# GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATORS

## EDUCATIONAL TRANSVERSAL CONCEPTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

# GAME ON!

## BONDING GENERATIONS AND CULTURES

Erasmus+

GAME ON! CONSORTIUM

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# PROJECT DESCRIPTION

"OUR HERITAGE: WHERE THE PAST MEETS THE FUTURE."
THE SLOGAN OF EUROPEAN YEAR OF CULTURAL HERITAGE, COMBINED
WITH OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS AND OUR EXPERIENCES, WAS THE
INSPIRING TRIGGER FOR THIS PROJECT AND LED US TO THE IDEA OF
BONDING GENERATIONS AND CULTURES THROUGH TRADITIONAL SPORT
AND GAMES.

"Game On! Bonding Generations and Cultures" it's a two-year Strategic Partnership for Exchange of Practices in Adult Education, and involves public and private organizations, from Portugal, Italy, Bulgaria, Poland and Spain.

Through the exchange of methodological approaches between the involved partners, we will create a European Intergenerational and Intercultural learning opportunity, engaging senior citizens in active ageing and promotion of Europe's cultural heritage, focusing on Traditional Sports and Games, tackling several challenges and needs from our communities.

The project is based on 4 premises:

- Population ageing is one of the greatest social and economic challenges facing the EU and "Active Ageing" has become a policy priority within the European Union. Projections foresee a growing number and share of elderly persons (aged 65 years and over) Eurostat's annual demography data collection shows there were 510.3 million people living in the EU-28 as of 1 January 2016, of whom almost 98 million were aged 65 years and over.

- One of the headline targets of the EU 2020 Strategy for Education and Training is that at least 15% of adults should participate in lifelong learning. The challenge is to provide learning opportunities adults, throughout their life, especially disadvantaged groups, including senior citizens.

- 2018 was the European Year of Cultural Heritage with the aim to encourage more people to discover and engage with Europe's cultural heritage, and to reinforce a sense of belonging to a common European space.

- Intergenerational dialogue refers to the way that people of all ages can learn together and from each other, and is an important part of Lifelong Learning, where the generations work together to gain skills, values and knowledge.

The project is framed within a long-term perspective and planned with a view to achieve a multiplying effect and sustainable impact, and it has a good geographical balance, involving 5 countries from South, Central and Eastern Europe, which will contribute to ensure a real European outreach of the project.

# INTRODUCTION

The intention of this document is to transfer to Adult Educators some transversal knowledge supporting educators who will act as Facilitators in the implementation of "Game On!" Program.

"Game On!" Program builds on both individual and group learning, always respecting participants needs. To achieve the learning goals, the learning process was carefully planned and framed within the principles of Lifelong Learning, Non-Formal Education and Experiential Learning.

In practice, it means that a self-directed learning approach strongly supported by Facilitators, having in mind the different learning styles, with frequent reflections on experienced activities and learning process, will be fostered.

The overall goal is to give a comprehensive introduction of these key concepts that each Educator can further deepen according to their needs and interests.

# FORMAL, NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Every day, we are presented with opportunities to learn. Beyond the formal classroom setting, we may acquire the most valuable of knowledge, skills and competences in our daily lives, be it at work, at home or during leisure time. Learning throughout life is a key route to personal development and acknowledging such learning may give greater value to citizens' achievements and their potential contributions to society.

Despite this, the influence of traditional forms of education remains strong, with non-formal and informal learning often ignored and undervalued. The 2012 Council recommendation on validation of non-formal and informal learning recognises this conflict and seeks to promote a more systematic approach to 'validation', to increase the visibility and value of learning taking place outside formal education and training systems.

Cedefop has created European guidelines to provide validation to a broad range of learning experiences, thereby aiding transparency and comparability across its national borders. The broad framework for achieving this certification across both non-formal and informal learning is outlined in the Cedefop European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning (Cedefop, 2015).

Non-formal education refers to education that occurs outside the formal school system. It is often used interchangeably with terms such as community education, adult education, lifelong education and second-chance education. This type of education refers to a wide range of educational initiatives in the community, ranging from home-based learning to government schemes and community initiatives, including accredited courses run by well-established institutions, as well as locally-based operations with little funding.

