E-N.L.L: Never Late to Learn! Promoting Opportunities for Learning in Later Life

504632-LLP-1-2009-1-BG-GRUNDTVIG-GNW

Comparative Analysis for Learning in Later Life Opportunities (based on the E-NLL Best Practices Collection)

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Introduction

"E.N.L.L.: Never Late to Learn! Promoting Opportunities for Learning in Later Life" focuses on the Grundtvig networks priority 3 - Stakeholder networks in adult education, strengthening the cooperation between practitioners on provision level - training providers, NGOs and social partners, from 13 European countries. It is in coherence also with the priority for promotion of learning in later life.

E-N.L.L is a multilateral network, promoting the cooperation for offering learning opportunities for learning in Later Life.

The EU is tackling the economic, employment and social implications of ageing as part of an "overall strategy of mutually reinforcing policies", launched at the Lisbon European Council in March 2000. This approach has been confirmed at subsequent European Council meetings in Nice, Stockholm, Gothenburg and Laeken as population ageing is observed in most EU Member States. The Social Policy Agenda, annexed to the Nice European Council conclusions, lists EU policy priorities in employment and social affairs, outlining how Member States can deal with the wider social and work-related implications of ageing through mutually reinforcing employment, social protection and economic policies. In this context, active ageing policies and practices which include, for instance, lifelong learning, working longer and retiring more gradually, being active after retirement, and engaging in health-sustaining activities are being encouraged (European Commission 2005c & 2006a).

Although the problem looks well-known and explored in European level, it states much more issues than what is visible at the first glance. Elderly people need different approach to be involved into learning, specific learning paths and encouraging support, and on the other point - the training institutions need additional support to switch to elderly audience. More over, the new LLP actions offer new possibilities for learning in later life, incl. mobility and volunteering, but they need to be made popular and operational amongst the stakeholders.

In order to respond to the growth of population of senior citizens, many countries have made efforts to improve the "quality of life" of elderly citizens, medically, economically, and socially. One important trend in educational planning has been the increasing learning opportunities for this population.

Although engagement in many activities including sports, leisure or learning, tends to decline with age, for many older people participation in learning is an essential social activity. A series of studies found that a passion for the subject, pleasure in the act of

learning, a concern to strengthen self-confidence and to meet people are all powerful incentives for older people to engage in learning. Analysis of the evidence on the benefits of learning also confirmed the success of their studies in meeting their aspirations, increasing confidence, developing new contacts and improving communication skills.

However, the absence of large numbers of older people from adult learning provision does not necessarily mean that they are not interested in learning. Older learners, like those of any other age, move in and out of formally organized learning activities according to personal needs and circumstances. Evidence shows that learning at home grows in importance with age and that older learners are eclectic in the tools they use – from informal contact, to reading a book, or following a correspondence course, using a computer, learning using a CD-ROM, or through the Internet.

E-N.L.L. network combines in an innovative way experienced partners with partners that are new in the field, but would like to learn, thus providing opportunities for institutions with various economic domains (incl.- building, agriculture, ecology...), interested to explore various possibilities that could be offered to seniors in each of these domains to communicate with institutions of a general character or other specifics. E-N.L.L. network has the objective to directly promote cooperation for further exploring the possibilities for learning in later life, offered by the LLP actions.

The E-NLL network unites 26 organizations from 14 European countries, interested to support senior citizens in their lifelong learning activities.

The current document has the objective to demonstrate the lessons learnt and experiences gained by the project partners during the collection and analysis of the existing practices; which to be a completely new experience for some of the partners, and enlarging of existing knowledge for the more experienced ones.

Moreover the Comparative analysis is based on the two-level impact of the practices collected, namely - the seniors and the stakeholders on provision level:

❖ the new challenging learning paths offered to seniors, coming from proven case studies in practices in the European countries.

❖ the stakeholders experience models for cooperation for clear identification of opportunities for the development of the LLL practices in their domain.

In both cases, the impact is significant and tangible, as it is based on a good balance between learning needs and learning opportunities.

