



GOOD PRACTICES REPORT



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1. INTRODUCTION

The world is facing unprecedented environmental challenges, from climate change to plastic pollution, that require collective action and a shift towards more sustainable lifestyles. While much attention has been given to engaging younger generations in environmental activism and education, there is an often-overlooked segment of the population that holds immense potential for positive change: older adults- citizens aged 65 and above.

This report introduces a transformative project aimed at harnessing the environmental passion and wisdom of older adults to enhance their green skills, reduce their ecological footprint, and foster lifelong learning and volunteering commitments within their communities.

Project Overview

- The project outlined in this report represents a concerted effort to address several interrelated objectives:
- *Enhancing Environmental Competence:* The primary goal is to elevate the environmental awareness and skills of both older adult learners and their educators. By doing so, we aim to inspire a shift in consumption habits towards more sustainable choices, not only within their respective organizations but also in their communities.
- *Empowering Educators:* A secondary objective is to support the professional development of adult educators who work with older adults. By bridging the knowledge gap between environmental conservation and social development, educators can provide more inclusive and diverse educational experiences to their senior learners.
- *Promoting Lifelong Learning and Volunteering:* The project aspires to create tailored environmental education programs designed to meet the unique needs, interests, and psychology of senior citizens. These programs will emphasize the importance of volunteerism for both the community and the environment, encouraging active participation in addressing environmental challenges.
- *Combatting Ageism and Fostering Inclusivity:* A critical component of the project is addressing ageism and the lack of diversity and inclusion in traditional environmental education programs. To tackle these issues, the project aims to develop inclusive environmental education initiatives and foster joint actions between seniors and youth, promoting intergenerational collaboration.

This "**Report on Good Practices on Seniors' Engagement, Environmental Education & Volunteerism**" has been crafted with a specific target audience in mind, primarily aimed at adult educators and relevant professionals. However, its potential impact extends beyond this primary group, reaching a wider range of education professionals both within and beyond the project's participating countries, including Greece, Italy, and Portugal.

Primary Beneficiaries: Adult Educators

The primary beneficiaries of this report are the adult educators who actively participate in the project's activities. These educators play a pivotal role in shaping the environmental education experiences of senior citizens and are central to the project's mission of enhancing green skills, fostering lifelong learning, and promoting volunteerism among seniors. For these educators, the report offers valuable insights into effective strategies, best practices, and successful approaches in engaging senior learners in environmental education and volunteerism. It serves as a practical resource to help them tailor their teaching methods and curriculum to the unique needs and interests of senior citizens, ultimately enhancing the quality and impact of their educational programs.

Secondary Beneficiaries: Relevant Professionals

While adult educators directly engaged in the project are the primary audience, the report's relevance extends to a broader group of education professionals and relevant stakeholders.

These professionals include:

- *Educators* working in adult education who may not be directly involved in the project but can benefit from the insights and practices outlined in the report.
- *Professionals* in the field of environmental education, intergenerational engagement, and seniors' empowerment and care who can gain valuable knowledge and ideas for their own initiatives.
- *Representatives from social and environmental government agencies* interested in supporting initiatives that promote environmental consciousness among seniors.
- *Non-governmental organizations and institutions*, including environmental NGOs, environmental education centers, and open centers for seniors' care, looking to enhance their programs for senior citizens.

International Reach

It's important to emphasize that the impact of this report is not limited solely to the project's participating countries (Greece, Italy, and Portugal). The knowledge and practices shared in the report can be of benefit to education professionals in various countries and regions. As a result, the report is a valuable tool for internationalization efforts, fostering cross-border collaboration and the sharing of best practices in engaging seniors in environmental education and volunteerism.

In summary, the **"Report on Good Practices on Seniors' Engagement, Environmental Education & Volunteerism"** serves as a resource with a dual purpose: to empower and inspire adult educators directly involved in the project and to disseminate valuable knowledge to a wider community of education professionals and stakeholders committed to promoting environmental consciousness among senior citizens. By doing so, it contributes to the project's overarching goal of fostering lifelong learning, reducing ageism, and promoting sustainable behaviors in senior populations.

This report is a testament to the commitment of the project partners and stakeholders to harness the knowledge and passion of seniors for the betterment of the environment and society as a whole. It underscores the vital role that senior citizens can play in promoting environmentalism, fostering inclusivity, and building more sustainable communities. Through collaboration and innovative approaches, this project seeks to make a lasting impact on the lives of seniors and the well-being of our planet.

1.1 The Project Description

The project aims to develop tangible, innovative methods for improving the environmental green skills of adult learners over 65 years old, reducing their ecological footprint, and promoting their lifelong education and volunteering commitment to the environment and their community.

It aspires to increase seniors and adult educators' environmental competences and awareness levels, foster the professional development of educators dealing with adult learners over 65 years old, engage seniors in relevant volunteering and community stewardship activities, and reduce ageist attitudes, prejudices, and stereotypes through education and intergenerational activities.

The participating organizations will incorporate new techniques and skills, expand their target group, diversify their activities, and gain experience of the ERASMUS+ ecosystem and network. The learners and volunteers, both seniors and youth, will challenge their biases with regards to environmentalism and ageism, and expand their knowledge and abilities. On a systems level, the project will explore and expand the educational possibilities and synergies between environmentalism, seniors' education, community, and intergenerational engagement. This project clearly serves the environment and climate action horizontal priority.

1.2 Key-words of the project

Environmental Education, Senior Citizens, Sustainability, Green Skills, Climate Action, Ageism, Lifelong Learning, Community Engagement, Volunteerism, Environmental Awareness, Inclusion and Diversity, Intergenerational Collaboration, Sustainable Lifestyle, Environmental Stewardship, Eco-friendly Practices, Professional Development, Environmental Conservation, Civic Engagement, Climate Change Mitigation, Environmental Impact.

