

Grey4Green

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



A COLLECTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

on Senior Volunteering in Nature Conservation





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INTRODUCTION



The ageing of population and environmental protection and sustainability are the two most pressing issues not only in Europe but across the globe. An ageing population brings social, health, economic, and other issues. Thus, measures to help older people remain active and participate in society has become a necessity, not a luxury. While people are encouraged to implement programmes addressing active ageing, the environment and fight against climate change are a lingering issue that also needs urgent action, and the involvement of all societal actors to be addressed.



The Grey4Green – Senior Volunteers for Nature Conservation project addresses the two issues of active ageing and environmental action, and the specific needs of organizations working in these fields and their target audiences.

This compilation of good practices from Denmark, Cyprus, Switzerland, Italy, Iceland and Portugal

– the countries of the Grey4Green consortium, endeavours to provide inspiration to other organizations and volunteers in Europe for projects that they would like to embark. More importantly, these projects also encourage the elderly to go out of the house, meet people and fight loneliness, that is a common challenge of this group.

The main focus of the good practice presented here are projects that senior volunteers can initiate themselves, implement in partnership with the local authority in their area or participate. The practices vary – from information dissemination, lobbying local authorities to enact more green laws, to building footpaths. Indeed, there is a project for every type of personality.

The partnership hopes that this compilation will encourage the elderly to volunteer to take care of the environment while building their own network of friends and fight loneliness.



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 programs 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 (EAI)

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 programs 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.



Title of the initiative and country

DENMARK

Bedsteforældres Klimaaktion (Grandparents' Climate Action)

Type of Initiative

The initiative focused on:

- **Good practice on innovative and motivational pedagogical exploitation of nature:**
What makes for a successful and engaging volunteer environment program.
- **Innovative approaches for promoting social inclusion of elderly people from different geographical or cultural contexts.**





Financing

The practice is financed/supported by:

- Private Foundations
- Private initiative/volunteer effort

Time frame

The practice has taken place from 2021 - the present

The NGO itself mission is to promote sustainability in Denmark. They have several initiatives that fight loneliness as well as working towards a more sustainable future for our grandchildren, and therefore, they will be continuing their activities.

Name of coordinator, type of organization & brief description of coordinator

The Danish name of the coordinator is “Bedsteforældres Klimaaktion”, in English Grandparents for Climate Action

Bedsteforældres Klimaaktion (BK), (Grandparents’ climate Action) is a grassroots national activist movement for people aged 50+, concerned about the world we are leaving to future generations. It has local chapters in Aarhus, Aalborg, Albertslund, Fyn, Hilerød, Copenhagen and Silkeborg.

Children’s climate is their cause. BK is part of the climate movement and work locally with other NGOs and public institutions working with sustainability.



In Aarhus, decisions are taken at a Joint Meeting once a month. It also has various independent groups:

- The Street Action Group, which is often on the streets in Aarhus with climate actions.
- The Choir (Klimakoret), which entertains at demonstrations, festivals, public meetings etc.
- The Knowledge Group, where themes are discussed and new knowledge is disseminated.
- The Politicians’ Group, where typically 2 people meet with a local politician to discuss climate issues.
- The communication group, which follows up weekly on what is happening where.

Name of Partners

The names of the partners are:

- Danish Climate Movement
- Inter-Ethnic Cooperation
- Green Youth Movement
- The Common Good
- Fridays For Future
- eXtinction Rebellion

Type of organization

The organization is an NGO

Brief description of the partner

The Climate Movement is an NGO. Member and campaign groups have full autonomy, provided that their activities are legal, and their causes are at least as ambitious as the association's policy program. It also promotes cross-community cooperation, so active members can learn from and inspire each other and work together. In addition to membership and campaign groups working throughout the country, there are local groups in major cities.

Inter-Ethnic Cooperation is an umbrella organization in Denmark whose aim is to support activists, social movements, organizations and networks so that they can fight oppression and violence. It believes that the right path to lasting change is to organize people and create change together. People in vulnerable and oppressed situations are entitled to know about their rights and to organize and fight for those rights. Working with people around the world, the organization pushes for political change and ensure access to schools, health clinics, clean water and more

Green Youth Movement is a group of young climate activists fighting for a green just future, through structural changes in society. It believes that the world is in the midst of a biodiversity and climate crisis that is growing day by day. To solve the challenges and reduce the damage, it is therefore essential that action is taken NOW! It works 100% voluntarily, independent of party politics, and strive for a flat organizational structure.

Det Fælles Bedste (The Common Good) is a citizens' movement created out of a need to make the transition to a sustainable society, where sustainability is ecological, economic, social, and cultural. We believe that a citizens' movement is needed. It brings together civil society, private and public sectors working for the sustainable agenda. It is a network of green and social actors in Denmark working for sustainability at all levels: climate, nature and environment, ecology, and biodiversity. Social justice, inclusion and communities. A new climate-friendly economy and a sustainable culture, mentality, and lifestyle.

Fridays For Future (FFF) is a youth-led and -organized global climate strike movement that started in August 2018, when 15-year-old Greta Thunberg began a school strike for climate. On the 8th of September, the strikers created the hashtag #FridaysForFuture, and encouraged other young people all over the world to join them. This marked the beginning of the global school strike for climate. Their call for action sparked an international awakening, with students and activists uniting around the globe to protest outside their local parliaments and city halls. Along with other groups across the world, Fridays for Future is part of a hopeful new wave of change, inspiring millions of people to take action on the climate crisis.

extinction Rebellion is a decentralized international and politically non-partisan movement using non-violent direct action and civil disobedience to persuade governments to act justly on climate and ecological emergency.



[Brief description of the project/initiative](#)

The project's theme is how can we preserve our planet and how to live sustainable lives.

The activities are a wide-ranging climate activism:

- Talking to people on the streets
- Protests at the city hall
- Choir
- Meetings with policy makers in the municipality
- Attending conferences
- Information dissemination on green, sustainable living
- Debates on climate and sustainable living
- Giving inputs to the climate plan of the municipality
- Creating sub-groups in the different parts of the municipality
- Climate Marches and demonstrations



[Objectives](#)

The practice has aimed to **achieve creation of awareness among the citizens on the importance of the issue of climate change and sustainable living**, and combatting loneliness among the elderly by providing them with venues to engage with the community.

[Target Groups](#)

The target group/s (direct and indirect) that are affected by the initiative are **primarily the elderly (60+) citizens**. The secondary target group consists of the citizens of Denmark, specifically those living in Aarhus. The end-users are the citizens. The target group/s comprise a major group in the local community. Denmark is an ageing society, and more elderly and pensioners would like to volunteer and contribute to the betterment of society. The secondary target group are citizens in general, as such this project has a wide reach.

[The role of the target group in the course of the initiative](#)

The elderly organizes all the activities in partnership with other NGO and civil society actors in Aarhus Municipality, including publicity for all their actions. **They have a website and a FB site where they communicate with other target groups on their activity.**

[The end-users](#)

The end users are the citizens of Aarhus.



Methodology

BK's methodology is basic **organizing for climate and a sustainable future**. Through their various activities, they endeavor to create awareness and spur people to action and take the issue of climate change seriously. As they say, we are just stewards of resources of our planet, and it is our responsibility to hand it over to the next generation.

Processes used to ensure the success of the project

The process **will depend on the activity that they are holding**. But basic to it all is organizing.

Timeframe for learned lessons and identification of key success factors

The BK is a fairly new organization. However, they are making their voices heard and **helping combat loneliness among the elderly**. One can clearly see the impact they have on the community, judging by the creation of other sub-groups within the municipality.

General Framework

In the local context there is a need to create awareness and spur people to action on climate change and sustainability. The Aarhus Municipality has this as a focus area, and NGOs and civil society organizations need to be a part of this effort to be able to succeed. The elderly are generally alone and lonely, and they need to be activated, and encouraged to continue to engage in society for a good quality of life. These are the framework that BK operates in. All their initiatives are inclusive, depending on the interests of the elderly. That is the reason why they have a wide variety of activities so people can join depending on their interests.

Problems/needs addressed by the initiative

The problem addressed is **the need to create awareness among the citizens of Aarhus on climate change and spur them to action.**

The relevance of the problems tackled on local/regional/national/EU levels

It is relevant on a **municipal, regional, national and global scale.**

Persistence of the challenges on local/regional/national/EU levels

The issues are still persistent on **local/regional/national/EU levels.**

Level and Scope of Implementation

The initiative has been implemented in the municipality of Aarhus, Denmark.

It is relevant for contexts outside its implementation framework and can be translated and implemented in other countries. This is due to the fact that the problem being addressed is a global one – we need to preserve our planet. The problem of loneliness among the elderly is also common among all peoples of the world. The activities initiated by BK are simple and would appeal to other elderly people.

Involvement of relevant communities/bodies/associations

The stakeholders mentioned below have been involved.

- Danish Climate Movement
- Inter-Ethnic Cooperation
- Green Youth Movement
- The Common Good
- Fridays For Future
- eXtinction Rebellion

The stakeholders' contribution/ involvement

The stakeholders' contribution/ involvement vary, sometimes they are the lead, sometimes they support.

Outcomes and impact

Even if it is still early to evaluate whether they have been successful or not, indications are that they have a great deal of support in the municipality. **They have a lot of activities lined up, coverage in the media and interest in creating sub-groups within the municipality.**

Beneficiaries

The direct are the elderly and the indirect are the citizens of Aarhus

The short- and long-term benefits for the beneficiaries

The short term benefits consists of having **built a network, engaged with the community, created awareness among the community on climate change.** And the long term benefits are that this is not just a one-off project. The organization is committed to continue with their activities and expand their coverage.



Impact on the local/regional/national/EU levels

They have shown that **the elderly can still do something for the community.** They have developed good practice on creating awareness about environmental issues as well as fighting loneliness among the elderly.

Challenges/lessons learnt and how challenges been overcome in the course of the initiative

You need to designate positive alternatives and have maximum media coverage. You should avoid climate anxiety and spur action, otherwise, distancing and resignation can be the results. They have been overcome by having more focus on the conversation with the individuals and visualization of realistic alternatives for the benefit of the individual; and by establishing a climate choir and writing more than 25 climate songs to well-known melodies.

The lessons/insights to be drawn from this initiative

Better **planning of street activities and meetings** with involvement are some of the lessons learned.

Sustainability and Replicability

The continuation of the initiatives after the envisaged timespan of its implementation?

They have been continued.



Incorporation into other activities

It can be **incorporated into other activities.**

The continued relevance of the initiative

It is still relevant and the tackled issue still persists in the community.

The possibility and ease of implementing the initiative diverse contexts/different countries and to the benefit of different target groups

The initiative can easily be implemented into other contexts/countries to the benefit of different target groups.

The conditions (institutional, social, etc.) for the initiative to be successfully replicated

The elderly should be engaged and must have a sense of purpose. Support from the municipality and other sectors – media, civil society actors are needed to ensure their success.

Upscaling this practice to achieve enhanced impact

Right now, this is a national initiative. Perhaps we can start an EU-wide network of grandparents for climate change.

Innovative/Success factors

The particular successful focal points of the initiative which could be incorporated in other projects

They have had focus on very specific themes that are transparent to everyone. The Climate Choir's performance with group singing and the incorporation of group work at the meetings could be incorporated into other projects.

The way in which the best practice has contributed to an innovation in the field of promoting volunteerism among the elderly and environmental protection

In the last year, the number of members has increased by 25% and a new local group in the town of Rønde is being established. The climate choir's performance at demonstrations and actions has been very successful.

Conclusion

Cooperation with other local climate groups has influenced the climate attention of local politicians and the climate footprint of decisions, for example around constructions, port expansion, marine environment, etc. In national cooperation, two lawsuits have been brought against companies for green washing.

Elements that can be used as inspiration for the Grey4Green project

They are **climate activism of the elderly** and the spirit of volunteerism.



[Contact Details](#)

They persons who have implemented the initiative are:

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[More Information/ Published resources](#)

[About Grandparents for Climate Action](#)

[Facebook page](#)

[Media Feature](#)

[People's climate march 2022](#)

Personal portraits:

<https://vimeo.com/696694530>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IQvEKoJ8UQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JB0IUXNgMuk>

Title of the initiative and country

DENMARK

Sammen om Verdensmål – på biblioteket, Together for Sustainable Development Goals – at the library

Type of Initiative

The initiative focused on:

- **Good practice on innovative and motivational pedagogical exploitation of nature:** *What makes for a successful and engaging volunteer environment program;*
- **Innovative approaches for promoting social inclusion of elderly people from different geographical or cultural contexts;**
- **Good practice on innovative pedagogical approaches to teach both professionals and the elderly on natural heritage and its preservation** *(including best media formats and assessment framework);*
- **Engaging and inspirational approaches to train third age professionals;**





Financing

- Private Foundations
- Other: Danish Library Association

Time frame

The practice was set to run February 2021 – May 2023, but it has been extended to the end of 2023, so it is an on-going project.

Name of coordinator, type of organization and brief description of the coordinator

The think tank Future Libraries, Project Manager, Kira Gilling Hansen.

It is a private entity. The project is anchored in a strong interdisciplinary partnership with project partners from libraries, municipalities, researchers and various organizations. The think tank Future Libraries is the project owner. The partners behind the Think Tank Future Libraries are the Association of Library Managers, the Association of Culture and Information, the Danish Academic, Research and Education Libraries and the Danish Library Association. The Think Tank is supported by and collaborates with more than 30 public libraries, private companies and library organizations, which all participate in and contribute to activities.

Name of Partners

The main member group of the Danish Library Association is **the municipalities represented by their cultural politicians**. The association's second membership group consists of library professionals, students and cultural institutions.

Type of organization

It is a private entity.

Brief description of the partner

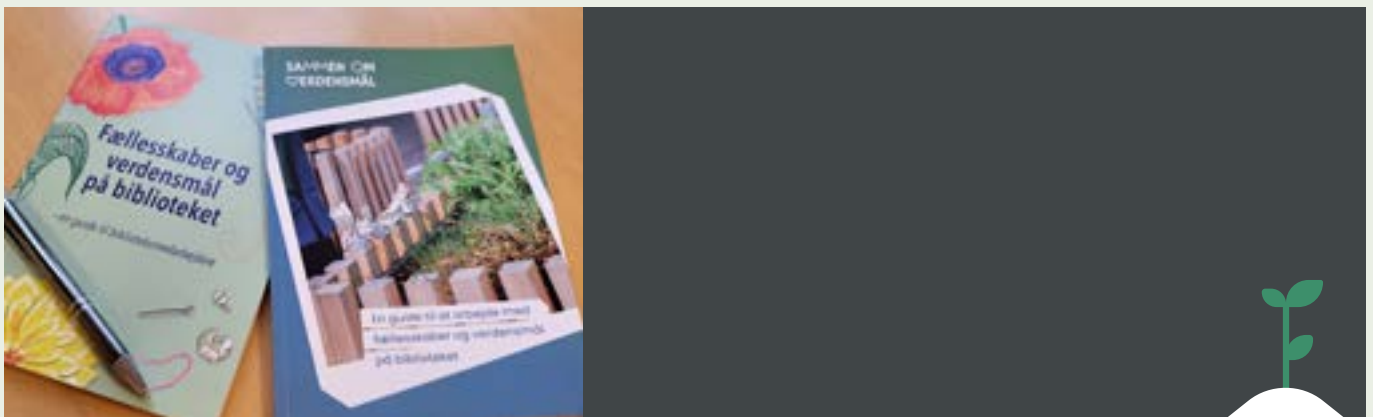
The main member group of the Danish Library Association is **the municipalities represented by their cultural politicians**. The association's second membership group consists of library professionals, students and cultural institutions.

Brief description of the project/initiative

Together for Sustainable Development Goals – the library is about developing local communities that contribute to one or more SDGs. Studies show that engaging in volunteer work increases the quality of life - and especially when the work is experienced meaningfully and happens in community with others. Therefore, we would like to



strengthen the facilitating role of libraries so that libraries become citizens' preferred meeting place and innovation space for sustainable ideas and actions. In this project, Think Tank Future Libraries collaborates with public libraries to involve citizens in local communities. We have a particular focus on citizens who have reached the age of 60, as there are already many good initiatives for children and young people. More specifically, the project will strengthen libraries in engaging and involving the target group 60+ in SDG work by facilitating local communities around the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, we have an assumption that it increases the quality of life to take action on something meaningful in community with others. We are also working to strengthen the libraries' facilitating role in this, as it is obvious that libraries provide a framework for popular anchoring of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.



Objectives

The project is aimed at achieving:

- Development of local communities that contribute to one or more SDGs.
- Increase in the quality of life for the 60+ through the involvement in volunteer work
- Strengthening the facilitating role of libraries so that libraries become citizens' preferred meeting place and innovation space for sustainable ideas and actions.
- Strengthening libraries in engaging and involving the target group 60+ in SDG work by facilitating local communities around the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Target Groups

The target group/s (direct and indirect) that are **affected by the initiative is primarily 60+/senior citizens**. The secondary target group are library employees. And the end-users are the 60+ and interested citizens of other age groups, libraries, library employees. The target group comprises a major group in the local community as there are about 1.5 million citizens who have reached the age of 60 in Denmark.

The role of the target group in the course of the initiative

The project is about **using libraries to develop local communities that contribute to one or more of the UN's sustainable development goals**. A handbook has been created as a guide on how, with the help of the local public library, you can create citizen groups and initiate local sustainable activities that make a difference.

The end-users

The project has a special **focus on citizens who have reached the age of 60**, but the handbook can be used by anyone interested in finding out how to contribute to a better and more sustainable world.

Methodology

The methodology is **Design thinking with a sustainable layer**. Design thinking is about accelerating innovation to create better solutions to the challenges we face. The new method (Design Quest) is human and planet-centered and has been given a sustainable layer in the quest for new solutions both for people and for the benefit of the entire planet. Design thinking is an approach that 'forces' us out into the world to learn more about the people and the world we want to make a difference for.

Processes used to ensure the success of the project

The training of library staff: A sustainability psychologist and Ph.D. Simon Nygaard teaches the staff at the libraries before they invite citizens along. He focuses on psychological mechanisms - and what we can do to create and support viable groups. The library employees are invited to join seminars and webinars, where different teachers give lectures on sustainable design thinking, SDGs, and sustainability psychology.

Workshops for citizens that focus on how they can use the library to realize their own and others' sustainable ideas. Sustainability psychologist and Ph.D. Simon Nygaard is responsible of these workshops and is inspiring the participants on how one can achieve greater well-being by engaging in meaningful and sustainable communities.

A handbook has been created as a guide on how, with the help of the local public library, you can create citizen groups and initiate local sustainable activities that make a difference.

Timeframe for lessons learned and identification of key success factors

In less than a year, 25 libraries had joined the project, and another 10 libraries were on the way. Approximately 2-3 employees from each library were involved in various sustainable and community-creating activities. The first feedback from libraries and citizens shows that there are reports of increased well-being among citizens who have participated in the project. It is not evidence-based, but several citizens think it has been good and inspiring for them to participate. And although many of the participants already felt well when they joined the project, they may as well achieve greater well-being when joining the groups at the libraries.

General Framework

The project focuses on unleashing the local libraries' potential in involving and engaging citizens/the community in sustainable activities, strengthening the libraries' role as a driving force for sustainability and local action communities with the 17 SDGs in mind.

Problems/ needs addressed by the initiative

The initiative addresses the needs for:

- Increasing the quality of life for the 60+ through the involvement in volunteer work
- Strengthening the facilitating role of libraries so that libraries become citizens' preferred meeting place



- and innovation space for sustainable ideas and actions.
- Strengthening libraries in engaging and involving the target group 60+ in SDG work by facilitating local communities around the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.
 - Developing local communities that contribute to one or more SDGs.

The relevance of problems tackled on local/regional/national/EU levels

They are relevant on levels from local to EU.

Persistence of challenges on local/regional/national/EU levels

They are still persistent on all levels.

Level and Scope of Implementation

The project has been **implemented throughout Denmark at over 30 local libraries** (with more joining through the life of the project). In order to up-scale the effort and to inspire even more libraries and citizens to contribute to the world goals, we have trained a so-called SDG travel team that acts as ambassadors. It is relevant for contexts outside its implementation framework and can be translated and implemented in other countries, because libraries are found throughout the world and the needs addressed are common to all countries.



Involvement of relevant communities/bodies/associations

Stakeholder from local, regional and national levels have been involved.

The stakeholders' contribution/involvement

The stakeholders play **everything from a supporting to an active role** in the project.

Outcomes and impact

The project is set to finish at the end of 2023, at which point a report will be issued on the outcomes and impacts. It has the potential to impact on thousands of beneficiaries both directly and indirectly.

Beneficiaries

Local communities and 60+ (seniors have valuable experience and knowledge that others can benefit from. And many want to contribute to a better world, hence the development of a model where seniors are spearheads for generational meetings and other citizen-run activities). The 60+ citizens and the library employees are the direct



beneficiaries. The indirect beneficiaries are the local communities throughout DK.

[Impact on the local/regional/national/EU levels](#)

It is too early to say.

[Challenges/Lessons learnt and how the challenges been overcome in the course of the initiative](#)

The libraries and project members aim to translate and transform world goals locally. However, they have realized that the SDGs need to be close to practice in order to be relevant, as they can appear abstract and very distant to many people. Instead of lecturing and repeating all the SDGs, they offer activities that contribute to the SDGs. It is important that the activities are developed by the participants - and that it is their ideas that shape the activity. It must be their sustainable ideas that are translated into activities so that they can feel ownership and feel like running the activities. translate abstract world goals into everyday goals when engaging in local activities.