Within the process of development of the current analysis, the following two steps have been undertaken:

1. All the partners conducted national surveys for the existing practices for opportunities for learning in later life in their countries,

   ❖ taking into consideration: projects and practices, developed as national initiatives and projects or international cooperation projects, whose products and results could be used as further potential to tackle with the new priorities of LLP - increasing the mobility amongst seniors, voluntary actions, intergenerational and intercultural understanding;

   ❖ analyzing the lessons learnt and identifying the possible pro-and con-s for promotion of further LLP-related activities amongst seniors;

   ❖ analyzing the follow-up practices from EU projects and networks, especially for the partners that have participated in such projects (Znanie, Tempo, bfw, BIT, ESTA, Anka, AEPMR etc.)

2. All the practices were collected and uploaded on the Internet platform (www.enll.eu – specifically created for the objectives of the types of practices and opportunities for learning in later life) according to a commonly agreed template (pls. see Attachment 1), which to illustrate in detail all the different case studies and practices as well as the specifics of the services, provided in the different 14 countries by the 26 partnering organizations.

I.   Overview by countries

There are 13 countries, present in the Project Consortium plus Switzerland, which have conducted the National Surveys as well as collected and uploaded best practices and case studies.

Although the process is an ongoing one throughout the whole project duration and after, until January, the 5th 2011 there have been altogether 81 practices and case studies uploaded by the partners from the countries, participating in the project:

1. Austria

The best practice scope of Austria encompasses two best practices – "Plan 60: Older People in Urban Environment" and Senior-Guides: Older volunteers carry out guide tours for senior citizens, which have been distributed in five categories: Hobbies and Leisure, Travel, Active citizenship, Senior Experts and Activities for providers.

2. Bulgaria

The Bulgarian best practices number 15, distributed in the categories as follows: ICT for Adults, Languages, Music, Drama and Art, Health and Fitness, Hobbies and Leisure, Environment, Travel, Active Citizenship, Intergenerational learning, Senior experts, Activities for Providers.

3. Czech Republic

The Czech practices, presented on the ENLL platform are 8 in the categories of ICT for Adults; Languages; Music, Drama and Art; Hobbies and Leisure; Active Citizenship; People with special needs; Back to work.

4. France

The French practice described is within the Active Citizenship, referring to RERS_ Réseau d'Échanges Réciproques de Savoir.

5. Germany

The German practices, which have been presented, are altogether 13, listed in the following categories: ICT for Adults; Languages; Music, Drama and Art; Health and Fitness; Hobbies and Leisure; Travel; Active Citizenship; Intergenerational Learning; Senior Experts; Activities for Providers and Other.

6. Greece

The Greek practices and case studies, which have been identified as existing potential for learning opportunities for elderly people, are 6 in the categories of ICT for Adults; Languages; Health and Fitness; Hobbies and Leisure and Travel.

7. Ireland

The Irish model for lifelong learning opportunities for elderly people is based on 5 practices and case studies in the categories of Languages; Music, Drama and Art; Health and Fitness; Hobbies and Leisure; Active Citizenship; Intergenerational Learning and Senior Experts.

8. Italy

The Italian good practices and case studies, serving as a model of the National survey are 7 in the following categories: ICT for Adults; Active Citizenship; Senior Experts and Activities for Providers.

9. Lithuania

The Lithuanian good practices and case studies, which have been to act as a reference for potential transfer of learning opportunities for elderly people, are summarized into the number of 5 in the categories: ICT for Adults; Music, Drama and Art; Health and Fitness and Active Citizenship.

10. Romania

The Romanian practices and case studies, described and uploaded on the platform are 5 in the categories of ICT for Adults; Hobbies and Leisure; Intergenerational Learning; Activities for Providers and Other.

11. Spain

The Spanish good practices and case studies, listed in the data base, are altogether 4 in the following categories: Music, Drama and Art; Health and Fitness; Hobbies and Leisure; Environment; Travel; Active Citizenship; Intergenerational Learning; Senior Experts; Back to work; Activities for Providers and Other.

