

24 - 26 October 2025

Geneva , Switzerland

How Can Help the "participatory Approaches with Older Adults" (paar-net) Cost Action Older Adults who Lack Digital Competence?

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Abstract

The COST Action Participatory Approaches with Older Adults advances inclusive social innovation through participatory methodologies that integrate the perspectives of older adults, particularly those at risk of social exclusion. Within this framework, Working Group 3 (Technology and Innovation) investigates how to reduce digital inequalities among older adults who lack digital competence.

WG3 adopts a participatory research approach to critically examine the barriers and facilitators of digital engagement for older adults. It focuses on the co-production of knowledge by involving older adults as experts-by-experience in all stages of the research process, from identifying needs to designing inclusive technological solutions. WG3 aims to synthesize evidence across disciplines and jurisdictions, evaluate methodological strengths and limitations, and construct conceptual and theoretical frameworks for informing digital inclusion through participatory practice.

This work not only addresses the structural and social dimensions of the digital divide but also challenges ageist assumptions in technology design. A subgroup of WG3 is working on how AI can help the aging generation. During the presentation, we will also ask participants to fill out a short online questionnaire about the use of AI, regarding the fact that since the use of AI reduces critical thinking and decision-making, can the life experience of the older generation really compensate for this?

By strengthening intergenerational learning and promoting equitable access to digital infrastructures, WG3 contributes to establishing new scientific standards for participatory ageing research.

We will show the WG3 results to date and outline opportunities for researchers and stakeholders to join this collaborative effort.

Keywords: Ai; Digital Competence; Older Adults; Cost Action; Participatory Research