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ERASMUS+ STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PROJECT 'DIGITAL ACQUISITION THROUGH INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING' (DIAL)

No 2017-1-LV01-KA204-035455

DIGITAL LITERACY FOR SENIORS: LEARNING TOGETHER IN THE DIGITAL WORLD THROUGH THE ERASMUS+ D.I.A.L. PROJECT

Old age is something we will all experience sooner or later. Not only is ageing something which concerns us personally, everyone we know and love will also eventually go through this process (if not already). As such, ageing poses problems and questions for each and every one of us to ponder.

It is known that a lot of people experience in their later years a sense of alienation from the world. This can result from many factors, one of which is technological advancement, which moves at such a fast pace that we can all barely keep up with. As the world around us moves forward and we are left behind, we cannot help but feel excluded, and the task of catching up with new technologies appears to be an insurmountable obstacle.

Loneliness is another problem that senior citizens may experience. As their children migrate to other countries for work, people are left without a family within reachable distance, and in many cases without the knowledge to contact them, even though it is, nowadays, very simple. Globalisation has immense benefits, which come, however, at a price, like everything else. Today's society is a lot more open, with opportunities for travel and work to everyone, both for personal and professional development. The adverse effect of this, however, is that more and more families are divided, as family members leave their home country, building lives away from home. Many times, the family members who are left behind feel exactly that: abandoned, and not a part of their children's lives.





Technology can easily help with this problem, as communication is becoming more and more simplified and easy. Loved ones and their lives are just a video call away, any time of the day. With basic technological skills, global communication is becoming increasingly accessible.

Yet the majority of the world's population, especially those of older ages, have very limited technological skills, something which can be attributed to the fact that until recent years, even simple electronics were expensive enough to prevent people with fewer opportunities from accessing them. As prices drop, however, and more and more people can afford smartphones and computers, it is becoming clearer and clearer that even though a lot of us now have the means, we lack the expertise.

The Erasmus+ project entitled **DIAL: Digital Acquisition through Intergenerational Learning** (No. 2017-1-LV01-KA204-035455) that was implemented in Cyprus by the Emphasys Centre (www.emphasyscentre.com) tackled these problems through intergenerational learning. This project was targeted towards grandparents (mainly adults of 55+) who wish to upgrade their basic skills, with the involvement of their grandchildren. This method had a twofold action on the problem:

- firstly, it taught people necessary skills to maintain a sense of relevance with their environment and e-participation,
- and secondly it has promoted communication between older people and their younger family, fostering social inclusion and belonging.

DIAL advocates active ageing and Lifelong Learning in line with the efforts of the EU, based on the Digital Competence Reference Framework of the EC (2016).

During the pilot testing of this project, both the importance and the impact it has on seniors were made evident. Many participants, such as M.Th. expressed their excitement and gratitude for the course, as they are now in a position to communicate with her grandchildren and other family members and friends who live abroad. "It's a miracle", as Mrs M.Th. said. Talking about the digital literacy course she attended at Emphasys Centre, she called it "a precious passport for magical travels", as she feels that it has enhanced the capabilities of the



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participants, giving them a skillset which allows them to listen to music, watch videos and look up information on any subjects they may have an interest in. Mrs. M.Th. described how the courses she attended boosted the participants' confidence and gave them a sense of belonging, inclusion, and purpose. She concluded thanking the EU and Emphasys Centre for embracing seniors, wishing that such programmes may continue to provide support.

The **DIAL** project has shown that it improves the quality of life of senior citizens through intergenerational and lifelong learning. Digital literacy is a key skill for everyone, including senior citizens, for a productive, motivated and independent life, which is what the **DIAL** project ultimately aims to achieve.

More information about the project can be found on the official website of the DIAL project on <http://dialproject.eu/>. Interested people can also visit the Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/DIALerasmusPlus/>, as well as the learning platform on <http://moodle.dialproject.eu/> For further information please you can get in touch with the Emphasys Centre by email at info@emphasyscentre.com or on 2266310.





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