[The lessons/insights to be drawn from this initiative](#)

The libraries and project members aim to translate and transform world goals locally. However, they have realized that the SDGs need to be close to practice in order to be relevant, as they can appear abstract and very distant to many people. Instead of lecturing and repeating all the SDGs, offer activities that contribute to the SDGs. It is important that the activities are developed by the participants - and that it is their ideas that shape the activity. It must be their sustainable ideas that are translated into activities so that they can feel ownership and feel like running the activities. translate abstract world goals into everyday goals when engaging in local activities.

[Sustainability and Replicability](#)

The continuation of the initiatives after the envisaged timespan of its implementation

They have continued.

[Incorporation into some other activities](#)

Yes, it is.

[The continued relevance of the initiative](#)

It tackles an issue that still persists in the community.

[The possibility and ease of implementing the initiative in diverse contexts/different countries and to the benefit of different target groups](#)

It can very easily be translated to and rolled out in other countries and among other target groups.

[The conditions needed for the initiative to be successfully replicated](#)

A local awareness of the 60+ age group and how their life situation is, would be needed in order to successfully replicate the initiative.

[Upscaling this practice to achieve enhanced impact](#)

The initiative can definitely be upscaled. Through the project life the project itself has already trained a so-called SDG travel team that acts as ambassadors with an eye to up-scaling the effort and inspiring even more libraries and citizens to contribute to the world goals.



Innovative/Success factors

The particular successful focal points of the initiative which could be incorporated in other projects

The creation of:

- The Report on Danish Senior citizens' attitudes and knowledge of the SDGs
 - The webinar for library employees
 - The workshops for citizens and library employees
 - The handbooks for citizens and employees (see links below)
 - The SDG travel team,
- could all be incorporated in other projects.

The way in which the best practice has contributed to an innovation in the field of promoting volunteerism among the elderly and environmental protection

It has increased people's awareness of possibilities there are at public libraries when it comes to having a place to meet and gather, unleashing the libraries' potential in involving and engaging citizens in sustainable activities.

Conclusion

The project has, in itself, an effect and impact, locally and nationally in DK. But its usefulness lies even more so in its replicability and materials created for the project.

Elements that can be used as inspiration for the Grey4Green project

Practically everything can be used.

Contact Details

The think tank Future Libraries, Project Manager, Kira Gilling Hansen

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<https://www.xn--sammenomverdensml-orb.dk/>

More Information/Published resources

Sammen om Verdensmål – på biblioteket, Together for Sustainable Development Goals – the library:

<https://www.xn--sammenomverdensml-orb.dk/>

<https://www.xn--sammenomverdensml-orb.dk/biblioteker>

<https://www.xn--sammenomverdensml-orb.dk/omprojektet>

Handbooks for staff and citizens:

[Handbook 1](#)

[Handbook 2](#)

[Webinar for employees](#)

[Report on Danish Senior citizens' attitudes and knowledge of the SDGs](#)

Title of the initiative and country

CYPRUS

Nature Conservation Unit

Type of Initiative

The initiative focused on:

- **Good practice on innovative and motivational pedagogical exploitation of nature:** *What makes for a successful and engaging volunteer environment program*
- **Good practice on innovative pedagogical approaches to teach both professionals and the elderly on natural heritage and its preservation** *(including best media formats and assessment framework)*





Financing

The project is funded by the EU, the Cyprus government and by private foundations.

Time frame

The Nature Conservation Unit (NCU) was established in 2005 under the Frederick University. It is still running.

Name of Coordinator, type of organization and brief description of the coordinator

The coordinator of the project is the Frederick University.

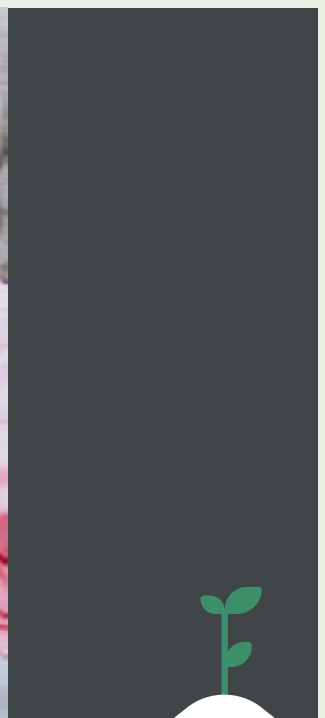
Frederick University is a private university located in Nicosia, Cyprus. It was founded in 1965 and offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs in fields such as business, engineering, computer science, education, and health sciences. Frederick University is accredited by the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture and is recognized by the European Higher Education Area.

Name of partners, type of organization and brief description of the partners

The Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment in Cyprus is responsible for overseeing and implementing policies related to the country's agricultural sector, rural development, and environmental protection. Some of the specific tasks and responsibilities of the ministry include:

- Developing and implementing agricultural policies and programs that aim to improve the productivity, competitiveness, and sustainability of the agricultural sector
- Managing and protecting natural resources, including forests, water, and wildlife
- Promoting sustainable rural development and preserving the country's cultural heritage
- Coordinating with other government agencies, as well as international organizations, to develop and implement policies and programs related to agriculture, rural development, and the environment.

The Ministry is also responsible for the inspection, control and certification of food products, as well as the protection of public health and the environment. Additionally, it manages the EU funds allocated to the agricultural sector, supports farmers and rural communities and protects consumers by implementing the EU legislation on food safety and quality.



Brief description of the project/initiative

The Nature Conservation Unit (NCU) is a department within Frederick University that specializes in biodiversity conservation, natural resources management, and environmental education and awareness in Cyprus. It was established in 2005 and is the first department in the Cypriot academic system to focus on nature conservation. The NCU focuses on studying, monitoring, managing, and conserving the flora, fauna, and habitats of Cyprus, as well as preserving ecologically important areas on the island. Additionally, it aims to raise awareness and educate the public about major environmental issues. The team at the NCU has extensive experience in conservation biology, natural resources management, and environmental education and awareness. It has also developed a wide network of associates both locally and abroad, collaborating with over 160 organizations in 38 countries from Europe and America. Through successful research proposals and tenders, the NCU has participated in over 50 projects, with a total budget of 34.8 million euros, with the NCU's budget being 4.6 million euros. These projects were funded or co-funded by the Research Promotion Foundation of Cyprus, the European Commission, the United Nations, and the Republic of Cyprus. Through these projects, the NCU has also acquired modern research infrastructure for both laboratory and fieldwork, which allows for new research initiatives.

Objectives

The Nature Conservation Unit (NCU) initiative aims to achieve several **goals related to biodiversity conservation, natural resources management, and environmental education and awareness in Cyprus.** Some of the specific objectives of the initiative are: Study, monitor, manage, and conserve the flora, fauna, and habitats of Cyprus

- Preserve ecologically important areas on the island
- Promote awareness and education among the people of Cyprus about major environmental issues
- Develop a wide network of associates both locally and abroad, collaborating with over 160 organizations in 38 countries from Europe and America
- Acquire modern research infrastructure for both laboratory and fieldwork to develop new research initiatives.

Overall, the initiative aims to improve the understanding and protection of the natural resources in Cyprus and to raise awareness and educate the public about the importance of conservation and sustainable development.

Target groups

The primary target group are:

- **Researchers and scientists:** The NCU aims to provide the necessary infrastructure, network, and expertise to support researchers and scientists in their conservation biology, natural resources management, and environmental education and awareness studies.
- **Ecological important areas:** The initiative aims to protect and preserve ecologically important areas on the island through management and conservation efforts.
- **Flora, fauna and habitats of Cyprus:** The NCU aims to study, monitor, manage, and conserve the flora, fauna, and habitats of Cyprus through research and conservation efforts.

Secondary targets are :

- **The people of Cyprus:** The initiative aims to raise awareness and educate the public about major environmental issues, with the ultimate goal of encouraging the public to take action to protect the environment.
- **Local communities and organizations:** The NCU aims to establish a broad network of associates (both locally and abroad) to collaborate with more than 160 organizations from 38 countries from Europe and America.
- **The government:** The initiative aims to support the government in developing and implementing policies and programs related to conservation, sustainable development, and environmental protection.
- **The target group includes a major group from the local community.** The secondary target group includes the people of Cyprus and the local communities and organizations. The initiative aims to raise awareness and educate the public about major environmental issues and to collaborate with local organizations in conservation, sustainable development, and environmental protection efforts.

The role of the target group in the course of the initiative

The primary target groups, researchers and scientists, are responsible for conducting research and providing the necessary expertise in conservation biology, natural resources management, and environmental education and awareness. They also contribute to the protection and preservation of ecologically important areas on the island, and the study, monitoring, management and conservation of the flora, fauna and habitats of Cyprus.

The end-users

The end-users are a combination of these groups and include researchers and scientists utilizing the infrastructure and resources provided by the initiative, members of local communities who benefit from conservation and management efforts in ecologically important areas, and members of the public who are educated and made aware of environmental issues through the initiative's efforts.

Methodology

The NCU uses a multi-disciplinary approach in addressing the initial issue of biodiversity conservation and natural resources management in Cyprus. This includes conducting research on the flora, fauna, and habitats of the island, monitoring and managing ecologically important areas, and implementing conservation efforts. The team at the NCU also places a strong emphasis on environmental education and awareness, working to educate the public and raise awareness about major environmental issues. The NCU also actively collaborates with a wide network of associates both locally and abroad, in order to share knowledge, expertise, and resources to support conservation efforts. Additionally, the NCU has successfully acquired funding through research proposals and tenders, allowing for the acquisition of modern research infrastructure and the implementation of new research initiatives. The NCU also provides guidance and support to the government in developing and implementing policies and programs related to conservation, sustainable development, and environmental protection.

Processes used to ensure the success of the project

The Nature Conservation Unit (NCU) at Frederick University uses a variety of methods to ensure the success of their projects. Some of these include:

- **Research and monitoring:** The NCU conducts research and monitoring of the flora, fauna, and habitats of Cyprus to better understand and protect them.
- **Collaboration:** The NCU establishes a broad network of associates (both locally and abroad) to collaborate with other organizations, governments and experts on conservation and environmental education.
- **Environmental education and awareness:** The NCU works to raise awareness and educate the public about major environmental issues in order to encourage them to take action to protect the environment.
- **Networking and partnerships:** The NCU works closely with the government and other organizations to develop and implement policies and programs related to conservation, sustainable development, and environmental protection.
- **Funding:** The NCU has successfully obtained funding from various sources such as the Research Promotion Foundation of Cyprus, the European Commission, the United Nations, and the Republic of Cyprus.
- **Project management:** The NCU uses a variety of project management tools and techniques to ensure the successful completion of projects, including monitoring and evaluation, risk management, and quality assurance.
- **Participatory approach:** The NCU involves the local communities and stakeholders to build capacity and support for conservation and environmental education and awareness initiatives.
- **Continual improvement:** The NCU continuously evaluates and improves their methods and strategies to ensure the success of their projects.

Timeframe of the identification of key success factors

The NCU has been operating for over 15 years and has a wide range of experience and expertise in conservation biology, natural resources management, and environmental education and awareness. It has also developed a wide network of associates both locally and abroad, collaborating with over 160 organizations in 38 countries from Europe and America.

General framework

The Nature Conservation Unit (NCU) is a department within Frederick University that specializes in biodiversity conservation, natural resources management, and environmental education and awareness in Cyprus.

Problems/needs addressed by the initiative

The initiative aimed to address the need for conservation and preservation of the natural resources and biodiversity in Cyprus. The NCU aimed to study, monitor, manage, and conserve the flora, fauna, and habitats of Cyprus, as well as preserving ecologically important areas on the island. Additionally, it aimed to raise awareness and educate the public about major environmental issues and support the government in developing and implementing policies and programs related to conservation, sustainable development, and environmental protection.

Persistence of challenges on local/regional/national/EU levels

The addressed issues are still persistent on local, regional, national, and EU levels as the conservation and management of biodiversity, natural resources, and the environment continue to be important concerns. Climate change, habitat destruction, pollution, and over-exploitation of resources are some of the ongoing challenges that threaten biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources. Therefore, the work of initiatives like the NCU is still crucial in addressing these issues.



Level and scope of implementation

Where has the initiative been implemented in the whole of Cyprus. It is relevant for contexts outside its implementation framework and can be translated and implemented in other countries as it is focused on conservation initiatives, which continue to be important concerns globally.

Involvement of relevant communities

The local stakeholders are:

- Researchers and scientists: The NCU aims to provide the necessary infrastructure, network, and expertise to support researchers and scientists in their conservation biology, natural resources management, and environmental education and awareness studies.
- The people of Cyprus: The initiative aims to raise awareness and educate the public about major environmental issues, with the ultimate goal of encouraging the public to take action to protect the environment.
- Local communities and organizations: The NCU aims to establish a broad network of associates (both locally and abroad) to collaborate with more than 160 organizations from 38 countries from Europe and America.
- The government: The initiative aims to support the government in developing and implementing policies and programs related to conservation, sustainable development, and environmental protection.

Stakeholders' contribution

- The stakeholders involved in the initiative included researchers and scientists from the Nature Conservation Unit (NCU) at Frederick University, ecologically important areas, the flora, fauna, and habitats of Cyprus, the people of Cyprus, local communities and organizations, and the government.
- The researchers and scientists from the NCU were the leading stakeholders in the initiative, providing the necessary infrastructure, network, and expertise to support the initiative's goals of conservation biology, natural resources management, and environmental education and awareness studies.
- The people of Cyprus, local communities, and organizations were also involved as secondary stakeholders, with the initiative aiming to raise awareness and educate the public about major environmental issues, and establish a broad network of associates to collaborate with.
- The government was also a stakeholder, as the initiative aimed to support the government in developing and implementing policies and programs related to conservation, sustainable development, and environmental protection.

Overall, the stakeholders' contribution and involvement varied, with the NCU leading the initiative and providing the necessary expertise, while other stakeholders such as the ecologically important areas, flora, fauna, and habitats, local communities, and government were key partners in the initiative, providing support and contributing to the initiative's goals.



Outcomes and impact

The Nature Conservation Unit (NCU) has had a significant impact on biodiversity conservation, natural resources management, and environmental education and awareness in Cyprus. The NCU has been able to reach a wide range of direct beneficiaries including researchers and scientists, ecological important areas, and the flora, fauna and habitats of Cyprus through its research and conservation efforts.



Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of the initiative were researchers and scientists, as the NCU provided the necessary infrastructure, network, and expertise to support them in their conservation biology, natural resources management, and environmental education and awareness studies.

The indirect beneficiaries were the people of Cyprus, as the initiative aimed to raise awareness and educate the public about major environmental issues, with the ultimate goal of encouraging the public to take action to protect the environment.

Impact on the local/regional/national/EU levels

The NCU focuses on studying, monitoring, managing, and conserving the flora, fauna, and habitats of Cyprus, as well as preserving ecologically important areas on the island, and also aims to raise awareness and educate the public about major environmental issues.

Challenges/Lessons learnt and how the challenges were overcome in the course of the initiative

Limited funding. This was overcome by forging more efficient partnerships.

The lessons/insights to be drawn from this initiative

The NCU's approach of using participatory methods for obtaining data and generating knowledge and involving VET providers and the private sector as active partners in designing, conducting, and analyzing research has been an innovation in the field of nature conservation.

Sustainability and replicability

The Nature Conservation Unit (NCU) has had a significant impact on the field of biodiversity conservation, natural resources management, and environmental education and awareness in Cyprus. This can be replicated in other EU countries.

The possibility and ease of implementing the initiative in diverse contexts/different countries) and to benefit different target groups

The conditions for the initiative to be successfully replicated

The conditions for the initiative to be successfully replicated would depend on the specific goals and objectives of the initiative. However, some key factors that would be necessary for replication include:

- Adequate funding and resources: The initiative would need to be adequately funded in order to support the research, conservation efforts, and educational activities that are necessary to achieve its goals.
- Strong partnerships and collaborations: The initiative would need to establish strong partnerships and collaborations with a wide range of stakeholders, including researchers, scientists, government agencies, NGOs, and local communities, in order to effectively address the issues that it aims to address.
- Strong leadership and management: The initiative would need strong leadership and management to ensure that the goals and objectives are met and that the initiative is effectively implemented.
- Clear communication and dissemination: The initiative should also have a clear communication and dissemination strategy to ensure that the findings and outcomes of the initiative are widely disseminated and effectively communicated to the relevant stakeholders and target groups.
- Monitoring and evaluation: The initiative should have a monitoring and evaluation plan in place to measure progress and assess the effectiveness of the initiative over time.
- Adaptation to the local context: The initiative should be flexible and adaptable to the local context in order to effectively address the specific issues and challenges that are present in that area.

[Upscaling this practice to achieve enhanced impact](#)

This project can be upscaled by:

- **Replication:** The NCU's approach and methods can be replicated in other regions, both in Cyprus and in other countries, to address similar conservation challenges.
- **Partnership building:** The NCU can expand its network of associates, both locally and abroad, to collaborate with more organizations and experts in the field of conservation biology, natural resources management, and environmental education and awareness.
- **Capacity building:** The NCU can establish training programs and workshops to build the capacity of local communities, organizations, and government agencies in conservation biology, natural resources management, and environmental education and awareness.
- **Research and Monitoring:** The NCU can continue to conduct research and monitoring on the flora, fauna, and habitats of Cyprus, and to use this information to inform conservation management decisions.
- **Policy and legislation:** The NCU can work with government agencies to develop and implement policies and legislation related to conservation, sustainable development, and environmental protection.
- **Public awareness and education:** The NCU can continue to raise awareness and educate the public about major environmental issues, with the ultimate goal of encouraging the public to take action to protect the environment.
- **Exploiting new technologies and digital tools:** The NCU can use digital tools and new technologies to enhance the dissemination of information and to improve the monitoring and management of conservation efforts.
- **Utilizing evaluation and monitoring results to improve the initiative:** The NCU can use monitoring and evaluation results to identify areas for improvement, and to continuously improve the initiative and its impact.



[Innovative/success factors](#)

The Nature Conservation Unit (NCU) has several successful focal points that could be incorporated into other projects, including:

- **Research and monitoring:** The NCU has a strong focus on research and monitoring of the flora, fauna, and habitats of Cyprus. This research and monitoring has helped to identify key conservation issues and has provided a basis for developing conservation and management strategies.
- **Networking and collaboration:** The NCU has built a wide network of associates both locally and abroad, collaborating with over 160 organizations in 38 countries from Europe and America. This network has enabled the NCU to share knowledge, resources, and expertise, and to work together to achieve common goals.
- **Environmental education and awareness:** The NCU has a strong emphasis on environmental education and awareness, which is crucial in raising awareness and encouraging public participation in conservation efforts.
- **Environmental policy and decision-making:** The NCU's research and monitoring has helped to inform policy and decision-making at the local, regional, national, and EU level. This has helped to ensure that conservation efforts



are guided by the best available science.

- Sustainable development: The NCU's work is guided by the principles of sustainable development, which aims to balance economic, social, and environmental considerations. This approach has helped the NCU to develop conservation strategies that are both effective and socially and economically viable.

[Contribution to the field of innovation in environmental projects](#)

It aims to raise awareness and educate the public about major environmental issues.

[Conclusion](#)

The Nature Conservation Unit (NCU) has made significant contributions to the field of biodiversity conservation, natural resources management and conservation, and environmental education and awareness in Cyprus. The initiative was the first of its kind in the Cypriot academic system and has played a key role in raising awareness and educating the public about major environmental issues. The NCU has also developed a wide network of associates both locally and abroad, collaborating with over 160 organizations in 38 countries from Europe and America. Through successful research proposals and tenders, the NCU has participated in over 50 projects, with a total budget of 34.8 million euros, providing a valuable source of funding for research and conservation efforts. Furthermore, the NCU has acquired modern research infrastructure for both laboratory and fieldwork, which allows for new research initiatives. The NCU has also contributed to an innovation in the field of promoting volunteerism and environmental protection through its work with local communities and organizations, and through its efforts to support the government in developing and implementing policies and programs related to conservation, sustainable development, and environmental protection.

[Elements that can be used as inspiration for the Grey4Green project](#)

The NCU's wide network of associates both locally and abroad, collaborating with over 160 organizations in 38 countries from Europe and America.

The NCU's success in securing funding for research proposals and tenders, and the acquisition of modern research infrastructure for both laboratory and fieldwork.

The NCU's approach of raising awareness and educating the public about major environmental issues.

[Contact details](#)

www.ncu.org.cy

[More information/published resources](#)

<http://www.ncu.org.cy>

Title of the initiative and country

CYPRUS

Terra Cypria

Type of Initiative

The initiative focused on:

- **Innovative approaches for promoting social inclusion of elderly people from different geographical or cultural contexts;**
- **Good practice on innovative pedagogical approaches to teach both professionals and the elderly on natural heritage and its preservation** (*including best media formats and assessment framework*)





Financing

This is financed from a multiple of sources:

EU, Cyprus government, municipality, private foundations, companies and private initiative/volunteer efforts

Time frame

The initiative started in 1999, and is still running

Name of coordinator, type of organization and brief description of the coordinator

Terra Cypria, NGO

Terra Cypria is a non-profit environmental organization in Cyprus. It was established in 1999 with the aim of preserving and protecting the natural environment of Cyprus through conservation, education, research, and sustainable development activities. They work to raise awareness of the importance of preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the island, with a focus on the protection of biodiversity, wetlands and coastal areas, and sustainable management of natural resources. They offer various projects and activities such as conservation, monitoring, research, education, and outreach, as well as volunteering opportunities for individuals and groups to participate in conservation work such as trail maintenance, beach cleaning and more. They also organize eco-tours, workshops, and lectures to promote awareness of environmental issues and conservation.

