



**Cost Action: INTERFASOL**

**Working Paper: WG3/1**

**A Framework for Programmes to Promote Intergenerational Family Solidarity**

**Prepared by members of Working Group 3**

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**May 2018**

## **A Framework for Programmes to Promote Intergenerational Family Solidarity**

Working Group 3 addressed the following goals:

- A comprehensive baseline report on the benefits of strengthening family solidarity between generations via an international critical review;
- The development of a procedure that could be implemented in sample countries and provide comparative research results;
- An informed framework for possible applications/practical applications and specific guidelines

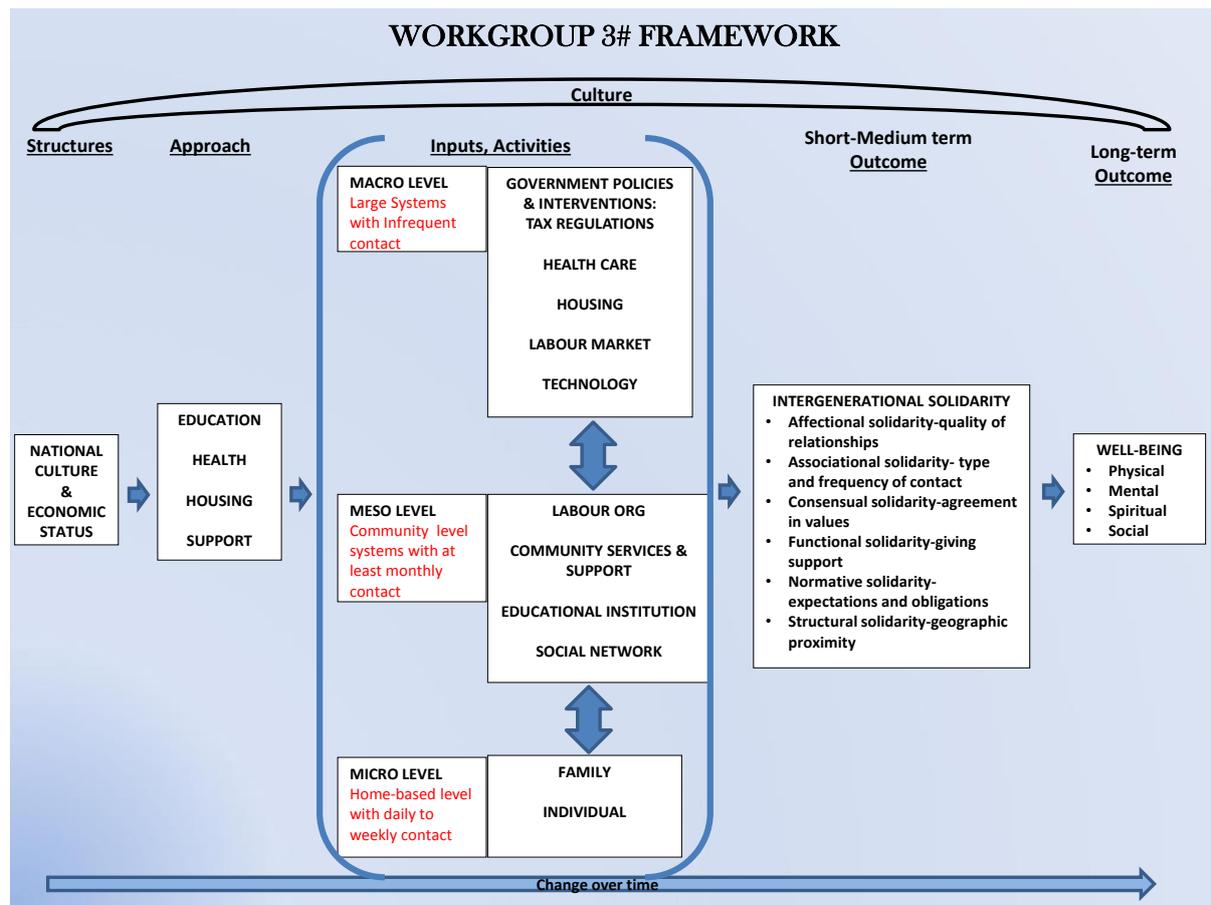
These goals have been met through the collation of interventions to promote intergenerational family solidarity in countries that are represented in Working Group 3. These interventions could take the form of government initiatives, activities organised by private enterprise or third sector organisations. Details on 31 interventions were collected in total, across 11 European countries. The countries included in this analysis are: Georgia, Greece, France, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, UK. A summary review of these interventions was carried out to provide an overall framework of strategies to promote intergenerational family solidarity. The summary review also provides a procedure for reviewing the implementation of interventions.

