



# XXIAdults

**Adaptation of the adult educational  
system to the XXI Century**

**The Good Practices Template**



INSTITUTE for  
ROMA and  
MINORITIES  
INCLUSION



**DIPUTACIÓN  
DE VALLADOLID**



**E-SCHOOL**  
EDUCATIONAL GROUP



**EMPODERAR**  
DESENVOLVIMENTO ORGANIZACIONAL, SOCIAL, PROFISSIONAL E PESSOAL



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## Name of the Good Practice

*Authentic Learning for Intergenerational Cooperation*

## Summary of the Practice

Brief, easy-to-understand summary: What is the practice, for whom, and for what purpose?

*Authentic Learning for Intergenerational Cooperation* is an educational initiative implemented in the Silesian region of Poland in 2024. It connects young people and seniors in intergenerational groups to design and carry out local community projects. The practice supports collaboration, active citizenship, and learning through real-life engagement. Participants work together on meaningful activities that respond to local social needs. The goal is to strengthen social ties, build key competences, and promote inclusion across generations.

## Description of the Practice – min. 2000 characters

### 1) Context / Background

What was the initial need or problem?

Who was the target group?

Was it part of a larger programme or project?

The project was created in response to the growing need for stronger social ties between generations. In many communities, seniors and young people live side by side but rarely have the chance to work together. Seniors may experience isolation or feel that their experience is no longer valued, while younger people often lack opportunities to take part in meaningful community life. At the same time, schools and community institutions look for ways to support cooperation and active citizenship among different age groups.

This project aimed to offer a practical answer to these challenges. It invited groups of young people and older adults to create small teams and work together on local activities. These activities were designed and led by the participants themselves, based on real needs in their towns and neighbourhoods. The focus was on authentic learning – that is, learning through doing, reflecting, and engaging with real-life situations.

The main target group included school-age youth and seniors aged 65 and older. In total, over 220 people from across the Silesian region of Poland took part in the project. Ten educational institutions and ten senior groups joined the process. Their involvement was supported by workshops, mentoring, and a clear framework that helped the teams move from ideas to actions.

The project was part of a larger initiative supported by the Norwegian and EEA Funds and coordinated by New Europe Foundation. It followed the idea that education should not only transfer knowledge but also build relationships, develop skills for everyday life, and strengthen participation in democratic society.





By bringing generations together and placing learning in a real-life context, the project created new opportunities for cooperation, understanding, and community involvement. It also became an example of how authentic learning can be applied in intergenerational education and used as a method for building local engagement.

## 2) Objectives

What were the goals of the practice?

What did it aim to improve or change?

The main goal of the project “Authentic Learning for Intergenerational Cooperation” was to bring together young people and older adults to work on local community initiatives. The idea was to create space for real cooperation between generations, based on shared experiences and mutual respect.

Participants worked in small groups and designed their own actions to respond to real needs in their neighbourhoods. These could be artistic, educational or social activities. Through this process, the project supported the development of important skills like teamwork, communication, empathy, and responsibility.

One important aim was to encourage learning by doing. Instead of learning from textbooks or lectures, participants were invited to act, reflect and learn through real tasks. This helped them feel more confident and involved in their communities.

The project also wanted to strengthen social ties and reduce distance between age groups. Seniors shared their experience and ideas, while young people brought in new energy and perspective. Both groups benefited from the collaboration.

Another goal was to support active citizenship. By taking part in the planning and implementation of local actions, participants had the chance to express their opinions, make decisions, and see that their voice matters. This kind of engagement helps build a stronger sense of belonging and responsibility for the local environment.

The practice was based on the idea of authentic learning — a method that focuses on real-life tasks, reflection, and active participation. The aim was not only to develop competences, but also to give people a chance to feel seen, heard and appreciated, regardless of age.

## 3) Implementation / Methodology

How was the practice carried out step by step?

What activities or methods were used?

How long did it take?

The first stage of this project involved selecting ten educational institutions and ten groups of seniors from different towns and cities across the region. Each institution formed a team of students, and each senior group selected participants willing to take part in joint activities. These teams were then matched to create intergenerational working groups.

