alzheimer's disease. It was notable that some of the older people with Parkinson's subsequently became volunteer guides as well. For many older people involved in the projects, as well for some of the visitors participating in museum tours guided by older volunteers, the experience was life-changing.

For further information:

<http://bit.ly/QLOvzb>

Innovation supported by technological change

Springboard, Cheshire (UK)

Springboard combines the twin assets of sophisticated data on the local population and a trusted brand to reach isolated and vulnerable older people in their own homes. Springboard is

a partnership between Age UK

Cheshire and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services (CFRS), which delivers targeted home visits to adults throughout the county. It pools the resources of CFRS with support from local councils' adult social care directorates. Springboard has developed a sophisticated understanding of the local older population, based on a unique data sharing arrangement between CFRS and the local NHS, which is then overlaid with other information including MOSAIC data, deprivation measures, and other datasets (eg people who have assistance with bin collections etc). This enables the team to identify where all over 65s reside across Cheshire and then factor in information about risk, lifestyle and general wellbeing. Older people who may be particularly vulnerable and in need of early intervention can then be identified from this and home visits arranged. Due to the trusted brands of CFRS and Age UK the team are invited into 98 per cent of homes they visit. Visitors establish a dialogue and, using a simple assessment form that was developed by Age UK Cheshire's older people's networks, they ensure visits not only provide safety information (and smoke alarms and gas detectors), but also offer a gateway into options including building or improving social networks, healthy lifestyles, maximising income etc. Springboard addresses social isolation in various ways, including connecting people to local resources, maximising their income, and referring them to befriending services, tea/coffee clubs, social and leisure networks, lifestyle and confidence building, educational opportunities, and virtual communities.

For further information:

<http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk/partnerships/springboard>

Internet: Grandparents and Grandsons Project (Italy)

Ora Senior Digital (Portugal)

Both projects used the issue of addressing digital exclusion amongst older people to advance greater intergenerational solidarity. Although there are some differences, both projects involved pupils drawn from secondary schools to teach and support older people to become familiar with digital technology and the internet. In so doing, there were reported improvements in the contact between generations and the breaking down of stereotypes on both sides. These approaches were both popular and effective.

For further information:

http://www.google.co.uk/url-sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCEQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.eagle-project.eu%2Fwelcome-to-eagle%2Fpractice-showcase%2FItaly_1_G?G_ID.pdf&ei=QuZKUO-fMoPT0QWD_YCAA&usq=AFQjCNFlixTsnrqCZa dEy_R8qUnfCT3IQ&sig2=IHgLE-JLKRHDCO8pnpTBw

For further information: <http://www.emil-project.net/index.php/en/case-studies/show-list/portugal/ora-senior-digital.html> **Ageing Well - New Opportunities for a Connected Society (UK & Netherlands)**

The ICT company CISCO, through its strategic consultancy, the Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG), is working in a number of areas to help leaders and organizations understand how new technologies will change the way people work, live, play, and learn in an ageing world. The programme "Ageing Well - New Opportunities for a Connected Society" is designed to:

- Develop proof points that illustrate globally significant innovation in action
- Establish strong alliances, share insights, and inspire others
- Champion holistic, cross-sector approaches that increase human

engagement, reduce constraints imposed by location and other factors, and maximize return on investment

CISCO believe that new communications technologies, including video and real time information exchange, built on high-speed broadband infrastructure could transform how:

- Individuals participate and communities thrive
- Employers benefit from the experience and expertise of a maturing population
- Health and social care needs are met, in innovative and sustainable ways.

In Torfaen in Wales, seven particular ideas were generated⁷¹ for consideration and potential operationalisation⁷²:-

1. Wisdom/Skills Bank – an online showcase of people's skills and capabilities. It will be a highly visual resource which will allow people to showcase their transferable skills and help individuals and employers take full advantage of these
2. Wisdom Link – the communication platform to deliver the wisdom/skills bank and other relevant services
3. Open Torfaen – a platform to help stimulate innovation and take advantage of it, e.g. place ideas, find expertise, build networks and attract funding
4. Virtual Mentor – using experience to help others overcome life issues, with a particular intergenerational focus
5. Amazing Eight – to showcase and celebrate some of Torfaen's inspirational people
6. Learning Hub – maximising learning potential through intergenerational support enabled by communication technology
7. Celebrate Flexibility – establish inspirational examples of the true ethos of flexibility for businesses and employees.

