

Sharing European Memories Between Generations

Transnational report

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1. Project objectives

SEMBET (Sharing European Memories Between Generations) is a project that aims to capture and share social memory through intergenerational communication. Starting from the individual memories of seniors, the project will develop and reinforce the social memory of a community. The seniors will be the teachers, guides and mentors for the successive generations, transmitting memories of daily life, which would otherwise be lost. Such memories about family, love, work, leisure, school etc may seem arbitrary, but are actually key to understanding the development and transition of our societies, as well as to building social memory.

The key objectives of the project are the following:

- to get elders actively involved in their community
- to strengthen the contribution of seniors to non-formal education in the society (including young adults)
- to value and enhance elders' knowledge and experience within the community
- to improve the knowledge of the past daily life and its consequences in our society
- to foster intergenerational and family learning and reduce intergenerational gaps
- to promote local identity and sense of belonging.

Teams from 5 participating countries – Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and Spain – have carried out research, data collection and analysis in their countries in order to determine the current situation in memory transmission. All of this was done in a systematic way and following the same, previously agreed-upon, research methods to allow for transnational comparison and meaningful analysis. All of the teams evaluated the current state of intergenerational learning practices in their national context, with a focus on learning about (social) memories and personal histories. Additionally, the researchers looked for and highlighted the best practices, past and present, for intergenerational learning projects. The researchers also conducted interviews with seniors and cultural managers to get a better idea of peoples' needs and expectations, but also of what is currently being done, and how intergenerational projects are being organised. Each research team produced a national report that presents the research findings and analysis along with the best practice case studies.

2. Intergenerational memory transmission – the state-of-the-art

The exercise of choosing existing or past projects as 'best practice' case studies served the aim of capturing what works in the context of intergenerational learning of memories and histories, and also what could potentially be transferred to other contexts. In short, it was done to highlight examples of good practice. In total, there

were 33 example projects of good practice highlighted (the division by national reports was as follows: Italy – 5, Poland – 13, Romania – 5, Slovenia – 5, Spain – 5). The aim of this section of the transnational report is to summarise, compare and analyse in a useful and productive way some of the best practices that were highlighted in the national reports, to look at the communalities and differences, and to point out what can be learned from the different contexts.

The case studies examples of intergenerational projects evaluated in the national reports vary in terms of how they are planned, organised and implemented. What becomes evident from the national reports is that intergenerational transmission of knowledge, memories etc. can happen through initiatives of memory collection and archiving, through educational projects or even through just creating a meeting space for people and thus facilitating intergenerational communication. When planning an intergenerational learning project, it is crucial to first identify the needs and expectations of the target group, and then decide what would be the best approach for meeting these. As will become clear through the best practices examples, there is no single strategy to organising a successful intergenerational project, but different ways that serve different aims. Due to the objectives of the SEMBET project, the transmission of memories, personal and social histories is central to the analysis of the best practice examples of intergenerational projects. Thus, the aspect of this kind of transmission or the potential for the transmission is taken into consideration in this section, even when it is not one of any particular project's original aims or objectives.

This section is divided into five main parts, with the first four focusing on different kinds of approaches to capacitating intergenerational transmission from across the participating countries. The first part looks at projects that aim to facilitate intergenerational communication by creating a space for meeting or a framework for such connections. The second part focuses on projects with the objective of memory collection, archiving and sharing. Then, in the third part, educational and training projects that aim to transmit knowledge and skills are evaluated. The fourth part of this section looks at community projects that are organised in a 'by the people for the people' way. This sort of division and categorisation allows for meaningful transnational analysis and comparison of different successful approaches to intergenerational projects. At the end of this section, in the fifth part, there is also a brief analysis of the different levels of the projects – EU, national and regional levels.

a. Projects facilitating a meeting space

First of all, there are several examples of successful intergenerational projects where the main aim of the initiative is to create a space for intergenerational communication and dialogue. Such projects usually facilitate intergenerational learning in a rather informal way. The discussions can be structured to an extent, depending on the way the project is organised, but the connections are rather more familiar than formal and more personal than impersonal. Examples of such events or meetings include Café Amarcord (Italy), 'Camelot' and 'ManAGER' (Poland), Alzheimer Café and 'The Dancing Tea' (Romania), and 'Tell us' (Spain). To understand how these initiatives work, it is necessary to elaborate on some of these.

The projects Café Amarcord (Italy) and Alzheimer Café (Romania) are very similarly organised, even if their aims are slightly different. Both of these projects aim to stimulate seniors and get them to socialise, especially with younger generations. In the

case of Café Amarcord, the target group is seniors with cognitive impairment and seniors living alone, whereas in the Alzheimer Café, the target group is seniors with Alzheimer's disease. In the latter, there is also an additional objective of educating the seniors' families and friends on the topic of Alzheimer's disease. The meetings of both Café Amarcord and Alzheimer Café happen weekly, and while for the latter, the intergenerational transmission is ever-present, in the Café Amarcord project the intergenerational transmission happens primarily in the meetings with elementary school children, which take place approximately 5 times a year. For the Alzheimer Café, it has been specified that the number of seniors with Alzheimer's involved in the project is 14, but the number of other participants (family and friends of the target group) is unclear. For Café Amarcord, the number of participants is unspecified, but due to the similar organisation of the two projects, the number is likely to be in the same range.

So, the two projects are quite similar in how they create a space for intergenerational learning. In both projects, the discussion topics for the meetings are, to an extent, predetermined. In the Alzheimer Café meetings, the topics often revolve around Alzheimer's disease and what it is like to live with it, but the seniors are also encouraged to share memories and knowledge about the past. In the meetings with children in Café Amarcord, there is always a certain topic for the meeting (e.g. past traditions of Christmas, how life used to be, local dialect or traditions and customs), and the knowledge the seniors share can be both personal and general. Thus, it can be said that in these projects it is mainly the seniors who are doing the teaching, and primarily through personal memories and knowledge. These are excellent examples of facilitating intergenerational transmission of such memories, as the younger generations learn directly from the seniors. Both projects received positive feedback from the participants, and professional staff also noticed these projects had a positive impact on the seniors involved. Additionally, it is worth highlighting how these kinds of projects are extremely sustainable, since the only costs involved are transportation and the peoples' own time.

