

Press release #1

May 2025



**Supporting older people with disabilities:
GOLD project launched!**

The Erasmus+ GOLD project aims to equip professionals and informal carers with essential skills to improve the quality of services and ensure dignified and healthy ageing. With the increasing life expectancy of people with disabilities, new challenges in care require innovative solutions. The project promotes collaboration between the ageing and disability care sectors to adapt services effectively. Through training, awareness raising and practical tools, GOLD aims to promote inclusion, empowerment and better support for older people.

The Erasmus+ GOLD project was officially launched in November 2024 and will run for 30 months. Partners across Europe are already actively working on the first project outputs to address the urgent need for better care and support for ageing people with disabilities. The GOLD project aims to develop methods and tools to improve the skills of professionals and informal carers working in the field of disability and/or older people's care. By equipping them with the necessary skills, the project aims to improve the quality of services provided to ageing people with disabilities, ensuring their dignity, autonomy and well-being.

With the increasing life expectancy of people with disabilities - statistics show that 75% of people with intellectual disabilities are now aged between 40 and 60, with a rapidly growing trend - new challenges in care and support are emerging. In addition, the European Commission's Disability Rights Strategy 2021-2030 highlights the diversity of disabilities, noting that almost half of people over the age of 65 report some form of disability. Despite these demographic shifts, care services and professionals remain largely unprepared to adapt their service models accordingly.

Not everyone ages in the same way, as the process is shaped by various intersecting forms of discrimination experienced throughout life. A new perspective is needed to address these challenges. Older people with disabilities is still too often subjected to outdated forms of discrimination which impact their autonomy. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 19) emphasises the right to self-determination and the need to empower individuals to plan their lives according to their own wishes and aspirations.

The GOLD project recognises that the ageing and disability care sectors need to collaborate, innovate and share expertise. As Anne Belot (Gérontologie & Société, 2019) notes, the key is to "bring geriatrics into disability and disability into geriatrics". All European countries must take

decisive action to ensure that ageing people with disabilities receive appropriate care, a priority outlined in the [European Commission's Green Paper on Ageing](#).

To achieve this, the GOLD project will develop practical, easy-to-use training resources to equip social, paramedical, educational, care professionals and informal carers for the transition of care and accommodation services.

Project objectives:

- To train and equip professionals and informal carers in the disability and older people care sectors to respond effectively to the needs of people ageing with disabilities.
- To promote social inclusion, empowerment and dignity for people with disabilities as they age.
- To raise awareness of ageing with a disability among professionals, informal carers, public authorities and civil society.

Through collaboration, training and awareness-raising, the GOLD project aims to build a future where older people with disabilities receive the quality care and dignity they deserve.

For more information and updates on the GOLD project, please visit <https://gold-project.eu/> and follow us on major social media using the hashtag **#GOLD_EU_PROJECT**

NOTES TO EDITORS

The GOLD project is implemented by a consortium coordinated by AGFE (France) and composed of UNESSA (Belgium), Anziani e non solo (Italy), Scuola Centrale Formazione (Italy), Aproximar (Portugal), Chance B (Austria), ASSOC (Romania), EPR (Belgium) and AGE Platform Europe (Belgium).

More information on the consortium can be found at: <https://gold-project.eu/partnership/>

Background:

The world's population is ageing rapidly, with the proportion of people over 60 expected to almost double by 2050. At the same time, life expectancy for people with disabilities has increased significantly, creating unique challenges for health and social care. Ageing with a disability often leads to premature health decline and increased vulnerability to secondary conditions. Despite shared risks with the general ageing population, gaps remain in service design and professional skills. The GOLD project aims to equip disability and geriatric care professionals with the tools to anticipate risks and ensure quality support for ageing people with disabilities.

GOLD is co-funded by the Erasmus Plus programme under the Grant Agreement number 2024-1-FR01-KA220-ADU-000244950

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the French National Agency. Neither the European Union nor the French National Agency can be held responsible for them