



Lifelong
Learning
Programme

Intergenerational Education, Learning, and Training in Spain

A State-of-the-Art Report

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Introduction

This report has been prepared as a country contribution to the ECIL project whose main objective is to develop an accredited learning programme and associated resources to enhance the competence of professionals delivering Intergenerational Lifelong Learning Programmes, with a specific focus on the VET sector. The report furnishes a rough description and assessment of the current state-of-the-art of intergenerational education, learning, and training in the Spain. Where possible, empirical data, results from research, and accounts from practitioners and experts involved in the intergenerational field have been provided. In summary, this report makes the case for the need to support current intergenerational work in the country through a much needed training able to connect intergenerational experiences inside and outside families.

1. About generations and the relationship between them

1.1. How are generations and the relationships between them perceived in Spain?

Spain is a *familistic* country: the family is most satisfying facet in Spaniards' private life (CIS, 2008) and 93% of Spanish citizens recognize to be fairly or very satisfied with their family life (The Gallup Organisation, 2008). Consequently, **generations are firstly and foremost perceived through a family lens**: above all, thinking of generations means paying attention to issues around grandparents, parents, children, grandchildren, and so on. **Outside the family, generational differentiation is fundamentally blurred**. Of course, we distinguish children from youth, adults from older people, and so on, but the use of distinctive generational denominations is scarce: "Beyond the Civil War Generation and the Transition Generation, [in Spain] we have few empirical references to generational consciousness emanating from having lived together historic periods, events, or cultural, political, economic, and technological phenomena" (IMSERO, 2011: 584).

In terms of how relationships between generations actually function, the latter distinction between familial and non-familial generational groups applies. **Within families, intergenerational contact keeps being high**. For instance, 68% of persons 65+ have

daily contact with their children (IMSERO, 2010). For those elderly who are grandparents, 40% of them are in contact with their children daily (IMSERO, 2011).

When older persons are invited to rate their family relationships in scale from 0 (totally unsatisfied) to 10 (fully satisfied), 52% of them give a 9-10 score, and 35.1% choose a 7-8 grade. Similar percentages and scores are found in other age groups, with youth aged 18-24 showing the highest satisfaction: 59.1% of them admit to be fully satisfied with their familial relationships (CIS, 2012). **In summary, in Spain there is an evident majority of citizens with a positive perception around the state of family relationships, many of which have an intergenerational nature.**

Regarding intergenerational relationships outside the family in Spain, it is fair to say that there is a lack of updated and specific data to ascertain the situation properly. **In terms of contact, percentages drop in comparison to familial intergenerational contact**. For instance, data from 2008 indicated that whereas 20.6% of older persons talked either on the phone or face-to-face with relatives younger than 35 years old, that percentage dropped to 9.6% in the case of talking to non-relatives youth of the

same age group (CIS, 2008). If we considered instead the 18-44 age group at the time, 59.6% of its members acknowledged to get in touch with older relatives either by phone or face-to-face; however, when it came to the percentage of them having that type of contact with non-relative older persons, that percentage descended to 14.9%.

We can have a look now at some research around mutual perceptions among non-familial generations in the country. Whereas on average only 18% of Spanish citizens either somewhat or strongly think that older people are a burden on society (The Gallup Organisation, 2009), **negative perceptions about older people abound among younger generations**: a survey carried out some years ago showed that 39.5% of those aged 18-44 saw older people as *dependant*, 28.9% perceived them as *intelligent*, 27.3% thought that people 65+ were *sick*, and 21.7% considered them *idle* persons. Older persons thought slightly different about younger generations: they referred to youth mostly as *healthy* (35.7%), *cheerful* (35.1%), *idle* (23.4%), and *intelligent* (22.8%) (CIS, 2008).

A complementary perspective on intergenerational perceptions at the time can be presented through looking at responses to the question *How does society treat older persons?* (CIS, 2008). Almost half (46.4%) of the Spanish citizens aged 18-44 believed that our society was *just fair* to older people. However, **older people themselves had a slightly**

better perception of how society was treating them. According to that survey, how did Spanish youth behave vis-à-vis older persons? They did it mostly *in indifference*. And what about the way older people behaved vis-à-vis youth? In general, they did it *in a well-mannered and respectful way*.

That said, we count on some preliminary research evidences showing that **when older and younger non-relative generations become involved in intergenerational projects their mutual appreciation and sense of solidarity are enhanced** (Sánchez, Díaz, López, Pinazo y Sáez, 2008; Sánchez, López, & García, 2010).

In summary, we find a sort of ambivalent vision since positive and negative appreciations coexist. Furthermore, **these dynamic and increasingly complex intergenerational visions do change throughout the life cycle**: Spanish children 8-10 see their grandparents as substitute parents, children aged 10-14 perceive older persons as autonomous and somehow as *buddies*; this image turns into a negative one in adolescence, it takes a positive turn during youth and gets back to a more negative stance as people enter adulthood and have to face caregiving responsibilities (Santamarina y Marinas, 2009). In the end, **in Spain negative stereotypes around older persons are not as well spread as many people in the country actually believe.**

1.2. Is there evidence that this perception has been changing over the last decade?

In Spain, we count on evidences indicating that **intergenerational perceptions both within and outside the families are changing. However, these changes are following very different paths.**

In the case of familial generations, the shrinking of families in terms of size along with the increasing longevity of their members is bringing about more vertical – intergenerational- than horizontal – monogenerational- relationships (Portal Mayores, 2009). This augment of vertical and more durable relationships –the probability of 4-5 coetaneous generations is higher than ever before- is having an impact on mutual perceptions. **Within the framework of satisfactory relationships, ambivalent images arise more and more.**