Another project very similar to Café Amarcord and Alzheimer Café is the 'Tell us' project organised in Spain. It is also intended to create an opportunity for the younger generations to learn first-hand from the older generation through their memories, but the 'Tell us' project focuses on a certain topic, namely the industrial past of the Basque country area. The target group is healthy seniors around 80 years old, with experiences and knowledge of the industrial past. In this project, though, the intergenerational learning process is intentionally two-way, as the schoolchildren involved (aged 10-11 years old) on the one hand learn about the past through listening to the seniors' memories, but, on the other hand, they also talk to and teach the elderly about modern technologies and games. Additionally, the 'Tell us' project is rather more structured than the previous two examples – the learning process involves working through a set of questions about industrial Spain and comparisons with present day in small groups (2-3 seniors with 5-6 children). Towards the end of the meeting, all groups work together by sharing and discussing the answers through a game. It has been noted that working in small groups is very effective, as it means that everyone is actively involved in the activities, and also the learning process is more personal. Altogether, the activities last only one hour. While one hour is quite a short amount of time, it has proved to be sufficient in the case of this project and the time limit has the benefit that no one will get bored or tired. As for the previous two projects, the feedback for 'Tell us' has been overwhelmingly positive.

The major difference between the Café Amarcord, Alzheimer Café and the ‘Tell us’ projects is the regularity of the meetings. While the meetings of Alzheimer Café are weekly, the intergenerational meetings in the case of Café Amarcord happen only 5 times a year. The ‘Tell us’ project is not regularly active, but is organised upon the request of schools. Additionally, there is no long-term creation of bonds in the Café Amarcord and the ‘Tell us’ projects, as there are new children involved each time. In the Alzheimer Café, however, there is a regular fostering of relationships – but at the same time, most people involved are family and friends of the seniors anyway. This comparison is not to say that such intergenerational meeting initiatives should or should not be regular and/or involve the same people – it is just necessary to bear in mind the different effects, depending on the objectives of any particular project. All of these projects definitely facilitate effective, personal, and face-to-face intergenerational transmission of memories and knowledge.

Another similar initiative facilitating intergenerational communication is the ‘Camelot – our little histories’ project (Poland). The aim of this project was to create ties between the generations in the local community in Luboń, but also social integration and building mutual respect. Since the objectives differ slightly from the previous examples, it is not surprising that the ‘Camelot’ project was organised differently. The target group for ‘Camelot’ was the seniors of a local Pensioners’ Club and junior high school pupils. Similarly to the other projects, there was an emphasis on facilitating the meeting and connection of different generations. However, in ‘Camelot’, the participants met several times over an extended amount of time, allowing for the building of ties and relationships. The meetings took different forms, from discussions to sightseeing and excursions, film sessions and organising an exhibition of photos taken by the participants during the trips and workshops.

Importantly, the ‘Camelot’ project set Luboń, the city, at the very centre of the project, so the discussions, stories, opinions and memories revolved a lot around the city. This provided a central theme for the project, similarly to how local industrial history was the focus of the ‘Tell us’ project, and it also created a sense of commonality between the generations. Moreover, this approach most likely also deepened the participants’ feeling of belonging during the project, as they deepened their knowledge about different parts of Luboń. Similarly to previous project examples, the learning in ‘Camelot’ happened mainly through personal stories, memories and family histories, making it personal. Unlike the previously mentioned projects, ‘Camelot’ also had a formal output at the end of the project – a book was published containing articles on family histories and Luboń itself. So, in many ways this project stands out as different from the previous examples – in terms of its longevity and formal output – but at the core, it was also about facilitating intergenerational contacts to allow for learning.

A further comment should be made about the scale and scope of the projects that have been highlighted in this section, Café Amarcord, Alzheimer Café, ‘Tell us’ and ‘Camelot’. Some of these facilitate one-off meetings between different generations (Café Amarcord and ‘Tell us’), while others have involve several meetings over a period of time (Alzheimer Café and ‘Camelot’). These different forms serve different aims, and have proved to be effective in each case for intergenerational transmission. However, it can be assumed that the more time the participants spend together, the more personal and deeper the knowledge transmission, as well as the impact it has on them. Again, this is not to say that short-term meetings are insignificant, but it is important to consider this aspect in the planning of projects, depending on what

outcome is hoped for. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that several of these projects have been going on for years (Café Amarcord, Alzheimer Café, 'Tell us'), with the 'Tell us' project having been sustained for 8 years already. At the same time, the 'Camelot' project was only organised once, between 2006-7. This is not a reflection on the success of these projects, but it is rather connected to how the aforementioned projects that have been going on for years are relatively easily sustained, with little costs and organisation – especially after the structure and contacts are in place after the initial launch of the project, and as long as there are people interested in participating.

b. Projects for collecting, archiving and sharing memories

As becomes apparent from the national reports, many intergenerational projects have further aims, beyond creating a space for bringing together different generations and facilitating communication. So, secondly, several best practice examples from across the countries are planned and implemented with the aim of collecting memories. Furthermore, the memory collection projects aim to help the younger generation better understand the past, especially the past of their home country, region or even family history. Memory collection projects also often aim to foster local identities through the better understanding of the past. Such projects involve recording memories and knowledge, and then archiving and sharing them. In general, all the example projects in this category are very similarly organised and have few substantial differences in the output. In all of the projects, the collection of memories is done through interviews with seniors. The practical differences are to do with how the interviews are conducted and how the material is later managed and archived. The main differences in terms of content lie in the themes that are being focused on, and, concomitantly, in the defined target groups. Examples of memory collection and archiving projects are the following: 'Memoro' and 'Stories of men at war on the Gothic Line' (Italy), 'Factories Decay, Good Memories Remain' (Slovenia), 'Mothers and daughters of the Spanish Transition' and 'Archives of the immaterial heritage of Navarre' (Spain). In order to understand how these projects are planned and carried out, and what are the outcomes of such initiatives, it is necessary to have a closer look at these examples.

