

# Project “Keeping Fit in Later Life”

## Introduction

**Kifli- Keeping Fit in Later Life** was a 2-year international project funded by the European Union’s ‘Grundtvig’ programme. The project developed innovative training material aimed at older people (working or retired) to help them maintain and improve physical fitness and thus improve their quality of life. The outcomes of the project included a collection of useful exercises, instruction videos, social game-based physical activities, tests and motivational material. The objectives were twofold: 1, inspiring and motivating older people to start or pursue physical exercises, 2, providing hints and tips about how to take physical exercise in a safe but still effective way.

## Implementation

The main aim of the project and related activities was to improve physical fitness of the elderly. During the two-year project a complex programme was established in which the voice of the older people was listened to carefully. Older people were invited to take part in the project activities from a very early stage. Groups were formed whose participants could try out various physical activities offered by local providers (either social centres offering courses, or private trainers showing and marketing their programmes). In this way, intense communication could occur between the various targets: local service providers, facilitators and end users. The informal way of learning and sharing of views and information gave the project a dynamic feeling and channelled all these exchanges into the development of the final outcome. The learning took place on various levels:

### 1. Informal learning between trainer and older people on the spot

Older people could try out various activities with professional support and were encouraged to give feedback (either directly to the trainer or indirectly via the project manager/programme organizer) on how they felt about that exercise/sport/intensity level. In this way, the development of the online material and handbook was shaped by their feedback and was not merely a construction of the experts.

### 2. Informal learning between older people themselves

In some cases small communities were formed who started to get together and exercise themselves. In this context it was possible to give advice to one another and a kind of peer teaching was initiated.

### 3. Individual informal learning via ICT

The online material was developed in such a way that it offered the possibility for individual learning. People could read about the benefits of exercise, what they are advised to do and what is the best way to take physical exercise (why? what? how?).

## Conclusion

This informal way of learning offered chances for a lot of interaction which would be more difficult in a formal system. It also welcomed various aspects of the various participants (providers, facilitators and end users) and thus helped to develop final outcomes which reflected multifaceted views. As a spin off, it contributed to the forming of groups, as well as facilitating encounters and engagement in dialogue outside the closed community (e.g. exchanging practices at a mobility in Graz with involvement of representatives of trainers and older people from each country). All in all, it was a kind of informal learning whose benefits reached beyond the aims of the project and also ensured its sustainability.

Project website: <http://www.kifli.eu>

This text is part of the book “Education and quality of life of senior citizens”. See the full book in <http://www.edusenior.eu>

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