12. The Netherlands

The Dutch expertise and experience in the provision and development of learning opportunities for adults has been summarized into 2 practices and case studies in the categories: ICT for Adults; Languages; Music, Drama and Art; Hobbies and Leisure and Senior Expert.

13. United Kingdom

The British scope of practices and case studies encompasses 4 examples in the categories as follows: ICT for Adults; Hobbies and Leisure and Intergenerational Learning.

II.   Overview by partner organizations

The distribution by partners from the 13 countries is as follows:

1. ZNANIE Association, Future in Europe Association, KU TU Ltd and Stroyexpert SEK Ltd, Bulgaria

   ❖ CSO_TEAA: A Bulgaria - Romania cooperation project - on the Way Towards a Europe for All Ages
   ❖ Computer course for 60+
   ❖ Computer course for adults organized by the Confederation of the Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria
   ❖ Daily Centre for Adults "CLUB 100"
   ❖ SINDI - interventional programme for integrated prophilaxy of the chronical non-infectious diseases - "TOGETHER WITH THE POPLE FROM THE THIRD AGE" project
   ❖ STUDENTS-RETIREES   IN   INTERGENERATIONAL   LEARNING CIRCLES
   ❖ STUDENTS-RETIREES   INTERGENERATIONAL   LEARNING CIRCLES
   ❖ Latin Dances Club for 50+ Women
   ❖ "Tulip" Foundation
   ❖ Light Me Up! – Language Lessons for Abroad
   ❖ "Traveling Neighborhood Plate" ("Patuvashta Sasedska Chiniya")
   ❖ SHOPLANG – The Shopping Language Game
   ❖ SENIOR EXPERTS
   ❖ Get to know the Bulgarian history
   ❖ Mountain guides

2. TEMPO TRAINING & CONSULTING, s. r. o., the Czech Republic

   ❖ 50 + actively
   ❖ KEMP – Keep employment by developing e-skills
   ❖ e-senior: The University of the Third Age
   ❖ VTI program in the area of care of seniors
   ❖ Život 90 (Life 90)
   ❖ ELPIDA NGO
   ❖ REMEDIUM

❖ Competencies for Seniors in Action

3. bfw - Berufsfortbildungswerk Gemeinnützige Bildungsseinrichtung, BIT - Büro für internationale Transfers und Beratung, ESTA Bildungswerk, Gesellschaft für Europabildung e.V. , Germany

❖ "EZUS European Center for Universitary Studies for senior citizen in Ostwestfalen-Lippe (Germany) "

❖ ViLE – "Virtuelles und reales Lern- und Kompetenz-Netzwerk älterer Erwachsener" - ViLE e.V. (Network for virtual and real learning and competencies for older adults)

❖ Education center for the Elderly in Heidelberg, Germany

❖ EFI - Experience for initiatives (NRW, Germany)

❖ eGovernment-Guide for Seniors

❖ Empowering seniors to take part in community life (SenEmpower)

❖ "e-Learning in Later Life (eLiLL)

❖ "eLearning for Seniors (eLSe)

❖ Political Participation of elderly people (Sevir)

❖ The Theater of Experiences in Berlin

❖ Voluntary Service 50+

4. ECO-CONSULTANTS S.A. ΒΑΒΙΖΟΣ-ΖΑΝΝΑΚΗ Μελέτες-Έρευνες Ανώνυμη, ERGOMATHISI S.A., DIAN Publications-Educational programs-Consulting, Greece

   ❖ 3D: Actions, volunteerism and mobility of the elderly

   ❖ SEELERNETZ

   ❖ ELDERLY AND NEW TECHNOLOGY

   ❖ TraVeL AGEnts

   ❖ "Craftsmen: Long Term Unemployed People Over the Age of 55"

   ❖ "MOLI: Mothers Improve their Skills A European Union Project within the programme INTI – Integration of Third Country Nationals"

5. IFES - Instituto de Formación y Estudios Sociales, EURORESO, Spain

❖ Senior University (Politechnic University of Valencia , Spain)

❖ "PROGRAM 'SENIORS'.

