NEEDS ANALYSIS SUMMARY REPORT

Seniors for Circular Economy

(SEN4CE)

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December 2022

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Introduction

The SEN4CE Project Result 1 objective is **to design a course curriculum on circular economy for seniors** which will **close gaps of previous approaches and create synergies with other projects** addressing the same target group. To achieve this goal, the project partners have conducted a needs analysis based on a questionnaire (T1.1) and the existing good practices, i.e. training and educational programs on circular economy for seniors, applied at the national and international levels.

Having conducted this analysis, each project partner collected 2-3 examples of circular economy initiatives available in their country and 1 international one, making a total of 19 good practices. This allowed the SEN4CE partners to verify whether the issues pointed out by the respondents are addressed by the identified good practices. And if not, **how the SEN4CE project could contribute to solving these issues by creating synergies with the existing initiatives or tailor-making a course curriculum in accordance with the real needs of its target group**.

International good practices

During the online research, it became apparent that there are still significant gaps in the field of senior education on the topic of circular economy, also regarding the use of digital devices. This was certainly confirmed by the responses of the conducted questionnaire, which frequently indicated that seniors were lacking adequate information on circular economy related topics and were unsure of where to obtain it. Due to the complexity of the Internet, with its many untrustworthy sources, it is a challenge to access relevant websites, especially for elderly people.

The following international best practices have been identified and analysed in relation to the objectives of the SEN4CE project:

- **Omas For Future** (Germany, Austria, Hungary, the Netherlands) displays a strong orientation towards climate change and related topics, but circular economy only plays an indirect role in existing learning and information materials.

- The **CYCLE Competence Centre** (Austria, Belgium, Italy, Poland, Spain and UK) is a great example of a European project which focuses on competences for the circular economy, but its target group is adult trainers and not seniors.

- **Gray is Green** (United States) is an initiative which targets the older adults and creates practical educational action-oriented content, e.g. in the form of an e-book which can be a great inspiration for the design of an elaborated SEN4CE curriculum available at the dedicated e-platform and applied at the European level.

EASI (United States) provides some educational activities for seniors and demonstrates to the SEN4CE partners the importance of collaborating to the local actors and scaling up the organizational efforts to the national level thanks to some train-the-trainer methodologies and established volunteer's network.

The Story of Stuff (United States) is an excellent initiative which shows the leverage that the project can make thanks to the media devices and other creative tools, as well as to the elaborated Community members network, but, as in the case of Omas for Future, it does not target the seniors specifically.

Therefore, by developing a program with circular economy related content during the project period of SEN4CE, which is specifically tailored to the elderly target group and their needs, the existing gaps can be closed.

National good practices

After the identification of different good practices at national level, it was concluded that there is a lack of online training for the over 65s on the topic of the Circular Economy. Practically all that has been found is theory applied in courses/workshops, etc. Moreover, they usually do not cover the concept of Circular Economy in its broad spectrum but focus mainly on recycling, remanufacturing, etc.

Also, there is hardly any promotion of digital skills which would hinder the use of many circular tools currently on the market and which could make it much easier for them to implement circular actions in their daily life.

There is, therefore, a lot of innovation and room for improvement in the training of the over-60s in the circular economy. However, it is the task of the SEN4CE project consortium to identify the best pedagogical tools to ensure that this target group is interested in the course and successfully acquires the knowledge to be able to apply it.

Final conclusions

As a result of the needs analysis, we concluded that there are no existing circular economy training programs designed specifically for seniors and available online, which addresses the inspirational and motivational aspects of adapting the circular economy practices in day-to-day life, which means that our project is even more important. The SEN4CE consortium has a freedom, and a duty, to innovate and develop an online study program that is suitable and engaging for seniors. However, partners can draw inspiration from the existing best practices to build a suited circular economy curriculum, tailored to the needs of seniors.

First of all, it is crucial that we precisely define a circular economy, in particular in relation to other terms we often hear when speaking about climate change or environmental protection. Most of the identified practices rather address educational aspects of the circular economy and not motivational and inspirational components of building the environmental habits in seniors' behaviours.

The SEN4CE curriculum should also address the difficulties seniors encounter when trying to find information on circular economy, due to the variety of existing sources and the different information they give. This curriculum should therefore contribute to closing this digital gap that prevents seniors from accessing the right information.

Some of the lessons learnt by this research also include: the need to cooperate or direct seniors towards local actors of circular economy, which they may feel are more trustworthy and more reachable; the importance of networking and sharing knowledge; the idea to make this curriculum entertaining in order to engage the public; and finally, the need to enhance the sense of community one may gain by applying circular economy practices, and to show the importance of community to apply these practices in the long term.

List of Best Practices

For those interested in exploring some of the best practices identified by our consortium, here is the full list per country:

International Best practices

CYCLE Project – Circular Economy Competences
Omas for future
Gray is green
The story of Stuff
The Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement (EASI)

National Best practices

Austria
Montags-akademie of the University of Graz
VHS Steiermark
BildungsLAB
France
Les séniors écol'EAU
Soyons nature
Grands-parents pour le climat
Germany
Klimaverträglich mobil 60+
Digital Kompass
Portugal
Repair Café
Course about circular economy
Zero Waste Lab
Spain
Circular economy, cuisine and local product
Sustainability and Circular Economy in practice: What can we do?
Third in age, first in recycling