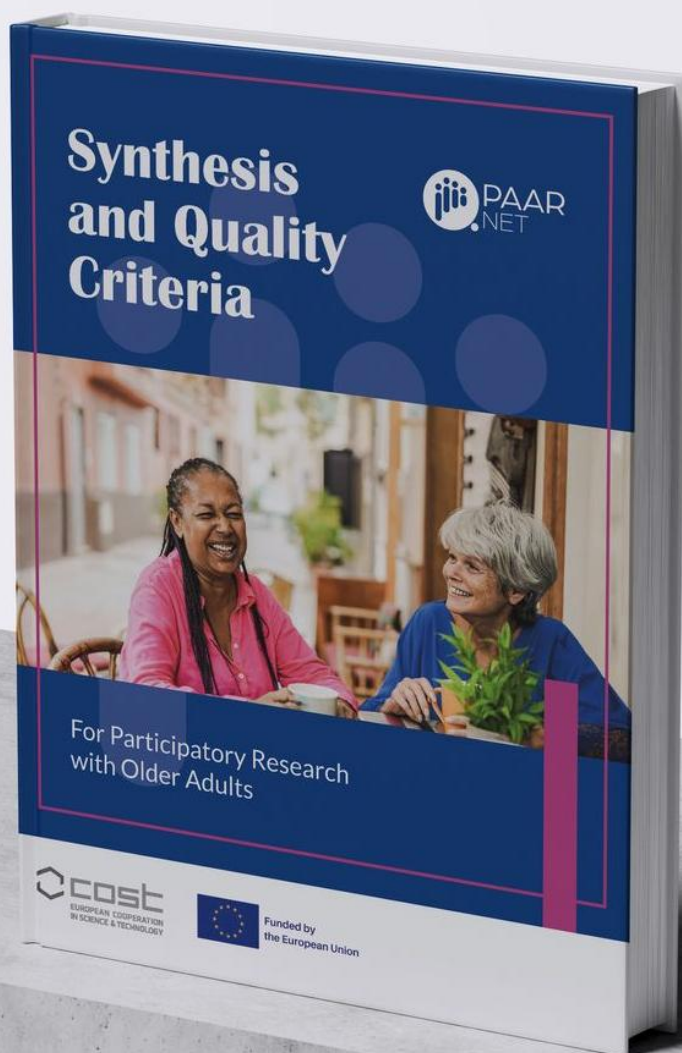


SPOTLIGHT ON CASE STUDIES IN WHITE PAPER 4 SYNTHESIS AND QUALITY CRITERIA



5 LEARNING AREAS

- Synthesising Knowledge & Establishing Quality Criteria for Co-Creation
- Power Dynamics & Ethical Complexities
- Building Inclusive & Culturally Sensitive Practices
- Developing Quality Criteria & Infrastructure
- Interdisciplinary & Multi-Level Collaboration

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01

Synthesising Knowledge & Establishing Quality Criteria for Co-Creation

We learn from our case studies that meaningful participatory research with older adults is built on two pillars:

Synthesis – combining evidence from academic research, policy practice, and the lived experiences of older adults. This integration ensures co-creation leads to more relevant and impactful outcomes.

Quality criteria – defining clear standards for who participates, at what stages, and with what influence. These criteria ensure participation is purposeful, equitable, and not tokenistic.

This dual focus makes co-creation structured, credible, and transformative, enabling older adults to move from consultees to genuine co-creators.

Our White Paper shares experiences from

PROGRESSIVE project , Poland:

Co-developed the “Guide – User Co-production in Standardisation,” working with organisations of older people to co-write the document. This broadened ownership and embedded their voices in technical policy but also exposed persistent barriers. In Central and Eastern Europe, senior councils often remain advisory, under-resourced, and symbolic. This shows that meaningful participation goes beyond formal inclusion., it requires real authority, adequate resources, and mechanisms to ensure older people’s contributions genuinely influence outcomes.

National Coordination on Active Ageing , Italy

Engaged over 100 stakeholders, ministries, regions, older people’s organisations, NGOs, unions, and experts, in co-developing national policy. Older adults participated through regional workshops, feedback exchanges, and online consultations, shaping active ageing priorities across all 19 regions and two autonomous provinces.