1.3 Project Partners

MEDASSET [GR]: MEDASSET's core mission is to contribute to the conservation of marine and coastal areas and protection of sea turtles in their natural habitats throughout the Mediterranean. Its main activities focus on scientific research, surveys & assessments, conservation projects, education, training & capacity building, raising awareness & engaging citizens as well as lobbying, advocacy, contribution to policy making processes at local, national, regional, and global level. MEDASSET works under the main themes of: Sea turtles, coastal & marine habitats, Marine Protected Areas, Fisheries interaction, Sustainable and responsible tourism, Litter & pollution, Sustainable coastal & offshore development, Climate change and Maritime traffic impact mitigation, with 68 programmes and campaigns, 121 publications and articles, 143 technical & research reports and 88 international meetings.

It was founded in 1988 in England and registered in 1993 in Greece as a not-for profit organisation. MEDASSET's educational programmes have been presented to more than 30.000 learners the last decade, including mainly students, teachers and parents. Via school visits, attendance in festivals and other public events, dedicated print and audio-visual material, games and many more, we educate our audience on the protection of marine environment. Since 2018, MEDASSET also implements educational programmes dedicated for adults, aiming at enhancing their relationship with marine environment and promoting good environmental practices. Second chance students and firm employees have mostly participated in these programmes, as well as seniors in collaboration with municipal organisations.

STARTAGERS [GR]: Startagers is a newly founded social enterprise focusing on developing educational volunteering programmes for older adults. Its members have long experience in similar organisations and are passionate in creating a more age friendly stance on life. an organisation dedicated to the promotion of lifelong education, the development of volunteering programmes and activities and strive towards the enhancement of the active citizenship in the senior people in Athens and throughout Greece. The team has long experience in similar organisations and is passionate in creating a more age friendly stance on life. We are interested in seniors' psychology and communication techniques and via this project, the experience in techniques to combat ageism will be offered. Its main activities include: Intergenerational Volunteering Programs, Intergenerational Educational and Cultural Events, Sustainability awareness Activities. It is interested in seniors' psychology and communication techniques and in this project, it will offer its experience in techniques to combat ageism.

EDUVITA [IT]: EDUVITA is an Italian non-profit organisation dedicated to the promotion of lifelong learning and the development of intergenerational and intercultural relationships. It has a long experience in bringing together youth and seniors in joint projects. It focuses on pedagogical research, innovating teaching and learning processes, designing the learning settings based on an intergenerational learning approach, developing new methodologies based on Adult Education and Intergenerational learning approaches. Its areas of activity include: Research in the field of didactics and education with a focus on Adult Education and Intergenerational Learning in collaboration with the Department of Pedagogy of the University of Salento, Digital education, Intercultural learning, Promoting of youth initiative and entrepreneurship (coworking space), Sustainability awareness, Digital education, Intergenerational learning, Intercultural learning. In this project it will contribute its expertise in seniors' psychology and communication techniques and intergenerational engagement practices in volunteering programmes. www.eduvita.it

FUTURE BALLOONS [PT]: The company was founded in 2010. It is located in the small coastal city of Figueira da Foz, from where it reached partnerships with universities, non-profit organisations, multinational companies and governmental bodies. The mission of Future Balloons is “trying to assist in the society transition from the information society to the understanding society”, because personally stored information and knowledge is just necessary up to a critical amount; from this amount on it may grow with creativity, may be strengthened by application, may be spread by teaching. In order to achieve this, the company combines 2 main activity areas: the pedagogical area and the technological area. In the first one, the team develops concepts and methods for a more motivated and immersing education. We involve client organisations and their targets (students, adult learners) in experiences that increase their competences to answer the learning challenges raised by Knowledge and Information Society. In the second area, we produce software solutions that support the pedagogical principles and deliver tools to clients for managing their own offer. FUTURE BALLOONS is built from a strong team of qualified people, although young (average age of 31), who are experienced in playing the roles of trainers, group dynamisers, software developers and researchers.

2. GOOD PRACTICES



in the pursuit of understanding and fostering senior engagement, environmental education, and volunteerism, this report seeks to illuminate the diverse perspectives and approaches employed by our project partners in Greece, Italy, and Portugal.

As we delve into the rich tapestry of international experiences and practices, it is essential to recognize that the journey towards effective engagement with seniors is a dynamic and evolving process.

This report not only aims to showcase the concrete outcomes and insights derived from the survey, study visits, and focus groups but also underscores the broader significance of promoting a sustainable and inclusive environmental ethic.

By acknowledging the unique needs and preferences of older adults, and by exploring the interplay between environmentalism, ageism, and behavioral activation, we strive to cultivate an environment where seniors are not only valued contributors but active champions in the global endeavor to protect our shared planet.