Another important changing feature in Spain has to do with the fact that more and more elderly are living alone. This preference for independency, in contrast with the traditional habit (especially installed among older widows and widowers) to dwelling with their children, is interpreted as an indication of ageing modernization in the country (López and Díaz, 2013). Linked to this trend seems to be a **stronger perception of older persons as autonomous, active, and self-determined.**

Finally, connected to the fact that Spanish offspring have to remain longer at home with their parents because of economic and work

related difficulties to emancipate (on average, emancipation age of Spanish youth is around 30 years old, whereas the European average emancipation age is 20-22 years), **parent-children relationships are becoming more and more guided by negotiation and flexibility.**

Outside families, generational perceptions are changing too. A recent governmental publication on active ageing in Spain has concluded that Spanish population's vision on older people is fundamentally negative but it does not correspond to the actual situation and capacities of these people. Looking backwards, "this vision has improved significantly in the last fifteen years" (IMSERSO, 2011: 145). Therefore, **we are making progress in terms of spreading a more positive image of older persons but we still have to admit that negative perceptions (such as older persons are inactive or they are a burden) predominate** (IMSERSO, 2011: 82).

An important sign of how generational perceptions are changing in the country is that **chronological age is less and less considered a key variable to ascribe someone to an older generational group.** Actually, 30.9% of Spanish persons aged 65+ believe that entering old age does not depend on chronological age (CIS, 2008). Should an age threshold to enter old age need to be picked, Spanish citizens mostly consider that only people age 70 or older are to be considered elders. The perception of

who are getting older in the country is being retarded; therefore, people

younger than 70 are mainly seen just as *older persons* but not as *geezers*.

1.3. What are the existing forms of solidarity and cooperation between generations in Spain?

All studies indicate that **intergenerational solidarity within Spanish families is high even in times of economic downturn**. For instance, according to 2011 national data (INE, 2012), 12.6% of households with all but one members unemployed are being sustained by pensioners aged 64 and older. In fact, 90% of Spanish citizens aged 15+ recognize that financial help from parents and grandparents is important when young adults are establishing their own households and families (The Gallup Organisation, 2009).

Typically, **Spanish older generations in the families have provided younger generations with support in the way of caregiving, education, and material needs**. Consequently, people in older generations have tended to expect that younger relatives reciprocate this provision of support should the former need it: three in every four persons 65+ in Spain think that children must take a main stake regarding problematic situations lived by their older parents (CIS, 2008).

However, to a certain extent **the moral rule of intergenerational reciprocity within families is being put into question nowadays**. Many young and middle aged adults are struggling to balance a very demanding professional life with their commitment to give back to

their parents and grandparents. **Solidarity, conflict, and ambivalence coexist in this regard, and they do it more today than it seemed to be the case in the past. Flexibility and negotiation are gaining importance as key features in familial intergenerational behaviours**. An illustration of the latter is that older adult organizations in the country (Consejo Estatal de Personas Mayores, 2009) are demanding that grandparents are treated not just as caregivers but as educators for their grandchildren: In Spain, 80% of grandparents either are or have been caregiving some of their grandchildren (IMSERSO, 2012). There is a public request for training and support to grandparents who play a significant role as caregivers of their grandchildren.

In line with the average opinion in other EU countries, in Spain **neither the contribution of older people as caregivers or as volunteers in charitable and community organizations is appreciated adequately** (The Gallup Organisation, 2009). This lack of appreciation, about which something should be done, may be partially interpreted as a demonstration of a weak generational consciousness about the contribution to society's welfare by older people.

In the case of Spain, it is clear that **the intergenerational contract in the families is still essential towards the maintenance of the welfare system.** That said, the country would need to pay more attention around how intergenerational consciousness and commitments are changing over time. One example of that change might be **the increasing number of older persons who acknowledge that, when in need of care would rather like be cared by public professional services than by their children** (CIS, 2009).

A final methodological research bias should be stated: analyses of intergenerational cooperation between familial generations tend to emphasize functional solidarity from older generations to younger ones. Therefore, **it is difficult to assess the contribution made by younger generations, especially by children and youth.** However, we do know that 22.7% of older adults in need of help to do daily activities are assisted by their children (CIS, 2009).

When we look at intergenerational solidarity and cooperation among non-familial generations, the information available is limited. There are hundreds of intergenerational activities and programmes going on in the country but only a few of them have produced data about how they are functioning. Some years ago, a research team tried to map out the state-of-the-art of intergenerational practices in Spain (Sánchez, Díaz, López, Pinazo, & Sáez, 2008). A total of 132 of these practices were identified and contacted, and 30 of them were sampled to go through an

on-site in-depth study. **Older volunteers involved in these practices acknowledged (97.9%) that participating in activities with children had made them feel useful, mentally (94.8%) and physically better (93.8%), and more active (95.3%).** Furthermore, 84% of these older persons said that through their participation in intergenerational practices they had improved their relationships with younger generations –by the way, 88.7% of youth involved seemingly acknowledged having better relations with older persons because of their participation in these practices-. In terms of contributions, 94.3% of **older people interviewed admitted that because of their intergenerational practices they had contributed to the education of younger generations, and the latter generations had contributed to make the former feeling better.**

A more recent evaluation research (Sánchez, López, & García, 2010) focused on an intergenerational homeshare programme tackled the issue of functional solidarity between older homeowners and their younger guest students. Spain is a leading European country in this type of intergenerational arrangements based on an exchange of accommodation for company. According to this work, **elder reported having received help mostly with personal activities: “In addition, 94% of the elderly people indicated that they had given something to the student, particularly in the form of emotional support (49.0%) and personal care activities/help (35.6%)”** (Sánchez, García, Díaz, & Duaigües, 2011: 382). **As for the homeshare students,**

“98.7% of them indicated that their participation in the programme had benefited them with regard to learning new things (35%) and having valuable experiences in life (31.8%). Nearly all students (98.1%) were also aware of having given something to the elderly person with whom they live, above all else, company (67.5%), happiness and well-being (22.3%), and security (20.4%)” (Sánchez, García, Díaz, & Duaigües, 2011: 382).