Cedefop (2015). European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning. Luxembourg: Publications Office. http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/008370

Non-formal education expresses the core principles that should be at the heart of all good education, since it is:

- Relevant to the learner's life and the needs of society. Mechanisms for involving children, parents and local communities, as well as educators, in deciding the content of what is taught, ensure that non-formal education is relevant to the needs of communities and draws on local resources and personnel.

- Appropriate to the level of the learner's development, with new content and experiences being introduced when the learner is ready. Teaching is learner-centred and student-directed.

- Embedded of quality, since non-formal education programmes have the potential to be of exceptionally high quality, due to the fact that they are able to respond more easily to the needs of individuals and specific groups in the community.

- Participatory, in the way that learners are active participants in their learning, and that they, their families and communities are involved in running the non-formal education programme.

- Inclusive, since it targets marginalized groups and responds to their needs (e.g., nomadic communities, girls, people with disabilities, school dropouts and working children).

- Flexible in what is taught and how it is taught, and adjusted to the needs of the different learners (e.g., adults and children who work, who live on the street, who are sick, who are in prison, who have a disability or who are victims of conflict or emergency), and flexible to traditional/indigenous learning Styles.

Informal learning is the education that goes beyond limitations and takes place outside of a traditional formal learning environment, such as a university, school or college. It is a type of education that is seen as a continuous learning, happening in our daily life or through learning projects undertaken by us.

This kind of learning is based on daily life experiences, such as those occurring within peer groups, family, media or any other influence in the learner's surrounding. Furthermore, this learning platform encompasses a great range of activities - it could be researching the International Gallery collection, learning cookery skills in a community centre, taking part in a project voluntarily, or others.

In other words, oftentimes, informal learning involves learning things without realizing the learning process is under way; it is the learning process that happens spontaneously in everyday life.
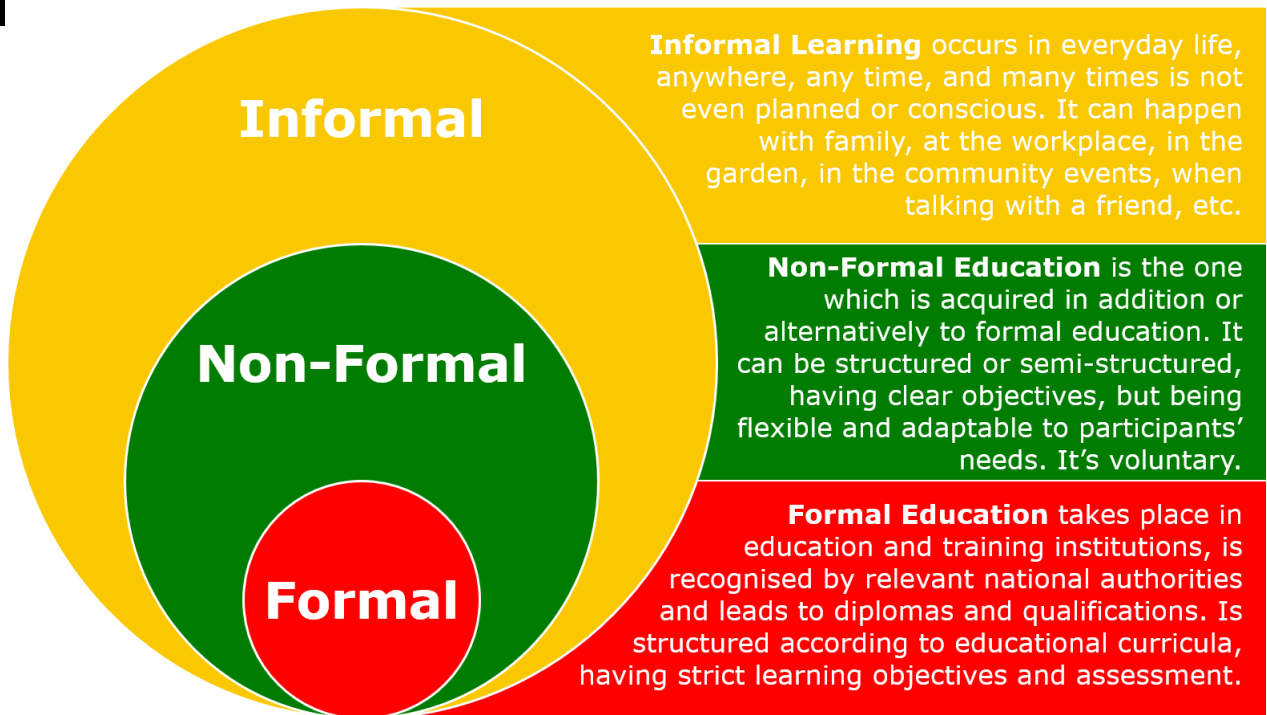
Keeping such information in mind, the main characteristics of informal learning are the following:

