



# Active ageing in active communities through Intergeneration programme

### **Making ‘Age-Friendly’ more than a Slogan!**

One of the great surprises of this century is gift of long life!

Historically, Albania’s enduring and resilient familial structure provided people of all ages with vital social and emotional support and ensured the transmission of cultural values from generation to generation. However, this venerable social system is under assault by the influences of modern life. There is an urgent need for new mechanisms beyond the family, that promote intergeneration interaction and understanding, and which would ensure cultural continuity.

Thus, it will be more and more vital to create places within each community where old people and children can meet, as ASAG (Albanian Society for All Ages) has done 15 years ago through Day Center ‘Community for All Ages’. It will provide children with an opportunity to get know views and opinions different from those of their parents, as well as a unique opportunity for social development quite different from that provided by association with peers.

The promotion of “active, healthy and engaged living” is a public health strategy to prevent problems affecting mental, physical and social well-being. This “primary intervention” addresses the root cause of a host of issues afflicting older Albanians today, such as isolation, falls, depression and elder abuse. It represents opportunities to avoid costlier and often unwanted “secondary layers of intervention,” such as medications, hospitalization and guardianship.

Intergenerational practice has emerged as one general approach that may help put substance to aspirations for bringing young people into closer contact with others in their community.

Intergenerational programs have the potential to foster and develop resilience, enhance social connection and interactions and build both individual and community capacity.

ASAG has established that the notion of intergenerational exchange is most often associated with a relationship of mutually beneficial exchange and cooperation across generational groups.

Literature reviewed also identified a large range of outcomes from intergenerational practice for young people, old people and the broader community. For individuals, these included increases in self-worth, less loneliness and isolation, new connections and friendships, academic improvements and more positive perceptions of other generations. For the broader community, benefits include the building of social networks, greater diversity of contact, breaking down of stereotypes, and enhancing of culture in particular communities.

### **Benefits for younger people**

- Increase in self-worth and confidence
- Less loneliness and isolation
- Access to adult support during difficult times
- Increased sense of social responsibility
- Greater positive perception of older adults
- More knowledge of issues facing seniors
- Provision of practical skills



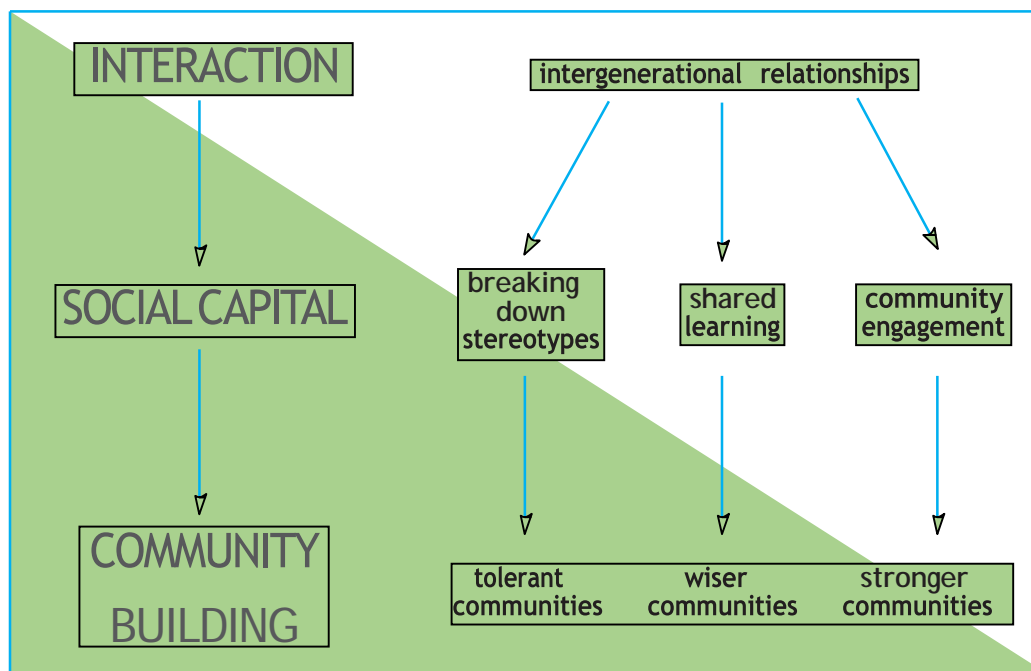


- School attendance improvement
- Enhancement of literacy development
- Less involvement in violence and drug misuse

## Benefits for the broader community

- Rebuilds social networks, developing community capacity and a more inclusive society
- Breaking down of barriers and stereotypes
- Building of social cohesion
- Enhancing and building culture
- Alleviates pressure on parents

*These ASAG 'bridge-building' experiences ... show us that if you can change people's way of thinking in a community it will become a better place to live... dedicating just a little bit of our time to the community will make people of all ages feel better about themselves...*



## REFERENCES

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*Elderly people are the best experts when it comes to their own needs.*