

# Project SILVER

## Report 7.1.1-7.1.6: *Exploitation of results*

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## 1 Management summary

The purpose of this *Report* is to present the strategy for exploitation of results, which is based on both mainstreaming the results and transferring the outcomes to different groups. While the project has implicit aspects of exploitation, we will also undertake some specific activities to assure a high level of it, as follows: contextualizing IGL, IGL as a lifelong learning strategy, Accrediting lifelong learning programs, and the future of IGL.

Contextualizing IGL is necessary to enlarge the spectrum of applications in Europe, considering different countries and different sectors of activities. There is always a need to adapt a certain model or toolbox to the specificity of a given culture and field of activity. In SILVER we had participants from six countries. In addition each country had a specific sector:

Holland	Public sector
Finland	Information technology
Germany	Knowledge Intensive Services
Greece	Healthcare
Romania	Higher education
Scotland	Transport

IGL as a lifelong learning strategy is viewed as a policy level recommendation for developing sustainable lifelong learning programs, and finding practical ways for evaluation and accreditation of these programs. Also, we think about policies to continue and extend these types of projects focusing on IGL at the national and European levels.

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## 3 Introduction

IGL becomes an important policy and strategy issue in the European countries due to the ageing of employees, and to the potential knowledge loss they may generate. IGL means a change in the paradigm of organizational knowledge dynamics and knowledge management. IGL means a strategy of increasing the level of organizational knowledge, reducing the knowledge loss due to retirement of old employees, and a new opportunity for organizational learning. That means also that innovation is stimulated significantly by learning between generations.

IGL as a lifelong learning tool may be very supportive in promoting creativity, competitiveness, employability and the growth of an entrepreneurial spirit. However, our research shows that implementing IGL is not so easy due to mental and managerial barriers. To overcome these barriers managers must evaluate first the degree of stakeholders awareness concerning ageing phenomenon and IGL, and then to contextualize the toolbox we have developed for implementing IGL. So the focus is on making IGL work in any organizational context, and in the difficult circumstances of the daily practice of work in organizations.

The SILVER Project developed a unique holistic and inclusive approach for IGL among knowledge workers, by addressing the specific requirements of implementing IGL, by developing methods for evaluating stakeholders awareness on ageing workforce and need for IGL, by designing a toolbox able to implement IGL and by testing all of these tools. Also, the Project developed sustainable mechanisms for stimulating lifelong learning in organizations and new perspectives for policy making.

## 4 Contextualizing IGL

### 4.1. Introduction

SILVER-project deliverable 7.2.1 is a short guide to using the concept of IGL and the IGL Toolbox in contexts other than those tested and made available to interested parties at national and local levels. In SILVER we had participants from six countries. In addition each country had a specific sector:

Holland	Public sector
Finland	Information technology
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The Toolkit with all the interventions it contains was tested in these countries and sectors. This guide is intended for managers and companies from other countries and sectors. The guide is divided into three sections. The next section presents general information about contextualization. More information about it can be found in SILVER deliverable 5.3.1 “Methodological guide to contextualizing interventions”. The third section presents CIMO-logic which is used in many parts of the IGL Toolkit. Finally fourth section presents the IGL Toolkit.

### 4.2. Contextualization

Contextualization in sociolinguistics refers to the use of language and discourse to signal relevant aspects of an interactional or communicative situation. Contextualization means in a board sense that a topic or issue is attached to a background, constraints and to the big picture. Typically culture is an example of this “context” but we can also see other examples like historical context, verbal context and social context as well. In essence if we want to understand certain event or action we must understand the context in which it happens.

Cultural context means understanding the different values and norms that are shared among a group of people and how they differ from ones own perspective. Similarly understanding historical context means that we understand how values, norms and beliefs of people in different eras differ. Verbal context refers to surrounding text or talk of an expression (word, sentence, conversational turn, speech act, etc.). The idea is that verbal context influences the way we understand the expression. Hence the norm not to cite people out of context. Since much contemporary linguistics takes texts, discourses or conversations as its object of analysis, the modern study of verbal context takes place in terms of the analysis of discourse structures and their mutual relationships, for instance the coherence relation between sentences.

