Education and quality of life of *senior* citizens

Pilar Escuder-Mollón, Salvador Cabedo (ed.)

quality of life

education

society

seniors

elderly

learning

Europe

classroom

institution

teaching

evaluation

informal

contents

activities

courses

learner

ict

teacher

staff

formal

control

quality

well-being

non-formal

manager

physical

Education and quality of life of senior citizens

Pilar Escuder-Mollón, Salvador Cabedo (editors)

UNIVERSITAT JAUME·I

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Universitat per a majors

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

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INTRODUCTION

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Ageing is one of the greatest social and economic challenges to European societies in the 21st century. It will affect all Member States and it will cut across nearly all EU policy domains. By 2025 more than 20% of Europeans will be 65 or over,[1] with a particularly rapid increase in the number of citizens over 80 years old.

Institutions that teach seniors (65+ years old or retired) need to address courses to a target group that is not aiming to get a degree or to improve their career opportunities. They must therefore apply different methodologies and also create specially designed courses, activities and materials. From a broader perspective, their main aim is to increase senior learners' well-being and quality of life (QoL). In this context, teaching becomes a socio-educational activity where more formal, non-formal and informal activities are blended. The knowledge students acquire is important, but other skills, attitudes and aims should not be forgotten such as socialisation, integration, adapting to society, active citizenship, etc.

Existing research defines QoL in terms of both objective and subjective perceptions. Some parameters are available for evaluating QoL and, therefore, to take action to improve an individual's QoL. Levels of QoL may fall as a result of several kinds of risks (e.g. loneliness, isolation) and may rise due to other activities that promote integration or communication. Education can be used to minimise the risks and maximise QoL. The promotion and enhancement of QoL in senior citizens is highly positive as it not only leads to happier seniors, but also to more active, productive, participative, healthy older people who require fewer social services and whose value in society is increased.

This guide is addressed to teachers, trainers, tutors, facilitators, staff, technicians, managers and decision makers who want to know more about the QoL-edu-

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1. Giannakouris, K. (2008). Ageing characterises the demographic perspectives of the European societies, in Population and Social Conditions. Eurostat; Statistics in focus. 72/2008

cation relationship among senior citizens. It is directly aimed at those people who want to set up an education programme for senior citizens. Each chapter therefore provides an introduction, together with practical content that will help the reader to understand and integrate some of the activities, content, experiences, etc. into his or her own institution, thereby increasing learners' QoL.

WHY QUALITY OF LIFE MATTERS

When basic needs are covered, everybody has the right to pursue other targets in life: happiness, self-realisation, independence, etc. All the above concepts are related to QoL, but they must be understood from the individual's subjective perception; having a good QoL means that one's life is pleasant and valuable.

QoL is based on external and internal components. The external components are those established by the community people live in. Modern societies try to increase the well-being of their citizens through social services, health programmes, resources for low-income citizens, increased accessibility and opportunities for the disabled, in an endeavour to reduce discrimination and raise inclusion of all members of society.

The internal components are those that derive from ourselves: optimism, perceived control, adaptation, etc. People with a higher QoL have better attitudes to face the challenges and problems of life. Their perception of a health issue or problem is more positive. They participate more in social activities, their neighbourhood and family.

QoL is an aim that represents the long-term direction of society's progress, in which every individual tries to live a rich life, in the broadest sense. In general, society benefits more from citizens with high QoL than from those with low QoL. Moreover, low QoL tends to imply greater expenditure on social services and medical services.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Although there is a large body of research and numerous publications focusing on disabled, marginalised or dependent people, few studies have explored the issue of senior citizens or retired people who capably manage their lives, and whose health problems are only those that typically accompany the ageing process. These people fall between the ages of 65 and 80 or even older as health conditions are improving.

The ageing process can be critical in any individual because it involves major changes. These changes and the loss of control are the main factors that jeopardise individuals' QoL, particularly when they are unpredictable and people are unprepared for them. There are changes in work (retirement), family, society, our bodies, and health related problems that require adjustments to the perceptions and structures of our lives. All of these are psychological, physical and social challenges that can lead to a decline in QoL if the individual does not deal with them in the right way.

On the other hand, this stage of life offers the chance to grasp new opportunities because people generally have more time to participate in social activities. Senior citizens also have a wealth of life experience that should not be lost or wasted. Society can benefit from seniors with good QoL, not only because of their increased social participation, but also through lower social and health service expenditure.

THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

There are public institutions, non-governmental organisations and associations as well as laws and regulations that combat poverty, exclusion, discrimination and other social aspects that create suffering and unfair living conditions. Actions to increase individuals' QoL can be taken from a global (governments, law, regulation, services, institutions) to a local (communities, families, friends, individual) perspective.

From the global-local perspective, individual QoL can be impacted through education. Learning has many stages in life; while children need to learn the most basic knowledge and social skills, training for adolescents and adults focuses more on professional skills and competitiveness. Education for elderly or retired people does not aim to improve their promotion chances at work, and their motivation is purely personal. The most common reasons they give for wanting to learn are: to find out about a subject they are curious about; to know more about today's society and its history; to understand modern society and keep abreast with changes; to avoid exclusion; and to remain active and creative. On the other hand, institutions offer this kind of educational activity because they know that they are beneficial for senior citizens: it equips them with the skills to face the challenges of present society, and to be more active and participative. Those concepts are closely linked to the aim of increasing seniors' QoL, as we will see in the following chapters.

The design of any educational intervention aimed to increase learners' QoL is not something that can be gained in the short term through a course subject or other activity. This very broad aim requires a carefully design of the entire teaching-learning process which involves not only the course content, but how it is taught, how learners interact, the environment, and many other aspects that will be covered in this guide.

Education can impact seniors' QoL, but like any other habit, skill or attitude, QoL can be learnt in the same way as we learn tolerance, friendship, or the right way to face up to challenges.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide has been specifically designed for tutors, facilitators, teachers, staff, technicians, managers and decision makers who want to know more about how they can impact seniors' quality of life through education. It can be used by those who want to set up a new educational activity for seniors, or those who are already running one and want to learn more. The guide attempts to go from the basic theoretical concepts to the most practical issues with examples and practice. It therefore aims especially to meet the requirements of personnel dealing with education for senior citizens (retired from the labour market, with personal motivations). The guide's final target is always the senior learner, who, in the final instance, is the recipient of the educational impact provided by the educational institution.

Numerous books and guides deal with the subjects of quality of life, education, society, gerontology and geriatrics. We do not aim to explain in detail these extensive issues in this book; indeed, this would be truly impossible task. Our aim is to introduce and link all these concepts together. The relationship between them is what makes this guide innovative, in the hope that it will be useful to practitioners. References are provided to guide the reader in furthering his or her knowledge about general concepts.

IMPROVING THE SENIORS' QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH EDUCATION

The guide is divided into chapters that try to answer *What*, *Why*, *How* and *Who* questions to the main topic: Improving the seniors' quality of life through education.

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┌──────────┐          ┌─────────────┐                                ┌──────────┐
│          │          │  Quality of │                                │          │
│          │          │ Life Concepts│                               │          │
│ Why / What│         └─────────────┘                                │          │
│          │     ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐              │ European │
│          │     │ Social context│     │ Psychological │             │ context, │
└──────────┘     │ of the elderly│     │ context of elderly│         │ experiences.│
                 └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘              │          │
┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────┐                │          │
│ How      │ │ Pedagogy │  │  Models  │  │ Content  │                │          │
└──────────┘ └──────────┘  └──────────┘  └──────────┘                │          │
┌──────────┐         ┌──────────────┐                                │          │
│ Who      │         │    Staff     │                                │          │
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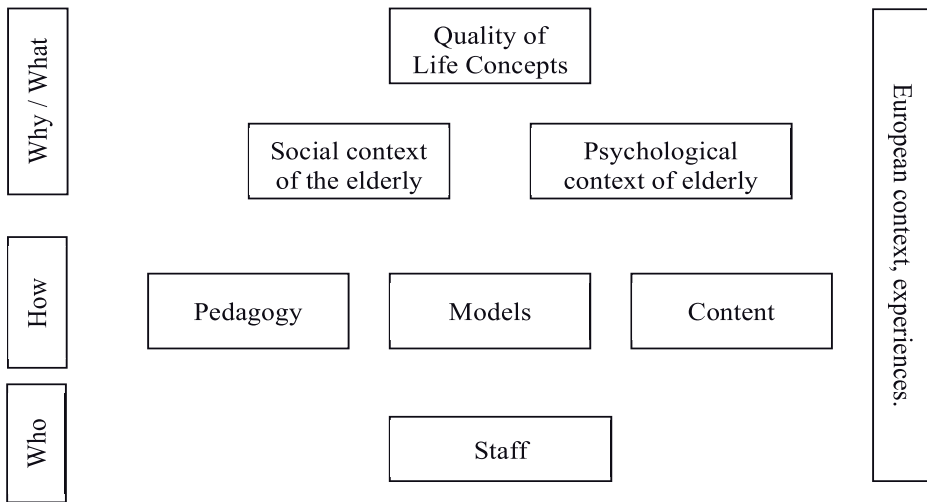
Figure 1. Chapters of this guide and its contextualisation

ABOUT THE CONTENT OF THIS BOOK

The book has seven main chapters, in addition to this introductory chapter and the final one (Challenges, conclusions). The book begins with a theoretical perspective and moves on to a more practical approach. The first three chapters establish the background needed to understand QoL, and also the needs and potentialities of the elderly. These chapters set out to provide information about *why* this topic is important and *what* we should focus on:

1. Quality of Life
2. Ageing
3. Social Context

Following this background on the requirements of the elderly and the aims and targets of the educational action, the next four chapters offer information about *how* the educational activity should be provided and the skills and competences of the staff that provides it, in other words, *who*.

4. Models
5. Pedagogy

6. Content
7. Staff, trainers

Each chapter introduces the main topic, and also includes local context[2] and experiences, within the following structure:

- Introduction and development of the chapter topic, providing mainly theoretical information.
- European Union context, illustrating the chapter topic from the perspective of each partner country.
- Experiences and best (good) practices. These include examples of good practices, research, projects or experiences related to the chapter topic.

The first part of each chapter aims to give the reader a clear idea of the topic. Readers who wish to further their knowledge can explore the references listed at the end of each chapter. The second and third sections of the chapter offer the reader practical examples that can be used and implemented in other institutions. More information about the experience in each institution can be obtained by contacting it directly.

HOW THIS GUIDE CAN BE USED

This guide provides the basic foundations and concepts for all those interested in senior education (senior citizens retired from the labour market, with personal motivations). The first chapters take a more theoretical approach, detailing the models, context and requirements of senior citizens. Subsequent chapters are more practical, and present the most appropriate techniques for senior education (pedagogies, models, contents). Whatever your area of knowledge, the guide will give you a comprehensive understanding of how education can be used to improve the quality of institutions.

It should also be remembered that the guide is divided into two parts. The second volume, entitled "Evaluation Toolkit for Educational Institutions: Increasing Impact on Senior Learners' Quality of Life", also focuses on seniors' education, but from a completely different angle, by providing well-defined characteristics and recommendations to increase senior learners' quality of life through education.

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2. Because the two first chapters (QoL and Ageing) are mainly theoretical, they do not include local context

You can use this guide in the way that best suits your needs and context, but we have found the following scenarios particularly useful:

- For experts in a specific subject (e.g., educators, facilitators, trainers, managers, etc.) who wish to acquire general knowledge in other fields.
- For personnel with limited experience who are keen to know more about the context and potentialities of senior citizens, and also how education can be shaped to have greatest impact on seniors' quality of life.
- For training of the personnel (vocational training) who will be working with lifelong learning programmes or institutions.
- For the wider public (decision makers, social services, volunteer institutions, associations), interested in knowing the potentialities of education and learning how they can encourage and reinforce lifelong learning among senior citizens, thereby increasing the benefits for society.

QEduSen PROJECT

This guide is part of the results of the QEduSen project "Evaluation toolkit on seniors' education to improve their quality of life". It was supported by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission, reference 518227-LLP-1-2011-1-ES-GRUNDTVIG-GMP, from October 2011 to September 2013

More information about this project is available at http://www.edusenior.eu and about the LifeLong Learning Programme of the European Commission at http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme

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THE PARTNERSHIP

Seven institutions worked together to produce this guide over a two-year period, following an initial phase of research and analysis into the concepts, requirements and education potentialities of QoL.

A brief description of each institution is given below:

Universitat Jaume I

Senior citizens' university

Castellón, Spain

The *Universitat per a Majors* (in English, Senior Citizens' University - SCU) offers a range of studies created by Jaume I University for people aged over 55 who want to continue their studies and widen their general knowledge. Through this university programme, the University hopes to contribute to improving adults' skills and abilities not only by giving them academic training, but also by enabling them to integrate and develop socially.