Brief description of the project/initiative

Terra Cypria offers a variety of projects and initiatives that focus on conservation, education, research, and sustainable development. Some examples include:

- Conservation projects: Terra Cypria works to protect the natural and cultural heritage of Cyprus, with a focus on biodiversity, wetlands, and coastal areas. They conduct research and monitoring, and participate in conservation activities such as trail maintenance, beach cleaning, and wildlife surveys.
- Education and outreach: Terra Cypria offers educational programs and workshops for students, teachers, and the general public to raise awareness of environmental issues and conservation. They also organize eco-tours, lectures, and other events to promote environmental education.
- Research: Terra Cypria conducts research on the natural and cultural heritage of Cyprus, with a focus on biodiversity, wetlands, and coastal areas. They also conduct research on sustainable development and environmental policy.
- Sustainable development: Terra Cypria works to promote sustainable development in Cyprus through the implementation of sustainable practices and policies, and the participation in sustainable development projects. Terra Cypria also offers volunteer opportunities for individuals and groups to participate in conservation work, research and monitoring.

Objectives

The general objective of the initiative is to overcome the exclusion and social isolation of the senior population.

Specific objectives:

- Promote senior environmental volunteering;
- Organise interpretive tours
- Foster the sharing of knowledge through intergenerational interaction;
- Sensitise the community in general to the social problem of exclusion and isolation of the senior population.

Target Groups

The primary target group is the natural environment and wildlife of Cyprus, which are directly protected and conserved through Terra Cypria's conservation projects and activities. The local communities living near or within the protected areas, who benefit from sustainable development and conservation activities, such as improved access to

natural resources and increased economic opportunities.

Secondary target group:

- The general public in Cyprus, who benefit from increased awareness of environmental issues and conservation, and the promotion of sustainable practices and policies
- Tourists visiting Cyprus, who benefit from the protection and conservation of the island's natural and cultural heritage, and the promotion of sustainable tourism
- Future generations, who benefit from the protection of natural and cultural heritage and the promotion of sustainable development
- Volunteers who participate in Terra Cypria's programs and initiatives, they gain experience and knowledge on conservation, environmental education and research.

Terra Cypria comprises a major part of the Local community. The organization works to protect the natural and cultural heritage of Cyprus, which often includes areas that are important to local communities. They engage with local communities and involve them in conservation and sustainable development activities to ensure that the benefits are shared by all.

[The role of the target group in the course of the initiative](#)

The project planning is based on the identification of the organization works to protect the natural and cultural heritage of Cyprus, which often includes areas that are important to local communities. They engage with local communities and involve them in conservation and sustainable development activities to ensure that the benefits are shared by all.

For example, Terra Cypria engages with local communities living near or within protected areas to raise awareness of environmental issues, and to understand and incorporate their needs and perspectives into conservation and sustainable development activities. They also involve local communities in the management of protected areas and the sustainable use of natural resources.

They also work with local schools and educators in their education and outreach programs, to provide students with hands-on experiences that promote environmental education and conservation.



The end-users

The end-users of Terra Cypria's initiatives are the people and communities that ultimately benefit from the organization's work. These include:

- The natural environment and wildlife of Cyprus, which are directly protected and conserved through Terra Cypria's conservation projects and activities.
- The local communities living near or within the protected areas, who benefit from sustainable development and conservation activities, such as improved access to natural resources and increased economic opportunities.
- The general public in Cyprus, who benefit from increased awareness of environmental issues and conservation, and the promotion of sustainable practices and policies.
- Tourists visiting Cyprus, who benefit from the protection and conservation of the island's natural and cultural heritage, and the promotion of sustainable tourism.
- Future generations, who benefit from the protection of natural and cultural heritage and the promotion of sustainable development.
- Volunteers who participate in Terra Cypria's programs and initiatives, they gain experience and knowledge on conservation, environmental education and research.



Methodology

- Identification of the issue: Terra Cypria identifies environmental issues and conservation priorities through research, monitoring, and engagement with local communities and other stakeholders.
- Development of a plan: Terra Cypria develops a plan of action to address the identified issue, which may include conservation activities, education and outreach programs, sustainable development projects, and research.
- Implementation of the plan: Terra Cypria implements the plan of action through a variety of activities and projects. This may include trail maintenance, beach cleaning, wildlife surveys, education programs, and sustainable development projects.
- Monitoring and evaluation: Terra Cypria monitors the progress of their initiatives and evaluates their effectiveness through data collection and analysis.
- Adaptation and improvement: Based on the results of the monitoring and evaluation, Terra Cypria adapts their approach and makes improvements as needed to ensure that their initiatives are effective and achieve the desired outcomes.
- Dissemination of best practices: Terra Cypria shares their experiences and best practices with other organizations and stakeholders to promote the conservation and sustainable development of Cyprus. It is important to note that the methodology used by Terra Cypria may vary depending on the specific initiative or project

Processes used to ensure the success of the project

- **Stakeholder engagement:** Terra Cypria engages with a wide range of stakeholders, including local communities, government agencies, other non-profit organizations, and the general public, to gain their input and support for their projects. This helps to ensure that the project is relevant, effective, and well-supported by the local community.
- **Planning and budgeting:** Terra Cypria develop a detailed project plan and budget that outlines the goals, objectives, activities, and resources required for the project. This helps to ensure that the project is well-organized, well-resourced, and that the team has a clear understanding of what is required to achieve the desired outcomes.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** Terra Cypria closely monitors the progress of their projects, and evaluates their effectiveness through data collection and analysis. This helps to identify any problems or challenges early on, and to make adjustments as needed to ensure that the project is on track to achieve its goals and objectives.
- **Adaptation and improvement:** Based on the results of the monitoring and evaluation, Terra Cypria adapts their approach and makes improvements as needed to ensure that the project is effective and achieves the desired outcomes.
- **Collaboration and networking:** Terra Cypria engages in partnerships and collaborations with other organizations, government agencies, and local communities to leverage their resources and expertise, and to increase the impact of their projects.
- **Dissemination of best practices:** Terra Cypria shares their experiences and best practices with other organizations and stakeholders to promote the conservation and sustainable development of Cyprus. It's worth mentioning that Terra Cypria also follows the guidelines and regulations of the international and national laws regarding the conservation and sustainable development, this ensure that the projects are legal and ethical.

Timeframe of the identification of key success factors

Since the frequency of development and implementation of the activities is low, often 1, at most 2 times a week, by the end of 2 months one can see what worked better and less well, but if the activities were more frequent it would be faster.

General framework

In general, Terra Cypria focuses on the conservation and sustainable development of the natural and cultural heritage of Cyprus. The organization's goal is to preserve and protect the island's unique biodiversity and natural resources, while also promoting sustainable development and supporting local communities.

Problems/needs addressed by the initiative

The Terra Cypria initiative is a solution to the social exclusion and isolation of seniors through a direct intervention in the causes of the social problem, which will generate impacts both at the individual and community level.

In general, **the local context and objectives of Terra Cypria's projects and initiatives include:**

- **Conservation of biodiversity and natural resources:** Terra Cypria works to protect and conserve the island's unique biodiversity and natural resources, including wetlands, coastal areas, and endangered species.
- **Sustainable development:** Terra Cypria promotes sustainable development in Cyprus through the implementation of sustainable practices and policies, and the participation in sustainable development projects.
- **Community engagement:** Terra Cypria engages with local communities and involves them in conservation and sustainable development activities to ensure that the benefits are shared by all.
- **Environmental education and awareness:** Terra Cypria raises awareness of environmental issues and conservation through education and outreach programs, and promotes environmental education among students and the general public.
- **Research and monitoring:** Terra Cypria conducts research and monitoring to understand the state of the natural environment and the impacts of conservation and sustainable development activities.

[Problems tackled relevant on local/regional/national/EU levels](#)

The social problem of social exclusion and isolation of seniors is, unfortunately, a relevant problem at the local, regional, national and EU level. Population ageing is set to become one of the most significant social transformations of the 21st century, with implications across all sectors of society - in the labour and financial markets; in the demand for goods and services such as housing, transportation, and social protection; and in family structures and intergenerational ties

[Persistence of challenges on local/regional/national/EU levels](#)

The issues are still persistent at the local/ regional/ national/ EU level, however some changes at the local level and in policy implementation are beginning to take place. In order to design an international policy on ageing in the 21st century, a Political Declaration and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing were adopted. This Plan of Action called for changes in attitudes, policies and practices at all levels in order to handle the issue of ageing in the 21st century. Its recommendations for action concern the quality of the ageing population, the promotion of well-being and health in old age, and the importance of creating support networks.



[Level and scope of implementation](#)

Terra Cypria is a non-profit environmental organization based in Cyprus, the initiative has been implemented on the island. The organization's main focus is on the conservation and sustainable development of the natural and cultural heritage of Cyprus, and it works to preserve and protect the island's unique biodiversity and natural resources, while also promoting sustainable development and supporting local communities.

Some of the specific locations where Terra Cypria has implemented its initiatives include:

- **The Akamas Peninsula National Park**, which is an important area for biodiversity and conservation in Cyprus.
- **The area around the Evretou Dam**, which is an important wetland area for migratory birds.
- **The Cape Greco National Forest Park**, which is a protected area that is home to a variety of plant and animal species.
- **The cities of Nicosia, Limassol, and Paphos**, where Terra Cypria has implemented educational and outreach programs.

Is it relevant for contexts outside its implementation framework and can be translated and implemented in other countries, depending on the local context and the specific needs and challenges of the country.

[Involvement of relevant communities](#)

- **Local communities:** Terra Cypria engages with local communities living near or within protected areas to gain their input and support for conservation and sustainable development activities. They also involve local communities in the management of protected areas and the sustainable use of natural resources.
- **Government agencies:** Terra Cypria works with government agencies at the local, regional, national and EU



levels to implement conservation and sustainable development activities and policies.

- **Other non-profit organizations:** Terra Cypria engages in partnerships and collaborations with other non-profit organizations to leverage their resources and expertise, and to increase the impact of their initiatives.
- **The general public:** Terra Cypria raises awareness of environmental issues and conservation through education and outreach programs, and promotes environmental education among the general public.
- **Researchers:** Terra Cypria works with researchers to conduct research and monitoring to understand the state of the natural environment and the impacts of conservation and sustainable development activities.
- **Businesses and industries:** Terra Cypria work with businesses and industries to promote sustainable practices and to minimize their negative impacts on the environment.
- **International organizations:** Terra Cypria engages with international organizations such as IUCN, BirdLife International and EU institutions to gain support and guidance on conservation and sustainable development.

Stakeholders' contribution

The partners provided spaces to carry out face-to-face activities, logistical support, support in the dissemination of the project among its users, tracking and attracting participants, transport for people with reduced mobility, support in the articulation with possible informal and/or strategic partners.

Outcomes and impact

Direct beneficiaries:

- The natural environment and wildlife of Cyprus, which are directly protected and conserved through Terra Cypria's conservation projects and activities.
- The local communities living near or within the protected areas, who benefit from sustainable development and conservation activities, such as improved access to natural resources and increased economic opportunities.
- The Volunteers who participate in Terra Cypria's programs and initiatives, they gain experience and knowledge on conservation, environmental education and research.

Indirect beneficiaries:

- The general public in Cyprus, who benefit from increased awareness of environmental issues and conservation, and the promotion of sustainable practices and policies
- Tourists visiting Cyprus, who benefit from the protection and conservation of the island's natural and cultural heritage, and the promotion of sustainable tourism

Future generations, who benefit from the protection of natural and cultural heritage and the promotion of sustainable development.

Beneficiaries

The project generates short- and long-term benefits on direct beneficiaries who stay:

- More motivated for life;
- More socially included;
- With a sense of belonging;
- More sensitive to environmental issues;
- With improvements in their physical, cognitive and emotional conditions;
- With better quality of life.

Impact at the local/regional/national/EU levels

The impact of Terra Cypria's initiatives on the local, regional, national and EU levels will vary depending on the specific initiative or project. However, in general, Terra Cypria's initiatives aim to promote conservation and sustainable development of the natural and cultural heritage of Cyprus, and to benefit both the natural environment and the people of Cyprus.



Impact on the local level:

- Terra Cypria's initiatives aim to promote conservation and sustainable development of the natural and cultural heritage of Cyprus, and to benefit the local communities living near or within protected areas, such as improved access to natural resources and increased economic opportunities.
- Terra Cypria engages with local communities to gain their input and support for conservation and sustainable development activities, and to involve them in the management of protected areas and the sustainable use of natural resources.
- Terra Cypria work with local schools and educators to provide students with hands-on experiences that promote environmental education and conservation.

Impact on the regional level:

- Terra Cypria's initiatives aim to promote conservation and sustainable development of the natural and cultural heritage of Cyprus, and to benefit the people of Cyprus by raising awareness of environmental issues and conservation, and promoting sustainable practices and policies.
- Terra Cypria works with regional and local government agencies to implement conservation and sustainable development activities and policies

Impact on the national level:

- Terra Cypria's initiatives aim to promote conservation and sustainable development of the natural and cultural heritage of Cyprus, and to benefit the people of Cyprus by raising awareness of environmental issues and conservation, and promoting sustainable practices and policies.
- Terra Cypria works with national government agencies to implement conservation and sustainable development activities and policies.
- Terra Cypria contributes to the development of the national conservation and sustainable development strategy.

Impact on the EU level:

- Terra Cypria contributes to the EU's conservation and sustainable development policies

Challenges/Lessons learnt and how the challenges have been overcome in the course of the initiative

Some of the challenges encountered were:

- the need to introduce the topic in indoor activities before going outdoors;
 - the need to do more activities but shorter ones due to time constraints;
 - the need to gain the confidence and motivation of the groups;
 - the need to adapt the activities to the limitations of the people and the partner institutions;
 - the need to combine the needs of the project with the wants and needs of the partner institutions;
- Difficulty in bringing several generations together still due to fear of COVID-19 (institutions don't feel comfortable bringing the elderly together with other people, even outdoors).

This was overcome by adjusting type and number of activities developed adapted to the different groups.

The lessons/insights to be drawn from this initiative

Lessons:

- despite the low literacy of this audience, they show interest and motivation for the theme related to nature/environment;
- activities have to be very practical/visual (orally transmitted message is difficult to make understood due to deficit in hearing acuity);
- it is very important to follow up the work done, for example, that the public knows/follows the evolution of their work (plants growing, nest boxes occupied...) so that they are motivated by the results achieved and not only by the first step carried out;
- activities that relate to life experience, stir up emotions and motivate learning through the content of the proposed activities.



Sustainability and replicability

The timeframe for its implementation, up to January 2023, is not over yet.

The possibility and ease of implementing the initiative in diverse contexts/different countries) and to benefit different target groups

It is possible to incorporate this project in the environmental education initiatives.

This responds to a problem that is growing in the community, at a local and a global level.

The number of the various activities already described can be increased, continuing the action with the senior public together with the general public so that, through environmental education and awareness, the isolation and social exclusion that affects the elderly population can be mitigated.

The conditions for the initiative to be successfully replicated

- small groups, maximum 12 people;
- very frequent activities, 1 time per week (they easily forget what they have already talked about);
- Place with easy accessibility, with WC, with benches for them to sit;
- transport and snack for outdoor activities;
- the audience needs a minimum of cognitive capacity to assimilate the information;
- microphones and speakers can be important;
- need for visual support with enough dimensions so that they can be well seen even individually (therefore prints or large screen equipment are useful)

Upscaling this practice to achieve enhanced impact

This practice can be upscaled if we: train more people to increase the team of trainers/monitors, increase the number of partners/users, have more financial resources, improve dissemination to reach the audience in question (eternal problem), establish a stronger relationship with the public that allows them to be mobilized effortlessly for activities (this is the key to success, making us 'family' with the older audience so that they can easily participate and be motivated).

Innovative/success factors

Adapt the activities to the public in question, whether it be elderly people, children, public with disabilities; carry out more practical work (so that people see 'work done') and establish a relationship of friendship and trust with the public.

Contribution to the field of innovation in environmental projects

- Integrate people who usually suffer from isolation and social exclusion into environmental activities;
- Develop a sense of belonging and group unity capable of acting and improving the environment to which they belong;
- Improve self-esteem through the recognition of the need and capacity for lifelong learning;
- Promote active and healthy ageing, increasing the quality of life as people get older;
- Promote the sociability of the public.



Conclusion

This project helps the elderly:

- Overcome social exclusion and isolation;
- Promote the self-esteem and sociability of this public;
- Promote active and healthy ageing;
- Improve environmental literacy;
- Value the contribution of each and every one (including the elderly) to the protection and conservation of nature.

Elements that can be used as inspiration for the Grey4Green project

- activities, regardless of age, mobility and place of residence;
- The lessons/insights learned in this project;
- Working for the environment and for a common cause.

Contact details

<https://terracypria.org/the-foundation/>

Title of the initiative and country

SWITZERLAND

Seniors et paysages





Time frame

The timeframe is 2020-2024

Name of coordinator, type of organisation and brief description of the coordinator

The Municipality of Château-d'Œx and Pro Senectute Vaud, which is a public body and Senior Association. Château-d'Œx is a municipality in the canton of Vaud in Switzerland. It is in the district of Riviera-Pays-d'Enhaut. Located in the heart of the Parc Gruyère Pays-d'Enhaut, Château-d'Œx is a popular place to live and an easily accessible tourist destination, both in summer and winter. One of the particularities of its population is that it has a higher proportion of people over 65 (24.4%) than the Swiss (18.3%) and Vaud (16.4%) averages. Pro Senectute Vaud looks after the well-being of the canton's senior citizens. Since its creation in 1919, the association has been taking care of the seniors of the canton of Vaud, while promoting their integration and social participation. The organisation offers a wide range of services and activities for senior citizens in the canton of Vaud, as well as for public authorities and companies in various fields.

Name of partners

- Pays-d'Enhaut Région Association
- Natural regional park Gruyère Pays-d'Enhaut
- Pays d'EnHaut Health Centre
- UNISANTÉ
- Rougemont municipality
- Rossinière municipality

Type of organization

It is a mixture of associations, municipalities, a foundation and a natural park.



Brief description of the partners

Pays-d'Enhaut Région Association: Municipal department of tourism in Château-d'Œx

Natural regional park Gruyère Pays-d'Enhaut: regional natural park.

Pays d'EnHaut Health Centre: a hospital

UNISANTÉ: University Centre for General Medicine and Public Health in Lausanne.

Rougemont municipality

Rossinière municipality

Brief description of the project/initiative

With the support of the Federal Office for Spatial Development and the Leenaards Foundation, the municipality of Château-d'Œx and Pro Senectute Vaud, senior citizens and local associations are consulted about their needs regarding their environment. In particular, they are asked to analyse the accessibility and enhancement of the landscape in their region.

Objectives

The objectives are promoting Social Engagement and providing elderly people with the opportunity to develop their knowledge on environmental topics. The aim of the “Seniors et paysages” project is to enhance the landscape of Château-d’Oex with senior citizens. The community-based approach allows the empowerment of the population and the development of local communities into full-fledged actors capable of taking care of their own needs. The intention is to make these infrastructures available to the whole population, in particular to families with young children and to people with reduced mobility. These walking trails will promote social ties between generations, as well as health prevention, while at the same time providing a new perspective on the cultural landscape.

Target groups

The target groups are elderly people, senior citizens and Château-d’Oex residents. Château-d’Oex has a higher proportion of people over 65 (24.4%) than the Swiss and Vaud averages.

The role of the target group in the course of the initiative

In concrete terms, residents and partners are invited to create working groups, e.g. on village life, which they would like to see more lively. Diagnostic walks are intended to identify areas for improvement on village paths. Collaboration between all local actors will make it possible to create facilities suitable for the elderly and usable by all. Finally, infrastructure proposals will be analysed by the municipality, built by local craftsmen and promoted to the public.



The end-users

The end-users in a project such as Seniors et Paysage are certainly the citizens of Château-d’Oex who will benefit from the diagnosis of the village routes and from the creation of facilities suitable for the elderly and usable by everyone.

Methodology

It is a participative approach for a transgenerational project. Since 2020 the commune of Château-d’Oex in collaboration with Pro Senectute has been implementing various actions within the framework of the Seniors et Paysages project. One of them is the diagnostic walk which aims to improve the accessibility and attractiveness of certain paths near the village from the point of view of seniors.

Processes used to ensure the success of the project

The project leaders, in collaboration with the seniors and local and regional associations, wants to develop an innovative and participative process, which will position Château-d’Oex as the preferred mountain village for seniors.

