



**European Approaches  
to Inter-Generational  
Lifelong Learning**

# **INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING IN EUROPE**

**POLICIES, PROGRAMMES & INITIATIVES  
DESK RESEARCH SYNTHESIS REPORT**



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## **EAGLE DESK RESEARCH SYNTHESIS REPORT**

# **INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING IN EUROPE POLICIES, PROGRAMMES & INITIATIVES**

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## **TABLE OF CONTENT**

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2 EUROPEAN POLICY ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3 WIDER NETWORKS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>4 GENERAL STATUS OF INTERGENERATIONAL PRACTICES IN SIX EUROPEAN COUNTRIES</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>5 CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>37</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ageing of the population is one of the significant transformations being experienced in European societies and one of the major social policy issues facing families, governments and communities. The evaluation of current demographic data regarding the ageing of population imposes a reconsideration of some key concepts which are not merely political or sociological: age-war and clash of generations concern not only economic and social parameters but also culture and mentality issues, which are usually to be dealt at a national or even regional level.

EAGLE Project concentrates on the field of intergenerational as well as trans-generational processes within the frameworks of non-formal and informal learning. In EAGLE project defines Intergenerational learning as a practice that aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities, which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and may contribute to building more cohesive communities. This desk research is an in-depth insight into the potential and limitations of trans-, inter-generational and later life formal and informal learning; as well as the policies, concepts, analyses, frameworks, experiences in place and empirical evidence available. In addition, National overviews of current intergenerational practice were produced from England, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy and Romania.

Policy initiatives underline the need to promote a 'cradle-to-grave' culture of learning in European society, supporting seamless transitions from school through higher education and into adult and informal learning. Closely allied to this vision of continuous learning are other policy agendas associated with skills utilization and development and with social inclusion – particularly focusing on promoting the inclusion of older people within economic, social and cultural life. ICTs can provide the tools for greater independence and a more active life especially for the disabled, the unemployed and, more pertinently for intergenerational learning, older people and the young. Intergenerational learning, as a means to responding to labour market inequality, increases cross-age participation in training and in the labour market. The EU policies are in turn supported by research and development programmes, among which the Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme, the European Social Fund (ESF) and the EQUAL programme are explicitly identifying and addressing intergenerational learning (however partly less reflected in actual practices). Indirect links to intergenerational learning can be found as well in the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme. However, the International Consortium for Intergenerational Programmes (ICIP) is the only international membership organisation focused solely on promoting intergenerational programmes, strategies and public policy from a global perspective. On the other hand national organisations focusing entirely on intergenerational learning exist only in Germany (e.g. Project Office Dialogue of the Generations) and in the United Kingdom (e.g. Centre for Intergenerational Practice' [CIP] of the Beth Johnson Foundation [BJF]).

In its various manifestations voluntary activity offers an opportunity for informal and non-formal learning and thus, alongside formal learning, plays an essential part in achieving intergenerational learning. Voluntary activity is inextricably linked with active citizenship, which is the cornerstone of democracy at local and European level. People take part in the life of society not only through political participation but also through the specific solution of social

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problems. Voluntary activity also promotes personal development: the development of social awareness on the one hand and, on the other hand, the development of key competences, and skills making volunteers more employable and enhancing their active participation in society.

Intergenerational practice is a political priority both in Germany and UK. In UK there is an increasing recognition by national government of the important contribution of Intergenerational Work to social cohesion, citizenship and challenging ageism and the need to promote positive roles for the young and old in society. In Germany, since the beginning of the 1980ies intergenerational exchange appeared explicitly on the political arena and agenda. On the contrary, intergenerational practice does not appear in policy agendas in Romania, Finland, Italy and Greece. This is peculiar especially in Finland, where Lifelong Learning has become the Finnish way of life.

Intergenerational practices are well developed both in UK and Germany. In the UK a major factor in the development of many intergenerational programmes has been the increasing recognition of the need to develop volunteering opportunities for older people, both to strengthen current social provision and in recognition of the value to older people and their communities. In Wales and Scotland both governments have made funding available to establish national Centres of Intergenerational Practice to partner the Centre in England. Government documents make increasing reference to the importance of developing relationships across the generations to develop safer, healthier and more cohesive communities and there are increasing opportunities to fund activities.

As the benefits of intergenerational exchange and learning are widely recognised in Germany, the landscape of activities is rich, manifold and highly diversified, although intergenerational activities and their institutional embedding vary remarkably on federal state, regional and local levels. The variety of intergenerational activities in Germany on programme (mostly top-down) and project (mostly bottom-up) level is remarkable; they address almost the entire spectrum of possible themes (e.g. community development, learning, mentoring, mediation, media educations, individual, family, community and social support in general, employability, history and reminiscence, health, arts, environmental protection) and involve a multitude of different actors and stakeholders from all ages and generations.

Intergenerational practices are not well established in Greece, Romania, Italy and Finland. However, in Greece there is a lot of traditional intergenerational exchange at the informal level because of the traditional familial relationships that are still prevalent in Greece where grandparents play a significant role in the care of smaller grandchildren, a role that has probably been increasing as more women enter the labour market in the past 20 years. In addition, in small communities (in semi-urban and rural settings) traditional Greek handicrafts e.g. embroidery, sweet making, as well as traditional dancing and musical instruments are being passed on as skills to the young generation though there exists no clear picture of the extent of this practice.

In Romania, intergenerational practice is not yet an established field in research, project work or in the decision and policy making processes, and consequently the EAGLE project offers an important opportunity to open the Romanian context for further work in the area of intergenerational practice.

Intergenerational learning is in Italy strictly related to employment strategy, because Lifelong Learning is not a system yet and the intergenerational process has just started. Nevertheless there is a flurry of learning activities targeted to adults and elderly, and among them intergenerational learning is emerging, both in the formal and in the non-formal sectors.

Intergenerational practices are not well developed in Finland, except in the University of the Third Age. Nevertheless, some intergenerational practices have a long tradition in Finland. Among them are voluntary work camps where people of different ages work for the benefit of the local communities or manage and conserve traditional rural biotopes. The international models of intergenerational practises cannot be transferred directly to the Finnish society, but they need to be adapted and developed to meet the national and local needs. However, some intergenerational practices have already been successfully used in preventive child welfare work.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The increase of life expectancy together with the structural changes in social insurance policies has created a newborn social class. The ageing of the population is one of the significant transformations being experienced in European societies and one of the major social policy issues facing families, governments and communities. The evaluation of current demographic data regarding the ageing of population imposes a reconsideration of some key concepts which are not merely political or sociological: age-war and clash of generations concern not only economic and social parameters but also culture and mentality issues which are usually to be dealt at a national or even regional level.

According to a 1998 research of the Eurobarometer the citizens of the European Union consider that elder people do not understand how many things have changed in our society, do not understand what young people really like and must be as much as possible active. At the same time, younger generations feel responsible towards aged people, do not have anything against them and would not let their parents live in an old people's home. Even though these opinions may seem to be contradictory, analysed under the certainty that the class of generations was always a phenomenon appearing in all societies and eras, blunting and sharpening in accordance with social circumstances, could lead us to the conclusion that the newer people are quite willing to bridge the gap of generations that social problems like unemployment, poverty, exclusion, racism make wider.

Towards this direction can contribute policies, actions and initiatives like: support of the activities, of the mobility and the quality of life of aged people, medical, pharmaceutical and social care of aged persons on a total and cohesive level, using new technologies (telecommunication and informatics), initiate them to the philosophy of continuous and lifelong learning, design of products and services for all ages in order to avoid exclusions due to age, offer them the opportunity to learn new technologies from younger persons and to transfer their precious experience of life to newer generations.

Given that the core of the issue to be explored is lifelong intergenerational learning, we intend to specify that this kind of interaction among generations covers a large spectrum of applications. It cannot be confined to formal (i.e. municipal, governmental, EU programmes) policies and strategies that empower the participation of aged persons to social life. It also includes non-formal and informal learning processes, which could be as much valuable for this effort.

Finally, an important dimension concerning the research on intergenerational Lifelong Learning is the interdisciplinary character that it may have. Multiple disciplines in social sciences and humanities could contribute to the investigation of this challenging field. A very example of this orientation is the 'Universidad de la Calle' project, which takes place under the aegis of the National University of San Salvador de Jujuy in Argentina, and, using semiotic methodology, it aims to study the transmission of knowledge in non-institutional (non-universitarian) contexts and environments.

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Taking into account all these factors implicated in the communication process among generations and its research, we will be able to comprehend and interpret the dynamics of this inter-social role-playing and to propose new directions of intervention strategies in order to confront efficiently and decisively the growing age-war.

EAGLE Project concentrates on the field of intergenerational as well as trans-generational processes within the frameworks of non-formal and informal learning. 'Societal Learning' inside these segments needs to be balanced by learning across all types of segments in order to preserve individual, collective, local, regional, national and European knowledge as well as sectoral cultural and societal identities. By exploring synergies opened by cooperation, mutual motivation, sharing and exchange, codified knowledge, skills and competences within and across segments of societies can be maintained or even newly created. The span of processes and practices to be incorporated are broad. It may range from rather formalized intergenerational supported learning in economic settings (e.g. by volunteer senior citizens as advisors to start-up companies) to the informal learning role of grandparents (e.g. acting towards children as 'talking points' into their personalized history and cultural values). It includes as well kids helping senior citizens or even their teachers to acquire and use properly e.g. Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) and related knowledge society skills. As a consequence EAGLE addresses the needs to broaden the view on learning beyond the traditional educational institutions, which tend to separate society into learners and non-learners; the conventional paradigms of pedagogy, which emphasize learning as a unidirectional process of information presentation and information retention; trends towards age segmentation in areas of living, working leisure activities, social support systems, media use, mobility profiles; limited budget lines for public funding available for specific age segments; and finally individualizing trends in post modern society.