This introductory section sets the stage for a detailed exploration of the good practices identified in each partner country, providing a comprehensive understanding of the nuanced approaches employed in fostering senior leadership in environmental education and volunteerism

Title the good practice/ project/ programme	Aule Verdi. L'orto delle Lune
Webpage	https://www.facebook.com/Aule.Verdi
Place of the implementation	Italy, Rimini, Emilia Romagna
Organiser	Auser Rimini, EONciò
Description	<p>Aule Verdi. L'orto delle Lune is a green initiative involving young students and senior volunteers in co-creating school gardens for healthier and more sustainable nutrition and food economy. Following the lunar biodynamic calendar, seniors volunteer to teach young students agriculture techniques and good practices to grow and harvest "school-grown" products. The laboratories occur periodically from June to September in the green areas of the schools, involving teachers and students' families. The products are marketed in fair trade local networks, which allow the project to be self-financed. The practical sessions are supported by informative sessions, where children and seniors learn more about nutrition and the environment through educational games, discussions, and workshops.</p> <p>As a result: 6 gardens are active in various schools across the province of Rimini (Italia); more than 2500 young students have been involved in the initiative; more than 100 seniors have participated as volunteering facilitators; more than 1500 volunteers have attended the educational and informative activities.</p>
How can this practice be useful for SEAnior leaders project (training methods, tips, ideas)	<p>Aule Verdi. L'orto delle Lune is an interesting model to combine eco-volunteering and environmental education in an interactive way for different generations, involving also the local community and institutions. In particular, senior volunteers play an active and central role as they facilitate the process and "educate" new generations, sharing their multiyear experience in biodynamic agriculture. At the same time, senior volunteers have the opportunity to spend time, learn and discuss environmental issues with younger generations, experiencing the benefits of intergenerational learning and exchange. On a greater level, the ultimate result of the whole process is something tangible that benefits the whole community, with healthier and more sustainable seasonal food. The products of fun work and intergenerational cooperation between senior volunteers and local schools. This model of interaction between senior volunteers and school students could be transferred to SEAnior Leaders as a methodology to involve actively seniors in the protection of the environment.</p>
Key words	eco-volunteering, intergenerational learning, seniors volunteering, active aging, eco-sustainability, environmental education

Title the good practice/ project/program	Adotta un'area verde
Webpage	http://www.quartieriattivi.org/index.php/adozione-aree-verdi-di-roma/ ; https://www.comune.roma.it/web/it/scheda-servizi.page?contentId=INF51478
Place of the implementation	Italy, Rome
Organiser	Municipality of Rome, Quartieri Attivi, and other local organizations
Description (200 words max)	Adotta un'area verde is a program promoted by local urban organizations in partnership with the Municipality of Rome, which allows citizens and local NGOs to adopt a green area for a year. Adopting an urban green area within this initiative implies a commitment to the following activities: taking care of the park or the green area on a constant basis; collecting waste and cleaning the area; protecting and preserving the biodiversity of the place; valorizing the cultural and natural heritage of the area (for example, creating informative panels about the species of the area). The program involves volunteers of all ages and local consortiums in the active life of the community, with small actions that benefit the environment and the collective urban life. Today, more than 200 green areas are "adopted" in Rome, with thousands of citizens volunteering on a daily basis. The initiative is a successful model of active citizenship and green urbanism, which empowers citizens as central actors in sustainable urban life and environmental protection.
How can this practice be useful for SEAnior leaders project (training methods, tips, ideas)	This good practice can be useful for SEAnior Leaders as a program to involve actively seniors in environmental volunteering, giving them the responsibility of taking care of a specific area over time. Moreover, it can be done in group work, which would allow senior volunteers to socialize, overcome loneliness and feel part of a community. As for the place to adopt, there could be different options including an urban green area, a beach area, an extra-urban park, or a green site, depending on the criticalities of the local area. In any case, the place chosen should be "relevant" for the senior volunteers, in order to keep their motivation and engagement high over time. Before the practical activity, the adult education organization should provide educational sessions about the area to adopt and how to take care of its environment. In conclusion, this model could also benefit the involvement of local authorities in environmental education, while fostering the networking between political institutions, local NGOs, and senior citizens.
Key words	eco-volunteering, seniors volunteering, active aging, environmental education, active citizenship, green urbanism

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Title the good practice/ project/ programme	Startagers! Let's get loud!
Webpage	www.facebook.com/startagers https://www.timafoundation.org/grants/lets-get-loud-program/
Place of the implementation	Greece, Region of Attica, EU
Organiser	Startagers Social Cooperative Enterprise
Description	<p>This program aims to raise awareness for seniors regarding the sustainable development goals, as set out by the UN, and in particular "Goal 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts." Through an interactive learning environment, Senior Green Leaders trained to communicate information in their cities on sustainable development best practices in the urban environment. Through a podcast series, Senior Green Leaders communicate their views on environmental matters that local communities face. The program aims to provide environmental education and training in 10 different cities in Greece. ENG & GR</p> <p>https://open.spotify.com/show/4SpZr3xKH6bYG4RiaP0o72</p>
How can this practice be useful for SEAnior leaders project (training methods, tips, ideas)	The training methods and the feedback from the participants will be useful for SEAnior Leaders project.
Key words	Intergenerational education; adult learning; environmental education;