This pilot project is based on the implementation of a community approach inspired by the “Quartiers Solidaires” methodology: the seniors are consulted and propose means of action to facilitate access to the landscapes, such as the installation of benches and handrails or the improvement of the signage. To ensure that the proposed improvements are useful to senior citizens, a working group is organising “diagnostic walks” with the residents. These tours, of various levels of difficulty, offer the opportunity for each person to give their opinion. The observations are then discussed together in a participatory spirit and with the aim of developing structures adapted to the needs of the elderly and, more broadly, to the entire population. At the same time, another working group is looking at ways of revitalising the life of the village and enhancing its natural and cultural heritage. The seniors have drawn up a list of volunteers who are willing to help welcome new residents. It is also planned that the Temple Hill, a true symbol of Château-d’Œx, will be further enhanced through the renovation of its garden and its infrastructures. The ambition to make Château-d’Œx a destination adapted to senior citizens will undoubtedly contribute to the revitalization of local life, its economy and tourism in the region, while respecting the nature and cultural heritage of the commune. In addition to enhancing the landscape qualities and developing urban planning by and for senior citizens, this project will also contribute to improving the well-being of the entire local population. The urban development and footpaths will benefit everyone, from picnic areas for families to wider pavements for pushchairs and people with disabilities.

Timeframe for lessons learned and identification of key success factors

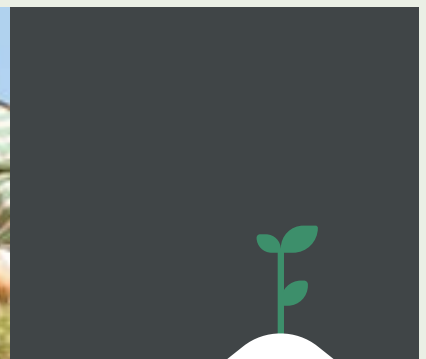
The process is still ongoing. Such participatory projects, which take a long time to prepare and then “break free”, will be better rooted in the reality on the ground and better accepted by the majority, rather than “top down” measures. Since the launch of the project, informal exchange spaces have already been created, new friendships made, and knowledge networks expanded. The comments regularly reported by the seniors mention the pleasure of having been able to build relationships, of being taken seriously and of having learned a new way of communicating and collaborating through this participatory approach. For the municipality, the process requires time and listening, but it allows it to be as close as possible to the actual needs and expectations of its population.

General framework

Château-d’Œx is the largest municipality in the canton of Vaud in terms of surface area, but not in terms of population. It has only 2% of its surface area devoted to housing and infrastructure, the rest being devoted to agricultural, wooded or unproductive areas. Moreover, 25% of its 3,500 inhabitants are over 65 years old, while the cantonal average is around 17%.

Problems/needs addressed by the initiative

The project is based on the desire of senior citizens to enhance the value of their landscapes, which for them represent much more than a stretch of land: freedom, well-being, sport, hiking, economy, tourism, etc. On the part of the municipality, there is a desire to interact with the population and to create a network with local actors (professionals and associations).



[The relevance of problems tackled on local/regional/national/EU levels](#)

Château-d'Œx is the largest municipality in the canton of Vaud in terms of surface area, but not in terms of population. It has only 2% of its surface area devoted to housing and infrastructure, the rest being devoted to agricultural, wooded or unproductive areas. Certainly, the case of this village can be replicated locally in many small towns, especially mountainous and isolated ones where there is a lot of woodland, little population and many elderly people. Areas therefore where there is a need to unite the community and not leave the elderly alone.

[Persistence of challenges on local/regional/national/EU levels](#)

Active ageing requires access to goods and services that are not always and everywhere guaranteed and to which the EU's work to enable ageing people to remain active in the labour market and in communication is linked. The challenge posed by Seniors et Paysages is fully in line with this and with all levels of governance.

[Involvement of relevant communities/bodies/associations](#)

Residents, local associations, organisations and municipal authorities are involved.

[The stakeholders' contribution/ involvement](#)

Senior citizens are actively involved in the working groups. These groups are open to all seniors: anyone can join. The Pro Senectute counsellors, who act as facilitators, make the participants aware of the "collective intelligence" and the spirit of the approach, and ensure that the groups are well balanced.

[Outcomes and impact](#)

There is no such information, but we do know that the inhabitants of Château-d'Œx are about 3,500 and more than 25% are over 65 + we have to consider the seasonal tourists in the region.

[Beneficiaries](#)

The direct beneficiaries are the elderly, and the indirect beneficiaries are citizens, tourists. They have been the enhancement of the landscape while making it more accessible to seniors.

[Impact on the local/regional/national/EU levels](#)

All in all, these measures will improve the well-being of the population and contribute to making the region an attractive living environment and destination for older people. This new market position will also give the local economy a boost. The experiences and findings of this model project will serve as a basis for other municipalities to take into account the needs and expectations of senior citizens in the context of spatial planning, so that their quality of living and local life is improved and the landscape is concretely enhanced and made visible.

[Challenges/Lessons learnt and how the challenges have been overcome in the course of the initiative](#)

No information was found on challenges.

[The lessons/insights to be drawn from this initiative](#)

The process is still ongoing. Such participatory projects, which take a long time to prepare and then "break free", will be better rooted in the reality on the ground and better accepted by the majority, rather than "top down" measures. Since the launch of the project, informal exchange spaces have already been created, new friendships made, and knowledge networks expanded. The comments regularly reported by the seniors mention the pleasure of having been able to build relationships, of being taken seriously and of having learned a new way of communicating and collaborating through this participatory approach. For the municipality, the process requires time and listening,

but it allows it to be as close as possible to the actual needs and expectations of its population.

The continuation of the initiatives after the envisaged timespan of its implementation

The process is still ongoing. The sustainability of the project is due to the "Quartiers et villages solidaires" methodology developed by Pro Senectute Vaud - on which this pilot project is based - and which strengthens the anchoring of a project thanks to the creation of a network in which the residents, local associations and organisations and the municipal authorities are involved. Given the involvement of the municipality and the variety of actors involved, these participatory community practices have every chance of being sustainable.

Incorporation into other activities

"Bouche-à-oreille" peer to peer consultation on topics that elderly themselves have chosen. The "Diagnostic walk" whose aim is to improve the infrastructure and accessibility of the hiking trails, the seniors visit the site in groups and observe what is good, what needs to be improved, what already exists and what is missing (a bench, a handrail, the layout of the ground, waste bins, etc.).



The continued relevance of the initiative

The initiative is more than relevant today and addresses an issue that will increasingly be dealt with, which is active ageing.

The possibility and ease of implementing the initiative in diverse contexts/different countries) and to benefit different target groups

The initiative can certainly be replicated in the countries to which grey4green members belong with the same target group, i.e. the elderly. Young people or adults could be involved but one should always present a small village with nature sites around and trails to be improved.

The conditions for the initiative to be successfully replicated

First and foremost, the municipality should coordinate the project as the body of primary importance to the citizens and a hub for uniting partnerships and recruiting seniors. Secondly, civil society associations should involve seniors already in their activities. Thirdly, safety and productive health centres can make the elderly aware of the project.

Upscaling this practice to achieve enhanced impact

The target of the action could be widened by involving other age groups such as young people, thus bringing added value to society and making two distant generations work in synergy. I do not believe that the activity could work by involving several surrounding villages since the very sense of community and mutuality created would be lost. Perhaps it would be necessary to start with more populous villages, but still in mountainous areas.



Innovative/Success factors

The factors are participation & involvement as Senior citizens are actively involved in the working groups. As well as accessibility to all the working groups and sustainability of the project.

The way in which the best practice has contributed to an innovation in the field of promoting volunteerism among the elderly and environmental protection

Undoubtedly the key to the success of this project was its methodology "Quartiers et villages solidaires" developed by Pro Senectute Vaud, which succeeded in strengthening the rooting of a project through the creation of a network in which inhabitants, local associations and organisations, and municipal authorities are involved. Given the involvement of the municipality and the variety of actors involved, these participative community practices have every chance of being sustainable, replicable and lasting.

Conclusion

Their motivation to participate comes from the fact that they are consulted and deal with topics that they themselves have chosen. That is why they were highly motivated to participate.

Elements that can be used as inspiration for the Grey4Green project

The diagnostic walk could be used in the 3 G4G voluntary programme in the environment context e.g. in a wood where benches are missing, signage, information panels on flora and fauna, if work is needed on securing paths, cutting grass, building birdhouses, orienting.



[Contact details](#)

Municipality of Château d'Oex

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Pro Senectute Vaud

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More Information/published resources

<https://www.quartiers-solidaires.ch/vald/chateau-d-seniors-paysages-914.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Np5445Fpl4o>

<https://www.quartiers-solidaires.ch/cdo>

<https://www.chateaudoex-admin.ch>

<https://www.quartiers-solidaires.ch>

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Title of the initiative and country

ITALY

Insieme PianTIAMO

Type of Initiative

The initiative focused on:

- **Good practice on innovative and motivational pedagogical exploitation of nature:** *What makes for a successful and engaging volunteer environment program*
- **Innovative approaches for promoting social inclusion of elderly people from different geographical or cultural contexts**





Financing

The regional authority is behind the financing

Time frame

The initiative took place between March 2022- August 2022. Given the positive experience of the initiative, what is sown and reaped, we can already read in the press releases of August 2022 the willingness of the partners to realise Insieme PiantiAMO bis.

Name of coordinator, type of organisation and brief description of the coordinator

Associazione Consumatori e Famiglie-ASSOCONFAM

It is a voluntary association.

The Associazione Consumatori e Famiglie aps (ASSOCONFAM aps), has been operating on a voluntary basis at national level since 1997, when it was set up by a group of leaders of the ACLI in Lazio. The aims of Assoconfam aps are, principally, to protect consumers, educate them to responsible consumption, favouring especially the protection of the environment, support for fair trade, product safety, quality of services, fairness of tariffs, the need for adequate information and correct advertising, and access to alternative justice.

Name of partners

A.E.C.I. Lazio, the environmental association Earth and Le Metamorfofi, Centre for Psychology and Psychotherapy.

Type of organisation

It is a non profit association.

Brief description of the partner

A.E.C.I. Lazio is the consumer association, earth is the association for the legal protection of nature and animal rights and finally the association Le Metamorfofi, is a Psychology and Psychotherapy Centre.

Brief description of the project/initiative

At a time when all we do is run around busy with emergencies and the myriad mishaps of daily life, complaining that we do not have enough time to spend with our loved ones, the Insieme Pianti-AMO project is the right opportunity to STOP. This break allows them to lend a hand to the two age groups that have suffered the most in the past two years: children and the elderly. The initiative promoted is realised with funds from the Lazio Region, under the Solidarity Communities 2020 Programme. This is why the project is designed and articulated involving both pre-schools and senior centres, to collaborate on an activity that has long fascinated grandparents and involved grandchildren, but which today seems to be the preserve of projects that only concern one or the other age group.

Objectives

The project idea is to create intergenerational collaboration, between children and the elderly precisely, with the common aim of beautifying our cities and conveying the environmental message of caring for greenery and 'do-it-yourself' in a 'tutorial' manner and in a proactive manner, reorganising green spaces, embellishing them and making them usable with furniture made from post-consumer materials.

Target groups

The primary target group is definitely the elderly and children/young people. Instead of a secondary target group, we could consider indirect target groups the citizens and all those who will benefit from what has been realized thanks to the project Insieme PianTIAMO. The end-users: The end users are the citizens of Rome, especially children and the elderly, but also tourists. The target group do not comprise a major group from the local community.

The role of the target group in the course of the initiative

Considering the elderly and children as the primary target groups of the project, these do not represent the entire local community because young people and adults, who can still be identified as end consumers, are missing.

The end-users

The end users are the citizens of Rome's municipality 5 and can also be considered the tourists who young people of the results of this initiative in terms of environment and quality of life.



Methodology

At a time when all we do is run around busy with emergencies and the myriad mishaps of daily life, complaining that we do not have enough time to spend with our loved ones, the Insieme Pianti-AMO project is the right opportunity to STOP. This break allows us to lend a hand to the two age groups that have suffered the most in the past two years: children and the elderly. To do this, various activities have been planned the project idea is to create intergenerational collaboration, between children and grandparents, in fact, with the common aim of beautifying our cities and conveying the environmental message of taking care of green spaces and "do-it-yourself" in a "tutorial" manner and in a factual manner, reorganising green spaces, embellishing them and making them usable with furniture made from post-consumer materials. This is why the project is designed and articulated to involve both pre-schools and senior centres, to collaborate in an activity that has long fascinated grandparents and involved grandchildren, but which today seems to be the prerogative only of projects concerning one or the other age group involving them in various activities.

Processes used to ensure the success of the project

Numerous activities are planned in the INSIEME PLANTS-AMO Project.

BREEDING AND PLANTING ORNAMENTAL PLANTS: in collaboration with preschools, which will see volunteers with children and grandparents over 60 raising and caring for plants, which will be placed in flower beds, gardens and identified green spaces.

NEIGHBOURHOOD EVENT DAYS: to place the plants raised in the spaces identified with the Public Administrations; this will be an opportunity to spend some time together, have fun with the initiatives organised and return home enri-

ched by the experience and some extra information.

SHARING AND EXPERIENTIAL EXCHANGE LABORATORIES: during the day-events, dedicated in particular to grandchildren and grandparents, who will be involved in group sharing and exchange of knowledge of experiences from one generation to the next.

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS: to learn - through video lessons - how to transform materials that are no longer used, to give new life to and reuse objects that are now broken or obsolete.

VIDEO PILLS: useful hints and tips to explain in a quick and light way how to avoid waste and take care of urban spaces and the environment around us.

COMPETITION "THE ENVIRONMENTAL PALADIN": prizes will be awarded to the 3 most beautiful achievements and the 3 most representative categories.

[Timeframe for lessons learned and identification of key success factors](#)

Bringing the children back together with the older generations, those who were most affected and segregated during the lockdown, and thanks to the season, playing with the earth, planting plants, a good opportunity to bring these generations together. Opportunity to rediscover themselves in a pleasant context.

[General framework](#)

The context was one preceded by Covid in which the elderly in particular remained segregated at home, and at the same time Rome, a very attractive but very dispersed city where, in addition to urbanisation, adding the fact that one cannot leave the house has created difficult situations for the elderly and also for the young. Detachment from nature, from the environment.

[Problems/ needs addressed by the initiative](#)

The need to rediscover the value of nature, the contact with it, especially in this day and age where nothing is taken for granted anymore and where the elderly have long been prevented, especially for protection, from leaving the house.

[The relevance of problems tackled on local/regional/national/EU levels](#)

Problems that can be found regionally, nationally, Europe-wide and everywhere in areas of high population density and high urbanisation, two key factors during covid 2019 that affected especially the most fragile people.

[Persistence of challenges on local/regional/national/EU levels](#)

The problem of high urbanisation, the lack of soil, natural land, is a problem found in almost all large European cities and beyond. This is affecting the quality of life not only of the elderly, who are certainly more fragile, but of everyone.

[Level and scope of implementation](#)

The initiative has been implemented in Rome, Italy. It is relevant for contexts outside its implementation framework, and it can be translated and implemented in other countries. This project can be implemented in any urban area. In fact, as Grey4Green tells us, the elderly constitute the largest number of people on earth and in Italy in particular they represent 22.8% of the population.

[Involvement of relevant communities/bodies/associations](#)

In addition to the project partner associations, primary schools in Rome's municipality 5 and elderly people's centres were involved.

[The stakeholders' contribution/ involvement](#)

They definitely support the activities as far as teachers and school are concerned, in the case of older people to me-

diate between their wishes and needs also thanks to the support of Le Metamorfosi.

Outcomes and impact

Direct benefits for target groups in action such as reconnecting with nature, discovering biodiversity, intergenerational outreach, discovering the land. Other indirect results are the improvement of the area in which the project took place, a sort of redevelopment of the territory for the benefit of all, moreover, the realisation of video pills is useful and usable by the larger pool of users using Youtube.

Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries are adult people and children of the schools involved. The indirect beneficiaries are the local community, the municipality.

The short-term benefit is the positive experience that is brought home, thanks to this active involvement of the elderly who help the younger ones and of the elderly themselves who rediscover and reconnect with nature and the ecosystem, bringing benefit to the latter.



The impact on the local/regional/national/EU levels

The positive impact is local rather than regional or national or beyond due to the redevelopment of the area, increase in green space, workshops open to the community, involvement of the population.

Challenges/Lessons Learnt

The inexperience of children with plants and nature and the reluctance sometimes of the elderly to get involved.

The encountered challenges and how these have been overcome in the course of the initiative

They have been overcome through promoter associations, psychological support, intergenerational drive and family ties.

The lessons/insights to be drawn from this initiative

Do not take it for granted that target groups will want to participate in the proposed initiatives, always envisage support, importance of intergenerational peer pressure.

The continuation of the initiatives after the envisaged timespan of its implementation

The initiatives came to an end with the end of the project, but given the high sustainability not that participation in the project has already been envisaged for August 2022 for a Insieme PianTIAMO bis

Incorporation into other activities

in addition to the didactic workshops set up to learn - through video lessons - how to transform materials that are no longer used, to give new life and reuse objects that are now broken or obsolete, one could think of sharing and experiential exchange laboratories: during the days-event, dedicated in particular to children/young people and the elderly of grey4green who will be involved in group sharing and exchange of knowledge of experiences from one generation to another, also with a natural conservation theme.

The continued relevance of the initiative

Although the covid problem has faded, the elderly's lack of contact with the city, nature and others often persists, especially in big cities. That is why involving them in initiatives such as these and volunteer programmes where they first and foremost can involve the younger ones and teach them what they know can be a very good inspiration.

The possibility and ease of implementing the initiative in diverse contexts/different countries) and to benefit different target groups

The initiative can be replicated anywhere, especially in big cities, but one can also think of mountain or country areas where, however, with the help of the elderly, children can be involved in nature conservation activities.

The conditions (institutional, social, etc.) for the initiative to be successfully replicated

Certainly, the presence of schools, centres for the elderly that can involve them such as universities of the third age or voluntary associations, regions, municipalities that finance and thus are sensitive to the issue.

Upscaling this practice to achieve enhanced impact

You must involve more centres for the elderly and schools, give it a duration of more than 6 months and make it cyclically replicable by acting in different areas of the city/territory.

Innovative/Success factors

Certainly, the kinship factor if present can be a strong driver for participation but it is not replicable in all territories and indeed often the elderly who need these activities most are alone. The most relevant parts are certainly activities such as intergenerational workshops, video pills and neighbourhood workshops.

The way in which the best practice has contributed to an innovation in the field of promoting volunteerism among the elderly and environmental protection

The unforeseen involvement of older people in an urban nature conservation and spatial regeneration project and their central role as instructors/accompanists/points of reference for project activities played a key role in the success of the initiative.



Conclusion

Trying to STOP, in a time where everything is rushed and superficial. Stopping to recover our senses, perhaps a little rusty during this time: re-learning to tell and listen to words and emotions, to smell plants and to touch to recognise the most common varieties by touch. This is the main purpose and the innovative aspect of the project. How? Through an intergenerational exchange on environmental issues not relegated to theory but putting into practice arts that are often unknown to the youngest and passed on to the elderly, benefiting not only these two age groups in psychophysical terms but the entire community where the project works.

Elements that can be used as inspiration for the Grey4Green project

As a volunteer one can think of the role of the elderly person as an expert, a master of conservation through the passing on of knowledge to other age groups. This can become a formative moment not only for the child or young person, but for the elderly person who, by putting himself at stake, rediscovers his practical skills and accompanies others on a sensory journey of discovery of nature.

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More Information/published resources

[ASSOCONFAM website and social media](#)

[A.E.C.I website and social media](#)



Title of the initiative and country




ICELAND

Conservation Volunteers Trailwork: A Handbook



Type of Initiative

The initiative focused on:

- 
- Good practice on innovative pedagogical approaches to teach both professionals and the elderly on natural heritage and its preservation** (*including best media formats and assessment framework*);
- 
- Engaging and inspirational approaches to train third age professionals; and Best examples of online learning** (*what pedagogical support tools are needed/ appropriate platforms*).
- 





Financing

The project is financed/supported by volunteers.

Time frame:

This initiative started in 2014 and was completed in 2020. This is a project that is still very important to the volunteering programme. It is still running and it is the aim to complete the handbook when necessary.

Name of Coordinator

Environment Agency of Iceland
Julie Kermarec, Project Coordinator

Type of Organization:

The Environment Agency of Iceland operates under the direction of the Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources. Its role is to promote the protection as well as sustainable use of Iceland's natural resources, as well as public welfare by helping to ensure a healthy environment, and safe consumer goods.



Name of partners:

Julie Kermarec. Julie is the Iceland Conservation Volunteer Programme coordinator since 1st of April 2022 and was the assistant coordinator for 3 years before. In 2017, she volunteered for the environment agency of Iceland and was a team leader for 10 weeks.

Roger Whysall is a volunteer and an Iceland Conservation Volunteer (ICV) leader for more than 15 years. Roger began leading trail teams in summer 2006 and since then has led hundreds of volunteers all over Iceland. During these years, Roger has been in contact with many experienced local rangers and managers and has gained tremendous knowledge on protected areas around Iceland. He refined his trail work skills and managed to share them with the other members of the ICV programme thanks to his exceptional ability in leading and coaching groups of young people, acquired during his previous work as a teacher in the United Kingdom.

Brief description of the project/initiative

The initiative consisted of writing a very easy to use trailwork handbook for the volunteers, containing all the knowledge about trail building and maintenance that Roger had gained over the years.