The University offers space and freedom to reflect, where senior learners can exchange knowledge and experiences. In our dynamic and constantly changing society, education and lifelong learning are necessary to keep abreast with and understand today's world. Seniors therefore have the opportunity to participate in a responsible way in the historical and social context we are living in. University education for senior adults does not aim to train students in their professional careers. The main goal is to encourage their personal development and contribute to the cultural development of our society.

In the Universitat per a Majors two important branches can be distinguished: research and teaching.

Research is promoted and developed through projects, publications, conferences and university exchanges, at national and international level.

The quality of our teachers is the base for programming the 'Senior University Graduate' studies. All the teachers involved in this programme belong to the university staff, but the subjects and activities focus on specific aims and contents for senior citizens. The SCU website is http://mayores.uji.es.

The subjects they study are mainly from the humanities – philosophy, history, art, sociology, etc, – but also from economics and the sciences. Given their importance in today's society, ICT and languages are two highly relevant subjects in the SCU.

Non-formal and informal activities are offered in addition to formal academic subjects; these include workshops, extra-academic and workgroup activities, volunteer work, etc. These are not secondary activities, but play an essential role in completing seniors' knowledge and proficiency in society. We understand education not only as teaching and acquiring new knowledge, but also as providing an integral socio-educational intervention aimed at integrating seniors more fully in today's society, through participation, thus leading to a greater quality of life.

Pilar Escuder-Mollon

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Graduate in Human Sciences from the University of Jaume I, Castellon, Spain. Master's Degree in Applied Social Gerontology from the University of Barcelona, Spain. Pilar has worked in the Senior Citizens' University (SCU) since 2000 as specialist and associate lecturer. Her role is to organise, prepare and supervise all the activities, courses, teachers and staff of the Senior Citizens' University. Her duties include coordinating the SCU programme as part of the Universitat Jaume I. She is a member of the board of the National Network of Senior Universities. She leads the educational gerontology research team, producing books and publications and participating in conferences related to education for the elderly from a broad perspective: gerontology, andragogy, quality of life, intergenerational learning, non-formal and informal learning and the use of new technologies for elderly learning.

Roger Esteller-Curto

Researcher in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering and researcher and assistant lecturer at the Senior Citizens' University.

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Graduate in Computer Science from the University of Jaume I, Castellon, Spain. Master's Degree in Information and Knowledge Society from the Open University of Catalonia. Roger has worked in the Senior Citizens' University since 2004 as a teacher of new technologies (NT; computer skills, internet, etc) and also technology and society (history, knowledge society, science and society). He coordinates the group of teachers and develops the subjects, materials and activities related to new technologies and other complementary activities (workshops and virtual communities). He leads the elderly and new technologies research groups, organising a bi-annual international conference, projects and papers related to digital inclusion of the elderly and the relation between senior citizens and technology from a social, human and practical perspectives.

University of Helsinki

Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education.

Helsinki, Finland.

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

The University of Helsinki is one of the leading European research universities and among the best multidisciplinary research universities in the world, cooperating strongly with the international academic community and business world. Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education is part of the University of Helsinki. Benefitting from the University's broad foundation across a range of disciplines, Palmenia operates in diverse fields of adult education and regional development. It designs and provides tailored programmes as well as research and development services to meet the needs of business life and the public sector.

Tea Seppälä

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Tea Seppälä is the head of the Unit Teaching and Education. She has over years of experience in the field of teachers and school leaders in-service training and she also serves as member of the consultative committee of teacher education at the University of Helsinki. Her specialization areas in research and domestic and international projects comprise pedagogical solutions in the field of adult education,

apprenticeship as a pedagogical model for adult education and intercultural human resource management.

Ulla Eloniemi-Sulkava

Adjunct Professor, Project Manager in Gerontology,
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Ulla Eloniemi-Sulkava has worked over 25 years in clinical, educational and academic posts in the field of gerontology. She is actively involved in the implementation of the effective care models in the Finnish social and health care organizations and is nationally recognized expert in dementia care. She is the active member and country coordinator in the Pan-European INTERDEM (Intervention in Dementia) Research Collaboration.

Ulla Eloniemi-Sulkava has over 50 publications in peer reviewed journals and over 80 publications in professional journals.

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Management of projects concerning intercultural issues and training for skilled immigrants. About 20 projects per year, staff of 8, annual revenue about 700 000 €. Experience in this field: 29 years.

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Irene Wichmann is a linguist and language teacher (Finnish and Hungarian) and has 30 years of experience in teaching Finnish as a second and foreign language, both on university level and in adult education centres. In the field of project work, Irene Wichmann has participated in several Finnish-Hungarian cooperation projects. She is an authorized translator (Hungarian - Finnish).

Cecil Issakainen

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Cecil Issakainen graduated in Information Technology specialized in digital communication with 15 years experience of teaching ICT on adult education level. She is also responsible for virtual learning pedagogy and e-learning tools (Moodle-Learning Management System training). Teaching and planning ICT courses to multicultural groups including seniors group are some of her duties. She has been in involved in the European project "ActiveICT for seniors", 2008.

Università delle LiberEtà del Fvg.

Udine, Italy

Università delle LiberEtà of Friuli-Venezia Giulia is a Lifelong Learning Centre in Udine, engaged in permanent education and training. Università delle LiberEtà aims at:

- being a cultural and formative resource for the whole community;
- making all associates aware that the present epochal changes require recurrent and continuous formative modernisation;
- stimulating the learners to an active and fruitful participation, by proposing initiatives and projects and contributing to their implementation;
- increasing the cultural horizons, from traditional culture to the new ways of learning;
- innovating learning and teaching methodologies, pointing out that improving culture and learning is possible at every age.

As Università delle LiberEtà is based on the relations between different generational groups, it therefore intends:

- to stimulate dialogue, meeting and exchange of ideas among different age groups;

• to activate theoretical and practical courses also for people still in their working age and to increase the development, deepening and updating of cultural and formative contents by organising courses for the staff of the schools of every degree;

• to fight isolation and to stimulate social and cultural promotion of the elder people by means of meetings and other initiatives of socialization and formation;

• to activate studies, investigations, researches, conventions on the problems of all ages, including education.

Since 1993 (the year of its foundation) the numbers of participants/learners, teachers and the choice of the educational offers have been increasing. Today it counts around 4 000 members and carries out almost 600 formative routes a year, which involve about 200 teachers.

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Responsible of public relations with the adult and senior learners at Università delle LiberEtà del FVG. Collaborator in the technical and administrative work for European projects. Collaborator in the organisation of conferences and seminars both at national and international level. Collaborator in the management of the financial as-

pects of Grundtvig Multilateral projects and Learning Partnerships and other Grundt-vig Actions like In Service Staff training Courses and Workshops. Teacher of English and Spanish for adult and senior citizens. E-learning teacher of Spanish.

Personality socialization research institute of Rēzeknes Augstskola.

Rezekne, Latvia

Rēzeknes Augstskola - Rezekne Higher Education Institution (RHEI) was established on the basis of the branches of the University of Latvia and Riga Technical University. On July 1, 1993 RHEI began to run as an independent higher education institution according to the Resolution No. 180 from April, 1993 of LR Council of Ministers "On Establishment of Rezekne Higher Education Institution".

Rezekne Higher Education Institution is a state-founded higher education and science institution of the Republic of Latvia which implements the study programs as well as is engaged in scientific, research and artistic creative work. The principles of RHEI are:

- freedom of academic and scientific work for the academic staff and students,
- free choice of study programs, teaching methods and themes of scientific research,
- expression (publishing) of scientific standpoints and results of research without censorship if this liberty does not contradict the norms of morality, rights of other persons and laws of the Republic of Latvia.

Personality Socialization research institute (PSRI) is a new structural unit of RHEI, which was founded in February 2006. Objective: to develop capacity of scientific research, to do interdisciplinary research, to ensure technological perfection (scientifically grounded theoretical, practical and informative basis, etc.) and innovation transfer in the field of personality's socialization and re-socialization (particularly for people with special needs), to support security of individuals and society.

Velta Ļubkina

Doctor of Pedagogy, professor, leading researcher.
The director of the Personality Socialization Research Institute (PSRI)
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Duties are related to preparing of research projects, managing research activities, interpretation of results using different techniques, writing collaborative journal articles and presenting conference papers. Responsibilities include executing the following phases of institutional design methodology: analysis of needs and tasks, learning objective generation, course outlining, creation of effective assessments, learning strategies, as well as internal and external resources development of unit, etc.

Svetlana Ušča

Doctor of Pedagogy, researcher.
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Field of scientific researches: special pedagogy, social work, data processing using IT technologies. Her duties within the project are related to analysing the theoretical background of pedagogy methods, as well as collecting and analysing the project data. S.Ušča has defended her thesis "Development of Communicative Competence of Adolescents with Language Disorders in a Basic Boarding School" where she combined the analysis of qualitative and quantitative research results.

Aivars Kaupužs

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A.Kaupužs is specialized in physical activity promoting for older adults population. He has experience of sport event organization and physical activity group leading. Research on the field of exercise behaviour change models and fitness improvement for elderly. Duties of project are related to analysing the theoretical background of pedagogy methods and analysing of gained data, writing collaborative journal articles and presenting conference papers.

Inese Rimšāne

Project coordinator
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Field of responsibility: time management of research group, planning and organising the research workshops. She is responsible for the technical organisation and the management of the project documentation. She is also the contact person for the cooperation with project and local partners. I. Rimšāne is responsible for public relations and dissemination. Field of interest: design and arts.

Akademia im. Jana Dlugosza w Czestochowie

Czestochowa, Poland

The Jan Dlugosz University in Czestochowa (JDU) is a public a university, with history that goes back to 1971. At present the University community consists of approx. 9 000 students and about 500 academic staff members. Our students can choose between 24 specialties at five faculties. JDU offers also trainings in 60 specialties of postgraduate studies.

The mission of JDU is conducting the scientific research, artistic activity as well as training in the areas of science and the humanities and arts disciplines. The University is engaged in environmental, regional, national and international projects.

JDU is also involved in popularisation of science and its achievements among the elderly people. About 700 students attend courses of study offered by the University of the Third Age (UTA). The main objective of UTA (University of the Third Age) within the Jan Dlugosz University is to maintain mental and physical welfare of the individual senior and achieve a proper and dignified position of elderly people. The main objectives of the university are: inclusion of older people in the system of lifelong learning; intellectual, psychological and physical activation of the students; conducting research; implementation of gerontological prophylaxis. The UTA program offers: lectures, seminars, foreign language courses, computer workshops, meetings with interesting people, sections of the subject of interest, clubs and teams thematic workshops, movement classes, recreation, rehabilitation, cultural, tourist and occasional courses and trainings. UTA at AJD has operated since 1994. It publishes a newsletter 'Our University' and cooperates with the other Institutions in the city and country.

Alina Gil

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Doctor degree in Solid State Physics. Postgraduate studies of ICT. Microsoft Approved Course "ICT in education". Head of Postgraduate studies "Computer Science and IT in teaching". Researcher and Lecturer at the Institute of Technical

Education and Safety, Jan Dlugosz University in Czestochowa – Poland. Scientific editor of the series: Technical and IT Education.

Experience in training of adults. Organizational skills, experience in management of the Institute. Courses taught include: IT in education and engineering.

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Experience in training of adults. Organisational skills.

TREBAG Property and Project management Ltd.

Nagykovácsi, Hungary

TREBAG was established in 1989 as a joint venture (Hungarian-German) company. In 1994, it became a private Hungarian company. The activities of

TREBAG have a multidisciplinary character ranging from project foundation to the implementation of results and dissemination. Within the scope of these activities are:: non-formal education, management consultancy, quality management consultancy, dissemination and demonstration activities, implementation of technology transfer and innovation chain management and organisation and management of various R&D projects.

Trebag was promoter of the Leonardo-project that won the 1st prize on the eFestival in Hungary in 2005 and the European Seal of Excellence in Multimedia prize on the CEEBIT in 2006. Trebag has experience in European projects and transnational cooperation. Trebag has practice in the adult training and organised special trainings for the facilitators for the elderly persons.

Also in 2011 Trebag became a member of the European Living Lab Network, therefore promoting living lab activities in the community of Nagykovácsi.

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Assist Net EOOD

Sofia, Bulgaria

Assist Net is a training and consultancy consortium focused on adult learning, senior education, intergenerational and family learning, and teaching learners with special needs, including e-learning.

