



TOY in Action



Acknowledgements



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Introduction



This report tells the story of the 12 TOY pilot actions which took place during 2014 in five European countries. The goal was to unite young children and older people in enriching intergenerational activities, improve social bonds and dismantle stereotypes.

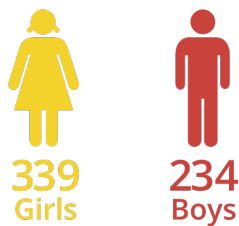
The actions were led and supported by local communities, municipalities and care services. During the actions schools, kindergartens and care homes were freed up to become resources for a wider cross-section of the population. As a result of the TOY pilots, their ability to engage with a broader public was enhanced and their value as a resource for the whole community was developed.

The benefits to both generations were demonstrated by improved mutual understanding, a reawakened interest in local culture and traditions and deeper community engagement.

Older people reported that contact with children improved their feelings of wellbeing and that they derived great satisfaction from sharing their knowledge and experience with the children.

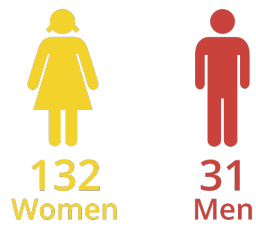
To demonstrate the success of the TOY pilot actions we have assembled photographs, drawings, videos and testaments from participants and we encourage you to visit the photo galleries of each initiative. Contact details for local organisers are provided, and you can visit the TOY Project website for more information about future events and activities. There is also free access to all the TOY publications.

Figures



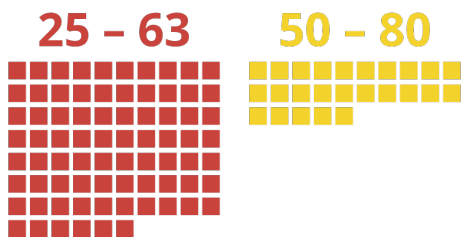
Total children: 589

16 children 0-3 year old (9 girls; 7 boys)
573 children 4-8 year old (339 girls; 234 boys)



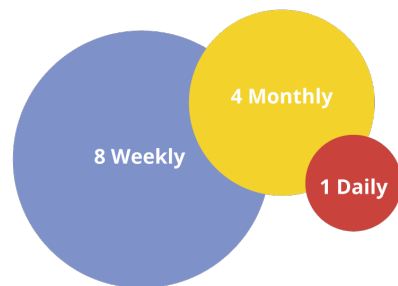
Total Older People: 163

55-74 years old: 74 women and 14 men
75+ years old: 58 women and 17 men



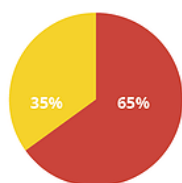
Total facilitators: 101

76 people (25-63 years old) facilitators (para-professionals)
25 senior volunteers (50-80 years old)



Frequency of contact between generations

Weekly: 8
Monthly: 4
Daily: 1



Themes

Nature and outdoor learning: 35%
Arts, culture and creativity: 65%

Together Old and Young: 5 Senses at Play

“Every session had an educational value, a peaceful atmosphere and was very touching. Children are so special and they enjoy these activities.”

Anna, 79

During May and June 2014, toddlers (two and three-year-olds) from the Asilo Nido Casa Vincenza nursery and five seniors (80 years+) from the Laser Day Care Centre came together to share space, time and knowledge. With support from two practitioners, the children and seniors took part in activities, both outdoors and indoors, which joined them in common purpose and playfully stimulated the senses. Activities such as gardening, cooking, painting, gym classes and game play proved hugely popular with everyone; the same children and seniors were involved throughout. Jointly they had time to build strong relationships and feel at ease in each other's company. The TOY pilot action ended with a public event on 30th July – an opportunity to share the benefits of IG practice with a wider group of children, parents, older people and their families.



“Look, there is the nursery where the ‘grannies’ go.”

Ricardo, 2



“My son recognises the road to the day centre for the older people and he is proud to have been there.”