Traditionally, in sociolinguistics, social contexts were defined in terms of objective social variables, such as those of class, gender or race. More recently, social contexts tend to be defined in terms of the social identity being construed and displayed in text and talk by language users.

Typically, for the purposes of SILVER-project we are mostly interested in cultural and social contexts. Verbal and historical context are also important to keep in mind and they provide valuable background information but are not so crucial for actual contextualization activities.



*Fig. 1. Steps of Contextualisation*

Tips for the contextualisers:

Learn as much as you can about the industry in general and local businesses

- Use and expand your existing networks and ask questions
- Be realistic about the effort, time and money it will take

As a practical note even if “Engaging with the companies” is marked quit late in Figure 1 you should really start discussions with the companies as soon as possible. It can take quite some time to gain the trust of the companies. Naturally if you are planning to use IGL Toolkit on your own company this is not a problem. For a more thorough understanding of contextualization please read the “Methodological guide to contextualizing interventions” (SILVER deliverable 5.3.1).

#### **4.3.CIMO-logic**

In order to structure the interventions the SILVER-project used the same framework with each intervention. The framework is based on what is called the CIMO-logic and it is one way that organizational change programs are analyzed. The way it works is shown below, using finance sector

as an example in regards to the STaP. (Please note that the examples are made up for purposes of illustration only.)

**C = Context.** This is the 'environmental' context in which the program has been, or is being, implemented, including the problem being addressed.

*Example: The finance department (75 employees) of a SILCO, a large (1200 employees) management consultancy firm is about to lose many of its employees to early retirement in the next five years. Management was concerned about a sudden dramatic loss of knowledge and skills and wanted to start working on ways to avoid these losses from being too devastating. One of the ways they think this could happen is to assure more and better interaction among younger and older workers that would stimulate knowledge exchange and learning. But management was worried because they see different cultures split along generational lines and wanted to first try and improve understanding between these groups.*

**I= Intervention.** This is the type of change program or intervention that is being implemented. Please include any points (for example critical success factors) you think might be important concerning the implementation.

*Example: Management implemented a communication campaign aimed at lowering stereotypes in the hope that groups would approach each other easier. In the campaign, stereotypes blown out of proportion to the point of absurd. An implementation critical success factor here was that posters were made using real employees who had agreed to be part of the campaign.*

**M= Mechanism.** This is what makes the intervention work by triggering different attitudes.

*Example: Employees started laughing with each other about the caricatures of the different generations, creating common ground for interaction.*

**O = Outcome.** This can be a direct (expected) outcome, or a final (expected) outcome or both. It depends on how much data is available and if it is longitudinal. Please indicate if the intervention was effective or not.

*Example: As a result of the campaign, managers saw more interaction between older and younger employees and deemed it a successful intervention (direct result based on anecdotal evidence). Another example could be; a quantitative survey and interviews were done as part of an evaluation of the campaign and showed it was in fact effective.*

As you read the IGL Toolkit you will come across CIMO-logic a lot. If you need more information about the CIMO-logic please contact [donald.ropes@inholland.nl](mailto:donald.ropes@inholland.nl)

#### **4.4. IGL Toolkit**

The SILVER-project produced an IGL Toolkit to be used in companies and organizations that have IGL-related problems or opportunities. The IGL Toolkit consists of the following parts:

1. Stakeholder Awareness Program
2. Doing IGL

Stakeholder Awareness Program (StAP) helps HRD professionals, knowledge and general managers and/or company trainers to:

- Diagnose the problems in the organization regarding potential knowledge loss through ageing and underutilization of older knowledge workers.
- Identify the potential benefits of IGL for their organization
- Assess potential barriers for change

Part of the StAP is a web-based learning game aimed to help employees face IGL related problems. The game will raise awareness for IGL and allow employees to see the benefits of it as well. In addition they will face different problems and issues that might come up with their day to day work.