The organisation is based in Sofia, Bulgaria, but works in cooperation with partners throughout the whole country and abroad, through its International Advisory Board.

Assist Net is a member of the European Network for Intergenerational Learning (ENIL) and International Certificate Conference – Europe, and works in cooperation with the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), Europe Schools Adult Education network, University of Sofia, Department of Special Education, Faculty of Pedagogy, and South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Bulgaria.

Assist Net is registered with the European Family Learning Network and the European Map of Intergenerational Learning Network, and is also in contact with the Learning in Later Life Network.

The basic activities focus on the following main areas:

• Training adults and seniors and people with special needs: disabled, disadvantaged, people at risk;
• Developing training and teaching materials for adults and seniors and people with special needs;
• ODL and e-learning;
• Audits and training needs analyses;
• Language training to adults and seniors;
• Training in entrepreneurial, management and computer skills;
• Training in communication and presentation skills;
• Training in intercultural awareness and intercultural communication;
• Quality assurance and testing.

Assist Net has experience with adult and senior learners and is also specialised in Special Educational Needs (SEN) learners.

The organisation has been involved in various Languages, ICT, Special Educational Needs (SEN), Adult Education and Senior Education projects.

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Experience in internal and external evaluation and monitoring of international projects.

1. QUALITY OF LIFE

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1.1. INTRODUCTION

Quality of Life (henceforth QoL) is an abstract concept that everybody can work out the meaning of, but which is difficult to define accurately. People usually associate QoL with well-being, a good life, being healthy, happy or having plenty of money. In that sense, it is easily associated with the idea that increasing QoL is a good thing for an individual and for society in general. In modern societies, where the well-being of citizens is a priority, decision makers frequently try to raise our QoL.

It is a widely known term, used not only by governments, psychologists, doctors and sociologists, but also by individuals pursuing the well-being of their families. Despite the use we make of the QoL concept, it is not something we usually think too much about. It is difficult to explain in detail the concept, how it is influenced by personal and external sources and how we or other actors can try to increase it. Curiously enough, evaluating QoL seems easier than defining it – at least this is what can be observed from the established evaluation models available and accepted by the academic community.

This chapter aims to clarify the concept of QoL, starting from a general perspective and then focusing on education and on the elderly. There is no single theory of QoL; each theory considers QoL from different perspectives and also attaches more importance to different life dimensions. In recent years, QoL theories have evolved to embrace what seem to be more psychological and less materialistic considerations, but still considering different dimensions of life. We should not think that these theories are contradictory, nor that they reveal a situation of chaos surrounding QoL. The theories and models of QoL should be taken as tools that will give us a better understanding of social reality, crucial for every human being.

We are sure that what you consider important in life and for your QoL is different from your neighbour's considerations, and from younger or older people living in a different towns or cities. There is no single concept of what QoL is. There are as many meanings as people you ask about it. For this reason QoL theories should be considered as a great opportunity to better understand the different meanings of QoL, why it declines and how you can work to increase it for other people.

This chapter will provide the necessary background to best apply the potentialities of education to senior citizens' needs. The final target of the educational intervention in the context of this project is to increase QoL, but some of the QoL dimensions cannot be affected by education, while other dimensions, if the educational intervention is correctly designed, can be greatly improved. It is necessary to know what these dimensions are, to understand them well, and then to know how they can be influenced.

1.2. UNDERSTANDING QUALITY OF LIFE

Researchers in the areas of sociology, psychology, medicine and philosophy have proposed theories about QoL depending on their point of view, area of research and point in time. The first philosophers in Greece thought much more about happiness and the good life than about QoL; the main purpose of human existence was to fulfil human appetites, a hedonic tradition that was first centred in the body but later also in the mind (Chung et al. 1997, Kubovy 1999). Aristotle believed that true happiness occurs based on what people do (activities) and what people believe (values). This was the eudaimonic perspective (daimon = true nature) that challenged the previous hedonic (pleasure or wish focused) tradition.

Modern QoL theories were steered by health studies, in attempts to argue how treatments and interventions could not directly improve patients' health, but rather their QoL. These actions were aimed to reduce symptoms, to make the patient's life less miserable or reduce unhappiness. This direct target of trying to increase QoL by reducing or removing pain or other problems contrasts with the most recent theories that propose acting to increase QoL through measures that make citizens happier, with greater support and security, for example, in case of governments promoting social services, healthy habits, communication, etc.

Recent QoL research has placed greater weight on citizens' subjective perception as opposed to objective considerations of their lives. The first intuitive idea is

to say that money makes people happier, ergo rich people have a higher QoL. To be healthy can be considered an important determinant for QoL. Of course, health and money do not bring happiness. Beyond a certain income needed to cover the average needs for a given society, money is not correlated to happiness (Myers 2000, pp. 54-60). Other studies found that the more people focus on economic and materialistic issues, the lower their well-being will be (Ryan & Deci 2001). The important issue here is to be aware of 'average needs', which is a socially determined measure. Below that threshold (poverty) money and well-being are highly correlated.

Thus, when our lifestyle is not challenged by health and money issues, the subjective perception of our life becomes the most important criterion to understand and evaluate QoL. In this chapter we introduce dimensions, facets, components and indicators that are related to QoL, but focusing on the elderly (not disabled or challenged) and on education. The final section of this chapter suggests further reading on general concepts of QoL.

1.3. DEFINITION

To find a single and commonly accepted definition of 'Quality of Life' is no easy task; there are as many definitions as there are theories and QoL models. Moreover, everybody has their own view on this subject.

QoL can be understood from a macro level (community, society, region) and from a micro level (our own life experience, conditions and perception). The most usual way to impact the macro level is at the policy decision-making stage; however, projects like QEduSen, associations and civil groups can also bring about this change by, for example, promoting positive attitudes towards learning in later life. On a micro level, the most important factors affecting an individual's QoL are their living conditions (income, health, security, etc). These factors are included in the base of the Maslow hierarchy of needs (Figure 2); when basic needs are covered, self-perception and life expectation become the most critical issues in our QoL. At this second level, esteem and self-realisation are more important (top of the Maslow hierarchy of needs). Even when basic needs are not covered, or there are factors that reduce our well-being (such as a disability), happiness and life satisfaction can still be high; QoL, as we will observe in the following theoretical models, is mainly subjective and culturally related. We now start by introducing three of the most accepted definitions of QoL.

The World Health Organisation QoL Group (WHO 1997) defines Quality of Life as "individuals' perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns". Dimensions can be seen in Table 2.

Research by Schalock (2000) centres more on health issues or disabilities. His definition is as follows: "Quality of life is a concept that reflects a person's desired conditions of living related to eight core dimensions of one's life: emotional well-being, interpersonal relationships, material well-being, personal development, physical well-being, self-determination, social inclusion, and rights." Dimensions are detailed in Table 1.

Cummins (1997) proposes a model to suit any population:

Quality of life is both objective and subjective, each axis being the aggregate of seven domains: material well-being, health, productivity, intimacy, safety, community, and emotional well-being. Objective domains comprise culturally-relevant measures of objective well-being. Subjective domains comprise domain satisfaction weighted by their importance to the individual

From the WHO definition, we can deduce that the concept of QoL must be understood in relation to the community where the individual lives, which has a major cultural significance. QoL is also very subjective: it is a 'perception'. Other definitions, such as Schalock's, attempt to define QoL by enumerating its component parts. These dimensions are very useful not only for evaluation purposes, but also in deconstructing QoL to later focus on increasing each specific dimension. However, it is difficult to precisely establish the dimensions, as each theory proposes its own set of QoL dimensions. In the second definition, Schalock puts forward eight dimensions (detailed in Table 1). Fortunately, most of these dimensions are common to all definitions. In his definition, Cummins emphasises the importance of the subjective factor, and evaluates both the subjective and the objective factors.

Basic needs

A person's QoL may be, for example, low, medium or high. Some QoL evaluation tools give a numerical score for QoL. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow & Cox 1987) (Figure 2) includes certain basic living conditions (survival conditions) that should be covered initially before higher QoL levels can be reached. From this
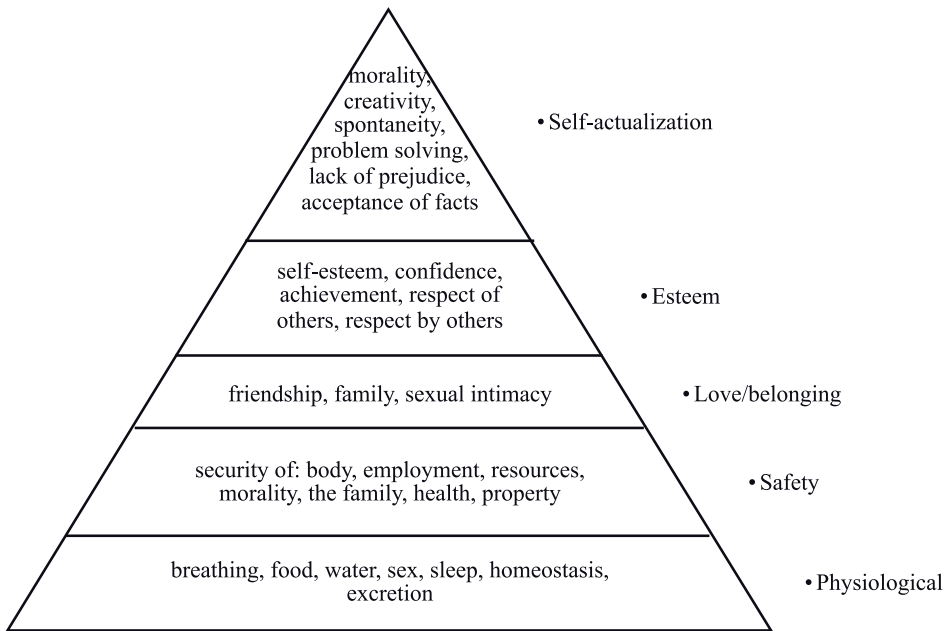
Figure 2. Maslow's hierarchy of needs

perspective, a person's QoL level can be associated with his or her met needs according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Conditions of great poverty, ill health or discrimination correlate with a very low QoL. People need the basic resources (income, house, security) in order to think about meeting other needs and increasing their QoL.

It is not aim of this chapter to focus on the unfulfilled basic needs that jeopardise QoL, which would not be met through educational actions, but through social and health services and supporting policies. When people have enough income, housing, security, reasonable health, transport and basic social support, then we can start to deliberate on ways of increasing their QoL, and how that increase can be beneficial not only for them, but for society in general.

Considering how we can increase QoL is only the first part of our target. We should consider the risks that can jeopardize QoL. In the case of the elderly, we must have a thorough knowledge of their social conditions, the psychological process of ageing and the changes and challenges getting older brings. Although those concepts are detailed in following chapters, here, as we start to break QoL down into its component parts, we will focus on any possible requirements that the elderly might have.

Subjective and Objective

Generally speaking, theories of QoL coincide that it has a subjective and an objective dimension; however, theories focusing on ordinary citizens living in modern societies (not in the third world or in poverty) attribute more weight to subjective aspects.

We might assume that physical health and money have a major impact on QoL, at least intuitively, reflected as a general opinion in surveys that found that "more money would make me happier" (Myers 2000, Campbell 1981). But when comparing nations with different levels of average wealth or comparing people with different levels of material possessions, the correlation with well-being disappeared (Myers 2000). Happiness is not so dependent on external factors, and sometimes it shows an inverse relationship: too many possessions decrease happiness (Ryan & Deci 2001).

As mentioned above, the WHO and the Cummins models place a great deal of emphasis on the subjective factor, as seen in their evaluation tools. The WHO introduces two interesting concepts in its definition: "the perception of the individual" and also "the context of the culture and value systems in which they live". Any assessment of QoL should therefore take into account where people live and their perceptions. In fact, in the abbreviated WHO evaluation tool (WHOQOL-BREF), more than half of the questions are subjective: "How satisfied are you….?" as compared to other more objective ones such as "How much do you need any medical treatment to function in your daily life?"

In Cummin's evaluation tool, all the objective indicators are balanced by a measure of "How important is…?" "How satisfied are you ...?", so a person may have a good income and material well-being, but feels unfortunate. In fact, Cummins (in Rapley 2003) states that when basic needs are covered, most people fall into the 70 %-80 % life satisfaction range; no higher life satisfaction has been reported from studies comparing groups of people with different health or income levels.