In the second stage, participants took part in a series of introductory workshops. These sessions focused on communication, group cooperation, project planning, and understanding the needs of the local





community. Participants shared their experiences, discussed local challenges, and began to develop ideas for joint actions. The workshops were led by experienced trainers and facilitators.

Each team was supported by mentors throughout the process. The mentoring stage helped guide the groups from idea to action. Mentors assisted with planning, organisation, and troubleshooting. Teams received financial and organisational support to implement their projects. The support included funding for materials, access to spaces, and help with logistics.

Over the course of several weeks, the intergenerational teams designed and carried out their initiatives. The actions varied depending on the local context and the ideas of the groups. Some teams focused on cultural or artistic activities, such as exhibitions, performances, or creative workshops. Others organised educational events, public meetings, or actions to support social integration and community engagement.

Altogether, 20 local initiatives were completed. Each one was documented and evaluated. Teams were encouraged to reflect on their process, outcomes, and what they had learned. The experiences were then collected in a final handbook, which includes practical tools, examples, and recommendations for others who want to use this method.

The project lasted for three months and was coordinated by New Europe Foundation with funding from the EEA and Norway Grants. Its success was based on a clear structure, strong mentoring support, and the active involvement of local communities. The method allowed people of different ages to learn from each other, take real action, and see the impact of their cooperation.

#### 4) Results / Outcomes

What were the concrete results?

How did the practice impact the participants?

The project delivered a wide range of concrete results and had a strong, positive impact on its participants. One of its biggest achievements was the implementation of 20 local intergenerational initiatives in 10 cities in the Silesian region, involving over 220 people – seniors and young participants. Each group was carefully balanced in terms of age, which allowed for real cooperation and mutual learning. The project activities were based on the ideas and needs of the local communities and included ecological, cultural, educational, and social integration actions. The process began with training sessions and workshops, which 94% of participants rated as very useful. As many as 91% reported improving their social and communication skills thanks to their involvement. The educational materials, especially the handbook created as part of the project, were also very well received – 93% of respondents described it as interesting and inspiring. Importantly, the effects of the project extended well beyond its formal timeline. Participants repeatedly emphasized that being part of the initiative increased their sense of agency (87%) and their engagement in community life (82%).

One of the most significant results was the change in how participants perceived other generations – 96% said the project helped them better understand the value of intergenerational cooperation. Young people appreciated the wisdom and experience of the older generation, while seniors enjoyed the fresh ideas and enthusiasm of youth. In many cases, this led to breaking stereotypes and building long-lasting





relationships. Several groups even decided to continue their collaboration after the official end of the project.

The partnership with the Norwegian organization Bjerkaker LearningLab was another great asset – their input brought fresh perspectives and introduced participants to methods of authentic education that were well suited to the local context. The 10 most outstanding groups were invited to take part in a study visit to Norway, which was not only a reward, but also an opportunity for further growth. Overall, the project clearly demonstrated that meaningful intergenerational cooperation, rooted in authentic learning and mutual respect, can lead to lasting change – not only visible in statistics, but above all in relationships, skills, and the motivation to stay active and engaged in community life.

## 5) Participants' Stories – optional

Short quotes, personal reflections or experiences shared by participant

*“My name is Urszula Mianowska and I am the animator of the Barwy Jesieni senior club in Żarki. I agreed and was very happy that we, together with the seniors, would take part in this project. I selected the theatre group that already exists at the senior club and simply decided to involve them in the project. I truly believe that when we spend time with young people, we feel younger. This is a very nice group of young people — we get along with them very well. Seniors are already people with life experience, who have been through a lot and young people can draw from that, if only they want to. We must not impose ourselves. But this group is exceptional and wonderful. Of course it's worth it. It's something beautiful. To learn from the young — you just have to learn how to listen to them. And in turn, if they want to, the young can learn a lot from us.”*

— Urszula Mianowska, Senior Club animator

## 6) Success Factors

What made the practice effective or innovative?

Were there any unique or creative elements?

One of the most important success factors of the “Authentic learning for intergenerational cooperation” project was the use of authentic learning methods. Instead of traditional teaching, the project focused on learning through real-life activities, cooperation, and reflection. Participants were actively involved in designing and running local initiatives, which helped them gain practical skills and feel responsible for the outcomes. This hands-on, experience-based learning made the whole process more engaging and meaningful for everyone involved.