- Informal learning is never organized. There are no defined formulas or guidelines. There are no prescriptive study programs for such activities.

- Informal students are often very motivated to learn. Unlike the school's formal learning environment, informal students are often eager and attentive.

- Informal learning is often spontaneous. Learning takes place anywhere, anytime. The student is inspired to learn, because of an immediate desire to know how to do something or understand a topic; or an informal "teacher" sees an opportunity to share his/her knowledge or wisdom with someone else.

- There is no formal curriculum. There is no study program or prescription methods. Whatever the method used, the person teaching knows how to teach, often based on his/her experience.

- The "teacher" is someone who cares - and who has more experience than the student. Even the word "teacher" here is a bit improper, since all professional teachers have credentials, certificates or a teaching license. In the context of informal learning, those who lead learning are likely to be emotionally close to the person they are teaching, such as a mother, a father, a grandparent, a daughter.

- The world is our class. It is a myth that learning only takes place at a school or in a classroom. With informal learning, there is no classroom. Our home, the neighbourhood park, the community and the world, are the classrooms.

- Informal learning is difficult to quantify. There are no exams and informal learning is difficult to quantify.

- It is often rejected by academics and sceptics, being considered as worthless. Informal learning is often overlooked and not considered particularly valuable learning. Some researchers and academics have the opinion that informal learning is less valuable than formal and prescriptive learning, due, in part, to the fact that it is difficult to quantify.

- It is essential for an adult's lifelong learning process.
Informal learning is what keeps us vibrant, mentally active and interested in the world around us, as well as our own development. Just because informal learning cannot be quantified easily, that does not mean that it is not worthwhile – or even essential to our development and growth as human beings.

**Informal Learning** occurs in everyday life, anywhere, any time, and many times is not even planned or conscious. It can happen with family, at the workplace, in the garden, in the community events, when talking with a friend, etc.

**Non-Formal Education** is the one which is acquired in addition or alternatively to formal education. It can be structured or semi-structured, having clear objectives, but being flexible and adaptable to participants' needs. It's voluntary.

**Formal Education** takes place in education and training institutions, is recognised by relevant national authorities and leads to diplomas and qualifications. Is structured according to educational curricula, having strict learning objectives and assessment.

Informal

Non-Formal

Formal

Summarizing:

• Informal learning happens nearly all the time in daily life (at home, on the street, in cafés, etc.) but it is not a planned activity;

• Non-formal education is voluntary, is assisted by others and is planned;

• Formal education is structured, regulated from the outside and involves some form of certification.

# THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

During a non-formal education process, the facilitator is accountable for planning, guiding and managing a group, ensuring that its goals are effectively fulfilled.

To do so, the facilitator must make it easier for learners to go through the process of learning and self-discovery, not by offering the correct answers, but through questioning the group and guiding it during the discussion, in order for its members to reach a conclusion.

This way, the facilitator must be objective and adopt a neutral stance, focusing solely on the group process, while keeping in mind the participants' needs and motivations. Furthermore, the faciltator role is versatile, since he/she must provide support and information, while also acting as a partner within the group.

