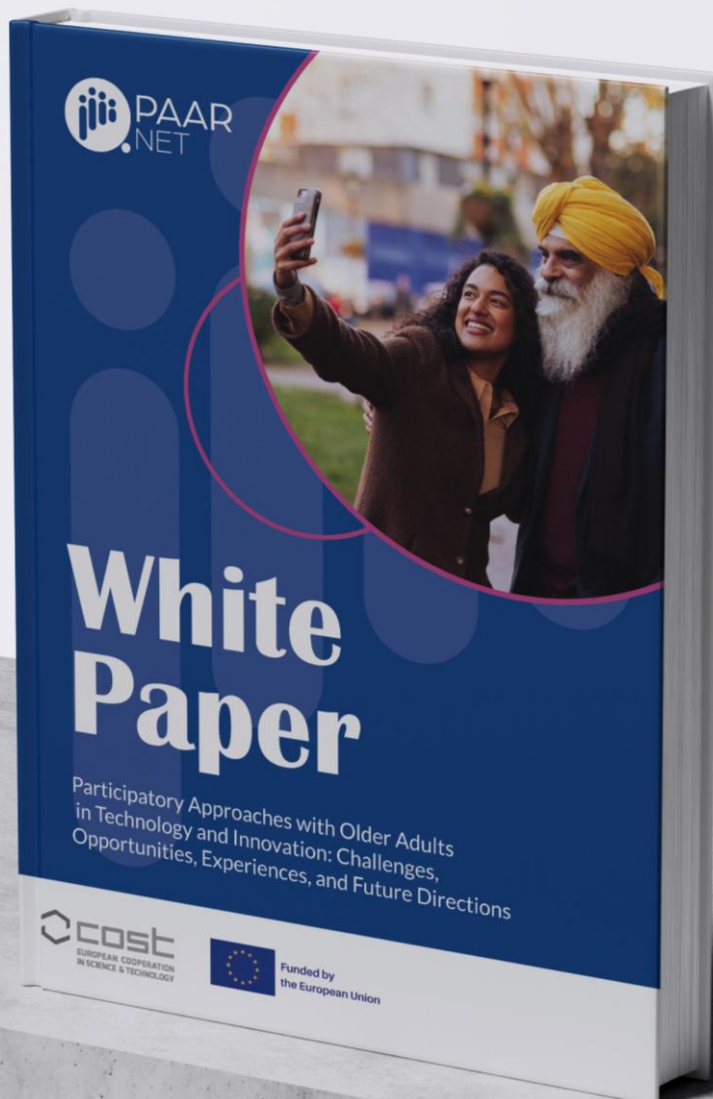


## SPOTLIGHT ON CASE STUDIES IN WHITE PAPER 3 TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

### 5 LEARNING AREAS

- Counteracting Ageist and Solutionist Narratives
- Embedding Multi-Stage Participatory Approaches
- Building Capacity for Sustainable Care
- Interdisciplinary & Transnational Collaboration
- Future-Oriented Innovation Strategies

[www.paar-net.eu](http://www.paar-net.eu)



## 01

# Counteracting Ageist and Solutionist Narratives

We learn from our case studies that Reframing ageing through participatory approaches challenges long-held assumptions that older adults are passive recipients of care or technology. By engaging them as active contributors, these projects demonstrate how co-created solutions can move beyond deficit-based models to promote autonomy, dignity, and agency.

Our White Paper shares experiences from

## Lorenzini, Sweden

Participatory design in the Welfare@Home project engaged 26 older adults and 26 homecare staff across five municipalities to co-examine and redesign welfare technologies for ageing in place. This work surfaced usability problems in medication packaging and digital devices, while empowering older adults to co-create guidelines for improved welfare technology implementation. This reframed them as co-designers of their care environments rather than passive technology users.



Access on pages 55–60

## Klincewicz Poland

Through the EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs, 22 food products were co-created specifically for older adults across 19 European countries. Older participants contributed insights on taste, packaging, cultural preferences, and accessibility (e.g., smaller portion sizes, softer textures without losing sensory appeal). Their creative input challenged industry stereotypes of older consumers as a homogenous group, instead showing them as innovators influencing food technology and market trends.



