Catalogue of EU Good Practices

D.1.3.1 European catalogue of good practices
on "aging and employment"

Document content

1 INTRODUCTION

The integration of older generations into the labour market has become an increasingly pressing challenge across Europe, especially as demographic trends reveal an aging population and a shrinking workforce. Age management in employment is crucial not only for addressing skill shortages but also for fostering inclusive workplaces that value the expertise and experiences of employees aged 55 and above. Recognizing this, the IntegrAGE project seeks to develop innovative solutions and strategies to promote the healthy adaptation and integration of senior workers into the labour market, thereby enhancing their employability and productivity.

This catalogue of good practices serves as a vital resource for stakeholders, including policymakers, employers, and labour market institutions, who aim to address the challenges faced by older employees and capitalize on their potential. By showcasing successful initiatives from across Europe, the catalogue provides practical insights into effective approaches to age management, skill development, and workplace adaptation.

The document is structured as follows:

- Methodology: Outlines the approach used to identify, document, and evaluate the best practices included in the catalogue.

- Criteria for Selecting Best Practices: Explains the benchmarks used to ensure the relevance and quality of the practices presented.

- Best Practices: Highlights specific examples of successful strategies and interventions.

- Short Analysis of Collected Practices: Provides an overview of common themes, challenges, and opportunities derived from the documented practices.

- Conclusion: Summarizes the findings and underscores the importance of implementing and sharing age management practices.

By compiling and analysing these examples, this catalogue aims to inspire and guide stakeholders in adopting and adapting effective practices that enhance the integration and well-being of the 55+ workforce across the Danube region and beyond.

2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology for data collection and analysis in the context of activity A1.3 and deliverable D.1.3.1 European catalogue of good practices on "aging and employment" involves a detailed and systematic approach to ensure the accurate identification and evaluation of best practices related to the integration and support of the 55+ workforce. The methodology includes the following steps

<u>Template Design:</u>

- Standardized reporting template: A standardized template was designed to capture detailed information about each best practice. The template includes sections for basic information, a description of the practice, implementation details, outcomes and impact, lessons learned, and transferability.

- Guidelines for completion: Clear guidelines were provided to partners on how to complete each section of the template to ensure consistency and comprehensiveness in reporting.

<u>Data Collection:</u>

- Partner contributions: Each project partner was responsible for identifying and documenting their best practices using the provided template. Partners gathered relevant information and completed the template based on their experiences and insights.

- Compilation of best practices: The completed templates were collected from all partners and compiled into a centralized database for further analysis.

<u>Data Analysis:</u>

- Review and verification: Each submitted template was reviewed for completeness and accuracy. Any missing or unclear information was clarified through follow-up communication with the respective partner.

- Categorization: Best practices were categorized based on common themes, objectives, and outcomes. This categorization helped in organizing the practices and identifying patterns and trends.

- Evaluation: The collected good practices were assessed in the framework of deliverable D.1.3.2 Feasibility study of selected good practices. They were evaluated against predefined

3 CRITERIA FOR SELECTING BEST PRACTICES

To ensure the selection of high-quality and impactful best practices, partners were advised to consider the following criteria when reporting their good practices:

Effectiveness:

- Objective achievement: how the practice has achieved its objectives. Provide evidence of measurable improvements, such as increased employment rates, enhanced skills, or improved well-being of the 55+ workforce.

- Impact on target group: positive outcomes and tangible benefits experienced by the beneficiaries of the practice.

Efficiency:

- Resource utilization: how the practice made efficient use of resources (financial, human, material). Provide examples of cost-effective strategies and measures implemented.

- Process optimization: how the implementation process was streamlined to avoid unnecessary complexity or bureaucracy.

Sustainability:

- Long-term viability: mechanisms in place to ensure the practice's sustainability over time, such as ongoing funding, institutional support, or capacity-building measures.

- Scalability: the potential for the practice to be maintained and scaled up without requiring significant additional resources.

Transferability:

- Adaptability: how the practice can be adapted and implemented in other contexts or regions.

- Guidelines and frameworks are there any guidelines or frameworks developed to support the transferability of the practice.

Innovation:

- Innovative approaches: are there any innovative approaches or technologies incorporated into the practice that enhance its effectiveness or efficiency.

- Creative solutions: how the practice addresses the challenges faced by the 55+ workforce in a novel and creative manner.