Ricardo's Mum

Passing time and dreaming mind. Intergenerational Summer Recreation Centre

“The Summer Centre is about to close. What will we do without the children? Will they come to visit sometimes?”

Amabile, 86

During the summer of 2014 the Hotel Adda, a centre for older people, hosted an intergenerational summer ‘camp’ for 25 seniors aged 65 to 93 years-old and 57 children aged 3 to 9. The children came every week day from 8.30 to 17.00. The goal was to promote intergenerational relationships, overcome stereotypes and enhance intergenerational solidarity through fun activities such as painting, mosaic making, water games, gardening, football, singing, needlework, table games, English lessons, swimming, common lunches and day trips; to a farm, an entertainment park, a market and a library.

“The real facilitators were not us, but children themselves who taught us how to relate to seniors in the most spontaneous, unfiltered and emotional way.”

Silvia Porta, facilitator, 42



“We won the football match because we had Terenzio in our team”

Sokchea, 6

Contact details

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Italy – Rome

The miniworkshop

"Some time ago the grandparents were the reference points in families. Now this has changed, and bringing them inside a school and allowing them to be grandparents to the classes has an incredible value. The level of respect was surprising – probably the highest in my experience as educator – it brought beautiful and very special dynamics."

Alessio, facilitator, 35

Every year, a cycling tour of Rome, called the Magnalonga is organised to raise awareness of sustainable mobility, environmental issues and healthy eating. This provided the incentive for a group of active senior volunteers to share their enthusiasm for cycling, and their bike maintenance skills, with groups of young children from the 3rd grade of the Istituto Comprensivo Alberto Manzi School. During three workshops, which culminated in the actual Magnalonga the children, aged 8, learned how to care for their bikes and repair punctures. Other benefits were that the children's self-confidence and sense of responsibility increased as did their respect for seniors.



"I discovered how to restore my bike, I will teach my father!"

Davide, 8



"It was nice, to have the children around you like chicks around the chicken...one of them came and told me: 'Do you remember last year? We rode together!': this is really satisfactory!"

Vincenzo, 74

"I didn't know that children used bicycles to go very far, in the past! It should be exciting, but also hard."

Valeria, 8

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<http://www.tavolarotonda.org/>

<http://www.magnalonga.net/>

It's Wonderful with Grandpas: Environmental Education in a Nature Park

"I enjoyed telling the story of my childhood and how attentively the children listened. I will never forget their emotions, they came and hugged me. I bring this with me in my heart. I did not know these children before, it was not my granddaughter who I hug every day, these are children that I have met here and who I now carry in my heart."

Maria, 78

The project *Che bello con il nonno! L'educazione ambientale in un parco naturale* (It's wonderful with grandpas: environmental education in a nature park) aims to introduce children to the environment and to promote and introduce them to more sustainable lifestyles. This initiative brought together: the promoting organisation; facilitators; a university researcher; teachers; two classes of 8 and 9 year-olds; 12 of their grandparents and members of the local community. The centre is in the middle of a nature park near Orvinio, central Italy. Through a variety of activities the participants discovered nature and local traditions; the past was brought to life thanks to the storytelling of the older people. As well as experiencing new relationship between otherwise distant generations contributors also created deeper understandings of their peers.



"During Christmas, in Grandma Anna's home, instead of games, toys and sweets there were nuts, figs, mandarin, I listened to their stories and I think, how strange!"

Francesca, 8

"Activities were designed to encourage exchange between senior s and children, both in the organised activities and in the more 'free' activities. The informal interaction was guided by a strong affective component. The community experience encouraged this exchange of emotions, not just when working in group but in the daily life together."

