GIDEP 2025

WHAT CAN WE DO TO COMBAT ALL THE PROBLEMS OF LONELINESS AND ISOLATION AMONG THE ELDERLY?

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Research

- **Basic Use of ICTs**: Older adults mainly use information and communication technologies (ICTs) for communication purposes—such as email, messaging, and online searches.

- **Limited Technical Mastery**: While they manage basic digital functions well, they face difficulties with more complex tasks like spreadsheets, databases, or statistical software.

- **Strong Social Influence**: Family, friends, and community environments play a major role in determining whether older adults adopt and continue using the internet.

- **Social Support as a Driver**: The presence of social support networks, rather than individual capability, is the main factor promoting digital inclusion.

- **Barriers Beyond Skills**: The main barriers to ICT adoption are technological access (availability of devices and connectivity) and lack of supportive environments, not cognitive limitations.

Research

- **Learning Through Relevance**: Older adults learn best when they perceive a clear, practical benefit from what they are learning—real-life relevance increases motivation and retention.
- **Experience-Based Education**: Teaching strategies should use real situations and personal experiences as the foundation for learning new technologies.
- **Intergenerational Support as a Key Facilitator**: Collaboration between generations helps bridge the digital divide; younger people assist older adults in adapting to constantly changing technologies.
- **Importance of the "Warm Expert"**: Informal facilitators—such as grandchildren, family members, or trusted community members—play a crucial role in initiating and maintaining ICT use.
- **Continuous Accompaniment Needed**: Because digital tools evolve rapidly, older adults benefit from ongoing, personalized guidance rather than one-time training sessions.

Inspiring projects

BAE organizes and coordinates tricycle outings for older adults and people with disabilities, creating meaningful experiences and human connections. Volunteers help participants explore the city of Donostia on customized routes chosen by them, fostering conversations, social bonds, and interactions with the local community.

Inspiring projects

A website to sign up for different support services for older adults.
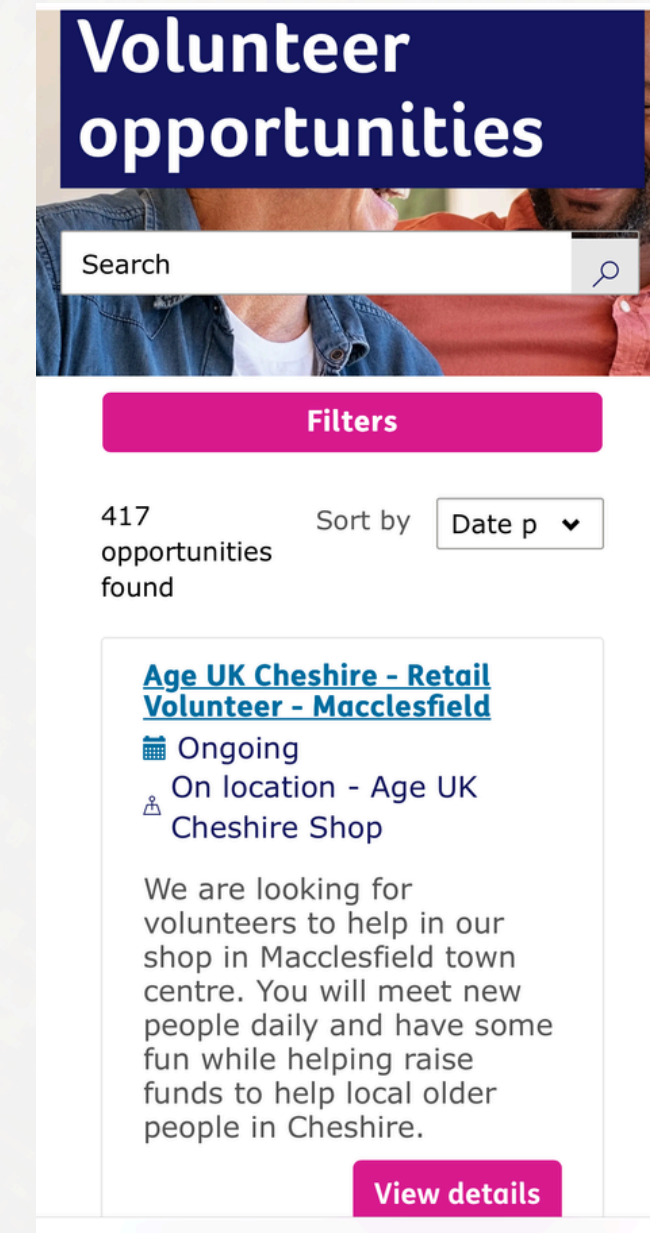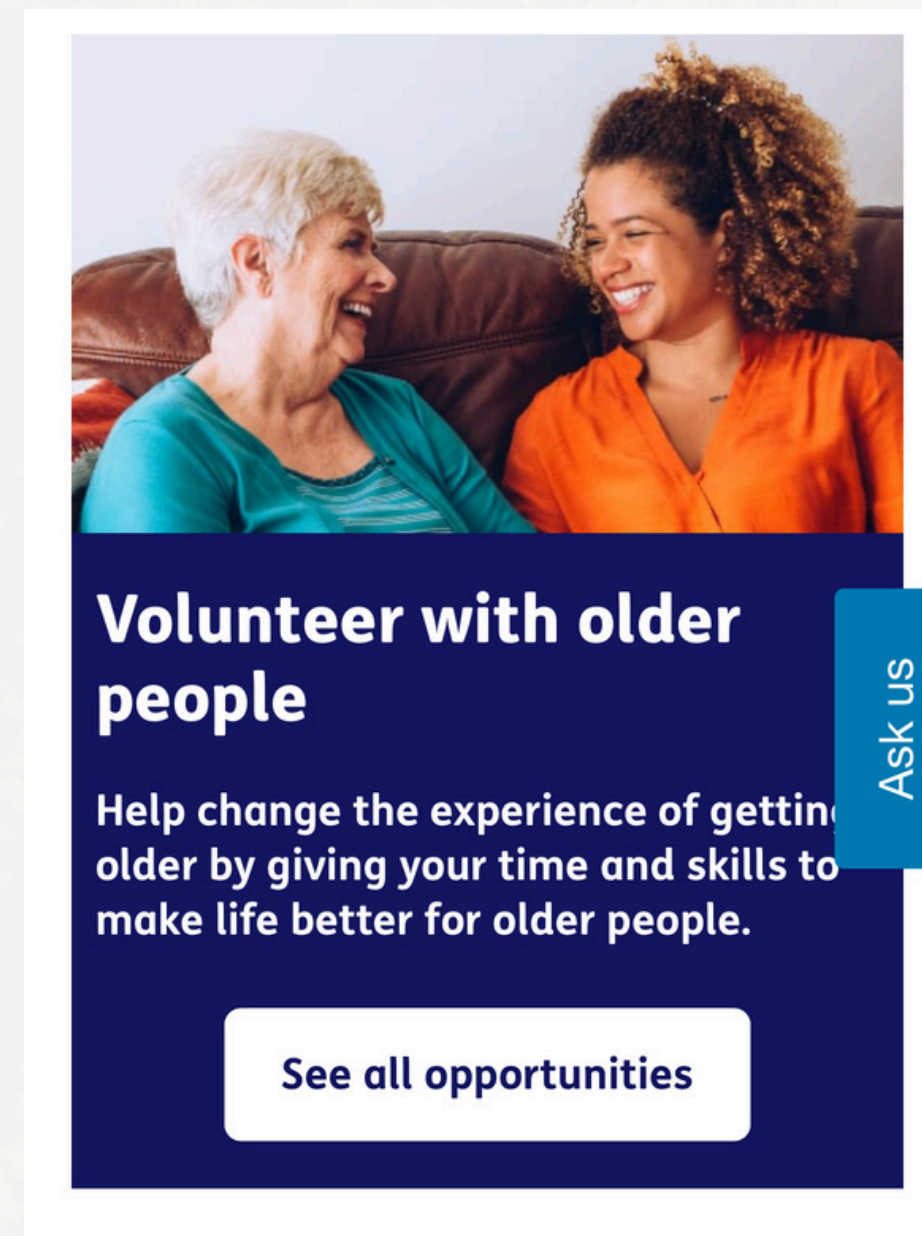
Main focus of the project