First of all, the types of memories collected in these projects vary a lot. So, for example in the 'Memoro' project (Italy), the aim is to record memories of daily life in the past. Along similar lines, the Spanish project 'Archives of the immaterial heritage of Navarre' aims to record knowledge of all kinds about the region's heritage, covering various aspects of life. Other example projects are designed to collect memories related to more specific topics. So, for example 'Stories of men at war on the Gothic Line' (Italy) aims to collect personal stories of World War II. As another example, the aim of the Slovenian project 'Factories Decay, Good Memories Remain' is to collect memories of seniors who worked in factories during the industrialisation period. And lastly, the project 'Mothers and daughters of the Spanish Transition' was created to collect the memories of Spanish women who grew up and became mothers during Franco's regime. Based on these examples, it can be said that in most of the projects, the memories collected are personal, but linked to a wider framework of a historical period or to a historical event. In a few of the projects, there is no such link and the memories collected have to do with daily life of the past or local heritage.

As mentioned above, in all of the projects, the memory collection happens through the process of interviews. In some of the projects, the selection of the target groups is

rather inclusive (e.g. in the 'Memoro' project any seniors can be interviewed), while in others, the selection is directly linked to the predetermined subject matter for the project (e.g. the interviewees have to have memories linked to the WWII in the 'Stories of men at war on the Gothic Line' project, or Franco's regime for the 'Mothers and daughters of the Spanish Transition'). The second main difference in how the projects are carried out lies in who conducts the interviews – and this is also the first potential moment for intergenerational transmission in memory collection projects. For example, in 'Factories Decay, Good Memories Remain' (Slovenia), 'Archives of the immaterial heritage of Navarre' (Spain) and 'Stories of men at war on the Gothic Line' (Italy), the interviews are conducted by the people coordinating the project (who may be from younger generations, this has not been specified). A different approach is taken in the examples of the Italian 'Memoro' project and the 'Mothers and daughters of the Spanish Transition' project, as the people interviewing are usually related to the interviewees. So, in the first project, 'Memoro', the interviewers are often the grandchildren of the interviewees, while in the 'Mothers and daughters of the Spanish Transition' project the interviews happen between mothers and daughters. In this way, the process is more personal and the intergenerational transmission is direct and active. As became clear in the example of 'Mothers and daughters of the Spanish Transition', the daughters doing the interviewing are sometimes surprised by what and how much they learn – the project prompts them to ask questions about things that may otherwise never be discussed. Through the memories and personal histories, they learn a lot about their mothers, but also about the local history.

When it comes to the process of archiving the materials, all of the abovementioned memory collection projects have the same approach. In all of the examples, the memories and knowledge is archived in an online database that is publicly available. This seems to be a standard practice for memory collection projects, and it does have many benefits. Assuming that the online archiving facilities chosen are reliable, this practice of archiving promises long-term and secure storing of the data. Additionally, making the archives publicly accessible broadens the potential impact the project can have and the creates potential for dissemination.

The final, and arguably very crucial part of memory collection projects is the process of sharing and dissemination. In most of the project examples, this process is rather limited in practice. So, in the projects 'Memoro', 'Mothers and daughters of the Spanish Transition', 'Archives of the immaterial heritage of Navarre' and 'Factories Decay, Good Memories Remain', the sharing of the collected materials is limited to making them available online – there are no further attempts to disseminate the materials. While it is inarguably a good idea to make the materials accessible by anyone, it is not clear how many people from the younger generations engage with these materials online in practice. It is possible that the actual transmission is not very extensive, limited to a number of people who specifically seek out these archives. Additionally, it can be said that viewing and listening to these materials online is rather passive and impersonal. So, while there is definitely some intergenerational transmission going on through the online archives, and the potential for this is there (both for current and future generations), it cannot be said with any certainty to what extent this is effectively happening in practice.

An example of more effective dissemination and sharing can be seen in the Italian project 'Stories of men at war on the Gothic Line'. In this case, the project materials were made freely available online similarly to the previous examples. However, this

project makes further use of these materials in creative ways that involve the younger generations more directly and actively. So, for example, the recorded materials are the basis for 'living dioramas' – the biographic materials are used to play out scenarios and situations live in front of students. Thus, the students are the audience of a show based on real-life experiences and memories, which engages them in personal stories of experiences of war, but also in seeing the different sides of the conflict. This format and the content is quite different from what is learned in history classes at school, and the personal stories provoke the students to think critically about war, 'official History' and how the personal experiences resonate (or do not resonate) with what they have learned about WWII. Utilising the collected memories and stories in such a creative way is probably a very effective method of intergenerational transmission, as it engages the younger generations directly. In projects of memory collection and archiving, this kind of creative and engaging use of materials should be very much encouraged in order to fulfil the potential that such initiatives have for intergenerational transmission.

All of the memory collection and archiving projects have been going on for years and the feedback from the participants is entirely positive. However, it can be said that in practice, the intergenerational transmission and sharing is rather limited in most of these projects, and does not happen in a sustainable way. As we have seen, the sharing that happens between the interviewer and interviewee can be meaningful and effective (as in 'Memoro' and 'Mothers and daughters of the Spanish Transition'), but this is then limited only to the interview situation. Also, it is clear that making the materials available as online archives has very limited impact and does not fulfil the potential such projects have. Thus, it seems that in order for memory collection projects to have sustainable outcomes and long-term effects, the materials should be engaged with after the procedure of archiving. As seen in the example of 'Stories of men at war on the Gothic Line', organised use of the materials available can result in effective transmission that happens beyond the core of the project itself, thus creating a more sustainable outcome. Thus, creative use of the collected and archived materials should be greatly encouraged in the context of memory collection projects.