Stakeholder engagement:

- Participation and collaboration: what was the involvement of key stakeholders, including employees, employers, policymakers, and community members. What were their roles and contributions to the practice.

- Partnerships and networks: what was the importance of building partnerships and networks to support the practice and ensure its success.

By considering these criteria, partners can provide comprehensive and detailed reports on their best practices, ensuring that they highlight the practices' effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, transferability, innovation, and stakeholder engagement. This rigorous methodology allows us to identify practices that truly make a difference and have the potential for broader application and impact.

4 BEST PRACTICES

1 Empower yourself

Summary of the good practice

'Empower Yourself' is an international project implemented by the Norwegian Bjerkaker Learning Lab, the Polish Rozwin Skrzydla and the Hungarian Human Innovation Group Nonprofit Ltd. for the facilitation of the wellbeing of older employees at the workplace. In Hungary the methodology was put into practice by LIFT consulting Ltd.

In the frames of 'Empower Yourself' project, implemented under Erasmus+ programme, 24 unified, compact training scenarios have been developed that help HR professional employing 55+ workers to motivate their employees and improve the sensitivity of employers – with methodology tailored to the needs of the target group, tried and tested methods and precise instructions.

Problem addressed and context

European labour markets face significant challenges due to labour shortages and an increasing share of aging workers. Despite their experience and expertise, employees aged 55+ often encounter barriers to employment, such as limited learning opportunities, motivational challenges, and difficulties integrating with younger colleagues. This project seeks to empower these workers by improving their self-esteem, resilience, and conflict management skills while equipping employers with tools to support them effectively.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders' engagement

The primary beneficiaries of this practice are employees aged 55+ and the HR professionals and employers responsible for their integration and development. Stakeholders were engaged through methodological workshops and dissemination events held with HR professionals, managers, and postgraduate students, fostering a collaborative environment to identify effective solutions.

Objectives and impact

The project focuses on:

- Helping workers achieve energy balance to improve productivity and work-life integration.
- Developing 24 compact training scenarios for HR professionals, requiring minimal resources for implementation.
- Equipping employees with skills in self-assessment, conflict management, and resilience, enabling them to navigate workplace challenges effectively.

The pilot workshops successfully demonstrated improved employee well-being and motivation, reduced stress levels, and stronger work-life balance, contributing to more cohesive and productive workplaces.

Resources Required

The training scenarios are designed to require minimal equipment and no specialized conditions, making them cost-effective and easily implementable.

Evidence of success

Pilot trainings conducted with 55+ employees in Hungary revealed significant positive outcomes, including increased resilience and enhanced self-esteem among participants. The workshops also facilitated open dialogue about workplace challenges and strategies for overcoming them, showcasing the program's effectiveness in addressing the needs of aging workers.

Potential for learning or transfer

This practice offers practical, tried-and-tested training methods with comprehensive guidelines that are adaptable across regions and industries. Key success factors for transfer include management support, alignment with organizational goals, and the ability to conduct trainings during working hours.

Innovation

The project employs innovative training approaches tailored to the needs of the 55+ workforce. It emphasizes resilience, stress management, and intergenerational collaboration, providing unique tools to address the evolving dynamics of modern workplaces.

2 Senior academy

Summary of the good practice

The Senior Academy of Pécs, jointly operated by the University of Pécs and the Active Ageing Foundation, is a pioneering institution in Hungary providing free educational opportunities for individuals aged 60 and above. Launched in 2014, the academy promotes active aging through learning, community engagement, and personal development. Each semester, it offers lectures, training courses, study groups, and recreational activities, all aimed at fostering resilience, self-confidence, and social inclusion.

Problem addressed and context

In response to the challenges posed by an aging society, the Senior Academy addresses the lack of well-organized, learning-focused training programs for older adults in Pécs. The academy was created to promote positive attitudes towards aging, enhance individual aging experiences, and build a community for lifelong learners. Through its holistic approach, it aims to bridge the gap in senior education and meet the specific needs of the elderly population in the region.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders engagement

The primary beneficiaries are individuals aged 60 and above living in Pécs and its surrounding areas. The academy is supported by volunteers and the University of Pécs, which provides premises for the activities. Stakeholder engagement is fostered through active collaboration with the university, participants, and local communities, encouraging seniors to lead or contribute to study groups and lectures. This bottom-up approach empowers participants and builds a robust community.

Objectives and impact

The academy aims to:

- Enhance senior education and community building.