The EAGLE project started with an in-depth scoping and mapping phase including Country Reports and a European review on policies and initiatives, and the aim of this report is to summarise these findings. The desk research is an in-depth insight into the potential and limitations of trans-, intergenerational and later life formal, non-formal and informal learning; as well as the policies, concepts, analyses, frameworks, experiences in place and empirical evidence available. The desk research will be complemented by an extended field research phase collecting under a common selection rationale 30 European models of practices presented in a synthetic field research report.

The EAGLE field research is based on in-depth insight into the models of practices developed; those practices, which are likely to be generalized, transferred, localized and useful to generate policy and practice recommendations; the criteria to systematically identify their related strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats combined into a consistent description framework of models of practices based on a consensual grid and terminology useful to describe cases of practice in a way they can be compared across different fields, different participating age groups, different types of interactions etc. This will lead to following core activities of EAGLE: the formulation, selection and implementation of European action research based segmental pilot experimentations; the pilot experimentations throughout Europe will undergo state-of-the-art verification and validation stages. Based on this desk, field and action research based analysis and piloting activities EAGLE aims finally at setting up a professional segmental dialogue including researchers, developers, implementation practitioners, age group representatives, policy consultants and policy makers to support exchange



of ideas and experiences across existing fragmentations and therefore to contribute and to encourage new, innovative and alternative learning pathways of (adult) education.

This report collects the principal findings of the six months desk research conducted in the framework of the EAGLE project. In particular:

**Section 2 – European Policy Environment** provides an overview of the main concepts and policy documents related to the implementation of intergenerational practices in Europe.

**Section 3 – Wider Networks** describes networks that share many of the values and aims of intergenerational practice but have not yet fully recognized that working cross-generationally may enable them to achieve some of their aims more effectively and sustainably.

**Section 4 – General Status of Intergenerational Practices in Six European Countries** provides an analysis on intergenerational initiatives as well as policies related to these initiatives in Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania and UK.

**Section 5 – Considerations emerging from Desk Research** draws a set of considerations emerging from the desk research and bridges such results with their relevance with the ongoing policy process concerning intergenerational practices.

## 1.1 DEFINITIONS OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF LEARNING

In this report different types of learning are discussed. The meaning of Intergenerational learning, Trans-generational learning, Formal learning, Non-formal learning, Informal learning as well as Autonomous learning in this report are described below.

**Intergenerational learning** can be defined as a practice that aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities, which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and may contribute to building more cohesive communities.

**Trans-generational learning** can be understood as knowledge sharing that expands the traditional model of peer-to-peer learning. Trans-generational pedagogy transcends traditional learning boundaries of profession, geography, and 'class' by linking learners and in-service professionals.

**Formal learning** is learning that takes place in education and training institutions, leading to recognized diplomas and qualifications.

**Non-formal learning** is learning that takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training and does not typically lead to formalized certificates. Non-formal learning may be provided in the workplace and through the activities of civil society organizations and groups (such as youth organizations, trade unions and political parties). It can also be provided through organizations or services that have been set up to complement formal systems (such as arts, music and sports classes or private tutoring to prepare for examinations).



**Informal learning** is a natural accompaniment to everyday life. Unlike formal and non-formal learning, informal learning is not necessarily intentional learning, and so may well not be recognized even by individuals themselves as contributing to their knowledge and skills.

**Autonomous learning** can be understood to be learning where the learner takes responsibility for the totality of his/her learning situation. He/she does this by determining his/her own objectives, defining the contents to be learned and the progression of the course, selecting methods and techniques to be used, monitoring this procedure, and evaluating what he has acquired.

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## 2 EUROPEAN POLICY ENVIRONMENT

### 2.1 Intergenerational Learning: EU Policy Background

Policies shaping and reflecting inter-generational learning within the EU have to be viewed within the context of the increasingly 'holistic' perspective for education and training. It is becoming evident in Europe that policies for learning, and their reflection of a "learning society", are not merely policies for teaching and learning, or even for education and training, but form an integral part of wider social and economic policy. The outcomes of learning are intimately connected to core economic and social policy concerns and have social as well as economic consequences and opportunities attached to them. This reflects the over-riding emphasis on the key 'Lisbon goal', and its recent 'renewal': The Union must become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion (European Council, Lisbon, March 2000). It is arguably not over-stating the case that education policy to a large extent is harnessed to economic competitiveness. The key policy agendas shaping how inter-generational learning is situated within this broader education policy landscape are the 2001 agreement of the future objectives of education and training systems, and the 'Ten Year Workplan' adopted in 2002. Other key initiatives include the Copenhagen declaration, promoting collaboration to improve the vocational education and training system within a 'knowledge economy' (2003); the Resolution to support Lifelong Learning (2002) and e-Learning (2001); Mobility; the Commissions Action Plan on eLearning; the Commission's work in relation to the future development of the European Union Education, Training and Youth Programmes; and the Commission's ongoing work in relation to the Concrete Objectives of Education and Training Systems. Supporting these are policy initiatives like the 'Open Method of Coordination' for coordinating the Lisbon process, measuring progress and enabling the European member states to make mutual comparisons; and various instruments supporting European mobility, and social inclusion (for example i2010).

Against this backdrop, the policy initiatives that are more explicitly concerned with inter-generational learning are incorporated within recent moves to promote lifelong learning, through instruments like the European Commission's 'Memorandum on Lifelong Learning'<sup>1</sup> These underline the need to promote a 'cradle to grave' culture of learning in European society, supporting seamless transitions from school through higher education and into adult and informal learning. Closely allied to this vision of continuous learning are other policy agendas associated with skills utilization and development and with social inclusion – particularly focusing on promoting the inclusion of older people within economic, social and cultural life. These include the eEurope 2002 Action Plan, its successor eEurope 2005 and the strategic programme i2010. e-Inclusion initiatives are being framed in the context of the efforts to move European economies towards a knowledge-based economy, and to make extensive use of ICTs to promote this growth. Whilst the underlying vision for EU e-Inclusion initiatives is thus strongly economic, from the early documentations onward a secondary vision has begun to take shape: that of technology as an enabler to participation. The strategic frame-

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<sup>1</sup> See Making a European area of Lifelong Learning a Reality, Brussels, 21.11.01, Com(2001) 678 final

work 'i2010 – A European Information Society for Growth and Employment' (i2010) <sup>2</sup> perhaps for the first time puts e-Inclusion in the context of 'quality of life', and in particular a personal empowerment model, where ICTs can provide the tools for greater independence and a more active life. There are four major groups targeted in this vision: the disabled; the unemployed and, more pertinently for inter-generational learning, older people and the young. In this context, an underlying agenda is to promote inter-generational learning through policies and initiatives based on increasing access to and utilization of ICTs, through digital literacy programmes for example, and supporting 'quality of use', for example through e-participation and e-government initiatives.

The development of 'comprehensive strategies in response to ageing' is a key priority in this policy landscape, for example as set out by the Employment Taskforce. It relates to the provision of incentives for workers, access to training and improving the quality of work.<sup>3</sup> Inter-generational learning, as a means to responding to labour market inequality, also encompasses two of the key European challenges set out by the Stockholm European Council<sup>4</sup>, namely increasing cross-age participation in training and increasing cross-age participation in the labour market. As emphasised by the Employment Taskforce, older workers' skills deserve to be both valued and enhanced. At the same time, steps should be taken to prevent a segmentation of the labour market between different types of workers.

This is supported by the latest report of the High Level Group on the future of social policy which suggests transforming the existing fears of our society into positive perceptions of the future and a new intergenerational balance: older workers should not fear for their pensions and the young people should not see their careers as uncertain.<sup>5</sup>

These policies are in turn supported by research and development programmes, including initiatives like the 'Citizens and Governance' initiative, focusing on: Lifelong Learning; Citizenship; Health and Competences; the 'Information Society Technologies (IST)' initiative, focusing on technology-enhanced learning; work-based learning and knowledge transfer, and the LEONARDO programme, focusing on Vocational Education & Training (VET).

## 2.2 Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme

The overarching priority of the Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme<sup>6</sup> is to reinforce the contribution made by education and training to achieving the Lisbon goal of making the EU the most competitive knowledge-based economy, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs, and greater social cohesion. Every part of the programme will give priority to action supporting development of national lifelong learning strategies by the coun-

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<sup>2</sup> Relevant documents on the i2010 strategy incl. the Communication from the Commission and the Benchmarking Framework are available at:  
[http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/eeurope/i2010/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/i2010/index_en.htm).

<sup>3</sup> Wim Kok 'Jobs, Jobs, Jobs. Creating more employment in Europe', November 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Report from the Commission and the Council: 'Increasing Labour Force Participation and Promoting Active Ageing', Brussels, 8 March 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Report of the High Level Group on the future of social policy in an enlarged European Union, May 2004, European Commission, DG Employment and Social Affairs

<sup>6</sup> European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. Part I – Priorities of the 2007 General Call for Proposals (EAC/61/2006).

tries participating and reinforcing collaboration between the different parts of the education and training system, strengthening the lifelong learning continuum, and supporting the acquisition of key competences.

