



# T - SQUADS

Active aging and intergenerational cooperation in volunteer work: a pilot intervention on termite pest control in the Azores (Portugal)

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## introduction

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ACTIVE AGING, INTERGENERATIONAL COOPERATION, CITIZENSHIP, URBAN PEST MANAGEMENT, RISK COMMUNICATION



**the problem:**  
termites a serious urban pest



Drywood termite is an insect pest that causes great damage by consuming an entire house wood infra-structure. In the Azores it is dangerously well established and its impacts are increased when combined with the region's regular seismic activity.

The pest is mainly established in the historical city centers, mostly composed by old housing and inhabited by aged citizens with low socioeconomic, literacy and physical mobility resources.

## T-Squads: Intergenerational pilot intervention

teams of volunteers help risk area residents in the assembling of traps in the context of their home.



## objectives & principles:

- Mutal benefits:** Recognize retired's spare time as an added value and usefull resource to the society & Promote elderly well being and quality of life in the aging process;
- Challenge gerontofobia:** by gathering dinamic, energetic, highly motivated aged citizens;
- Promote active citizenship** by participating in the control of a public health and environmental problem;
- Strengthen the bounds in the community.**

Adopted from Hatton-Yeo (2009) **intervention typology:**

“Older adults and youth collaborating in service to community” Hatton-Yeo (2009)

## method of implementation:

“Multidisciplinary and decentralised approach, allowing intersectorial cooperation among various agencies and institutions” Hatton-Yeo (2009)

In a 3 day intervention 610 houses were visited by: 39 volunteers (organized in teams of 4 to 5 elements being the older one the coordinator):

- 6 adults (average ages 66,5 and ±5,0 years)
- 33 youngsters (average ages 17,5 ±2,9 years)

## objectives

- Uncover the meanings, motivations and expectations of the elderly on participating in this intergenerational volunteering intervention;
- Assess the interventions impact from the elderly point of view:
  - gains and achieved satisfaction towards well being and quality of life in the aging process;
  - improvement measures

## methodology

- Focus group interview conducted with 6 elderly participants;
- Descriptive-interpretative analyses of collected data;
- Thematic-categorical content analysis with a posteriori analytical grid building;
- Concept mapping

## elder's benefits from participating in the T-Squads:

acquiring knowledge	social bonding	feeling usefull
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABOUT THE PROBLEM</li> <li>• ON ITS MANAGEMENT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TEAM WORK</li> <li>• RESTORE CONTACT WITH YOUNGER GENERATIONS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BEING HELPFUL</li> </ul>

## elder's volunteer profiles taking into account previous experiences:

empowering	bonding	mental training	caring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PREVENT INFOEXCLUSION</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PREVENT LONINESS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PREVENT MENTAL AGING &amp; ILLNESS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRAISING &amp; REGARDING ONES' DIGNITY</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMPUTER TEACHING</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VISITING &amp; CHATING</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GAME BUILDING &amp; PLAYING</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASSISTING &amp; FEEDING LAND UP / BED RIDDEN PATIENTS</li> </ul>

## elders' motivations to participate in the T-Squads & functions of volunteer work:

occupy their spare time	continue to help the other	contribute to the solving of a social need	place-identity and sense of belonging
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SELF WELL BEING</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCIETY WELL BEING</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCIETY WELL BEING</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMMUNITY WELL BEING</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FILL A VOID</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RETRIBUTIVE MISSION</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CONTROL THE RISK</li> <li>• INVOLVE DISINTERESTED CITIZENS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PREVENT PATRIMONIAL LOSSES</li> <li>• HELP FELLOW COUNTRYMAN</li> </ul>

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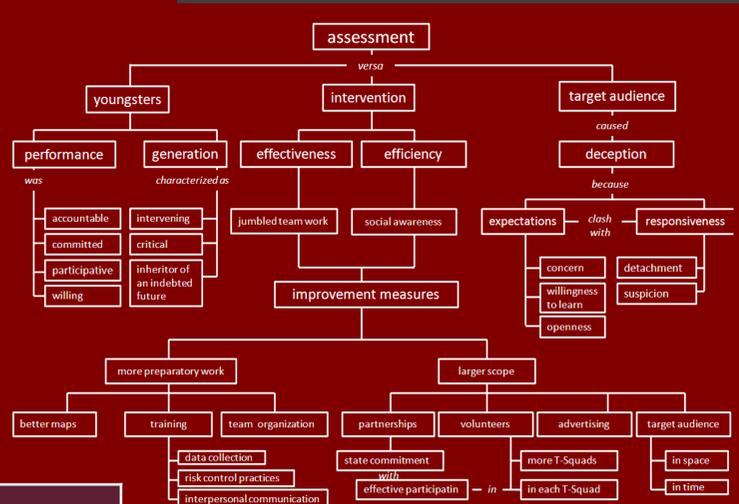
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## results



## Discussion of results

Focusing on the elderly's satisfaction and representations the T-Squads showed great potential to the promotion of intergenerational principles:

- quality of life through an active aging process;
- strategies of getting closer and in contact different generations and exchanging of mutual benefits:
  - from the youngsters to the elderly (energy & enthusiasm)
  - from the elderly to the youngsters (examples of active citizenship);
- the solving of a social problem, despite demanding:
  - interventions' scope enlargement to other communities in order to guarantee its efficiency, and not betray the participants expectations;
  - incorporation of the participants suggested measures;

Focusing on the termite pest control benefits

- future research is needed:
  - asses T-Squads impact in the promotion if behavior change towards pest control practices.



T-squads were part of a larger risk communication campaign implemented in 4 city councils with the aim of:

- consolidating the social conscious of the pest;
- promote behavior change;
- involve citizens in risk mitigation actions;
- Involve the different stakeholders;
- Build commum trust.