- Strengthen intergenerational connections.

- Promote active lifestyles and senior volunteering.

- Support skills development, self-confidence, and critical thinking. Positive impacts include increased knowledge, reduced social isolation, and improved health awareness among participants. The academy also provides opportunities for research and professional practice for university students.

Resources Required

The academy operates through voluntary contributions, with no fees for participants. Necessary funds are raised by the Active Ageing Foundation through applications, and the university offers facilities and support. Resources include purchased equipment such as projectors, sound systems, and digital recording tools.

Evidence of success

Over its 10-year history, the academy has seen steady growth in participant numbers and engagement. New study groups continue to emerge, and many participants contribute back as lecturers or group leaders. The model has inspired similar initiatives in other Hungarian cities, with ongoing professional support from the academy.

Potential for learning or transfer

The academy's holistic approach—combining education with community building and personal development—makes it unique in the region. Its model has been successfully replicated in other cities, demonstrating scalability and transferability. Key factors for success include adopting a comprehensive view of aging and providing opportunities for grassroots initiatives.

Innovation

The academy distinguishes itself by approaching senior education not merely as knowledge transfer but as a means to achieve holistic successful aging. Through its diverse activities and emphasis on community-driven learning, it fosters intergenerational cooperation and enhances the well-being of older adults.

3 Measures to retain experienced workers

Summary of the good practice

ISS Facility Services Spain implemented a comprehensive set of measures to retain older workers and improve their health. These measures, negotiated through a collective agreement with trade unions, included adapting work schedules, promoting flexible work arrangements, and providing health benefits such as medical tests and workplace modifications. Training sessions raised awareness about health risks, while external service providers assessed the program's effectiveness. These efforts resulted in higher employee loyalty, reduced sick leave, and improved staff performance.

Problem addressed and context

The physically demanding nature of work in cleaning and security services posed significant health risks, such as musculoskeletal disorders and work-related stress, particularly for older workers. Recognizing the occupational challenges and demographic shifts, ISS Facility Services introduced these measures in 2009 to improve working conditions, reduce absenteeism, and support the well-being of older employees. A collective agreement with trade unions provided the framework for these initiatives.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders engagement

The primary beneficiaries were the older workers at ISS Facility Services Spain, who gained access to health support, workplace adaptations, and flexible arrangements. Stakeholders included:

- Management: Provided leadership and resources.

- Human Resources Department: Designed and implemented the measures.

- Health and Safety Representatives: Advocated for employee well-being.

- Employees' Representatives/Trade Unions: Negotiated agreements.

- External Service Providers: Evaluated and enhanced the effectiveness of the initiatives.

Engagement involved collaborative design of health measures, compulsory training sessions for employees and managers, and feedback collection through surveys.

Objectives and impact

The practice aimed to:

- Retain experienced older workers by improving workplace conditions.

- Enhance employee health and well-being.

- Reduce costs associated with absenteeism and turnover. Outcomes included:

- Improved staff performance and loyalty.

- Significant reductions in sick leave.

- Positive shifts in workplace culture and employee satisfaction.

Resources Required

The initiative utilized a combination of financial and institutional resources. The program was supported by top management and the Human Resources Department, which collaborated to allocate funding for systematic health surveillance, workplace modifications, and regular training. External consultants provided additional expertise for surveys and program evaluations, ensuring that resources were used efficiently.

Evidence of success

The program achieved significant outcomes, including reduced sick leave and higher staff loyalty. Employees reported greater satisfaction and engagement, while the company experienced lower costs associated with absenteeism and turnover. These results demonstrated the effectiveness of the measures and highlighted the value of investing in workplace health and employee well-being.

Potential for learning or transfer

The holistic approach adopted by ISS Facility Services Spain provides valuable insights for other organizations and regions. Combining workplace adaptations, health surveillance, and targeted training, the initiative is scalable and transferable to various industries. Success depends on early stakeholder engagement, tailored measures, and robust evaluation processes to ensure the program's relevance and sustainability.

Innovation

This initiative stands out for its innovative integration of health surveillance, workplace adaptations, and training programs. The use of external evaluations and feedback mechanisms underscored its commitment to evidence-based practices, fostering a supportive environment tailored to the needs of older employees. These strategies effectively enhanced occupational health and strengthened workplace culture.