The game can be found from the SILVER web-site (<http://www.intergenerationallearning.eu/>). You can run the game in any modern web-browser. It will take some time to load the game. The game is made with Unity3D game development tool. This means that the first time the game is played you will need to install a Unity plugin. After that the game will work normally. Currently there are 6 language versions of game. If you prefer to have a new language version please contact [teppo.raisanen@oamk.fi](mailto:teppo.raisanen@oamk.fi).

Basically the Stakeholder Awareness Program is a series of organizational interventions for raising awareness, breaking down barriers to, and understanding the benefits of IGL. In most cases it is the first step that HRD managers and organizations must do to start with IGL. Mark down all the problems, barriers and benefits that you find through STaP. The next part of the Toolkit aims at addressing these issues.

Doing IGL -part of the Toolkit is meant for HRD managers, teachers, trainers and others involved in human resources related activities to actually perform interventions that promote and facilitate the learning processes that are needed for IGL to occur effectively. Based on the STaP results you may utilize different parts of Doing IGL. If there are problems with losing critical knowledge through retirement maybe you need to utilize mixed aged teams so that this knowledge can be transferred to younger generation. Or maybe mentoring can be used to familiarize younger employees to your organization. Nevertheless choose those parts of Doing IGL that you feel will help your organization and the problems it is facing the best. For more information about Doing IGL please contact [donald.ropes@inholland.nl](mailto:donald.ropes@inholland.nl)

## **5 IGL as a lifelong learning strategy**

### **5.1. Introduction**

Age diversity in organizations is not a novel issue; however, as the demographics change in Europe, with the aging working population increasing, there is demand for novel innovative strategies for life long learning. This age diversity posits challenges to Human Resources, to knowledge management experts and employees, as they have to struggle with different generations. Research indicates that life long learning decreases knowledge loss in organizations and promotes effective educational environments particularly in informal settings. As such, informal learning has become the basis for

developing organizations and can be achieved in different ways, including sharing of experiences, interaction and involvement. One strategy for implementing LLL in organizations is intergenerational learning (IGL).

#### **4.2. Policy-level view**

One concept that has been repeatedly highlighted in this project is that IGL is a naturally occurring process in organizations. At the same time informal learning is a natural process that happens unintentionally and is based on the intrinsic curiosity of individuals to explore the environment. As, such learning is both an individualistic and a social activity because it includes others from the environment that provide stimulation. Sustainability is a way to improve both formal and informal learning by incorporating principles and concepts from the educational system to the real world. To achieve sustainable learning in Europe, we should acknowledge the limitations of formal learning and appreciate informal learning as a strategy for sustainable LLL. Modern educational systems provide specialized knowledge in specific fields of study, which is mostly theory-driven. Graduates from higher education have difficulty in incorporating this knowledge and applying these principles in the workplace environment. The EU has developed several policies to assist work-related learning by strongly supporting the notion of apprenticeships in organizations. This system provides additional skills to graduates that are not gained from formal education and seem to be most valued by employers. Within this framework IGL is a very reliable method for training younger employees within the workplace. More importantly, IGL as a tool for increasing LLL is available to all employees without exception to the underprivileged thus, enhancing democracy and equal opportunities. The EU must identify that some of the most essential skills for employees include personal competencies such as self-confidence; self-reflection; self-image; self-motivation; self-esteem; and, inter-personal competencies all of which are enhanced through IGL for both younger and older workers.