⁷¹Wisdom, Wealth and Wellbeing Programme, Torfaen Local Service Board Executive Group, August 2011

⁷²Wisdom, Wealth and Wellbeing New Opportunities for a Connected Wales, CISCO, 2011

The focus of this initiative is not exclusively on older people; rather it is on the 45-65 age group and how they can extend their contribution through work for as long as they wish to, and enhance their personal wealth and wellbeing now and into their retirement, as well as the health and wellbeing of the local economy.

In the City of Almere in the Netherlands, the Verzilvering programme⁷³ was designed to identify innovative ways to help older people overcome physical and geographical barriers to their mobility. The core idea was to investigate the role of video based services. Three different types of video interaction were investigated:-

- Live Interaction - using Cisco's 'advanced collaboration technology'. For example, linking two community buildings allowed a fitness instructor to lead two exercise classes for older people simultaneously in two different venues. It also enabled the community choir in Almere to join together with one in a care home in Melbourne Australia
- Personal Recorded Video – twenty small easy to use video cameras were distributed to older people in a choir. They were used to record their own experiences and then share them; this increased mutual understanding and strengthened social bonds. The choir master used it to create 'homework' videos
- Broad cast video – used to raise public and cross sector awareness. The local TV station provided cameras and production services and established the Verzilvering web-TV channel. More than 50 video clips were broadcast publicly attracting 10,000 hits during the pilot's duration.

The results of the pilot were found to be very positive:-

- The energy and capability of the older people involved in the pilot reinforced the significance of over 60's to Almere's economic and social success

- More than 95% of participants reported that the pilot had increased their social contact and that they felt mentally and physically improved as a result
- Live immersive video enables people to interact effectively over distances
- Personal recorded video helps increase social interaction
- Video based approaches help extend public and community services across geographic boundaries thus increasing the reach of scarce resources
- Video can help extend the range of service offerings, including new ones facilitated by video itself
- Improving the health and wellbeing of Almere's citizens by increasing community interaction and self sufficiency

For further information:

<http://www.cisco.com/web/about/ac79/ps/ageing/index.html>

INtouch Kirklees Digital TV (UK)

INtouch allows people to get local information and use services using their TV and remote control. It is particularly valuable for people who don't have access to a computer and the internet. As well as using INtouch to find information, residents can also add their own information, make comments and ask questions. This interactivity is an important part of INtouch. It allows residents to stay at home yet still learn, question and be heard. INtouch is also available via mobile phone.

INtouch kirklees offers over 5,000 pages of information from Kirklees Council, other public sector organisations, voluntary groups and Kirklees residents:-

Advice and information

Advice and online services on many different topics, including crime and safety, employment, the

⁷³Ageing Well in the Netherlands: the City of Almere Pilots Innovative Video Services, CISCO, 2011

environment, health, housing, learning, money and transport.

Services

People can request waste collections, report graffiti and street problems, join a credit union, renew their library items and use many other services.

Having a say

People can contact their local politician, see live local election results, take part in consultations and comment on council and other services.

My community

This section has been developed by members of local communities. People can contribute their own information, including creative writing, memories and personal stories, messages to a loved one and recipe ideas.

Reading Circle

Older people can participate in a virtual reading and creative writing group, run by a volunteer, and use related library services and information.

For further information:

<http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/community/intouch/aboutintouch.shtml>

Get Connected, Get Online (UK)

The Get Connected, Get Online project was a pilot scheme devised and delivered by Digital Outreach Limited (a joint venture social enterprise set up by Age UK, Community Service Volunteers and CEL Group to deliver large-scale community outreach programmes throughout the UK).

The project tested whether using a community outreach model (in this case, Digital Outreach's 'embedded outreach' model used to deliver information to vulnerable people during the digital television switchover) could be used to increase internet use amongst particular target groups (e.g. older people). Community outreach involves personally engaging with the voluntary

and community sector in order to get information, messages, advice and support to targeted groups who are hard to reach and who may experience barriers in understanding or coping with social change. Community outreach is a technique that can be used as part of a social marketing initiative.

During the project, internet 'taster' sessions were delivered to more than 100 local groups using existing community events. Participants took part in sessions in venues which were familiar to them, and through trained members of local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations.

The Digital Outreach 'embedded outreach' model is different from traditional behavioural change models as it utilises the existing voluntary and community sector (VCS) infrastructures (regularly used by the target groups) to cascade information, support and advice. This allows information to be cascaded to the targeted groups in a place they are familiar with and through people they already know and trust. The communicated message is reinforced repeatedly through regular events and activities in the community – such as coffee mornings, parent and toddler groups and reading circles, therefore ensuring sustainability of the message. The embedded outreach model is thought to be highly effective at reaching specific target groups, and impacting on the local community.