4 Mondragon

Summary of the good practice

The Mondragon Cooperative Model is an innovative and people-centered business framework based on cooperative principles. Established in the Basque region of Spain, it focuses on creating economic stability, fostering sustainable well-being, and promoting social impact. The model integrates lifelong education, democratic governance, stable employment, and social protection, making it a globally recognized example of resilience and competitiveness driven by intercooperation and solidarity among its member cooperatives.

Problem addressed and context

The Mondragon Cooperative Model was created in response to the economic impoverishment and lack of a middle class in the Basque region following the Spanish Civil War. It aimed to tackle unemployment and foster community development through cooperative businesses. The framework, initiated in the 1940s by Catholic priest José María Arizmendiarrieta, began with technical education and cooperative principles to address pressing economic challenges. Over time, it evolved into a robust system of intercooperating businesses that ensure sustainable livelihoods for the local population.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders engagement

The primary beneficiaries of the Mondragon Model are the worker-members of its 92 autonomous cooperatives, who gain stable employment, social protection, and the right to participate in decision-making. The model also benefits the broader community by creating a resilient local economy. Stakeholders include cooperative employees, governance bodies, and educational institutions like Mondragon University. Engagement occurs through democratic governance, regular training, and solidarity mechanisms that ensure collective ownership and shared decision-making.

Objectives and impact

Mondragon pursues several core objectives:

- To provide stable and quality employment.

- To ensure economic stability and sustainable well-being for its members.

- To promote lifelong education and equal opportunities for all participants.

The model employs approximately 70,500 people across various cooperatives, contributing significantly to local and international economies. Key impacts include a low accident rate among industrial cooperatives (28.68 per thousand workers compared to the Basque Country's 63.04) and substantial participation of women in governing bodies (32.3%) and Boards of Directors (31.1%). These achievements highlight its success in fostering inclusivity and safety while maintaining economic competitiveness.

Resources Required

Mondragon relies on financial investments, human resources, and educational infrastructure. Resources are efficiently utilized through collective ownership, democratic governance, and intercooperation among its cooperatives. Specific mechanisms include a cooperative bank (Laboral Kutxa) and a social security system (LagunAro) to support worker-members.

Evidence of success

The Mondragon model has demonstrated long-term success through its adaptability and sustained growth. It maintains a strong presence in local and global markets, with 43.3% of its workforce based in the Basque region, 43.2% in Spain, and 13.5% internationally. The cooperative structure ensures resilience, even in challenging economic climates, while fostering a supportive and inclusive workplace culture.

Potential for learning or transfer

Mondragon offers a replicable model for regions aiming to establish cooperative businesses and promote economic and social stability. Key success factors for transfer include strong community engagement, robust training programs, and mechanisms for democratic participation. Its internal social security system, cooperative banking, and emphasis on lifelong education are valuable frameworks that can inspire similar initiatives worldwide.

Innovation

The Mondragon Cooperative Model is a leader in implementing innovative solutions such as its internal social security system, LagunAro, and the cooperative bank, Laboral Kutxa. These mechanisms ensure financial stability and social protection for worker-members. Additionally, Mondragon University plays a pivotal role in fostering lifelong learning and technical training, reinforcing the cooperative's adaptability and resilience in a dynamic global economy.

5 Active Aging of Migrant Elders across Europe (AAMEE)

Summary of the good practice

The AAMEE project, initiated by the Ministry for Intergenerational Affairs, Family, Women, and Integration of North Rhine-Westphalia and funded by the European Commission, sought to address the challenges faced by migrant elders across Europe. Through a range of initiatives, the project aimed to transform cultural diversity into an opportunity by promoting active aging, improving access to culturally sensitive services, and enhancing the quality of life for migrant elders. Activities included research, policy development, workshops, and pilot projects, culminating in the "Bonn Memorandum," a framework for stakeholders to promote integration and well-being among migrant elders.

Problem addressed and context

The AAMEE project was developed in response to demographic changes in Europe, particularly the growing number of migrant elders who face social isolation, inadequate access to healthcare, and challenges in participating in community life. Many of these elders had migrated to Europe as workers during the mid-20th century and now required tailored strategies to address their aging-related needs. The project aimed to bridge gaps in existing aging policies, particularly by providing culturally sensitive healthcare, fostering social inclusion, and encouraging participation in civic and community life.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders engagement

The primary beneficiaries of the AAMEE project were migrant elders and their families, who gained improved access to culturally appropriate services and opportunities for active aging. Key stakeholders included governmental bodies, migrant associations, and social and cultural organizations. Engagement strategies involved workshops, surveys, and collaborative events, ensuring the voices of migrant elders were integral to the project's design and implementation. European institutions such as the European Council of Regions and Eurocities supported the initiative, contributing to its broad impact.