Title the good practice/ project/ programme	Adopt a Beach
Webpage	https://www.sep.org.gr/en/normal/102228/ViewAnnouncementhttps://adoptabeach.wwf.gr/yio8ethse-mia-paralia
Place of the implementation	Greece, EU
Organiser	WWF Greece and Scouts in Greece
Description	<p>Scouts in Greece have partnered with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to launch a new program called "Adopt a beach" in order to collect plastic waste from the shores of the country. The cleaning action is part of the citizen's science initiative of which the Greek Scouts are a strategic partner. The program create an integrated national platform for recording plastic pollution on Greek beaches, a highly efficient approach, as data collection is key in tackling the problem. The main findings will be reflected in an annual report, which will be sent to public services, municipal authorities, and research bodies. The program started as a pilot project in May 2021, with 22 groups of volunteers had already adopted 26 beaches in various parts of Greece, from Thessaloniki to Chania. On average, 925 wastes per 100 meters of coastline have been recorded, at a time when the EU has set a maximum limit of 20 wastes per 100 meters in order to maintain the good environmental condition of the coastline. The recordings also showed that the most common waste on the beaches is cigarettes, plastic cups, straws, and baby wipes. Each team could adopt a specific beach and be trained by WWF Hellas in the process of monitoring and recording waste. The action is planned to be repeated periodically 2 to 4 times a year to create time series and the data from the recordings are registered on the website Adopt a beach in order to be publicly available to everyone. As a strategic partner of the "Adopt a Beach" program, the Greek Scouts have actively participated in the collective efforts of mobilizing its members throughout Greece and raising awareness among young people about the problem of plastic pollution. All programmes are free of charge and require prior booking.</p>
How can this practice be useful for SEAnior leaders project (training methods, tips, ideas)	<p>Creating a campaign to advocate for more ambitious measures to limit disposable plastic products and minimize plastic waste leakage while bringing together different age groups can be a powerful initiative. By combining these training methods, tips, and ideas, SEAnior leaders can effectively lead the campaign, involve different age groups, and drive meaningful change towards reducing plastic waste and promoting sustainable practices.</p>
Key words	Environmental education; adult learning; data analysis; platform; volunteering; intergenerational education;

Title the good practice/ project/ programme	We are Present! Ensuring the Future!
Webpage	http://medsos.gr/
Place of the implementation	Greece, EU
Organiser	Mediterranean SOS Network - An environmental organization that focuses on environmental protection and conservation efforts in the Mediterranean region. Information Office of the European Parliament - This office is responsible for providing information about the European Parliament and its activities to the public. Representation of the European Commission in Greece - The representation of the European Commission in Greece represents the European Union's executive body in the country and helps promote EU policies and initiatives.
Description	The participatory workshop titled "Urban Coastal Areas" was organized by the environmental organization Mediterranean SOS Network, in collaboration with the Information Office of the European Parliament and the representation of the European Commission in Greece. The meeting took place within the framework of the initiative "We are Present! Ensuring the Future!" on the occasion of the European Year of Active Aging and Solidarity between Generations. Its main objective was to engage 50 senior citizens, especially in environmental protection, and to leverage their knowledge and experience while fostering collaboration with other age groups.
How can this practice be useful for SEAnior leaders project (training methods, tips, ideas)	The practice of organizing participatory workshops like the one titled "Urban Coastal Areas" can be beneficial for the SEAnior Leaders project, which focuses on engaging senior citizens and leveraging their knowledge and experience.
Key words	Environmental education; adult learning; volunteering; intergenerational activities

Title the good practice/ project/ programme	Sustainable Greek School
Webpage	https://www.ellet.gr/en/project/sustainable-greek-school/
Place of the implementation	Greece
Organiser	Ellet, Society for the environment and cultural heritage
Description (200 words max)	<p>The Sustainable Greek School Programme is one of the most important initiatives of the Council for Environmental Education. It is a programme that promotes the philosophy of sustainability in the school. A school is considered sustainable if through its organization, existence and operation, it can be a model of good practice for both students and society, to provide students with knowledge and to cultivate skills for them to become active members of society capable of tackling environmental and social problems and shaping the future in terms of environmental and social sustainability. The Sustainable Greek School programme tries to activate mechanisms for the transformation of the school into a sustainable one. The holistic approach of the school as an organization is adopted so that the teachers are encouraged to gradually get involved in the transformation processes of their school and to follow the course of the changes brought about by the sustainability of the school. In this context, the introduction of sustainability in the school is organized around eight pillars, in order to encourage teachers to be involved in their school transformation processes and to monitor their progress towards sustainability, based on categorized-specific pillars with the relevant criteria. Immediately below are the proposed eight pillars of sustainability.</p> <p>1st Pillar: Democracy and participation 2nd Pillar: Promoting Learning 3rd Pillar: Promotion of arts and culture 4th Pillar: Sustainable building and courtyard 5th Pillar: Energy saving / travel policy 6th Pillar: Saving resources 7th Pillar: Promoting Health 8th Pillar: From the local to the planetary scale</p> <p>The Pedagogical and Scientific team of the Program produces educational material, organizes workshops, seminars, summer universities and conferences, seeks the interaction of the schools of the program with each other and discreetly supports the schools that wish it.</p>
How can this practice be useful for SEAnior leaders project (training methods, tips, ideas)	Sustainability and Green skills are very important issues of SEAnior leaders project
Key words	Education. Energy saving. Saving resources. Mitigation. Recycle & Upcycle.

Title the good practice/ project/ programme	Mediterranean Cleanup
Webpage	https://enaleia.com/mediterranean-cleanup/
Place of the implementation	Greece, Mediterranean Sea
Organiser	Enaleia
Description (200 words max)	We work with the fishing communities in the Mediterranean, mobilising them on sustainable fishing practices and incentivising them to bring their plastic bycatches back to the port. The fishers don't collect only fish but also plastic, which they previously used to throw back into the sea. This is why we mobilise the fishers to bring back their plastic bycatches. Mainly between October and May, we incentivise the fishers to bring their plastic bycatches back to port, collecting the equivalent of more than 2 trucks of plastic daily. In addition, between March and June, we are spearheading our actions by incentivising coastal fishers to limit their regular activity and instead collect marine plastic from remote coastlines, helping the breeding and reproduction of fish.
How can this practice be useful for SEAnior leaders project (training methods, tips, ideas)	Sustainable fisheries and marine litter are very important issues of SEAnior leader project
Key words	Marine litter, Fishing, Education. Prevention. Mitigation. Recycle & Upcycle.