Access on pages 49–54

## Additional insights from across our case studies:

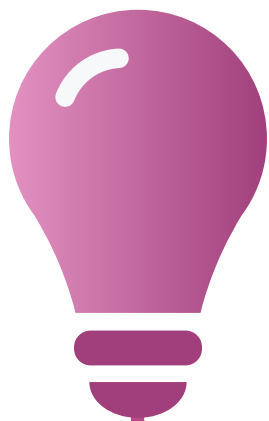


**Türkiye (Demiral, pp. 36–46):** Highlighted the importance of framing older adults as active participants in digital transformation. The Digital Inclusiveness Project for 65+ emphasised skills-building and peer-to-peer learning, countering narratives of older adults as digitally incapable.



**Moldova (Buciuceanu-Vrabie, pp. 46–48):** Through the Active and Healthy Ageing Program, older adults engaged in co-developing digital inclusion strategies, showing how participatory approaches can shift policy discourse toward empowerment and capability-building.

**AFECO Project (Van Staaldin & Tavy, pp. 62–65):** Involving older adults in co-designing e-learning modules on eco- and age-friendly living practices across six countries demonstrated how cross-border participation challenges one-size-fits-all assumptions about ageing needs.



**01**

→ **Participation disrupts ageist design cycles:** When older adults are engaged early and meaningfully, they challenge assumptions baked into technologies (e.g., “one-size-fits-all” devices or patronising food products), leading to outputs that better reflect the realities of ageing.

**02**

→ **Shifting narratives unlocks different priorities:** Projects in Sweden and Poland show how reframing older adults as creative contributors, not dependent users, changes what gets designed — from passive welfare devices to tools that support autonomy, dignity, and active living.

**03**

→ **Narratives shape policy and practice:** Participatory work in Moldova and Türkiye illustrates how involving older adults in policy-oriented projects reframes them from cost-centres to partners in digital transformation, influencing how governments structure inclusion strategies.

**04**

→ **Cross-border participation strengthens counter-narratives:** Multinational initiatives like AFECO expose the limits of “universal” ageing solutions, revealing diverse experiences and aspirations that can drive innovation beyond narrow, problem-oriented framings.

## Prompt for Reflection:



*How might reframing older adults as knowledge partners, rather than service recipients, change the way you design or deliver your own programmes? What assumptions about ageing in your work could participatory approaches help challenge?*

**Quick Link**



## 02

# Embedding Multi-Stage Participatory Approaches

We learn from our case studies that participatory approaches are most effective when they are continuous, spanning from project conception through design, testing, and evaluation. This moves engagement beyond tokenistic consultation into a true partnership, where older adults help define goals, shape interventions, and assess outcomes. Multi-stage participation improves adoption rates, ensures solutions are culturally relevant, and builds trust between stakeholders.

Our White Paper shares experiences from

**AFECO Project – Netherlands, Portugal, Italy, Poland, Greece, Germany (Van Staaldunin & Tavy)**

A six-country Erasmus+ collaboration co-designed an **e-learning platform** on eco- and age-friendly ageing in place. Structured interviews with 120 older adults shaped training content and delivery preferences (e.g., short, clear modules; multi-format learning – face-to-face, online, visual/audio). A second participatory phase refined modules and will be followed by large-scale testing. This iterative approach ensures the platform reflects **real learning needs**, while acknowledging language barriers and cultural differences.

**Digital Inclusiveness Project – Türkiye (Demiral):**

In Türkiye, the Elderly Rights Association worked with older adults to **co-develop digital literacy training** post-COVID. Covering smartphone use, e-government access, online banking, and video communication, the project reached 800 older participants. It illustrates how **iterative engagement** (from needs assessment to content co-creation) can empower older adults in low-literacy contexts.



Access on pages 61–65



Access on pages 39–41

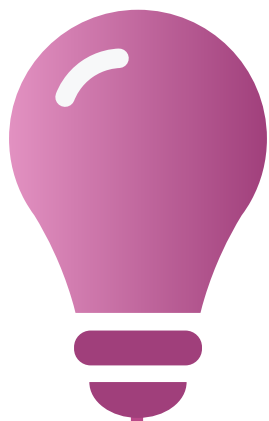
## Additional insights from across our case studies:



**Hungary (Sik-Lanyi, pp. 65–73):** Long-term initiatives like eHungary and Gondosóra show how layered participation (combining training, feedback, and ongoing support) sustains engagement and safety.



**Moldova (Buciuceanu-Vrabie, pp. 46–48):** National programmes link participatory co-creation with policy development, embedding citizen voices in long-term digital inclusion strategies.



**01**

- **Participation is a process, not an event:** Involving older adults at multiple stages, from needs assessment to testing, transforms projects into partnerships, ensuring solutions remain relevant as they evolve.

**02**

- **Iterative cycles improve quality:** Feedback loops across design, refinement, and evaluation make interventions more usable and culturally sensitive, particularly in cross-border contexts.