Adapting to changes

No one is born old. By definition, everyone who reaches old age has a past, a life experience. The ageing process can be understood as normal ageing (average, standard, normative ageing), while successful ageing, generally less common, is ageing with the absence of any disease or illness. This perspective has, unsurprisingly, generated controversy (Schulz & Heckhausen 1996). The renewed idea
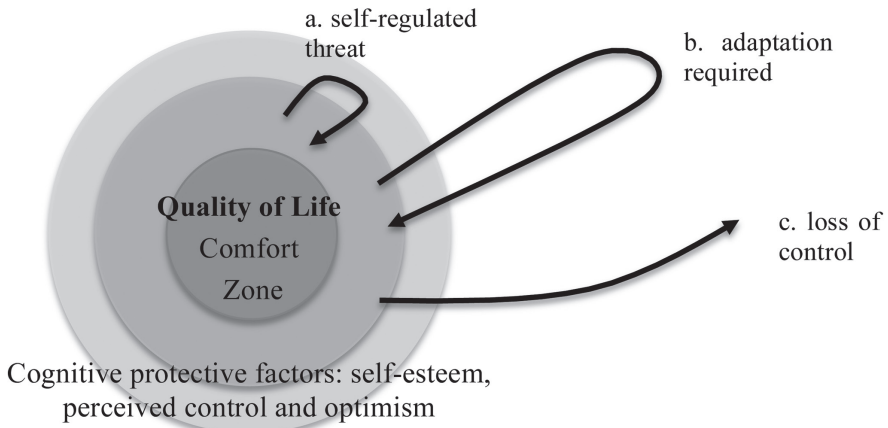
Figure 3. In ordinary situations a person has a high quality of life (darker circles). When a threat occurs (here threats are represented as curves that displace us from the QoL zone: a, b, c) three scenarios are possible, depending on our cognitive protective factors (Rapley 2003): we do not notice the threat (scenario a); we adapt to the threat (scenario b); or we lose control (scenario c)

of successful ageing is based on developmental phenomena. Older people are confronted with physical, psychological, and social changes that increase their exposure to uncontrollable situations. How we face these changing situations will increase or decrease our subjective perception of QoL. Tools to manage these situations are therefore required, namely primary control and secondary control.

Primary control allows us to change and adapt the environment to ourselves; secondary control is applied when we adapt ourselves to the environment. In younger people or adults, primary control is the most widely applied, while among the elderly, secondary control is more commonly applied in an attempt to retain control (Maher 1999).

Cummins (2000) identifies some "cognitive protective factors", namely self-esteem, perceived control and optimism, that act as buffers to ameliorate the impact of threats from changing life circumstances and make QoL homeostatic (self-regulated and usually at a high level). When negative life events have to be endured, they can be accepted as evidence of a complete loss of control. According to Rapley (2003 p. 206), any aversive extrinsic condition compromises how the person adapts to the environment and then, if the buffer is insufficient, the person perceives unmet needs which brings QoL to below the standard range. This is illustrated in Figure 3.

1.4. QoL DIMENSIONS

When defining QoL most authors attempt to break it down into dimensions that can help us to understand it better and also identify the factors we should act on to increase it.

Schalock and Verdugo (2002) affirm that the QoL concept reflects the life conditions desired by an individual related to eight needs or domains, detailed in Table 1. Schalock (Schalock 2011) also believes that

[…] the best definition of [individual] quality of life is a multidimensional phenomenon composed of core domains influenced by personal characteristics and environmental factors. These core domains are the same for all people, although they may vary individually in relative value and importance. In this regard, the assessment of quality of life domains is based on culturally sensitive indicators.

TABLE 1. QUALITY OF LIFE DIMENSIONS ACCORDING TO SCHALOCK AND VERDUGO 2002.

Factors	Domains
Independence	• Personal development • Self-determination
Social participation	• Interpersonal relations • Social inclusion • Rights
Well-being	• Emotional well-being • Physical well-being • Material well-being

The World Health Organisation's (WHO) proposal to measure quality of life justifies the evaluation procedure based on the division of QoL into 24 facets in 6 domains.

Table 2 details the 6 domains and 24 facets that the WHO considered to measure QoL with the WHOQOL-100 evaluation tool. Later research suggested merging 6 dimensions into 4: physical, psychological, social relationships and environment (WHOQL-BREF).

Table 3 shows the main domains following Cummins (1997); each domain has three objective and two subjective measures, which when aggregated, provide a unitary measure of well-being. It has been proven to be a reliable and repeatable test (Rapley 2003, pp. 94-95) designed for the adult population in general.

TABLE 2. WHO DOMAINS AND FACETS FOR MEASURING QoL (WHO 1997)

Domain	Facets incorporated within domains
	0. Overall Quality of Life and General Health
1. Physical health	1.1. Energy and fatigue 1.2. Pain and discomfort 1.3. Sleep and rest
2. Psychological	2.1. Bodily image and appearance 2.2. Negative feelings 2.3. Positive feelings 2.4. Self-esteem 2.5. Thinking, learning, memory and concentration
3. Level of Independence	3.1. Mobility 3.2. Activities of daily living 3.3. Dependence on medicinal substances and medical aids 3.4. Work Capacity
4. Social relationships	4.1. Personal relationships 4.2. Social support 4.3. Sexual activity
5. Environment	5.1. Financial resources 5.2. Freedom, physical safety and security 5.3 Health and social care: accessibility and quality 5.4. Home environment 5.5. Opportunities for acquiring new information and skills 5.6. Participation in and opportunities for recreation/leisure 5.7. Physical environment (pollution/noise/traffic/climate) 5.8. Transport
6. Spirituality / Religion / Personal beliefs	6.1. Religion /Spirituality/Personal beliefs

TABLE 3. DOMAINS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE
QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE - ADULT (CUMMINS 1997).

Domain	Facets
1. Material well-being	Accommodation, possessions, estimated income
2. Health	Visits to doctor, disabilities or medical condition, medication
3. Productivity	Work time, spare time, TV hours
4. Intimacy	Talk, care, activity
5. Safety	Sleep, home, anxiety
6. Place in community	Activity, responsibility, advice
7. Emotional well-being	Can do, bed, wishes

1.5. INCREASING QUALITY OF LIFE

Increasing the QoL of any individual whose basic needs are covered is very difficult and can only be achieved in the long term. We cannot take people with social difficulties to parties because we think they will benefit from the social contact, or tell a person facing a very serious illness that everything will turn out fine. The subjective perception of QoL develops within all individuals; it changes and adapts from cradle to grave. It is like an attitude to life and also an attitude to ourselves. It cannot be taught, it can only be encouraged through a broad educational intervention; it can be learnt by involving people, encouraging them to act and react, to better understand themselves and the environment.

The main actions to increase QoL through education taken from principal theories of QoL are as follows:

Adapt

Changes occur to our bodies, our lives and our environment. Any change can affect QoL positively or negatively.

According to Cummins, high QoL is better maintained among people who are able to adapt to changes in their lives. These changes can happen from two perspectives:

- Changes to ourselves, caused by illness, accident, progressive disease or the effects of ageing on our bodies. This category includes conscious or unconscious changes in our way of thinking that we cannot dominate or control.
- Changes in the environment, in society in general, our community, families and friends. These may be traumatic changes (e.g. a daughter's divorce) or progressive changes (new roles as grandparents).

First, the new environment, the change itself, the structure and the new role must be understood. Second, the person has several options: to accept the changes, to negotiate or to struggle against them.

Social participation

QoL is closely related to social participation. It is understood as the satisfaction individuals experience as a result of their participation in activities in the family, in the workplace and within their community, for which they use their abilities and develop their personality.

By social participation we mean the 'significant social participation', the personal interaction process that involves taking part in an active and engaged way in a joint activity, which the person perceives as beneficial. Social participation refers to support systems or psychosocial resources as unions between individuals, characterised by material aid, physical assistance, shared thoughts, feelings and experiences, and positive social contacts. Significant social participation essentially consists of four areas: education, occupation, physical activity and group recreation, and social relations where the aim is mutual interaction and social integration. But the quality of social contacts is more important than their quantity.

Get and give support

Outstanding environmental factors for QoL are mainly those that allow each individual to make contact, get support and socialise with other groups such as friends, family, neighbours, community, etc.

A contradiction therefore emerges, since on the one hand an individual's autonomy and self-sufficiency is promoted, and on the other, inclusion, social support and interaction, in which the individual's autonomy and independence appears to be lost. Schalock and Verdugo (2003 p. 161-181) explore this relationship by evaluating the family, where the individual feels included as another member who can also be evaluated, e.g. leisure and enjoyment can be seen from the point of view of the person being evaluated or from the social group that the person belongs to. Hence, the source of pleasure is the social group, but it is the individual who is enjoying him or herself.

The sense of family varies greatly from one culture to another, and can have different meanings and importance depending on the person, sometimes involving the aspect of authority. In addition, there are other groups of people that everybody has to deal with, sometimes without choice (neighbours, workmates, our children's friends, etc.). However, the important groups are those we can relate to, provide for and get support from, such as groups of friends or colleagues, in which the benefits derived from the group or a friend are sometimes more important than the feeling of individuality. Two important aspects related to QoL therefore emerge:

- Choice or perceived control in selecting our group.
- Inclusion. Feeling part of and integrated in the group is related to communicative and affective and assertive skills, assuming interpersonal relations and being part of a group, and sometimes, working and deciding collaboratively.

Be active

Continuing to have goals and objectives in life and being an active member of a social group is related to continuing good health. According to Erikson (1985), older people must maintain a generative function: on the one hand they should produce and create, and on the other hand, they should build links with other people and feel responsible for them, because all citizens' lives are interlinked, and this implies working together to achieve common goals and causes by interacting with others through communication and social solidarity. But social participation must not only be related to each individual's own initiatives, which could be linked to their individual lifestyles, their internal motivations or other external motivations; social participation is also related to the place that society assigns to its older citizens.

Always keep learning

Recent research has shown the importance of lifelong learning (as a psychosocial activity) for better quality of life. Learning can be seen as an activity that keeps individuals active, but also enables them to increase their creativity, personal development, personal skills and life satisfaction (Brocket 1985, Ladmin 1997, Schuller 2004). Lifelong learning is therefore a powerful tool that is frequently part of the 'Personal Development' dimension (Shalock and Verdugo 2002).

1.6. CONCLUSIONS

As we have seen, QoL is a complex status; there is no single and simple way to improve it. Education can help to raise QoL, or at least prevent it from declining. Properly designed socio-educational actions can be used to teach senior learners, but also to enable them to acquire new skills, attitudes and aptitudes. This is related to individuals' capacity to learn more about themselves, to know more about what is important in the environment (friends, family, or other members of community) and to acquire skills to create useful and positive links between them for social support, giving and receiving help, being able to defend one's own interests, or accepting what cannot be changed.

In this chapter we have made some suggestions on how to increase QoL, but this is not a closed list. The elderly are a very heterogeneous group, and each indi-

vidual has his or her own needs and problems, so the concept of QoL for each person is even more complex. Education can provide a very useful tool, by encouraging/developing the capacity to keep learning, learning from what happens around us and what happens to us, and adapting. This can be achieved through courses or activities related to our own history, present society or sociology, understanding current changes and future trends. Our place in society, in our neighbourhood and in our family should be always identified from a reasoned and constructive position. Attitudes like tolerance, positive thinking, problem resolution, collaboration in groups, etc. can be learnt, and are easier to acquire from a group in a learning environment, with other classmates and helped by facilitators.

Other courses and activities such as philosophy or psychology can help us understand ourselves better and to take more control of changes. Finally, subjects related to the economy or technology give us a better understanding of the practical skills and competences needed to remain included.

We have provided some examples of courses and activities above, but as the following chapters will show, the content of the course is only one tool in an educational institution. The human factor is crucial (how staff and teachers deal with senior learners), as are the models and pedagogy used. Education has a huge potential but it should be applied constantly; or better, we should never stop learning.

Another important aspect concerning the elderly and QoL is that of being as young as possible, doing the same things that we used to do, or thinking that we can stop the ageing process. QoL is also about accepting ourselves, our limitations and the obstacles in our lives, but thanks to the learning process, everybody can discover new potentialities, new pleasures we were unaware of, and new ways of being happy, productive and useful to others.

1.7. EXPERIENCES AND GOOD PRACTISES

Researching QoL and Education[3]

Introduction

During the first phase of the QEduSen project, it was necessary to clarify the relationship between QoL and education. To this end, two studies were designed and

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conducted, and two articles about the QEduSen project were presented at the World Congress of Education 2013 held in Rome. The first was entitled "Impact on Senior Learners' Quality of Life through Lifelong Learning", the second, "Pedagogical Proposal to Increase Senior Citizens' Quality of Life".

