

## LUXEMBURG

# Socially inclusive futures

### Location

Echternach

### Programming period

2014 – 2020

### Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local development

### Measure

M19 – LEADER/CLLD

### Funding (EUR)

Total budget 49 039.52

EAFRD 25 892.87

National/Regional 17 261.91

Private/own funds 5 884.74

### Project duration

2018 – 2020

### Project promoter

Mouvement pour l'Egalité des Chances pour Tous – MEC asbl

### Contact

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### Website

[www.mecasbl.lu](http://www.mecasbl.lu)

This project involves inhabitants in the region actively contributing to better social cohesion. It connects different generations in 'caring for the community' and is the only intergenerational school support service in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

## Summary

The Mouvement pour l'Égalité des Chances pour Tous – MEC asbl cooperated with the LEADER LAG Région Mëllerdall and created and developed an intergenerational school support service. Seniors provide voluntary help to children in Luxembourg primary schools, supporting them with their homework. This academic support promotes intergenerational communication, which is invaluable in terms of sharing knowledge and improving social cohesion.



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## Results

The project is a real societal success proved by increasing demand from other municipalities who will also implement this service.

- 40 children benefited from school support during the first year.
- 16 seniors were recruited.
- 14 municipalities in the Mullerthal region were covered.
- Nine municipalities in the Moselle region are implementing the service from January 2021.

## Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The service's success is based on collaboration between seniors and the Senior Service association with their combined commitment to educational support.
- ❑ Seniors maintain their knowledge, stay connected with a new generation and create affinity with young people. Children learn a lot, including patience, how to integrate lessons and how to gain a broader perspective on life. Parents benefit from reduced family tension, more time for non-scholastic activities and less childcare pressure. Teachers find the service also helps children become more motivated. Seniors also exchanged information on how best to assist colleagues when they encountered difficulties and made new friends.
- ❑ Other cooperation is also important. Municipalities published advertisements in newspapers distributed to the local population. The project involved clubs for older people and committees of municipal administrations which recruited seniors and consulted committees in schools to promote the service to parents.

## Context

Life expectancy in Europe is continuously increasing, leading to a category of people who are approaching retirement age while still having great dynamism and energy. Older people continue to take part in diverse activities, including travel and sport and use their free time to fully enjoy life. This group has acquired many skills during their working life and their extensive knowledge can be passed down to younger generations.

At the same time, children can increasingly encounter difficulties with learning issues, and often a lack of organisation and self-confidence. Some cannot access appropriate support at home. In this case, someone from outside may help to avoid tensions around homework. Other children need clarification in a specific subject that parents cannot provide, through a lack of skills, time or sometimes interest.

School support systems in Luxembourg are limited to children with specific difficulties. The school management system does not have the technical and human capabilities to meet all demand and has to focus on priority cases. Educators in childcare centres do not always have an explicit role in helping children through this kind of support activity. Private organisations can be a solution, but these are often expensive and therefore inaccessible to most, in particular to children with educational difficulties who often come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

## Objectives

The main goal for MEC asbl, the association promoting the project, was to bring two different worlds together to create an opportunity for different generations. By creating an intergenerational school support service, seniors help children who are struggling with motivation and a work rhythm. At the same time, the seniors remain active and feel valued and connected to the new generation. All parties have the incentive to find benefits and satisfaction.

## Activities

### Senior recruitment - October 2018 to March 2019

- A leaflet addressed to seniors was sent to all households in the Mullerthal region. A covering letter, curriculum vitae and extracts from the criminal record system were mandatory to apply.
- Tests were arranged for applicants on French, German and mathematics, the main subjects in Luxembourg primary schools.

- Interviews took place with a specialised recruitment coach to assess motivation and establish a profile of the candidate.
- Training covering childhood psychology and an explanation of school basics.

This process provides a guarantee of quality for parents.