Title the good practice/ project/ programme	Pick the Alien
Webpage	https://isea.com.gr/pick-the-alien-eng/?lang=en
Place of the implementation	Thessaloniki, Athens, Crete, Cyclades, Dodecanese and the Argolic Gulf
Organiser	iSea
Description (200 words max)	All actions of the project "Pick The Alien" will contribute to the goal of creating a strong alliance between stakeholders aiming at the promotion of responsible seafood consumption and particularly the replacement of native and especially apex predator species with edible alien species contributing in the holistic protection of the marine environment. "Pick the Alien" project more than 5000 consumers in Thessaloniki, Athens, Crete, Cyclades, Dodecanese and the Argolic Gulf have been informed about the effects and consequences of alien species while they had the chance to taste and rate the gustatory value of edible alien species. Additionally, we collaborated with more than 60 chefs all over Greece in order to create tasty recipes with basic ingredients edible alien species. The recipes can be found in the book "Invading your kitchen" at the Informative Material section.
How can this practice be useful for SEAnior leaders project (training methods, tips, ideas)	Fish consumption and marine litter are very important issues of SEAnior leader project
Key words	Alien species, Fishing, Prevention. Consumption. Tourism

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Title the good practice/ project/ programme	Bootcamp Intergeracional Surfing4Family
Webpage	https://www.cm-mafra.pt/pages/1129?news_id=515
Place of the implementation	Ericeira Camping
Organiser	Municipality of Mafra (Lisbon)
Description (200 words max)	23 participants from different age groups came from different institutions of the Council. The 3 days at the Ericeira Camping, included a wide range of activities: surf lessons, mindfulness classes, and a visit to the Interpretation Centre of the Ericeira World Surf Reserve. Promoted by the Municipality of Mafra and more than 100 students, they intended to carry out an innovative approach and promote active ageing, through the practice of playful sports activities in the family, giving priority to intergenerational relationships and coexistence, reducing the social isolation associated with older people. This activity is co-financed by Lisbon 2020 and Portugal 2020, through the European Social Fund.
How can this practice be useful for SEAnior leaders project (training methods, tips, ideas)	By involving different institutions of the council, it is possible to gather young people and seniors. The creation of this activities is a great way to involve the participants having the theme of the preservation of the sea as a priority.
Key words	Intergenerational relationships



Title the good practice/ project/ programme	Ocean Leaders e School Tours
Webpage	https://www.oceanario.pt/educacao/ocean-leaders-e-school-tours/
Place of the implementation	In person or online
Organiser	Fundação Oceano Azul (Blue Ocean Foundation) and Oceanário de Lisboa (Lisbon Oceanarium)
Description (200 words max)	With the support of the Blue Ocean Foundation and the Lisbon Oceanarium, Schenker and Kikas School Tour will go to schools this school year, in person or online. The Ocean Leaders are Portuguese athletes of international reference in water sports, which through their personal experiences have the ability to raise interest and engage young people, raising awareness of the importance of changing behaviors and a more sustainable lifestyle, promoting emotional attachment to the ocean and marine species, i.e., contributing positively to the creation of a blue generation. The conversations with Joana Schenker and Frederico Morais aim to bring young people closer to ocean-related issues, stimulating creativity, communication and their active participation in the protection of the ocean. The online School Tour is an original format to promote ocean literacy and support teachers with dynamic and fun classroom solutions. All programmes are free of charge and require prior booking.
How can this practice be useful for SEAnior leaders project (training methods, tips, ideas)	Although the activities found are geared towards younger people, seniors could benefit from this knowledge. At the same time, the different age groups could be brought together.
Key words	Ocean literacy



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Title the good practice/ project/ programme	Ocean Literacy: The Essential Principles and Fundamental Concepts of Ocean Sciences for Learners of All Ages (2020) Ocean Literacy for All – A Toolkit
Webpage	https://oceanliteracy.unesco.org/resource/ocean-literacy-the-essential-principles-and-fundamental-concepts-of-ocean-sciences-for-learners-of-all-ages-2020/file:///C:/Users/futur/Downloads/260721eng.pdf - Ocean Literacy for All – A Toolkit
Place of the implementation	Portugal and EU
Organiser	Government of Sweden and to the Voluntary Commitment partners who contributed resources for developing the kit as part of their support for IOC-UNESCO.
Description (200 words max)	Ocean Literacy for All A toolkit is the result of a joint work and contributions of members of this global partnership. It provides to educators and learners worldwide the innovative tools, methods, and resources to understand the complex ocean processes and functions and, as well, to alert them on the most urgent ocean issues. It also presents the essential scientific principles and information needed to understand the cause-effect relationship between individual and collective behavior and the impacts that threaten the ocean health. We hope that this publication will inspire the readers - scientists, educators and learners - to take greater personal responsibility for the ocean, as well as to enable them to act as citizens, working through partnerships and networks, sharing ideas and experiences and developing new approaches and initiatives in support of ocean literacy. The ocean is the great unifier, and it is our shared responsibility to preserve it for the current and future generations. The resources are designed to be relevant for all learners of all ages worldwide and to find their application in many learning settings, while in their concrete implementation they will, naturally, must be adapted to the national or local context.
How can this practice be useful for SEAnior leaders project (training methods, tips, ideas)	The resources could be adapted to the context of each country. Creating a network of partners is important for the implementation of the activities and for everyone's involvement.
Key words	Ocean literacy