Objectives and impact

The project aimed to:

- Enhance the quality of life for migrant elders.
- Promote their social integration and participation in community life.
- Provide better access to culturally sensitive healthcare and social services.

Positive impacts included increased participation in social and cultural activities, reduced social isolation, and improved physical and mental health. The project also fostered community cohesion and strengthened support networks for migrant elders.

Resources Required

The AAMEE project was funded by the European Commission and implemented in collaboration with local and regional organizations. Resources included financial investments, human capital for research and implementation, and existing community infrastructure. Optimization strategies

included leveraging volunteer involvement and integrating culturally sensitive practices into existing services, maximizing the project's efficiency and reach.

Evidence of success

The project successfully established a network of culturally sensitive services for migrant elders, resulting in measurable improvements in their quality of life. Increased social participation, better health outcomes, and enhanced community engagement among migrant elders were some of the notable achievements. The "Bonn Memorandum" served as a significant policy framework to guide future initiatives.

Potential for learning or transfer

The AAMEE project offers a replicable framework for regions aiming to integrate diverse aging populations. Its adaptable design, which emphasizes stakeholder collaboration and cultural sensitivity, makes it suitable for various contexts. Success factors include robust community engagement, efficient resource utilization, and policy integration. However, challenges such as policy differences, funding availability, and varying levels of community involvement may affect transferability.

Innovation

The project's innovative elements include the development of culturally tailored services, community-building activities, and educational programs for both elders and service providers. It highlights how leveraging cultural diversity can foster active aging and social cohesion. The "Bonn Memorandum" serves as a blueprint for designing inclusive policies and programs for migrant elders.

6 European Local Authority Competition (ELAC)

Summary of the good practice

The European Local Authority Competition (ELAC) was a pioneering initiative aimed at improving the quality of life for migrant elders by recognizing innovative municipal strategies. Launched in 2010, ELAC fostered active aging, mutual integration, and empowerment of migrant elders across Europe. The competition highlighted successful projects addressing employment, health, social inclusion, and intergenerational solidarity, serving as a model for local authorities to implement impactful practices. Awarded initiatives ranged from training programs for caregivers to intergenerational art projects and citywide senior integration strategies.

Problem addressed and context

ELAC tackled the challenges of social and economic inclusion for migrant elders in Europe, particularly those related to employment and active aging. Migrant elders often faced language and cultural barriers, social isolation, and limited access to health and social services. Additionally, older workers, including migrants, struggled with age discrimination and inadequate employment opportunities. The initiative was driven by the demographic shift in Europe's aging population and the need for sustainable, inclusive policies to support both migrant elders and older workers. The

competition provided a platform for sharing best practices across local authorities to address these critical issues.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders engagement

The competition primarily benefited migrant elders and older workers, enabling them to access better employment opportunities, culturally sensitive services, and active roles in their communities. Stakeholders included local authorities, employers, community organizations, and representatives of migrant elders. Through workshops, consultations, and collaborative projects, ELAC encouraged a participatory approach to designing and implementing solutions. The involvement of European institutions like the European Parliament and regional networks ensured wide-ranging impact and visibility.

Objectives and impact

The ELAC initiative aimed to:

- Enhance the quality of life for migrant elders through tailored programs in health, housing, and education.

- Promote active aging and social inclusion by addressing employment challenges and fostering intergenerational cooperation.

- Disseminate best practices among European local authorities to improve community support for aging populations.

Positive outcomes included increased job opportunities for older workers, improved workplace conditions, and greater societal awareness of the benefits of an age-diverse workforce. The competition also created a repository of replicable best practices, strengthening the capacity of local governments to address aging-related challenges.

Resources required

Supported by the European Commission, ELAC leveraged funding for organizing competitions, training programs, and stakeholder engagement activities. Resources included contributions from local authorities and partnerships with community organizations. The initiative optimized costs through public-private collaborations and by utilizing existing infrastructure for training and policy dissemination.

Evidence of success

ELAC achieved notable success by inspiring local authorities to adopt age-friendly policies and programs. Measurable achievements included increased employment rates for older workers, broader adoption of intergenerational initiatives, and enhanced cultural sensitivity in municipal services. The competition fostered cross-regional collaboration and established a robust framework for tackling the aging population's challenges.