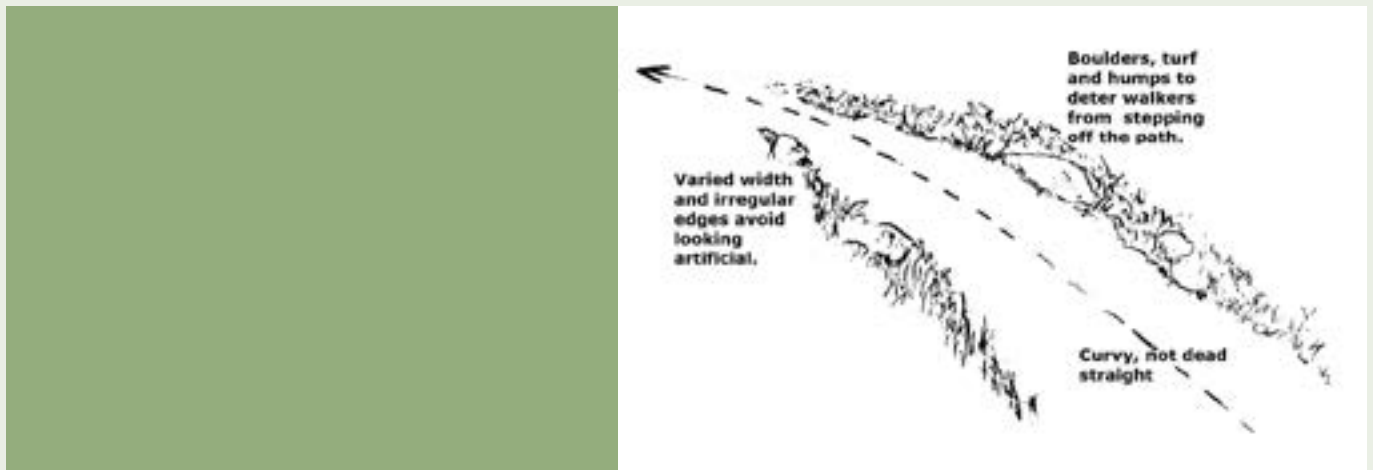
Objectives

This Handbook aimed to provide simple, easily understood, Iceland-specific, explanations and guides for non-specialists who, in many cases, are only temporarily engaged in this trailwork. This handbook is used every summer by the ICV volunteers to help them find the right techniques and/or guidelines on how to do a particular work.

Target Groups

The target groups affected by this initiative are:

- **Primary target group:** Iceland Conservation Volunteers
- **Secondary target group:** Rangers and managers of the protected areas in Iceland
- **The end-users: Volunteers,** rangers and managers of the protected areas in other countries



The role of the target group in the course of the initiative

The target group will use the handbook and, for those who are coming multiple times to Iceland, their role would be to update and/or complete the information / techniques as well as passing the knowledge.

The end-users

The end-users could be volunteers, rangers or managers from other countries searching for trail building and maintenance techniques.

Methodology

There have been several meetings between the coordinator and the partner to find out which presentation would be the easiest to use since the handbook is quite long with multiple techniques description and details. There are a lot of drawings and sketches that help the reader to understand the techniques better. On site pictures have also been set on the Facebook page for a practical vision (considering the handbook was more of a theoretical explanation).

Processes used to ensure the success of the project

Clear communication and presentation every year to the new volunteers. The first week of the 10 weeks volunteers' programme always starts with a training week in which those techniques.

Timeframe for lessons learned and identification of key success factors

It is an ongoing process.

General framework

There was no handbook with detailed techniques that applied to the Icelandic context and it was very needed, especially since volunteers are mostly new to trail building and maintenance.

Problems/needs addressed by the initiative

The main need was to compile all the knowledge that Roger had in Trailwork in order to pass it to the experienced leaders and new volunteers. It was also a need when the teams of volunteers had to work on a specific project.

The relevance of problems tackled on local/regional/national/EU levels

This handbook is usable all around Iceland and most likely in Scandinavia / in countries with similar weather conditions (UK).

Persistence of the challenges on local/regional/national/EU levels

The challenges are still persistent.

Level and scope of implementation

It is implemented in protected areas of Iceland.

It is relevant for contexts outside its implementation framework, and it can be translated and implemented in other countries.

The handbook is already in English so it would be easier to translate to local languages. However, it is very specific to Iceland and the Icelandic context.

Outcomes and impact

There are at least 20 volunteers per year that benefit from the handbook and get some trail building and maintenance knowledge.



Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries are Iceland Conservation volunteers, managers and rangers of protected areas. The short and long term benefits have been Knowledge and confidence in leading some trail building and maintenance projects. Of course, the main benefit is nature conservation of the protected areas.

The impact on the local/regional/national/EU levels

Locally, this handbook has helped the volunteers to choose the right techniques to repair or build a path.

Challenges/Lessons learnt and how the challenges have been overcome in the course of the initiative

The main challenge is that the handbook is pretty long and that there is too little time to go over the whole handbook with the volunteers. However, they get to have a printed copy that they can bring with them on the field and the handbook is introduced to them during the training sessions.

Encourage the volunteers to read the handbook and the leaders to share the knowledge on the field.

The lessons/insights to be drawn from this initiative

The knowledge of experienced volunteers is very precious and should be highlighted in one way or another.

Sustainability and replicability

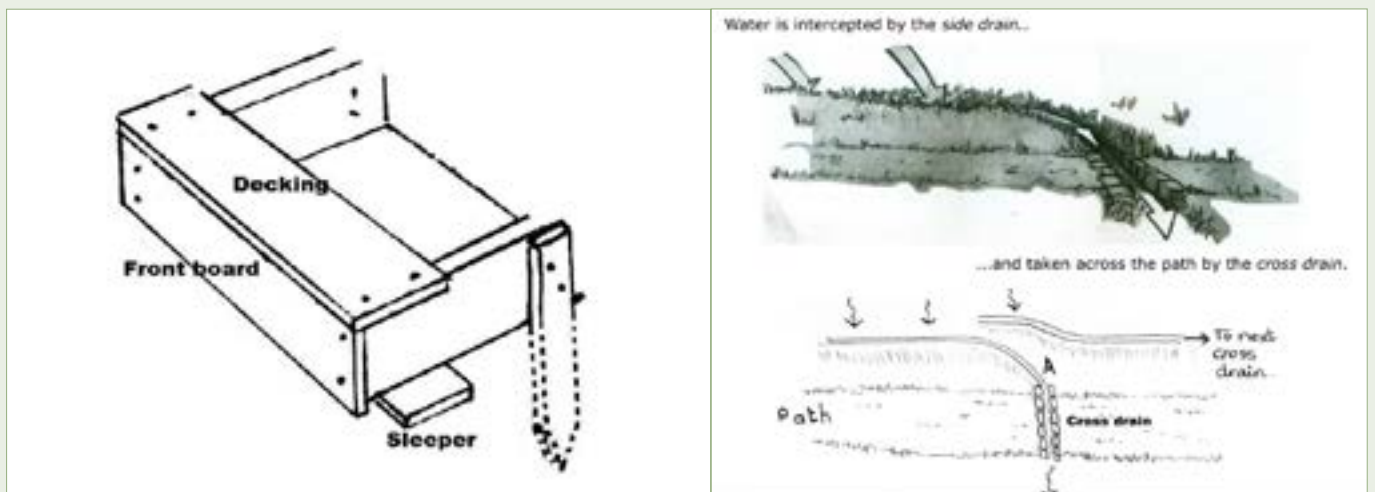
The initiatives have been continued even after the envisaged timespan of its implementation, thus Roger had very little time to do so.

Incorporation into other activities

This handbook can be presented, and techniques can be taught during training sessions (the volunteers are encouraged to read and use the handbook).

The continued relevance of the initiative

The initiative is still relevant, and it tackles an issue that persists in the community.

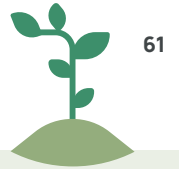


The possibility and ease of implementing the initiative in diverse contexts/different countries) and to benefit different target groups

It can be implemented in countries with similar weather conditions.

The conditions for the initiative to be successfully replicated

This initiative might be difficult to replicate thus a similar one could be implemented. The aim of this initiative was to compile the knowledge of an experienced volunteer into a handbook. It required that the volunteer was willing to share and take his own time to do so, as well as some time for the coordinator to compile all the information.



The particular successful focal points of the initiative which could be incorporated in other projects

Innovative/Success factors

The particular successful focal points of the initiative that could be incorporated into other projects are communication, cooperation and motivation.

The way in which the best practice has contributed to an innovation in the field of promoting volunteerism among the elderly and environmental protection

It has been the first handbook released online detailing the techniques for path maintenance and building for the Icelandic context.

Conclusion

The handbook is very useful and very precious for all the volunteering projects in protected areas. It helps the volunteers to adapt the techniques with the local context and wishes of the local managers and rangers. The handbook is giving them a step by step explanation of each technique and many details.

Elements that can be used as inspiration for the Grey4Green project

The knowledge of the elderly is precious and can be useful for younger generations.

Contact details

Environment Agency of Iceland

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More Information/published resources

[The whole handbook is on the Environment Agency website here](#)

[Some pictures on the public Facebook page accompany it](#)

Title of the initiative and country

ICELAND

Organising the Iceland Conservation Volunteer Programme

(from 20+ years/no age limit)

Type of Initiative

The initiative focused on:

- Innovative approaches for promoting social inclusion of elderly people from different geographical or cultural contexts;
- Good practice on innovative pedagogical approaches to teach both professionals and the elderly on natural heritage and its preservation (including best media formats and assessment framework);





Financing

State financed

Time frame

The initiative took place the first time in 1978 and runs every summer since 1994 – usually the programme lasts an average of 10 weeks. It is still running.

Name of coordinator, type of organization and brief description of the coordinator

It is a public entity. The name of the coordinator is Julie Kermarec. She has been the Iceland Conservation Volunteer Programme coordinator since 1st of April 2022 and was the assistant coordinator for 3 years prior to that. In 2017, she volunteered for the environment agency of Iceland and was a team leader for 10 weeks.

Name and type organization of partner

The partner is Vatnajökull National Park which is a public entity.

Brief description of the partner

Vatnajökull National Park was established in 2008. It includes the national parks in Skaftafell (est. 1967) and Jökulsárgljúfur (est. 1973) along with the Vatnajökull ice cap itself and extensive areas around it. Vatnajökull National Park is characterised by diversity on all fronts, be it landscape, biosphere, cultural remains or service levels. For simplification, however, it may be placed into two categories: uninhabited highland areas with limited services and lowland areas with higher service levels.

The volunteering programme is taking place in the protected areas the Environment Agency has under her scope but also in the protected areas within the Vatnajökull National Park where volunteers are working on nature conservation projects.

A longer description can be found here: <https://www.vatnajokulsthjodgardur.is/en/about-us/vatnajokull-national-park/about-the-national-park>



[Brief description of the project/initiative](#)

This programme is designed for volunteers who want to spend 10 weeks in the wilderness, visiting and doing projects in several protected areas around Iceland, including the highlands.

Trail Teams will do projects involving building, repairing and maintaining small bridges, boardwalks, drains and stone steps in remote natural trails. Trail Team support the activities of local rangers, take part in wilderness restoration actions, such as the removal of invasive plants and obliteration of tracks left by illegal off-road driving.

[Objectives](#)

Its objective is nature conservation of protected areas around Iceland

[Target Groups](#)

The primary target group is made up of organisations receiving volunteers (Environment Agency of Iceland, Vatnajökull National Park). The secondary target group consists of local communities and/or landowners where the nature protected areas are located. The end-users are visitors of the nature protected areas (tourists and inhabitants). The target groups comprise a major group from the local community, as the aim of the volunteering programme is to benefit the local communities thus there are very few volunteers from Iceland taking part to the programme.

[The role of the target group in the course of the initiative](#)

The primary target group has the role of organizing the project on site, welcoming and working with the volunteers, be the local emergency contact.

[The end-users](#)

The visitors of the protected areas the volunteers are working in.

[Methodology](#)

The programme has been improved all over the years. The current coordinator has written a handbook in 2020 that would help anyone willing to organize the same kind of programme a success.

[Processes used to ensure the success of the project](#)

Writing the handbook was the last stone to ensure the success of the project as well as organisational documents to help the coordinator of the programme. Survey at the end of the programme for the volunteers who have participated to the programme, as well as for the team leaders. We do collect all the answers to improve the programme. We have also been working over social media to promote the programme with a strong connection with the similar British volunteers' organisations who have also relayed through their websites or medias our programme, who is now world renowned.

[Timeframe for lessons learned and identification of key success factors](#)

The environment agency and the coordinator are always trying to improve the programme by self-evaluating and by asking the participants to the programme feedbacks.

[General framework](#)

The Icelandic Conservation Volunteer programme is financed by the ministry the Environment, Energy and Climate with an aim to help the local managers in nature conservation project on protected areas.

Problems/needs addressed by the initiative

The initiative started in 1978 when it was realized how few were working in nature protection and how much work needed to be done in the protected areas. The beginning of volunteer work for the benefit of nature in Iceland was in 1978 when the Nature Conservancy offered to bring British volunteers to the country, they worked in several places in the country, e.g. they built a retaining wall around the newly built ranger's house at Jökulsárgljúfur, but today is Vatnajökull national park. There was then a realization that there was a need for helping the managers, rangers and local communities achieve some projects.

The relevance of problems tackled on local/regional/national/EU levels

The problems are relevant on these levels and thus the context of each country is very different.

Persistence of the challenges on local/regional/national/EU levels

The challenge persists, and there is a need for volunteers to work in nature conservation and work with the local communities.



Level and scope of implementation

It is implemented in Iceland. It is relevant for contexts outside its implementation framework, and can be translated and implemented in other countries. The Icelandic programme is already a declension of the British similar programme.

Involvement of relevant communities/bodies/associations

They are involved when the protected areas are not managed directly by the environment agency nor the Vatnajökull National Park.

The stakeholders' contribution/ involvement

The stakeholders' contribution and involvement consists of organisation of the projects, communication and finance.

Outcomes and impact

These are hard to measure.

Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries are the visitors of the areas (inhabitants, tourists from Iceland or abroad)

The short- and long-term benefits for the beneficiaries are participating to a larger conservation management project, restoring and protecting some areas, raising awareness about the fragile nature in Iceland, as well as learning and sharing some nature conservation experience (Trailwork techniques) especially for the rangers and managers.

Challenges/Lessons learnt and how the challenges have been overcome in the course of the initiative

The challenges we face are more related to the type of work done by the volunteers like removing invasive plants like the lupine, that can be quite controversial and not accepted by everyone. They have been overcome through communication and education mainly.

The lessons/insights to be drawn from this initiative

These are that organisation and communication are the key to the success.

Sustainability and replicability

The programme has been implemented for many years. It will be continued.

Incorporation into other activities

It is possible to organize the same kind of programme but for a shorter period or/and for locals none residential volunteers.



The continued relevance of the initiative

It is still relevant.

The possibility and ease of implementing the initiative in diverse contexts/different countries) and to benefit different target groups

It can be implemented in other countries thus it has to be adapt to the local context.

The conditions for the initiative to be successfully replicated

These consist of getting sufficient fundings for the programme, having enough organisations motivated to organize such programme and projects, having a coordinator of the programme (the ICV programme is a all-year round job) as well as having good communication skills.

Upscaling this practice to achieve enhanced impact

It would be very difficult to upscale this initiative, unless by organizing an exchange volunteering programme between different countries.

Innovative/success factors

These are communication with partners and local contacts.

The way in which the best practice has contributed to an innovation in the field of promoting volunteerism among the elderly and environmental protection

The ICV programme is open to anyone over 20 years old. There have been many volunteers over 60+ who had participated in the programme.

Elements that can be used as inspiration for the Grey4Green project

The intergenerational aspect is inspiring. The ICV programme is organized in a way that the volunteers are teams of 5, 4 volunteers and one team leader. The aim is to usually blend volunteers of different age, background, knowledge and education. The 60+ volunteers are then working with younger people and they both benefit from the experience.

Conclusion

The programme has a huge positive impact on Icelandic nature. Many of the projects would not be possible to achieve without the help of the volunteers (most of the rangers are working alone in the protected areas and thus cannot work on multiday tasks on themselves). Each summer, the volunteers are working in about 30 protected areas in diverse nature conservation projects.



[Contact details](#)

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[More Information/published resources](#)

<https://www.ust.is/english/visiting-iceland/volunteers/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ICV.is>

Title of the initiative and country

PORTUGAL

Academia das Gerações (Academy of Generations)

Type of Initiative

The initiative focused on:

- **Good practice on innovative and motivational pedagogical exploitation of nature:** *What makes for a successful and engaging volunteer environment program;*
- **Local community in general;**
- **Social and environmental NGOs/ IPSS/ organizations;**
- **Local public bodies;**
- **managers of natural areas.**





Financing

Financed and supported by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

Time frame

This initiative started in March 2020 and it's still going on. The ending date depends on future fundraisings. The plan is to maintain partnerships with public and private entities to meet the need of intervention.

Name of Coordinator, type of organization and brief description of the coordinator

Municipality of Lousada, a public local entity

The Municipality of Lousada is an institution of local public administration. It aims to pursue the interests of the population in the territorial space of the Lousada Council. The Municipality mission is to define guiding strategies and execute the resulting municipal policies towards sustainable development of the municipality, contributing to the increased competitiveness of it, in local, regional and national levels, through measures and programs in various areas of their competence, promoting the quality of life of its citizens and ensuring high standards of quality services.



Name of Partners

- 5 IPSS - Private Institution of Social Solidarity (Complexo Social de Macieira; ASSN- Associação de Solidariedade Social de Nespereira, ADASM- Associação de Desenvolvimento e Apoio Social de Meinedo; Centro Social e Paroquial de Sousela and Centro Social e Paroquial de Caíde de Rei);
- 1 Non-profit Association- USALOU (Senior University);
- 13 senior community centers;
- Partnership with 7 schools.

Type of organization

The organization is a public entity.

Brief description of the partner

Third sector- NGO's; IPSS working on social impact, specially promoting active aging and active learning, contributing for social inclusion;

Companies working on farming and rural tourism and interested in getting involved with the local community;

Public primary schools.

Brief description of the project/initiative

Academy of Generations is an intergenerational environmental education and volunteering program that aims to protect nature through the active involvement of pupils/ young people and seniors. Additionally, intergenerational dynamics will provide tools for the adoption of a more conscious and sustainable lifestyle, promotion of socio-emotional skills through well-being and direct contact with nature and by sharing knowledge and experiences with elderly people, encouraging empathy and intergenerational cooperation. Thus, promoting a socio-educational context where age generations that are most distant from society cross, but who are similar because they represent the most vulnerable groups, it is intended to stimulate environmental and citizen awareness in children, young people and seniors. Greater literacy linked to the environment and the power of active citizenship will enable the target audience to be agents of change in behavior and practices that are transmitted between generations.

Objectives

The objectives are to create educational contexts that appeal to the sense of community and mission for a common cause - the protection of the environment and of traditional knowledge and practices. With this project it is possible to unite the younger and older generations in environmental volunteering actions, for example to improve the ecological value of school outdoor spaces.

Target Groups

The primary target group consists of seniors citizens of the municipality of Lousada; Senior university; Pupils and Young people. The secondary target group consists of: Teachers, educational action assistants; the local community in general; social and environmental NGOs/ IPSS/ organizations; local public bodies (schools); managers of natural areas. The end-users are senior citizens of the municipality of Lousada; Senior university; pupils and young students. Academy of Generations involves about 400 seniors and 450 pupils and young people. These two target groups prominently in the demographic expression of the local community.

The role of the target group in the course of the initiative

Both pupils/ young people and mainly seniors have the role of getting a better understanding about environmental issues and cooperate actively towards mitigating them and improving the quality of life in the territory (air and soil quality, diverse ecosystems, etc.)

The end-users

The end-users are senior citizens from day care centers, senior movements, university and pupils and young students.

Methodology

The methodology of Academia das Gerações consisted of creating intergenerational contexts in order to motivate children/young people and especially seniors to be part of the transformative action of making the village of Lou-sada greener and more sustainable, and in particular the school playground. Intergenerational volunteering has shown immense potential in motivating and committing both generations to a common cause: improving the health of the planet. The motto applied in these actions is: Think globally and act locally. In addition, theoretical-practical sessions were created for the transfer of intergenerational knowledge related to traditional and contemporary environmental practices where both generations share and absorb new knowledge and learning.

Processes used to ensure the success of the project

The initial process involved creating a close relationship between children and seniors. To this end, at the beginning of any intergenerational environmental volunteering action, all those involved were introduced one by one and ice-breaker dynamics were carried out to precisely break the ice/age difference barrier; The project's connection with schools was always maintained vigorously and dynamically throughout the school year to ensure the link of interest and involvement of the school community (teachers and students) in the course of volunteering actions. Schools were the motto to motivate seniors to be more civically active, and the younger ones were identified as being the main stakeholders in ecological improvement actions since, later, they benefit from a greener, healthier and environmentally and socially sustainable playground. In volunteer actions, seniors are always in the role of facilitators of learning, and they are the ones who most often share knowledge to achieve the objectives of the action and who demonstrate and correct the correct fulfillment of the tasks assigned to children and young people; In the learning process, there are always moments to clarify doubts or comments.



Timeframe for lessons learned and identification of key success factors

It has taken 1 year to make an assertive examination of the factors that enhance the success of the project, but maybe 2 or 3 years to solidify the methodology.