Research

The objective of the first study, "Impact on Senior Learners' Quality of Life through Lifelong Learning", was to find out senior learners' subjective perception of how education impacts their quality of life (QoL). A quantitative survey was carried out among 167 senior learners in four institutions (average age 67). The survey first aimed to discover which QoL component was the most significant, and second to relate how various educational components impact seniors' QoL.

The survey revealed that 'Physical well-being' was considered the most important, but the second with nearly the same value was 'Psychological and emotional well-being'. The component with the least importance for their QoL was 'To have a lot of money, material well-being'.

In the second survey, learners were asked to link eight QoL dimensions — physical well-being, psychological well-being, energy and motivations, adaptation, pleasure (enjoyment), social support and personal development — with 8-10 educational factors (which varied from one institution to another) differentiating among environment, pedagogy, types of subjects, courses, activities, teachers, tutors, and classmates. All these dimensions (the eight QoL dimensions and the eight to ten educational dimensions) were explained on the questionnaire learners were asked to complete in an attempt to minimise misunderstandings.

To a large extent, the learners coincided that the teacher and their classmates have the greatest effect on their QoL. Learners stated that the courses and pedagogies were not as important as the teacher. In qualitative interviews, learners were not able to distinguish between pedagogies, and claimed to sometimes choose courses and activities according to the teacher, not the content. In conclusion, the most important factor in enhancing a learner's QoL is the teacher, regardless of the pedagogy and the course content. This affirmation is, clearly, only true from the learners' point of view. Teachers, on the other hand, use pedagogies as tools in their courses and activities, and are also passionate about the content they teach (indeed, most of the teachers of adults interviewed also enjoyed teaching seniors).

The second report, "Pedagogical Proposal to Increase Senior Citizens' Quality of Life", was produced after a quantitative and qualitative study of 39 experts in

five partner institutions. All these experts had an average of 10.7 years' experience in teaching senior learners. The purpose of this research was to learn how education of senior citizens should be focused to impact the learners' QoL. Five dimensions were analysed: pedagogy, contents, institution, models of education, and trainers/staff.

All experts agreed that QoL can be impacted through education (6 on a scale of 7), but certain necessary conditions must first be achieved for this to occur.

All the experts coincided that the most critical factor in increasing senior learners' QoL is the human factor (facilitator, teachers and technicians). The teacher is the main contact with knowledge available to the learners, but he or she is also the facilitator to achieve a better understanding of themselves, their context and the society. The teacher becomes not only a provider of skills and information, but also a friend and a support, who maintains a certain distance from and respect for the learner, but who is close enough to know the learner's needs.

The topics of the activities or courses are the first tool that teachers can use to impact QoL; the second is the pedagogy that they apply. Some topics have been mentioned as teaching suggestions for students and are significant to their QoL, but there are many more topics that senior students can enjoy learning and that can be highly beneficial to their knowledge, self-esteem or personal growth. The teaching-learning process itself is highly valuable, regardless of the content, if there is interest from both parties in the process (the teacher and the learner).

The final factor that has an impact on learners' QoL is the institution or environment that is created. The learning context is important not only because it facilitates the learning process, but also because it allows the learner to become part of a group, providing benefits for socialising and support.

Conclusion

The research found a conviction among learners that education improves their QoL. In the knowledge that QoL is mainly subjective, their perception is, by itself, proof that they have a higher QoL as a result of attending an educational institution.

The importance of the human factor in teaching senior citizens can be seen from the perspective of the learners and from the experts. Sometimes the content or the place do not matter, but how the person that teaches can transmit and make the learners feel active and creative.

Details of the research can be obtained from "Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences" (Word Congress of Educational Sciences 2013, Rome) and the surveys can be downloaded from http://www.edusenior.eu.

ASLECT Project – Active Seniors Learn, Educate, Communicate and Transmit[4]

Introduction

ASLECT is a European cooperation project,[5] funded through the Lifelong Learning Programme, which promotes seniors both as (re)sources and beneficiaries of learning. The project is a good example of transnational partnership (Austria, Germany, Romania, Italy, Bulgaria and Turkey) and is featured in the Initiatives database of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations on the EUROPA server of the European Union.

One of the main objectives of this project is to fight the idea that elder persons lose their cultural and social relevance. The project goal is to promote a different attitude towards seniors, in terms of their capacity to learn and further transmit their expertise, and in terms of their relationships with the community in general and with cultural organizations in particular.

In line with the principles promoted by the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012, the main objectives of ASLECT are:

- to provide resources for strengthening the capacity of cultural and educational organizations in order to offer an adult learning environment suitable for seniors;
- to create opportunities for retired professionals to use their experience and skills and become adult educators;
- to establish partnerships between the involved organizations and other cultural and social institutions.

A significant stake for the ASLECT project is to promote the understanding of senior citizens not only as users of social services, but also as active co-creators of culture and education in the local community.

The ASLECT project

ASLECT aims at making visible the existing skills and interests of seniors at the formal and informal level, and at placing these at the centre of activities in cultural organisations and educational institutions. The project goals are achieved

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4. Slavina Lozanova, Boian Savtchev. Assist Net. Bulgaria
5. http://www.aslect.eu/

in a variety of ways first, by presenting and promoting to cultural professionals and adult educators learning tools designed and tested with seniors; then by organising and carrying out local workshops with cultural professionals and seniors.

The project partners develop together a set of criteria to identify those educational practices involving seniors which were relevant to the project goal. The main criteria are represented by the concepts of seniors' empowerment and participation in the educational and cultural process.

In the initial phase, ASLECT identifies a series of Good Practices on Seniors' Involvement in Education and in Cultural Life. The identification was conducted on the basis of a 43-question-catalogue of Good Practice Criteria focusing on four areas: empowerment, participation, impact, and sustainability. The research reviewed all the European projects compendia between 2007 and 2010, as well as the respective project websites in order to collect examples of good practice in which seniors were successfully integrated.

In the Second Phase, the projects are randomly distributed among five partners. Each partner writes a summary for the assigned projects. The purpose of the summaries is to outline the most significant project information, using the project websites and all the available material.

In the Third Phase, the written project summaries are sent to two other partners. Their task is to review the summary and add their opinion to the final results and findings. The review questionnaire consisted of two questions concerning the usability of the summary, multiple choice questions regarding empowerment, participation, impact and sustainability as well as two open questions regarding the usefulness of the gained knowledge and available materials for ASLECT. Based on the evaluation of the projects during the Identification and Review Phases, a ranking is created in order to determine the best 15 projects. As a result the best 15 European projects on senior's involvement in education and culture are presented in detail.[6]

As a valorisation project, ASLECT is focusing on identifying relevant educational approaches for seniors, in disseminating them and in advocating for more collaboration between cultural organisations and seniors. In a practical way ASLECT valorises results from previous projects; therefore, in the project run the available educational materials, developed within any of the 15 listed projects/ Good practice cases selected during the identification phase are used. All educa-

6. http://www.aslect.eu/index.php/en/good-practices

tional materials form the basis for testing the training sessions organised by every ASLECT-partner with cultural professionals, aimed at giving sufficient knowledge and input to participants in order to develop their own programmes and initiatives for and with seniors.[7] More than 110 seniors from the six partners' countries participated in the local workshops, organized in project partner countries. The aim of these local workshops was to develop the knowledge and skills of cultural and educational professionals working or willing to work with seniors, of volunteers and seniors.

Conclusion

Developing cultural, artistic and educational programmes for seniors becomes crucial in the perspective of today's social, economic and cultural dynamics.

The results of the project work are made available for cultural professionals, adult educators, seniors and seniors' representatives from all over Europe. It is oriented toward those practices which place active learning at their core, involving seniors in the decision-making process, determining them to take responsibilities in relation to the process, results and meaning of the action, within which their knowledge and expertise is recognized and used as a valuable resource of learning. All project activities provide opportunities for sufficient social interactions by encouraging seniors to be active, creative, participative and learning to learn. Learning how to socialise and being socially active, as well as being resourceful and independent at the same time are among the significant indicators with positive impact on seniors' Quality of Life.

A set of recommendations is developed, which is relevant to the concept of QoL. Active community participation, which is to improve seniors' QoL, requires motivation strategies, based on participants' experience and interests. Self-directed learning and informal learning that happen outside a formal classroom setting is recommended, because it responds intelligently and flexibly to the specific needs of the elders in accordance with their specific situations and practical needs.

Along with the seminars and workshops, transnational exchanges are defined as possible tools for motivating seniors to take part in community life, a matter of giving a new way to unusual learning opportunities which are to improve seniors' Quality of life.

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7. http://www.aslect.eu/documents/brochure/BroshuraEN15.01.2013.pdf

Perception of QoL by Latvian seniors[8]

Introduction

The study sample consisted of 359 respondents between 60 and 75 years old. The mean age ± SD of the participants was 67.3±7.1 years. 228 were female (63.5 %) and 131 male (36.5 %), the proportion of gender within the sample is representative for the population of Latvia of this age group. The subjects were volunteers without mobility limitations who visited the Heart Health consulting rooms across 5 regions of Latvia to assess cardiovascular risks.

Health Related Quality of Life Assessment

The Medical Outcomes Study Short Form version 2 (SF-36v2) is widely used as an extensive health related quality of life measurement (Ware, Kosinski & Dewey, 2000). The SF-36 contains 36 items measuring 8 dimensions of health and well-being. These attributes are combined using a regression equation and standardised to population norms to provide a physical component summary (PCS) and a mental component summary (MCS). PCS consists of subscales: physical functioning, role physical, bodily pain, general health. MCS consists of subscales: mental health, role emotional, social function and vitality. Although vitality and general health subscales has mutual correlation to PCS and MCS. The results of the SF-36v2 questionnaire summary components can be analysed by norm-based scoring, where 50 is the mean for the general population and 10 is the standard deviation. It means that scores above 50 are better self-evaluation of health than the general population average, while scores below 50 are worse.

Results

Analysis of the health-related life quality questionnaire SF-36v2 components reveals that the population of Latvia in the age group of 60-75 years has lower self-esteem regarding the quality of life than General Population Norm scoring in all components, except for vitality. The average index of respondents' physical component scale (PCS) is 42.33 points while for the mental component scale (MCS) it is 42.36 points (Figure 4). The vitality factor, which is characterised by questions about the joy of living and fatigue, is close to the optimal level and reaches 49.55 points.

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8. Velta Lubkina. Personality Socialisation Research Institute of Rezeknes Augstola. Latvia

PCS –	**Physical component summary**	**MCS- Mental components summary**
	PF – Physical function	VT - Vitality
	RP – Role physical	SF – Social function
	BP – Bodily pain	RE – Role emotional
	GH – General health	MH – Mental health

Figure 4. Distribution of the health related quality of life components according SF36v2 questionnaire data

Figure 5. Percentage of sample whose scores are Above, At, or Below the General Population Norm

More than a half of all respondents (55 % in physical and 52 % in mental health component) demonstrated results that were below the average (Table 5). In particular, this was observed in the components "health in general" and "emotional role". 68 % of respondents have self-evaluation below the average in the factor "health in general", and only 9 % of the respondents assess their health above the average, which can be assessed as 'good'. It means that people at this age mostly assess their state of health as poor and are aware of the health problems.

Conclusions

The results lead to the conclusion that there is a tendency that aging makes all health self-assessment components decline. It is observed that for women at the age of 64 to 69 these components have more rapid decline, while for men more rapid decline of health in general as well as social functioning is demonstrated after 69 years. Public health deterioration creates cause serious risks to both social and economic sphere.

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2. AGEING

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2.1. INTRODUCTION

There are an increasing number of seniors (65+) in Europe. On average, these aged people live longer, are more educated and have better functional capacity compared with the previous generation of 65+. They are used to having an active life and participation. The interest in lifelong learning is increased in these seniors. Educational institutions should offer a variety of activities to meet very different needs of this heterogeneous group of people. Educational planners and teachers should have up-to-date knowledge about normal ageing. They need to understand the aspects that support good psychological ageing as well as the facts that threaten it. They have to be aware that there are a lot of preconceptions and false assumptions regarding all dimensions of the ageing process and aged people. These are affected by ageism. This chapter provides evidence based gerontological knowledge that teachers need in order to provide education that supports the quality of life of aged people.

Even a person with high age (over 85+) has all the possibilities to learn and enjoy learning. There is decline in some areas of cognitive capacity but cognition on the whole is well preserved and makes it possible to continue a normal good life and lifelong learning; e.g. life experience and wisdom compensate cognitive decline.

Teachers should be aware of all the aspects that affect an aged person's motivation and possibilities to attend educational sessions and to participate actively in them. There are potential difficulties in hearing and sight since risks of these are increased in ageing. Furthermore, aged people are at risk to losses, e.g. loss of functional capacity and loss of spouse and friends. Without illnesses a person can have good functional capacity up to 90 years. However, the risk of health problems increases with age and threatens functional capacity. Declined functional capacity affects motivation and learning but is not a barrier to lifelong learning.

