



**DIGITAL
GENERATIONS**

GUIDELINES FOR OTHER MUNICIPALITIES AND INTERESTED ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS EUROPE

FIFTH RESULT

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2. Introduction and the definition of the topic

Welcome to the Digital Generations guidelines, a comprehensive resource designed for municipalities and organizations across Europe, aimed at fostering intergenerational IT training programs led by young people for the seniors.

The Council of the European Union's 2018 Recommendations on key competences for lifelong learning bring together 8 core competences that citizens need for personal fulfilment, social inclusion, active citizenship and employability in a knowledge society. Among them is also the core competence "**digital literacy**".

Digital literacy is the fundamental ability of an individual to use and operate in the digital world. It is the ability to use information society technologies safely and critically in a variety of domains: at work, in leisure and to communicate with others. **Digital competence** is a key component of this capability, along with the **safe and critical use** of information society technologies.

Europe's ageing population makes seniors and their inclusion in society an important segment of various European guidelines and policies. One way to enable seniors to live more independently and play a more active role in society is through **digital literacy education programmes**. Such programmes make it possible to overcome the social exclusion of marginalised and vulnerable groups (including seniors), improving their quality of life, social participation and integration. Digital technologies offer unlimited possibilities for enriching lives and increasing independence. The independent use of digital technologies by the older population creates a freer and better quality of life in old age and ensures that they can live as long as possible in their own environment, while reducing loneliness and exclusion from social relationships. Digital technologies enable them to communicate better with family and friends, to have greater access to health services, to have more opportunities for lifelong learning, and also to have more possibilities for leisure activities, which is the concept of "active ageing".

Intergenerational learning, which is also becoming part of the professional field, is one of the forms of education that bring people together, strengthen their inclusion and solidarity, thus following the objectives of the European guidelines. It enables people to break out of their isolation and become active in their environment. Intergenerational learning has many positive effects and strengthens several of the basic competences listed in the Recommendations (e.g. "personal, social and learning to learn competence", "citizenship competence", "cultural awareness and expression competence").

The positive effects of intergenerational learning among others are:


- seniors become an important support for other groups to learn and participate, while at the same time developing their personal development and self-esteem;
- an opportunity for active social inclusion;

- offers volunteering opportunities for both young and seniors. It increases their opportunities for community involvement, mutual support and strengthens their social networks;
- encourages younger and older generations to overcome stereotypes;
- learning that different generations in the same culture face similar problems.


The partners of the **Digital Generations project** are convinced that an intergenerational programme is an excellent tool to strengthen the basic digital literacy skills of seniors (65+). As a result, the consortium has developed several **methodologies and guidelines** all available on our [Results](#) on the website, to use them as help and guide when developing intergenerational learning programmes in your region or organisation, which we present to you below.

DIGITAL GENERATIONS PROJECTS


PROJECT RESULTS




State of the art research
[Know More](#) (Available in: FR, GR, ES, BG and SI)




Digital tools handbook
[Know More](#)



Guidebook with the training methodology
[Know More](#)



Guidebook with the mentoring methodology
[Know More](#)



Guideline for other municipalities and interested organizations across Europe
[Know More](#)

3. Methodology for the creation of the Guidelines

The methodology outlined in this chapter forms the cornerstone of effective intergenerational training programs. It is designed to bridge the generational divide, fostering a learning environment that is mutually enriching and respectful of diverse experiences. This approach is about imparting knowledge and creating a shared space where different generations can learn from each other, building understanding and empathy across age divides.

To develop the guidelines for municipalities we followed a comprehensive and analytical methodology. The process was led by the KAMNIK Municipality, with collaboration from all partners. It's important to acknowledge the foundational role of the [Training Methodology](#) and [Mentoring Methodology](#) developed within the project. These methodologies, combined with the insights gained from piloting each phase, have significantly informed the development of these guidelines. This integrated approach ensures that the guidelines are not grounded in theoretical knowledge and are also enriched by practical experiences and learnings from the project's implementation stages.

To enrich the conclusions from the Training & Mentoring Methodology Piloting, the KAMNIK Municipality drafted the introduction to the guidelines. Following the introduction, each partner started their research. This research was key in gathering specific insights and understanding the specific challenges and opportunities within each region. By doing this, we made sure that the guidelines are understandable, effective and also go along with the needs of different municipalities.