❖ Matching senior mentors and young entrepreneurs

❖ "CLASSES FOR SENIORS CULTURAL VOLUNTEERS

6. Executive Coaching Solutions Limited, Ireland

- ❖ "Ageing with Confidence"
- ❖ Go for Life
- ❖ UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE
- ❖ Macushla Dance Club is a community based facility for the over 50s to learn, practise and exhibit their dancing skills.
- ❖ Fáilte Isteach – the Irish language for Welcome Inside – is a community project with older volunteers welcoming new immigrants through classes of conversational English language.

7. Associazione BIOCERT, Italy
- ❖ Telemouse
- ❖ GRANDPARENTS ON INTERNET (Non-net)
- ❖ BLUE LABEL FOR "THIRD AGE" POPULAR UNIVERSITIES
- ❖ ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE FOR AGED PEOPLE
- ❖ Study Circles
- ❖ AUSER Time bank

8. Studio TAF SAS, France
- ❖ RERS_ Réseau d'Échanges Réciproques de Savoirs
- ❖ Club d'usagers
- ❖ Bourse d'échanges des savoirs

9. Soros International House, Lithuania
- ❖ TAPE – Transgenerational arts/cultural platform in education
- ❖ Else – Academy project
- ❖ STILL ACTIVE
- ❖ Promotion of physical activity for Seniors
- ❖ "SenEmpower"

10. de Plannenmakers Beleidsadviescentrum Utrecht BVp, the Netherlands
- ❖ SeniorWeb; computer skills for people from the age of 50.
- ❖ HOVO- hoger onderwijs voor ouderen- higher education for elderly people

11. „die Berater" Unternehmensberatungsgesellschaft mbH , Austria
- ❖ Plan 60: Older People in Urban Environment
- ❖ Senior-Guides: Older volunteers carry out guide tours for senior citizens
- ❖ Tramp: Transnational mobility of older people - Working in teamwork projects in crafts
- ❖ Still Active!

12. Asociatia pentru Educatie Permanenta in Mediul Rural, Romania

❖ "Digital Literacy for Adults and the Elderly in Europe"

❖ CROSS AGES

❖ Volunteers- Ambassadors of Change

❖ EAGLE - 'European Approaches to Inter-Generational Lifelong Learning'

❖ SEELERNETZ Seniors in Europe Learn in Networks

13. Lancaster & Morecambe College, UK

❖ Inter-Generational Reminiscence project in a rural village in North West England

❖ Gardening Together

❖ Time of Our Lives

❖ What's On the Web (WOW)

III. Best practice categories distribution

There have been defined altogether 14 categories within the commonly agreed best practice and case study template. The categories refer to the already stated as existing common learning opportunities for elderly people, which describe in specifics the core of the learning idea as well as competence improvement/ transfer and interest for participation provoked.

The distribution within the categories is the following:

1. ICT for seniors

There have been described 20 practices and case studies within this category. The countries, which have listed practices within the category, are 9, namely: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Romania, United Kingdom which can be summarized into the following major themes:

❖ Computer courses for elderly people

❖ EU projects for digital competence development for elderly people

❖ E-government for elderly people

❖ Internet and Elderly People

2. Languages

Within this category there have been gathered 7 practices and case studies. The countries, in which such practices, are common or can serve as a model for lifelong learning opportunities are in 6 number, namely Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands.

The major themes of the practices refer to:

❖ EU projects for language learning, language transparency and promotion

❖ Language skills development

❖ Training centres establishment for language learning for elderly people

❖ Emigrant learning courses

3. Music, Drama, Art

The "Music, Drama and Art" Category has encompassed 10 good practices and case studies, which are demonstrating the potential of 7 countries, namely: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Spain.