Ageing is a complex but an extremely heterogeneous process. There may be two generations of people among senior learners (e.g. ages between 65 and 90). All stereotyping should be avoided. This chapter emphasizes the resources of aged people disregarding tales of ageing in our societies where youth is highly admired.

2.2. FACTS OF AGEING

Europe is strongly aging due to decrease in fertility and mortality and increase in life expectancy. The table 1 shows percentages of 65+ years old people in different EU countries in 1991 and in 2011.

The life expectancy of seniors is constantly increasing. The average life expectancy in EU member states for 2008-2010 reached 75,3 years for men and 81,7 years for women. However, there are differences between the countries. The gap between the highest and lowest life expectancies is around eight years for women and 12 years for men. Women in France had the highest life expectancy (85,0 yrs) and in Bulgaria and in Romania the lowest (77,3 yrs). Respectively, men in Sweden had the highest life expectancy (79,4 yrs) and the lowest in Lithuania (67,3 yrs) It is expected that life expectancy will continue to increase. In 2016 it will be 84,6 years fo men and 89,1 years for women. The gains in longevity result from various factors, e.g. from rising living standards, healthier lifestyle, better education and greater access to quality health services. It is important to point out that when an aged person reaches average life expectancy she/he still has many years left (table 5).

The cognition (e.g. perception, memory, attention, comprehension) of a person is fully developed by the age of 25. From middle-age on cognition starts to decline. All aspects of cognition show losses with similar trajectories as individuals' age. However, it must be emphasised that despite decline even a very old person's cognitive capacity is, on the whole, well preserved and provides the possibility to continue a normal and good life with ability for lifelong learning. Dementia and decline in memory functions are some of the biggest fears of aged people. A distinct decline in memory and other cognition functions is not part of the normal ageing process but is always a sign of a pathological syndrome mainly of dementia or of depression. In normal ageing long-term memory is usually well preserved. Respectively, there is deterioration in working memory which is a part of short term memory. This is caused by the slowing down process in ageing. However, it must be stressed that there are wide differences between individual performances. There are seniors

TABLE 4. PERCENTAGES OF PEOPLE 65 + IN EU COUNTRIES IN 1991 AND 2011

People 65 years old or over		
	In 1991	**In 2011**
Ireland	11,4	11,5
Slovakia	10,4	12,6
Cyprus	10,9	12,7
Poland	10,2	13,5
Luxembourg	13,4	13,9
Romania	10,6	14,9
Malta	10,5	15,5
Czech Republic	12,6	15,6
Netherlands	10,5	15.6
Slovenia	10,8	16,5
France	14,0	16,7
Hungary	13,5	16,7
United Kingdom	15,8	16,7
Denmark	15,6	16,8
Estonia	11,7	17,0
Belgium	15,0	17,1
Spain	13,8	17,1
Croatia	11,6 (in 1990)	17,3 (in 2009)
Finland	13,5	17,5
Austria	15,0	17,6
Lithuania	11,0	17,9
Latvia	11,8	18,4
Bulgaria	14,3	18,5
Sweden	17,8	18,5
Portugal	13,6	19,1
Greece	13,8	19,3
Italy	15,1	20,3
Germany	14,9	20,6

TABLE 5. ESTIMATED LIFE EXPECTANCY OF FEMALE AND MALES AT EACH AGE POINT (AN EXAMPLE OF FINLAND)

Male	**Female**
75 yr: 11 years	75 yr: 13 years
80 yr: 8 years	80 yr: 11 years
85 yr: 6 years	85 yr: 7 years
90 yr: 4 years	90 yr: 5 years
95 yr: 3 years	95 yr: 4 years
100 yr: 2 years	100 yr: 2,5 years

between the ages 75-90 without any noticeable decline in their memory performance (Suutama 2010).

Various factors affecting memory functions are important to know when arranging education for seniors (Table 6). A good arena for lifelong learning is provided when it offers an individually tailored activity level and motivation, provides a positive learning atmosphere and new stimulations, and supports mood. Seniors need to know that memory skills can be exercised. The optimal level of cognition requires enough sleep, a good level of nutrition and physical exercise. Illnesses and syndromes should be properly taken care of in order to optimise the level of cognitive functions (Suutama 2010).

TABLE 6. THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FACTORS AFFECTING
MEMORY FUNCTIONS (SUUTAMA 2010)

Positive factors	Negative factors
Activity	Passivity
New experiences and stimulations	Non-stimulating environment
Exercise of memory functions	Low use of memory functions
Good motivation	Lack of motivation
Positive attitudes	Negative attitudes
Positive mood	Depression
Health, good condition	Illnesses, poor condition
Physical exercise	Lack of physical exercise
Vitality, good sleep	Fatigue, insomnia
Good nutrition	Poor nutrition

It was stated earlier that intelligence declines in ageing. This incorrect statement was caused by a study bias when in cross-sectional studies the intelligence of different generations was compared. No decline in intelligence with age could be revealed when in longitudinal studies the same group of people were followed throughout their lives. Crystallised intelligence based on life-long learning, life experiences and increased knowledge even improve during the ageing process. Conversely, tests requiring fluid intelligence show some decline when people age. However, there is great diversity between people and generalisations should not be made. This diversity comes from education, life style and how actively a person has used his/her capacities in everyday life. The studies show that practice may improve both a person's fluid and crystallised intelligence even in late life. We can then conclude that at least some of the changes in ageing do not actually result from ageing itself but from unused abilities (Kuusinen 2010).

Changes in an aged person's social network and/or family structure may increase the risk of suffering from loneliness. Based on the Finnish studies on loneliness, one third of aged people experience loneliness with negative emotions and consequences to social interactions (Savikko et al 2005, Tiikkainen and Heikkinen 2005). In Finland hardly any aged people live in the same household with their children as in some decades ago. Children have moved to cities leaving their aged parents to live in rural areas. Subjective causes for suffering from loneliness are loss of a spouse, illnesses and lack of friends (Savikko et al 2005). Loneliness is strongly related to depressive symptoms (Tiikkainen and Heikkinen 2005) and has many other severe implications e.g. on a decreased quality of life and an increased use of social and health care services. Lifelong learning institutions can provide meaningful activities, social surroundings and peer support groups for seniors.

2.3. AGEING EXPERIENCE

The age itself is not the key factor as to what extent a person feels old. A senior has his/her individual perceptions regarding ageing. The ageing experience brings up an important dimension as to why we should refrain from generalising when we talk about seniors. Personality, life history and experiences, individual responses to an ageing body and illnesses, and surrounding attitudes from society and social relationships are integrated to the ageing experience.

The Finnish researcher Dr. Riitta-Liisa Heikkinen has conducted a longitudinal research on ageing experiences of seniors in five-year intervals starting at the age of 80. The narratives of the study participants revealed their present ageing experiences at each time point. Experiences were in historical and cultural context but were guided by individual development factors, personal life history, situational factors and life crises (Figure 6). The seniors with good self-esteem and positive attitudes towards their life felt old less seldom and had fewer depressive symptoms than those with opposite experiences. However, it was noticeable that those who achieved the age of 90 seemed to have 'learned to age'. They were able to make compromises and had abilities to survive in life crises (Heikkinen RL 1993).

It can be concluded that we can only understand individual aspects of ageing by listening to a person's own narratives of their life and ageing experiences. Listening to seniors is a very important skill when working in the field of senior education. By listening we can learn about seniors but also find new innovations for senior education and effective methods to facilitate lifelong learning.
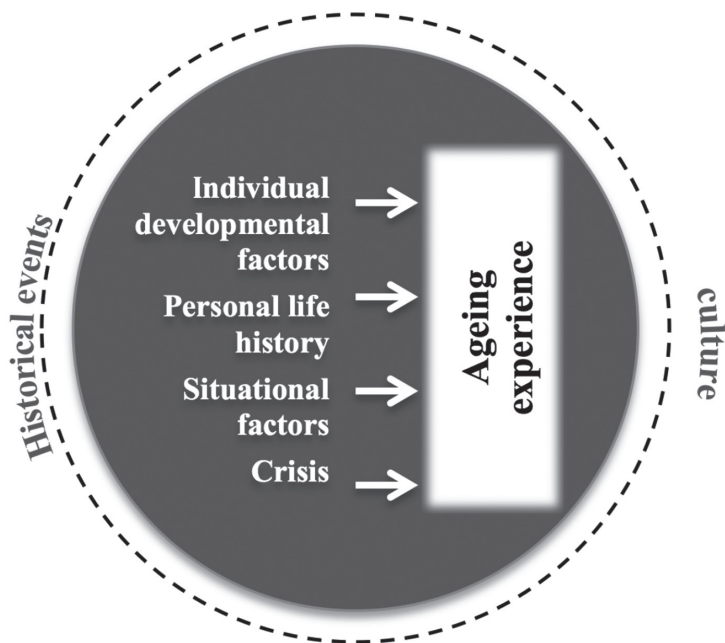
Figure 6. The model of ageing experiences (Heikkinen RL 2010)

2.4. THE CONCEPT OF SUCCESSFUL AGEING

Ageing is the process of various elements. It includes such objective facts as the age of a person, measured functional skills or diagnosed diseases. Besides these, ageing is a strongly subjective experience of self, experienced illnesses and syndromes or subjective functional and cognitive capacity. There is a wide range of variables affecting the ageing process, and how people experience ageing. Successful ageing is not only a disease-free life but equally requires subjective life satisfaction, social participation, good cognitive performance and psychological resources (Figure 7).

The above mentioned conceptualisation is supported by Professor Bowling and Dr Dieppe from UK who explored the concept of successful ageing. Both the theoretical definitions and the additional lay persons' definitions reveal a wide picture of successful ageing where good health, functional capacity and absence of illnesses are only one part of the concept (Table 7)
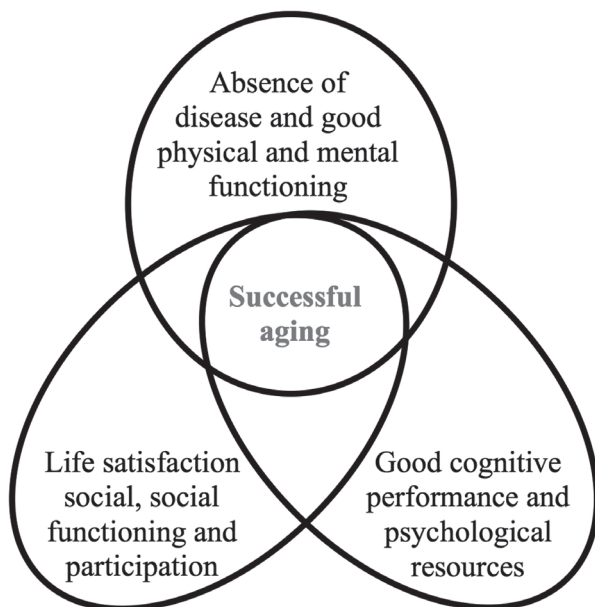
Figure 7. The elements of successful ageing based on literature
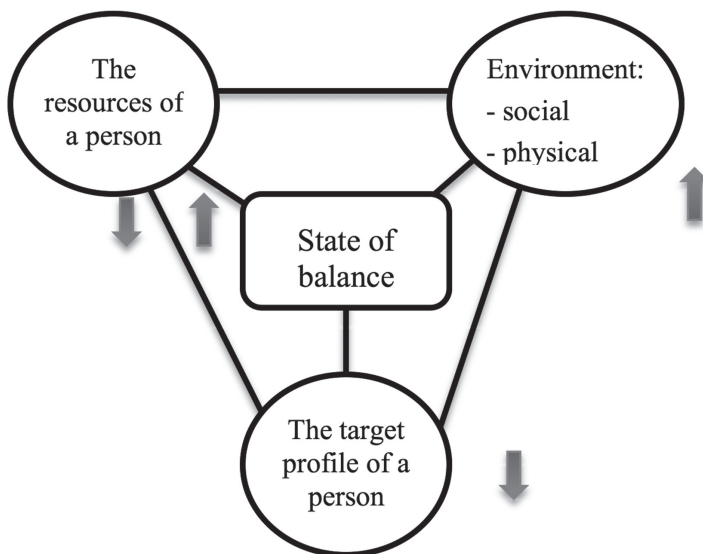
Figure 8. The health of an aged person as a dynamic process (Heikkinen E 2010)

TABLE 7. MAIN CONSTITUTES OF SUCCESSFUL AGEING (BOWLING AND DIEPPE 2005).