Intergenerational non-familial practices hold significant promise for benefits but the number of them around is still insufficient: in 2009, a European survey (The Gallup Organisation, 2009) found out that 69% of Spanish citizens aged 15 years and above considered that **our country did not provided older and younger people with enough opportunities to meet and work together, via associations and local community initiatives.** People seem to be willing more opportunities to the latter regard.

2. National legal framework for intergenerational education and learning opportunities

2.1. Which national policy measures are supportive of the generations and/or solidarity and cooperation among them?

A few years ago, only 36% of Spanish citizens aged 15+ believed that the country's government was doing a good job in promoting better understanding between young and old –on average, only 27% of the rest of EU citizens thought so (The Gallup Organization, 2009). Nonetheless, 93% of them somewhat agreed or strongly agreed on the fact that local authorities should support associations and initiatives that foster stronger relations between young and older people.

What is that these figures are telling us? On the one hand, a public opinion stake around intergenerational issues is finding its way. On the other hand, **there is public interest in making of policies aimed at supporting intergenerational cooperation.**

However, how is that we might be able to find out which specific decisions are best suited to support intergenerational solidarity since most of the times policy decisions do not refer to intergenerational relationships explicitly? For instance, legislation regulating maternal and paternal leave to care their newborns does affect intergenerational support. Nevertheless, these measures are rarely tagged as intergenerational

ones and therefore remain unnoticed from an intergenerational perspective. This invisibility brings about a bias whenever we try to identify measure supportive of intergenerational solidarity and cooperation.

That said, we are going to focus our comments on some measure that are explicitly connected to intergenerational cooperation. Spain already counts on some national, regional, and local measures in this area, about which we are going to provide some examples.

At a **national level**, the Institute of Older Persons and Social Services (IMSERSO) presented recently its 2011 White Paper on Active Ageing. This document, a first step towards in the decision-making process to pass some measures, devotes one whole chapter to intergenerational issues, and makes the following recommendations:

“a) To delve more in the empirical understanding of how intergenerational processes at all levels –interindividual, group, organizational, and macrosocial, actually work.

b) To make public opinion aware of values linked to intergenerational solidarity.

c) To support down-to-earth initiatives able to foster intergenerational relationships there where people live, so that they may increase their awareness about their generational membership. These initiatives should focus on the *inter-*, i.e. on opportunities to establish bonds between generations.

d) To organize initiatives geared at promoting a productive and reciprocal intergenerational exchange within which older persons are perceived as an asset in society.

e) To study in depth the specific situation of people in the current adult generation who for the first time ever have to be involved in care provision for their parents, children, and grandchildren” (IMSERSO, 2011: 596).

IMSERSO was the entity in the Central Administration responsible to launch and fund, in the period 2005-2012, the **Spanish Intergenerational Network**, a national instrument to disseminate information and sensitize about intergenerational issues as well as to support the development of the intergenerational field both in Spain and Latin America.

Likewise, and part of its role of coordinating institution in Spain of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, IMSERSO has realized and supported many activities –some of them touching at education, learning, and training, to promote stronger

collaboration between generations. Thanks to this recent national effort, intergenerational issues, mainly approached from a gerontological perspective, have gained visibility and presence in the social and political agenda.

Regarding intergenerational cooperation within families, Spanish national legislative assembly passed in 2003 a piece of law regulating the right of grandparents to communicate and visit their grandchildren whenever grandchildren’s parents happen to separate or get divorced. This measure tries to guarantee that ending a marriage does not imply ending intergenerational relationships between grandparents and grandchildren.

To exemplify one measure at **regional level**, we have selected the 2nd Integral Youth Plan 2011-2014 passed by the Andalusian Government, in Southern Spain. This Plan concerns to population aged 14-34 in this region. One thread of intervention in this Plan refers to the need of “enabling intergenerational encounters between youth and elders”, and to this regard suggests **encouraging intergenerational accommodation of college students and older homeowners**. More than two decades ago, Andalusia pioneered this type of intergenerational homesharing in Europe. Nowadays, it is a programme implemented almost in all universities in the region.

The **local level** has been the one in which intergenerational measures have been developed the most. An outstanding example at this level can be found in Marchena, a small

municipality located in the province of Seville. Marchena has made a huge effort in the last fifteen years to infuse an intergenerational perspective across services and sectors. Recently, this model has inspired a whole new programme organized by the regional political body responsible for supporting medium and small size municipalities in the province. Through this new plan it is intended that all population in the province, with a special emphasis on youth and older persons, is informed, sensitized, and trained around volunteering from an

intergenerational perspective. Among other achievements, this measure expects to transform public nursing homes throughout the province into intergenerational sites. A final clarification applies. Despite the examples furnished above, it is fair to acknowledge that **current measures issued by Spanish authorities at all levels, both from a qualitative and quantitative point of view, are still far from paying a significant attention to the introduction of specific initiatives to foster intergenerational relationships.**

3. Intergenerational education, training and learning opportunities in Spain

3.1. From a Spanish perspective, what makes intergenerational education, learning, and training intergenerational? What conditions must be fulfilled for them to be intergenerational?

We cannot say that there is a *Spanish perspective* as such regarding what is that makes education, learning, and training intergenerational. Similarly to what it may happen in other countries, Spain counts on a diverse range of understandings and approaches to that question, and we have no way to get to know all of them. Therefore, our arguments will show just some ideas taken from both public discussions and our own views around this question.