Detail on the interventions considered for the summary review is given in Appendix 1. This report presents the main findings of the summary review.

### **Framework**

The different types of interventions collated by working group 3 illustrate the diversity of strategies that are adopted at different scales across Europe to promote inter-generational family solidarity. These different approaches have been combined within an overarching framework (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Framework for Intergenerational Family Solidarity



This framework identifies structures, approaches, inputs, activities and outcomes, both short and long term. The framework recognises that any interventions to promote intergenerational family solidarity need to incorporate normative cultural and economic characteristics. The model suggests that these are ordinarily measured at a national level, however this does not preclude interventions that target specific economic and cultural groups. We identify 4 main areas that may be the target of intergenerational intervention: education, support, health and housing and finance/welfare. In the sample of interventions collated there are examples that target all of these areas, though housing is not as well represented. Most schemes seek to provide support to older people, such as help with IT or help in the home, or provide an educational space from which generations can learn from each other and facilitate intergenerational learning. At the onset of the activity we anticipated that some programmes might promote financial or welfare solidarity but we did not find any initiatives that support monetary exchange between generations. The

emphasis is very much on activities that generations can do to support each other, rather than considering financial support.

Turning to inputs and activities. All interventions have been classified by level of input, though for some there is evidence that interventions work at more than one level. There is a clear preference for interventions at the meso level. Of the 31 interventions, 20 were introduced at a meso level and this usually involved working within a community. In contrast 7 operate at a micro level and 10 at a macro level. All of the micro level initiatives overlapped with a meso level component, suggesting that the scale of activities could be more appropriately characterised as either working at the macro or meso level.

Outcomes of intergenerational solidarity can be distinguished between short/median and long-term impacts. More immediate outcomes correspond to Bengtson's theorisation of intergenerational solidarity: Affectual, associational, consensual, functional, normative and structural. It is though also appropriate to identify longer-term goals that are targeted by interventions, which may seek to bring about a change in participants' physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being.

### **Case Studies of Interventions.**

Working group members were asked to provide information on three examples of interventions to promote intergenerational family solidarity (all countries except France provided three examples, for France only one national case study is presented). These examples represent a convenience sample and may not be representative of all programs involved in the promotion of intergenerational solidarity.

The collation of case studies reveals the diversity of different types of interventions across Europe and that there is a considerable amount of activity in promoting intergenerational relations. With a few notable exceptions, particularly France for which the case study is of a national intervention programme, interventions were more likely to be focussed on particular communities. More localised initiatives are sponsored by third sector organisations and/or local government. The main recommendation from these case studies is that more focussed and localised interventions are appropriate as these can integrate the diversity of challenges and family practices in specific communities. The challenge of

delivering interventions at a national scale is that these need to make generalised assumptions about family and generation that are not necessarily realistic in a pluralistic and diverse society. The trend towards more localised initiatives also demonstrates the capacity in communities to actively promote inter-generational solidarity may suggest that (1) inter-generational solidarity programs are not necessarily best promoted through top-down initiatives, or (2) governments are less inclined to develop inter-generational solidarity programs. The review of interventions suggests that local governments take and feel more responsibility to organize projects on solidarity. The development of most programmes was not in response to a particular crisis in the family relations, but rather from a commitment to engaging across relations and a shared belief that generations benefit from working together. Our findings suggest that the promotion of intergenerational family solidarity has therefore been a cultural practice and one that attunes to the localised practices and customs.