General Framework

Age alienation is a global and local reality. Children, young people and seniors live their lives without much oppor-

tunity for moments to promote social cohesion and cooperation. In addition, youth and senior civic participation in Portugal still has a long way to go, and more projects are needed that encourage active citizenship in the community in general, and the senior community in particular. Greater civic involvement brings positive impacts in terms of delaying physical, mental (cognitive), emotional and intellectual difficulties, which is even more evident when it comes to actions in contact with natural or semi-natural and socially and environmentally healthy environments. Intergenerational volunteering has provided dozens of intergenerational actions, with multiple benefits, not only for the communities involved (school and senior) but also for the entire community (namely family members) who see the school space where their children spend great time. part of everyday life valued and ecologically improved. Between planting native trees, creating organic gardens, aromatic beds or sowing native flora, there are many actions that materialize this project.

Problems/needs addressed by the initiative

Attending the regional and national reality of illiteracy and civic inaction of the elderly, respectively, educating and training seniors in favor of environmental preservation and citizenship is an innovative strategy to promote active aging. In addition, scientific articles prove that contact with nature promotes numerous benefits for human health and involving the elderly with nature along with rural traditions is to touch the old experiences linked to the countryside. Besides that, the contact of the seniors with pupils is an X factor for various feelings, especially joy and personal fulfillment.

The relevance of problems tackled on local/regional/national/EU levels

Academy of Generations contributes to valorization, inclusion and social cohesion; to the improvement of local environmental quality and to a healthier, more sustainable and balanced community at various levels: socially, emotionally and environmentally.

Persistence of challenges on local/regional/national/EU levels

The issues are still persist. Social and environmental fields require a continuous work since it's associated with structural fragilities (social, cultural, economic and environmental).

Level and Scope of implementation

The initiative has been implemented in Lousada, Portugal. It is relevant for contexts outside its implementation framework, and can be translated and implemented in other countries. The intervention lines are adjustable to other parts of the country and the world. Academy of Generations includes indoor and outdoor activities (e.g., interpretative walks, outdoor workshops, plantation actions, among others) which can be implemented attending to each local context.

The stakeholders' contribution/ involvement

Most of the stakeholders come from the local level. They were schools involved to create the intergenerational groups; social and environmental NGOs/ IPSS: day care centers, Senior University and environmental volunteer organizations; The national stakeholder was the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation that was involved from the beginning of Academia das Gerações once it was the funding entity.

-The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's contribution went through funding the majority of the project (because we won a public application to implement the project at our intervention site), as well as helping coordinate and manage it, such as evaluation and monitoring tasks; The schools and daycare centers and Senior University's contributions were based on ensuring the legal authorizations to participate on the project, mediating the activities' schedule, etc.

Outcomes and Impact

There were 850 direct beneficiaries and 400 indirect beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries were seniors; the indirect beneficiaries were pupils and young people, seniors' close family, day center employees, community in general.

There were socialization benefits such as contact with people from the community, municipality staff- boosts building new social connections; contact with kids and young people and with the school community (teachers, educators, school staff, etc). There were health benefits such as pleasure moments when doing activities in nature and with youngest generations. The benefits of environmental volunteering in the 3rd age (e.g., cleaning natural areas, gardening) are quite evident at the level of physical activity, related to self-esteem and less functional limitation. Since there are intergenerational contact is a factor for a greater happiness and joy for elderly people. Often, during the activities with kids, seniors get very emotive.

The impact on the local/regional/national/EU levels

The impact consisted of higher involvement of the school community in socio-environmental issues, with the management of several schools increasing their interest in new trees, vegetable gardens, flower beds, etc. in outdoor spaces. It also consisted of greater civic mobilization by the senior community as voluntary actions are carried out when in schools.



Challenges/Lessons learnt and how the challenges have been overcome in the course of the initiative

The main obstacles/ challenges are health difficulties/ limitations- physical, mental, emotional, cognitive and/ or intellectual. Financial support from the municipality or parish councils regarding the transportation system can represent an obstacle. The difficulty of scheduling school activities with senior groups (very restricted available times for both target-groups).

The encountered challenges have been overcome by creating opportunities/ activities considering the individual difficul-

ties; by adapting each activity to each group; by fostering youth volunteering parallel programs to help promoting the activities and reinforce the security of the activities (outdoor volunteering actions); by creating a schedule of activities for the all year to increase the chances of getting transportation from the municipality, and reducing schedule incompatibility;

The lessons/insights to be drawn from this initiative

The lessons and insights that can be drawn are that intergenerational contact is a promisor strategy to foster environmental volunteering. This project works on European Green Deal achievements, such as 'No one is left behind' and the team leader and the school community can recognize a huge relevance on this project. It's important to match schools/ classes carefully with senior groups (geographical distance, special skills, school's needs and interests, etc.).



Incorporation into other activities

It is possible to incorporate into other activities. Usually, senior groups have different types of activities in day centers, although it's mainly ludic and cultural activities. Thus, including environmental activities increases the challenge of engaging seniors into a different thematic and contributes for the development of other interests and skills. Usually, day centers, formal or informal senior groups are quite interested in incorporating different activities in their programs. In the same way, having good communication with the school's directors, it's possible to create a similar connection between senior groups and schools.

The continued relevance of the initiative

Active aging, social cohesion and nature conservation are causes that need to keep working on.

The possibility and ease of implementing the initiative in diverse contexts/different countries) and to benefit different target groups

The methodology can be implemented in every place and in different age groups with similar social and economic context.

The conditions (institutional, social, etc.) for the initiative to be successfully replicated

Having a good plan action and clarifying the plan with both groups (schools and senior groups);
- Safe and pleasant place for indoor activities (comfortable chairs, cooled or warmed rooms, toilets);
- Having people (can be senior volunteers or people from the community) responsible for the management of those



places (logistics, planning activities, providing food, etc.);

- Transportation logistic for outdoor initiatives;
- Insurance for both indoor and outdoor activities;
- Paying attention to site conditions; meteorological conditions; list of individual and work materials; among others.
- Periodic meetings with senior community centers responsible;
- Partnerships;

-The dissemination and communication of the project can in part be done through the beneficiaries, it means that seniors can be the face of volunteerism themselves;

- Snacks at the end of the activity is always a positive point, although it depends on the budget. Occasionally, school's teachers and educators prepare and offer the snack or similar to the seniors as courtesy and the elderly people get quite happy and thankful about it.

Upscaling this practice to achieve enhanced impact

More human resources could increase the number of seniors involved. Increasing the intervention team (mainly monitors) there is the possibility of raising the range of people involved in the project. Additionally, enlarge the project dissemination in order to recruit more participants and volunteers (for example, creating open calls within the community) could level up the impact. A wider project dissemination through the scholar bodies.

Innovative/Success factors

Work in a close and empathetic relationship with the senior public. Promote strong connections between generations through group dynamics and sharing moments. Put together two different generations in favor to a bigger cause. Empower the use of the knowledge and empirical experience of the elderly in favor of nature conservation. Generate diversified activities/actions, and use innovative resources such as technology, access to digital media, etc. Combine the preservation of the natural heritage with the cultural heritage. Create partnerships with emblematic local entities to strengthen the motivation of the elderly to act actively for nature conservation.

The way in which the best practice has contributed to an innovation in the field of promoting volunteerism among the elderly and environmental protection

Intergenerational volunteering as a regular program is an uncommon method. Volunteer seniors are not just mere performers of pre-defined tasks based on conservation needs and priorities. On the contrary, seniors are involved, not only in the execution process, but also in the planning process of volunteer actions, based on their skills, abilities, interests and (in)capacities. Valuing local traditions and promoting complementary actions between the environmental and cultural component generates actions of enormous motivation for volunteering.

Conclusion

More than 6500 native planted trees in schools. More than 50 intergenerational activities were carried out. 7 partnerships were formed with schools, and about 400 seniors and 450 kids were involved.

Elements that can be used as inspiration for the Grey4Green project

Key success factors: Valorization of special skills and competencies of the seniors to promote intergenerational volunteering actions; Seniors having the role of teaching kids about practical works in nature; Practicing the concept "learning by doing" or "hands-on"; Create partnerships with schools in order to create an intergenerational volunteering program.



Contact details

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More Information/ Published resources

[https://www.cm-lousada.pt/pages/902?event_id=98;](https://www.cm-lousada.pt/pages/902?event_id=98)

[https://www.verdadeiroolhar.pt/lousada-academia-das-geracoes-quer-criancas-idosos-lutar-pelo-ambiente/;](https://www.verdadeiroolhar.pt/lousada-academia-das-geracoes-quer-criancas-idosos-lutar-pelo-ambiente/)

[https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1423955027800953;](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1423955027800953)

[https://valsousatv.sapo.pt/2020/09/22/academia-das-geracoes-de-lousada-vence-o-primeiro-lugar-no-concurso-da-gulbenkian/;](https://valsousatv.sapo.pt/2020/09/22/academia-das-geracoes-de-lousada-vence-o-primeiro-lugar-no-concurso-da-gulbenkian/)

[https://issuu.com/municipiodelousada/docs/2020-09_completa;](https://issuu.com/municipiodelousada/docs/2020-09_completa)

Title of the initiative and country

PORTUGAL

BioSénior

Type of Initiative

The initiative focused on:

- **Good practice on innovative and motivational pedagogical exploitation of nature:** *What makes for a successful and engaging volunteer environment program;*
- **Innovative approaches for promoting social inclusion of elderly people from different geographical or cultural contexts;**





Financing

Municipally financed

Time frame

This initiative started in March 2020 and it's still going on. The ending date depends on future fundraisings. The plan is to maintain partnerships with public and private entities to meet the need of intervention.

Name of Coordinator, type of organization and brief description of the coordinator

Municipality of Lousada

The Municipality of Lousada is a public local entity.

The Municipality of Lousada is an institution of local public administration. It aims to pursue the interests of the population in the territorial space of the Lousada Council. The Municipality mission is to define guiding strategies and execute the resulting municipal policies towards sustainable development of the municipality, contributing to the increased competitiveness of it, in local, regional and national levels, through measures and programs in various areas of their competence, promoting the quality of life of its citizens and ensuring high standards of quality services.

Name of Partners

The partners are 5 IPSS - Private Institution of Social Solidarity (Complexo Social de Macieira; ASSN- Associação de Solidariedade Social de Nespereira, ADASM- Associação de Desenvolvimento e Apoio Social de Meinedo; Centro Social e Paroquial de Sousela and Centro Social e Paroquial de Caíde de Rei);

- 1 Non-profit Association- USALOU (Senior University);
- 13 senior community centers;
- Partnership with 2 historical gardens landowners;
- Partnership with local radio – Rádio Vizela.



Type of organization

It is a public entity.

Brief description of the partner

- Third sector- NGO's; IPSS working on social impact, specially promoting active aging and active learning,

- contributing to social inclusion;
- Companies working on farming and rural tourism and interested in getting involved with the local community;
- Rádio Vizela is a social media platform opened to include emerging issues in the radio agenda such as environmental awareness and social engagement through education.

Brief description of the project/initiative

BioSénior is an environmental education and volunteering program that aims to conserve nature through the active involvement, appreciation and empowerment of the senior community, while seeking to prevent cases of fragility and loss of psychomotor capacity, prolonging the quality of life of seniors. Thus, the BioSénior project is dedicated to promoting literacy, active citizenship and rescuing/appreciating the empirical knowledge of the senior public in environmental matters. This type of intervention, in addition to reflecting benefits on individual health and well-being (e.g., increases the level of self-esteem), also enhances the practical, effective, and creative contribution in what is an urgent and decisive mission for the future of the planet, and for the quality of human life - nature conservation. The project includes a wide range of indoor and outdoor recreational-pedagogical dynamics, including lectures, debates, interpretive tours, artistic creation workshops, workshops, actions of ecological restoration, intergenerational environmental volunteering. By creating and promoting equal opportunities for learning and actions for climate action, BioSénior intends to multi-directionally empower seniors in the municipality of Lousada towards the premises for sustainability and active and healthy aging.



Objectives

The commitment is to promote literacy and good environmental practices among a slice of society normally left out of this type of educational, social, and civic opportunities. Showing that there is a place for the elderly to become active citizens in favor of protecting the environment, and that they have an outstanding role in safeguarding cultural heritage, the initiative seeks to contribute to the mitigation of health and social problems related to aging.

Target Groups

The primary target group consists of seniors citizens of the municipality of Lousada and senior university. The secondary target group is the local community in general; social and environmental NGOs/ IPSS/ organizations; local public bodies; managers of natural areas. The end-users are seniors citizens of the municipality of Lousada and senior university. Lousada has approximately a population of 48 000 inhabitants, wherein there are about 7 000 people over the age of 65. Like most European countries, the age of the population is rising which enhances the importance of work towards active aging and active citizenship.

The role of the target group in the course of the initiative

It is about active participation of seniors as transforming agents towards nature and cultural heritage conservation. The participants nourish the willingness to learn and to be more active citizens, adding new learning and experiences to themselves and to the local community and to the territory.

The end-users

The end-users are senior citizens from day care centers, senior movements and university. All the seniors have free access to the activities/ actions and all the program is designed to this specific group, considering their potential, limitations, etc.

Methodology

The methodology is environmental motivation through the valorization of the natural and cultural heritage: On one hand, the initial methodology consisted of identifying the skills and interests of the participants, in order to enrich the intervention, taking advantage of their knowledge, arts, crafts and traditional practices towards the project 's objectives - a citizenship most active for nature conservation. On the other hand, several pedagogical materials related to environmental education were created from scratch and were made available, with adjusted language for the senior community in the sense of a best understanding of the contents. Finally, the methodology went through promoting volunteering actions in combination with cultural, popular, or traditional experiences/ moments. This method was observed to be preponderant for a stronger involvement and commitment to the project mission.

The processes used to ensure the success of the project

Several processes were used throughout the project. A solid and robust action plan was important, aligned with partners. Such an action plan requires a diversity of activities/ themes, which add value to the territory, to the local community and mainly to their own lives (e.g. adoption of beds for native pollinators, tree nurseries, construction of ponds and shelters for fauna). In this way, the elderly feel their work valued by the community in general, fostering self-esteem and encouraging greater participation. In addition, activities monitoring (direct and indirect beneficiaries' feedback) seem to be a relevant factor to identify any problems or aspects to improve, boosting the quality of the intervention.

The timeframe for lessons learned and identification key success factors

It took 1 year to make an assertive examination of the factors that enhance the success of the project, but maybe 2 or 3 years to solidify the methodology.

General Framework

BioSénior impacts approximately 450 seniors, most of whom live in a rural context, which incites isolation and loneliness. As the Sousa region, along with Tâmega has the lowest levels of education and qualifications in Portugal (8.8%, according to a study by the University of Minho), it exacerbates the vulnerability of seniors and accelerates the loss of cognitive functions and intellectuals. Such a reality lacks an innovative and transformative intervention. The changes observed when we involve the elderly in activities in nature are feelings of personal satisfaction and self-esteem to occupy their time in a useful and stimulating way, happiness, and greater physical and psychological well-being, scientifically confirming the benefits shown from contact with nature in the active asset. Additionally, in Portugal, the civic participation of people over 65 is only 6.5%, so environmental activation and environmental encouragement can be a vehicle for the voluntary promissory note for citizenship.

Problems/needs addressed by the initiative

Paying attention to the regional and national reality of illiteracy and civic inaction of the elderly, respectively, educating and training seniors in favor of environmental preservation and citizenship is an innovative strategy to promote active aging. In addition, scientific articles prove that contact with nature promotes numerous benefits for human health and involving the elderly with nature along with rural traditions is to touch the old experiences linked to the countryside.

The relevance of the problems tackled relevant on local/regional/national/EU levels

BioSénior contributes to the mitigation of a worldwide socio-economic problem - the aging of the population and consequent social isolation and deterioration of the quality of life (physical, mental and emotional). The initiative also intends to fight the social/environmental alienation of seniors through civic participation (currently residual) since it is a slice of society that generally stays apart from involvement in the area of environmental conservation. From another perspective, BioSénior encourages direct contact with nature which promotes well-being and self-confidence, in particular through walks in forest, riverside zones, among others.



Persistence of challenges on local/regional/national/EU levels

The issues are still persistent. Social and environmental fields require a continuous work since it's associated with structural fragilities (social, cultural, economic, and environmental).

Level and Scope of Implementation

The initiative is being implemented in Lousada, Portugal.

It is relevant for contexts outside its implementation framework and can be translated and implemented in other countries. The intervention lines are adjustable to other parts of the country and the world. BioSénior includes in-

door and outdoor activities (e.g., interpretative walks, outdoor workshops, plantation actions, among others) which can be implemented with attention to each local context.

[The stakeholders' contribution/ involvement](#)

The stakeholders consist of:

- Local media/ radio- Rádio Vizela;
- Social and environmental NGOs/ IPSS: Day care Centers, Senior University, Environmental Volunteer Organizations;
- Local public bodies: Municipality of Ílhavo and Albergaria-a-Velha interested in knowing and disseminate the program and its methodology;
- Local managers of natural areas such as landowners who want to contribute to nature conservation in their green areas through social engagement;
- National organization: IPDJ (Instituto Português da Juventude e do Desporto)-Youth and Sport Portuguese Institution by financing youth volunteering programs with seniors.

The stakeholders contributed to raise senior groups in the intervention, raising the range of the project, as well as helping the coordinator with logistics tasks; Program dissemination; Making areas available to do conservation

[Outcomes and impact](#)

There are 450 direct beneficiaries, and 200 indirect beneficiaries.

[Beneficiaries](#)

The direct beneficiaries are seniors, and the indirect beneficiaries are seniors' close family, day center employees, community in general.

The socialization benefits have been, contact with people from the community, municipality staff which boosts the creation of new social connections;

The health benefits have been the pleasure moments when doing activities in nature;

The benefits of environmental volunteering in the 3rd age (e.g., cleaning natural areas, gardening) are quite evident at the level of physical activity, related to self-esteem and less functional limitation.

[Impact on the local/regional/national/EU levels](#)

In 3 years, BioSénior Program accomplished 370 environmental activities/actions involving more than 7140 senior participations. Through volunteering actions seniors have planted more than 1030 native trees in Lousada in public areas such as local public forest, urban parks or schools; also in some private areas of interest for nature conservation such as green areas owned by local managers. We constructed an artificial pond for wildlife in a senior's field, which serves as a pedagogical tool as well. We have recorded more than 100 radio episodes focused on environment themes and interviewed 21 seniors to share their knowledge, experiences and opinions about nature, environment and local traditions through media. Among other results, we have impacted several seniors and the local community in general in terms of civic engagement and well-being, as we have contributed to our main goal: helping nature conservation through supporting elderly people.

[Challenges/Lessons learnt and how the challenges have been overcome in the course of the initiative](#)

The main obstacles/ challenges are health difficulties/ limitations- physical, mental, emotional, cognitive and/ or intellectual. Also, the financial support from the municipality or parish councils regarding the transportation system can represent an obstacle.

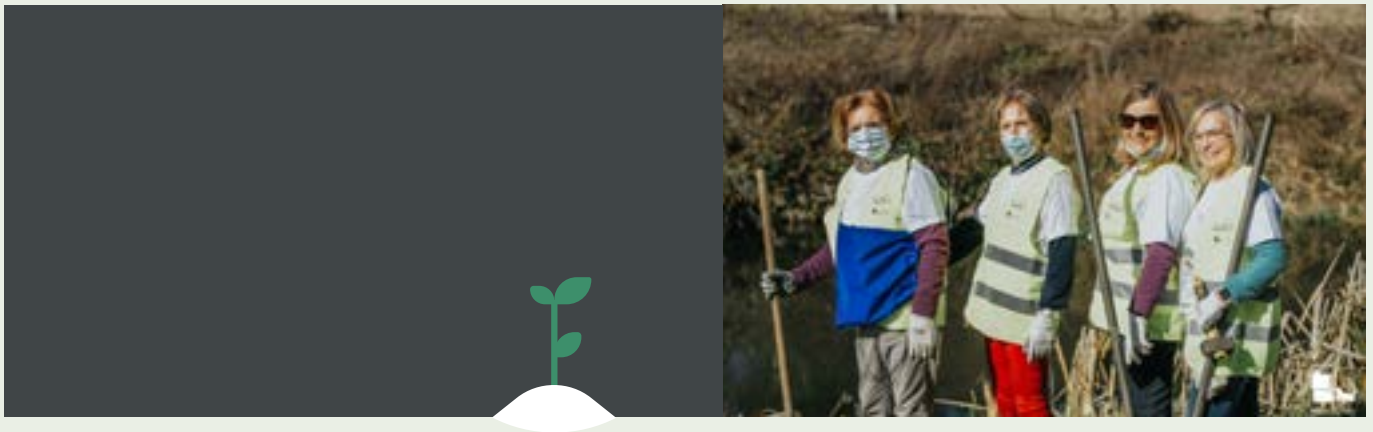
This has been done by creating opportunities/ activities considering the individual difficulties; Adapting each activity to each group; and by fostering youth volunteering parallel programs to help promoting the activities and reinforce the security of the activities (outdoor volunteering actions); as well as by creating a schedule of activities for the all year to increase the chances of getting transportation from the municipality.

The lessons/insights to be drawn from this initiative

Creating a robust plan of why and how to implement and evaluate an environmental and social program like BioSénior, it's possible to accomplish an effective positive impact on the local community in terms of environmental awareness, social inclusion, emotional and mental benefits and also creating economic value once active seniors will delay their health issues.