For a definition of intergenerational education, probably the most cited one in Spain comes from Sáez (2002: 29): “[the concept intergenerational education designates] Processes and procedures that are based on and legitimated through an emphasis upon cooperation and interaction between any two or more generations trying to share experiences, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values, in search of their respective self-esteem and personal fulfilment. The objective [of intergenerational education] is to change and to transform oneself through learning with others”.

Multiple generations, sharing, and personal development through co-learning seem to be singular features to this type of education.

This author explores further this

concept and finds three different interpretations of this term: **(i) intergenerational education happens when acquiring knowledge about intergenerational topics becomes the focus of the educational curriculum, (ii) intergenerational education is the one that incorporates the fostering of intergenerational processes as its main concern, and (iii) intergenerational education is any education in which different generations are involved.**

Formulated a decade ago, these ideas have been opened to discussion and more elaboration in the country. In fact, more recently Sanchez, Kaplan, & Sáez (2010) have argued that **our approach to education and intergenerational processes should be connected to the concept of communities of learning so that intergenerational education makes us think of practice, discourse, participation, and bonding.**

Then, there is the aforementioned duality between familial and non-familial intergenerational processes. On average, Spanish people tend to link intergenerational issues with interactions between different generations *within families*. From

this perspective, **any education and learning taking place between parents and children, or grandparents and grandchildren would represent an example of intergenerational education/learning.** As in any other species, older human beings transmit knowledge on to younger generations because it is through this transmission that continuation of human life and human society may be guaranteed. Therefore, intergenerational relationships are natural and consubstantial to humanity: “Every human being is intergenerational” (Sánchez, Kaplan, & Sáez, 2010: 26).

The programmatic perspective has focused on intergenerational processes in which non-familial generations are involved. In this case, what is the distinguishing feature of intergenerational processes, including education/training and learning? Sánchez, Díaz, López, Pinazo, & Sáez (2008) argued that any intergenerational practice should meet three basic criteria: **(i) participation of people from different generations, (ii) intended organization and management, and (iii) exchange of resources between participant generations.**

However, later on the introductory guide to intergenerational programmes (Sánchez, Kaplan, & Sáez, 2010) differentiated three alternative distinctive features in these programmes: **(i) intentionality, as in any other programme, (ii) implicit distance, typical in all *inter* endeavours – the ones in which something happens *in-between* two or more**

agents, cultures, territories, etc., and (iii) temporality-historicity, a dimension that is always implicit in the concept of generation.

“Intergenerational programme, as a concept, stresses the intent of making something to happen between different generations, and it is that *something* that constitutes the programme’s *raison-d’être*” (Sánchez, Kaplan, & Sáez, 2010: 15). According to these authors, a programme is not intergenerational just because children and older persons get together: “it is intergenerational if relationships between those children and older persons become a key component in setting the rules and resources required for the programme to get started and to develop according to its goals” (Sánchez, Kaplan, & Sáez, 2010: 31). According to this relational approach, **generational relationships *in-between* individuals are the very condition for a programme to be intergenerational.** Furthermore, those relationships are perceived to some extent as contingent upon the very situations in which individuals meet and accomplish the process-like creation of mutual bonds. Previous and pre-established generational identities and wished-to-happen interactions are not as relevant to understand intergenerational programmes as are intergenerational relationships emerging throughout the programme implementation. Hence, the secondary role played by discussions about what specific type of relationships -reciprocal or other- should be expected when these programmes are organized. It is not as important how people from different generations are going to behave –because of their

generational identity, during a programme as it is how those people may flow and change because of the experience of allowing themselves being exposed to and in touch with other generational groups.

In a most recent paper, Sánchez, & Díaz (2012) have argued that **the sheer gathering at a same place of individuals from different generations would not make education, training, or learning intergenerational**. Nor all intergenerational programmes need to be around solidarity, cooperation and mutual support between generations: actually, conflicts, tensions, contradictions, and ambivalences are part of those programmes too. These scholars argue that intergenerational

programmes are not, above all, a set of activities (*doing something together*) but a series of processes (*being together* through and around interconnected and situated experiences evolving in a given rhythm during a certain period of time).

Intergenerational programmes should not treat intergenerational relationships just as instruments that can be used to attain certain objectives. It is actually the contrary: **intergenerational relationships were there firstly and what an intergenerational programme does is providing opportunities for these relationships to occur and to be practiced anew**.

3.2. Is there a tradition of intergenerational education, learning, and training in Spain? What can be learned from current and past practices? Please give examples where possible

If we just focus on out-of-the-family settings, we should start by saying that we cannot date when intergenerational initiatives connected to education, training, and learning were firstly put in place. Newman, & Sanchez (2007) presented results from a Spanish research project that analysed 133 intergenerational programmes in the country. The oldest programme identified had been launched in 1982 and **from the year 2000 onwards the number of intergenerational programmes being organized had grown steadily, and that it is still the case today**.

Currently, we find intergenerational education/learning initiatives in all

levels of mandatory school, in universities, in adult and older adult education programmes, and within the scope of projects implemented by many non-for-profit civic organizations. Does all of this constitute a tradition? We think not. Two main reasons justify our answer. Firstly, **to be a tradition involves some sort of institutionalization, whether formal or by sheer accumulation of practice, and such a process has not found its way in Spain yet**. Secondly, **there is much more unacknowledged and invisible intergenerational education/learning than not**; this lack of awareness hampers the birth of a distinctive tradition on this area.

That said, where in Spain do we typically find that intergenerational education/learning is being practiced purposefully? Some examples follow.

University Programmes for Older Adults (UPOA): Some 50,000 students 50+ are currently attending these programmes in more than 54 public and private universities in the country (Bru, 2012). Some UPOAs include what it is usually named as *integrated programme* within which older students are able to attend regular college courses side by side with younger classmates. Classrooms become thus multi-generational spaces and therefore there is room for intergenerational education too.