It is worth noting that the 'Memoro' project has been going on for the longest time period, as it started as early as 1980, and still continues to grow. It has also become an international project, with branches opened in a number of countries. In a few of these memory collection projects, the process of recording interviews has finished, but in all of the projects mentioned above, the materials are still available for use. Based on the feedback of memory collection projects, it can be said that this format is generally well received and popular. As we have seen, however, in order to have sustainable outcomes and fulfil the potential of memory collection projects, it is important to consider different implementation practices for efficiency in planning such projects – especially in terms of sharing the memories collected.

c. Educational projects

A rather common type of intergenerational projects is one that involves direct teaching or training, and here, such examples from the national reports are categorised under the general umbrella term 'educational projects'. These projects involve the teaching of

certain skills or some kind of knowledge. Sometimes the seniors are doing the teaching, other times it is the younger generations that are teaching the elderly, and sometimes the process is two-way. It can be said that while most of these educational projects seem to only have practical and straightforward aims, they most likely also facilitate intergenerational transmission of memories and stories, whether intentionally or not. The ways these projects are organised differ, and this is primarily related to the different kinds of knowledge or skills that are being transferred. Examples of such educational projects from the national reports include 'Time Bank' (Italy), 'Doing2learn' and 'The Academy of Seniors' (Romania), 'Intergenerational cooperation through the eyes of primary school pupils' and 'Simbioza' (Slovenia). Some elaboration on these different projects is necessary for understanding how the educational projects work.

Firstly, the Romanian project 'The Academy of Seniors' and the Slovenian project 'Simbioza' are quite similar in how they are organised. Both projects are organised so that volunteers teach the seniors. The latter, 'Simbioza', focuses on teaching the elderly computer literacy and e-skills, while the former, 'The Academy of Seniors', provides not only computer courses and workshops, but also language classes. In both examples, the volunteers are mostly students or young people, so there is definitely intergenerational transmission of knowledge and (computer or language) skills. It can be said that such classes, courses and workshops can facilitate a simultaneous intergenerational transmission from the seniors to the younger generations as well, but it is not clear to what extent this happens in practice. The major difference between the two projects lies in their periodicity – 'Simbioza' is organised as a week of workshops (a total of 20 hours), whereas the courses of 'The Academy of Seniors' take place over a longer period of time. It can be assumed that longer-term projects are more effective in facilitating intergenerational transmission beyond the practical skills and knowledge taught. Additionally, it has been noted that the beneficiaries cannot gain substantial practical knowledge and skills in just a week of workshops (see Slovenian national report), so the general suggestion is to have a more extensive time period. Both 'Simbioza' and 'The Academy of Seniors' have been active for more than three years now, and there is continued interest in the projects. Both projects have also received positive feedback from the beneficiaries.

Secondly, the Italian project 'Time Bank' is a rather unique project that involves the exchange of knowledge and skills, using time (not money) as the measure of the exchange. The main aim is to facilitate learning and the exchange of knowledge and skills that would otherwise remain unexpressed. At the same time, the project aims to satisfy peoples' practical needs and also create opportunities for socialising within neighbourhoods, cities, workplaces, universities etc. The 'Time Bank' is open to everyone, and thus the intergenerational transmission happens if the people participating in any particular initiative are from different age groups. It is not clear how often this happens, but there is clearly potential for intergenerational learning and this is likely to happen in exchanges of certain skills and knowledge – the older and younger generations often have different skills and knowledge to offer. The transmission of memories, personal histories and stories is likely to happen spontaneously in these kinds of settings (but again, it is not certain how often this happens in practice). The 'Time Bank' project started in 2007.

In the last two remaining examples, the seniors are the ones doing the teaching. In the Romanian project 'Doing2learn', seniors over 50 years old were initiated in ICT and communication skills and then, with some help, developed their own online courses,

using their skills and experiences as the basis for the courses. The outcome was a series of 'How to...' courses online, about various topics, from cooking and handicraft to fixing things etc. So, there was once again transmission of practical knowledge and skills. The transmission is likely to be intergenerational, as the things taught are mostly useful for all generations, and we can assume that younger generations do watch these videos (although it is not certain to what extent this happens). Additionally, the seniors themselves also learn in the first stages of the project (ICT skills). However, the aspect of memories is unlikely to be present in videos teaching practical know-how. According to the Romanian national report, there was also an interactive web platform, through which it was possible to get in contact with the people, but the web page seems to be no longer active. The 'Doing2learn' project took place in the years 2008-2010.

The last example of an educational project comes from Slovenia – 'Intergenerational cooperation through the eyes of primary school pupils'. In this project, seniors teach primary school students to make simple products in 3 workshops, and the students then produce short videos about the workshops. So, there is direct intergenerational transmission of practical handicraft skills. Interestingly, as the students later create videos, they work through the information and teachings after the actual workshops as well, and this probably reinforces the knowledge and skills gained during the workshops. This project does facilitate intergenerational communication and thus there is a potential for transmitting memories and personal histories, but it is not clear to what extent this is realised in practice. As there are several workshops, and not just one, it is likely that the seniors and the students do form some kind of bonds, and this may support the transmission of more personal kinds of knowledge to an extent.

In short, the methods of teaching in the educational projects highlighted take different forms. In most general terms, the ways the educational projects are organised can be categorised as more formal or more informal. In the more formally organised projects, the teaching most often happens in the form of a course, with either regular classes over a longer period time (e.g. 'The Academy of Seniors') or more intensively, with several classes in a shorter period of time (e.g. 'Simbioza'). Generally, the longer courses implemented over an extended period of time are recognised as more substantial. In these more formally organised courses, there are clearly defined topics or skills to be taught, and there is one or several teachers for the group of beneficiaries. As to the less formally organised projects, the variety of teaching methods is larger. So, the teaching methods can also involve regular or irregular courses, but also the creation of 'how-to' videos, for example. Additionally, the person doing the teaching can often choose the topic or skill to be taught (as in the 'Time Bank' or 'Doing2learn'), and thus also the more specific ways of teaching. The regularity of the more informal projects varies, as some are just one-off events, while others happen over a longer period of time.

