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## **GreenerAge: Empowering Sustainable Transitions through Adult Education for 55+ people**

**Inês Saavedra, Carina Dantas, Joana Vieira, Flávia Rodrigues<sup>1</sup>,  
Raúl Castaño-Rosa, Outi Valkama, Pauliina Baltzar, Sofie Pelsmakers<sup>2</sup>,  
Willeke van Staalduinen<sup>3</sup>, Karin Stiehr<sup>4</sup>, Lucia Thielman, Bart Borsje<sup>3</sup>,  
Leni Koch<sup>4</sup>, Edyta Sadowska<sup>5</sup>, Patricia Lucha<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> SHINE 2Europe

<sup>2</sup> Tampere University

<sup>3</sup> AFEdemy - Academy on Age-Friendly Environments in Europe

<sup>4</sup> ISIS - Institut für Soziale Infrastruktur gGmbH

<sup>5</sup> LAB60+ - Fundacja Laboratorium Architektury 60+

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The ageing of the global population is fast-moving. In Europe, the projections are that individuals aged 55 and older rise from approximately 35% in 2022 to around 40% of the total population by 2050 (Eurostat, 2020). Climate and sustainable actions should consider their participation and engagement. With accumulated life experiences, maturity, time, and knowledge, older adults can play a pivotal role in advancing a greener future, both at the individual and community levels.

The commitment to move towards a carbon-neutral future by 2050, as expressed in the European Green Deal, entails significant social, economic and employment impacts (EC, 2021; EP, 2022).

## *GreenerAge*

The GreenerAge project aims to promote the potential of 55+ population to achieve this target by supporting them through the transition process. Education and training systems emerge as critical conduits for increasing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to navigate and lead these changes toward sustainability.

GreenerAge is focused on achieving the following outcomes:

- 1) a European Compendium with a low-threshold collection of knowledge and practical tips that aim to encourage shifts in older citizens' behaviours;
- 2) an e-Learning Platform for older adults that combines the compendium, tools and training content through gamification strategies, to facilitate the engagement of participants towards sustainable actions in their daily lives;
- 3) a Trainer Manual that will complement the learning platform and compendium, offering essential background knowledge, innovative workshop ideas and equip adult educators with the necessary tools and insights to effectively lead engaging learning experiences;
- and 4) Policy Recommendations, including specifically tailored measures to various levels of impact: micro, meso and macro.

The presentation will concentrate on the development of the learning platform, focusing on the co-creation process with the target audience and its influence on content creation and presentation. A comprehensive research phase was conducted not only to understand the habits, knowledge, digital skills and learning preferences of the 55+ population but also to explore strategies to enhance environmental and climate literacy and instigate behaviour change with the COM-B Model of Behaviour (West & Michie, 2020).

This comprehensive assessment was carried out in the five partner countries - Portugal, Finland, Poland, The Netherlands, and Germany – and was conducted via desk research and two structured surveys: the General Ecological Behavior Scale (GEB-50) (Kaiser, 2020) and the Digital Literacy Assessment Questionnaire (Son, et al., 2017). Furthermore, the research process incorporated narrative interviews, allowing participants to share their insights.

A consultation process with 43 individuals aged 55 or older revealed some common aspects between countries.

Participants showed a general awareness of environmental issues but often lacked insight into how these issues directly affected their lives. Most participants expressed a strong desire to

better understand the impact of personal actions on the environment and the possibility of having access to practical tips for adopting sustainable habits.

Financial factors played a significant role in participants' decisions. In most countries, participants cited financial constraints as barriers to adopting sustainable practices, such as installing solar panels or purchasing eco-friendly products. Regarding mobility, while some participants used eco-friendly transportation options, personal vehicles were commonly used for convenience.

The shared gaps and needs across countries, alongside the unique characteristics of each country, highlighted through the research, have served as the foundation for the development of the e-learning platform.

This platform will be accessible in each partner country's language and tailored to each country's specific contextual gaps and needs. Aligned with objectives of the European Green Deal (EP, 2023), the e-learning platform features several learning modules. These include climate change knowledge and behavioural patterns, sustainable approaches to food consumption, various facets of recycling, environmentally friendly modes of mobility, prudent water management, the adoption of renewable energy practices, and strategies for sustainable living within domestic settings. Formulated with the express purpose of inspiring behavioural transformations, the e-learning platform offers easily accessible information and good practices in each learning module. Moreover, it serves as a catalyst for introspection and action by incorporating quizzes with varying levels of difficulty. For individuals seeking deeper knowledge, a set of hyperlinks directs them to relevant and informative content on the given topic. Furthermore, the platform promotes a set of actions at both individual and community levels. Tailored to accommodate varying levels of commitment, ranging across time and resources, these actions empower users to choose the degree of involvement that suits them best.

GreenerAge's contribution extends beyond the 55+ population encompassing adult educators and policymakers. By facilitating informed learning and strategic action through free and accessible resources like the compendium, e-learning platform, trainer manual, and policy recommendations, GreenerAge empowers these target groups with tools for effective change implementation.

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