Popular Universities (PU): These organizations are devoted to foster cultural development at local level, and typically their main goal is connected to enhancing the quality of community and individual life through an improvement of opportunities for participation, education, training, and culture. Extremadura, a region located in Western Spain, hosts more than 400 of PU, most of them installed in small rural municipalities. Promoting intergenerational communication, relationships and projects is one of the objectives acknowledged by these PU. Actually, their programme *Our Active Older Persons* was awarded in 2011 under the Generations United contest because of its solid trajectory of intergenerational work according to international standards. Many PU include educational activities with a strong intergenerational component.

Early childhood education: In Spain, formal compulsory schooling starts at the age of 6. However, earlier voluntary access to school has become the norm, especially from the age of 3. There are interesting examples of kindergartens that welcome older people on a regular basis and involve them in educational endeavours. For instance, in the city of Granada, a local organization run by older volunteers has been implementing several intergenerational programmes aimed at facilitating a significant, ongoing, and sustained participation of older people in several municipal schools for children 0-6. These older volunteers collaborate with classroom teachers in the organization and implementation of different educational workshops and activities (see section 4.2 below for more details).

Intergenerational homesharing: In Spain, one of the most extended forms of shared accommodation is the intergenerational one. In general, it consists of a programme through which an elderly person who lives alone in a home that it is in good condition hosts a university student attending college away from his family home, with limited economic resources, and willing to provide companionship to the elderly person.

A recent evaluation (Sánchez, García, Díaz, & Duaigües, 2011) performed on *Viure i Conviure* (Live and Live Together), one of the most consolidated intergenerational homeshare programmes in Spain, has highlighted learning as one of the benefits of these programmes: 35% of students and 9% of elderly

homeowners admitted that their participation in the programme had allowed them to learn new things. Furthermore, 31.8% of students referred to this experience as “vital” in their lives.

School of grandparents: Spanish Red Cross and some municipalities such as Barrio del Cristo-Quart de Poblet are organizing schools whose purpose is providing grandparents with support and resources to fulfil

their role of caregivers and educators of their grandchildren. Given the growing percentage of grandparents involved in this type of caregiving, these schools attract many grandparents who are oriented and taught about educational issues in childhood and adolescence. After some intensive training and support sessions, some of the grandparents may set self-help groups (see section 4.2 below for more details).

3.3. Why and in what form are intergenerational education, learning, and training opportunities needed in Spain and why are they needed in different settings (formal education, informal education, local community, urban and rural environment, at work, in neighbourhood, etc.)?

The Spanish introductory guide to intergenerational programmes (Sánchez, Kaplan, & Sáez, 2010) cites seven imperatives behind the intergenerational movement. While they are not specific to Spain, they apply to our country too. These imperatives are worded as follows: (i) the demographic imperative, (ii) restoring the *circle of care* as an imperative, (iii) the active ageing imperative, (iv) the social cohesion imperative, (v) the livable community imperative, (vi) the cultural continuity imperative, and (vii) the relational imperative.

In the particular case of Spain, and given its family-centred tradition, **it is probably with regard to community settings that major efforts to infuse and promote intergenerational perspectives are required.** The 2011 *White Book on Active Ageing* recommended making an effort to valorise and

systematize current intergenerational practices, especially taking into account how these practices are contributing to the country’s welfare and social cohesion (IMSERSO, 2011).

Regarding the need of training, in Spain we are fortunate to have available some research around why and where training initiatives on intergenerational work would be needed. Sánchez, Díaz, López, Pinazo, & Sáez (2008) interviewed 30 community workers responsible for coordinating intergenerational practices. **These practitioners were asked about their training and they acknowledged that some specialized training would be desirable.** “Regarding intergenerational projects, we often take decisions just based on wishes or intuition”, one of them said.

What kind of problems has aroused because of this lack of training? Wasting of time, faulty task and activity coordination, wrong response to daily issues, mediocre evaluation, mistaken leadership style leading to staff burnout, and inability to motivate and achieve participants 'buy-in' to the intergenerational project.

A second research was even more focused on this issue. Sáez, Díaz, Pinazo, & Sánchez (2009) gathered a mix of 30 intergenerational community workers and other specialists in the field and run a Delphi study about professionalization processes linked to intergenerational work. This research devoted a whole phase to find out about training expectations. Participants ranked from more to less important the following 9 areas as required of training:

- (1) methodologies, techniques, and tools to facilitate relationships and exchange,**
- (2) capacity to get to know the reality, context and features of generations involved in a given intergenerational programme,**
- (3) management strategies specific to intergenerational work,**
- (4) intergenerational programme evaluation,**
- (5) theoretical frameworks about intergenerational relationships and programmes,**
- (6) strategies for collaborative, network-oriented, and cross-sectors work,**
- (7) improvement of personal and social skills,**
- (8) successful intergenerational programmes, and**

(9) ways to connect intergenerational programmes to research, policy, and theory.

Finally, in the process of preparing this report we contacted a group of 21 researchers, social workers, social educators, Vocational Education and Training (VET) specialists, gerontologists, and psychologists, and we asked them about the potential need to establish in Spain a professionalizing training programme on intergenerational work. All of them but two said to be in favour of such a training programme, whose need was argued according to the following set of reasons:

(i) many intergenerational activities could become sustainable programmes if social professionals coordinating them had a better understanding of how to plan, implement, and evaluate these particular programmes;

(ii) some type of official accreditation attesting expertise of practitioners in the field would help to strengthen their capacity to justify the interest of these programmes;

(iii) there is a shortage of professionals knowledgeable of ways to building relationships between all ages;

(iv) gender and life course perspectives should be ingrained in Spanish policies and programmes around ageing, and a better intergenerational *know how* would be helpful in that direction;

(v) against an age-segregated tradition both in the way we live and in how we intervene on social issues, stronger intergenerational approaches might propel more collaborative, interdisciplinary, and cross-sectors work, following claims that are demanding more efficiency in times of scarcer resources;

(vi) such a training would help to increase social consciousness about the need to put into practice intergenerational approaches;

(vii) current efforts in the country to make VET stronger and more attractive to students are going to require contributions from all sectors and age groups, therefore an intergenerational approach to VET would be very timely.