Theoretical definitions	Additional lay definitions
• Life expectancy. • Life satisfaction and wellbeing (includes happiness and contentment). • Mental and psychological health, cognitive function. • Personal growth, learning new things • Physical health and functioning, independent functioning. • Psychological characteristics and resources, including perceived autonomy, control, independence, adaptability, coping, self esteem, positive outlook, goals, sense of self. • Social, community, leisure activities, integration and participation. • Social networks, support, participation, activity	• Accomplishments. • Enjoyment of diet. • Financial security. • Neighbourhood. • Physical appearance. • Productivity and contribution to life. • Sense of humour. • Sense of purpose. • Spirituality.

In conclusion, educational institutions may have an important role in supporting successful ageing by providing the type of learning environment where the elements of successful ageing are taken into account. This requires a large variety of educational courses and the use of tailored pedagogical methods.

2.5. CONCLUSIONS AND CHALLENGES

Lifelong learning among seniors requires professional teachers who have up-to-date gerontological knowledge and positive attitudes towards ageing and aged people. Aged people even in high age without disease-based cognitive disorders (mainly Alzheimer's disease and related disorders) have no other barriers for learning except those of their own motivation. Therefore, a variety of educational activities to meet the needs and expectations of aged people must be offered. Aged people are the most heterogeneous group of people wanting tailor made activities.

We must bear in mind that ageism in our societies affects aged people and causes barriers to participating in educational activities. Therefore, we have to fight against false information and attitudes to develop life-long learning that supports quality of life for seniors.

2.6. EXPERIENCES AND GOOD PRACTISES

Heterogeneity of Ageing[9]

Introduction

Aged people are a very heterogeneous group of people. Active seniors today are aged from 65 + years to even over 90 years which means that the group covers two generations. These seniors are not one type of people but come from different social and political backgrounds. They are individuals with personalities, educational background, life histories, interests, hobbies and with a wide range of life experiences. Furthermore, aged people increasingly have multicultural backgrounds.

Educational institutions need to be able to offer a wide range of courses, seminars, excursions, and different kinds of physical and psychosocial activities in order to meet the needs of seniors. It would be wise for institutional institutions to create their best practices in cooperation with seniors. The feedback from seniors during the planning process is considered to be very valuable.

Some seniors are interested in ageing and health issues, others wish to have knowledge e.g. on information technology, history or geography. Some seniors love travelling, in courses/in classroom or in real life and often like to study languages. Some seniors need peer support group in different areas, e.g. in sharing the feelings of family caregiving or of widowhood, and for some, exercise activities are more important.

Recommendations

Firstly, we suggest that <u>workshops for the planning of education</u> should be arranged. In these workshops seniors actively participate in the educational planning process. These workshops support client-centeredness. They could take place e.g. during the three months before the finalising of next years' timetable. The workshops are comprised of a heterogeneous and voluntary group of seniors (6-8 participants) who are willing to give their input in developing educational activities. Meetings are held twice monthly.

Secondly, <u>a continuous feedback gathering system</u> is needed in order to collect ideas and preferences from seniors throughout the year.

There should be a wide variety of best practices which differ depending on an institution's individual interests and abilities. Below are some examples of good practices favoured mostly among seniors.

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Lectures and seminars from different subjects should be offered during each year. Those with good feedback and high participation should be repeated periodically. At the same time new subjects are offered.

A reminiscence group has its clear objectives and it supports the psychological wellbeing of a person. Reminiscence is usually a natural part of ageing where a person relives his/her life. The coach/therapist of a reminiscence group needs to have proper professional qualifications. This type of group is a closed group that meets on a weekly basis and for a fixed period of time.

Similarly, a peer support group has its individual focus, e.g. on sharing feelings of widowhood or loneliness. The coach should have the proper professional qualifications. The closed group works goal-directed and meets on a weekly basis for a fixed period of time.

Activity classes should be offered e.g. painting, photography and gardening.

One of the favourites is daily dances which give both enjoyment and social contact but also improves fitness. The music should be easy to dance to but also offer feelings of nostalgia from days gone by.

Many educational institutions offer gym and water aerobics, both of which are favourites of seniors.

Many seniors love excursions e.g. to guided museum tours or to historical sites. Furthermore, it is important that trips to the opera and theatre are arranged.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the main goal of educational activities is to support the wellbeing and quality of life of a senior. Seniors have their individual objectives but from the perspective of an institution the aspects of quality of life issues should be considered to be the most important. Increasingly, planning processes should take place in cooperation with seniors. The opportunities for seniors to give feedback needs to be enhanced. The heterogeneity of seniors is increasing as people live even longer with good functional capacity. Heterogeneity is a great challenge that needs to be taken into account when educational activities are developed in the near future.

Psychological image of seniors in Poland[10]

The objective of this study is to present a psychological image of Polish seniors. It highlights their mental needs and character, interests and education, rela-

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10. Responsible for this study are Elżbieta Napora and the members of the research team of Jan Dlugosz University in Częstochowa, Poland.

tionships between them, lifestyle and the social dimension of the seniors. For this study we have reviewed online articles, chapters in books and reports, which have appeared in the last two decades.

Mental needs and character of seniors

In comparison to other European countries, Polish seniors live less actively as the study and experience of everyday life show (Matusiak 2011). Although, more often you will meet those who pursue their dreams and eagerly indulge in their passions. Stipulation of progress is to satisfy the needs of safety, love and membership. In many opinions senior seems to be someone who is desirable for the other people and this is connected with a fulfilling caring function and educational role in the family. The feeling of being needed can be seen also on the wide field associated with the transmission of traditions and values, so others can benefit from the rich experience of seniors and their skills (Landsberg 2012). Although in the post-productive stage of life people have a stronger need of closeness than previously (Susułowska 1989), they then expect usefulness and respect. Meeting those needs determines creative attitudes, both self-addressed and to others.

Reports show that Polish seniors describe a low level of activity, and at the same time a high level of alienation (Matusiak 2011). From the research emerges the picture of a male senior as a man who wants peace, avoids stress and focuses on the interests of accompanying him all the time. The picture of female seniors is more optimistic and active than that of male senior described before (Bonk 2011). In general, seniors are often accompanied by a lack of trust of the others, resulting in loneliness perceived as a destructive phenomenon (Bonk 2011). This lack of confidence is connected with low self-esteem and a sense of low value (Boni 2008). However, decisive factor of senior satisfaction is age, where together with its growing, there are more seniors who negatively assess the quality of their social relationships. What is interesting, the group of 80+ is the most satisfied with the social activities, which counteracts solitude[11] and promotes mental health.

Interests and education

Observations reveals that the amount of seniors using information technology is still not satisfactory. However, seniors access the services offered by the media in

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11. The diagnosis of the elderly, obtained from http://www.pokl-rcpslodz.pl/sites/default/filesdiagnoza_50%2B_raport _ko%C5%84 cowy_final.pdf (12.2011)

many different ways, but despite this – they do not use them.The seniors who use those means are in a better mental state and are more optimistic.According to Polish specialists, only 10 % of Polish seniors use the Internet – this result is the lowest in the European Union.

In terms of pre-figurative culture, young people play the role of teachers and guides for the elderly. For example, we can see which sources the seniors mainly use, when they looking for the knowledge about some technological achievements. Often grandchildren show them how to operate the technical novelties (Landsberg 2012). Seniors seem to be interested in education, and thanks to lectures at the University of the Third Age such as computer classes or psychological workshops, they can realise themselves. Some studies on elderly show that thanks to such a kind of mental elicitation, seniors can develop and fulfil themselves (Łój 2001) and do not remain the slaves of their age or imaginary limitations (Boni 2008). Through those forms they realise their hobbies not only individually, but also in a groups, associations or clubs (Landsberg 2012).

The realisation of interests and education results in how to quit smoking (80 %), searching medical information and the causes of illness and health (77 %). Enjoyment of friends and regulated family life (77 %), following the medical recommendations (77 %), and diet (73 %) are perceived as preventive health behaviours, leading to a positive mental attitude. However, the most common complaint mentioned by Polish seniors is trouble with sleeping (47 %).

Self-relation and lifestyle

Contemporary lifestyle is still changing. This also applies to the way of life of Polish seniors. The picture that is emerging from qualitative research shows that more and more older people are well maintained, open and curious of the world (83.3 %). They are full of hope, have a sense of meaning in life. The vast majority of respondents (88 %) believe that they should not give up and improve their quality of life. But among the seniors, there are more pessimists than optimists (Wadołowska 2009).

The condition of seniors is revealed by sexual efficiency and time organisation. Report results on sexuality show that Polish seniors are interested in this area of life, but they cannot always enjoy it because of health problems. They have low level of knowledge about possible help and specific pharmacological agents.[12] Next important

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12. The reported images of older people in the media were obtained from http://www.bezuprzedzen.org/doc/Wizerunek_Osob_Starszych_w_Mediach.pdf (08.2007).

aspect is the organisation of seniors' time. The form of spending it in retirement is to work for social organisations, local governments or politics. However the research shows that such activities do not seem to succeed in the elderly, particularly those who do not work for hire or reward. Of these, only 4 % said they have belonged to some organisation, and 6 % report membership and activity in it. Although the vast majority of the Polish people of retirement age withdraw from the labour market, it does not mean for them to withdraw from life in general. Seniors keep contacts with the family outside their household, and also with friends, with whom they can talk about personal cases and ask for help. In 2007, 45 % of responders declared that they see their family several times per week, and one third (34 %) sees the family only once or few times a month. One fifth of the responders (18 %) sees the family few times a year, and 3 % occasionally (Wądołowska 2009). As it can be seen, a motivation for seniors' activities is the desire for organised time.[13] Therefore, it is important to offer proper guidance for seniors, respecting their motivation and expectations.

Senior social image

Senior social commitment is two to three times lower than in European countries and is usually limited to the immediate family (Boni 2008). Comparing to their peers in Europe, Polish seniors quite often declare dedicating their time to family, but this is applied only to 30 % of respondents.[14] There are no empirical studies on the role of grandparents in the family, at national and regional level, which causes that the most effective kind of support from them cannot be determined (Schneider et al 2012). Although, they are regular partners of resting grandchildren, often more than parents (Parnicka 2008), and they play a significant role in the socialisation of offspring, thereby satisfying emotional (Tyszkowa 1990) and financial needs (Wadolowska 2012). Research shows that women (84 %) feel more needed in the family than men (60 %). However, acceptance in the immediate vicinity is experienced by 60 % of seniors and there were no significant differences between men and women.

Commitment in helping the others make them satisfied and well-being. Research reveals that the highest level of satisfaction is connected with the quality of relationship with friends (62 %), relationship in family (43 %), achievements (43 %), financial situation of own family (43 %). Health (27 %) and prospects for

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13. Government Program for Senior Citizens Social Activity for 2012-2013, obtained from: http://as.sektor3.wroclaw.pl/page/raporty/projekt_program%20na%20rzecz%20aktywnosci%20osob%20starszych.pdf (07.2012).
14. AXA Retirement Scope (2008) -United States.

the future (17 %) are cited as the factors bringing moderate satisfaction. The lowest level of satisfaction is connected with situation in the country (3 %). High satisfaction with relationships with friends shows that a contemporary Polish senior is often more socially supported and has much better relationships with friends than with the immediate family (Bonk 2011).

The image of Polish seniors is not so unequivocal. They are accompanied by a sense of isolation and marginalisation, a general aversion to social activity, which results from the attitudes in the earlier stages of life and life experiences, and extensive involvement in family life and the care of their grandchildren.[15] It may be noticed that this image is based on dissonances and contradictions. On the one hand, we have seniors who feel necessary, share their life experience, traditions, values, they are open to the younger generation, inoculate the culture. On the other hand, we see them pushed to the margins, unnecessary, embittered and lonely people, who nobody wants to hear, causing further frustration and sense of apathy or hopelessness (Landsberg 2012). In fact, those two images coexist, and none of one of them is able to deny each other.

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15. Government Program for Senior Citizens Social Activity for 2012-2013, obtained from: http://as.sektor3.wroclaw.pl/page/raporty/projekt_program%20na%20rzecz%20aktywnosci%20osob%20starszych.pdf (07.2012).

Breaking down myths and stereotypes about the elderly[16]

Introduction

Many myths and stereotypes surround the issue of ageing, some positive, others negative. It is always a mistake to try to generalise and think that our conceptions are common to all seniors or to all people. A person with no experience of the elderly frequently associates ageing with illness, disability, functional and mental problems, among others. These preconceptions must be eradicated.