In general, it can be said that the main effect of educational projects is the transmission of practical knowledge and skills. Based on the examples of good practice, these projects often create a space for intergenerational communication and thus, there is potential for transmitting memories, personal histories and stories spontaneously. It is not clear, however, to what extent this potential is realised in practice in the context of such educational projects. It can be assumed that this is more likely to happen in projects where the participants meet several times, and especially if these meetings take place over an extended period of time. In this way, the participants have the

chance to get to know each other, form bonds, and thus it is more likely that they will share personal memories and stories. Depending on the project objectives, these points should be taken into consideration in the planning of intergenerational education and training projects.

d. Community projects

A quite distinct category of projects highlighted in the national reports is that of community initiatives. It is thus worth saying a few words about such community projects and how these facilitate intergenerational transmission. The examples here are of projects that are organised in a 'by the people for the people' way, and are not intended as intergenerational projects *per se*. However, these projects have proved to connect people from different generations through common interests, aims and shared activities, and thus facilitate intergenerational transmission. In general, such community initiatives primarily aim to enhance the local living conditions, through improving local facilities. Examples of community projects are the following: Rural Housewives Club (Poland), urban gardening and 'Auzolan' (Spain).

All of the aforementioned projects are led by groups of people who care for the well-being of the local community, and who organise and carry out various kinds of community work. The Spanish examples involve gardening and growing local food (urban gardening, example case of Butroi) or repairing and improving local infrastructure, public facilities etc (Auzolan example). In these cases, the people involved are of different ages, but, at a closer glance, it becomes clear that the youngest generations are not participating (perhaps because advanced skills are often required for specific kinds of work). In the Butroi urban gardening group, for example, the youngest participants were 35 years old. Thus, there is an intergenerational transmission of practical skills and know-how, but this happens between senior and 35+ age groups. However, for intergenerational transmission, the strength of community projects lies in how they connect people through shared aims, and these connections are very likely to facilitate the sharing of memories and stories, especially those linked to the local community. This potentially strengthens local identity and everyone's knowledge of the locality.

The Rural Housewives Club (RHC) in the village of Rzadkowo, Poland, is an excellent example of a community initiative that facilitates intergenerational transmission of all kinds. Founded more than 50 years ago, this club brings together people aged 20-80 years old and even older. The main aim of RHC is to improve life in the village, and this is done through organising community projects, which range from renovation works, participating in various competitions to organising trips and archiving old photographs. Being very active and inclusive in terms of the people it involves, the club is exemplary in how it facilitates intergenerational communication and learning. Depending on the specific undertaking, the people involved gain practical skills and knowledge, but also learn about local history, traditions, memories etc. Importantly, the transmission is almost always active, direct and personal. Additionally, the club expresses and also reinforces strong appreciation for the local community and village, and cultivates a sense of belonging. The Rural Housewives Club is something people are very proud of and it has a lot of support in the region.

For the purposes of this analysis, RHC is a prime example of not only a successful intergenerational project, but also of community-building. Along with the other

community project examples, it shows the potential of informal local initiatives and what people can manage to achieve when they have shared goals and ideas. While the aforementioned local community initiatives have come into being 'by the people for the people' and thus probably rely, to a great extent, on proactive self-starters and leaders within the community, what can be learned from these examples is that if people from different generations have common goals, it is worth thinking about ways to help them work towards these. Facilitating members of any particular community to work towards common goals can clearly strengthen local relationships and thus become a strong foundation for intergenerational exchange and transmission of various knowledge and skills.

e. The funding and scale of the projects: EU, national and regional undertakings

When considering the funding and scale of the different successful projects highlighted in the national reports, it first becomes clear that the vast majority of the projects are local-level and organised from local funds. Out of all the 33 best intergenerational practice project examples across the countries, only 6 can be considered as EU or international level, 4 as national level and the rest, a total of 23 example projects, are organised on the regional level.

Out of the 6 projects that are on the international level, 4 have received EU funding and 2 can be considered international in a more practical way (i.e. project is active across national borders). The four projects that have received EU funding are 'Stories of men at war on the Gothic Line' (Italy), 'International Conference for Solidarity Between Generations' (Poland), 'Active People Benefit Twice' (Poland) and 'Doing2learn' (Romania). All of these are grand-scale initiatives, with very different outcomes and effects. The 'International Conference for Solidarity Between Generations' (Poland) brought together a lot of people with interests in intergenerational issues, and provided an opportunity to learn from experiences in other countries, along with thought-provoking lectures and debates. The 'Active People Benefit Twice' project was about getting seniors active in the society. The other two projects were respectively about collecting World War II memories ('Stories of men at war on the Gothic Line'), and about seniors disseminating their knowledge and skills through online courses ('Doing2learn'). While the four EU projects do not seem to have much in common, they were all, in different ways, educational and informative. Also, all of the projects involved an element of exchange of experiences, either practical experiences or life experiences.

In practice, what all of the aforementioned EU-funded projects lacked was an effective means or opportunity for deep interpersonal learning. Of course, the conference provided an opportunity to meet people face-to-face, have meaningful debates and discussions, but since the event was large-scale and lasted only two days, the number of long-term connections it created is likely to be rather small. The 'Active People Benefit Twice', 'Stories of men at war on the Gothic Line' and 'Doing2learn' projects did not provide any opportunity of direct intergenerational transmission or connections. The first did not have an intergenerational dimension, and the transmission in the latter two was mediated through technology or other people. This is not to say that these EU-funded projects were not fruitful, as they certainly served their aim and the participants gained a lot from these. But even though these are just 4 distinct and standalone projects that were funded by the EU, these projects did all lack the aspect of

substantial interpersonal learning. Along the same lines, all of these four projects did share a rather formal structure and layout for the learning process. Thus, it could be said that the EU-funded projects lacked a long-term personal aspect, which may hinder meaningful intergenerational transmission and learning beyond the straightforward and practical aims of the projects.

As a contrast, some (but not all) national and local initiatives and projects have rather more sustainable outcomes and deeper effects, as the way they were organised was not as limited in terms of structure, connections and time. For example, in the 'Camelot' project (Poland), the seniors and the young participants met and communicated in different contexts, over a longer period of time (for more details, see under 'I – Projects facilitating a meeting space' or the Polish national report). This allowed for cultivating familiarity, relationships, and thus could lead to more meaningful sharing of memories and stories. On the other hand, another project, 'Mothers and daughters of the Spanish Transition' (Spain), made use of pre-existing family ties and connections and provided the structure for intergenerational learning about issues that might have otherwise never have come up in their communication (for more details, see under 'II – Projects for collecting, archiving and sharing memories' or the Spanish national report).