While it might be assumed that a national organised programme might be the most effective way of supporting family solidarity, such as that found in France, we cannot verify this as there is no systematic evaluation of family solidarity interventions. Indeed to design such an evaluation would be problematic as the outputs that most interventions are seeking to bring about are subjective, rather than objective. The benefits of interventions are often realised through participation in the activities themselves, rather than securing longer-term goals. Intergenerational solidarity is not so much a problem that needs to be 'fixed' through intervention but rather it can be facilitated through more formalised arrangements, such as older people going into schools to teach younger children, or older children providing IT support and advice for older generations. Interventions can provide a platform for generations to come together, however the value of these interventions and what they can achieve will be realised through the activities and simply being in a space which promotes the benefits of intergenerational solidarity.

The analysis of the interventions has been informed by a cultural analysis of family practices in the 11 countries included in this review (see appendix). This cultural analysis identifies social and demographic trends that are common across all countries, and a consistent, but by no means universal, commitment to liberalisation of family policy (particularly with relation to sexuality). However, despite these similarities, family values remain a cultural

attribute that is recognised as a defining principle of national political agenda, even if in reality there is considerable convergence in family values and practices. The reliance on community, or city-wide initiatives reveal how geography is often a key condition of successful intervention and that bringing generations together in solidarity is not necessarily an activity that can be achieved at a national level, but through smaller scale, community endeavours.

## Case Studies of Interventions.

| Intervention |   | Name   | Approach  | micro | meso | macro | Description   | Outcomes         |
|--------------|---|--|-----------|-------|------|-------|---|------------------|
| France       | 1 | Ensemble Domain  | Education |       |      | x     | NGO working with government funding; implemented in schools, universities, senior clubs, nursing homes; civic education.  | Educational      |
| Georgia      | 1 | Virtual Grandchildren program at Nursing Home.   | Health    | x     | x    |       | Virtual grandchildren in nursing home; psychology students phone conversations with weekly meetings, psychological dialogue; nursing home residents chosen by nursing home; students obtain credits; unsure it is started because there was no funding provided | Mental Wellbeing |
|              | 2 | ICT education and entertainment for social well-being  | Education | x     | x    |       | ICT education for older people in nursing homes; same actors as program 1; one university, one nursing home; ICT learning, personal photoalbums and art performances; promote understanding between generations; not active yet, because lack of funding;       | Educational      |
|              | 3 | Collaborative twinning - Intergenerational solidarity at workplace for improving engagement in online postgraduate medical education | Health    |       | x    |       | IGS at the working place; connecting junior and senior physicians in Tbilisi State Medical University; outcome practical skills (diagnosis) and ICT-skills; professionally based IGS  | Educational      |
| Greece       | 1 | Help at Home   | Support   |       |      | x     | Intervention indirectly related to family support; national schemes on professional schemes; locally operated   | Social wellbeing |
|              | 2 | Schools for Parents  | Education |       |      |       | Intervention supervised by the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs to support parents   | educational      |

|         |   |   |           |   |   |   |   |                                  |
|---------|---|---|-----------|---|---|---|---|----------------------------------|
|         | 3 | Bereavement Counseling Centres  | Support   |   |   | x | Voluntary organisation to provide psychological support to children, adolescents and their families when a loved one has a life threatening illness or has died.  | Mental wellbeing                 |
| Hungary | 1 | National Association of Large Families  | Support   | x | x |   | NOE is a NGO, since 1987; serving specific interests of large families; training, education, awards, legal protection; non-profit and impact is nationally; large families (3 or more) are a member; they have 250 local organizations;               | Demographic and cultural         |
|         | 2 | Three princes, three princesses   | Support   | x | x |   | Foundation and civil movement; promoting families and indirect IGS; concentration on fathers; direct programs like finding and promoting friendly workplaces; non-profit;   | Social wellbeing                 |
|         | 3 | Home start Hungary Programme Foundation   | Health    | x | x |   | Volunteer organisations; helping out single mothers and improve wellbeing; impact on individuals; country wide NGO with local organizations   | Mental Wellbeing                 |
| Ireland | 1 | DCU Intergenerational Learning Programme  | Education |   |   | x | Research program, no intervention other than bringing people together and talk about the issue; collecting information, contribute to discussion, create awareness; people talking about intergenerational solidarity at several times.               | Educational and social wellbeing |
|         | 2 | Intergenerational Local History Programme: Ballymun/Whitehall Area Partnership            | Education |   |   | x | Local history program; older people come into classrooms at primary schools and tell them what life was like when they were at school; taking history walks; no funding? No evaluation? Who is organizing this? Providing training to the volunteers? | Educational                      |
|         | 3 | Changing Generations: Towards a new national dialogue on intergenerational solidarity and | Education |   |   | x | University Intergenerational Learning Programme; older people take modules, students take credits for it; university based and funded.  | Educational                      |