3.4. What formats and methods are predominately being used for intergenerational education and training in Spain?

Again, this is a challenging question since there is a lack of studies in this area. **Depending on the educational setting, a combination of formal, informal and non-formal methods are being used. However, regarding intergenerational programmes non-formal education is much more installed** since civic society and community organizations tend to be the most typical spheres for these programmes. To this regard, the standard cases are participatory projects implemented through a network of community partners, and organized on the basis of volunteers. Along with teaching, tutoring, mentoring, and, in a lesser extent, befriending are some approaches present in these programmes.

When it comes to training, Spain counts on several initiatives that we have been able to identify. Some of them were implemented in the format of face-to-face training seminars, some used a combination of face-to-face and distance procedures, and one has been fully conceived to be run as online.

In 2006 and 2008 the national Institute of Older Persons and Social Services funded 16 courses entitled *Training Intergenerational Managers* aimed at fostering the role of intergenerational community workers, and providing both professionals and older persons with knowledge and skills to organize and facilitate successful intergenerational programmes, experiences and workshops. Around 250 persons attended 20 hours of face-to-face training along 2 and half days. Once this first phase was over, learners were given one month to draft an individual plan for a viable intergenerational programme. For this second phase, learners could use a mailing list to get support from the course's tutors. In all, each one of these courses lasted 60 hours.

From this pioneer experience on intergenerational training some lessons and recommendations followed:

(i) the learning is more effective when the trained group is integrated by learners from different generations and age-sectors (gerontology, services for adults, youth work, children's education, and so on);

(ii) the duration of the face-to-face component should have been longer;

(iii) for this training to be more successful, it is recommended that a sustainable and mid-term follow-up strategy after the initial 60-hours course is considered;

(iv) more emphasis on applicability of knowledge and skills learnt would be desirable.

Hartu-Emanak (HE), and older adult organization based in the Basque Country, and the **University of Valencia (UV)** –located in Eastern Spain, have developed different actions around intergenerational training too. HE is concerned with promoting lifelong learning and social participation by older citizens, in combination with other age groups, hence its commitment to intergenerational education. Older persons, college students majoring in Social Education, social professionals (such as psychologists, community workers, pedagogues, and so on), and adult students have participated in HE's intergenerational training. **A dialogic, theoretic-practical participatory methodology has been infused across all intergenerational activities by HE in order to empower older people and to valorise their social and cultural capital. Training activities range from seminars on grandparents-grandchildren**

relationships, history workshops, or monographic sessions on intergenerational programme management, to in-classroom encounters between older people and college students. Till now, some older people's hesitation and even resistance to participate in these innovative initiatives has been the main drawback of the experience.

The University of Valencia's (UV) approach is a very different one since the training is realized within the framework of a **Master Degree in Psycho-gerontology**. Students in this Master may register for the 36 hours-long course on "Intergenerational Programmes" whose aim is not only studying but practicing intergenerational relationships and dialogue. Therefore, and apart from the proper Master session at the classroom, older volunteers from a local organization and regular Master students, organized in multi-generational small groups, meet and participate in different activities to experience how intergenerational interaction actually works.

Collaborative learning, empowerment, small group work, and active participation are some methodological features applied in this case whose evaluation has confirmed participants' learning about the ageing process, approaches to work with older people, project planning, and how experiential learning operates.

Finally, the **University of Granada** has been collaborating with different institutions in the implementation of training for current and future intergenerational practitioners. Some of this training has been

delivered through 1-2 days seminars focused on evaluation of intergenerational programmes, management of intergenerational shared sites, or intergenerational programmes as means to foster opportunities for active ageing.

These intensive and monographic training activities have worked well in terms of presenting concepts and tools. However, they do not seem appropriate when it comes to more practice how-to-do-it learning, unless a systematic follow-up is organized and some sort of technical support is provided in the mid and long terms.

In 2011, the University of Granada launched a different training project: a *Qualification of Intergenerational Work Professionals* course. This pilot was implemented through a combination of 160 online hours and 80 face-to-face hours, its audience was integrated by active social professionals, and its main emphasis was around **training intergenerational practitioners as experts in relationships**. Why this

relational emphasis? A research accomplished some years earlier (Sáez, Díaz, Pinazo, & Sánchez, 2009) with participation of a sample of intergenerational practitioners, researchers, and experts concluded that there are six distinctive features of intergenerational programme managers, the first one being “to facilitate mutually enriching intergenerational contact, social relationships, interactions, and bonding”. After this first pilot, described by its participants as “transformational”, and in the same vein, the University of Granada has launched a 350-hours-long second edition, fully online, due to start in October 2013. In this case, the relational approach implemented is not just focused on relationships between generational groups but it takes a wider stance: all social reality has a relational nature and therefore, following Donati (1999: 32), **“generations involve social relationships, even more, they are social relationships and they need to be understood through the timing of relationships”**.

4. Practice of intergenerational education and training events and learning opportunities

4.1. Who are current providers of intergenerational educational, training events or learning opportunities in Spain?

Throughout this report we have already cited names of some of the main players in the Spanish intergenerational field. Providing a list of their names would be inaccurate, for this phenomenon is still in need of efforts to keep track on initiatives been implemented.