It is also worth noting that 3 out of 4 of the EU-funded projects had a degree of internationality to them. While the conference (Poland) brought together both local and foreign professionals, the 'Stories of men at war on the Gothic Line' project (Italy) involved interviews with people from different sides of the WWII. And the 'Doing2learn' project was actually implemented in several European countries. While some of these projects definitely benefitted from the international aspect, it should be noted that at the same time, all of the aforementioned three EU-funded projects lacked the dimension of locality. From what we have seen in many good practice examples of intergenerational projects, putting the locality (e.g. in terms of local identity and/or local history) at the centre of the project, can have a positive effect on the project. So, for example, in the examples of the community projects (see IV – Community projects), the focus on the locality gave an added incentive for people to get involved (if the well-being of the community was not the main focus from the beginning), and, on the other hand, it also ended up reinforcing the participants' feeling of local identity or connection with the local community. Another example can be seen in the 'Factories Decay, Good Memories Remain' project (Slovenia), where the local history was central to the whole project, and thus what was transmitted through the project was not only the personal memories of the senior participants, but also local history that is closely connected to the whole development to the area and fundamental to local identity. Based on these and other examples of involving the locality in the project, it can be said that bringing in the locality or community as an aspect of intergenerational projects can have a very meaningful effect in the form of an added value of cultivating feeling of community and local identity. While the international and/or local aspects of intergenerational projects can be intentional or unintentional, it is clear that the potential benefits of both should be considered and evaluated in planning intergenerational projects.

3. Seniors' views and ideas

As a part of the research for this project, interviews were carried out in each national context with the aim of finding out more about how the seniors live and spend their time. The more specific aims of the surveying were the following:

- to evaluate where the seniors live and how they spend their time;
- to find out what the seniors think about intergenerational projects;
- to learn about the needs and expectations of the seniors and other local stakeholders.

The questionnaires were targeted at seniors born between 1920-1960. The goal was to get a sample that would have a gender balance, and would include an equal number of people living in rural and urban areas. In all participating countries, the sample size was between 30-37 people (Romania: 37, Spain: 30, Italy: 30, Poland: 33, Slovenia: 30). As there were no major problems in following the guidelines for carrying out the research, the sample in each country was more or less representative of both rural and urban, both female and male seniors.

It must be noted that the group of seniors targeted is rather diverse. Quite a few of the national reports noted on this, as the oldest (those born between 1920-1940) often have issues with mobility, health and tiredness. The youngest group (born between 1951-1960), on the other hand, is still in employment and some respondents from this age group also expressed the feeling that they are too young to be targets of intergenerational projects or that they are in frequent contact with the younger generations anyway, for example through work (e.g. see Spanish national report). While the age groups are somewhat different, the seniors across the countries did share some ideas regarding intergenerational projects.

First of all, and most importantly, all national reports noted on how the majority of the seniors are interested in participating in intergenerational projects. This proved to be equally true for seniors living in urban areas and seniors living in rural areas, those who have previously participated in such projects and those who have not, as well as for all age groups (the only exception being urban seniors in Romania, out of whom only a little over half are keen to participate; see Romanian national report for more details). The only reasons some seniors highlighted for not wanting to participate included dedication to intergenerational exchange among family members (see Italian national report), old age and illness (see Romanian national report), and the fear that young people would not respect the seniors, their knowledge and advice (urban Romanian respondents, see Romanian national report).

Secondly, another major point that emerged from the national reports is the relatively low awareness rate of intergenerational projects – many seniors said they did not know of any intergenerational projects. For example, in the Slovenian case, only the seniors who had previously participated in such projects were aware of intergenerational projects, whereas approximately half of the interviewees had neither heard of such nor participated in any intergenerational projects (see Slovenian national report). The results from Spain and Italy reflected a similar situation. So, while the seniors express enthusiasm for intergenerational projects, their knowledge of such projects is low. Thus, dissemination of information would be key to getting them to participate, as many of them just do not know of any such initiatives.

Thirdly, a few of the national reports noted that seniors are unhappy with the relative lack of intergenerational initiatives. For example, some respondents from Slovenia said they would like to see more intergenerational projects (see Slovenian national report). Similarly, the seniors from rural areas in Romania expressed their dissatisfaction with the current lack of such projects (and the disjointedness of the village cultural houses' activities in general). The Romanian respondents also noted that there are more young people involved in different activities and initiatives in the urban areas, whereas in the rural areas the younger and the older generations' shared activities are limited to the context of the family (see Romanian national report). Additionally, the Italian seniors noted that the local initiatives they are involved in often lack the intergenerational aspect (see Italian national report). This general idea of a lack of intergenerational projects may be related to the previous point, the low awareness rate of such projects. However, as many of the respondents across the countries had participated in intergenerational projects, the dissatisfaction with the scarcity of these cannot be only due to the low awareness rates.

Another perception that many seniors across the countries seem to share concerns the involvement and motivation of the young people. The general idea that many seniors echoed was that the younger generations need special stimulation to get them involved in intergenerational projects, especially when regarding the topics of memories, the past and local histories. Interestingly, some of the Romanian and Spanish respondents argued that the young are not that interested in memories, the past and local history. At the same time, the Italian and Slovenian seniors were primarily of the opinion that young people can be very interested in local or family past (if sometimes only in the context of school projects; see respective national reports). In 4 out of 5 national reports, seniors argued that the younger generations need to have the right stimulation, special encouragement or an added incentive to get them involved. So, the Italian and Slovenian respondents argued that the information has to be presented in an interesting and exciting way, and that it is important to intrigue the young. At the same time, the Spanish seniors seem to have the impression that young people only get involved when they are directly affected by an issue. In short, whether or not the seniors believed the young to be interested in memory and the past, they are certain that the young need special stimulation for participating in intergenerational projects (it is, however, useful to bear in mind that this is the perception of the seniors – the young were not interviewed as a part of this research).

In some of the participating countries, it became clear that the situation for seniors in urban areas is rather different from that of seniors living in rural areas. Thus, this aspect requires some elaboration. In Italy and Slovenia, there are no significant differences between the urban and rural contexts in terms of seniors' opportunities and intergenerational projects. Also, the ideas and opinions of seniors living in urban and rural contexts were very similar or identical (see Italian or Slovenian national report for more details). In the case of Spain, there is no comment or information about the differences between urban and rural context. In Poland and Romania, however, the contrast between urban and rural areas is quite stark.