The basic themes, listed, are the following:

❖ Dancing lessons

❖ Club for interests – both presence and virtual forms

❖ EU projects – learning via art

❖ Experience Theatre

❖ Training centres – learning via art

❖ Third Age University

❖ Volunteering

❖ Art as an Intergenerational learning tool

4. Health and Fitness

"Health and Fitness" is a crucial domain for the elderly people to be involved in, not only as learners but as experience providers and intergenerational dialogue initiators so that the health and sport-oriented concepts have their sustainability within the time and activities undertaken. There have been described 10 practices and case studies from 6 countries: Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania and Spain in the following major themes:

❖ Sports – practice and experience transfer

❖ Healthy Way of Life – Training Centres and Third Age University

❖ Health and Prophylaxis – Virtual learning

5. Hobbies and leisure time

Within the category "Hobbies and Leisure" there have been identified 23 practices and case studies by the partner organizations, focusing on the core of the interest provoking of the elderly people for participation – the presence of free time. The countries, in which the practices are distributed, are 10, namely: Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom.

The major themes defined are the following:

❖ Daily centres for Adults, based on the interests and initiative for participation: Experience Theatre, Sports, Gardening, etc.

❖ EU projects

❖ Nongovernmental organizations development

❖ Third Age University

❖ Volunteering and Seniors as Future Planners and Change Ambassadors

6. Environment

This category has not been widely distributed among the Partneship Consortium organization. There have been defined only 2 practices and case studies by 2 countries – Bulgaria and Spain.

The major themes, in which the practices are presented, are:

- ❖ Knowledge accumulation – Third Age University
- ❖ Knowledge transfer – Mountain guides
7. Travel

The "Travel" category has recently become one of the top themes for learning opportunities for adults since the existence of free time is no longer a problem and this is the right moment for both entertainment activities out of the daily life location as well as for learning and investigating other cultures, traditions and societies. Here there is also the impact of knowledge distribution by seniors with travelling experiences. Within this category there have been identified 7 practices and case studies in 5 countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece and Spain.

The major themes are:

- ❖ Getting to know culture, traditions, history, societies
- ❖ EU projects with focus on travel and exploration of elderly people via language learning
- ❖ Mobility and Trainings
- ❖ Travel agents – back to work and Volunteering – travel guides
8. Active Citizenship

"Active Citizenship" has been defined as one of the attractive learning opportunities for elderly people, providing them the opportunities for active life though the age and social/public participation in the up-to-date processes. The partner organizations have collected 23 practices and case studies from 9 countries: Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania and Spain.

The main themes of the practices and case studies collected are:

- ❖ NGO development
- ❖ EU projects participation
- ❖ Skills development and transfer – future planning, past sustainability
- ❖ Third Age University and Volunteering
- ❖ Entrepreneurial intergenerational dialogue
- ❖ Learning Circles
9. Intergenerational Learning

The Intergenerational learning dialogue is a crucial topic of discussion of the 21st century since many governments realize that there is a growing resource demand for the ageing population. Young people can be considered as vibrant new resources

especially in terms of new knowledge and family support. The future is in their hands, and the rest will be taken along on the ride, while the seniors possess the experience as well as the practices approved so that the result and outcomes of the joint efforts to be an engine for the effectiveness of the new society and technologies.

There have been identified13 practices and case studies within 6 countries: Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland, Romania, Spain and United Kingdom.

The major themes are the following:

- ❖ Culture and Traditions transfer
- ❖ Mobility for elderly people
- ❖ Third Age University and Volunteering – elderly people as ambassadors of change
- ❖ Entrepreneurial intergenerational learning
- ❖ Intergenerational houses
- ❖ EU projects

10. People with special needs

Within this category there have been identified 2 practices only in one country – the Czech Republic with the following major themes:

- ❖ EU projects
- ❖ Life at 90

11. Senior experts

One of the leading trends as a lifelong learning opportunity for elderly people is "Senior experts" since this is the way of both engaging the elderly after their active life and at the same time making use of the accumulated knowledge, competencies, know-how and experience, thus making them active part of the new society.

Within the category there have been defined 12 practices and case studies in 7 countries, namely: Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain.