IGL is sustainable learning since it is self-directed and intrinsically motivated, rather than simply processing information. Through IGL, people can monitor their learning in relation to other more experienced employees, learn to be active listeners and learn from peers in a safe environment and learn how to deal with real work-related issues from older more experienced workers. At the same time, younger workers provide a contemporary way of thinking to the older employees particularly in ICT issues that promoted knowledge exchange and innovation in organizations. IGL provides a unique sustainable learning environment by linking facts to hands-on activities, by creating an interactive knowledge exchange process between employees while at the same time maintaining a collaborative working environment for all. The process of reflection is also accomplished in a safe non-judgmental environment, allowing for individual differences in learning (e.g., pace, learning style). At the same time older workers feel highly valued and respected increasing their motivation to maintain high performance in the workplace and increasing the opportunities for LLL.

#### **4.3. Summary and Conclusions**

This project has provided abundance of scientific evidence that IGL can be used as a framework for developing sustaining LLL and training programs. More so, this project has provided the tools for facilitating IGL in organizations with aging workforce. In doing so, we have provided evidence that IGL increases sustainable learning in numerous ways such as:

- Enhancing peer-to-peer interaction between generations
- Utilizing the competences of different generations to increase innovation and productivity
- Using a naturally occurring process that minimizes the risks in training
- Employing a strategy available to all, without exceptions to the underprivileged
- Making the learning process relevant to the organizational setting
- Acknowledge individual learning styles
- Sharing of ideas and thoughts from different generation, thus, creating more opportunities for future organizational and personal development
- Older employees may also act as role models or mentors for younger workers
- Skills are enhanced and extended to real-life situations in which younger and older generations exchange competences.

## **6 Accrediting lifelong learning programs**

### **6.1. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning**

Lifelong learning programs are a growing focus in the international and European contexts. Perhaps the greatest evidence of valorization of such educational programs is the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). This institute is a non-profit initiative of UNESCO that promotes both policy and practice of lifelong learning, with an emphasis on adult education, increasing literacy and vocational and non-formal learning opportunities. UIL advocates for marginalized groups in working towards achieving the educational components of the UN's Millennium Development Goals and Education for All initiative, among other UN development projects. The focus of works mainly address developing and underprivileged nations, but lifelong learning programs are in addition adapted to fix European contexts.

Although UIL's main focus is on Africa and the developing countries, the Institute was among the first organisations to examine functional adult literacy in Europe. Currently, UIL is addressing the thematic area of literacy in Europe through advocacy, networking and collaborative research activities. UIL's goal for its literacy-related activities is to further literacy as a foundation for lifelong learning. ([uil.unesco.org](http://uil.unesco.org))

UIL carries out its mission in four distinct categories: advocacy, research, capacity-building and networking. Each of these working areas are subdivided into various projects and initiatives, including the publication of the International Review of Education, coordination of the International Conferences on Adult Education,, coordination of the Adult Learners Week, providing assistance to the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and the development of the ALADIN Network.

### **6.2. ALADIN Network**

This international network includes members from India, Chile, Lebanon and Germany which work to provide a resource for collecting and sharing information, tools and expertise regarding adult learning policies and practices. The mission of the ALADIN Work Plan states that networking and capacity-building are its central concerns in creating a "global network of networks" by continuously

updating and disseminating information regarding adult learning. To achieve their mission, the network works to “share relevant information on adult learning, correct the uneven distribution of documentation and resources, and provide training in adult-learning knowledge management”.

### **6.3.UIL in Germany**

In cooperation with the University of Hamburg, UIL has established a Research Network on Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in Germany in an effort to strengthen the working relationship between UIL and its host country and city. This network is made up of Junior Professors in Adult Education from Germany, which supports the development of the next-generation of German adult education. Various projects and joint-research opportunities are presented by this network, including the findings of the [second Global Report of Adult Learning and Education \(GRALE\)](#), which was presented at the second annual meeting on 5 September 2013 in Berlin.

### **6.4.European Commission of Education and Training**

In a distinctly European context, the European Commission, the executive body of the European Union, enacted a mission towards reinforcing and promoting lifelong learning, called the European Commission of Education and Training. This organization’s mission is twofold, the first being coordinating policy cooperation between member states.

