



December 2022- Newsletter
Best Friends against ageism project
31/12/2020 - 30/12/2022

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What is the project about?

"Best Friends" is a EU-funded project with 6 organisations from 6 countries: UK, Latvia, France, Austria, Greece and Italy.

The number of older people living on their own is expected to increase as a consequence of the demographic change in European Societies.

BEST FRIENDS focuses exactly on this factor and aims to break the isolation and exclusion of older people in our communities, by developing an innovative curriculum / toolkit and collecting inventive games that promote intergenerational communication and learning.

Project Outcomes

During this project, as a partnership, we have carried out intensive research of current needs, developed and produced an innovative Intergenerational learning training program alongside a bespoke Toolkit for Intergenerational learning activities and social participation. As well as developing these tools we also developed a handbook on mainstreaming policy for the project results.

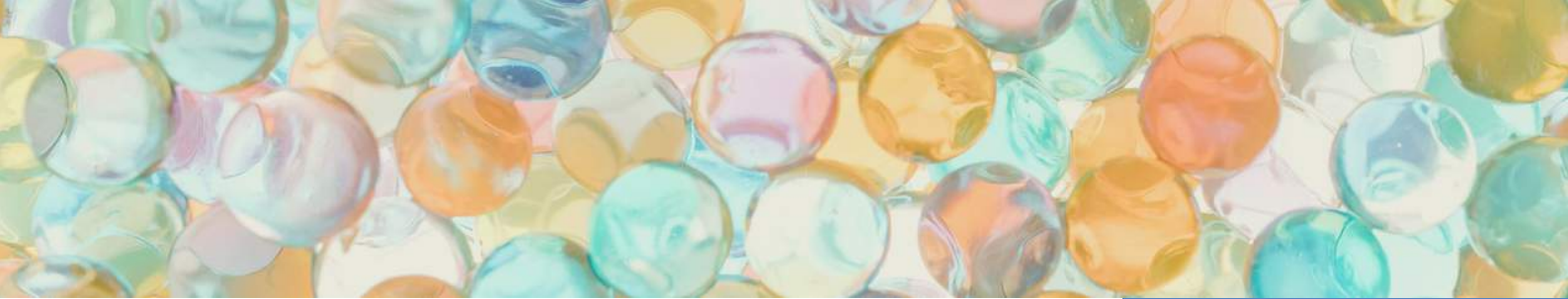
All of these outcomes will enable those working with older adults to:

- Break the isolation felt through social participation and inclusion in our communities.
- Improve their physical and mental health through interaction with young children
- Enrich the learning process of older individuals through their interaction with young children

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Outcome 1 - Comparative research of current needs

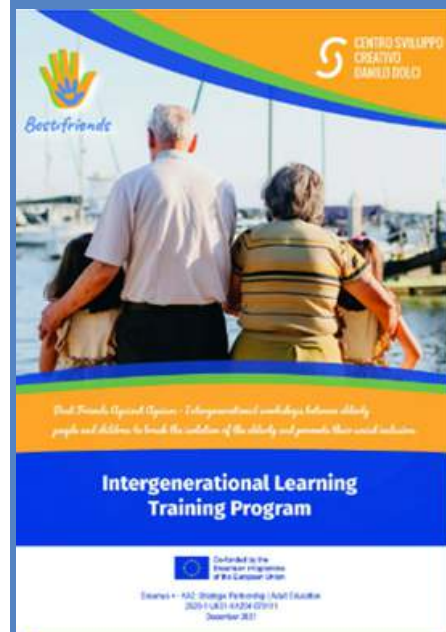
During this period, at the start of the project, we analysed the current situation in each partner country in term of the current needs that the social and care workers, but also the older adults, face. We compiled a 46-page European Report on Intergenerational Learning and Social Inclusion of Elderly People. This was accomplished through: desk research, focus groups with over 60 participants alongside interviewing and recording videos of older adults with the emphasis on Autobiographical Life Stories. These videos are available on the project website and YouTube.

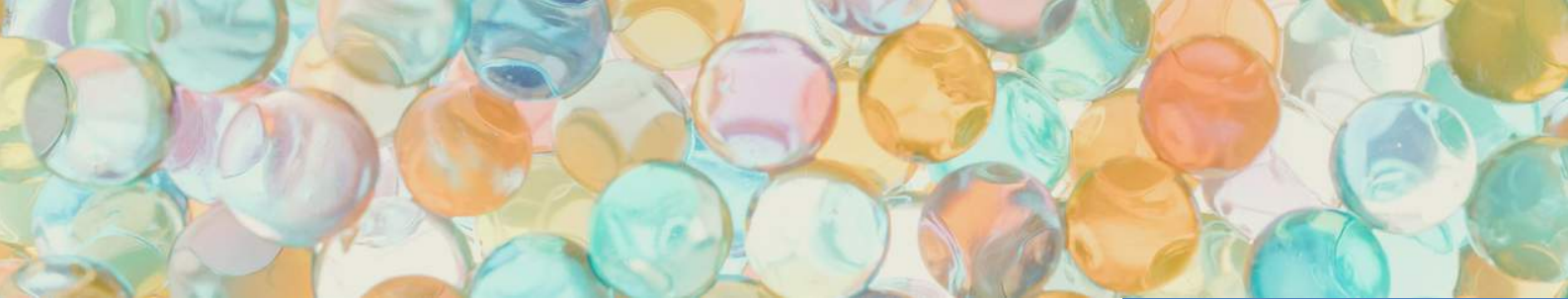


Outcome 2 - Intergenerational Learning Training Program:

The Training Program is a 66-page document including:

- Learning at different ages
- Ageism and Stereotyping
- The concept of Intergenerational Learning
- Intergenerational practice within contexts and settings
- How to plan and implement an Intergenerational Learning activity?
- How to facilitate Intergenerational Learning activities?