The project’s blended top-down and bottom-up model, with continuous feedback loops, shows how synthesis of diverse knowledge and robust participatory frameworks can deliver nationally relevant, co-created policies.







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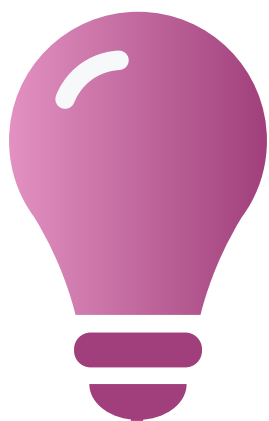


Access on pages 35–39

Additional insights from across our case studies:

-  **Bangladesh (pp. 18–21):** Used culturally grounded dialogue to empower the “severely poor” older adults, challenging epistemic injustice and creating inclusive research agendas.
-  **France (pp. 23–25):** The PARAGE project enabled older adults to document and analyse urban hazards, producing actionable recommendations for fall prevention and mobility safety.
-  **Denmark (pp. 29–34):** Future Creating Workshops empowered nursing home residents and staff to co-design quality-of-life improvements and advocate for systemic resource changes.
- Balkan countries (pp. 22–23):** Involving older patients in co-designing treatment plans improved adherence and trust in healthcare systems.
-  **UK (pp. 40–45):** The Uncertain Futures project combined art, activism, and participatory research to amplify the voices of older women in debates on work and ageing.





01

- **Synthesis can drive systemic change:** Integrating research, policy, and lived experience creates stronger, more credible interventions.

02

- **Quality criteria protect against tokenism:** Clear participation standards (roles, responsibilities, and influence) are essential for meaningful engagement.

03

- **Empowerment needs resourcing:** Spotlight cases (Poland, Italy) show that structured frameworks and financial support are key to scaling participation.

04

- **Context matters:** Cultural, economic, and political realities shape what participatory models are feasible and effective.

05

- **Participatory research influences policy:** When older adults co-create solutions, outputs gain legitimacy and policy traction.

Prompt for Reflection:



How can your projects embed clear quality criteria to ensure older adults' contributions have real influence? What systems (resources, frameworks, accountability) would make your participatory work more transformative?

Quick Link



02

Power Dynamics & Ethical Complexities

We learn from our case studies that participatory research with older adults cannot succeed without acknowledging and actively addressing power imbalances. This includes recognising the ethical complexities of involving marginalised or minoritised groups, ensuring their consent is informed, their input is valued, and their participation leads to tangible benefits. Continuous reflexivity, reassessing how power and privilege operate within research and policymaking, is crucial to building respectful, equitable, and transformative participatory practices.

Our White Paper shares experiences from

Empowerment through Cultural Traits and Participatory Dialogue, Bangladesh

This participatory dialogue project addressed **epistemic injustice** by creating culturally grounded spaces where severely poor older adults could challenge social hierarchies and act as **knowledge producers**. It redefined the researcher's role as a facilitator and **curator of dialogue**, enabling the most marginalised to participate on equal terms.

Uncertain Futures and the Voices of Older Women, UK

Used art-based co-production to amplify the experiences of older women facing workplace discrimination and economic insecurity. Through creative participatory workshops, older women shaped narratives that challenged policy assumptions, turning personal stories into a platform for policy debate. This work demonstrates how artistic and activist methods can transform co-creation into a vehicle for equity and advocacy.



Access on pages 18–21



Access on pages 40–45

Additional insights from across our case studies:



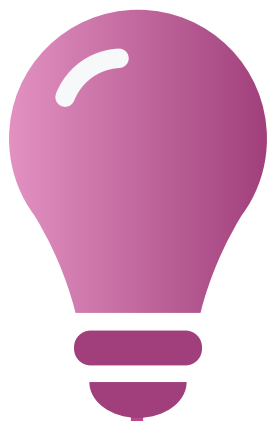
In Poland, the PROGRESSIVE Project (pp. 26–28) co-produced guidelines that revealed the limitations of consultative structures without real authority, highlighting the need for resources and decision-making power.