|        |   |   |                   |   |   |   |   |                                       |
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|        |   | justice in Ireland  |                   |   |   |   |   |                                       |
| Israel | 1 | Arugot  | Health            | x | x |   | A multi-disciplinary therapeutic non-profit organisation providing treatment for families with children who have learning disabilities. For religious families, reading and learning (including the Torah) is of paramount importance to family life. Mostly funded by philanthropy and government contracts. | Educational                           |
|        | 2 | Milav   | Support           |   | x | x | Branches of Milav are all over Israel; organizing social clubs, they bring in kids and students for classes and workshops to work with older people. No single specific program, major resource is government funding and philanthropic donations.  | Educational                           |
|        | 3 | The Voice at Age  | Education         | x | x |   | Volunteer organisation designed to connect youth and elderly. Multiple projects but no specific theme. Bidirectional involvement so youth help elderly and vice versa. Both groups obtain more positive perspectives of each other.   | Social wellbeing                      |
| Malta  | 1 | Artistic and Intergenerational Solidarity Program at Mellieha Nursing Home. | Education/ health |   |   | x | Money provided by ministry of health; artistic intervention; connecting youth and elderly residents at a nursing home; repeated in other homes; homes are run by the government; one-time momentum of IGS   | Mental Wellbeing: Cultural activities |
|        | 2 | Active Ageing: Intergenerational Dialogue                                   | Support           |   |   | x | Government pays for theatre and movement workshops; students and elderly performing together; one-off event.  | Social awareness, cultural activities |
|        | 3 | Eko Scola   | Education/ health |   |   | x | Specific project on students and resident older adults who are ex-farmers; sharing info on environment and sustainability; project in school; younger students having more healthy snacks, older residents had crops and gardens in nursing homes.  | Mental wellbeing                      |

|          |   |                        |         |  |   |   |   |                              |
|----------|---|------------------------|---------|--|---|---|---|------------------------------|
| NL       | 1 | Seniorenstudent        | Support |  | x |   | senior student service; social enterprise that connects students to older generations to help them with all types of errands  | Social wellbeing             |
|          | 2 | Work and Informal care | Support |  |   | x | werkenmantelzorg.nl; toolkit provided by government funding; voluntary employed by work organizations in order to facilitate combining work with informal care;   | Informal care                |
|          | 3 | Stadsdorpzuid          | Support |  | x |   | voluntary organization in a specific neighborhood in the city of Amsterdam; civic members helping out each other in the local community   | Social wellbeing             |
| Portugal | 1 | Cosiness               | Housing |  | x |   | Housing for college students in older people's homes in Porto; cheaper way to live in exchange of small services. Works in countries/cities where there is a surplus of housing, older people in the community and students looking for rooms. This is about putting students in private homes. Porto city council and Porto academic are working together. | Housing and social wellbeing |
|          | 2 | Yellow Heart           | Support |  | x |   | Voluntary organisation organizing community intergenerational program; volunteers are training volunteers; helping out with small tasks inside and outside the home. Students at university are encouraged to do this.  | Social wellbeing             |
|          | 3 | To give and take       | Support |  | x |   | Program of the University of Porto; financed by a private company and supervised by the psychologist of the university. Focus intergenerational solidarity between residential older adults and institutionalized children; research intervention examined pre-post tests on wellbeing. 12 months, monthly intervention.                                    | Social and mental wellbeing  |