**03**

- **Structured participation builds confidence:** Clear engagement formats (e.g., short, accessible learning modules) make participation feasible for those with varying literacy and digital skills.

**04**

- **Multi-sector collaboration sustains outcomes:** When academia, civil society, and policymakers share ownership of participatory projects, they are more likely to embed these practices into lasting systems.

## Prompt for Reflection:



*Where in your projects could older adults be brought in earlier or more continuously? How could co-creation be structured to make participation feasible and meaningful across all stages?*

**Quick Link**



## 03

# Building Capacity for Sustainable Care

Digital and social exclusion among older adults is not only about lack of access — it reflects a complex interplay of socioeconomic status, geography, gender, education, and cultural context. Bridging these divides requires multi-layered strategies: targeted digital literacy training, participatory programme design, and systems that support autonomy and inclusion. The White Paper shows that when older adults co-create their pathways into the digital world, participation rises and exclusion decreases.

Our White Paper shares experiences from

## Republic of Moldova – Active and Healthy Ageing Program (Buciuceanu-Vrabie):

This national programme (2023–2027) prioritised digital inclusion through participatory skills-building initiatives, including the Ungheni Senior Club and Generations United Against Loneliness hackathon. These spaces enabled older adults to co-create digital solutions alongside younger participants, transforming them from passive users into active innovators in their communities.

## Hungary – eHungary and Gondosóra Programmes (Sik-Lanyi)

The eHungary initiative provided broadband access and community-based ICT training, while the Gondosóra programme offered a free 24/7 emergency call service for older adults, reaching 650,000 users and saving over 16,000 lives. Both projects blend digital access with safety and autonomy, demonstrating how participatory design can support inclusion at scale.



Access on pages 46–48



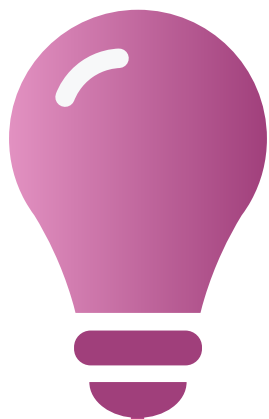
Access on pages 66–73

## Additional insights from across our case studies:



**Programmes in Türkiye** emphasised tailored digital literacy and culturally adapted training for low-literacy groups.

**Multi-country projects such as AFECO** showcased the value of multilingual content and flexible learning models in broadening digital access.



**01**

→ **Digital inclusion must go beyond infrastructure:**

Access alone does not erase exclusion. Projects in Moldova and Hungary show that training, peer support, and intergenerational collaboration are equally vital.

**02**

→ **Safety and inclusion can coexist:**

Initiatives like Gondosóra demonstrate how combining digital tools with care-oriented services builds trust and adoption, making technologies meaningful in older adults' lives.

**03**

→ **Community-rooted design sustains participation:**

When older adults co-create programmes, as seen in Moldova's hackathons and clubs, they become long-term stakeholders rather than passive recipients.

**04**

→ **Addressing hidden barriers is critical:**

Tackling language, literacy, and cultural barriers enables broader participation and prevents the reinforcement of inequalities.

## Prompt for Reflection:



*How could your digital inclusion efforts move beyond access to address the social and emotional drivers of exclusion for older adults?*

**Quick Link**



## 04

# Interdisciplinary & Transnational Collaboration

Collaborating across borders and disciplines unlocks solutions that no single sector or country could achieve alone. The White Paper highlights how transnational participatory projects help tackle shared challenges, from ageing in place to eco-friendly innovation, by pooling diverse expertise and making outputs culturally adaptable. Interdisciplinary teams bring together researchers, practitioners, civil society, and older adults, strengthening both the **relevance** and **scalability** of participatory approaches.

Our White Paper shares experiences from

## Generations United Against Loneliness Hackathon – Moldova (Buciuceanu-Vrabie):

This hackathon paired younger developers with older adults to co-create IT solutions that address loneliness and improve social connectivity. It showcased how intergenerational and interdisciplinary collaboration can generate creative, community-rooted innovations with immediate relevance for diverse stakeholders.

## Welfare@Home Project – Sweden (Lorenzini):

Involving researchers, homecare staff, and 26 older adults across five municipalities, this project co-developed guidelines for implementing welfare technologies that support ageing in place. The collaboration bridged academic, practical, and lived-experience perspectives, ensuring that technological solutions were usable, acceptable, and aligned with real care environments.