The major themes within this category are as follows:

- ❖ Voluntary work
- ❖ EU projects
- ❖ Entrepreneurial intergenerational exchange
- ❖ Trainings
- ❖ Third Age University
- ❖ Environment and vocational guidance.

12. Back to work

This category encompasses 4 good practices and case studies in 3 countries: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Spain.

The majors are the following:

- ❖ Senior experts
- ❖ Mountain guides
- ❖ Keep employment by developing skills
- ❖ Matching senior mentors and young entrepreneurs

13. Activities for the Providers

This category refers to the second aspect of the National surveys conducted, namely the existing good practices for lifelong learning opportunities providers. Within this category there have been listed 13 practices from 7 countries: Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Romania and Spain.

The major themes of the practices collected are:

- ❖ Senior experts
- ❖ Learning circles
- ❖ EU projects
- ❖ Third Age University
- ❖ Volunteering

14. Other

This category enrolls all practices, which do not refer to any of the abovementioned categories or are broader than those. The identified ones are from 6 countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Romania and Spain.

The major themes are the following:

- ❖ Active at the age of 50+
- ❖ EU projects
- ❖ Trainings.

IV.   Trends

Digital competencies development has been defined as both an opportunity for the active citizenship participation of the elderly (ICT courses – Internet, MS Office, 3D, Photoshop, Skype, etc.) as well as of a foundation for the expert potential usage of the elderly people such as in the e-government for elderly, described by the German partners and the projects: ELPIDA, REMEDIUM, VILE, eLSe, eLIL, MOLI, SEELERNETZ, Telemouse, etc. Lack of **ICT** access and skills is a major challenge for developing elderly people's ICT-enabled learning opportunities. This challenge needs to be addressed and although the basic lack of ICT knowledge will reduce as the generations change, similar challenges will remain, because ICTs keep changing. Hence, research approaches should not only concentrate on present problems but develop models to study and follow the learning needs of older people in the future as well. The role and importance of lifelong learning during the whole life course and also at the workplace should be researched and developed, as the role of learning in a knowledge society is very important throughout citizens' lifetimes

What has been noted as one of the most popular lifelong learning opportunities for elderly people is "**universities for the third age**". They were born during the 80ies, thanks to some non profit organizations, as an opportunity for elderly people to have classes about unusual subjects, even without university degree, dealing mostly with general culture (literature, psychology, history, physic, etc.). Now they are spread on the whole territory and the range of subjects they tackle is very wide (from gardening to philosophy). Furthermore they changed their name in "Popular Universities" and now their courses are not only for elderly people but for everybody. In fact there are people from every age group attending to the classes, and the teachers are usually young people which an university degree still looking for a definitive job.

Another experience, where lifelong learning is used as **a tool for intergeneration dialogue** are interesting workshops involving aged people, teachers and students. Some of them are:

-    cooking courses in an elementary school, where students and elderly people have nutrition classes together and prepare foods;
-    workshop with children from 11 to 13 for creating useful things and didactical materials and learning simple maintaining skills;

- memory workshop, where grandfather and grandmothers can talk about their past experiences and show things they used for their games, studies and daily life;

Volunteering is a way for non-employed or retried people to fell themselves useful, create new social relationships and take part in the life of their community. Without considering the acquisition through volunteering of specific skills combined with the service, there are some transversal knowledge and competencies transmitted on the job in the majority of volunteering activities, irrespective of the specific kind of the activity: among them working in groups, cooperative attitudes, problem solving, approaching beneficiaries, mediating among stakeholders, etc.