...the European Commission supports, develops and implements lifelong learning policies with the aim of enabling countries to work together and to learn from each other, with an important emphasis on mobility. It does so through the "open method of coordination", while respecting the full competencies of Member States in education and training.

The second half of the Commission of Education and Training’s mission deals with the implementation of the Lifelong Learning Program. This program has been used since 2007 as an umbrella term to include all efforts by the European Commission to support educational and lifelong learning projects.

### **6.5.The Lifelong Learning Program**

This project provides funding for several subcategories of educational programs intended for all levels of students and professionals. The Comenius and Erasmus programs target students of school-age and higher education, which Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig provide specialized programs for vocational education and training and adult education, respectively. The targets of these programs include increasing mobility in an international context and provide placements for adult education and continued learning in diverse and vocational settings.

### **6.6.Accreditation lifelong learning**

At the Ministerial Conference in Berlin in 2003, the Ministers of the Bologna signatory states agreed on the development of a European Qualifications Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and committed themselves simultaneously to the development of national qualifications frameworks, which should correspond to the European. With this instrument, the ministers set straight there

should be no other qualifications framework for the whole of the European Higher Education Area ( QF- EHEA) but this . As a reference tool for national qualifications framework , this should serve as a translation device to set the national qualifications frameworks related to each other.

As one of the first countries, Germany led this certification procedure in 2008. In implementing the adopted report from London (2007) on the Bologna Conference "National Qualifications Frameworks. Development and Certification Report from Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks" continued the national Bologna Working Group in March 2008, officially the procedure in motion .Unlike the Qualifications Framework for the whole of the European Higher Education Area ( QF- EHEA) , the European Qualifications Framework *extends for lifelong learning ( EQF)* both qualifications in the field of general education, vocational and academic education and training .

As a translation device between different national qualification systems it should do internationally comprehensible and comparable learning outcomes from all sectors of education and thereby increase mobility on the European labor market, between training systems and within the education systems. The EQF describes a total of eight levels qualifications in terms of learning outcomes and differentiates between knowledge, skills and competencies. It is compatible with the QF- EHEA and the levels six to eight EQF meet the qualification stages, to the authorities responsible for higher education ministers have agreed in the framework of the Bologna Process in 2005.

The EQF was adopted in the form of a non-binding recommendation to the Member States in 2008 by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. It was also recommended that national qualifications systems or frameworks to relate to the EQF by 2010. In addition, countries should ensure by 2012 that individual qualification certificates bear a reference to the appropriate EQF level.

## **6.7.Project SILVER**

The Grundtvig SILVER project relates the mission of the European Commission to unlock Europe's full educational potential to the specific context of lifelong knowledge sharing and vocational training in the workplace. In the face of an aging workforce, this project seeks to provide tools for use in organizations to aid the transmission of valuable knowledge between workers, promoting lifelong intergenerational learning. One such tool in the SILVER toolkit is a Stakeholder Awareness Program (StAP) which is designed to provide the groundwork within the workplace for an IGL campaign through organized intervention. The project sustainability can be generated by combining the accreditation guidelines and the project tools. The accreditation can increase the incentives for participation. There are many good clues in connection with this project.

## **7 The future of IGL**

### **7.1.Introduction**

This report will assist policy makers to better understand how future projects focusing on Intergenerational Learning (IGL) in the workplace might be designed following on from research carried out by the SILVER project. Demographic change in Europe over the last 30 years has resulted in significant ageing of the population in Europe. There has been steady rise in the number of adults

aged 55 and over in employment or seeking employment across Europe. The increase in employment rates of older adults is projected to continue in the future, presenting significant challenges for organisations. The SILVER project aimed to develop an approach to IGL that will alleviate some of the problems associated with an ageing workforce; increase older workers' employability through developing key competences, assure critical organisational knowledge retention and reuse, contribute to younger workers' learning and development and help embed sustainable innovation in organisations.

## **7.2.Recommendations**

The report has indicated that the rise in the number of older adults in employment is projected to continue. This combined with globalisation and increased competitiveness means that in the future organisations will need to utilise all employees to their fullest capacities. One method of achieving this is by organising intergenerational learning within organisations.