The aim of the GRUNDTVIG programme is to address the teaching and learning needs of institutions and individuals involved in adult education. In particular, it aims to respond to the challenge of an ageing population and to provide pathways for adults to improve their knowledge and competences. Through GRUNDTVIG, the European Commission provides funding to promote exchanges of experiences and to improve the quality and accessibility of mobility throughout Europe in the area of adult education. It is open to all kinds of institutions and organisations, whether working in formal, non-formal or informal adult education. It complements and interacts with other programmes within the Lifelong Learning Programme to cover the whole spectrum of lifelong learning.

One of the priority areas of the GRUNDTVIG programme is learning in later life; Intergenerational learning. The programme will provide support for projects focusing on:

- Transferring knowledge, methods and good practice for senior citizen education;
- Identifying the learning needs of senior citizens and developing strategies on how these needs can be met (for instance, by developing learning sites in local community centres or libraries);
- Equipping senior citizens with the tools and skills that they need in order to cope with change and keep in employment, with special emphasis on ICT skills;
- Developing strategies and methods for teachers, trainers and other adult education staff who work with senior citizens;
- Identifying effective models on how to make use of the potential of senior citizens by contributing to the learning of others (for instance, collecting and sharing best practice where retired people remain active as educators and trainers in adult education).

### **2.3 A European Information Society for Growth and Employment (i2010)**

The programme i2010 - A European Information Society for Growth and Employment<sup>7</sup> announces a European initiative on e-Inclusion for 2008. The 2006 Riga Ministerial Conference on ICT for an inclusive society provided strategic guidance and was a major step towards this initiative. In line with i2010, e-Inclusion policy addresses issues in the fields of active ageing, geographical digital divide, accessibility, digital literacy and competences, cultural diversity and inclusive e-Government. Improving ICT access for elderly is particularly important for active ageing and independent living. Furthermore, it is important to address the needs of older workers and elderly people by:

- Improving the employability, working conditions and work-life balance of older workers to improve productivity by supporting innovative ICT solutions which can be easily used everywhere including at home, and encouraging the provision of training from the

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<sup>7</sup> Ministerial Declaration 2006. ICT for an Inclusive Society; i2010 eGovernment Action Plan: Accelerating eGovernment in Europe for the Benefit of All

public, private sectors and from civil society, making special efforts on ICT skills for older people.

- Enhancing active participation in the society and economy and self-expression, through innovative ICT-enabled access to goods and services, and relevant content, to facilitate interactions with public and private entities, entertainment, and social contacts.
- Realising increased quality of life, autonomy and safety, while respecting privacy and ethical requirements. This can be done through independent living initiatives, the promotion of assistive technologies, and ICT-enabled services for integrated social and healthcare, including personal emergency and location-based services. The ambient assisted living initiative of the 7th Framework Programme is an important initiative in this respect.

Countries will put in place, by 2008, digital literacy and competence actions, in particular through formal or informal education systems, building on existing initiatives. These actions will be tailored to the needs of groups at risk of exclusion including elderly, as well as marginalized young people, contributing to their employability and working conditions.

## 2.4 EQUAL

Another important programme in the context of inter-generational learning is arguably the EQUAL Programme. EQUAL has developed existing approaches and created new ones to enable intergenerational learning in the EU. Examples include the following: EQUAL in France set up self-assessment in working groups along identified themes to define needs in new jobs and invited employees aged 50+ from various levels of the company to take part. This, although demanding much organisation and time, has proved efficient in enabling interaction between different groups, the sharing of experiences and recognition of tacit knowledge.

A learning platform has been established by EQUAL where newcomers and older workers exchange and transfer their knowledge and experience in order to evaluate global solutions for training and work organisation. Coaching of older workers has helped them express their ideas and views on possible solutions to their employer.

Tutoring and mentoring models have been developed in several European countries as a way to support the flow of knowledge between older and younger workers. In France, EQUAL developed multimedia-working groups adapted to the older workforce. These groups allowed workers to identify key competences for a job and further training that could help them adapt to new technologies or define a new career.

## 2.5 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7)

The Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7)<sup>8</sup> is the European Union's main instrument for funding research in Europe. FP7, which applies to the years 2007-2013, is the natural successor to the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6), and is the result of years of consultation with the scientific community, research and policy making institutions, and other interested parties. Since their launch in 1984, the Framework Programmes have played a lead role in multidisciplinary research and cooperative activities in Europe and beyond. FP7 continues that task, and is both larger and more comprehensive than earlier Framework Programmes. Running from 2007 to 2013, the programme has a budget of 53.2 billion euros over its seven-year lifespan, the largest funding allocation yet for such programmes.

The Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) includes several specific programmes:

- *Cooperation* – fostering collaboration between industry and academia to gain leadership in key technology areas.
- *Ideas* – supporting basic research at the scientific frontiers (implemented by the European Research Council).
- *People* – supporting mobility and career development for researchers both within and outside Europe.
- *Capacities* – helping develop the capacities that Europe needs to be a thriving knowledge-based economy.
- *Nuclear research (Euratom programme)* – developing Europe's nuclear fission and fusion capabilities.

Although intergenerational learning is not explicitly one of the programme fields, as it is focused on themes like new technologies and knowledge and includes a humanities and social sciences point of view, it may also imply a lifelong and intergenerational learning procedure, but a merely institutional (formal) one, concerning the initiative of intergenerational learning within the frames of a private company and a EU project, or concerning new technologies learning addressed to specific target groups within the same organisational and institutional frames. In general terms, this programme aims to empower research development and cooperation between universities, research institutions, multinational companies and enterprises, includes a large-scale multi-financed actions, is open to new ideas and project propositions and covers a wide field of research and scientific activities.

In conclusion, FP 7 offers remarkable opportunities of interdisciplinary, trans-national and inter-institutional research that can welcome a comprehensive approach of intergenerational and/or Lifelong Learning activities at a European level.

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<sup>8</sup> See for example: [http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/pdf/fp7-brochure\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/pdf/fp7-brochure_en.pdf)

## 2.6 European Social Fund (ESF)

The European Social Fund (ESF)<sup>9</sup> primarily aims to:

- Help unemployed and inactive people enter work;
- Provide opportunities for people at a disadvantage in the labour market;
- Promote Lifelong Learning;
- Develop the skills of employed people;
- Improve women's participation in the labour market.

Most ESF money is distributed via national and regional authorities through co-funding schemes. In England for example it is distributed to projects through the Learning and Skills Councils, Jobcentre Plus and other organisations (for example, some Regional Development Agencies and local authorities). ESF money is shared out under three Objectives, which are designed to focus resources on those in greatest need. Objectives 1 and 2 target specific regions or areas, while Objective 3 develops human resources.

Objective 1, 2 and 3 programmes focus on five main 'policy fields':

- Active labour market policies;
- Equal opportunities for all and promoting social inclusion;
- Lifelong learning;
- Adaptability and entrepreneurship;
- Improving the role of women in the labour market.

ESF is also available through the EQUAL initiative, which is developing new ways to tackle disadvantage in the labour market (see previous section).

Intergenerational initiatives are generally situated within Objective 3 funding environments. The aims of Objective 3 are:

- To tackle long-term unemployment;
- To help young people and those at risk from not being able to find work;
- To improve training, education and counselling for lifelong learning;
- To encourage entrepreneurship and adaptability in the workplace;
- To promote equal opportunities and improve the role of women in the workforce.

ESF supports European employment and social policies, including 'active ageing'. The EU supports this move through policy coordination, financial backing from the European Social Fund, and minimum standards to improve working conditions and combat discrimination. It also encourages the social partners and companies to invest in and exploit the full potential of workers during their entire career. Promoting active ageing is at the core of the European Employment Strategy (EES), which coordinates the employment policies of the Member Sta-

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<sup>9</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/esf/](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf/)

tes. The Integrated Guidelines for growth and jobs (2005-2008) have sharpened the focus on attracting and retaining older people in employment within a lifecycle perspective. This includes better working conditions, more Lifelong Learning, a healthier work environment and adequate incentives to work and discouraging early retirement. Essentially ESF's role in intergenerational learning policies and initiatives is highly mediated through the agendas of member states and regional agencies, rather than directly through trans-national actions. For example, the ESF funded a project in the UK, which provides ex-managers over the age of 50 with the chance to mentor younger professionals and post-graduate students in over 200 SMEs. Similarly, the Finnish Programme on Ageing Workers (1998-2002) followed a comprehensive approach involving changes in legislation, research projects, training, and extensive communication aimed at changing attitudes towards ageing throughout Finnish society.

In practice, though there is a clear commitment to intergenerational learning within ESF, there are few examples of actual practices. One such example from the UK is the project 'Supporting rural communities - Improving skills'. This is an ESF project addressing the barriers to learning faced by rural and semi-rural communities in South and West Cheshire.

A total of 490 learners have already participated in the Reasheath College project, which is providing innovative Family Learning activities and programmes delivered in primary schools and nurseries in the community.

Parents, grandparents and foster carers are all participating in intergenerational activities through the project, which runs from February 2003 to December 2004.

The Family Learning programmes are based on the premise that awareness of opportunities for learning in everyday home and community activities can contribute to successful literacy and numeracy development - in both adults and children. A number of participants have now been recruited as classroom helpers and gone on to participate in further adult education courses.

## 2.7 European Associations related to Intergenerational Learning

The **European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)**<sup>10</sup>, founded in 1953 as an association of NGOs actively involved in the development of adult education throughout Europe, plays a major role in promoting new adult education policies and practices while maintaining constant contact with the European Commission and the European Parliament.