In the creation of our guidelines, a significant part was the "National Research and Stakeholders Contacts" step. Each partner, guided by the KAMNIK Municipality, conducted focused research in their respective regions. This research was to understand the specific challenges and opportunities in each area, ensuring the guidelines would be effective and relevant across various contexts.

The stakeholders included local authorities, educational institutions, and organizations working in the field of adult education and digital literacy. Their input was invaluable, providing real-world perspectives and suggestions that greatly enriched our guidelines.

The combination of these efforts resulted in the following guidelines that are **theoretical and practical**, based on the realities of different European municipalities.

For a detailed view of the specific questions used in this research and stakeholder engagement phase, please refer to the [Annexes](#).

4. Guidelines for Municipalities

4.1. Core principles that guide effective intergenerational training programs

The principles and strategies detailed below are grounded in the belief that when generations come together, both young and elders, the exchange of wisdom, skills, and perspectives can lead to a richer, more inclusive community. Drawing from the latest research and best practices in andragogy, this methodology emphasizes adaptability, engagement, and a deep respect for the cultural and experiential backgrounds of all learners. Through this, we aim to build programs that are not only educational but also transformative, fostering connections that transcend age and time. The following points can be taken into account during designing intergenerational programs:

The Design

- Intergenerational programmes, as a form of education, should engage at least two non-consecutive generations, fostering mutual learning and interaction. When designing such programmes, it is important to take into account all the principles of youth and adult education, which need to be adapted to the selected groups, taking into **account the differences between the generations** (e.g. in expectations, work ethic, communication style).
- Adapt the length and frequency of sessions according to the needs and preferences of participants. This was evident in the various approaches of the organizations, where some preferred shorter, more frequent sessions, while others chose longer, less frequent ones.

Andragogical Principles and Structure

- In line with andragogical principles, the experience, background, and values of all learners should be acknowledged and integrated into the learning process. Intergenerational programmes must be **carefully prepared** and mentors, trainers, advisors must be **appropriately trained**.
- Intergenerational methodological approaches: Employ both affirmative (listening-centered) and cooperative (action-oriented) learning methods. Cooperative learning, which emphasizes active participation and interaction, is often more effective in intergenerational settings. According to social theories of learning, every learning process and every teacher-student relationship is part of a cultural context, **education is part of culture**. Participants enter the educational process with their own set of values, beliefs, and thought traditions.
- Emphasize the importance of acknowledging and valuing the diverse educational backgrounds of participants. This involves tailoring the content and delivery to suit different learning speeds and styles, especially considering the digital literacy gap between generations.

- Foster an environment where all participants are encouraged to actively participate and share their experiences, thus enriching the learning experience for everyone involved.

Content and Learning Process

- Select content that resonates with the life experiences of the elderly, enhancing their confidence and engagement. This aligns with the approach of choosing content that is familiar and relevant to older learners, as indicated in the responses.
- Regularly seek feedback from participants to understand their learning needs and preferences, adapting the program accordingly. This approach helps in continuously refining the program to better meet the participants' needs.
- Education should be enjoyable and social, as it is not only about learning new skills, but also about getting to know each other through common themes.
- **Content** is very important. Content is the element that attracts older people to start learning a new skill. We choose content that is close to the elderly, that they have some knowledge about and can build on. This creates an environment in which older people feel **confident** in relation to younger people. This creates a learning process in which everyone is a learner one moment and a teacher the next.
- Older people often have a fear of the new. **Pair work**, where the young trainer and the older trainee **build trust**, is very useful for encouragement. Learning in tandem contributes to the feeling that the pupil can do it, as the **process is fully adapted to them**. When tandems are integrated into a group, the advantage of **group learning** is further demonstrated.
- We design the programme to be relevant to the expressed educational needs, but also to **exceed expectations**, as these are always limited by what is already known. The programme will thus contribute additional knowledge and skills and **develop new educational needs**. Perhaps it is precisely the link with the younger generation that offers the opportunity for the older generation to recognise the limitations of their aspirations.
- **The principles and strategies for identifying educational needs** need to be taken into account. The sessions should be tailored to the **learner's needs**, so first check with the participants what they expect to learn, what they would like to learn, and observe what they do not yet know.