Generally there is a correspondence between the lifelong learning aims and the educational goals that can be reached through **senior expert** work. For what concerns elderly people volunteering we can describe the following educational potentialities:

- to contact new fields of knowledge: usually voluntary service activities have nothing to do with the previous work, this means that people have to acquire new information and contact new areas of interest and expertise;
- to interact consciously and critically with the information society: often volunteering means not only supplying some kind of service but also tackling the related issues, it requires the ability to collect, verify, process and disseminate information about it;
- to renew believing no more useful for the new life needs: this happens anyway having contacts with new, different people, furthermore voluntary service, letting people contact relevant issues, works strongly on prejudices and biased opinions through direct experience;
- to build satisfying relationships: this is one of the main motivation for people to take part in volunteering, usually voluntary service activities requires contact with different people (other volunteers, beneficiaries, workers active in that field, policy makers, etc) and they contribute to renew social bounds;
- to find priorities according to personal interests: to choose volunteering and one field of action (social, cultural, environmental activities, etc) requires itself the ability to distinguish among social relevant issues and to define priorities. This is why many people look for organizations able to steer them towards possible volunteering activities.

Time banks are an effective tool for promoting the active participation of elderly people (as well as of all the social group risking exclusion) are Non-monetary exchange systems (NES). Exchanging services and knowledge in a system non monetary based can represent an innovative way by which local communities search for an answer to a series of unsatisfied social and economic needs. It can be considered also a lifelong learning opportunity for people with low economic resources or with exclusion problems. The Bank of Time is based on reciprocity, which means that one gives to get back and one looks for time to give it back; in fact, all the accounts should tend to have a "zero balance".

Hobbies and Leisure in their different forms of Music, Drama, Art, Travel, Environment, Health and Fitness turn out to be the global trend amongst all countries, respectively – partner institutions since the involvement of the elderly people in learning opportunity activities mainly refers to the presence of both factors: free time and interest. Thus there have been described different ideas for learning through entertainment: dancing courses, theatre, mobility via travelling – getting to know and spreading skills and knowledge.

Learning circles are an important aspect that needs attention in a society where there are active and healthy people from several generations working and learning. Interaction between generations provides two-way learning on and around learning topics, and the sharing of tacit knowledge.19 In workplaces especially, gradual retirement schemes and mentoring would provide older people with possibilities to share their knowledge with younger workers. Elderly people also have a lot of knowledge about cultural heritage and history that could be shared with younger people, for example, creating in collaboration new ICT-based knowledge resources for future generations. All in all, more research should be focused on ways of using the knowledge of the older people who could teach each other and younger generations.

Conclusion

Learning plays a key role in ageing societies as it can help to address many of the related challenges and opportunities, such as increasing social and health expenditures, older people's participation and contribution to the economy, re-skilling and up-skilling in the knowledgebased information society and inter-generational sharing of experience and knowledge.

If we have to summarize the benefits to elderly people out of the learning opportunities, there can be found as follows:

- ❖ improved confidence, self esteem and sense of well-being;
- ❖ better physical and mental health;
- ❖ increased mobility;
- ❖ improvements in motor skills;
- ❖ lower levels of depression;
- ❖ lessening of incontinence;
- ❖ less dependence on medication;
- ❖ faster recovery rates;
- ❖ better ability to manage pain and illness;
- ❖ increased levels of resilience and ability to cope;
- ❖ changes in behaviour;
- ❖ maintenance, and for some, improvement of attention, communication and memory skills; reduced dependency on others;
- ❖ •reduced isolation;
- ❖ development of stronger relationships between carers and those being cared for;
- ❖ increased sociability with other elderly people being cared for;
- ❖ greater levels of engagement, by providing opinion, speaking up and communicating with others;
- ❖ development of new skills;
- ❖ improved levels of motivation to participate in day-to-day activities; and
- ❖ greater enjoyment of life – something to look forward to and to talk to others about.

Elderly people's learning needs and the barriers to learning they come up against can be overcome by means of the good practices presented in the current report. It has indicated the research areas that need to be addressed for developing tools,

approaches and policies in this area. People interested in learning as such, and also people who are not specifically looking for learning opportunities, should be empowered to learn. These people could be reached more effectively if learning on different organizational levels was offered. First, it is important to empower individual elderly learners by providing them with the necessary skills and relevant learning opportunities. Second, learning opportunities could be developed and the learning resources and places provided to empower different groups, social networks and small communities. Finally, elderly people's learning should also be empowered in larger scale networks, accessible platforms, educational organizations and companies, in ways that are meaningful for all stakeholders.