Everyone in the European Union is increasingly affected by decisions taken by its institutions: the Council of Ministers, the Commission, the European Parliament and the Court of Justice. Decisions affect the daily lives of all its inhabitants - including older people. Bodies like the **European Older People's Platform (AGE)**<sup>11</sup> as well as **European Federation of Older Persons (EURAG)**<sup>12</sup> promote the interests of older people in the European Union and raise awareness of the issues that concern them most.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/education/aladin/members/37.htm>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.age-platform.org>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.eurag-europe.org/en/eurag.html>

AGE, the European Older People's Platform, was set up in January 2001 following a process of discussion on how to improve and strengthen cooperation between older people's organizations at EU level. Membership of AGE is open to European, national and regional organizations, and to both organizations of older people and organizations for older people. Organizations of older people will have the majority of votes in AGE's decision-making bodies. Membership is open only to non-profit-making organizations. AGE is co-financed by its members and by the European Commission. AGE is involved in a range of policy and information activities to put older people's issues on the EU agenda and to support networking among older people's groups. Among the guiding principles is that a change of attitudes is needed to achieve a society for all ages, seeking solidarity between generations in a way that recognizes older people's contributions to society.

EURAG represents the interests of the older generation in Europe, sets up working groups and committees on topical issues and launches proposals and motions to the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the United Nations Organization, World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization, as well as other organisations concerning the older generation.

## 2.8 European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

The 'European Economic and Social Committee' (EESC)<sup>13</sup> urges the Commission to announce a Year of Volunteers, and to publish a White Paper on voluntary activity and active citizenship in Europe at the earliest opportunity. This could underline the relationship between these two phenomena and stress their scale and importance. As most voluntary activity takes place at local level, this White Paper should contribute to a strategy for strengthening the European dimension of voluntary activity, and promoting active European citizenship and the role of identification with Europe in the European integration process.

The governments of the Member States should be encouraged to frame national policies on voluntary activity and strategies ensuring that voluntary activity is encouraged and recognised. These national policies should also cover the role of infrastructure in facilitating voluntary activity. The EU can provide a framework and encourage greater exchange of best practice between Member States.

At the same time, in the interests of preparing individuals for voluntary activity, the EESC feels that it would be useful to highlight the relationship between civil society and schools. In primary education, more attention must be paid to educational activities aimed at developing social awareness and involvement in solving social problems of general interest. For example, from the age of 15, as part of a "social and environmental year", practical activities could be provided as an option for young people, to encourage them to carry out important and useful voluntary activities. Particular support should be given to NGOs enabling children to undertake their first voluntary activities.

In its efforts to promote the recognition of informal and non-formal learning, e.g. through the Europass and the recommendation on key competences, the EU should put particular emphasis on the recognition of competences acquired through voluntary activities. The im-

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.cev.be/Documents/EESCOpinionVoluntaryActivity2006.doc>

plementation of Europass-Youth would help to enhance recognition of voluntary activities of young people.

The EESC would like the European Union to adopt a more active, consistent and coherent approach to voluntary activity, making pan-European volunteer programmes available to all population groups rather than being restricted purely to long-term voluntary service by young people.

The EESC would also welcome a specific recommendation for the promotion of voluntary activity by senior citizens, for example with pilot actions for partnerships and exchange of experiences and which would be among the first initiatives to be launched.

Voluntary activity is inextricably linked with active citizenship, which is the cornerstone of democracy at local and European level. People take part in the life of society not only through political participation but also through the specific solution of social problems. By working for society they can translate a desire to help shape society into action. Individuals either sacrifice their leisure time, or engage in voluntary service for others and work for the common good, often at considerable risk to their financial well being or health. It is this very form of European active citizenship, which gives people a strong sense of belonging to society. Voluntary activity can therefore be regarded as one of the best examples of participation and thus an essential component of, or even a precondition for, active citizenship.

Voluntary activity also promotes personal development: the development of social awareness on the one hand and, on the other hand, the development of key competences and skills, making volunteers more employable and enhancing their active participation in society. In its various manifestations voluntary activity offers an opportunity for informal and non-formal learning and thus, alongside formal learning, plays an essential part in achieving Lifelong Learning.

Voluntary activity also makes an essential contribution to our economies' output. This contribution is often overlooked in national statistics, as it does not always involve the exchange of goods of monetary value and because there is no single accepted method for measuring its economic value. Where it is measured, however, the economic value of voluntary activity and its contribution to the economy has proved considerable<sup>14</sup>. For example, in the United Kingdom the economic value of voluntary activity is estimated at 7.9% of GDP, with 38% of total population engaged in voluntary activity. In Ireland and Germany more than 33% of the population is involved in voluntary activity in one form or another, compared to 18% in Poland.

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<sup>14</sup> Based on the "Facts & Figures Research Project" research document (2004-2006), published by the European Volunteer Centre (CEV) (<http://www.cev.be/facts&figures.htm>)

## 3 WIDER NETWORKS

The current EAGLE study needs to be seen in the context of a number of other networks that share many of the values and aims of trans-generational and intergenerational learning but have not yet fully recognised that working cross-generationally may enable them to achieve some of their aims in a more effective and sustainable way.

In this chapter we have listed a selection of networks involved in promoting citizenship, volunteering, participation and engagement and community cohesion that share core values with the EAGLE project. There is not space here to undertake a detailed analysis of these synergies but instead to note them as potential partners for sharing future learning from the project and contributing to our growing European understanding of intergenerational learning.

Organisations have not been listed in any particular order and we know that this list is far from complete so it should be seen in an illustrative way.

### 3.1 Youth in Action

Youth in Action<sup>15</sup> is the new EU Programme in the field of youth, which was implemented on 1 January 2007 until 31 December 2013 with a total budget of 885 million euros. It is the successor of the YOUTH Programme (2000-2006).

The Youth in Action Programme makes an important contribution to the acquisition of competences and is therefore a key instrument in providing young people with opportunities for non-formal and informal learning with a European dimension.

The Youth in Action Programme is a programme for all. It encourages the involvement of young people with fewer opportunities and addresses young people aged between 13 and 30. This Programme is the result of a large consultation with the different stakeholders in the youth field and is the response to the evolutions in the youth sector at European level. It aims to inspire a sense of European citizenship among the youth of Europe and to involve them in constructing the future of the Community.

In order to achieve its objectives, the Youth in Action Programme foresees five operational Actions:

- Action 1 - Youth for Europe: supporting exchanges and youth initiatives and encouraging young people's participation in democratic life;
- Action 2 - European Voluntary Service: encouraging young people to take part in a voluntary activity abroad that benefits the general public.
- Action 3 - Youth in the World: encouraging cooperation with Partner Countries by building networks, promoting the exchange of information and assisting with cross-border activities;

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<sup>15</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/yia/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/yia/index_en.html)

- Action 4 - Youth Support Systems: promoting the development of exchange, training and information schemes;
- Action 5 - European Cooperation in the youth field contributing to the development of policy cooperation in the youth field.

### 3.2 European Network of Older Volunteer Organisations (ENOVO)

The European Network of Older Volunteer Organisations (ENOVO)<sup>16</sup> formed in 2005 as a formally constituted section of 'Volonteurope' is actively promoting volunteering by older people across Europe. The secretariat is based in London and is provided by 'Retired and Senior Volunteers Programme (RSVP).

ENOVO believes it is the only organisation in Europe to help promote opportunities for the older volunteer. It aims to be the umbrella organisation for any volunteering organisation that wishes to seek opportunities for its own older volunteers and also wants to have closer ties with other European organisations to learn from their experiences. Its aims and objectives are:

- Promote good practice by older volunteers;
- Link in partnership with other volunteering organisations;
- Promote the benefits of volunteering to the volunteers themselves;
- Develop new opportunities for older volunteers;
- Respond to social change by developing new volunteering;
- Open up funding streams for older volunteers;
- Combat ageism in volunteering organisations across Europe;
- Develop tools for measuring the impact of older volunteering effort;
- Develop solidarity of older volunteers across Europe.

### 3.3 European Volunteer Centre (CEV)

The European Volunteer Centre (CEV)<sup>17</sup> is an European umbrella association of 43 National and Regional Volunteer Centres across Europe, that together work to support and promote voluntary activity. CEV channels the collective priorities and concerns of its member organisations to the institutions of the European Union. It also acts as a central forum for the exchange of policy, practice and information on volunteerism. It supports networking among its members and organises conferences, seminars, workshops and other activities such as research.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.enovo21.org/en/index.html>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.cev.be>

The members of CEV represent thousands of volunteer organisations, association and other voluntary and community groups at local, regional and national level. Together they work to influence policy; strengthen the infrastructure for volunteering in the countries of Europe; and to promote volunteering and make it more effective. CEV believes that voluntary action is at the heart of European ideals of democracy, active citizenship, participation and empowerment. CEV sees volunteering is as:

- Central to European ideals of democracy, inclusion and active citizenship;
- Undertaken of a person's own free-will without concern for financial gain;
- Driven by personal commitment;
- A powerful tool for positive social and environmental change;
- A source of empowerment of the disenfranchised;
- A source of reconciliation and reconstruction in divided societies;
- A means of Lifelong Learning.

CEV is actively engaged in:

- Promoting volunteering to the general public, the media, businesses and policy-makers;
- Policy development and research;
- Advocacy in the European Union;
- Supporting existing National and Regional Volunteer Centres throughout Europe;
- Supporting the development of new Volunteer Centres;
- Strengthening networking between Volunteer Centres and other voluntary bodies throughout Europe;
- Supporting organisations promoting innovation and wishing to implement good practice in their involvement of volunteers.