Intergenerational learning should form part of a comprehensive approach to age management that pulls together all the dimensions of the age management strategy such as, recruitment and selection; exit and transition to retirement and flexible working. The ageing workforce is a development that has implications for employers and their approach to human resource management. It is important for employers to have a strategy in place for managing the ageing workforce in order to remain competitive, particularly through periods of economic downturn.

Learning is a key component of the age management model. Good practice in training and lifelong learning means that organisations should base access to training decisions on the needs of both the individuals and the business, regardless of the employees' age. However, initiatives specifically aimed at older workers such as providing opportunities to get involved in intergenerational learning may also be necessary. Positive approaches aimed at older workers should be encouraged by policy makers including; providing opportunities for older workers to mentor others; developing mixed-age teams and groups where intergenerational knowledge transfer is promoted. Policy makers should encourage employers to build intergenerational learning into their age management policies by providing training or awareness raising activities.

The pilot carried out by the SILVER project confirmed preliminary research findings which indicated that workplace culture is vital to the success of intergenerational activity. Intergenerational learning tends to be more effective within organisations that value older employees and the company culture is one of trust and cooperation between generations as opposed to rivalry and tension. In terms of attitudes toward older workers, many employers consider them to be a valuable asset. Positive aspects attributed to them include reliability, a strong work ethic, loyalty and experience. However, many negative stereotypes about older workers still remain. Common perceptions include, lower productivity rates than younger workers, they are slower, less adaptable to technological changes and training, resistant to management and prone to ill health (Parry and Tyson, 2009). The CIPD (2010) survey highlights that many older employees experience age discrimination; 40% feel they have been disadvantaged in a work situation for appearing too old.

While popular conception among many authors (Loretto and white, 2006; Naegele and Walker, 2006; McNair *et al*, 2007) suggests that employers view older workers positively and recognise a number of desirable qualities such as reliability, experience and knowledge, the reality is that older workers are increasingly being deemed as 'disposable' by many organisations. Scotland's largest local authority, among others, adopted a strategy to cut 4,000 jobs held by workers aged 50+ over a 12 month period, around 12% of the workforce (The Herald, Scotland, 2009). Both the young and old are victims of ageist attitudes to varying degrees across Europe. Therefore, one of the key forthcoming challenges facing employers and policy makers is changing mind-sets. Intergenerational practice provides a mechanism for generations to work closely together and from this rediscover the reality of who they really are and what they have to gain from being involved in other generations. Educating, informing and reinforcing key issues such as the challenges presented by demographic change, the threat of losing valuable tacit knowledge from the organisation are areas worth highlighting. To ensure growth and economic prosperity in the future, employer attitudes and views of older workers must change. A change in attitudes to older workers may occur naturally over time as the age profile of organisation alters reflecting the age profile in society as a whole. However, policy makers should urge national governments to adopt policies that create cultures that are open to intergenerational learning among their workforces.

Future research and development projects focusing on intergenerational learning should emphasise the promotion of the positive effects of intergenerational learning both to older and younger people. A key driver of organisations is competitiveness. Businesses want to out-perform the competition and gain competitive advantage. A business case is always a strong marker of achieving the buy-in of organisations. Intergenerational learning is based on the principle of all participating generations gaining benefit. By working together both groups also ensure that important skills are maintained within the organisation. An additional recommendation is that policy makers take steps to demonstrate both the tangible and intangible benefits and highlight a concrete case for facilitating intergenerational learning in organisations. It will be necessary to encourage organisations to collect primary data on the impacts of their intergenerational learning activities. Evaluation is an important aspect of intergenerational learning for organisations in order to evidence the impact of their work. Evaluation enables companies to discover what works, what doesn't work and how to measure the benefits of the activity. A further consideration of this report should take note that additional exploration into these factors is supported through supplementary desk research.

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