Valeria, 8

Contact details

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Netherlands – Leiden

Young and Old fit together like two pieces of a puzzle

The *Pacelli* Primary School and *Robijnhof* Care Centre for older people face each other in a Leiden street. Both were keen to open their doors to the other and to the local community. What better way than to match of class of 7 and 8 year-olds with a group of older people in a joint art project. In the first instance, the two groups were introduced via short film clips; this made their eventual meeting less stressful and encouraged curiosity of each other. Based on the information from the films each group made puzzles which they thought their counterpart would enjoy. Finally, everyone came together for a social event where they swapped puzzles and played together. Everyone was very excited to finally meet each other; the children overcame their shyness and the older people enjoyed the energy and the company of the young children.

"I hope the children making something for me get truly inspired by my picture."

Miss van der Bijl, 94



"I like painting very much. And I like to give it to someone who is making something for me to."

Igor, 8



"I know that someone is making a puzzle for me. But that is not why I am making it beautiful for her."

Joyce, 9

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Netherlands – Leiden

Gardening Together

In Summer 2014, the vacant car park in front of *Opaal Community Service Centre* in the city of Leiden was transformed into a community vegetable garden. Children from the neighbourhood together with local older people began planting and caring for a selection of vegetables and flowers. They were helped by a volunteer from School Garden Leiden and staff of Radius, an organisation dedicated to supporting the welfare of older people in Leiden. They meet weekly – it's a friendly and active session when both young and old developing gardening skills. It is hoped that in time more members from the community will get involved in this intergenerational gardening initiative.

One child asks me with a big smile: "Can I please water the plants?"

girl, 6



"Look how happy they are."

Mrs. De Jong, 75



"It's like they do this all the time."

Olivia, volunteer



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Old Traditions – New Learning

"It's nice to see how children are interested in our life experience."

Maria 67

The main goal of the TOY pilot action in the village of Janisławice, which was promoted by local community development group, was to build relations and closer ties between the generations through a range of multi-generational activities focused on local folklore traditions. Preschool and primary school children participated along with their grandparents in baking cakes for Easter, decorating Easter eggs, ironing and mangling and making flower wreaths for weddings. The activities took place twice a month, between April and August 2014. A special event took place on 21 June, midsummer's night, when all three generations, seniors/grandparents, parents and children gathered for a midsummer's night picnic which was shared with the whole community, a traditional local celebration on this night.



"Baking Easter cookies was so much fun."

Iza, 7



"The whole community joined us in our celebration of midsummer night, it got us closer".

Agnieszka, facilitator, 40

Poland – Rawa Mazowiecka

Arts and Crafts for Old and Young

“Seniors could show their strengths and it gave them joy.”

Małgorzata, facilitator, 40

Four village primary schools in Pukinin, Konopnica, Boguszyce and Stara Wojska came together, along with the local library in Boguszyce, to engage the youngest local children (4 to 9 year-olds) in learning traditional crafts and games from seniors in the communities who were keen to engage with children. Together they sewed, made dolls clothes, tissue-paper decorations, and also learned some traditional outdoor games. The main goal was to stimulate older people to be more active in the community, enrich learning processes of both older people and young children, and preserve local creative traditions.

“I’m going to sew clothes for my dolls at home, just like Ms Józefa taught us how to do.”

Julia, 6



“I’m happy I can show children the clothes I sewed for my dolls, at least I’m not sitting at home alone”.

Józefa, 81



Intergenerational Art Workshops

"I like when Ms Rozalia reads us books."

Filip, 4



"I needed children and children needed me."

Rozalia, 66

"Senior ladies are smiling all the time while playing with children."

Felictya, 64



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Portugal - Aveiro

"The intergenerational activities present an opportunity for all those involved to experience an atmosphere of 'giving and receiving' with fraternity, generosity, promoting feelings of gratitude."

Susana Passos, facilitator, 38



"We love and care for them because they are 'tomorrow's adults' and it is enriching for them to be in contact with the old people to receive good advice and a good example."

António Bartolomeu, 90.

Intergenerational toy library: 1, 2, 3... Let's play again?