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Title the good practice/ project/ programme	The Blue School
Webpage	https://escolaazul.pt/escola-azul/o-que-e
Place of the implementation	Schools from Portugal, Portuguese Municipalities
Organiser	Directorate-general for maritime policy and the Mission structure for the extension of the continental shelf Fernanda Silva (National coordination) - fernanda.silva@dgpm.mm.gov.pt 218 291 012 And Bernardo Mata (Programme Communication and Partnership Management) - bernardo.mata@dgpm.mm.gov.pt 218 290 994
Description (200 words max)	The Blue School is an educational program of the Ministry of Economy and Sea that aims to promote Ocean Literacy in the school community and create more responsible and participatory generations that contribute to the sustainability of the Ocean. This program distinguishes and guides the schools that work on issues related to the sea, creating a community that brings together schools, the sea sector, industry, municipalities, NGOs, universities and other entities with an active role in Ocean Literacy. The aim is to stimulate the school community to understand the influence of the Ocean on us and our influence on the Ocean, motivating schools to work on the Ocean in a structured, interdisciplinary and vertical way, without being restricted to the classroom context, and with reflection at a social level, both from the involvement of local communities and the participation of different partners. The Blue School programme also integrates multidisciplinary marine education actions in a diversified partner network directed towards Blue Schools. Through transversal, innovative and creative learning, a Blue School promotes the development of critical spirit and initiative in students and encourages them to translate their knowledge into effective attitude changes in their relationship with the Ocean. The Blue School programme is the central focus of the chapter "Fostering Ocean-Literate Generations: The Portuguese Blue School", launched in a Springer publication on Ocean Literacy in June 2021.
How can this practice be useful for SEAnior leaders project (training methods, tips, ideas)	Although the activities found are geared towards younger people, synergy with other institutions working with seniors could be beneficial for intergenerational promotion.
Key words	Schools, ocean literacy



3. FOCUS GROUP RESULTS



In the last decades, our society has witnessed two major phenomena:

- the environmental crisis, with climate change, reduced biodiversity, increased pollution, and other changes that are affecting our lives and our planet;
- the demographic change, with the increase of the ageing population, generating a society where seniors 65+ live longer and healthier lives.

This evidence strengthens the need for a mutual effort by all the generations to build a more sustainable and environmentally responsible society. However, seniors are often marginalised and overlooked in environmental involvement:

“Despite the effect that the environment has on older adult populations, there is a lack of involvement of environmental initiatives caused by the lack of inclusion and awareness that is stemmed from ageism and a lack of age-friendly initiatives in the community and environmental organisations” 1

How to change the trend and empower seniors to take action through environmental education?

A focus group involving 8 adult educators and 8 seniors (aged 65+) from Greece, Italy, and Portugal was conducted to get some insights on how to make environmental education more inclusive and suitable to the needs of adult education.

The interviewees shared opinions, experiences, ideas, and advice from their daily lives, to explore how to raise environmental awareness among seniors and effectively engage them in environmental educational initiatives.

Riche, Meagan, "Creating Change: Finding Older Adults Role in Local Environmental Issues" (2019). Community Engagement Student Work. 24. (https://scholarworks.merrimack.edu/soe_student_ce/24)

3.1 Challenges: what prevents seniors from active involvement in environmental education?

“One of the main obstacles we meet when we do environmental training programs for seniors is their way of thinking. They believe these activities are for children and younger people because they are the future and it’s their responsibility to take care of the planet.”

(Kostas Thomopoulos - Environmental educator, Medasset, Greece)

Both the adult educators and the senior interviewees identified several challenges that older learners may experience before and during environmental activities, due to physical conditions, personal beliefs, and societal factors.

Physical Challenges:

- Accessibility: getting to the venue of the activity may be difficult for seniors due to lack of transport or because they don’t drive.
- Staying outdoors too much time can be physically demanding
- Mobility: engaging in certain physical activities can be challenging, especially for seniors with movement difficulties. For example, if recycling bins are too far, this would be an obstacle for them.
- Getting stressed out by the activity
- Health concerns
- Lack of time in their busy schedule

Perceptions and Attitudes:

- Ageism: Seniors tend to believe environmental activities are for younger people, especially because they are the future. They think the climate crisis and the environmental issues don’t and won’t affect them;
- They can’t see the big picture: Some seniors may have a limited local perception of environmental issues, not acknowledging the global threats they pose.
- Resistance to change: Seniors may feel they are “too old” to change their habits and attitudes. For example, they are used to using plastic and they won’t renounce it.
- Prejudices towards certain environmental activities, such as cleaning during a beach clean-up.

Psychological Challenges:

- Avoiding “unnecessary” stress: since they feel they are living the last years of their life, they prefer not to engage in “negative thoughts” such as the climate crisis. They just want to enjoy life and engage in activities not associated with a negative future perspective.
- They feel pointless and useless toward environmental issues because they don't understand the impact of their actions and contributions
- Fearing the guilt: they may fear being perceived as guilty or irresponsible towards the environment. For example, they would lie about their recycling habits.

External Challenges:

- Information Gap: due to the internet, social media, and language barriers, seniors may have limited access to accurate and up-to-date information about the environment, resulting in misinformation, stereotypes, and prejudices. At the same time, they may not be aware of environmental education activities when promoted only online.
- Lack of societal support: they may not receive adequate support or representation at a community and societal level, in the field of environmental causes.

Numerous challenges persist due to the lack of support from institutions for the active participation of seniors in environmental activities. During a workshop, participants candidly expressed their desire to stay informed about environmental initiatives, yet faced difficulty in locating relevant information. Despite their willingness, there is a notable absence of societal backup support. The sentiment shared by participants echoes the sentiment that, at times, seniors feel excluded from communication and involvement in environmental initiatives. This exclusion often arises from the assumption by organizations and institutions that seniors lack interest in environmental issues.