Practical role of the facilitator:

- To create a safe and trustful learning environment, by providing the group physical, emotional and intellectual support:

- To conceive and plan the group process, selecting the most adequate learning tools for the group;

- To guide the group, ensuring the learners possess good levels of self knowledge and motivation, as well as their effective participation in the learning process;

- To monitor, access and sum up the activites' results and impacts.
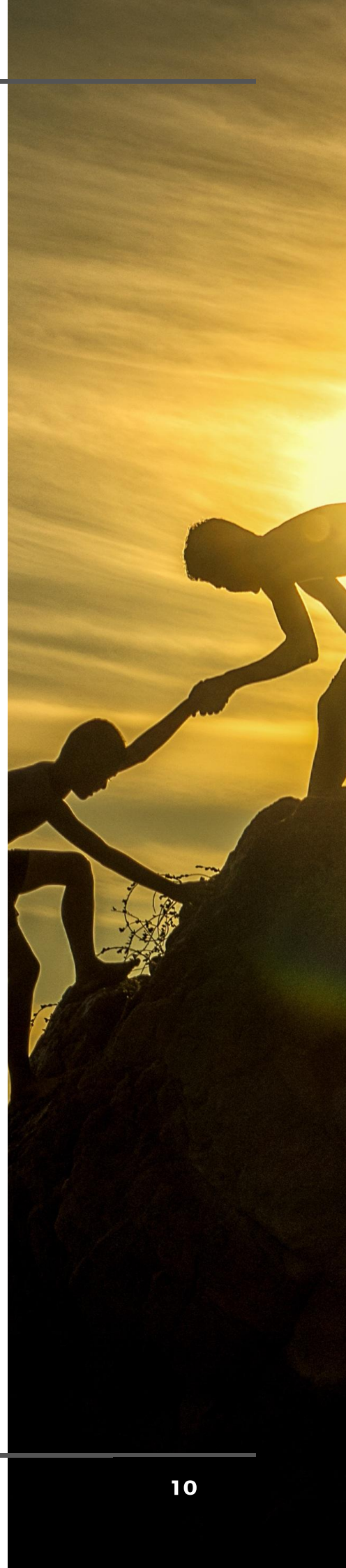
# LEARNING BY DOING

'Learning by doing', and the term 'experiential learning', are commonly used to refer to several aspects of learning, and this approach is largely used in non-formal educational settings.

It is common for training courses to be described as either practical or theoretical: as either involving doing or involving thinking. It is not enough to simply have an experience to learn. Without reflecting upon this experience, it may quickly be forgotten, or its learning potential lost. It is from the feelings and thoughts emerging from this reflection that generalisations or concepts may be generated; and these generalisations enable new situations to be tackled effectively.

Similarly, if it is intended that behaviour should be changed by learning, it is not enough to simply learn new concepts and develop new generalisations. This learning must be tested out in new situations. The learner must make the link between theory and action by planning for that action, carrying it out, and then reflecting upon it, relating what happens back to the theory.

Therefore, it is not enough to just do, and neither is it enough to just think. Nor is it enough simply to do and think. Learning from experience must involve links between the doing and the thinking.

Learning from experience involves four stages, which follow each other in a cycle, as in the following diagram:

CONCRETE EXPERIENCE

CONCEPTUALIZATION (GENERALIZATION)

APPLICATION

REFLECTION
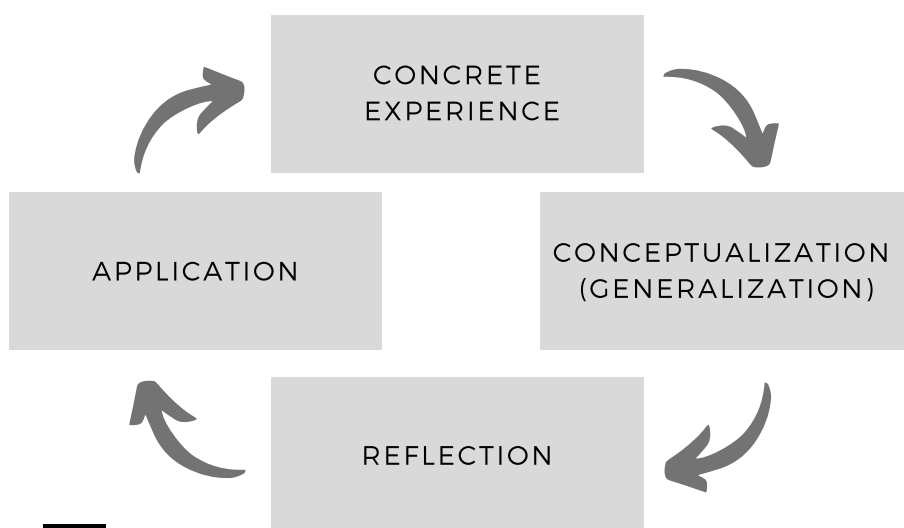
The terms used here as labels for the four stages come from Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory and, placed in this sequence, they form the experiential learning cycle:

- CONCRETE EXPERIENCE: where the learner actively experiences an activity, such as a lab session or field work.
- REFLECTION: when the learner consciously reflects on that experience.
- CONCEPTUALIZATION (Generalization): where the learner attempts to conceptualize a theory or model of what is observed.
- APPLICATION: where the learner is trying to plan how to test a model, theory or plan, for a forthcoming experience.