The continuation of the initiative after the envisaged timespan of its implementation

BioSénior has reached a point where it's possible to continue even after the program itself because the need to engage seniors with nature for their quality of life is already a given proof. As long as BioSénior has been involving caretakers and social animators to get familiarized with this type of methodology, they have some knowledge and network (with local community and the municipality) to drive some environmental awareness and volunteering activities/ actions.



Incorporation into some other activities

It is possible to incorporate it in other activities. Usually, senior groups have different types of activities in day centers, although it's mainly ludic and cultural activities. Thus, including environmental activities increases the challenge of engaging seniors into a different thematic and contributes for the development of other interests and skills.

The continued relevance of the initiative still relevant

Insofar as active aging and nature conservation will be always emerging issues in our society, there is an evident relevance to continue investing in these type of programs.

The possibility and ease of implementing the initiative in diverse contexts/different countries and to the benefit of different target groups

The methodology can be implemented in every place and in different age groups with similar social and economic context.

The conditions (institutional, social, etc.) for the initiative to be successfully replicated

- Safe and pleasant place for indoor activities (comfortable chairs, cooled or warmed rooms, toilets);
- Having people (can be senior volunteers or people from the community) responsible for the management of those places (logistics, planning activities, providing food, etc.);
- Transportation logistic for outdoor initiatives;
- Insurance for both indoor and outdoor activities;
- Action plan for the volunteering activities (site conditions; meteorological conditions; list of individual



- and work materials; among others).
- Periodic meetings with senior community centers responsible;
 - Partnerships;
 - The dissemination and communication of the project can in part be done through the beneficiaries, it means that seniors can be the face of volunteerism themselves.

Upscaling this practice to achieve enhanced impact

More human resources could increase the number of seniors involved. Increasing the intervention team (mainly monitors) there is the possibility of raising the range of people involved in the project. Additionally, enlarge the project dissemination in order to recruit more participants and volunteers (for example, creating open calls within the community) could level up the impact.

The particular successful focal points of the initiative which could be incorporated in other projects

Work in a close and empathetic relationship with the senior public; Empower the use of the knowledge and empirical experience of the elderly in favor of nature conservation; Generate diversified activities/actions, and use innovative resources such as technology, access to digital media, etc.; Combine the preservation of the natural heritage with the cultural heritage; Create partnerships with emblematic local entities to strengthen the motivation of the elderly to act actively for nature conservation

The way in which the best practice has contributed to an innovation in the field of promoting volunteerism among the elderly and environmental protection

Volunteer seniors are not just mere performers of pre-defined tasks based on conservation needs and priorities. On the contrary, seniors are involved, not only in the execution process, but also in the planning process of volunteer actions, based on their skills, abilities, interests and (in)capacities; Valuing local traditions and promoting complementary actions between the environmental and cultural component generates actions of enormous motivation for volunteering.

Conclusion

Some of the impacts of the initiative have been the installation and monitoring about 80 bird nests; the planting of more than 600 native trees; more than 30 interviews on social media - Rádio Vizela ; around 1800 native trees seeded per year; more than 30 volunteering actions in a year.

Elements that can be used as inspiration for the Grey4Green project

The key success factors: Valorization of special skills and competencies of the seniors; the creation of local partnerships in green and historical areas; seniors as a part of the volunteering planning process.

Contact Details

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More Information/Published resources

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=364390668234074>

<https://valsousatv.sapo.pt/2020/02/17/apresentado-hoje-o-projeto-biosenior-na-casa-das-videiras-em-lousada/>

<https://www.verdadeiroolhar.pt/avos-criaram-horta-biologica-na-escola-basica-de-cristelos/>

<https://www.verdadeiroolhar.pt/seniores-plantaram-125-arvores-e-arbustos-junto-ao-rio-sousa-em-meinedo/>

Title of the initiative and country

PORTUGAL

Albergaria + Ativa

Type of Initiative

The initiative focused on:

- Innovative approaches for promoting social inclusion of elderly people from different geographical or cultural contexts.
- Good practice on innovative pedagogical approaches to teach both professionals and the elderly on natural heritage and its preservation (including best media formats and assessment framework).





Financing

This is funded by private foundations and companies.

Time frame

This initiative is for a period of one year which started in January 2022.

At the moment, the project is still running. However, there is still no funding that allows the coordinator to continue in the same way in the future. Without the funding, it would have to be the council moving forward or the institutions themselves paying for activities, another option is to do it *pro bono* occasionally.

Name of Coordinator, type of organization and brief description of the coordinator

The project is being implemented by the NGO, Associação BioLiving.

BioLiving's objectives are 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 with communities, municipalities, schools, companies and other NGOs. The association was brought about by a group of people that includes biologists and professional environmental educators with a common thread: all had been working within systems that are the epitome of reluctance to bring about much needed change, namely in politically-dependent institutions.

Name of Partners, Type of organization and brief description of partner organisations:

Associação Social para Idosos com Vida (ASIV) is a private, non-profit organisation.

ASIV aspires to provide new knowledge, through activities of intellectual and physical involvement, encourage participation in cultural and citizenship activities, aiming to contribute to the updating of knowledge, creation and maintenance of social and cultural relations of the elderly population. ASIV seeks to respond globally to the needs of its users, adjusting itself to the needs and available resources, ultimately developing a set of activities capable of promoting a positive image of the elderly, promoting social participation and the right to healthy ageing, while intrinsic human process.

Associação de Promoção de Albergaria-a-Velha (PRAVE) is a private, non-profit organisation.

PRAVE is a non-profit organisation with thirteen years of experience dedicated to the promotion and development of the Municipality of Albergaria-a-Velha, namely by carrying out actions to enhance the endogenous resources, defence and promotion of the natural, environmental, cultural, ethnographic, increase in entrepreneurship in the



region, revitalization of the economic and social fabric and promotion and implementation of professional training actions.

The Municipality of Albergaria-a-Velha is a local, public authority that aims for a continuous development of the quality of life of its citizens. It endeavours to strengthen citizens' participation and involvement in building a strong civil society, promoting collective building practices and reinvigorating local democracy.

Brief description of the project/initiative

The "Albergaria + Ativa" project is the solution to the social problem of social exclusion and isolation of seniors through a direct intervention in its causes, which will generate impacts both at the individual and community level.

Specifically, the project promotes:

- Voluntary actions for groups of seniors (garbage collection, planting actions, sowing, creation of a community garden, creation of bee flower beds, installation of wildlife shelters, etc.), promoting environmental education and good practices of environmental citizenship;
- Group interpretive tours (hiking, botanical tours, birdwatching, sensory tours, amphibian observation, etc.), to get to know the native fauna and flora;
- Intergenerational sessions for mutual sharing of knowledge (sewing, carpentry, basketry, horticulture, bread making, cereal milling, using social media, good practices for separating waste, etc.), valuing the knowledge of each generation and bringing them together through sharing, and to promote social health, mutual respect and a citizenship of sharing, dialogue and solidarity.

Thus, the project generates impacts on direct beneficiaries, who:

- Feel more motivated for life;
- Are socially included;
- Get a sense of belonging;
- Are more sensitive to environmental issues;
- Improve their physical, cognitive and emotional conditions;
- Have a better quality of life.

Objectives

The general objective: To overcome the exclusion and social isolation of the senior population of Albergaria-a-Velha. Specifically, it aims to:

- Promote senior environmental volunteering;
- Organise interpretive tours for seniors;
- Foster the sharing of knowledge through intergenerational interaction;
- Sensitise the community in general to the social problem of exclusion and isolation of the senior population.

Target groups

The primary target group is the senior population of the municipality of Albergaria-a-Velha. The secondary target groups are the community of Albergaria-a-Velha; local social sector; BioLiving's volunteers and associates; and Associação BioLiving.

The end-users consist of the senior population of the municipality of Albergaria-a-Velha.

The municipality of Albergaria-a-Velha has some rural areas with a high rate of ageing of the population. According to the most recent data (Census 2021), almost 23% of the municipality's population is 65 years old or older, with an ageing index of 177.5 elderly per 100 young people (under 15 years old).

The role of the target group in the course of the initiative

The project planning is based on the identification of the specific needs of the senior population of the region, both in terms of social problems and the physical mobility limitations of some participants. Throughout the project the beneficiaries play an active role in monitoring and evaluating the activities, making it possible to adapt these activities to their real needs. Additionally, an active participation of seniors as transforming agents of their own reality, interacting with everyone involved in the activities, and sharing knowledge and experiences with other generations is expected.

The end-users

The end-users are the seniors of the municipality of Albergaria-a-Velha. They are typically over 65 years old, living in their homes, attending the day centres of social entities, associations and institutions in the municipality or who are permanent residents of these institutions. The main target of this project are seniors living in disadvantaged rural areas, more vulnerable and subject to greater inequalities and greater risk of social exclusion.



Methodology

Since the beginning of the project, an active methodology was adopted to promote environmental citizenship, and to encourage public participation and the involvement of senior citizens through awareness-raising actions, training and education for sustainability, culture, healthy lifestyles, and nature conservation and environmental protection.

Specifically, a methodology of incentive to:

- Senior volunteer actions;
- Interpretive tours for groups of seniors, in the intervention parishes (São João de Loure and Frossos, Angeja, Alquerubim and Ribeira de Fráguas);
- Intergenerational sessions of mutual knowledge sharing.

Processes used to ensure the success of the project

Strategic partners were chosen to be official partners of the project and help in its implementation. In addition to these entities, many others were contacted to benefit from the work to be carried out during this project. Additionally, a Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct, Plan for Equality Gender, Policies for reconciling personal, family and work life and Inclusion Policies were written so that everyone could respect them. For a correct implementation of the activities to be carried out, these were pre-defined in detail:

Senior environmental volunteering actions

Include:

- Garbage collection;
- Planting actions;
- Sowing;
- Creation of a community garden;
- Creation of bee flower beds;
- Installation of wildlife shelters.

Expected outcome:

- Increase the participation of the senior population in social and environmental activities;
- Improvement of environmental education and good practices of environmental citizenship;
- Increase in the beneficiaries' quality of life.

Goal: 420 beneficiaries; 12 senior volunteer actions carried out.

Interpretive tours (e.g., hiking, botanical tours, birdwatching, sensory tours, amphibian observation), in a group, guided by a biologist/environmental educator. It will increase knowledge on native biodiversity and promote social interaction.

Expected outcome:

- Increase in the participation of the senior population in social and environmental activities;
- Increase in environmental literacy;
- Increase in the beneficiaries' quality of life.

Goal: the same as previous.

Intergenerational knowledge-sharing sessions.

Seniors > Youth (e.g. sewing, carpentry, basketry, horticulture, bread making, cereal milling);

Youth > Seniors (e.g., using social media, good waste separation practices).

Expected outcome:

- Increase in intergenerational social contacts;
- Increase in essential skills for lifelong learning;
- Increase in the beneficiaries' quality of life.

Goal: 1020 beneficiaries; 12 actions of intergenerational sessions.

Timeframe for lessons learned and identification of key success factors

Since the frequency of development and implementation of the activities is low, often 1, at most 2 times a week, by the end of 2 months one can see what worked better and less well, but if the activities were more frequent it would be faster.

General Framework

As the municipality of Albergaria-a-Velha has some rural areas with a high rate of ageing of the population, which is often subject to situations of prolonged social isolation, worsened by the current COVID-19 pandemic, the elderly tend to develop feelings of loneliness and abandonment that significantly affect physical, cognitive, and mental health. This is the context in which the project "Albergaria + Ativa" appears, aiming to overcome the exclusion and social isolation of the senior population of Albergaria-a-Velha by promoting senior environmental volunteering, organising interpretive tours for seniors, fostering the sharing of knowledge through intergenerational interaction, and raising awareness among the general community to the social problem of exclusion and isolation of the senior population.

Problems/ needs addressed by the initiative

The “Albergaria + Ativa” project is a solution to the social exclusion and isolation of seniors through a direct intervention in the causes of the social problem, which will generate impacts both at the individual and community level.

Problems tackled relevant on local/regional/national/EU levels

The social problem of social exclusion and isolation of seniors is, unfortunately, a relevant problem at the local, regional, national and EU level. Population ageing is set to become one of the most significant social transformations of the 21st century, with implications across all sectors of society - in the labour and financial markets; in the demand for goods and services such as housing, transportation, and social protection; and in family structures and intergenerational ties.

Persistence of challenges on local/regional/national/EU levels

The issues are still persistent at the local/ regional/ national/ EU level, however some changes at the local level and in policy implementation are beginning to take place. In order to design an international policy on ageing in the 21st century, a Political Declaration and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing were adopted. This Plan of Action called for changes in attitudes, policies and practices at all levels in order to handle the issue of ageing in the 21st century. Its recommendations for action concern the quality of the ageing population, the promotion of well-being and health in old age, and the importance of creating support networks.

Level and scope of implementation

The initiative has been implemented in parishes of the municipality of Albergaria-a-Velha (São João de Loure and Frossos, Angeja, Alquerubim and Ribeira de Fráguas), Portugal.

This project is relevant in contexts outside its implementation framework because it is an increasingly widespread social problem, with serious consequences both for seniors and the general community, and the development of more effective and efficient responses is crucial. Fighting the problem of exclusion and social isolation through the contact with nature, intergenerational contacts, and active involvement of seniors in the transformation of their own reality represents an answer to the social problem that can be translated, replicated and implemented in other countries, since it is based on environmental education activities that are relatively easy to implement as long as human resources have the essential skills in environmental education.

The stakeholders' contribution/ involvement

The local stakeholders consist of:

- ASIV (Associação Social para Idosos com Vida);
- Municipality of Albergaria-a-Velha;
- PRAVE (Associação de Promoção de Albergaria-a-Velha);
- Donaldeia;
- Parish council of Ribeira de Fráguas;
- Theatre A Bateira;
- CEDIARA – Associação de Solidariedade Social de Ribeira de Fráguas;
- Parish and Social Centre of Angeja;
- Elderly Care Home 2 - Misericórdia de Albergaria-a-Velha;
- Social Centre of Alquerubim.

They provided spaces to carry out face-to-face activities, logistical support, support in the dissemination of the project among its users, tracking and attracting participants, transport for people with reduced mobility, support in the articulation with possible informal and/or strategic partners.

Outcomes and impact

At the start of the project the following targets were set:

1. Direct beneficiaries:

- 420 seniors (65+) participating in activities;
- 40 elderly people in a situation of dependence due to the ageing process;
- 370 elderly people in isolation;
- 10 seniors with neurodegenerative diseases.

1.1. Senior environmental volunteering actions

Expected outcome:

- Increase the participation of the senior population in social and environmental activities;
- Improvement of environmental education and good practices of environmental citizenship;
- Increase in the beneficiaries' quality of life.

Goal: 420 beneficiaries; 12 senior volunteer actions carried out.

1.2. Interpretive tours (e.g. hiking, botanical tours, birdwatching, sensory tours, amphibian observation), in a group, guided by a biologist/environmental educator.

Expected outcome:

- Increase in the participation of the senior population in social and environmental activities;
- Increase in environmental literacy;
- Increase in the beneficiaries' quality of life.

Goal: the same as previous.

1.3 . Intergenerational knowledge-sharing sessions. Seniors > Youth (e.g. sewing, carpentry, basketry, horticulture, bread making, cereal milling); Youth > Seniors (e.g. using social media, good waste separation practices).

Expected outcome:

- Increase in intergenerational social contacts;
- Increase in essential skills for lifelong learning;
- Increase in the beneficiaries' quality of life

Goal: 1020 beneficiaries; 12 actions of intergenerational sessions.

2. Indirect beneficiaries: 600 persons (BioLiving volunteers, relatives of the elderly, social sector of shelter for the elderly, young people, etc.).



Beneficiaries

The project generates short- and long-term benefits on direct beneficiaries who stay:

- More motivated for life;
- More socially included;
- With a sense of belonging;
- More sensitive to environmental issues;
- With improvements in their physical, cognitive and emotional conditions;
- With a better quality of life.

Impact on the local/regional/national/EU levels

The project Albergaria + Ativa, coordinated by Associação BioLiving, aims to overcome isolation and social exclusion among the senior population of the municipality of Albergaria-a-Velha through nature-related activities. This project began in January 2022 and is now in the second half of its implementation.

Since the beginning of the project, the association has been working in partnership with the Associação Social para Idosos com Vida (ASIV), in the parish of São João de Loure and Frossos, and, at this moment, it is also working with new partners, namely the Centro Social e Paroquial de Angeja, the Associação de Solidariedade Social de Alquerubim (ASSA) and the Solar das Camélias, located in the parishes of Angeja, Alquerubim and Ribeira de Fráguas, respectively. Within the scope of this project, on a local level, we have already reached approximately 500 people with whom we developed a total of 480 awareness-raising and environmental education activities by August of 2022.

Challenges/lessons learnt and how the challenges have been overcome in the course of the initiative

Some of the challenges encountered were:

- the need to introduce the topic in indoor activities before going outdoors;
- the need to do more activities but shorter ones due to time constraints;
- the need to gain the confidence and motivation of the groups;
- the need to adapt the activities to the limitations of the people and the partner institutions;
- the need to combine the needs of the project with the wants and needs of the partner institutions;

It was also difficult to bring several generations together due to the fear of COVID-19 (institutions do not feel comfortable bringing the elderly together with other people, even outdoors).

To mitigate this challenge, the type and number of activities developed have been adjusted and adapted to the different groups we have been working with.

The lessons/insights to be drawn from this initiative

Lessons learnt:

- despite the low literacy of this audience, they show interest and motivation for the theme related to nature/environment.
- activities have to be very practical/visual (orally transmitted message is difficult to make understood due to deficit in hearing acuity);
- it is very important to follow up the work done, for example, that the public knows/follows the evolution of their work (plants growing, nest boxes occupied...) so that they are motivated by the results achieved and not only by the first step carried out.
- activities that relate to life experience, stir up emotions and motivate learning through the content of the proposed activities.



Sustainability and replicability

The initiative has continued after the envisaged timespan of its implementation.

The possibility and ease of implementing the initiative in diverse contexts/different countries) and to benefit different target groups

It is possible to incorporate this project in the environmental education activities for other target groups carried out by Associação BioLiving at national level.

The number of the various activities already described can be increased, continuing the action with the senior public together with the general public so that, through environmental education and awareness, the isolation and social exclusion that affects the elderly population can be mitigated.

The conditions (institutional, social, etc.) for the initiative to be successfully replicated

Some factors to be considered if this will be replicated in other contexts:

- small groups, maximum 12 people;
- very frequent activities, 1 time per week (they easily forget what they have already talked about);
- place with easy accessibility, with WC, with benches for them to sit;
- transport and snack for outdoor activities;
- the audience needs a minimum of cognitive capacity to assimilate the information;
- microphones and speakers may be important;
- need for visual support with enough dimensions so that they can be well seen even individually (therefore prints or large screen equipment are useful).

Upscaling this practice to achieve enhanced impact

This practice can be upscaled if we: train more people to increase the team of trainers/monitors, increase the number of partners/users, have more financial resources, improve dissemination to reach the audience in question, establish a stronger relationship with the public that allows them to be mobilised effortlessly for activities (this is the key to success, making us 'family' with the older audience so that they can easily participate and be motivated).

Innovative/Success factors

Adapt the activities to the public in question, whether it be elderly people, children, public with disabilities; carry out more practical work (so that people see 'work done') and establish a relationship of friendship and trust with the public.

Contribution to the field of innovation in environmental projects and among the elderly

- Integrate people who usually suffer from isolation and social exclusion into environmental activities;
- Develop a sense of belonging and group unity capable of acting and improving the environment to which they belong;
- Improve self-esteem through the recognition of the need and capacity for lifelong learning;
- Promote active and healthy ageing, increasing the quality of life as people get older;
- Promote the sociability of the public.

Conclusion

- Overcome social exclusion and isolation;
- Promote self-esteem and sociability of this public;
- Promote active and healthy ageing;
- Improve environmental literacy;



- Value the contribution of each and every one (including the elderly) to the protection and conservation of nature

Elements that can be used as inspiration for the Grey4Green project

- Inclusion of everyone (including the elderly) in activities, regardless of age, mobility and place of residence;
- The lessons/insights learned in this project;
- Working for the environment and for a common cause.

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More information/published resources:

26 January 2022

[Soberania Radio](#)

13 February 2022

[Aveiro News](#)

18 February 2022

[Albergaria Newspaper](#)

Title of the initiative and country

PORTUGAL

VACALOURA.pt

Type of Initiative

The initiative focused on:

→ **Good practice on innovative and motivational pedagogical exploitation of nature: What makes for a successful and engaging volunteer environment program**





Financing

The project is funded by private foundations, private initiative/volunteers, and other supplementary funding from Aveiro's University, ICNF (Instituto da Conservação da Natureza e Florestas)

Time frame

It started in 2016, and is still running with the involvement of new staff members of BioLiving.

Name of Coordinator, type of organization and brief description of the coordinator

The project coordinator is the NGO, Associação BioLiving

BioLiving's objectives are 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 with communities, municipalities, schools, companies and other NGOs. The association was brought about by a group of people that includes biologists and professional environmental educators with a common thread: all had been working within systems that are the epitome of reluctance to bring about much needed change, namely in politically-dependent institutions.