Institutional Acceptance

- Highlight the significance of carefully selecting and training young trainers to ensure they are equipped to handle the unique dynamics of intergenerational learning.
- Introduce new information and skills at a pace that is comfortable for the learners, especially considering the learning speed of older participants. New information and skills are introduced according to the learner's abilities.
- Experience shows that older people prefer skills that they can **immediately transfer to everyday life** (e.g. maintaining contact with family members living abroad). It is

also important that participants in the programme acquire skills that enable them to **connect to new social networks**.

- Intergenerational learning is becoming a concept that is **acceptable to a wide range of institutions** - from pre-school to universities of the third age.
- Intergenerational learning is interesting because it allows for the **development of creative approaches** and **challenges creativity**. Breakthroughs from established patterns usually take place in dialogue with others, learning from each other, confronting differences and finding new methods.

4.2. Best Practices and Lessons Learned

Key best practices, Important lessons [from the piloting and stakeholder feedback], common challenges & Practical solutions

In this section, we will explore effective strategies, valuable lessons learned through practical experience, and feedback from stakeholders. We will also address common challenges encountered during the implementation of our programs and provide practical solutions to overcome these obstacles.

The research phase for this document involved engaging with project partners, young trainers and stakeholders.

This insight is derived from our pilot programs and the input of our stakeholders, aiming to enhance the effectiveness and impact of our initiative. The collective analysis of this data led to the identification of common themes, supported by practical examples, concluding in guidelines that balance theoretical knowledge with the practical realities across different European municipalities. In this specific context, the examples provided by organizations like DEFOIN, e-seniors, KAMNIK Municipality, 4-elements, DCHS, and RCNE serve as practical illustrations supporting the identification of the common themes such as: key best practices, important lessons, common challenges, and practical solutions.

4.2.1. Key Best Practices

Engaging and interactive sessions with a mix of theoretical and practical components.

- DEFOIN reported that they structured their piloting sessions as a mix of theory and practice, emphasizing interaction and engagement. This approach allowed participants to understand the concepts and then immediately apply them in practical scenarios.
- E-seniors highlighted the use of interactive techniques, such as discussions and hands-on activities, which kept the sessions lively and ensured that learning was not just a passive experience.
- KAMNIK Municipality found that stakeholders enjoyed working in groups and sharing their experiences. This collaborative approach fostered a more dynamic and engaging learning environment.

- 4-elements found that shorter, more frequent sessions were effective in keeping participants engaged and ensuring the material was absorbed effectively.
- DCHS found it effective to have a smaller number of seniors per session, allowing for maximum individual attention, suggesting a best practice of maintaining small, manageable group sizes for personalized learning experiences.

Encouraging a reciprocal learning environment where both young and old participants teach and learn from each other.

- 4-elements approach involved creating a space where older participants could share their life experiences and wisdom, while younger participants contributed their technical skills and fresh perspectives. This mutual exchange enriched the learning experience for both groups.
- KAMNIK Municipality emphasized the importance of creating a learning environment where each participant, regardless of age, felt valued and heard. By encouraging older adults to share stories and experiences, they fostered a sense of respect and appreciation for the wisdom and knowledge each generation brings.

4.2.2. Lessons Learned from Piloting and Stakeholder Feedback

The importance of patience and empathy in bridging the generational digital divide.

- DEFOIN noted that one of their main challenges was dealing with varying levels of digital literacy among participants. Their solution involved showing patience and providing individual attention to those who needed more time to grasp new concepts. This approach helped in making all participants feel comfortable and valued, regardless of their starting skill level.
- RCNE emphasized the importance of empathy, especially when older participants faced difficulties with new technologies. By understanding and empathizing with their challenges, trainers were able to create a supportive environment that encouraged continued participation and learning.
- An important lesson highlighted by DCHS was the necessity to adapt to the specific needs and questions of seniors, even if it diverges from the planned program, underscoring the importance of flexibility in educational approaches.

Recognizing the diverse experiences and backgrounds of participants and integrating these into the learning process.