One of the most challenging stages is what happens after learning experiences and how learning points may be drawn out through structured reflection. The diagram below relates the stages of a full structured debriefing to the stages of the experiential learning cycle.

Stages of a structured reflection:
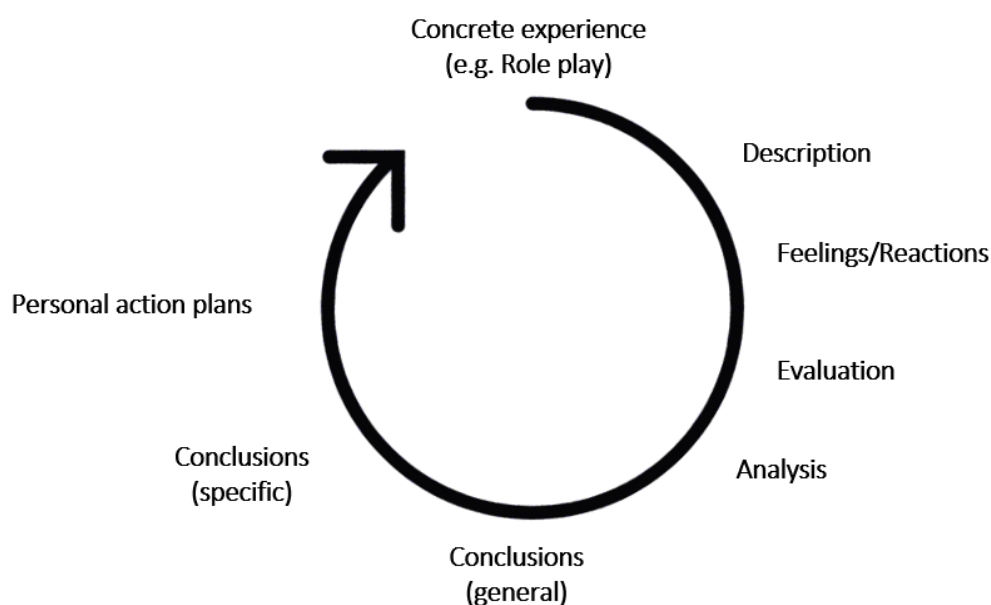


- DESCRIPTION: What happened? Don't make judgements or try to draw conclusions yet; simply describe.
- FEELINGS/REACTIONS: What were your reactions and feelings? Again, don't move on to analysing these yet.
- EVALUATION: What was good/bad about the experience? Make value judgements.
- ANALYSIS: What sense can you make of the situation? Bring in ideas from outside the experience to help you. What was really going on? Were different people's experiences similar or different in important ways?
- CONCLUSIONS (general): What may be concluded, in a general sense, from these experiences and the analysis you have undertaken?
- CONCLUSIONS (specific): What may be concluded about your own specific, unique, personal situation or way of working?
- PERSONAL ACTION PLAN: What are you going to do differently in this type of situation, next time? What steps are you going to take on the basis of what you have learnt?

# LEARNING TOOLS

'A tool is usually any physical item that may be used to achieve a particular physical result, especially if the item is not consumed in the process. However, informally, the word has also come to be used to describe a procedure or process with a specific purpose.

Tools may be classified according to their basic functions (cutting tools, cooking tools, drawing tools, etc), but, in fact, they may be creatively used for other purposes.

The non-formal education process has a number of particular characteristics and, being voluntary, it happens usually in an open, attractive and flexible environment, addressing learners' needs and aspirations, and this assume special relevance when the target group are senior citizens and children/youngsters. Though lacking some of the more common features of the formal learning environment (such as curricula, validation or system assessment), it aims to follow coherent and constructive learning experiences.