### Setting up Super Senior Operations - March 2019 to April 2019

- Support is provided in 10 sessions, renewable twice. However, the system is flexible and can adapt to each case.
- Fixing a rate of 10 euros per session, almost all of which goes to the senior for travel expenses. Part is reserved for a gift to diligent students at the end of the support period.
- First meeting with parents, the student and the association to discuss the school problem, present the service to parents and determine the student's profile.
- Assignment of files to seniors according to the profile of the student.
- Second meeting with parents, the student, the senior and the association for a first contact, to determine the school problem in more detail, the days, hours and frequency for the sessions.
- Supervisory meetings between seniors and the association every two months to exchange experiences.

Meetings to identify needs and plan meetings are at the headquarters of MEC asbl. School support sessions are at children's homes in the presence of an adult from their family.

The whole process was implemented in consultation with the seniors to create group cohesion and a team spirit within the service.

### Promoting the service - April 2019 to September 2019

- Sending a leaflet to all households in the Mullerthal region to offer the school support service. A leaflet including a comic strip and a superhero mascot helps parents to engage their children.
- First requests for school support.
- Start of service activities.

### Second phase of senior recruitment - October 2019 to March 2020

In response to the growing number of requests for academic support, a second phase of senior recruitment enabled the project to expand the team and to process more cases.

## Main Results

- 40 children benefited from school support during the first year.
- 16 seniors recruited in the Mullerthal region. They have varying degrees of education, are from different nationalities and social or professional backgrounds. Some are former teachers, others are former bank managers, secretaries, a geologist, dentist, educator, railway employee, etc. This diversity is an asset as it generates different approaches to support and is a source of richness during meetings to exchange practices between seniors. No typical profile emerges. Anyone interested in getting involved in tutoring can contact the service. The quality label ensures that seniors offer quality help to the children.
- 14 municipalities in the Mullerthal region with more than 26 000 inhabitants benefit from the Super Senior service.
- Nine municipalities in the Moselle region with more than 30 000 inhabitants will implement the service from January 2021.

The added value of the Super Senior service is that some schoolteachers have integrated the seniors' support to assist the children's progress.

## Key lessons

For seniors, educational support allows them to maintain and share their knowledge, stay connected with the new generation and create affinities with young people. It can also prevent social isolation.

Children gain a considerable amount of knowledge. Additionally, they learn to be patient, integrate lessons and gain a broader perspective on life.

For parents, school support may allow them to reduce family tension, have more time for non-scholastic activities with their children and benefit from less childcare pressure.

The support can be integrated by teachers in their daily work to support the transmission of know-how to children who can become motivated and improve their school performance.



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The service's success is based on collaboration between seniors and the association with a commitment to educational support. Consultation with the seniors created group cohesion and a team spirit within the service.

Seniors also exchanged information on how best to assist colleagues when they encountered difficulties and created new friendships (or made new friends). Promoting the service to inhabitants in the Mullerthal region was also possible thanks to working with municipalities, which published advertisements in their newspapers distributed to the local population.

In addition, the project involved senior clubs and senior committees of municipal administrations in the Mullerthal region to recruit seniors. Committees in schools also promote the service to parents.

The service has been expanding outside the Mullerthal region. It was installed in the neighbouring municipality of Junglinster (8 090 inhabitants) and will be established in nine Moselle municipalities during 2021. The city of Luxembourg has also expressed interest in adopting the programme.

The service could be extended throughout the whole country and even exported to another European country.

Thanks to RDP support and agreements with several municipal administrations the service can finance the operating and staff costs.

## Additional sources of information

<https://mecasbl.lu/super-senior/>

[https://mecasbl.lu/wpcontent/uploads/2019/12/Senior-Folder-Parents\\_def.pdf](https://mecasbl.lu/wpcontent/uploads/2019/12/Senior-Folder-Parents_def.pdf)

[https://mecasbl.lu/wpcontent/uploads/2020/12/SuperSenior\\_420-Edition-2\\_print.pdf](https://mecasbl.lu/wpcontent/uploads/2020/12/SuperSenior_420-Edition-2_print.pdf)

[https://www.mu.leader.lu/sites/default/files/download/2019-02/NewsletterLEADER18\\_2019\\_web.pdf](https://www.mu.leader.lu/sites/default/files/download/2019-02/NewsletterLEADER18_2019_web.pdf)

Funded by the



\*This project has been categorised under 'Socially inclusive futures' by the nominating National Rural Network