### **3.4 Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service**

The International Voluntary Service<sup>18</sup> began in its modern form in 1920. The idea was the result of a meeting of a group of Europeans following the First World War (1914-1918). They decided that they had to do something active to try to deal with both the dreadful effects of the war, and to find a way to remove the causes of conflict. Volunteers from former enemy countries were invited to rebuild a village in France, which had been the scene of some of the fiercest fighting. The international group of volunteers built houses and lived together in an international community.

After World War II, new organisations sprang up to help reconstruct Europe, both physically and in terms of bringing former enemy populations together. These new organisations nee-

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/ccivs>

ded co-ordination. With the support of the recently established United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) was created in 1948. Over the following 50 years, CCIVS expanded its membership from a West-European base to include youth movements in Eastern Europe and volunteer organisations in Africa, Asia, Arab Countries and Americas.

The objectives of CCIVS are related to the promotion and development of the voluntary service movement on national, regional and international levels in the contemporary world:

- Towards peace, international understanding, friendship and co-operation among the people of the world, particularly the youth, in order to advance and improve the future of humanity;
- Towards the development and the furthering of efforts concerning developing countries, in order to strengthen their national independence;
- In Solidarity with people struggling for national independence, democracy, social progress and against all forces not observing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- For the benefit of people affected by all forms of social and economic exploitation, unemployment and bad working and living conditions, and the promotion of awareness and action against these forms of degradation;
- For the benefit of a fruitful co-ordination of the activities of the CCIVS members.

In order to achieve:

- The propagation and development of the aims of voluntary service and its educational impact both on the volunteers and the community in which they work;
- The promotion and development of relations and co-operation with other voluntary service organisations, with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), with youth and student organisations and movements on a broad political, religious and social spectrum, which are dedicated and committed to contributing to the objectives of the voluntary service movement;
- The support of the United Nations Principles: co-operation and contribution to the implementation of the programmes and the initiatives of the United Nations and its bodies on questions of common interest, especially to develop co-operation on a broader scale with UNESCO, striving for the realisation of common initiatives and the contribution to each other programmes.

### **3.5 Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (AVSO)**

Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (AVSO)<sup>19</sup> is an international non-governmental organisation and an European platform of non-profit organisations offering opportunities for long-term full-time international and/or national voluntary service. Many of AVSO's member organisations are international networks and associations themselves. Including their members, AVSO represents more than 110 national organisations across Europe.

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<sup>19</sup> [http://www.avso.org/index/index\\_whatsavso.html](http://www.avso.org/index/index_whatsavso.html)

AVSO promotes full-time, long-term voluntary service by advocacy activities, by lobbying governmental institutions at the European and national levels and by networking with other non-governmental and public organisations. AVSO strives to promote trans-national voluntary service by offering support services to organisations involved directly or indirectly in volunteering, e.g. by policy monitoring, by organising training and partnership-building events and by identifying best practice and sharing expertise. AVSO is active in the following areas:

- Youth program;
- Youth policy;
- Legal status of volunteers;
- Disability;
- Inclusion;
- Environment;
- EU citizenship and democracy;
- Education and Culture.

Member organisations have to be directly involved with voluntary service or the promotion of voluntary service in general. Dealing with volunteers, the organisations can at the same time be involved in environmental, social or educational issues. AVSO has currently 13 member organisations, which are local or national sending and hosting organisations but also international networks located in different EU member countries

### 3.6 UNITED

The European Network UNITED<sup>20</sup> of more than 560 organisations from 49 European countries working together against nationalism, racism, and fascism and in support of migrants and refugees. It seeks to develop respect for different approaches and to promote cooperation across national and cultural borders to make our multicultural societies work. UNITED takes action through European campaigns such as Action Week against Fascism and International Refugee Day.

### 3.7 my EUROPE

myEurope<sup>21</sup> is a web based project that aims to help teachers raise their pupil's awareness of what it means to be a young citizen in Europe. By involving a network of more than 7000 schools the diversity of Europe is brought in to the classroom via the internet.

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.united.non-profit.nl>

<sup>21</sup> [www.eun.org/portal/index.htm](http://www.eun.org/portal/index.htm)

### 3.8 World Volunteer Web

The World Volunteer Web<sup>22</sup> is maintained by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme in partnership with the following organizations:

- CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation;
- Inter-American Development Bank (IDB);
- International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE);
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC);
- Merrill Associates;
- Millennium Campaign;
- OneWorld.net;
- Portal do Voluntário.

The World Volunteer Web supports the volunteer community by serving as a global clearing-house for information and resources linked to volunteerism that can be used for campaigning, advocacy and networking. It is an online hub where the community can meet, share resources and coordinate activities to mobilize volunteer action in support of the [Millennium Development Goals](#).

With a constituency comprising of over 20,000 organizations and individuals, the World Volunteer Web helps to catalyze partnerships among volunteer stakeholders from all continents. This website is also the global focal point for [International Volunteer Day](#) (IVD), celebrated around the world every 5<sup>th</sup> of December.

The mission of the World Volunteer Web is derived from the November 2002 UN General Assembly resolution that led to the creation of this website:

- Make available to the global volunteer community an online reference point for information and resources related to all forms of volunteerism worldwide;
- Provide the volunteer community with tools and resources for sharing information and knowledge and for networking;
- Invite other volunteer sector stakeholders to partnerships to promote volunteerism through a voluntary and collaborative approach.

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org>

### 3.9 International Association for Voluntary Effort (IAVE)

The International Association for Voluntary Effort (IAVE)<sup>23</sup> is an international non-governmental organisation that promotes, celebrates and strengthens volunteerism world-wide. IAVE has individual and organisational members in some 80 countries around the world. IAVE offers a range of services and benefits to its members that include:

- Newsletter in four languages and members' e-bulletin;
- Exchanges of experience;
- Biennial world conference;
- Regional conferences across the world;
- Access to networks and contacts.

### 3.10 Institute for Citizenship

The Institute for Citizenship<sup>24</sup> is an independent charitable trust. Its aim is to promote informed, active citizenship and greater participation in democracy and society through a combination of community projects, research, education and discussion and debate. Young people may not be able to vote before they are 18, but they can make a positive contribution to their communities. Young people should be actively involved in decision-making, both in schools and in the wider community. They should be encouraged to think critically about their role in society and their potential as agents for change.

The Advisory Group on Citizenship's 1998 report states that one of the main aims of Citizenship education is "for people to think of themselves as active citizens, willing, able and equipped to have an influence in public life" For this to occur, Citizenship education needs to be thought provoking, inspiring and actively engage students with the political, social and moral issues of the world around them. It is recognised that such learning cannot be purely abstract and classroom based but also requires young people to learn through active participation and involvement in real experiences in the school and wider community. To this extent, one of the key elements of the National Curriculum Citizenship Programme of Study is aimed at developing students' skills of participation and responsible action.

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.iave.org>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.citizen.org.uk/index.html>

### 3.11 International Consortium for Intergenerational Programmes (ICIP)

The International Consortium for Intergenerational Programmes (ICIP)<sup>25</sup> of the Beth Johnson Foundation is the only international membership organisation focused solely on promoting intergenerational programmes, strategies and public policy from a global perspective. Launched at an international meeting of intergenerational specialists in The Netherlands in October 1999, ICIP represents the culmination of the vision and work of many people who saw the importance of bringing together policy makers, academics and practitioners to promote intergenerational practice. The aims of the consortium are:

- To promote and develop intergenerational programmes and practices nationally and internationally;
- To develop a systematic approach to understanding why intergenerational programmes and practices work;
- To promote the importance of intergenerational programmes and practices as agents for global social change.

To achieve its aims, ICIP is involved in a range of activities that include:

- Holding a biennial international conference;
- Producing a regular newsletter;
- Provide a website;
- Develop a database of members' programmes and interests.

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<sup>25</sup> [www.icip.info](http://www.icip.info)

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## 4 GENERAL STATUS OF INTERGENERATIONAL PRACTICES IN SIX EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

### 4.1 Date Collection

EAGLE project produced national reports on inter-generational initiatives as well as policies related to these initiatives on six European countries: Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania and England. The aim of national reports was to provide an overview of current inter-generational practice in these countries. Information was collected on:

- National context;
- Effects of ageing;
- Adult learning possibilities especially in the light of an increasingly aging population;
- Main features of the national policy documents and strategies related to intergenerational practices including those policies that intergenerational learning has relevance to but which may not yet be using descriptors such as intergenerational/trans-generational;
- Intergenerational learning activities.

### 4.2 Effects of Ageing

All the populations of the six countries studied have been ageing as a result of declines both in fertility rates and in the mortality rates. The source of the problem is not higher life expectancy as such; rather it is the inability of current policies to adapt to the new demographic order and the reluctance of businesses and citizens to change their expectations and attitudes, particularly in the context of labour market modernisation. In short, the Member States are facing a problem of retirement rather than a problem of ageing.

### 4.3 Participation in Learning

Education and training rank among the highest political priorities for the Member States of the European Union. Acquiring and continuously updating and upgrading a high level of knowledge, skills and competencies is considered a prerequisite for the personal development of all citizens and for participation in all aspects of society from active citizenship through to labour market integration. Lifelong learning has emerged as an overarching strategy for enabling citizens to meet new challenges. According to the Community Labour Force Survey 2003<sup>26</sup> 58% of EU citizens did not participate in any kind of learning. It appears clearly that people with low educational qualifications participate in training much less than those with tertiary education qualifications. If we compare participation in any kind of learning activity (formal, non-formal or informal) we see that the participation rate is below one

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<sup>26</sup> Kailis, E. & Pilos, S. 2005. Lifelong learning in Europe. Statistics in Focus: Population and Social Conditions 8/2005.

third of the reference population in Greece and Romania, between one and two thirds in Germany, Italy and UK, and more than two third of the population in Finland. Whilst at the EU level, there is no significant difference between the female (41%) and male (43%) rates, these figures vary in some countries. Females participate more in learning activities in Finland and Greece, while in Italy males' participation is higher. At EU level participation rates decrease with age from 50% for 25-34 years old to 30% for the age group 55-64.