Name of Partners, type of organization & brief description of the partner

Sociedade Portuguesa de Entomologia (SPEN): SPEN is a non-profit civil association that promotes studies of Entomology, specifically in the fields of investigation, dissemination and conservation of species. It promotes scientific and cultural activities, as well as the edition of publications aimed at stimulating and disseminating research in its area, as well as promoting the exchange of information between Portuguese entomologists and national and foreign scientific societies.

Wildlife Research Unit of the Biology Department of the University of Aveiro: is a public entity.

The Wildlife Research Unit, of the Biology Department of the University of Aveiro, integrates several aspects in the area of animal ecology, including the study of the dynamics of animal populations and their habitats, hunting and fishing management, application of geographic information systems to the management of natural resources, population genetics, conservation, recovery and monitoring of natural areas and their biodiversity.

Instituto de Conservação da Natureza e das Florestas (ICNF): ICNF is a public institute under the indirect administration of the Portuguese Government with the mission of contributing to the enhancement and conservation of forest resources, nature and biodiversity in Portugal. Among its attributions are the management of areas integrated in the National Network of Protected Areas, national forests and forest perimeters, implementation of national policies for nature conservation, forests, hunting, fishing in inland waters and combating desertification, applying different European legislation and international agreements and conventions in the field of forests and nature conservation.

Brief description of the project/initiative

VACALOURA.pt is a 100% voluntary citizen science project which aims to contribute to the conservation of the stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*) and other beetle species of the Lucanidae family (*Lucanus barbarossa*, *Dorcus parallelipipedus* and *Platycerus spinifer*) in Portugal, by compiling data on the distribution and status of the populations, and delivering environmental education activities, because there is little information about these species in Portugal. It was born in 2016, from a partnership between Associação Bioliving, the Wildlife Research Unit of the Biology Department of the University of Aveiro (UVS/DBio-UA), the Sociedade Portuguesa Institute of Entomology (SPEN) and the Instituto de Conservação da Natureza e das Florestas (ICNF), and it is the result of a shared interest and the combination of different aspects and areas of action of each entity for the conservation of these species.

Objectives

The objective of the project is to compile and organise information sent by citizens on the distribution and status of the populations of the stag beetle and other beetles of the Lucanidae family in Portugal, in order to collaborate with the European Network for Stag Beetle Monitoring, which in turn intends to investigate the conservation status of this species in its distribution area, and identify possible areas for special protection of this species. The project has a strong component of environmental education, aiming to disseminate and raise awareness of the importance of dead wood in forest ecosystems, the biodiversity associated with these habitats and how together people can help to conserve these ecosystems.

Target Groups

The primary target group are all citizens, national and international, of all ages.

The target group is the entire national community once it is a 100% citizen science project. This term designates the involvement of citizens in projects of large-scale scientific research, mainly of ecological and environmental nature, through the use of the internet and new technologies.

Explain the role of the target group in the course of the initiative

The volunteer project participants play a vital role in the results of the initiative as they will be the means of collecting information of the distribution and status of some beetle species in Portugal using two different methodologies: sporadic species registration and carrying out monitoring transects. The record of coleopteran sightings can be done by ordinary citizens more or less involved in the project or by project ambassadors, who are people or institutions that are really committed to this initiative, participating in regular meetings with the team responsible for the project, carrying out monitoring courses, events, such as the Stag beetle Weekend and environmental education/awareness actions for different age groups.

The end-users

The end-users are the same as the target group: all citizens, national and international, of all ages, whether they have scientific knowledge or not.

Methodology

The global assessment for the stag beetle contained in the national report corresponding the period between 2007-2012 was “Unknown” (ICNF 2013), denoting the urgent need to obtain more information, such as the number of organisms and population trends, to carry out a duly based assessment. Because of that in an initial phase, in June 2016, strong publicity was made to the public in general, using press releases, interviews, social networks, contact lists of the project partners and direct contact with potential collaborators with easy access to areas where the spe-



cies had already been reported or where there is an adequate habitat. An online platform was created (<http://www.vacaloura.pt> and www.facebook.com/vacalourapt) to communicate the project and its objectives, as well as the types and participation instructions. Citizens can participate by making some sporadic registrations in the mobile App iNaturalist or during monitoring paths, entering a photo of the organism and their localization and other data like gender, lifecycle phase, etc. This registration is then analysed and validated by some worldwide wildlife experts and members of the project. Other methodology used was the performance of environmental education actions, such as talks, interpretive tours, workshops and appearances at conferences or fairs where citizens can be aware of the importance of dead wood and the biodiversity associated. The local support given by many institutions are vital for the success of these actions. During this project a strong social communication campaign was made to involve more volunteers in the cause. In addition, an explanatory panel of the project was created, in roll-up format and 300 pamphlets with a mini-guide of the species in focus in the project to be distributed during environmental education activities. This pamphlet is also available for free download on the project page. ICNF (2013) Relatório Nacional de Aplicação da Diretiva Habitats (2007-2012). <http://www.icnf.pt/portal/naturaclas/rn2000/dir-ave-habit/rel-nac/rel-nac-07-12Iglesias>



Processes used to ensure the success of the project

The partnerships made were essential for the project success at the beginning, as well the strong publicity made to the public in general. The main idea of creating a network of active citizens for the conservation of the stag beetle in Portugal, the implementation of local ambassadors that are connected in a regular way, and the increase of the number of actions to preserve this species were the best way to disseminate the project. VACALOURA.pt was created following some studies in the area and other examples in Europe, for example, the monitoring transects instructions were created following the European protocols for monitoring this species.

Timeframe for the identification key success factors

It took probably one year to learn some lessons: initially the registration of the species was made in a form in the project page, but this methodology requires more maintenance, costs and it reaches a limited audience. To overcome this issue, the data started to be introduced in the mobile application iNaturalist. During the same period, some success key factors were identified, such as: the implementation of engagement and awareness actions all over the country, the straight connections established with the ambassadors and a strong outreach made by social media.

General framework

In Portugal, the horns of stag beetles were used as symbols of luck and people, in a general way, do not like this kind of organisms. This problem appears because of the absence of scientific information that reaches the common citizen, they did not know why they are vital for the ecosystems for example. That is one of the reasons that VACALOURA.pt was thought of as a 100% voluntary citizen science project – if it raises people's awareness, they can identify these species, share their location and numbers and contribute for their conservation. Then, the objective of the project is to compile and organise information sent by citizens on the distribution and status of the populations of the stag beetle and other beetles of the Lucanidae family in Portugal, in order to collaborate with the European Network for Stag Beetle Monitoring, which in turn intends to investigate the conservation status of this species in its distribution area and identify possible areas for special protection of this species.

The project has a strong component of environmental education, aiming to disseminate and raise awareness of the importance of dead wood in forest ecosystems, the biodiversity associated with these habitats and how together people can help to conserve these ecosystems.

Need addressed by the initiative

The global assessment for the stag beetle contained in the national report corresponding the period between 2007-2012 was "Unknown" (ICNF 2013), denoting the urgent need to obtain more information, such as the number of organisms and population trends, to carry out a duly based assessment. This reflects the fact that general people do not know how to identify the beetle species and the benefits of saproxylic species and the dead wood for the ecosystem.

Problems tackled relevant on local/regional/national/EU levels

This is a relevant problem on a national and even EU level, for example in some countries this species is extinct and in Italy, Zapponi et al. (2017) has a similar project and the results showed that the data obtained by citizens could enhance the distribution area of the stag beetle by 33%.

(Zapponi, L., Cini, A., Bardiani, M., Hardersen, S., Maura, M., Maurizi, E., Redolfi de Zan, L., Audisio, P., Bologna, M.A., Carpaneto, G.M., Roversi, P.F., Sabbatini Peverieri, G., Mason, F. & Campanaro, A. (2017). Citizen science data as an efficient tool for mapping protected saproxylic beetles. *Biological Conservation*, 208, pp. 139-145.)

Persistence of challenges on local/regional/national/EU levels

The issue is still relevant on a local/regional and national level, but it is decreasing because of the project results: between 2016 and 2020 the percent of citizen knowledge about the *Lucanus cervus* species increased by 201%, by 300% for *Lucanus Barbarossa*, 194% for *Dorcus parallelipedus* and 113% for *Platycerus spinifer*.

Level and scope of implementation

The project was implemented in Portugal, mainly in the areas that were marked by this beetle species (*Lucanus cervus*) presence (north and centre of the country). It is relevant for contexts outside its implementation framework and can be translated and implemented in other countries because it is an EU problem, and it is relatively easy to implement because it does not need many financial expenses or complex programme management.

Involvement of relevant communities

There are many stakeholders involved: in a national level there is the Instituto de Conservação da Natureza e das Florestas and the Sociedade Portuguesa de Entomologia, in a regional and local level there is the University of Aveiro and other universities, and others associations and organisations like Laboratório da Paisagem, Amigos da Montanha, Aves da Batalha, Coração Azul, and others, and common citizens.

Stakeholders' contribution

They are the main support and operational team of the volunteering program, because they can organise the events to help the project, gather beetle registrations and new ambassadors, etc.

Outcomes and impact

There are 1 direct beneficiary and 4 indirect beneficiaries:

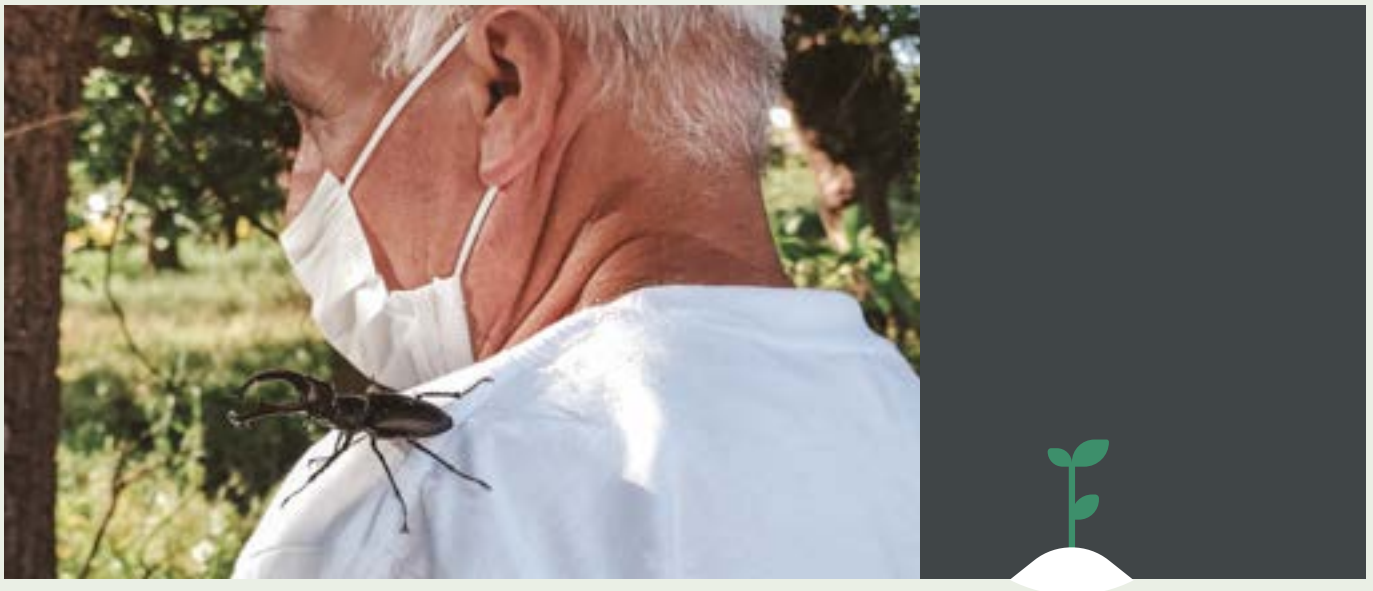
Volunteers due to the contact with nature;

Communities, since they get more knowledge about their surroundings (education/training), live in healthier environments and get to enjoy more green spaces;

Researchers that get more data to develop their work;

Forestry and green spaces managers, since they get more information about the best practices;

Policy makers, for the last reason mentioned.



Beneficiaries

Volunteers have more contact with nature, which has been proven to have benefits for the physical and mental health of everyone. Plus, knowing that they are contributing to scientific knowledge makes volunteers feel that they are contributing for something bigger and useful. Besides, if forestry and green space managers and policy makers have information about the best practices, they can make informed decisions that will benefit the community in the long term – healthier ecosystems contribute to healthier communities. Researchers that get more data to develop their work, which is important considering that there is a lack of data and knowledge about saproxylic species and dead wood.

Impact on the local/regional/national/EU levels

At the national level, there was an increased knowledge of the distribution of the species and people became more aware of the importance of the stag beetle (and species associated) and its habitat. Besides, the network of ambassadors allowed us to reach a wider public.

Challenges/Lessons learnt and how the challenges were overcome in the course of the initiative

The main challenge was always the funding. There was also difficulty at the beginning in managing the data obtained by the ambassadors using Google forms.



The project funding problem was overcome with an initial crowdfunding and constant application for national and international awards and funding. The data management was improved in the second year of life with the creation of a functional App.

[The lessons/insights to be drawn from this initiative](#)

This initiative has shown that common people can help science, that the participants of the project become more nature-conscious, and the project proved that dead wood and the saproxylic organisms are very important for the ecosystems.

[Sustainability and replicability](#)

The project is still running.

This initiative has been incorporated in environmental education activities, both to let people know about the project and its target species, and to collect data. It is still relevant to gather data for scientific purposes (knowing the distribution of the species) and also to raise awareness among people about the importance of the target species of the project, their habitat and how their disappearance might impact people's lives.

[The possibility and ease of implementing the initiative in diverse contexts/different countries\) and to benefit different target groups](#)

This type of initiative can be easily implemented in different countries since there is no need for specific equipment other than a smartphone or a camera and a computer, and internet connection.

[The conditions \(institutional, social, etc.\) for the initiative to be successfully replicated](#)

For this project (with the same emblematic species) to successfully be replicated, first of all, it has to be replicated in a place where the species exists. Having a network with public institutions, such as the one responsible for forests and biodiversity, and universities is also important. Other than that, it is also relevant to have a good network of stakeholders across the country, to ensure that there is more closeness to the community, involving more people in the project.

If the interest is to replicate a citizen science project similar to VACALOURA.pt, it is important to choose an emblematic species, to which people have a bond, or a set of species that harm their environment and that should be managed (e.g. alien invasive species). After that, the same steps mentioned before should be followed.

[Upscaling this practice to achieve enhanced impact](#)

This initiative can be upscaled by increasing the network of ambassadors and their geographical distribution.

[Innovative/Success factors](#)

- Using a species to which people have an emotional connection.
- Having a good dissemination strategy of the project.
- Involving key partners from the beginning.
- Having an attractive image

[Contribution to the field of innovation in environmental projects](#)

It has contributed to an innovation in the field of promoting environmental protection because the data collected by the volunteers was, and still is, analysed in order to produce scientific and practical knowledge about forest management. It can also promote volunteerism among the elderly because it is not physically demanding, a short walk might be enough to make a record, as long as they have access to a smartphone or a camera and a computer, and



internet connection.

[Contribution to an innovation in promoting volunteerism among the elderly and environmental protection](#)

It has contributed to an innovation in the field of promoting environmental protection because the data collected by the volunteers was, and still is, analysed in order to produce scientific and practical knowledge about forest management. It can also promote volunteerism among the elderly because it is not physically demanding, a short walk might be enough to make a record, as long as they have access to a smartphone or a camera and a computer, and internet connection.

[Conclusion](#)

This project is very useful, as it gathers data for scientific purposes – knowing the distribution and status of the populations of the stag beetle and other beetles of the Lucanidae family in Portugal, in order to collaborate with the European Network for Stag Beetle Monitoring, which in turn intends to investigate the conservation status of this species in its distribution area and identify possible areas for special protection of this species and raise awareness among people about the importance of the target species of the project, their habitat and how their disappearance might impact people's lives – and promotes contact with nature.

[Some remarks summarizing the usefulness and impact of the initiative](#)

- Inclusion of everyone (including the elderly) in activities, regardless of age, mobility and place of residence;
- Knowledge of the elderly about nature;
- Working for the environment and for a common cause

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[More Information/published resources](#)

Scientific article

Soutinho, J.G., Carvalho, J., Moreira-Pinhal, T., Gonçalves, A.R., Rego, C., Ceia, H., Fonseca, C. & Matos, M. (2017). VACALOURA.pt – Rede de monitorização da vaca-loura em Portugal. Balanço do primeiro ano de ação. Lucanus – Revista de Ambiente e Sociedade, 1, 146-165.

Mini-Guide to Lucanidae Identification

Mini-Guia de Identificação de Lucanídeos, Soutinho, J.G., Carvalho, J., Moreira-Pinhal, T., Gonçalves, A.R., Rego, C., Ceia, H., Fonseca, C. & Matos, M. (2017).

News

Notícias de Aveiro – [Atividades no Arouca Geopark: Visitas pelos 'Passadiços do Paiva' e "À descoberta da vaca-loura"](#)

Reflexo Digital – [Pelo crepúsculo, vai-se partir em busca da vaca-loura no parque das Taipas](#)

Green Savers – [Vaca-loura: como está este escaravelho por Portugal?](#)

EntroncamentoOnline – [Viu um destes escaravelhos? Procuramos a vaca-ruiva!](#)

PortodosMuseus – [Mosteiro de Tibães adere ao Fim-de-semana da vaca-loura](#)

Jornal Oeste – [PATO promove conservação de escaravelho vaca-ruiva](#)

Alvorada – [Campanha de sensibilização e ciência cidadã focada na conservação da vaca-ruiva](#)

Louzadense – [Maio o mês das Vacas-louras!](#)

Jornal de Notícias – [Projeto inventaria árvores de elevado valor ecológico e já há quase 7400 identificadas](#)

Science4you – [Vaca-loura procura-se! -missão ciência cidadã](#)

Rádio Vizela – [Fim-de-semana da Vaca-loura passa por Vizela](#)

Wilder – [Este fim-de-semana há passeios ao pôr-do-sol para procurar a Vaca-loura](#)

Wilder – [Mais de 130 pessoas foram à procura de Vacas-louras](#)

Notícias de Aveiro – [Estarreja na rota do "Fim-de-semana da vaca-loura"](#)

Diário de Aveiro – [Estarreja vai receber um "Fim-de-semana da Vaca-loura"](#)

UAOnline – ["Fim-de-semana da vaca-loura": Três dias dedicados à conservação do maior escaravelho de Portugal](#)

Wilder – [Onde e como ver Vacas-louras em Portugal](#)

Diário de Notícias – [Cidadãos cientistas à cata da vaca-loura, o maior escaravelho da Europa](#)

Diário de Aveiro – [Campanha da vaca-loura regressa com aplicação móvel.](#)

Terra Nova – [Projeto de conservação do escaravelho vaca-loura precisa de ajuda para dar próximo passo.](#)

Notícias Sapo – [Escaravelho Vaca-loura precisa da nossa ajuda](#)

Notícias Sapo – [Associação pede donativos para manter projeto de conservação da Vaca-loura](#)

Wilder – [Esta campanha permite-nos participar na conservação da vaca-loura](#)

Público – [Eles querem proteger a vaca-loura, mas precisam da tua ajuda](#)

Comunidade Cultura e Arte – [Querem proteger o escaravelho vaca-loura e precisam da tua ajuda](#)

Ambiente Magazine – [Universidade de Aveiro pede ajuda aos cidadãos para apoiarem o projeto de conservação do escaravelho Vaca-Loura](#)

Jornal de Notícias – [Viu uma vaca-loura? Faça o favor de avisar \(3 de Junho – Printed version\)](#)

UAOnline – [Campanha de monitorização da vaca-loura regressa com aplicação móvel que facilita o apoio dos participantes](#)

Wilder – [Saiba como pode ajudar a salvar este escaravelho](#)

Wilder – [Europa já tem uma Lista Vermelha dos escaravelhos que ajudam florestas](#)



Wilder – [Cidadãos aumentaram em 36% a área de distribuição conhecida para a vaca-loura em Portugal](#)
Wilder – [Como ajudar os animais que regeneram florestas](#)
Wilder – [Biólogos pedem ajuda para procurar vacas-louras em Portugal](#)
Diário de Notícias – [Biólogos apelam aos cidadãos para localizarem o escaravelho “vaca-loura”](#)
Jornal de Notícias – [Salvem a vaca-loura](#)
Notícias Magazine – [Salvem a vaca-loura](#)
Wilder – [Estes são os resultados ao maior escaravelho de Portugal](#)
Wilder – [Como criar refúgios para os escaravelhos](#)
Wilder – [À conversa com o coordenador do censo à vaca-loura](#)
RTP – [Viu uma vaca-loura? Avise a Rede Nacional de Monitorização em Aveiro](#)
Jornal de Notícias – [Se vir uma vaca-loura, avise.](#)
Notícias Sapo- [Viu alguma Vaca-loura? Se sim, há ciêntistas que querem saber onde elas estão.](#)
Diário de Aveiro- [Cientistas pedem ajuda para encontrar vacas-louras](#)
Diário de Notícias – [Procuram-se vacas-louras. Se vir uma, avise](#)
Wilder – [Estamos todos convidados a procurar vacas-louras](#)
UAOnline – [Cientistas querem saber onde andam as vacas-louras portuguesas. Se vir alguma, avise-os](#)



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