- 4-elements highlighted the value of recognizing and integrating the rich life experiences of older participants into the learning process. This approach not only made the content more relatable but also allowed older participants to feel that their experiences were respected and valued.
- E-seniors, in their feedback, it was mentioned that acknowledging the diverse backgrounds and experiences of participants was crucial. They found that when

learners' personal histories and knowledge were incorporated into the program, it led to a more engaging and inclusive learning experience. It indicates that a case-by-case approach was beneficial, suggesting that recognizing and integrating the diverse experiences and backgrounds of participants.

4.2.3. Common Challenges and Practical Solutions

Challenge of engagement

A common challenge across organizations was keeping participants, especially the elderly, engaged and motivated.

- 4-elements addressed this by integrating relevant and relatable content, ensuring that the learning material was directly applicable to the participants' everyday lives.
- E-seniors mentioned a challenge of keeping senior citizens focused and not just chatting. They also noted seniors' unwillingness to learn, and fear of failure. The solutions included a comprehensive training course designed to be more inclusive and adaptable to the needs of the participants, ensuring that the material was relevant and engaging for them.
- DCHS encountered challenges with senior citizens getting off-topic, indicating a need for strategies to maintain focus without causing discomfort.
- DCHS also noted seniors' concerns about privacy and online security, pointing to a common challenge in digital literacy education for this demographic.

Technological Hesitancy

Many older participants were hesitant to engage with digital tools.

Kamnik highlighted that a continuing challenge was the fear of elderly participants towards digital devices.

- KAMNIK Municipality and E-seniors tackled this by employing pair work and small group activities that built trust and allowed for more personalized assistance.
- Defoin mentioned challenges when working with people who are not used to technology.

Additional Insights

Importance of ongoing support and follow-up to ensure the continued use and understanding of digital skills.

- 4-elements mentioned that their training methodology was put into action by not just delivering sessions but also ensuring follow-up. This indicates an emphasis on ongoing support to reinforce the learning and application of digital skills.
- KAMNIK Municipality noted that young trainers were equipped with all the necessary tools and information. This suggests that they were prepared to provide continuous support and assistance, essential for the ongoing use and understanding of digital skills.

The need for continuous adaptation and innovation in training methodologies to keep them relevant and effective.

- 4-elements approach was addressing digital literacy gaps among seniors by using relatable examples and practical exercises. This reflects a continuous adaptation of training methodologies to make them more effective and relevant.
- RCNE put emphasis on conducting training in a manner that is suitable for the learners' abilities highlights the importance of innovating and adapting training methods to meet the varying needs of participants.

5. Conclusion

As we conclude the Digital Generations guidelines, we extend a warm invitation to municipalities and organizations across Europe to adapt and implement these training materials within their communities. By fostering digital literacy through intergenerational learning, you can contribute to bridging the digital divide, enhancing social inclusion, and promoting active aging. These guidelines offer a foundation for creating meaningful and impactful programs tailored to your contexts and needs.

Let's work together to empower all generations in the digital age!

6. Annexes

6.1 Questionnaire for Partners

1. What kind of structure/ delivery of trainings for both pilots did you find the most appropriate (number of sessions, duration of each session, number of chapters per session, preparation of venue of sessions, preparation of devices)? Please, explain in a few sentences.
2. How did you prepare or select the young trainers who have sufficient expertise and knowledge with working with the elderly?
3. Describe the main challenges and best practices identified in your region during the pilots.
4. How were resources used effectively in the piloting of the methodologies?

6.2 Questionnaire for Young Trainers

1. How useful were the Guidebooks and meetings (Athens, Malaga) in preparing you for the pilot?
2. Describe key challenges and effective strategies you found in working with the elderly.

6.3 Questionnaire for Stakeholders

1. How was your experience collaborating with the project team? What aspects of the collaboration worked well, and what could be improved?
2. Were there any aspects of the project's delivery that you found particularly effective or in need of improvement?
3. In your opinion to what do we need to pay attention when designing this type of training for the elderly?

7. References

- [Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning Text with EEA relevance. \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [The importance of computer literacy and e-literacy.pdf](#)
- [Digital literacy.pdf](#)
- [A handbook for intergenerational learning.pdf](#)



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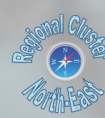
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