At the Centro Comunitário da Paróquia São Pedro de Aradas, in Aveiro children's and older people's services are usually located in separate buildings. In the TOY pilot initiative eighty eight 3 to 6 year-olds from the kindergarten visited the seniors in the care home to play and create games together. The 15 seniors involved ranged in age from 76 and 94 years-old and were visited by the children in groups of 20 at a time. Activities included board games, such as dominos, puzzles and physical activities. Children taught the seniors how to use and play with a tablet (i.e. ICT skills) and older people taught the children how to play more traditional games. An additional benefit was improved fun and learning opportunities between the two generations.

"I like the seniors. They are our friends like our grandparents because they play games and do activities with us."

Margarida Ferreira, 6



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Recipes with Smiles

"Will the seniors be back again to cook with us?"

Simão, 4



"I accepted the invitation to join the activity because I believe I have something to teach the children, old knowledge taught by my parents. I made the recipe just like my mother did and it is different from nowadays."

Rosa Cândida, 66

"It is gratifying to see the children and older people's happiness as an outcome of the initiative."

Sofia Vieira, facilitator, 42



"Recipes with Smiles" is the name of an intergenerational initiative promoted by Centro Social de Azurva in Aveiro, an institution with facilities and services for young children and older people. It involved seniors spending time in the kindergarten, cooking their favourite recipes with the young children and sharing the prepared food with a larger group of kindergarten children during meal times. They also produced a recipe book based on their memories and stories relating to their culinary heritage. Both groups were inspired by cooking together and were keen to repeat the experience. In total, 45 from three to six-year-old children and 8 seniors – all women ranging in age from 63 to 95 - were involved, along with the support of the kindergarten teacher. An additional benefit was the opportunity for older people to make a valuable contribution to the cultural heritage of the younger generation.

Contact details

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A time warp: games then and now

"It has been a very positive experience and has given another perspective to the Play Centre; this project has helped to energise it. Older people have been involved so much; all of us have learned new skills. We were able to experience so much love and we want to keep working on this project."

Christine, 63

The intergenerational project organised by Balàfia's Play Centre united children and older people in an exchange of traditional and modern games. During April and May 2014, 56 participants, boys and girls, men and women, aged from 3 to 82 visited the Museum of Traditional Games in Campo and took part in workshops involving old-fashioned toys such as rag dolls, marbles and knucklebones. The seniors showed the children how to play the traditional games and the children explained some modern games such as.... construction games, table games, songs and stories. The initiative was successful in meeting its goals; the children and older people enjoyed learning and playing together – and in the process they learned about each other's life experience. Negative age-group stereotypes were reduced and respect between generations was promoted.



"I feel very special to share these 'special little moments' with children."

Carmina, 63

"I haven't a grandfather and now I have lots of them."

Cataline, 4



The spoken-dance of Moors and Christians

"Implementing the TOY Pilot Action has been a great experience. Everyone (professionals, children and seniors) has learned to value, respect and enjoy learning together. We must continue to invest in these types of intergenerational activities because they enrich our community."

Alba, facilitator, 25.

The main aim of this project was to share the cultural heritage of the town via an intergenerational arts scheme. This involved the revival of a traditional dance and drama – the Ball parlat dels moros i cristians. Children and older people, 36 in total (from 4 to 70 years-old) were guided by a theatre director. They worked together to explore the cultural and historical context of the play; they wrote the text, which the children adapted for their peers, made costumes, and finally performed the actual play. By taking part in this creative project the participants learned some theatre skills and the shared responsibility helped reduce negative stereotypes and increase respect between the generations.



"I didn't know that older people liked to play and dress up."

Nada, 4

"It was a great experience. Since I was widowed I had to participate in these initiatives because it motivates us (older people) in our day to day lives. We have found a happy relaxed atmosphere and great affection."

Pepita, 69



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<http://educacio.paeria.cat/lleida-educa/als-ciutadans-i-ciutadanes/toy-together-old-young/toy-together-old-young>

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