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## Food In Later Life

Food In Later Life (FILL) aims to provide an international, intercultural, multidisciplinary and intergenerational perspective on how the preparation of food and eating should change over the years to accommodate changes in nutritional needs and living styles.

 FILL aims to provide an international, intercultural, multidisciplinary and intergenerational perspective on a specific cultural aspect: how the preparation of food and the rituals associated with eating should change in time to accommodate the changes in nutritional needs and living styles of people. FILL focuses on those who, due to age or diseases, have to substantially change their nutritional style. The target groups include adults caring for their relatives, volunteers active in NGOs, aging people and educators working in the

fields of social work and healthcare. Different cultures, ages, lifestyles and expectations will be taken into consideration.

A number of simple and effective solutions are available. Project partners aim is gather data about them and to offer concise information to those who are involved, directly or indirectly, in the preparation and presentation of meals. To this end, FILL partners are producing textual, visual and audiovisual informational products.



## Transnational Meeting in Hanover

The second transnational meeting of the FILL Partnership was

hosted by VNB on March 20–21, 2014. The first day was intended as a workshop (Learning Day) on food and meal habits in various cultural settings and their implications on healthcare and nutrition practice. On the second day participants reported on their

activities and on progress they are making on FILL related activities. Coordination, planning, monitoring and evaluation of the Partnership and of the meeting took place resulting in some adjustments to future activities. During the meeting, representatives of the project partners' organisations and networks worked together efficiently in a warm and friendly atmosphere. Partners brought new perspectives when considering each others' work on the shared topic. Much additional knowledge was gained and ideas to promote and disseminate the project outcomes were developed.

## **FILL Learning Day – Intercultural Aspects of Food in Later Life**

The aim of the Learning Day, which was conceived and presented by Anke Egblomassé (VNB), was to develop sensitivity to intercultural aspects of food in later life. The starting point was the participants' own experiences from which new understandings were developed. Different instructional methods



and means were used for participants to learn how to take into consideration the way habits and traditions are carried into work contexts and how these can interfere with habits and traditions that patients are accustomed to. Recalling one's favourite dish and the circumstances when it was first eaten, as well as talking of foods that one does not eat and the reasons for not including them in one's diet are some examples. Differences between regulations in different countries were also highlighted, in particular regarding families bringing food into hospitals or into nursing homes.

Suggestions for activities and exercises will be made available on the FILL Project website.

VNB is also planning to develop a mobile-phone application on intercultural aspects of food in later life. The application is expected to be ready by October 2014.



### **Migration, Culture and Food in Later Life – Why This Theme?**

In Europe, the share of people with a migration background is increasing. For instance in Germany, one out of five inhabitants has a migration history. According to the Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb), the total number of migrants older than 65 years in Germany will increase from 1.4 million in 2011 to 2.8 million in 2030. The age increase is expected for all European populations. These phenomena require a shift of paradigm in the way we view migration, care and nutrition: from migrants as caregivers to migrants as care receivers.

Other facts to consider are eating habits and expectations that are transforming as generations change. While the post-war generation was used to eating whatever was available, in particular in times of famine,

younger generations have different expectations regarding food and nutrition. In migrant communities, there is often a lack of information about healthcare and related services. There are doubts and prejudice about professional care and the aptness of carers regarding cultural and religious requirements. These worries may echo the current inadequacy of cultural-sensitive offers in professional care including food and nutrition. Rural areas are especially concerned. Last but not least, considering there is no one simple answer, different individual responses to the



challenges need to accommodate increasingly diverse societies, since there are countless people with different individual cultural habits and needs.

Within the framework of the FILL partnership, these topics are being discussed continuously. The Learning Day has awakened an awareness for all participants as to the need to attend adequately to intercultural aspects of food in later life within each one's professional activities.



## Lecture on Intercultural Aspects of Food in Later Life During IFITS International Days

On invitation of the FILL project partner IFITS, VNB made a presentation during IFITS International Days in April 2014 on intercultural aspects of food in later life. The situation of older migrants in Germany and their relationship to the professional care system were explained. This included the challenges that organisations are facing when it comes to meeting the needs and wishes of people with a migration history as regards food in later life. One important goal of the lecture was to raise student and stakeholder

awareness for the topic. The Learning Day in Hanover and its outcomes were presented as well as an educational exercise that was used during the Learning Day which actively involved the participants in the lecture hall.

With more than 250 participants, comprising students at IFITS, nutrition and healthcare experts as well as academics from across Europe, the International Days were a fantastic occasion to present and share the ideas being developed in FILL. The International Days also enabled to learn about new healthcare issues related to endeavours that partners' are engaged in.

More on [fill-project.eu](http://fill-project.eu)

## Credits

### FILL Partners



FILL is an initiative brought to you by several European organisations that are involved in adult learning and education. By forming a Partnership these organisations are sharing knowledge and working together to offer a comprehensive understanding of issues related to nutritional changes that take place as one gets older, plus offer instructional materials to support a lifelong pleasurable experience when eating. This initiative was made possible thanks to grants from the European Commission under the Grundtvig Partnerships Lifelong Learning Programme.

## Disclaimer

*This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author; and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.*



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