Potential for learning or transfer

The ELAC framework is highly transferable due to its adaptable design and clear guidelines for stakeholder engagement. Its focus on age-friendly policies, retraining programs, and intergenerational cooperation offers a scalable model for addressing aging and employment challenges in diverse regions. Potential barriers to transfer include variations in local labor market conditions and funding availability. However, the emphasis on collaboration and knowledge-sharing mitigates these challenges, making ELAC a replicable and impactful initiative.

Innovation

ELAC introduced innovative approaches such as tailored retraining programs, age-friendly workplace designs, and intergenerational projects that fostered mutual understanding between older and younger generations. By combining public awareness campaigns with practical initiatives, the competition successfully addressed age discrimination and promoted the value of an inclusive society.

7 SEN@ER - Silver Economy Network of European Regions

Summary of the good practice

SEN@ER is a joint initiative launched in 2005 by North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, to transform the challenges of an aging society into opportunities for economic growth and regional development. The network supports regions in fostering economic activities targeting the older population, promoting intergenerational cooperation, and enhancing the employability and integration of older workers. By facilitating policy exchange, training programs, and innovative projects, SEN@ER has helped European regions embrace the potential of the Silver Economy.

Problem addressed and context

SEN@ER was developed in response to Europe's demographic shift and the underutilization of the 55+ workforce. High unemployment rates among older workers and the lack of tailored employment opportunities underscored the need for focused efforts. The initiative aimed to address these issues by creating age-friendly workplaces, developing innovative products and services for seniors, and advocating for policies to improve the employment landscape for older adults. SEN@ER has since played a crucial role in making the Silver Economy a strategic priority for European regions.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders engagement

The main beneficiaries of SEN@ER include older workers, regional governments, businesses, and local communities. Stakeholders actively engage through thematic workshops, conferences, and good-practice competitions, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing. The initiative emphasizes the inclusion of diverse participants, including policymakers, businesses, and older adults, ensuring a comprehensive approach to addressing the needs and opportunities of an aging population.

Objectives and impact

The objectives of SEN@ER include:

- Enhancing the employability and job retention of older workers through training and policy advocacy.
- Promoting age-friendly workplaces and intergenerational cooperation.
- Supporting regions in developing and implementing Silver Economy initiatives.

Key impacts of the network include increased employment rates for workers aged 55+, improved job satisfaction, and the development of innovative solutions tailored to seniors' needs. SEN@ER

has also strengthened regional capacities to address aging-related challenges by fostering collaboration across Europe.

Resources Required

SEN@ER relies on funding from regional and European Union programs, partnerships with businesses, and resources provided by the Ministry for Intergenerational Affairs, Family, Women, and Integration of North Rhine-Westphalia. These resources are utilized for organizing events, conducting training, and supporting innovative projects. Process optimizations, such as leveraging existing regional structures and fostering public-private partnerships, have ensured the efficient use of resources.

Evidence of success

The network has achieved significant outcomes, including a notable increase in employment rates for participants aged 55+. Positive feedback from businesses highlights the effectiveness of age-friendly workplace policies and training programs. SEN@ER has also facilitated the development of region-specific solutions, contributing to the broader adoption of Silver Economy strategies across Europe.

Potential for learning or transfer

SEN@ER provides a replicable framework for other regions to address aging-related challenges. Its focus on regional cooperation, tailored training, and policy integration makes it highly transferable. Success factors for implementation include strong stakeholder engagement, effective resource allocation, and adaptability to local contexts. Challenges may include securing consistent funding and aligning initiatives with regional priorities, but the network's collaborative approach mitigates these risks.

Innovation

The initiative has introduced innovative training methods and intergenerational cooperation projects, fostering mutual understanding and collaboration between age groups. SEN@ER's emphasis on the Silver Economy as a growth opportunity has positioned it as a leader in promoting sustainable, inclusive economic development. Its efforts to integrate health and social care services, such as through projects like "CommonWell," further demonstrate its commitment to innovation and adaptability.

8 Silver Skills Initiative

Summary of the good practice

The Silver Skills Initiative is a European project aimed at addressing the digital skills gap among workers aged 55+. By providing tailored distance training programs, the initiative enhances digital literacy and employability for older adults, while fostering intergenerational learning and collaboration with local businesses. The program also promotes lifelong learning and integrates older workers into the digital workforce, contributing to the broader "silver economy."