DECREASE IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Briefing

There is currently a growing gap between generations, especially between young people and older adults. This distancing results in a significant loss of knowledge, experience, and cultural values that were previously passed down naturally within communities. In Europe, more than 30% of people over the age of 65 live alone, and nearly 20% frequently feel lonely or unheard. This lack of community connection affects their emotional well-being and limits the possibility of sharing their knowledge, stories, and skills with younger generations.

Differences in lifestyles—more digital, fast-paced, and constantly changing among younger generations—deepen the intergenerational gap and reduce opportunities for mutual learning. Rebuilding this connection would enrich both generations, strengthen the social fabric, and improve the mental health of older adults by helping them feel valued, heard, and recognized for their experience.

Key questions:

- How could a product, service, or experience facilitate the active participation of older adults in the daily life of their community?
- What strategies or design elements could help challenge and transform the prejudices that fuel the intergenerational gap?
- What type of environment (physical, digital, or hybrid) could encourage meaningful exchanges of knowledge, experiences, and skills between younger and older generations?
- In what ways can design make the experience of older adults visible and valued, contributing to their emotional well-being and sense of belonging?
- What role can local communities, educational institutions, or digital platforms play in creating and sustaining these intergenerational connections?
- How could we measure the social and emotional impact of initiatives designed to strengthen relationships between generations?

Intergenerational Community Activities Service

General Description: We aim to create a group activity program/service held in a shared and accessible environment where young people and older adults can meet, interact, and enrich each other through the exchange of experiences, knowledge, and skills.

Objectives and Benefits

For older adults:

- Share their life experiences, both personal and professional.
- Pass on their practical knowledge in areas such as cooking, sewing, carpentry, arts and crafts, science...
- Feel valued and active, maintaining a meaningful and participatory role within the community.

For young people:

- Foster empathy and respect toward older generations by understanding their stories and contributions.
- Learn practical skills and values that can be applied in everyday life.
- Share their own knowledge and talents, such as technology, music, sports, or modern forms of expression, thus also enriching the older participants.

Intergenerational Community Activities Service

Environment Requirements

- Accessibility: The space must be safe and comfortable for older adults.
- Appeal to young people: The environment should be dynamic, modern, and welcoming.
- Location: Define whether the activities will take place in a residential area, town, city, or local community.
- Recurrence: Establish an appropriate frequency (weekly, biweekly, or monthly) to encourage continuity and relationship-building among participants.
- Promotion: Publicize the service through community channels, social media, schools, neighborhood associations, or cultural centers.