## 4.4 Policy Environment

### 4.4.1 National Action Plans against Poverty and Social Exclusion

At the Nice European Council in December 2000, a decision was taken to draw up National Action Plans against poverty and social exclusion as part of the political cooperation between Member States of the European Union in social protection. In terms of intergenerational practices National Action Plans against poverty and social exclusion has a number of relevant objectives. The Plans are based on goals for the prevention of poverty and social exclusion approved jointly by the Member States. The four general objectives are:

- To facilitate participation in employment and access by all to the resources, rights, goods and services;
- To prevent the risks of exclusion;
- To help the most vulnerable;
- To mobilise all relevant bodies.

The first two-year National Action Plans against Poverty and Social Exclusion were drawn up by the Member States in 2001. These Plans in turn contributed to the report on social inclusion submitted jointly by the Council and the Commission to the Laeken European Council in December 2001. After a discussion headed by the Social Protection Committee, the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council approved the updated objectives for the second round of National Action Plans in December 2002, aiming at a report to be submitted jointly by the Commission and the Member States to the European Council in spring 2004.

The general objectives approved at the Nice European Council have proved feasible and functional. No great changes were made to the general objectives for the second round of National Action Plans, covering the years 2003 to 2005. New points of emphasis approved include setting targets for significantly reducing the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, emphasizing the importance of taking the role of gender fully into account, and highlighting more clearly the high risk of poverty and social exclusion faced by some as a result of immigration.

The National Action Plans are prepared by all EU Member States according to jointly agreed principles. The Plans take into account the different situations and points of emphasis in the respective countries, while efforts are also made to harmonize the structure and content of the Plans in order to facilitate mutual learning.

Poverty and social exclusion are closely connected with the fastest social changes and, for example, with structural changes in working life. For this reason, individuals cannot be left to take the responsibility and to find individual solutions; society must accept the responsibility

for ensuring the rights of all its members to a worthwhile existence. Work providing a sufficient income, a good living environment, satisfactory housing, access to services and social networks supporting self-sufficiency form the basis for normal participation and inclusion in society. Universal public services and income transfers support these everyday structures and practices. In addition, specific special measures and programmes are needed to combat particularly persistent vicious circles of exclusion.

#### *4.4.2 Intergenerational Practice a Policy Priority in Germany and UK*

In the **UK** there is an increasing recognition by national government of the important contribution of Intergenerational Work to social cohesion, citizenship and challenging ageism and the need to promote positive roles for the young and old in society. There is also an increasing focus on joined up government and recognition that intergenerational work provides a mechanism to approach policy that is cross sectorial and challenges the traditional silo approach to departmental organization. In addition, there is an increasing recognition of the role of grandparents and older kin and the role of intergenerational learning within the family setting and its potential to benefit both the child and the older person. Alongside this has been a growth of projects that engage older people as mentors and supporters to help to promote achievement particularly for young people who may lack supportive older adults in their family structures. However, at a time when IP has become a political priority funding is still difficult and a main concern for organizations.

In **Germany**, since the beginning of the 1980ies active citizenship and voluntary/honorary work of the older generation and intergenerational exchange appeared explicitly on the political arena and agenda, in accompanying research activities and in practical and model projects, either initiated top-down through public funding or bottom-up approach through private funding. For example, the German Strategy for lifelong Learning adopted in 2004 suggests that new forms of learning e.g. through intergenerational dialogue and volunteering in social contexts and interactions could be probable and efficient ways to exchange knowledge, expertise and problem solving abilities between different generations and to increase subsequently human and social capital. Similar to the new Lifelong Learning Strategy the '5<sup>th</sup> Report on the Situation of Older Generations in German points to the benefits of a multigenerational perspective and to the profits of knowledge exchange and transfer between the generations, either during employment (e.g. professional competence development) or after retirement (e.g. personal development and citizenship). The report recommends fostering further intergenerational practices throughout all formal, non-formal and informal learning activities. The action programme 'Multigenerational Houses – Strengthening the Cohesion of the Generations' is explicitly aiming at transferring the cooperation of the generations from private to public settings. The multigenerational houses are using the expertise and potentials of all generations by being open community drop-in centres, where all generations can meet.

#### *4.4.3 Intergenerational Practice not apparent in Policy Agendas in Romania, Finland, Italy and Greece*

In **Romania**, there is an increasing recognition by the national government and the local authorities that social cohesion, citizenship and the ageing of population are major issues that have to be approached coherently through policies and programmes. However, in approaching ageing, social inclusion and citizenship the potential of intergenerational work is

not yet acknowledged formally by the national and local authorities and at this moment there are no policies in place that promote or enhance learning and social inclusion through intergenerational work. Although, intergenerational practices appear in educational and professional processes initiated and implemented by public bodies or professional ones (the system of apprenticeship in VET education, the system of mentoring in the pre and in-service training of future teachers and lawyers, citizenship education as part of the compulsory component of the New National curriculum for primary and secondary education), the potential of such work is not yet apparent in policies and in national programmes.

Although lifelong learning is increasingly becoming the **Finnish** way of life, intergenerational practice has not become a political priority, and consequently it does not appear in policies or national programmes. Nevertheless some steps towards the direction of intergenerational practices can be found, e.g. according to the Government Education and Research Programme 2003-2008 one special aim in developing the operational structures in education and training provision will be to enhance collaboration between the different sectors and forms of education and to boost flexibility, performance and efficacy. Wider use will be made of learning in non-formal environments. The nature of liberal adult education as an institutional network responding to citizens' needs and its status in promoting social cohesion, democratic values and active citizenship will be strengthened.

In **Greece**, lifelong learning activities are not well developed, and consequently intergenerational practice does not appear in policies or national programmes. As it is stated in the National Reforms Program, elderly individuals' active participation is promoted. The Government is promoting active ageing policies (up until retirement age), as well as re-training and life long learning in order to upgrade elderly individuals' skills. The Government puts an emphasis on full employment, yet no substantial policy measures have been taken to encourage older workers to remain longer in employment and support for skills development. Although older people are considered to be a disadvantage in the Greek labour market, neither the government nor the social partners have paid much attention to the question of their continuous employment.

In **Italy**, intergenerational learning is strictly related to employment strategy and national policy documents do not clearly indicate 'intergenerational learning' as a major objective. This is due to the fact that the intergenerational processes have started recently, and Italian companies are realizing that old and young workers' competences are different, not interchangeable but rather complementary. According to recent investigations, lots of the best senior workers prematurely pulled out of their jobs, have been or are being asked to re-enter their jobs. They are now offered new responsibilities such as to train young workers of the same company.

## 4.5 General Status of Intergenerational Practices

### 4.5.1 *Intergenerational practices well developed in UK and Germany*

Within the **UK** there is a strong recognition of the potential for mutual learning and support and for the need to provide more contact between the generations.

Within the last decade, a considerable amount of Intergenerational Activity has been undertaken and a feature of this is that projects are increasingly evaluating and disseminating

their findings to a wider audience. To date the interest by the academic community has been limited.

A major factor in the development of many Intergenerational programmes has been the increasing recognition of the need to develop volunteering opportunities for older people, both to strengthen current social provision and in recognition of the value to older people and their communities of them being engaged in life-long learning processes and the resource that they represent. However, the conceptual understanding of why this is important, how it operates and what it can achieve is still in its infancy.

Within England and the wider UK there is a growing interest in intergenerational practice at all levels from community groups to national government. A wide range of intergenerational learning opportunities are evidenced including formal skills exchange, transmission of knowledge and history and activities that promote citizenship and social cohesion. The breadth of this interest is illustrated by the 900 organisations and individuals who are members of the Centre for Intergenerational Practice (CIP).

This interest in IP as an agent for Social Change is reflected in the actions of national government. In Wales and Scotland both governments have made funding available to establish national Centres of Intergenerational Practice to partner the Centre in England. Government documents make increasing reference to the importance of developing relationships across the generations to develop safer, healthier and more cohesive communities and there are increasing opportunities to fund activities.

However, whilst there is a strong framework to support practitioners and an increasing understanding by policy makers the evidence base for the impact of IP in England still needs to be considerably strengthened. Increasingly project staff is writing up and evaluating their projects and this is building the literature base. The Approved Provider Standard has established a bench mark to begin to measure quality but the development of research studies by the academic community to assess the broader and more sustainable impact of the many initiatives is still very limited.

The challenge in the UK is to build on the broad foundation of practice that now exists to develop a greater understanding of how IP can be used most effectively to promote systems on trans and inter generational learning that have a long term impact on the quality of relationships and experiences of people in our society.

The variety of intergenerational activities in **Germany** on programme and project level is remarkable; they address almost the entire spectrum of possible themes and involve a multitude of different actors and stakeholders. Existing intergenerational policies, programmes, initiatives and projects aiming at re-uniting separated generations and sharing resources between them, can be categorised by the following aims and objectives:

- Learning from each other (e.g. skills and capacity development, digital literacy, employment, oral and local history, reminiscence, preserving cultural heritage);
- Helping and supporting each other (e.g. childcare support for single parents, mentoring and mediation for pupils and youngsters, support for migrants, interaction between day care centres for children and retirement homes, civic participation);
- Living together (e.g. multi-generational living, neighbourhood/community living);



- Experiencing together, opening up collaborative spaces (e.g. pedagogical initiatives in museums, community centres and work);
- Playing, acting and performing together (e.g. arts, theatre, music, festivals, workshops).