|       |   |  |           |  |   |   |  |  |
|-------|---|--|-----------|--|---|---|--|--|
| Spain | 1 | Comunitat d'Aprenentatge (Learning Community)          | Education |  | x |   | Learning communities; program designed to educate parents in working class neighbourhoods with migrant population. Method is 1) education for relatives, 2) discussion programmes. Outcomes for parent-children within families and within school.                                 | Educational  |
|       | 2 | Aprendre amb la gent gran (Learning with older people) | Education |  | x | x | Long term program; Learning with older people; enacted at the community level; includes schools and retirement communities; share life stories; older people volunteer; University of Barcelona; share experiences and value past and present. Supported by Barcelona City Council | Social wellbeing and educational                         |
|       | 3 | Viure i conviure (Living and Living Together)          | Housing   |  | x |   | Living and living together; students living in housing of older people; delaying residential care; Barcelona City Council; psychologists involved for selection and training students and older people. Promote intergenerational contact even after living together.              | Housing and social wellbeing                             |
| UK    | 1 | UK Network of Age Friendly Cities                      | Education |  | x |   | Age friendly cities; how physical order shapes social order; research network and city council; city of Manchester.  | Cultural: promoting age-friendly policies and Activities |
|       | 2 | Camden Intergenerational Network                       | Education |  | x |   | Storytelling; Camden burrough in London organizes intergenerational weeks (in 2013-2015-2017) including crafts and story telling. Funded by Ageing Better, funded by National Lottery and Age UK.  | Wellbeing: Cultural activities                           |
|       | 3 | Liveage Festival                                       | Education |  |   |   | Liveage Festival; 'Ages and Stages' is about celebrating age; theatre, products older people have made   | Wellbeing: Cultural activities                           |

## **Appendix: Cultural analysis of family practices**

In order to inform analysis of interventions the WG carried out an overview of the cultural values, norms and the place of family in the society, reflected in family-friendly policies in the following European/EU and associated group member countries:

### *Demographic and Social Trends*

Family forms and policy have changed significantly in the recent years, for instance, some countries legally allowing same sex marriages (Portugal/2010, Ireland/2015, Malta/2017) and the right for adoption by LGB couples (Portugal/2016). Many countries reported decline in population and in birth rate (Georgia, Hungary, Portugal, Spain) decreasing family size (Ireland, UK), fragmented and/or nuclear families (France, UK) with increasing life expectancy (e.g. Portugal, Spain).

Ireland, Hungary and Malta are among those countries where family is treated traditionally by people as a priority value. However, historically Georgia and the Mediterranean countries, Greece, Spain, Portugal had always popularised a culture of strong family relations. While in Israel family is so central and important both culturally and from the family policy point of view that there is the highest birth rate among the studied countries, partly due to the inexpensive and accessible advanced high tech (IVF) fertilization techniques. Modernization, urbanization, ageing and the recent economic hardship had significant effect on the form, life, well-being and intergenerational solidarity of the countries. Specially hidden by the post-Soviet transitional effects, burdened with war conflicts, Georgia has lost one-third of her population between 1989-2017, mainly through emigration, some regions and villages struggling with significant depopulation. Portugal is among the fastest ageing societies in the world, coupled with the consequences of the economic crisis, such as one of the highest youth unemployment rate in the EU, putting a great burden on the sandwich generations. Moreover, due to the financial crisis and high unemployment rate general, traditional co-habitation of more generations became widespread again, mostly in the Mediterranean countries (Portugal, Greece). However, property, house and rental prices increased immensely both in the UK and Ireland, thus young, carrier and family starting generations need much more financial and/or habitation support from their parents, grant parents. Based on these disadvantageous socio-economic

facts, though intergenerational solidarity is stated as important from both directions in the surveys, it seems many times as a one-way support channel from the parents' and even grandparents' direction towards the youngest generation.