As articulated by Stella Psarrou, Adult educator from Startagers in Greece, 'They are willing, but they don't receive backup support from society. Sometimes, they are excluded by the communication and the involvement just because organisations and institutions assume that seniors are not interested in the environment.'

3.2 Factors of participation: what motivates seniors to participate in environmental activities?

ADVISORY COMMITTEE: SEAnior volunteers talk!

“ My motivation for environmental volunteering at 65+ stems from a strong sense of responsibility for future generations and a desire to leave a positive legacy. It allows me to stay active, continually learn, and find a supportive community of like-minded individuals who share a passion for environmental conservation.”
(Elena, Adult Learner, Greece)

Getting to know the inner and outer “reasons why” seniors participate in environmental activities is the first step to encourage and inspire their active participation.

Following the focus group results, when planning an environmental training program or volunteering initiative, trainers should take into account that seniors participate because:

- **They like socialising:** seniors see environmental initiatives as a great opportunity to get to know people, make new friends, and overcome the sense of loneliness and isolation;
- **They want to feel useful,** by contributing to community life;
- **They care for a better future for the younger generations,** in particular for their children and grandchildren;
- **They want to feel included,** as an active part of the community;
- **They love to learn things** that can use in their life
- **They are committed to a sense of civic engagement,** feeling responsible for the future of the planet

ADVISORY COMMITTEE: SEAnior volunteers talk!

“Doing good in environmental terms gives me a sense of victory and environmental contribution, as well as strengthening interconnection with younger people.”
(Victor, Adult Learner, Portugal)

Taking into account the challenges as well as their factors of participation, the interviewees proposed a set of guidelines (3.3 & 3.4) to help educators and trainers involve seniors in environmental education and volunteering activities as well as support them during the learning experience.

3.3 Factors of participation: what motivates seniors to participate in environmental activities? Preferences: How to plan an environmental training program for seniors?

This section provides an overview of the ideal setting, time, and conditions according to the preferences and needs of senior learners highlighted during the focus group.

WHERE - Training venue

Following the advisory committee's recommendations, the training session should be conducted at adult centers, as these locations are better equipped with toilets and other facilities to accommodate the needs of the seniors. For more practical activities, if possible, choose outdoor venues, taking into account the accessibility of the place, the potential mobility challenges of some participants, and the location's facilities.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE: SEAnior volunteers talk!

"A face-to-face approach is more suitable for adult learners. The online method sometimes is boring. If there is a theoretical part, you can distribute materials and sources to study at home and then discuss it in a face-to-face meeting."
(Despoina, Adult Learner, Greece)

Generally, seniors prefer in-person learning events over online methods, because they have the opportunity to have face-to-face interactions, make personal connections, and receive immediate feedback from instructors.

WHEN - Time

The best time for seniors is weekends, which usually are less busy than weekdays. The environmental activity should be planned ahead and announced at least two weeks before allowing seniors to arrange their plans and fit the initiative into their agenda.

HOW LONG - Duration of sessions

For outdoor activities, sessions should last 2 to 3 hours. For indoor activities, educators and seniors suggest 1 hour or more, split into shorter sessions (of 30 min each, for example) with small breaks, in order to keep the participants focused and engaged.

PROMOTION

As a solution to the challenge of the information gap (3.1), combine various channels for the promotion of the initiative to target the audience effectively, including social media (especially Facebook), emails, direct messages on WhatsApp or Viber, personalised invitations and reminders, and printed leaflets.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE: SEAnior volunteers talk!

“Not all the seniors use the Internet to find the information. Printed materials, printed leaflets are still popular among my generation: leave the information in shops, post offices, and hospitals, where seniors can learn about environmental educational programmes.”

Luigi, Adult Learner, Italy

3.4 Approaches - How to make environmental education engaging for senior learners?

“Senior learners love learning through practical and real experience. Information is not enough for them: when they learn they need to relate the knowledge they are acquiring to their life, repurpose it, and make it relevant for their personal experience and needs.”

(Roberto Franco - Adult educator, EduVita, Italy)

Lifelong learning studies have extensively investigated the specific characteristics of adult education, proposing different models, methodologies, approaches, and tools to cater to the peculiar needs of senior learners.

The next challenge is combining the theory and experience from adult learning with the insights from environmental education to create an educational space, where seniors can learn about the environment while feeling comfortable, involved, and valued.

How to succeed in this? During the focus group, the adult educators discussed the importance of the three following dimensions:

Educational models

First of all, senior learners prefer interactive learning approaches, which alternate and balance theory and practical activities, encouraging their active contribution to the learning process. Moreover, for seniors, it is more effective to experience and put into practice what they are learning through experiential learning.

Relating to real-life situations and engaging in hands-on activities can help them understand environmental concepts better and retain information longer. For the same reason, topics should be relevant to seniors' daily experiences, such as travel and its environmental impact. In conclusion, it is also important to create a safe space with a circle setting and multidirectional communication, where every participant feels comfortable and empowered to share their experience and contributions.

AADVISORY COMMITTEE: SEAnior volunteers talk!

“Create a comfortable atmosphere without the barriers. Offer a cup of tea or coffee to the participants, leave the first 15 minutes of the class just for relaxing and chatting with each other. Senior learners often don’t feel comfortable in the classroom, let them feel that this is a safe space!”

Maria, Adult Learner, Italy

Methods

To address a diverse group of seniors, educators suggest combining different methods during the session. Role-play, games, questionnaires, discussion, etc: every session of the training should be designed with a specific method according to the content of the program and the profile of the participants. For example, small group work and discussion are good strategies to promote active participation, cooperation, and socialisation among seniors. In addition, physical movement should be incorporated: activities involving their bodies help seniors keep their levels of energy high.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE: SEAnior volunteers talk!