In general, we might refer to the school system –especially early childhood and primary schools,

senior centres and nursing homes, non-for-profit volunteering organizations, local authorities in many municipalities, centres for adult education, and universities – more specifically within their programmes for older adults. **The VET sector seems to have a lack of an intended intergenerational culture in its educational approach.**

4.2. Please name and describe four current outstanding national initiatives in the field of intergenerational education, learning, and training in Spain, including your own work

1) INTERGENERATIONAL APPROACH PROGRAMME (UNIVERSITY OF VALLADOLID)

The University of Valladolid (UVA), a centenarian institution whose campuses are based in the cities of Valladolid, Palencia, Segovia, and Soria, it is integrated by more than 30,000 students, some 2,500 teachers and around 900 administrative workers. Its formal education offer includes 150 undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, approximately.

In 1997, UVA started its **Intergenerational Approach Programme**, in collaboration with the regional government and the four municipalities where this university is based. The aim of this programme is encouraging intergenerational dialogue and collaboration between people 60+ and students 18-35 years old. This programme is articulated in two different but complementary modalities: (i) an intergenerational homeshare scheme, through which older people living along welcome university students searching for affordable accommodation, and (ii) a Cultural Exchange sub-programme

that allows older people and Social Education students to share knowledge and learn together during a whole week once a year.

UVA is making an effort to introduce intergenerational content and perspectives in a varied range of educational activities linked to arts, sports, culture, and environment. Thousands of elderly people and university students have participated till now.

2) EDUCATING TOGETHER IS BETTER (OFECUM & GRANADA EDUCA FOUNDATION)

OFECUM is a small non-for-profit association based in Granada – Southern Spain, devoted to promote active and productive ageing practices among older persons in town. **Granada Educa Foundation** is a body managed by the local City Council and focused on educational policies and programmes for children 0-6 years old. This Foundation is responsible to run several kindergartens located in different neighbourhoods in Granada. The key distinguishing feature of this programme is its capacity to demonstrate how kindergartens, originally thought for teachers, children and their parents, may gain multigenerational flavour and ingrain intergenerational education through carefully planned participation of older people. This programme is challenging local society to rethink kindergartens as places for all ages, multi- and inter-generational contexts, instead of considering them just-for-children services.

In 2012 activities have been expanded to include a couple of schools so that older pupils in mandatory education and VET students may participate. The programme struggles to guarantee a significant, quotidian, ongoing, and planned presence of people from different generations collaborating in educational tasks at these schools. In the end the hope is that these schools may become genuine educational communities of generations.

3) SCHOOL OF GRANDPARENTS (INTER-MUNICIPAL COMMUNITY ALDAIA-QUART DE POBLET)

Launched in 2004, this intergenerational programme tried to bridge the gap provoked by the lack of support and resources specifically addressed to grandparents in their educational role, both inside and outside their families. This programme intends to be a response to grandparents who have to play an intensive role of caregivers and educators for their grandchildren and feel that they have to update some of their knowledge and educational skills.

Furthermore, **School of Grandparents** aspires to increase possibilities around for local intergenerational encounters and solidarity, mainly through informal and non-formal educational practices. The main expected outcome is the revalorization of the educational role played by grandparents both within families and in society.

Grandfathers, grandmothers, their children, and their grandchildren

have progressively joined this programme whose activities are articulated around seven pillars: intergenerational culture, legal issues, general education, health education, nutritional education, complementary therapies, and new technologies. Participants meet several times a month.

Some strengths of this programme are its capacity to foster intergenerational participation, its focus on intergenerational learning throughout the life cycle, and its combination of formal, non-formal, and informal education. Which are its main weaknesses? A difficulty to keep pace with an ongoing changing environment, and complicity to find professionals well trained in intergenerational work able to collaborate in the programme.

4) ONLINE COURSE *QUALIFICATION OF INTERGENERATIONAL WORK PROFESSIONALS* (UNIVERSITY OF GRANADA)

This initiative was somehow presented above (see section 3.4). After a long history of involvement

in training intergenerational workers and coordinating the Spanish Intergenerational Network, the University of Granada started in 2011 this unprecedented training in the country.

This course's content is based on results from a previous research project (Sáez, Díaz, Pinazo, & Sánchez, 2009) that was able to identify features of an ideal training programme in this field according to the views of intergenerational managers and other intergenerational experts.

The number of total training hours in this 15 weeks online course is 350. Themes in this course range from humanities and social science perspectives to understand today's society relationally, to a deep study of intergenerational theory, research, and programme planning. This course approaches intergenerational practices as educational and relational ones. The course spends its final section looking at conditions, processes and strategies of professionalization in the intergenerational field.

5. Partner organisation as a provider of intergenerational education

5.1. What is your organisation's experience in the field of intergenerational projects? Please, describe

The University of Granada (UGR) has been involved since the mid 90's in intergenerational projects at local, regional, national, and international levels. We have planned, implemented and evaluated intergenerational programmes, mainly within the framework of the University's centre for older adult education and OFECUM, an organization that was born under the auspices of UGR. More recently, UGR has put in place a new Office on Quality of Life and Ageing that it is promoting as well intergenerational activities.

Given its large size, in terms of regular undergraduate and postgraduate teaching is impossible to assess which UGR's university courses are covering intergenerational themes. However, some experiences with Social Education, and Gerontology undergraduate and postgraduate students have been made in the way of inviting older persons to join them for dialogue along some teaching sessions and educational activities.

Moreover, UGR has coordinated and/or participated in several research and lifelong learning projects in the intergenerational

field such as *Self-Organised Learning in LaterLife*, *Intergenerational Learning Schools in Europe*, or *Good Professional Practices in the Intergenerational Field*.