Problem addressed and context

Many older workers in the EU face significant digital skill gaps, which limit their ability to compete in an increasingly digitalized job market. The Silver Skills Initiative was developed to bridge this gap, addressing barriers such as lack of access to training and technological unfamiliarity. This initiative

recognizes the untapped potential of older workers and seeks to equip them with the digital skills necessary to remain competitive and valuable in the modern workforce.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders engagement

The main beneficiaries of the initiative are workers aged 55+, as well as local businesses that benefit from a more digitally skilled workforce. Educational institutions and training providers also gain valuable insights into effective methods for teaching digital skills to older adults. Stakeholder engagement was achieved through research, surveys, and active collaboration with training institutions, employers, and career advisors. This ensured that the training programs were tailored to meet the real-world needs of both older workers and employers.

Objectives and impact

The primary goals of the initiative include:

- Enhancing digital literacy among individuals aged 55+.

- Increasing employment rates for older adults by equipping them with in-demand skills.

- Promoting lifelong learning and the integration of older workers into the digital economy.

The project successfully delivered measurable improvements in digital competencies and facilitated job placements for participants, demonstrating its effectiveness in closing the digital divide among older workers.

Resources Required

The Silver Skills Initiative was co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. Resources included the development of a blended learning training program, a detailed study on the situation of seniors in the EU, and a comprehensive project handbook. Training materials and resources are freely available online, maximizing accessibility and scalability.

Evidence of success

The initiative has achieved significant outcomes, including:

- Development and implementation of a blended learning program available online (Silver Skills Moodle Platform).

- Creation of a study detailing the challenges and opportunities for older workers in the digital age, accompanied by actionable recommendations.

- Positive feedback from participants and stakeholders, showcasing increased digital literacy and improved employability.

Potential for learning or transfer

The Silver Skills Initiative offers a highly adaptable model for regions facing similar digital divides. With detailed training manuals, an online learning platform, and collaboration frameworks, the initiative provides a robust foundation for replication in other contexts. The emphasis on lifelong learning and community engagement ensures its sustainability and transferability across diverse regions.

Innovation

The project stands out for its innovative approach to blending distance learning with intergenerational collaboration. By integrating tailored digital training with career development resources, the initiative empowers older workers to actively participate in the modern workforce. Its use of research-driven methodologies and open-access resources further highlights its innovative and inclusive nature.

5 SHORT ANALYSIS OF COLLECTED PRACTICES

Analysis of collected data: Summary of the main findings

The analysis of the eight collected best practices highlights a diverse range of approaches aimed at addressing the challenges faced by older adults in the labour market. These practices focus on promoting active aging, enhancing employability, fostering social inclusion, and supporting intergenerational cooperation. Examples include tailored training programs for digital literacy (Silver Skills Initiative), community-oriented educational initiatives (Senior Academy of Pécs), workplace adaptations for older employees (ISS Facility Services), and international policy frameworks encouraging local government involvement (ELAC).

These practices collectively emphasize:

- Empowering individuals aged 55+ through education, skills development, and mentoring.

- Facilitating workplace adjustments to retain older workers.

- Leveraging intergenerational and cross-cultural exchanges to build inclusive societies.

- Addressing the unique needs of older migrant populations to foster integration and reduce isolation.

A notable strength across these practices is their holistic approach. Many initiatives integrate employment strategies with social and health-focused elements, ensuring broader benefits for individuals and communities. For example, SEN@ER focuses not only on employability but also on promoting the Silver Economy, thereby addressing both economic and social dimensions of aging populations. Projects like the Senior Academy of Pécs combine educational opportunities with community-building activities, creating a well-rounded model for active aging that reduces isolation and enhances self-confidence among older adults.

Strengths and Challenges

Strengths:

The primary strengths of these practices lie in their adaptability, innovation, and focus on collaboration. The use of lifelong learning programs, such as those offered by the Senior Academy, empowers older adults to remain active and engaged in their communities. Initiatives like the Mondragon Cooperative Model showcase the potential of cooperative structures to create stable employment and foster resilience in challenging economic contexts. Practices that address specific demographic needs, such as the ELAC competition's focus on migrant elders, highlight the power of targeted interventions to promote inclusivity and integration.

1. Innovation and adaptability: Initiatives such as the Mondragon Cooperative Modeland SEN@ER Networkshowcase innovative approaches to economic participation and societal contributions of older adults.