So, a non-formal learning tool is something that creatively and inventively initiates or supports an action or process that leads to a learning result or outcome.

However, tools alone have no influence. It is the facilitator's task to adapt them to the context, objectives and target group, but, most importantly, to their own skills, in order to turn such tools into something powerful!

Usually, a non-formal learning tool has the following features:
- It is transferable and capable of further change and development, depending on the context;
- It results in identifiable learning outcomes;
- It adapts to a variety of learning methods and approaches (for example, group work, games, discussions, simulations);
- It helps participants in identifying their own learning needs and capacities;
- It helps participants engage in the learning process;
- It is user-friendly and flexible;
- It may stand-alone, but also be part of or related to a broader activity.
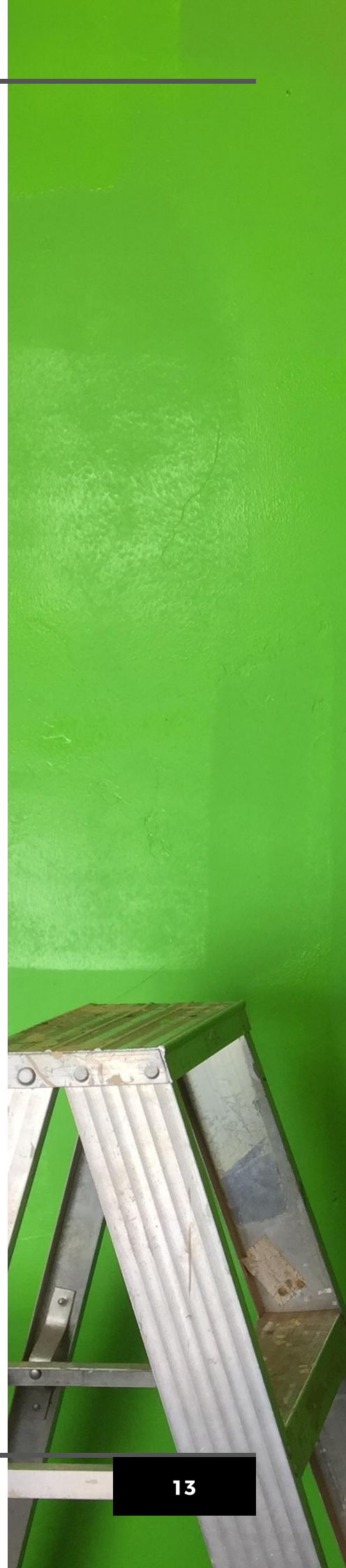
# WORKING WITH SENIORS AND CHILDREN

'Working with intergenerational groups has both advantages and challenges. We must take into account several elements when carrying out activities and projects with people of different generations.

One of the elements to take into account is the challenge of communicating with people of different ages. The language used should be simple, clear and warm, so both children/youth and seniors are able to understand the explanations easily and get motivated.

Timing is another important element when carrying out intergenerational activities, since users have different rhythms and adapting to their pace may be the key to ensure the quality of the activity.

The participants of intergenerational activities have different needs: children tend to be more dynamic, participatory and active, which requires quick and agile stimuli, but without falling into vehemence and disorder. Seniors, on the other hand, need more slow and calm stimuli; however, we must bear in mind that it is only a slower understanding. In any case, all participants need calm and dynamism equally.

Another element that poses a challenge when integrating the several generations is the choice and design of the activities themselves. One has to value whether the activities and games chosen are suitable for different ages, that is, one must choose activities for all audiences. Games that involve a lot of physical activity and that require skills such as agility, strength or endurance, are not recommended for seniors, as it depends on their health condition. And, on the other hand, activities that involve many rules may become difficult to transmit and understand. Therefore, the ideal activities should contain few movements and rules, but without losing dynamism and interest; activities that are easy to implement and understand, and in which safety and fun are guaranteed.

Finally, it is important to mention some of the skills and qualities that the facilitators should possess when putting into practice this type of intergenerational activities, such as the ability to listen actively, to establish empathic links, and to respect and understand others (namely, the participants). It is also important to exhibit professional qualities associated with the sector, such as techniques to revitalize groups and use community resources.