From the Polish national report, it becomes clear that not only is there a much wider range of activities for senior citizens available in towns and cities, but the projects and initiatives in urban areas are also different from those in the rural areas. In general terms, the urban initiatives are much more formally and thoroughly organised and planned, while the rural ones are usually local initiatives connected to the community and/or local traditions (see the Polish national report for more information). While the Polish report does not elaborate on whether the needs and expectations of the rural seniors differ significantly from those of the urban seniors, the projects implemented certainly have very different outcomes. In such a context, it would be necessary to

evaluate if certain needs and expectations are being left unmet in such a situation, where the urban and rural initiatives differ to such a great extent. There may be a disconnect between the needs and the means available, but it is also possible that the current situation has developed as a result of the differing needs and expectations of urban and rural seniors.

In Romania, there is a similar disparity between urban and rural areas – it is clear that there is a smaller range of activities and intergenerational projects available for the seniors in rural areas. Further, it is also noted that the seniors living in rural areas are dissatisfied with this situation, as the intergenerational dialogue is not encouraged or facilitated in the villages, and thus the seniors would like to see more of such initiatives. So, there is a definite disconnect between the seniors' needs and expectations and the current realities in the context of Romania's rural areas.

a. The seniors' needs, expectations and suggestions for intergenerational projects

The seniors' needs and expectations for intergenerational projects overlap to a great extent across the countries. It must be noted that these findings are based on both those respondents who have participated in such projects before and those who have not. Thus, the responses potentially include both ideas based on some seniors' perceptions of what intergenerational projects might be like and also ideas based on seniors' experiences of such projects.

The expectations seniors have for the benefits of participating in intergenerational projects are the following (starting with the most cited ones and ending with those mentioned in only one national report):

- to feel valued and useful (to the society or to anyone)
- to gain energy and positivity from contacts with the young
- to have fun and find joy in the energy of the young
- to be active
- to have company
- to be able to learn from the young
- to find the will to live
- to be able to relax.

Looking at the questionnaire findings and the best practice examples from national reports, it can be said that in general terms, the intergenerational projects meet the seniors' needs and expectations. All of the example projects do help seniors to be more active, to feel valued and useful and to have company. From the feedback of various projects, it is also clear that the intergenerational projects give the seniors energy, positivity and joy. Most of the projects also give the seniors the opportunity to learn from the young, more or less intentionally and directly. So, it can be concluded that the current examples of good practice do correlate with the general expectations seniors have for the benefits of participating in intergenerational projects.

In terms of more specific needs and wishes for intergenerational projects, seniors across the countries highlighted the following (starting with the most cited ones and ending with those mentioned in only one national report):

- to gain skills for using computers, internet, and other modern technologies
- to learn foreign languages
- workout classes
- help with travel
- help out in retirement homes
- assistance with waste separation
- food delivery

An evaluation of these more specific needs and wishes alongside the examples of good practice projects shows that some of these are being met, while others are not. When asked to iterate such specific wishes, the most popular responses are clearly related to gaining practical skills, and as we have seen, the format of intergenerational educational and training projects is quite popular. Thus, it can be said that these wishes are being met. From the rest of the specific needs and wishes expressed, the only one that is being met is 'help with travel', which is something that the Rural Housewives Club does (see Polish national report for details). However, that is also the only example from across the countries of an initiative that serves this wish. As to the rest of the specific wishes – workout classes, help in retirement homes, assistance with waste separation, food delivery – none of them are being met in the projects that have been highlighted in national reports.

The questionnaires also touched upon what the seniors would like to pass on to the younger generations. The seniors across the countries put forward various skills and knowledge that they would like to pass on, so here are the most popular responses (starting with the most cited ones and ending with those mentioned in only one national report):

- handicraft
- knowledge about the local and/or national history (often as first-hand memories)
- general advice, values and attitudes (e.g. tolerance, altruism, optimism)
- intergenerational respect and understanding
- old customs
- models of proper behaviour (especially related to work, studying, and facing difficulties)
- knowledge about the importance of the environment

- survival and practical skills, such as how to grow vegetables.

In the context of intergenerational projects, it is imperative to consider what the older generations wish to pass on to the younger generations, as these also reflect on what is important to the seniors. Based on the list above, and the projects highlighted in the national reports, it can be said that there is a very strong match between what the seniors wish to pass on and what is transmitted in the example projects in practice. As we have seen, a lot of projects involve the seniors passing on practical skills, from handicraft (see 'III – Educational projects' for more details) to growing vegetables (see 'IV – Community projects' for more details). Also, there are many projects that are concerned with the transmission of local knowledge and/or history (all parts of the '2. Intergenerational memory transmission – the-state-of-the-art' section are relevant here). There are also projects that involve passing on old customs (e.g. Rural Housewives Club, folk groups – see Polish national report –, but also the Spanish project 'Archives of the immaterial heritage of Navarre', to name a few) and knowledge about the importance of the environment (e.g. urban gardening in Spain). From the above list of what seniors would like to pass on to the younger generations, the only set of skills that is not passed on in any of the example projects is 'survival skills'.

Some of the things that seniors wish to pass on to the younger generations are much more difficult to pin down in the context of actual examples of projects. So, it is rather difficult to determine whether the current intergenerational projects definitely facilitate the transmission of values, attitudes and models of proper behaviour, or whether they allow for cultivating intergenerational respect and understanding. At the same time, it can be argued that all of these are so fundamental to the idea of intergenerational transmission that every project does, at least to a degree, facilitate the passing down of these.

4. Summary and outlook

The research carried out for the SEMBET project has captured the current situation in relation to intergenerational projects, the seniors' needs and expectations. The national reports have raised a lot of issues and as the analysis presented in this transnational report shows, there are some commonalities in the state of affairs in the different countries, and some shared ideas. Most importantly, it has become evident which practices serve what aims, but also what must be taken into account in the context of intergenerational learning projects. It is worth reiterating the main suggestions that have emerged from the transnational analysis of best practice examples for the purposes of projects that aim to facilitate intergenerational memory transmission.

