



Grey4Green

Active ageing and climate action through the involvement of senior citizens in nature conservation



LAYMAN'S REPORT

Simplified Report for the General Public



Authors in alphabetical order:

Associação BioLiving, Daniela Salazar Simões
Associação BioLiving, Inês Pimentel Santos
Association des Agences de la Démocratie Locale, Ginevra Gatti
Center for the Advancement of Research Development, Christos Procopiou
Umhverfisstofnun, Julie Kermarec
FO-Aarhus, Karin Coles
FO-Aarhus, Elizabeth Gregersen
Município de Lousada, Mariana Cardoso

Editor:

Association des Agences de la Démocratie Locale, Ginevra Gatti

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PROJECT PARTNERS

DENMARK

Frit Oplysningsforbund-Aarhus (FO-Aarhus) - Coordinator

FO-Aarhus (Association for Adult Education) is a non-government, non-profit organization established in 1973 to provide non-formal adult learning and counselling to the citizens of Aarhus. It has its own elected Board of Governors composed of representatives from the private sector, public administration, and the formal and vocational education sector. FO-Aarhus' basic expertise lies in non-formal adult education for the general public and specialization in programmes that help disadvantaged groups – e.g. immigrants, unemployed people, people with learning disabilities, dyslectics, people with mental issues – to enhance their quality of life and to integrate (or re-integrate) into society and the workforce. The aim is to strengthen the participants' personal, social, and vocational competencies as a stepping-stone to re-education, re-inclusion into the job market or further education.



CYPRUS

Center for the Advancement of Research & Development in Educational Technology (CARDET)

CARDET is one of the leading adult education research and development centers in the Mediterranean region with global expertise in adult education, social inclusion, project design and implementation, capacity building, and e-learning. CARDET is independently affiliated with universities and institutions from around the world, such as the Yale University, the University of Nicosia and the International Council of Educational Media. CARDET has completed numerous projects relating to adult education, eLearning, literacies, blender learning, university – community collaboration, MOOCs, digital tools, volunteering, and VET. CARDET brings together an international team of experts with decades of global expertise in designing, implementing, and evaluating international projects.



FRANCE

European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA)

ALDA is a non-profit association founded by the initiative of the Congress of the Council of Europe in 1999 whose main goal is to promote good governance and citizen participation at the local level. ALDA is a membership-based organization gathering more than 350 members (including local democracy agencies, local authorities, an association of local authorities, civil society organizations, universities, NGOs, grassroots associations, and public bodies), based in 45 countries over most of Europe and the European Neighbourhood countries, amongst these the Balkans, Belarus, Moldova, the Caucasus area, Turkey, and a few countries from the North African region. Its offices are based in Strasbourg (FR), Brussels (BE), Vicenza (IT), Subotica (RS), Skopje (MK), Chisinau (MD) and Tunis (TN). ALDA has 40 staff and various interns and volunteers who support the activities of the different offices. Today, ALDA is a key stakeholder in the field of local democracy, active citizenship, good governance, EU integration, human rights, and cooperation between local authorities and civil society. Most of its work is based on multilateral decentralized cooperation.



ICELAND

Environment Agency of Iceland

Under the direction of the Ministry for the Environment, EAI's role is to promote the protection and the sustainable use of Iceland's natural resources, as well as public welfare by helping to ensure a healthy environment. EAI is a leading agent in environmental issues and nature conservation in the community. Its role is to closely monitor the development of environmental issues and safeguard the welfare of the public. One of the main roles of EAI is to manage and protect the Snæfellsjökull National Park and other 115 protected areas in Iceland. According to the nature conservation act a Nature Reserve is an area protected for its importance for wildlife (flora and fauna) and landscape. The primary work method of EAI is group work and works well for formulating the future policy of the EAI in each instance. It has about 90 full time employees.



PORTUGAL

The Municipality of Lousada (Município de Lousada)

The Municipality of Lousada (ML) is a local public administration that manages an area of 95 km² with about 50.000 inhabitants. This highly populated area, in a peri-urban region, faces many challenges regarding its sustainable development, life quality, and population literacy and citizenship. Thus, the ML's mission is to define guiding strategies and execute the resulting local policies through measures and programmes in various areas of our competence, promoting the quality of life of all citizens and ensuring high standards of quality services. Our work is directed at achieving sustainable development with benefits and opportunities to all our citizens, in terms of environment, social and economic fields.



PORTUGAL

Associação BioLiving

The objectives of this NGO are, among others, to promote sustainability through the engagement in environmental citizenship and public participation for the protection of nature, while boosting the social economy and fostering inclusion, peace, and solidarity, using education, natural resources, and the protection of nature as leitmotiv. BioLiving's operating model focuses on the proximity to communities, municipalities, schools, companies, and other NGOs. It believes that working in partnership with the stakeholders and populations facilitates the dialogue and the search for solutions for environmental education and nature conservation and their involvement and interest in environmental issues is more effectively promoted.





01 Rationale

Birth rates around the world are going down, while people are living longer. This is creating challenges, like higher costs for pensions, healthcare, and long-term care as populations age. By 2050, it is predicted that more than 30% of the population in developed countries will be over 60 years old, which means that the world population is “turning grey”, endangering our social systems.