2. Community engagement: Practices like the Senior Academy encourage active community participation and reduce social isolation.

3. Policy influence: Programs like ELAC demonstrate the power of structured competitions and collaborations in influencing local and international policies.

4. Diversity and inclusivity: The AAMEE project integrates culturally sensitive measures to address the needs of older migrants, offering a transferable model for diverse settings.

Challenges:

Challenges remain, particularly in ensuring widespread participation and overcoming barriers to implementation. Funding limitations often restrict the scalability of these practices, as seen in several initiatives. Resistance to change, especially within organizations, and a lack of awareness about the benefits of such programs can hinder progress. In the case of ISS Facility Measures, external work environments created obstacles in consistently applying workplace health initiatives. Similarly, ensuring that isolated or underrepresented groups, such as less educated elders or migrant communities, are effectively reached remains an ongoing issue.

1. Sustainability and funding: Many programs rely heavily on external funding, raising concerns about long-term viability.

2. Scalability: Tailored approaches, while effective locally, may face challenges in broader implementation.

3. Resistance to change: Resistance from stakeholders, as noted in ISS Facility's experience, can impede the adoption of new measures.

4. Integration barriers: Addressing systemic barriers, such as age discrimination and digital divides, remains complex.

Recommendations

For successful implementation of these practices in other countries or regions, it is critical to ensure strong stakeholder collaboration and tailor solutions to the specific needs of local populations. Policymakers and organizations should prioritize creating inclusive environments that value the contributions of older individuals while addressing barriers such as digital skill gaps and cultural differences. Sustainable funding mechanisms, including public-private partnerships and EU grants, are essential to support the long-term viability of such programs.

Providing accessible resources, such as the training manuals developed by the Silver Skills Initiative, can facilitate transferability and encourage replication of successful models. Intergenerational projects, like those in Mondragon and AAMEE, offer valuable lessons in fostering solidarity and creating shared opportunities for learning and growth. Furthermore, integrating age-friendly workplace policies into broader economic strategies can help combat resistance to change and demonstrate the tangible benefits of retaining and supporting older workers. By focusing on these recommendations, regions can effectively transform the challenges of aging populations into opportunities for social and economic innovation.

1. Promote cross-sector collaboration: Encouraging partnerships between governments, private sector, and civil society ensures a holistic approach to addressing the needs of the 55+ workforce.

2. Focus on digital literacy and lifelong learning: Expanding programs like Silver Skills to improve digital competencies is critical for enabling older workers to thrive in modern workplaces.

3. Adopt inclusive workplace policies: Implementing flexible work arrangements and health-focused workplace adaptations, as seen in ISS Facility's measures, can retain and motivate older employees.

4. Facilitate intergenerational cooperation: Encouraging shared initiatives between younger and older generations fosters mutual learning and societal cohesion.

5. Standardize and scale proven models: Practices with demonstrable success, like the Mondragon Model, should be adapted and scaled to fit local contexts while maintaining their core principles.

6. Address policy and advocacy needs: Strengthening advocacy for the inclusion of older workers in labour market policies ensures systemic change and reduces age-based inequalities.

These insights provide a robust foundation for replicating and scaling the collected practices, enabling the IntegrAGE project to drive impactful change across diverse regions.

6 CONCLUSION

The collected good practices illustrate the vital role that innovative and inclusive strategies play in addressing the challenges posed by aging populations and workforces. Best practices in age management demonstrate that older workers are a valuable resource whose experience, skills, and perspectives contribute significantly to the social and economic resilience of communities. These practices, ranging from improving digital literacy and workplace adaptability to fostering intergenerational cooperation and promoting cultural inclusion, highlight the potential to transform demographic challenges into opportunities for sustainable growth.

The importance of age management in employment extends beyond the workplace. It fosters stronger communities, reduces social isolation, and enhances the overall well-being of older individuals. Programs that emphasize lifelong learning, inclusive policies, and tailored support for older workers underscore the need for systemic solutions that integrate economic, social, and health dimensions.

By adopting and adapting these best practices, organizations and policymakers can create age-friendly environments that empower older adults to remain active contributors to society. Collaboration between stakeholders, sustainable funding mechanisms, and the sharing of knowledge across regions are critical to achieving these goals. In conclusion, investing in age management is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic approach to building resilient and inclusive societies for the future.