Outcome 3 - Toolkit for Intergenerational Learning Activities and Social Participation

The toolkit we produced is a 24-page document including:

- What is Intergenerational Learning?
- How Can Intergenerational Learning Activities Be Designed and Implemented?
- It's Time to Play&Learn (Games and Activities)



Outcome 4 - Mainstreaming Policy of project results

Networking is a very important part of mainstreaming as it enabled us to share experiences and know-how and to inform others on how to adopt the Best Friends approach (which has already been tested by others). As a partnership we have developed a handbook on mainstreaming policy alongside sharing all project results with various stakeholders.

Short Term Staff Training:

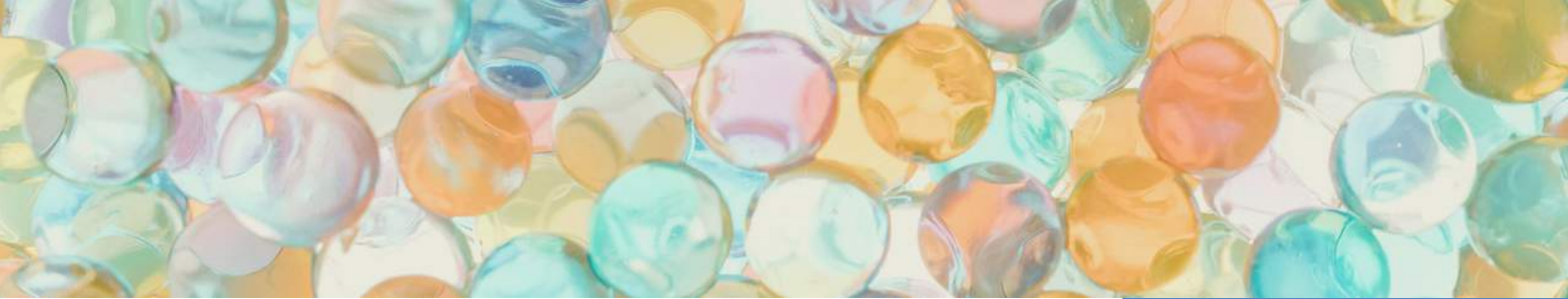
In April 2022, 11 participants from UK, Latvia, Austria, Greece, France and Italy took part in training in the UK. During the training the participants took part in theoretical and practical training. The training enabled the participants to strengthen their skills and competences with regards to intergenerational learning.

During the training, the participants also shared and exchanged practices, knowledge, skills and expertise on ways of delivering Intergenerational Learning programs for older adults and young children.

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Multiplier Events

Near the end of the project all partners held local multiplier events in their country. During these events we presented the innovative tools developed during the Best Friends project.

The focus of the events was to promote the project's approach to Intergenerational Programmes and highlight the achievements.

The emphasis was on presenting all intellectual outputs and the importance of intergenerational work and activities in day to day living.

During the events care workers / social workers and those involved in the project also shared their experience and thus motivating others to embed the approach in their work.

Conclusions

Throughout this project we have actively involved "experts" including Care/Social workers and those working with older adults, as well as older adults themselves, in order to ensure that we produced innovative and most importantly useful guidance and tools.

60 participants took part in focus groups. During the focus groups the partners collated the opinions and contributions of all participants.

30 participants took part in in biographical work (5 interviews from each country)

108 participants took part in pilot testing of methodology for training

108 participants took part in the evaluation of the handbook

Over 53 participants took part in testing and evaluation of the toolkit

30 participants took part in mainstreaming workshops and over 240 participants took part in the multiplier events.

Through rigorous testing and evaluation throughout the project lifetime, we are extremely pleased and proud of the outcomes developed. We are confident that these "free" resources will be used by those working with older adults in order to improve their lives.

Intergenerational learning will increase and have a positive impact, as well as the credibility of its methods and potential impact.

"It was very interesting and informative"

"Really interesting and helpful to understand ageism and how to fight it"

"Practical and useful learning activities"

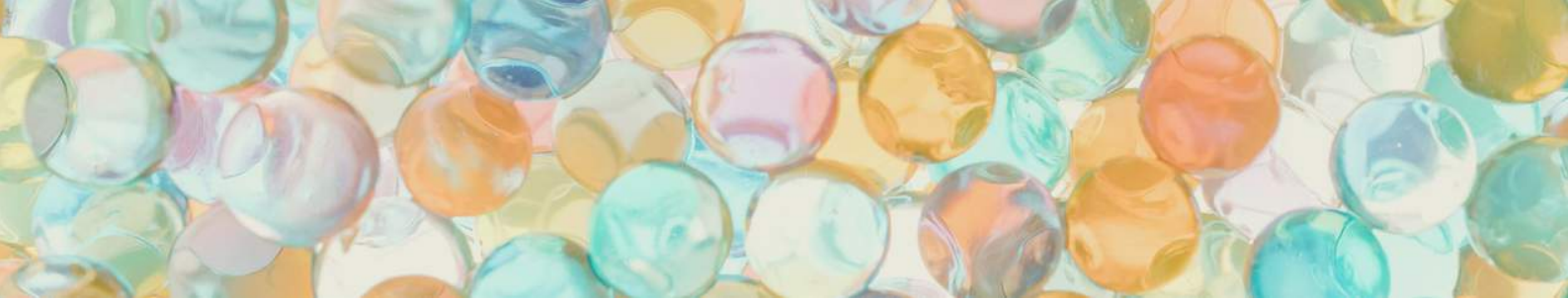
"Interesting to see real implemented activities"

"This is an amazing project"

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