Access on pages 47



Access on pages 55–60

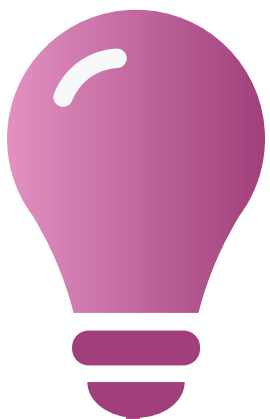
## Additional insights from across our case studies:



**Digital Inclusiveness Project (Türkiye):** Demonstrated how multi-stakeholder partnerships can tackle post-pandemic digital literacy gaps in older populations.



**EIT Consumer Labs (Poland):** Illustrated how industry-academic-older adult collaboration drives socially responsible innovation in market-focused contexts.



## 01

- **Interdisciplinary collaboration reshapes problem-solving:** Projects like Welfare@Home reveal that integrating academic, practitioner, and lived-experience perspectives does more than improve outputs — it reshapes how problems are defined, ensuring technologies and services respond to the complexities of ageing in real environments.

## 02

- **Cross-generational design enriches innovation:** The Moldovan hackathon shows how combining younger developers' technical expertise with older adults' lived insights leads to novel, socially meaningful solutions that are unlikely to emerge from single-demographic teams.

## 03

- **Structured collaboration enables replication:** Developing common participatory frameworks across countries allows projects to maintain cultural sensitivity while scaling innovations across diverse settings, increasing their policy and funding relevance.

## 04

- **Bridging research and practice accelerates adoption:** When researchers, practitioners, and older adults co-own the design process, outputs are more likely to move beyond pilot projects into sustainable, widely adopted solutions.

### Prompt for Reflection:



*Where could cross-sector or cross-generational partnerships add value to your work? What structures would you need to make such collaborations productive?*

**Quick Link**



## 05

# Future-Oriented Innovation Strategies

We learn from our case studies that while participatory approaches can address current needs, they can also anticipate and shape future challenges in ageing. The White Paper shows that experimental methods, from speculative co-design to intergenerational foresight workshops, enable projects to imagine new roles for technology in older adults' lives, ensuring innovation is ethical, equitable, and future-proof..

**Our White Paper shares experiences from**

## Unfettered Design for Digital Health – Sweden (Fischer & Östlund):

This method gave older adults space to imagine and generate unconstrained design ideas for digital health tools. It uncovered priorities beyond functionality, like emotional reassurance and autonomy, illustrating how speculative co-creation reveals latent needs that traditional design often overlooks.

 [Access on pages 24](#)

## Intergenerational Digital Encounters – PAAR-net Future Visioning Workshops

Workshops combining **younger and older participants** explored the future of AI, robotics, and smart technologies in ageing. They addressed ethical concerns, accessibility, and cultural dimensions, creating **shared visions** that can inform research and policymaking on emerging technologies.

 [Access on pages 30–33, 80](#)

## Türkiye – e-Nabız Digital Health Platform

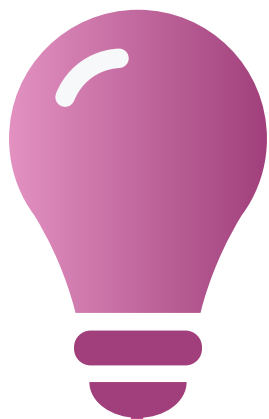
Highlighted as an example of state-led innovation, showing how participatory input can inform the rollout of nationwide digital health services.

 [Access on pages 42](#)

## Additional insights from across our case studies:

**AFECO Project:** Embedded forward-thinking education on eco- and age-friendly ageing, preparing older adults for environmental and demographic shifts.

**Consumer Engagement Labs:** Showed how participatory food design can anticipate future market and health needs, blending social innovation with industry practice.



## 01

- **Speculative methods expand innovation horizons:** Unfettered and future-visioning workshops encourage radically new thinking, helping older adults co-define the technologies of tomorrow.

## 02

- **AI and emerging technologies need participatory ethics:** Involving older adults in shaping AI and digital systems ensures innovations align with autonomy, dignity, and fairness.

## 03

- **Intergenerational co-creation builds resilient futures:** Combining perspectives across generations yields more adaptable and culturally sensitive scenarios for future ageing.

## 04

- **Embedding foresight in participation is vital:** Creating participatory “future labs” helps projects evolve alongside changing technologies, demographics, and policy landscapes.

### Prompt for Reflection:



*What future-facing questions could participatory design help you explore? How might speculative methods or intergenerational co-creation reshape your innovation priorities?*

### Quick Links