The United Nations and the European Commission agree that quality ageing is a responsibility of all (private, public and civic actors), and can only be sustained through the participation of multiple sectors. At the same time, the fight against climate change is also an issue that concerns all societal actors. Thus, this project attains to vast societal needs by addressing active ageing as well as environmental action to obtain nature conservation. The project believes that many elderly people want to help protect the environment because it benefits their health and independence. However, many elderly often lack the skills to participate in nature conservation or simply find opportunities in their local community that meet their abilities. To address this in line with the EU Green Deal, the Grey4Green project set out to promote active aging by involving seniors in environmental volunteer work, and empowering elderly people to contribute positively to the society and the environment.

The project's key objectives are:

- Raise environmental awareness and skills among seniors and their caregivers;
- Train professionals and partners who work with the elderly to lead such programs;
- Help seniors become productive citizens and change-makers;
- Create high-quality resources to promote similar programs across the EU;
- Promote social inclusion, active aging, and green policies.

A stylized illustration of a tree with a dark green canopy and a dark grey trunk, set against a light green background. There are several white, rounded cloud shapes scattered around the tree. The number '02' is written in a large, dark grey font, and the words 'The Project' are written in a large, dark green font below it.

02 The Project

Project Partners:

- FO-Aarhus (Denmark) - Coordinator
- Município de Lousada (Portugal)
- Associação BioLiving (Portugal)
- Association des Agences de la Démocratie Locale (France)
- Centre for Advancement of Research and Development in Educational Technology LTD-CARDET (Cyprus)
- Environment Agency of Iceland (Iceland)

Target Groups:**Grey4Green target three main groups of participants:**

- Seniors over 60 years old from partner communities and from all over the world;
- Professionals working with the elderly (e.g., social workers, nurses, adult educators);
- External stakeholders like nature conservation organizations and/or senior sectors and policymakers.

Activities:

Firstly, a mapping of best practice of environmental projects was produced in the partner countries. A written handbook for people working with the elderly and a handbook for volunteers were created, a website was launched and an online learning platform was built. Grey4Green offered international training courses for both practitioners and volunteers, and cultural exchanges in Portugal, Denmark and Iceland to inspire them with the work that they do in their own countries. The training covered topics like nature conservation, active ageing, social inclusion, and social entrepreneurship. Seniors had the chance to participate in cultural exchanges with peers from different countries, experiencing new cultures and environments while learning how to contribute to the EU Green Deal.

03 Key Achievements & Results



Outputs:

The project developed 9 outputs:

1. [Best Practice Report.](#)

A report on best practices in partner countries to inspire people interested in working with the environment. This includes results from new surveys and debates organized with seniors, staff and stakeholders.



2. [Online platform and observatory.](#)

The website includes documents, goals, results and outputs, an e-learning exchange environment, and an online observatory of environmental initiatives. This also contains all the products produced by the project.



3. [Handbook for senior volunteers in nature.](#)

A handbook for senior citizens that want to volunteer in nature conservation programs, addressing relevant topics and providing education.



4. [Senior volunteers for nature – Implementation handbook.](#)

A handbook for staff members with step-by-step guidance on how to conduct projects with the elderly.



5. [Grey4Green Training Course: Active Ageing and Nature Conservation.](#)

A training course on active aging in nature conservation programs for third-age personnel and the elderly.



6. [Senior environmental volunteering programs Executive Package.](#)

A ready-to-use package of documents for any entity willing to implement a senior volunteer program in nature conservation.



7. [Audiovisual instructive package.](#)

8 videos working as recommending materials for the inclusion of the elderly.



8. [Policy Paper: Unraveling the potential of active aging for nature conservation.](#)

Paper for decision- and policymakers to inform and inspire improvements in policy and local governance.



9. [Layman's Report.](#)

An easy to read report on the Grey4Green project and the products the project has produced.

All resources are available - most of them in all partner languages - on the Grey4Green [website and learning platform](#).

Local Policy Recommendations:

- Create accessible, safe and environmentally friendly public spaces for older adults.
- Increase opportunities for volunteer matches between seniors and organizations.
- Highlight the social and educational benefits of volunteering.
- Train older adults on environmental initiatives and encourage them to become ambassadors.

National Policy Recommendations

- Educate communities about sustainability.
- Lead more conservation projects.
- Develop national programs to include seniors in environmental activities.
- Create a national strategy for nature conservation.

Local and International Events

The project facilitated 3 Senior Mobility Exchanges, 5 Active Ageing and Nature Conservation Seminars and an International Final Conference.



04 Impact & Benefits

ELDERLY PEOPLE gained new skills, knowledge about the environment, improved communication skills, and increased confidence and happiness.

STAFF FROM 3RD AGE SECTOR received specialized training, enabling them to teach others and lead future programs independently.

STAKEHOLDERS AND DECISION-MAKERS received high-quality resources and policy recommendations, useful for shaping policies and promoting conservation efforts.

COMMUNITIES around the project partners and online audiences are expected to benefit by developing stronger environmental responsibility and European citizenship values. The resources are freely accessible, contributing to EU goals like the European's 2030 and the EU Green Deal about social inclusion and basic environmental education.



05 Conclusion

Grey4Green tackles important social and environmental issues aligned with the EU Green Deal and Erasmus+ priorities. The project has the potential to make a significant impact across Europe by promoting social inclusion, active ageing and citizenship, green volunteering, and lifelong learning for seniors and those who support them.

Contact information

FO Aarhus

Address: Frederiksgade 78C,
8000 Aarhus C, Denmark.

Website: www.fo-aarhus.dk

Phone: +45 87 46 45 00

Project information

Website: <https://grey4green.eu/>

Social media: <https://www.facebook.com/Grey4GreenProject>

Newsletters: <https://grey4green.eu/category/newsletters/>



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www.grey4green.eu



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