Another strong point was the equal partnership between generations. Both young people and seniors worked together in all project activities – not in a top-down way, but as true equals. Each group had the chance to contribute ideas and learn from one another. This helped build respect, understanding, and trust between generations. Many participants said it was their first time working closely with people from a different age group, and it changed how they saw each other.

The diversity and creativity of the local initiatives also played an important role. Each group created its own unique project – from cultural events and dance performances to eco-campaigns and mobile creative





workshops. These ideas came directly from the needs and interests of the participants and their communities. Because the groups had ownership of their work, they were more motivated and proud of what they achieved. The variety of projects showed how flexible and adaptable the model could be.

An additional success factor was the international partnership with Bjerkaker LearningLab from Norway. This organization shared their experience and tools for intergenerational learning, based on Norwegian educational practices. Their involvement in online training, workshops in Poland, and the study visit to Norway brought new ideas and raised the quality of the project. It also gave the participants and coordinators a broader, European perspective.

Finally, the project's well-prepared materials and documentation helped ensure that its results would last. The handbook created during the project not only described what was done, but also explained how other groups could use the same approach. Thanks to this, the ideas and methods developed during the project can be used again – in new places, with new people, and with the same positive impact.

## 7) Transferability / Recommendations

Can the practice be used elsewhere?

What conditions are needed for successful implementation?

Yes, the “Authentic learning for intergenerational cooperation” project can definitely be transferred and used in other contexts, both in Poland and internationally. In fact, the project itself is an excellent example of successful transferability — it was originally inspired by methods developed in Norway and was adapted and implemented with great success in Polish communities. This proves that the model is flexible, inclusive, and suitable for different cultural and social environments.

What makes this practice easy to transfer is its focus on real-life learning, active participation, and meaningful cooperation between generations. These are universal values that can work across countries and settings.

For successful implementation elsewhere, a few key conditions should be met. First, there must be a committed local team – educators, NGO staff, or community leaders – who believe in intergenerational learning and are open to sharing responsibility with participants. Their role is not to control, but to guide and support.

Second, the project requires a safe and respectful environment, where both young people and older adults feel valued and listened to. Equal participation is essential, and attention should be paid to creating balanced groups, building trust, and encouraging open communication.

The availability of clear and practical tools is another success factor. The handbook developed during the project includes step-by-step guidance, examples, and templates that make it easier to repeat the process elsewhere. Organizers don't need to start from scratch – they can build on tested solutions.





Another useful element is external inspiration or partnership. In this case, the Norwegian partner – Bjerkaker LearningLab – provided expertise, methods, and motivation. Other projects may benefit from a similar collaboration with international or national institutions, or even local experts who can enrich the process.

Finally, time and patience are key. Intergenerational understanding doesn't happen overnight – it needs careful preparation, time for shared experiences, and moments of reflection. But when this process is given space to unfold naturally, the results are deep and lasting.

## 8) Tips / Implementation Advice – optional

Checklists, lessons, or advice for those wishing to implement the practice.

For those planning to implement a similar intergenerational initiative, here are five key recommendations:

### 1. Build balanced teams

Ensure equal participation of both age groups – young people and seniors. Balanced teams promote mutual respect, encourage dialogue, and create space for real cooperation. Each generation should have the chance to lead, share experiences, and influence the outcome.

### 2. Let participants co-create

Give participants the opportunity to design and shape their own local initiatives. When people work on ideas that matter to them and their communities, they feel more involved, take ownership, and show greater creativity and commitment.

### 3. Provide practical tools and support

Offer clear guidelines, workshop templates, and accessible materials that help participants navigate the process step by step. Ongoing support from a mentor or facilitator can make a big difference, especially during the early stages.

### 4. Be flexible and open

Each group and each local context is different. Stay open to adjusting timelines, formats, or expectations. Flexibility allows the project to respond to real needs and encourages innovation.

### 5. Use real-life learning

Focus on hands-on activities that have a visible impact in the community. Participants stay more motivated when they see concrete results and when their efforts contribute to something meaningful and useful for others.

## 9) Lessons Learned - optional

Biggest surprises, obstacles or key takeaways during implementation.