In Germany the concepts of intergenerational practice, human and social capital and social inclusion are strongly interrelated as both make reference to actual and potential resources of social networks for the individual, formally and informally shared norms and values between members of social networks, reciprocity and trust within these networks and between the individual and the network. As a consequence intergenerational learning is viewed as a prime, but not fully exploited resource base for individuals, groups and the society at large. Individuals able to access and rely upon these resources and relationships increase their chances for personal and professional development; communities benefit from enlarged mutual exchange, active participation and cooperation; and societies become more cohesive and inclusive. As a consequence the benefits of intergenerational practice and learning from other generations are nowadays widely accepted.

As the benefits of intergenerational exchange and learning are widely recognised in Germany, the landscape of activities is rich, manifold and highly diversified. The variety of intergenerational activities in Germany on programme (mostly top-down) and project (mostly bottom-up) level is remarkable; they address almost the entire spectrum of possible themes (e.g. community development, learning, mentoring, mediation, media educations, individual, family, community and social support in general, employability, history and reminiscence, health, arts, environmental protection) and involve a multitude of different actors and stakeholders from all ages and generations.

Measures to foster intergenerational practice in Germany are furthermore strongly related to programmes aiming at strengthening civil engagement, active citizenship and voluntary work as many programmes, initiatives and projects are trying to engage citizens of all ages on an honorary basis.

Apart from own funds of organisation and voluntary work of individuals, intergenerational projects can rely on a variety of funding streams of public (e.g. European, national, federal state level, regional) and private origin (e.g. foundations, own funds of organisation, sponsorship). Especially foundations are playing an increasingly important role in funding intergenerational activities. Nevertheless many projects are struggling with their continuation i.e. with the sustainability after the end of the funding period, independent of the funding source.

Intergenerational learning projects in Germany are horizontally localised across different policy areas as reflected in the involvement of multiple stakeholders e.g. not only the Federal Ministries of Education and Research and of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth; but also the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology; Federal Ministry of Health; Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs; Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety; similar to the field of general adult education and Lifelong Learning other actors are public bodies at federal state level; non-profit and profit making, business and public training providers, churches, Chambers of Trade and Commerce, trade unions, charities, foundations, volunteer organisations and individuals.

Finally intergenerational activities and their institutional embedding vary remarkably on federal state, regional and local levels. Due to the decentralised organisation or the German Education & Training (E&T) national programmes are mainly model programmes of a limited scale and time aimed at triggering innovation, fostering research and encouraging good practice. As the 16 German federal states are responsible for regulating the organisation and support of general continuing education (where intergenerational learning in the narrow would be located) the roll out of intergenerational learning and most crucially the funding of those activities towards federal state, regional and even local and community levels seems to be crucial for its mainstreaming, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. As the evaluation of bottom-up projects and of top-down programmes show, the contextualisation and local/community embedding of intergenerational (learning) activities and the focus on the needs of the involved actors (i.e. what works with whom under which condition) appears to be crucial for the success and mainstreaming of intergenerational activities in Germany over the next years.

#### *4.5.2 Informal Intergenerational Exchange flourishing in Greece*

In Greece, intergenerational learning in informal settings is more common than well established institutionally based settings of learning. There are various reasons for that. Greece embarked on the process of industrialization considerably later than the rest of Europe, and under rather violent and short-lived stimuli. This rapid development has produced an imbalance between its economic and socio-cultural level. This lack of correspondence is a common aspect of societies that are in a stage of development that is neither well articulated nor well defined and of societies where coexisting economic, social and cultural structures correspond to different modes of production. Thus it can be said that Greek economy is characterized by heterogeneity due to the coexistence of "traditional" and "modern" components of techno-economic activity. This is also evident in the social sphere where the social structure of institutions, groups, and relations is still in a state of inertia imposed by the past. Social groups and/or classes cannot easily and creatively articulate their role in the context of prevailing conditions and available opportunities.

In the research conducted in the framework of Eagle it became apparent that intergenerational and lifelong learning are concepts that Greek society has not familiarised with.

At the informal level there is a lot of intergenerational exchange because of the traditional familial relationships that are still prevalent in Greece where grandparents play a significant role in the care of smaller grandchildren, a role that has probably been increasing as more women enter the labour market in the past 20 years. In small communities (in semi-urban and rural settings) traditional Greek handicrafts e.g. embroidery, sweet making, as well as traditional dancing and musical instruments are being passed on as skills to the young generation though there exists no clear picture of the extent of this practice. From time to time, through the media there are cases presented from older people, active in keeping traditions alive that start in a more formal way to pass their knowledge to younger generations in order to be used as the basis for new cultural work. At the same time, beliefs and practices passed on from one generation to the next in informal settings are good examples of a society still struggling between the traditional, the modern and post-modern way of life.

#### *4.5.3 Intergenerational Practices not well established in Romania, Italy and Finland*

**Romanian** society has traditionally grown around and encouraged intergenerational communication and learning, as most European societies have, both within the family and within the rural communities or small town communities: knowledge and skills have been shared between generations in the case of parents and children, teachers and pupils and masters and apprentices in different professions and occupations. These activities continue to underpin the functioning of Romanian society. However, intergenerational learning programmes that have an intergenerational learning dimension are not very easy to identify in order to map the phenomenon nationally: projects and activities may happen, but they are usually grass-root initiatives and information about them is not always disseminated efficiently.

In Romania intergenerational practice is at the level of isolated programmes and projects initiated and sustained locally by individual institutions and organisations, private, or, in some cases, public (local authorities). The dissemination of information documenting these existing practices is not done systematically, and there are no channels for this information to circulate on a regular basis.

The only cases of intergenerational practice supported by policy and having a national coverage are those that underpin pre-service and in-service training of teachers and lawyers and the apprenticeship system in VET.

Intergenerational practice is not yet an established field in research, project work or in the decision and policy making processes and sustained work is necessary in order to make this field visible for researchers, practitioners and decision makers.

EAGLE is an important opportunity to open the Romanian context for further work in the area of intergenerational practice: the National Report and the collection of Case Studies foregrounding intergenerational work in Romania are baseline studies that can indicate directions for further work and the point of departure for initiating the collection of data and literature, for sustaining practitioners in their work and for raising awareness at the policy and decision making levels.

**Italy** does not have a specific legislation on intergenerational learning: LLL segments are approached and managed separately and the resources allocation are also different.

Intergenerational learning is in Italy strictly related to employment strategy national policy documents do not clearly indicate 'intergenerational learning' as a major objective. This objective is rather deducible from policy documents and is embedded in recent documents on LLL. This is mainly due to the fact that the process is just started and to that in Italy LLL is not a system yet. Moreover, the two political major forces, the centre-left coalition (now governing Italy) and the centre-right coalition, have different macro-orientations as regard social priorities and categories: the centre-left coalition is mainly oriented toward old workers' protection and defence whereas the centre-right coalition tend to firstly protect young workers. What is missing is the link/communication between the two categories/policies.

Intergenerational learning activities carried out within companies can rely on Multi-sectoral funds for continuing training. Intergenerational learning not directly connected to the employment field are mainly funded by regional or local public authorities such as Municipalities

(see for example the Loom Project in the CS collection), Foundations, private companies etc.. But in the last years the yearly financial laws have generally decreased the total budget allocation to the regional and local authorities and this will further lessen the funding directed to such initiatives.

Inequities in participation in adult education opportunities have been identified: less training for less educated persons, immigrants, those working in small and medium sized enterprises, blue collar workers, older workers and people out of the labour force. In some cases the iniquity in participation is also found at geographical level (e.g adult participation rates in LLL have always been higher in the North of the country).

A recent datum related to the level of participation in continuing training activities: there is a clear gap between the high level of participation of people aged between 25 and 54 and the low rate of participation among people aged over 55 and youngsters below the age of 24. This datum emerged from the investigation carried out by ISFOL in 2004. The recent Italian policy agenda did not develop an integrated approach to give a response to that worrying trend and did not yet identify the adequate tools to properly fight against this problem.

Nevertheless there is a flurry of learning activities targeted to adults and elderly (and among them intergenerational learning is emerging), both in the formal and in the non-formal sectors, but:

- That wealth of supply runs the risk of becoming redundant leading to overlapping activities (there are a lot of initiatives in the field of digital literacy targeted to elderly involving students as teachers).
- The lack of integration among them is another problem, each experience/institution/sector tends to act independently and as a result the fragmented supply is not always consistent with the effective demand;
- The plurality and variety of subjects providing that supply is a real challenge: their institutional or non-institutional nature, their mission, their powers, functions and competences are extremely diversified.

Among problems/barriers to the success of adult education, and thus elderly as well as intergenerational learning, we also identified:

- Lack of adequate pedagogical solutions to cope with the needs of training of people aged over 55;
- Lack of adequate policy;
- Limited funding options/dependence on the European Social Fund (ESF);
- Limited awareness and acceptance of social responsibility of companies. This is especially true for regions with a high number of small and medium sized companies;
- People over 55 do not have the possibility to ask for a part-time contract: the opportunity to have recourse to their skills and experience – using them as a mentor, for example - is therefore missed;
- Lack of recognition of competences acquired in the past.