- First and foremost, the most important thing to bear in mind is to take into consideration the needs, expectations, wishes and hopes of the participants. Asking the target groups the right questions and basing the projects and activities on these is key to a successful intergenerational transmission project. There is an abundance of forms and ways of organising an intergenerational

project, so to choose the most useful way, one has to start with the wished outcomes.

- Secondly, when it comes to any project that is meant to facilitate intergenerational connections and communication, it is necessary to consider to what extent and how this space should be structured to achieve optimum outcome (in terms of location, time scale, themes and topics etc.).
- Thirdly, it seems that the most effective transmission of memories, stories and knowledge happens in small groups – in that way, it is easier to get everyone actively involved, and the whole learning process is more direct and personal.
- As a fourth point, it is necessary to consider the time-scale of any particular project. Whether the aims could be met in one or several meetings, over a short or longer period of time. This evaluation, of course, will have to be linked to the format and content of the project.
- Another point worth considering is whether the project could benefit from an international dimension, or from a link to a specific locality. Involving these aspects will have different effects on the project outcomes, so it is necessary to take this into account in the planning.
- Further, it is crucial to evaluate the potential sustainability of the project, in terms of finances and the human resources involved. It can be argued that projects that do not require substantial funding are potentially more sustainable, as they would not be directly affected by circumstances that can impact the financing of any particular project (from suspended funding from sponsors to economic crises).
- Additionally, it is of utmost importance to take into consideration the different needs and capabilities of the seniors when planning the activities. For example, it is important to consider the time frame of any particular activity for different age groups – the older and less healthy will get tired more quickly. Also, the seniors in villages and towns can have different needs, as well as different opportunities in terms of mobility or options for spending leisure time.
- Lastly, based on the results from the questionnaires, it seems that it would be of crucial importance to disseminate information about any intergenerational project more effectively than it has been done so far – the awareness rates are low among seniors across countries. Effective dissemination will utilise mediums and channels that are visible to seniors in any particular context. These can be locally distributed newspapers, local TV or radio channels, but can also involve bulletin boards in locations that seniors frequent (e.g. cultural centres, local shops etc.). In any city, village or community, there are always ways for people to find out about what is happening in the locality or surroundings. Thus, it is important to determine these and utilise them for disseminating information about intergenerational projects.

From the transnational analysis of best practices, some suggestions also emerged for specific kinds of projects:

- Firstly, educational and training projects most often serve the practical needs and expectations. For an added outcome in the form of memory transmission, it is necessary to think through just how to facilitate this, when the main aims of these projects tend to be practical. This may be tricky, so it would seem that the form of teaching or training projects is not most suitable for the transmission of memories.
- Secondly, in memory collection and archiving projects, it is important to critically evaluate the potential aspect of sustainable intergenerational transmission – for example, the very prevalent creation of online archives of memories is only effective if the young generations definitely engage with these after they have been created.
- Thirdly, memory collection projects can also facilitate intergenerational transmission more directly and effectively if the person doing the recording is from a different generation than the person being interviewed.
- Additionally, it is important to realise the potential of community projects and initiatives, as shared goals can bring together people from different generations, thus creating very effective and natural frameworks for intergenerational transmission.

In addition to these suggestions that emerged from the transnational data analysis, the researchers from all participating countries also put forward some ideas based on their research and experiences. To start with, the Italian partners pointed out that oftentimes the memories and stories of the ‘middle generation’ are somewhat lost. This is so because people tend to focus on grand narratives and big events, which are more linked to the current grandparents’ generation. Thus, the transmission mostly happens from the grandparents to the grandchildren. Surely it is not the aim of any particular project to exclude the middle generation, but this tends to happen in the current context. So, it would be important to consider how to include these as well or how to involve the middle generation’s memories and stories, too. Along similar lines, the Spanish researchers point out that the idea of involving more than 2 generations is enticing and could be very rewarding. At the same time, this could make the planning and organisation very complicated.

The Spanish researchers also emphasise that it is of key importance to consider the age of the target group when planning the activities and schedule – these cannot be the same for the different age groups of seniors, e.g. for 65-year-olds and seniors over the age of 80. This means that it would either be important to delimit the beneficiaries to a more specific age group or to define different activities for different ages in the methodology. Furthermore, it is not only the age, but also the health of the seniors that can delimit their capabilities. In short, it would be crucial to consider these points in the planning of any intergenerational project.

Another suggestion put forward in the Spanish national report is that it is useful to have an additional purpose or objective in the project, beyond mutual learning and awareness of the past. According to the Spanish researchers, this can motivate participation. Furthermore, having a preparatory stage in the project, in which old and young people could cooperate and agree on specific objectives, activities and schedule of implementation, could enhance the motivation and involvement in the project.

Additionally, the Spanish researchers argue that small-scale projects are most efficient, or at least working in small groups. In this way, the approach is more personal, participants have the chance to get to know each other, but also it is more likely that everyone gets the chance to talk, ask questions etc.

The Polish and Romanian reports emphasise that it is important that the methods of the projects are innovative, engaging and current to effectively pass on knowledge about the past, but also to be attractive to the young. However, this suggestion is not further elaborated on, in terms of what is meant by innovative and 'keeping up with the times'. It goes without questioning that the younger generations are very much used to modern technologies, and indeed in quite a few of the best practice examples, the activities make use of technology in different ways (recording, video-editing, etc.). However, it cannot be expected that involving modern technologies automatically engages the younger generations. Based on the best practice examples analysis, it would seem that it is more important that all of the participants are interested in whatever the aim or outcomes of the project are.

A further suggestion put forward by the Polish researchers is that as the elderly often feel connected to specific locations, they should be encouraged to share memories and knowledge about their settings. There are several successful examples of how this has been achieved among the best practices highlighted in the Polish national reports (e.g. village folk groups, but also the 'Camelot' project). Finally, another point the Polish researchers emphasise is that there can be a big difference in the choice of leisure activities for seniors in the rural areas and urban areas. This is something that should also be taken into consideration, when considering the opportunities, needs and capabilities of the target group.