The findings of an evaluation⁷⁴ of the project demonstrated that Digital Outreach's embedded outreach model was highly effective in breaking through many of the barriers which prevent digitally excluded people from utilising the internet, and encouraging them to embrace the internet as part of their daily lives.

For further information:

http://www.digitaloutreach.org.uk/content/images/uploaded/DOL_GetConnected_GetOnline_Web_Final.pdf

⁷⁴Get Connected, Get Online: Using embedded outreach to bridge the digital divide, Digital Outreach, 2011

Volonteuropa recommends

1. EU institutions and Member States should:-

- a. Recognise the key role of NGOs promoting volunteering by older people as partners and key stakeholders in programmes to stimulate social innovation
- b. Do more to support NGOs working with older people to raise awareness of the benefits of the internet and provide support in

learning about and accessing it.

- c. Promote more intergenerational initiatives as part of their strategies to tackle digital exclusion.

2. NGOs promoting volunteering by older people should:-

- a. Be supported, including through access to funding streams, to play a full role in European innovation programmes
- b. Be able to access capacity building opportunities to strengthen their participation in social innovation

Conclusion

The twin themes of 'active ageing' and 'solidarity between generations' are vital given the demographic change which is taking place across Europe. Older people now appear to be more active and more engaged, but that cannot be sustained without the support of a strong volunteering infrastructure. As this report has shown there is a wealth of different models and initiatives across Europe which engage and support older volunteers. But none of this can happen without the existence of a vibrant voluntary / NGO sector.

“ Active ageing and solidarity between generations will only be achieved with the support of older people’s volunteering and civic engagement.”

In reviewing the material set out in this report a number of key issues emerge:-

- There is a need to properly embed a shift away from a 'deficit model' with regard to older people towards one which is grounded in the awareness of the huge contribution that older people themselves have to make to society
- The world is changing and models of volunteering and the sorts of services that they deliver need to keep up to date
- There is huge benefit to be gained from supporting older volunteers to take the initiative and to be supported to deliver the services which address the issues in their communities
- If left unchecked, there is the potential for older and younger generations to move further apart and become more critical of each other. It is crucial that intergenerational initiatives are supported and indeed helped to make a real step change in terms of their volume and content
- Social exclusion can be effectively addressed through active ageing initiatives. People with dementia are a

group who can face particular exclusion but, as has been shown in this report, there are many effective ways of supporting them, including supporting them to make a contribution to the rest of society.

- We will not achieve the objectives of active ageing if there is not a shift away from the negative views about older people and ageing promulgated in some sections of the media. Europe can only be truly 'age friendly' once there has been a cultural shift towards valuing older people and celebrating the huge advances in longevity and quality of life.

The major message emerging from this report is that, whilst there are differences in the demographic and cultural challenges experienced by different EU countries, there are nevertheless many common issues. The range of examples from different countries are a reminder of the importance of learning from each other rather than 're-inventing the wheel' many times over.

And finally, active ageing and solidarity between generations will only be achieved with the support of older people's volunteering and civic engagement.

Roundtable Discussions

Two roundtable discussions involving were undertaken in the course of developing this report. These discussions were particularly helpful in formulating the recommendations contained in the report.

Participants in the Roundtable Discussions:-

BRUSSELS, 5 September 2012:

- Elsa Laino, Solidar, Belgium
- David Lopez, La Ligue de l'Enseignement, France
- Claus Larsen-Jensen, FIC, Denmark
- Iva Evguenieva, Institute of Social Integration, Bulgaria
- Luigi Cordiano, CSV, UK
- Peter Warner, ABF, Sweden
- Anna Waldhausen, ISS, Germany
- Marica Guiducci, Auser, Italy
- Andre' Hudepohl, Humanitas, the Netherlands
- Rudi Frick, AWO, Germany
- Adeline Otto, Solidar, Belgium
- Nahima Laieb, CEMEA, France
- Maurice Claassens, Solidar, Belgium
- Agata Patecka, Solidar, Belgium
- Stephanie Havekost, ASB, Germany
- Guy Robertson, Positive Ageing Associates, UK

LONDON, 6 September 2012:

- Angela Schlenkhoff-Hus, CSV
- Duncan Tree, CSV
- Emma Dobie, Mentoring and Befriending Foundation
- Lucy de Groot, CSV
- Nicola Robinson, Age UK
- Oonagh Aitken, CSV
- Piotr Sadowski, CSV
- Yasmin Ahmed, Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion
- Louca Hepburn, DWP
- Len Goss, SME Leadership Academy

Notes