Adult education and life-long learning have emerged as increasingly important components in the **Finnish** educational policy and planning. The life-long learning model has meant that



alongside the traditional institution-centred or formal learning, there is a new kind of non-formal, informal and casual learning. Although lifelong learning has become the Finnish way of life, the desk and field research shows that intergenerational practices are not well developed in Finland, except in the University of the Third Age. As traditional values recede, the risk is that people become marginalised and feel lonely.

Furthermore, there is a strong need to provide more contact between generations, because activities across generations are very scarce. The challenge is to promote and maintain values which favour communality and the acceptance of difference, as well as to encourage active memberships of civil society, which could be achieved by developing intergenerational practices. Nevertheless, some intergenerational practices have a long tradition in Finland. Among them are voluntary work camps where people of different ages work for the benefit of the local communities or manage and conserve traditional rural biotopes.

According to an action research carried out by Johanna Moilanen (2005) the international models of intergenerational practises cannot be transferred directly to the Finnish society, but they need to be adapted and developed to meet the national and local needs. The most effective way to reduce poverty and social exclusion is to adopt a preventive approach as the primary operating model. According to Moilanen (2005) intergenerational practices can be successfully used in preventive child welfare work. Finland's population is ageing more rapidly than in any other OECD country, and intergeneration practices can offer a tool to provide education enhancing the retired population's quality of life, since education and cultural services constitute a key factor for the welfare and active life of the ageing population.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

Intergenerational learning is characterised by non-formal learning processes mostly enacting in parallel to mainstream E&T systems, but especially by informal or incremental learning activities, which are often spontaneous and self-managed, not necessarily intentional and not targeted towards a specific achievement and/or performance. Informal learning is the source of approximately 80% of what we learn in our life. Informal intergenerational learning can be perceived a process, through which individuals acquire skills and knowledge, but also attitudes and values, from daily experience and from all educational resources and influences in their own environment i.e. at home, at work, at play, through conversations, through media etc. Learning in this sense is a natural and continuous supplement to everyday life of individuals. Learning should not be regarded as distinct entities but instead as semi-permeable categories in complex and constant interactions in professional and private lives as they become more and more integrated in the emergent Knowledge Society.

The concepts of intergenerational learning, social capital and inclusion are furthermore strongly interrelated as both make reference to i) actual and potential resources of social networks for the individual, ii) formally and informally shared norms and values between members of social networks, iii) reciprocity and trust within these networks and between the individual and the network. As a consequence intergenerational learning was and is a prime resource base for individuals, groups and the society at large. Individuals able to access and rely upon these resources and relationships increase their chances for personal and professional development; communities benefit from enlarged mutual exchange, active participation and cooperation; and societies become more cohesive and inclusive. On the other hand social capital is not equally available to all citizens as geographic, individual, social and inter-generational isolation might limit the access to resources. Furthermore social capital is not created equally, but mediated through psycho-social, socio-demographic and socio-economic variables.

The conducted desk research highlights the benefits of intergenerational practice, learning and exchange, which are in the meantime widely recognised, but not equally implemented in practice in European Member States:

- Uniting segregated generations and building better understanding between generations;
- Encouraging active citizenship and social participation;
- Encouraging cross-generational working;
- Sharing societal and professional resources, tacit and explicit knowledge among generations;
- Challenging social problems cross-generationally;
- Supporting Lifelong and Lifewide Learning;
- Maintaining & building human and social capital simultaneously.

Intergenerational practice is a political priority both in Germany and UK. In UK there is an increasing recognition by national government of the important contribution of Intergenera-

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tional Work to social cohesion, citizenship and challenging ageism and the need to promote positive roles for the young and old in society. In Germany, since the beginning of the 1980ies intergenerational exchange appeared explicitly on the political arena and agenda. However, intergenerational practice does not appear in policy agendas in Romania, Finland, Italy and Greece. This is peculiar especially in Finland, where lifelong learning has become the Finnish way of life.

Intergenerational practices are well developed in UK and Germany. In UK a major factor in the development of many Intergenerational programmes has been the increasing recognition of the need to develop volunteering opportunities for older people, both to strengthen current social provision and in recognition of the value to older people and their communities of them being engaged in life-long learning processes and the resource that they represent. This interest in IP as an agent for Social Change is reflected in the actions of national government. In Wales and Scotland both governments have made funding available to establish national Centres of Intergenerational Practice to partner the Centre in England. Government documents make increasing reference to the importance of developing relationships across the generations to develop safer, healthier and more cohesive communities and there are increasing opportunities to fund activities.

As the benefits of intergenerational exchange and learning are largely accepted in Germany, the landscape of activities is rich, manifold and highly diversified, although intergenerational activities and their institutional embedding vary remarkably on federal state, regional and local levels. The variety of intergenerational activities in Germany on programme (mostly top-down) and project (mostly bottom-up) level is remarkable; they address almost the entire spectrum of possible themes (e.g. community development, learning, mentoring, mediation, media educations, individual, family, community and social support in general, employability, history and reminiscence, health, arts, environmental protection) and involve a multitude of different actors and stakeholders from all ages and generations.

Contrary to UK and Germany, intergenerational practices are not well established in Greece, Romania, Italy and Finland. However, in Greece there is a lot of traditional intergenerational exchange at the informal level because of the traditional familial relationships that are still prevalent in Greece where grandparents play a significant role in the care of smaller grandchildren, a role that has probably been increasing as more women enter the labour market in the past 20 years. Furthermore, in small communities (in semi-urban and rural settings) traditional Greek handicrafts e.g. embroidery, sweet making, as well as traditional dancing and musical instruments are being passed on as skills to the young generation though there exists no clear picture of the extent of this practice.

In Romania, intergenerational practice is not yet an established field in research, project work or in the decision and policy making processes and sustained work is necessary in order to make this field visible for researchers, practitioners and decision makers. Consequently, the EAGLE project is an important opportunity to open the Romanian context for further work in the area of intergenerational practice.

Intergenerational learning is in Italy strictly related to employment strategy. However, national policy documents do not clearly indicate 'intergenerational learning' as a major objective. This is mainly due to the fact that the process is just started and to that in Italy LLL is not a system yet. Nevertheless there is a flurry of learning activities targeted to adults and

elderly (and among them intergenerational learning is emerging), both in the formal and in the non-formal sectors.

Although Lifelong Learning has become a Finnish way of life, intergenerational practices are not well developed in Finland, except in the University of the Third Age. Nevertheless, some intergenerational practices have a long tradition in Finland. Among them are voluntary work camps where people of different ages work for the benefit of the local communities or manage and conserve traditional rural biotopes. The international models of intergenerational practises cannot be transferred directly to the Finnish society, but they need to be adapted and developed to meet the national and local needs. Some intergenerational practices have already been successfully adapted in preventive child welfare work.

At the European level policy initiatives underlines the need to promote a 'cradle to grave' culture of learning in European society, supporting seamless transitions from school through higher education and into adult and informal learning. Closely allied to this vision of continuous learning are other policy agendas associated with skills utilization and development and with social inclusion – particularly focusing on promoting the inclusion of older people within economic, social and cultural life. ICTs can provide the tools for greater independence and a more active life especially for the disabled; the unemployed and, more pertinently for intergenerational learning, older people and the young. Intergenerational learning, as a means to responding to labour market inequality, increases cross-age participation in training and in the labour market. However, the International Consortium for Intergenerational Programmes (ICIP) is the only international membership organisation focused solely on promoting intergenerational programmes, strategies and public policy from a global perspective.

In its various manifestations voluntary activity offers an opportunity for informal and non-formal learning and thus, alongside formal learning, plays an essential part in achieving intergenerational learning. Voluntary activity is inextricably linked with active citizenship, which is the cornerstone of democracy at local and European level. People take part in the life of society not only through political participation but also through the specific solution of social problems. Voluntary activity also promotes personal development: the development of social awareness on the one hand and, on the other hand, the development of key competences and skills, making volunteers more employable and enhancing their active participation in society.

Demographic changes are creating a new society, and these changes are set to speed up from 2010 onwards: ever fewer young people and young adults, ever older workers, pensioners and very elderly people. The challenges of an ageing society provoking changing economic and welfare patterns and a shortage of skilled labour force; the shift from an industrial to a knowledge-based society; gradually dissolving traditional family patterns, more and more individualised biographies and a general decline in civil participation are largely acknowledged by society, economy and policy and measures to tackle those challenges are a matter of vivid public and policy debate. Those changes have led to an individualisation of societal structures, to an increasingly age-segregated post-modern society and subsequently to the disappearance of cultural heritage and societal knowledge.

There is large consensus that those challenges imply a more and more urgent need for new approaches of re-qualification, re-engineering and re-generation within the concepts human capital, social capital, social inclusion and cohesion including aspects of e-Inclusion e.g. novel forms of individual, family and community support; health prevention; new contributions to

child, day and health care; prolongation of the working life and better knowledge utilisation of older workers; efficient networking between public, professional and voluntary services without replacing regular employment by honorary services.

Intergenerational learning has at the same time to be viewed in the wider context intergenerational practices and dialogue. Furthermore the concept of 'Lifelong Learning' (LLL) relates closely to the field as the wide range and large number of intergenerational (learning) activities is mainly located in the field of non-formal and especially informal learning. Measures to foster intergenerational practice are strongly related to programmes aiming at strengthening civil engagement, active citizenship and voluntary work as many programmes, initiatives and projects are trying to engage citizens of all ages on an honorary basis.

Our societies will have to invent new ways of liberating the potential of young people and older citizens. Dealing with these changes will require the contribution of all those involved: new forms of solidarity must be developed between the generations, based on mutual support and the transfer of skills and experience, and intergenerational practices could have an important role on this.