Regarding intergenerational training, UGR has been the coordinating institution of the 2006 and 2008 sixteen courses on *Training Intergenerational Managers* funded by the Institute of Older Persons and Social Services (see section 3.4). Likewise, in 2009 and 2010 personnel from UGR co-directed training programmes for intergenerational practitioners in Guatemala and Uruguay. Finally, there is the training experience around the *Qualification of Intergenerational Work Professionals* referred above (see section 4.2).

Finally, UGR has been the technical coordinator institution of the Spanish Intergenerational Network since its inception in 2005 and throughout its entire duration till December 2012. Through this Network UGR has lead and got involved in hundreds of initiatives linked to scanning, researching, and supporting the development of the field in the country.

5.2. What permanent intergenerational activities does your organisation conduct? Please, describe.

Main permanent intergenerational activities being implemented by the University of Granada have been described in previous sections of this report. Here we just list them:

- Intergenerational education in the framework of the University's programme for older persons.
- Intergenerational projects accomplished by the University's new Office on Quality of Life and Ageing.

- Several research projects linked to intergenerational issues.
- Intergenerational education infused in some courses within the areas of Social Education and Psychology, among others.
- UGR has recently coordinated the first Generations Together awards organized in the country.
- In the period 2005-2012, UGR has been responsible for the technical coordination of the Spanish Intergenerational Network.

Summary and Recommendations

Despite the lack of more accurate and updated data, we have been able to present some features of the current state-of-the-art of intergenerational education, learning, training in Spain. We are aware that the image presented is inaccurate too. However, we have tried to argue that, even if blurred, **the current picture of the Spanish intergenerational field is one characterized by a sustained awakening, i.e. a process of emergence, movement, and change.**

Intergenerational initiatives seem to abound more than ever before, especially in the communitarian realm, and many of these initiatives include education and/or learning as an important component. After preliminary contacts, we might say that **the VET sector is interested in intergenerational issues too.**

Regarding intergenerational education and **learning within families, we have diagnosed that a strong traditional solidarity between generations is still predominant.** However, this ancient status quo is changing and there is no clear image yet of how the new one may look like. A search for greater individual independence, a burdensome demand for many family caregivers, a moral obligation to reciprocate assets and services received from previous generations, along with a different understanding of what and how a family should be, are combined into **a transitional**

model made up of a mixture of solidarity, conflict, and ambivalence.

Generational images in Spanish society are changing as well, and chronological age is losing momentum as the sacred variable to understand who is who along the life course. **The progressive softening of normative standards around age groups and generations, along with a more visible discourse on active ageing, are contributing to raise interest in the public opinion about intergenerational programmes and policies.** Though intergenerational discourses in Spain are some biased towards aging and gerontology, initiatives from the children and youth sectors are emerging too. In this regard, the role played by university programmes for older people and some non-for-profit volunteering organizations deserves to be highlighted.

More research would be desirable to inform and orient the work being done by intergenerational practitioners who, by the way, recognize their need of specific training to lay out and to take the best out of intergenerational encounters. How such training should be planned and implemented? We finalize this report with some recommendations to help responding this key question.

Recomendation #1: In a *familistic* country such as Spain, learning how to work intergenerationally within the community should be somehow connected to the vast amount of knowledge and experience accumulated around intergenerational family life. Similarly to the concept of 'bridging social capital', we might want to explore how *bridging intergenerational relationships* are generated and connected across families and different social forms within the wider social fabric.

Recomendation #2: Complementary to the typical static approach which consider generations and generational groups as pre-formatted and given, practitioners should be taught to **work from a relational perspective**, i.e. a consideration of relationships (those between generations and the rest of them) as the raw material to understand and explore the singularities of intergenerational encounters and experiences as they are set out and move on. Consequently, **the language, the skills and competences in focus during the training, as well as the planning, implementation, and evaluation tools used in intergenerational work should be renovated and selected accordingly.**

Recomendation #3: This training should **take into consideration the four main components of the intergenerational field**, i.e. theory, research, policies, and practices. Connecting these components is a requisite to skip blind and purely intuitive intergenerational work.

Recomendation #4: Any training effort without **adequate follow-up support** risks of falling short in terms of reaching a sustainable implementation of intergenerational perspectives. Therefore, the design of a plan to put in place such post-training follow up is recommended.

Recomendation #5: In terms of the actual content of the training, we stick to what Spanish intergenerational practitioners demanded in 2009 (see section 3.3 above):

- (1) Methodologies, techniques, and tools to facilitate relationships and exchange**
- (2) Capacity to get to know the reality, context and features of generations involved in a given intergenerational programme**
- (3) Management strategies specific to intergenerational work**
- (4) Intergenerational programme evaluation**
- (5) Theoretical frameworks about intergenerational relationships and programmes**
- (6) Strategies for collaborative, network-oriented, and cross-sectors work**
- (7) Improvement of personal and social skills**
- (8) Getting to know examples of successful intergenerational programmes**
- (9) Ways to connect intergenerational programmes to research, policy, and theory.**

Recomendation #6: In a similar vein, we would need to recommend that reasons presented by the group of researchers, social workers, social educators, Vocational Education and Training (VET) specialists, gerontologists, and psychologists

contacted in the process of drafting this report are taken into consideration as well:

- (i) To facilitate a better understanding of how to plan, implement, and evaluate intergenerational programmes**
- (ii) Training should lead to some type of official accreditation attesting expertise of practitioners in the field**

- (iii) How building relationships between all ages should be an issue tackled along this training**
- (iv) To pay attention to the connection between intergenerational work and the mainstreaming of gender and life course perspectives in policies and programmes around ageing**
- (v) To adjust the training as much as possible to the particularities of the current development of VET in the country**



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