The PARAGE Project, France (pp. 23–25) Empowered older adults to collect and co-analyse environmental data on fall risks, showing how transparency and shared ownership improve trust.



Italy's National Coordination on Active Ageing Project (pp. 35–39) embedded diverse voices, from regional authorities to grassroots organisations, ensuring older adults could influence national policy on active ageing.



01

- **Ethics are relational, not procedural:** Beyond consent forms, ethical participatory research requires ongoing negotiation of roles, expectations, and impacts with participants.

02

- **Decolonising approaches dismantle hierarchies:** Projects like Uncertain Futures and Bangladesh show that redistributing authority leads to richer, more inclusive knowledge creation.

03

- **Reflexivity must be embedded:** Teams need to critically assess their own power and adjust methods to avoid reinforcing inequities.

04

- **Participation should deliver benefits:** Ethical co-creation is not symbolic — it should result in real improvements to participants' lives, well-being, or influence on decisions.

Prompt for Reflection:



What hidden hierarchies might shape your participatory work? How can you build reflexivity and shared decision-making into your methods to make participation more equitable?

Quick Link



03

Building Inclusive & Culturally Sensitive Practices

True inclusion means meeting older adults where they are, culturally, socially, and geographically, and creating spaces where their knowledge and priorities shape the agenda. Participatory approaches in the White Paper highlight that one-size-fits-all methods exclude those most at risk, including those marginalised by poverty, ethnicity, or institutional living. To counter this, culturally sensitive and context-specific approaches are needed to decolonise participatory research and make older adults full and equal partners in co-creation.

Our White Paper shares experiences from

Incorporating Older Patients' Perspectives – Balkan Countries (Harasani):

This project involved older patients in co-designing treatment plans, boosting adherence, improving patient–clinician trust, and exposing how cultural and systemic barriers influence healthcare engagement. It illustrates the need for tailored participatory approaches in contexts where older adults' voices are rarely included in clinical decisions.

PARAGE Project & Delphi Study – France (Langeard):

Older adults acted as co-researchers, mapping environmental hazards using geocoded data, photos, and narratives to inform urban planning for safer mobility. Through participatory analysis and collaboration with policymakers, this project ensured culturally diverse voices directly influenced interventions for public safety.



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Access on pages 23–25

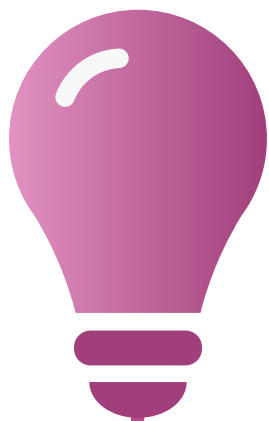
Additional insights from across our case studies:



Bangladesh (Akram, pp. 18–21): Showed how culturally grounded participatory dialogues can dismantle entrenched hierarchies and epistemic injustices.



Uncertain Futures – United Kingdom (Campbell et al., pp. 40–45): Combined art, activism, and research to highlight the intersecting inequalities faced by older women in work.



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 participatory work integrate culturally specific methods to engage underrepresented groups? What adjustments might make your projects more context-sensitive and intersectional?

Quick Link



04

Developing Quality Criteria & Infrastructure

We learn from our case studies that participatory approaches need clear quality standards and robust infrastructure to move from one-off projects to sustainable practices. The White Paper highlights that defining who participates, at what stage, and with what influence is essential to avoid tokenism. Equally, without institutional and financial backing, participatory work struggles to deliver meaningful change or scale beyond the local level. **Our White Paper shares experiences from**

Future Creating Workshops – Denmark (Andersen & Bilfeldt):

This participatory action research project engaged nursing home residents, relatives, staff, and local councils in a structured process of critique, visioning, and implementation to redesign care environments. The clear, phased workshop model provided transparent quality criteria for participation while influencing organisational practices and political agendas around care home resourcing.

Uncertain Futures – United Kingdom (Campbell et al.):

By combining **art, activism, and participatory research**, this Manchester-based project amplified the voices of older women in debates about work and ageing. Sustained by long-term partnerships with cultural institutions and academic networks, it highlights how dedicated infrastructure (funding, institutional commitment) allows participatory projects to address systemic inequalities and maintain momentum over years, not months.