I appreciate the opportunity to engage in group discussions and collaborative activities when learning in a classroom or workshop setting. It fosters social interaction, diverse perspectives, and shared learning experiences. Learning from peers who share similar experiences and challenges can be enriching. Peer support and discussions provide practical insights and relatable examples.

(Despina, Adult Learner, Greece)

Materials

Materials should be diverse and multimodal (e.g. a presentation, video game, documentary, or hands-on demonstration). Generally, seniors prefer paper-based materials, instead of digital ones, as they are more familiar to them. Educators can adapt existing materials to the specific needs of the participants, for example translating, adding subtitles, making them more accessible, or changing the games outdoors based on the physical needs. Before planning the activities, sending a questionnaire to the senior learners is a good idea to get to know their learning needs. Among the challenges of the seniors (3.1), the educators mentioned that seniors prefer to avoid negative focus; as a solution, educators can present “sad” information about the environment through alternative ways like games, role play, or fun videos.



4. CONCLUSIONS

“As educators, it is our mission to get to know seniors' needs and opinions. Listen carefully to them, valorise their contributions. Tell them their ideas matter, and their actions have an impact. On the present and on the future of our planet.”

(Carina Samoes - Adult Educator, Future Balloons, Portugal)

The first essential step to creating a generation of active and engaged SEAnior Leaders is to foster a sense of environmental responsibility among seniors. Help them question and challenge the prejudices, stereotypes, and attitudes they nurture. Help them understand their contribution to the environment is essential and that by taking action they can make a difference too. Engage and activate them through environmental training.

In order to achieve this goal, as a result of the good practices (2) and the ideas and experiences shared by adult educators and senior volunteers during the focus group (3) we have collected some practical guidelines for adult trainers and educators:

(Before the training)

- Inform: Combine volunteering and practical activities with educational sessions and share accurate information about the environment. Help them reflect on how their actions impact their life and the planet. If the practical activity is not supported by a more informative session, they won't change their attitude.
- Include in order to change beliefs and stereotypes, and let them realise environmental issues affect all generations.
- Inspire: propose role models in the form of grand or senior environmental influencers; suggest diverse educational materials, such as podcasts where other seniors talk about the environment.

(During the training)

- Highlight their impact - Explain how they are contributing to a better world and are making a difference.
- Demonstrate value - Show them their actions are valuable and fundamental through explanations and feedback during the activity.
- Value their contribution - Listen to and care for their opinions and personal experiences;
- Promote group collaboration - motivate them to cooperate and support each other.
- Raise awareness - before any activity provide clear information and instructions and explain to them the greater meaning of what they are doing and why.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE: SEAnior volunteers talk!

“Inspiration and encouragement for adult learners aged 65+ during the learning process come from supportive instructors who appreciate our life experiences, a welcoming and inclusive learning environment, recognition of our contributions, opportunities for practical application, and a sense of purpose in acquiring new knowledge and skills that enrich our lives and those around us.”

(Elena, Adult Learner, Greece)

As for the organisational and the educational approach, the Advisory Committee also shared some practical tips for trainers who are new to teaching environmental education to seniors:

- When planning the activity, ask participants about their needs (e.g. through a questionnaire);
- Design environmental activities for varying physical abilities and energy levels: include different tasks so that seniors can choose activities that match their capabilities;
- Provide thorough training on safety protocols: ensure that participants understand the potential risks and how to mitigate them.
- Create a safe and comfortable setting for the activity;
- Make the participants feel welcome and treat them to snacks and water or other drinks;
- Get to know them, their motivations, and their interests;
- Adapt materials and activities to the needs of the group;
- Help them reflect and raise awareness about age discrimination and stereotypes about the environment
- Speak loud and clear, using simple and accessible language and some visual aids
- Repeat and recap more frequently
- Be patient and empathic

- Promote group interaction and peer learning
- Encourage intergenerational interactions, creating the opportunity for seniors to learn from younger volunteers and vice versa.
- End the environmental activity with a reflection session, where seniors can actively reflect on their learning process.

In conclusion, the pursuit of a sustainable planet necessitates a paradigm shift in our approach to environmental education—one that prioritizes inclusivity, accessibility, engagement, and alignment with the unique needs of senior learners. The insights gathered from the survey, study visits, and focus groups across Greece, Italy, and Portugal underscore the pressing need for comprehensive support systems that empower seniors to actively participate in environmental initiatives. The challenges identified, particularly the lack of institutional support and assumptions regarding seniors' interests, serve as critical touchpoints for intervention.

The good practices observed in each country reveal promising initiatives that bridge the gap between seniors and environmental engagement. From targeted information dissemination to tailored activity interventions, these practices exemplify the transformative potential of fostering a person-centered approach. As we navigate the intricate intersection of ageism, behavioral activation, and environmentalism, it becomes evident that empowering senior learners is not merely an aspiration but an imperative for creating a sustainable and harmonious future.

In embracing these good practices, we pave the way for a more interconnected and intergenerational commitment to environmental conservation. The success stories highlighted in this report showcase that when environmental education is made accessible, engaging, and responsive to the diverse needs of seniors, it becomes a catalyst for change. By fostering a collaborative ethos where all generations contribute to the conservation of the environment, we move closer to a shared vision of a planet where sustainability is not just an aspiration but a collective reality. As we conclude this report, let it serve as a testament to the transformative power of inclusive environmental education and an inspiration for future endeavors in cultivating a world where every individual, regardless of age, plays an integral role in safeguarding the beauty and vitality of our planet.

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