### *Family and Welfare Provision*

It is varying in what form, areas and to what degree the state – be a well-developed welfare state, like the Netherlands or a transition country, like Georgia – tries to compensate and ease the burden of the families in the studied countries, based on their economic-political resources and assets, (e.g. Georgia started Universal Healthcare Coverage and free-of-charge Hepatitis C treatment programmes since 2013) The Netherlands, for instance, is a densely populated country, geographic distance between families is small, inter-generational contact between two or even three generations is quite frequent. Yet the Netherlands has also favoured toward a de-familialisation policy pattern, in which the welfare state provides generous support for her citizens (minimum pension, grants and loans for students etc.), at the same time less younger people agree with the statement that they should take care of their sick parents (40%). In France, Hungary, Malta, or Israel, although different in socio-economic development, governmental family policies and support are quite generous. In Hungary various child care allowances, benefits, tax incentives, state loans for first home etc, are provided representing 3.1 % of the GDP (2.2% EU average), Malta is represented by e.g. reduced and flexible working hours, more family friendly work-life balance policies, while France has introduced intergenerational educational programs, like “Together tomorrow” to share and transmit knowledge, disappeared values. While in Georgia, where the welfare state is not so developed yet, public family policy support is less, so families rely on their private resources, such as their relatives support – e.g. regular transfers from abroad living family members (12-25%) – and over 2/3 of them think that younger generation should help the elders if they are sick.

### *How Family is Valued*

Family may be valued through the ideal of tradition (eg Hungary, Israel, Georgia and Malta) or through commitment to diversity (eg UK, France, Netherlands and Ireland). Though even this split is not straightforward with Malta for example recently endorsing diverse family forms (e.g. same sex marriage). Family is though more commonly valued through

intergenerational support and how both young and older generations are supported through family practices (this is the classic Southern European Familialistic model found in Greece, Portugal and Spain. Georgia would also appear to fit this model).

Another clear divergence (which relates to the familiastic divide) is the distinction in how the state is expected to support family or if the family is expected to support the state. For example, in Netherlands policy actively supports the capacity of families to provide intergenerational solidarity. France offers a similar model, though here state support is channelled through education rather than social policy. In the UK the state intervenes to support families 'in trouble'. Georgia provides state support for families with children, though does not promote this to intergenerational support. The Southern European countries are characterised by weak state support (Portugal, Spain and Greece). In these countries family support is required, or favoured, over state support.

### *Threats to Family*

Changes to family practices are a key theme in many of the descriptions, yet these differ in how they are identified and the extent to which these changes are embraced or identified as threats to family life and individual well-being. Declining fertility is identified as a key threat in Israel, indeed it would appear that pro-natalism defines both family culture and policy in Israel. Hungarian policy also supports families with larger numbers of children. In other countries the outcome of declining fertility is recognised, that is dealing with an ageing population. France is characterised as focussing on the challenges of ageing populations. The development of intergenerational educational policies in France have been particularly stimulated by concerns about ageing populations. The development of national policies to alleviate the social and economic outcomes of ageing is not consistent across the sample countries, with some more advanced than others. Georgia for example, has yet to develop policies to address the challenges of ageing.

Elsewhere 'threats' to family life are associated with the economic crisis and declining job opportunities (eg Spain and Portugal) or the cost of housing (Ireland). These economic threats are recognised as potentially undermining intergenerational family solidarity if young people have to move away from other family members in search of employment or affordable housing.

Yet not all changes are embraced as threats, while countries such as Hungary and Georgia seek to establish a national identity through conservative family ideals, other countries such as UK, Netherlands, Malta, Portugal and Ireland are embracing diversity. In particular recognition of same-sex partnerships is being extended throughout Europe. Indeed it would appear that this family form is more acceptable than other structures, such as lone-parent families. Countries such as Georgia that have resisted any formal recognition of same-sex partnerships are obliged to provide legal recognition for non-marital partnerships, including same-sex partnerships, according to the Venice Commission's ruling on this issue.