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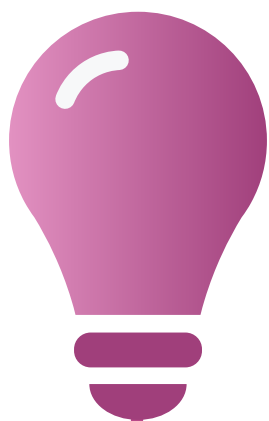


Access on pages 40–45

Additional insights from across our case studies:

Balkan Countries (Harasani, pp. 22–23): Show the need for institutional frameworks to legitimise participatory input in healthcare systems.

- **France – PARAGE Project (Langeard, pp. 23–25):** Demonstrated how structured tools (Delphi surveys, collaborative analysis) can codify quality criteria for co-research in urban planning.



01

- **Explicit standards prevent tokenism:** Setting roles, responsibilities, and decision-making power upfront leads to more equitable processes.

02

- **Structured methods build credibility:** Tools like the Future Creating Workshop provide clear frameworks for meaningful co-production.

03

- **Institutional backing sustains change:** Long-term partnerships and funding (as in Uncertain Futures) ensure participatory projects influence policy and practice.

04

- **Quality criteria support scaling:** Defining participation standards makes it easier to replicate and adapt participatory approaches across contexts.

Prompt for Reflection:



What formal structures or partnerships could strengthen the credibility of your participatory work? How might clearer participation standards make your projects more transparent and impactful?

Quick Link



05

Interdisciplinary & Multi-Level Collaboration

We learn from our case studies that participatory approaches are most impactful when they connect actors across sectors and levels of governance. The White Paper shows that collaboration between older adults, researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and community organisations creates shared ownership and strengthens the reach of participatory outputs. Successful projects use multi-level frameworks that align grassroots priorities with institutional agendas, making innovations more scalable and sustainable.

Our White Paper shares experiences from

National Coordination on Active Ageing – Italy (Lucantoni & Principi):

This initiative engaged over 100 stakeholders, including ministries, regions, older people's organisations, unions, NGOs, and academics, to co-develop a national active ageing strategy. Its blended top-down and bottom-up approach ensured that local voices informed high-level decisions, creating a coordinated, multi-level framework for inclusive policymaking.

PARAGE Project & Delphi Study – France (Langeard):

This project brought together older adults, urban planners, public health experts, and local policymakers to co-analyse mobility risks and design safer public spaces. Its interdisciplinary team approach transformed older adults' insights into evidence-based, actionable recommendations, showing how cross-sector collaboration can bridge the gap between lived experience and technical planning.



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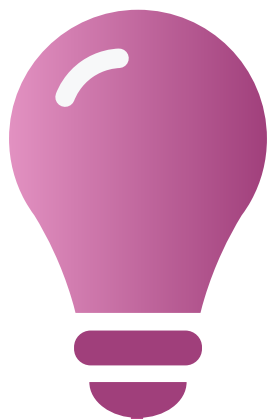
Access on pages 23–25

Additional insights from across our case studies:

Balkan Countries (Harasani, pp. 22–23): Highlighted how linking patient participation with healthcare providers and academic researchers can improve adherence and trust.



Uncertain Futures – UK (Campbell et al., pp. 40–45): Combined cultural institutions, academia, and grassroots activism to tackle inequalities for older women in work.



01

- **Collaboration drives legitimacy:** Multi-level frameworks give participatory outputs the credibility to influence policy and practice.

02

- **Interdisciplinarity enhances impact:** Integrating diverse expertise (community, technical, academic) creates solutions that are more innovative and practical.

03

- **Shared ownership prevents silos:** Collaborative networks ensure that research findings translate into systemic change, not just isolated project outcomes.

04

- **Scaling needs aligned agendas:** Coordinating local input with national or institutional priorities makes participatory projects sustainable and scalable.

Prompt for Reflection:



How could your work bring together diverse disciplines or levels of governance? What partnerships could make your participatory efforts more influential and scalable?

Quick Link