In the early phase of the project, one of the main challenges was maintaining regular communication within local intergenerational teams. This highlighted the need for additional mentoring support or tools that could help teams stay connected and work together more effectively. Although the educational materials were generally rated very highly, some participants pointed out the need for more accessible digital tools and simplified versions, especially for older adults with lower digital skills. This showed that future initiatives should pay closer attention to adapting communication methods and materials to the needs and abilities of both age groups from the very beginning.

**10) Photos illustrating the described practice**

Please attach at least 3 photos related to the described good practice

**PRACTICE PROFILE – CLASSIFICATION CHECKLIST**

*Please tick all categories that apply to your described practice. You may choose more than one.*

**TYPE OF THE PRACTICE**

- Learning by doing
- Intergenerational learning
- Community-based learning
- Digital / blended learning
- Peer learning
- Mentoring / coaching
- Cultural / creative approaches
- Collaborative / partner-based
- Other (specify):

**TARGET GROUP**

- Adults with low qualifications
- NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training)
- Migrants / Refugees
- Older adults
- Women
- People with disabilities
- Other vulnerable groups





<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General adult population
<b>LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Formal
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Non-formal
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Informal
<b>SKILLS / COMPETENCES DEVELOPED</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Literacy (reading, writing, comprehension)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Numeracy (maths, logical thinking)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Digital skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Personal, social and learning to learn
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Civic competences
<input type="checkbox"/>	Entrepreneurship
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cultural awareness and expression
<input type="checkbox"/>	Language skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	Job-related / vocational skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	Green competences
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify):
<b>POTENTIAL USERS</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Teachers / Educators
<input type="checkbox"/>	Administrative staff
<input type="checkbox"/>	School / Centre management
<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy makers / Public administration
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NGOs / Community organizations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify):

## Glossary of Categories (Explanation of Checklist Items)

### Type of the Practice

- Learning by doing – learning through hands-on activities, practice-based methods such as workshops or real tasks.
- Intergenerational learning – activities involving participants from different age groups learning from each other.
- Community-based learning – learning that takes place within the local community, often through real-life engagement.
- Digital / blended learning – education using digital tools (online), or a mix of online and face-to-face methods.
- Peer learning – learning among participants of similar status or experience, supporting each other.





- Mentoring / coaching – one-to-one support from a more experienced person to help learning and personal growth.
- Cultural / creative approaches – use of arts, music, theatre, storytelling etc. as learning tools.
- Collaborative / partner-based – practices involving cooperation between organisations or groups.
- Other (specify) – any other method not listed above.

## Target Group

- Adults with low qualifications – adults who have low levels of formal education or basic skills.
- NEETs – people Not in Education, Employment, or Training (often young adults).
- Migrants / Refugees – individuals who moved from another country, often facing integration challenges.
- Older adults – Adults aged 65+
- Women – practices specifically addressing women's needs.
- People with disabilities – individuals with physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental health disabilities.
- Other vulnerable groups – groups at risk of exclusion (e.g. long-term unemployed, homeless).
- General adult population – average adults not in specific categories.

## Learning Environment

- Formal – learning within official education systems, certified courses (e.g. schools, universities).
- Non-formal – organised learning outside the formal system (e.g. workshops, community training).
- Informal – learning through everyday experiences, without a structured course (e.g. volunteering, family).

## Skills / Competences Developed

- Literacy – reading, writing, and understanding texts (including functional texts like forms).
- Numeracy – using mathematics and logical reasoning.
- Digital skills – using digital tools e.g. CV creation, online tools, online platforms.
- STEM – science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
- Personal, social and learning to learn – self-awareness, motivation, teamwork, lifelong learning skills.
- Civic competences – active citizenship, understanding of democracy and social responsibilities.
- Entrepreneurship – creativity, innovation, project management, risk-taking.





- Cultural awareness and expression – appreciation and creation of cultural content (e.g. arts, music).
- Language skills – ability to communicate in one or more foreign languages.
- Job-related / vocational skills – practical skills useful in specific jobs or professions.
- Green competences – knowledge and behaviours supporting sustainability and environmental care.
- Other – any other skills developed (please specify).

**Potential users** – groups who could benefit from applying, adapting, or being inspired by this practice in their work context.

Note: These categories follow EU frameworks such as the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (2018), the Action Plan on Basic Skills (2025) and the Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2025 – Glossary