As this chapter states, the elderly are a very heterogeneous group and the ways people age are myriad, influenced by personal, social and cultural factors. Society holds the idea that being elderly is synonymous with being ill, and what is worse, it is senior citizens themselves who assume that "I feel ill because I am old", and therefore there is nothing to be done about it.

This way of thinking by society, but also by seniors, must be eliminated. There is nothing more harmful than the idea that we cannot do anything to alter this. In this situation, education can make a major change by removing the idea that "it is easier to take medication than to go for a walk". Indeed, from years of experience of teaching and contact with senior learners, we find the opposite to be true: "I do not need any medication when I come to class". We are convinced that when good socio-education is properly provided it turns the clock back; as one senior learner said: "I feel younger".

Breaking stereotypes in the classroom

The biggest mistake any senior citizen can make is to pretend that he/she is still young, and act and think as though he/she were. But the opposite must also be avoided: being old does not mean that life is over. Some of the common stereotypes associated with the elderly are:

• The elderly cannot learn new things
• The elderly do not face up to the changes of ageing
• The elderly are intolerant and strict
• The elderly are lonely and isolated
• The elderly have memory problems

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16. Pilar Escuder-Mollon, Universitat Jaume I, Spain.

1. Memorising is not learning, and in the case of senior learners it is not advisable to try to memorise. Fluid intelligence can decrease. This type of intelligence transfers what we know now from our short-term to our long-term memory and establishes it there permanently. On the other hand, crystallised intelligence does not decline. This intelligence is based on lifelong experiences. It is easy to learn new things if they are associated with a life experience or can be related to something we already know or we are interested in. Therefore, learning is possible, if we know how to teach.

2. The changes of ageing are usually related to physical, psychological and social changes, and become the most common concerns regarding quality of life among the elderly. Physical and psychological barriers prevent people from doing the things they enjoy, and can lead to feelings of anger, anxiety, stress or shame. Receiving social support then becomes the best way to remove those negative feelings and reduce the subjective perception of disability due to illness. When incapacity is caused by a severe injury or a challenging disease, support must be provided by other specialised organisations (social services, hospitals, etc.). However, in cases where health problems are not so severe, social support can come from informal networks of other senior citizens. Firstly, the environment created in the classroom is very important, enabling senior learners to join in and chat before and after the class. Secondly, health-related courses and materials can also be provided that, together with workshops and activities, focus the teaching-learning process not only on the content itself but on health, generating discussions and interaction among the learners. Thirdly, participation in learning activities outside the classroom and making these activities visible to society breaks down the myth that seniors do not face up to changes of ageing.

3. The best way to learn tolerance and respect is in a place where many people in equal conditions and with different ideas have to share a space and reach a common goal. In this process the trainer can act as a facilitator.

4. Getting older can be associated with loneliness and isolation, mostly because it is a period when work relationships end, friends die and the person's role in the family changes. In this case, new networks of friends arise among classmates who share the same interests and problems.

5. Memory can begin to fail; however, memory problems are not associated with being elderly but with brain related diseases and illnesses (such as dementia). It is true that when a person becomes older, they can lose some cognitive and physical skills. This can be seen when a senior tries to memorise certain stages in a process or

use a computer mouse. In the classroom, learning completely new tasks that require the use of complex rules of logic (such as ICT) or transversal and complex skills like language learning can be challenging. However, from our observations in the class-room, these learning and memorising problems mainly arise not because of cognitive decline, but because the right pedagogy is not applied and lack of practise. The main reason senior learners do not practise is lack of time, they feel embarrassed when speaking in a foreign language or are afraid of making a mistake with the computer.

Conclusion

Education can help to break down stereotypes about old people. In this chapter we present only five of these myths, but there are many more. Some of these stereotypes are caused by society while others derive from senior citizens' self perception. Changes in physical and psychological conditions mean that the elderly need to adapt to those changes; learning is one way of facilitating that adaptation or fighting against the changes.

Firstly, education must be adapted to the elderly person's psychological situation. Trainer, content and pedagogy must be tailored to their specific needs, with an awareness of the personal situation of the seniors attending the class. Secondly, it is important that learning does not end when the senior leaves the classroom. Learning must occur anywhere and also impact friends, family and society. Getting older is not a phase of life where memory fails, or people become isolated or physical impaired; rather it is a time for new opportunities of learning, sharing, and discovering.

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3. SOCIAL CONTEXT

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3.1. INTRODUCTION

Senior citizens are an important part of society: on January 1st 2010 there were more than 87 million people aged 65 and over in the EU-27, representing some 17.4 % of total population. The 2010 EU commission Demography report states that "gradual and major changes are affecting the population of Europe. Two main positive trends are emerging: a slight increase in fertility and greater life expectancy". Europeans are becoming more in number and older.

The number of people aged 60 and above in the EU is now rising by more than two millions every year, roughly twice the rate observed until 2008. In 2009, the median age of the population was 40.6, and it is projected to reach 47.9 years by 2060.

A longer active life allows for productive retirement through volunteering and general engagement in the civil society.

In the 2012 EU Year of Active Ageing it is important to face the challenges of an ageing population. Being retired from labour market does not mean that they are not active. Their status in relation with income, education, families, role, etc. can affect their quality of life and also must be understood clearly when designing educational programmes focused to their social facts.

This chapter will point out some aspects that must be taken into account when we face the challenges of adult education with seniors.

3.2. DEMOGRAPHY

On 1st January 2010 the population of the EU-27 stood at 501.1 million people. Eurostat's 2008-based population projections (convergence scenario) show the
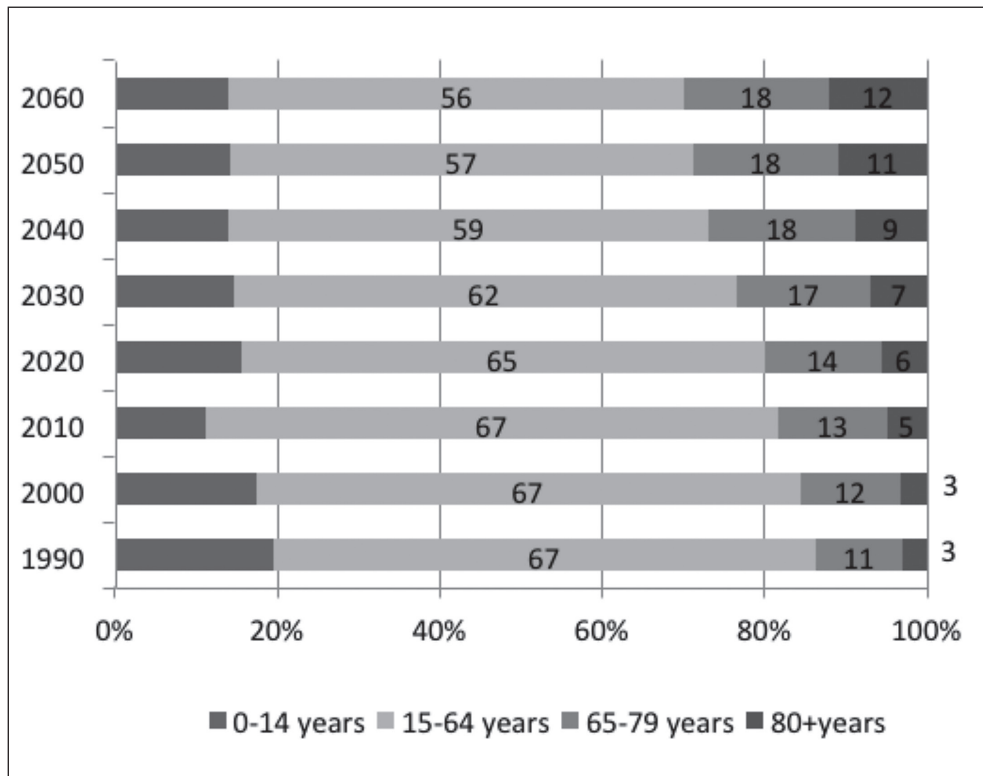
Figure 9. Percentage of total population

population of the EU-27 rising gradually to 520.7 million in 2035 and thereafter gradually declining to 505.7 million in 2060. According to Eurostat population projections (EUROPOP2008, convergence scenario), the population of the EU-27 as a whole will be slightly larger in 2060, but much older than it is now. The impact of demographic ageing within the European Union is likely to be of major significance in the coming decades.

Consistently low birth rates and higher life expectancy will transform the shape of the EU-27's age pyramid; probably the most important change will be the marked transition towards a much older population and this trend is already becoming apparent in several Member States.

Another illustration of the ageing of the population is the trend in the median age. In the EU-27 the median age of total population rose from 35.2 years in 1990 to 40.9 in 2010.

3.3. POPULATION AGEING

EU-27 population is becoming older, and that is because of increasing life expectancy and low levels of fertility sustained for decades. Eurostat's population projections show that the ageing process will continue in future decades. The elderly population aged 65 or over was equivalent to 25.9 % of the working-age population in the EU-27 at the beginning of 2010.

On 1 January 2010, the young population (0-19 years old) accounted for 21.3 %, the population aged 20-64 for 61.3 % and the population aged 65 years or over for 17.4 %.

Across Member States, Ireland had the largest proportion of 0-19 year olds, 27.5 %, and Germany the smallest, 18.8 %. Germany had the largest proportion of those aged 65 or over, 20.7 %, followed by Italy. 20.2 %. The lowest proportion of those aged 65 or over was in Ireland (11.3 %), Slovakia (12.3 %) and Cyprus (13.1 %).

Population ageing is a long-term trend which began several decades ago in the EU-27. Between 1990 and 2010, the working-age population (20-64 years) in the EU-27 increased by 1.8 percentage points, while the older population (aged 65 or over) increased by 3.7 percentage points.

The change in the median age of the EU-27 population also provides an illustration of population ageing. In the EU-27, the median age of the total population rose steadily from 35.2 years in 1990 to 40.9 in 2010.

3.4. LIFE EXPECTANCY

Differences in life expectancy at birth throughout the EU-27 Member States remain significant. For men, the lowest life expectancy in 2009 was recorded in Lithuania (67.5 years) and the highest in Sweden (79.4 years). For women, the range was narrower, from a low of 77.4 years in Bulgaria and Romania, to a high of 85.0 years in France.

In all EU-27 Member States, women live longer than men, but there are substantial differences between countries. In 2009, the gender gap in life expectancy at birth varied from four years in the United Kingdom and Sweden to over 11 years in Lithuania. In the Baltic States, women can expect to live more than 10 years longer than men.

TABLE 8. LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH BY SEX, 1993 AND 2009. SOURCE: EUROSTAT.

	Men		Women	
	1993	**2009**	**1993**	**2009**
EU-27	:	76.4	:	82.4
BE	73.0	77.3	79.9	82.8
BG	67.6	70.1	75.1	77.4
CZ	69.3	74.2	76.5	80.5
DK	72.6	76.9	77.8	81.1
DE	72.8	77.8	79.4	82.8
EE	62.3	69.8	74.0	80.2
IE	72.5	77.4	78.1	82.5
EL	75.0	77.8	79.8	82.7
ES	74.1	78.7	81.4	84.9
FR	73.4	78.0	81.7	85.0
IT	74.6	79.1	81.0	84.5
CY	74.7	78.6	79.8	83.6
LV	:	68.1	:	78.0
LT	63.1	67.5	75.0	78.7
LU	72.2	78.1	79.6	83.3
HU	64.7	70.3	74.0	78.4
MT	:	77.8	:	82.7
NL	74.0	78.7	80.1	82.9
AT	72.8	77.6	79.5	83.2
PL	67.2	71.5	75.9	80.1
PT	71.0	76.5	78.1	82.6
RO	65.9	69.8	73.4	77.4
SI	69.4	75.9	77.6	82.7
SK	67.8	71.4	76.3	79.1
FI	72.1	76.6	79.5	83.5
SE	75.5	79.4	80.9	83.5
UK	73.5	77.8	78.9	81.9

3.5. SOCIAL ISOLATION

Social connections and relationships are an important dimension of well-being, as social relationships and interpersonal trust have proved to bring happiness to people's lives. Indicators referring to never meeting relatives or friends can be regarded as an extreme degree of isolation. The 2006 EU-SILC survey showed that "The share of population with no friends tends to increase by age in all the countries, due to the dissolution of friendships or the death of friends, and the growing difficulties in replacing these relationships". In half of the countries, over 1 in 10 persons aged 65 or more has no interaction with friends at all, neither personally or in any other ways. Family and relatives play a major role in preventing complete isolation in old age; although the elderly are strongly affected by diminishing interaction with friends or relatives, as shown in the Figure 10, in many countries they can still rely on the help of others.
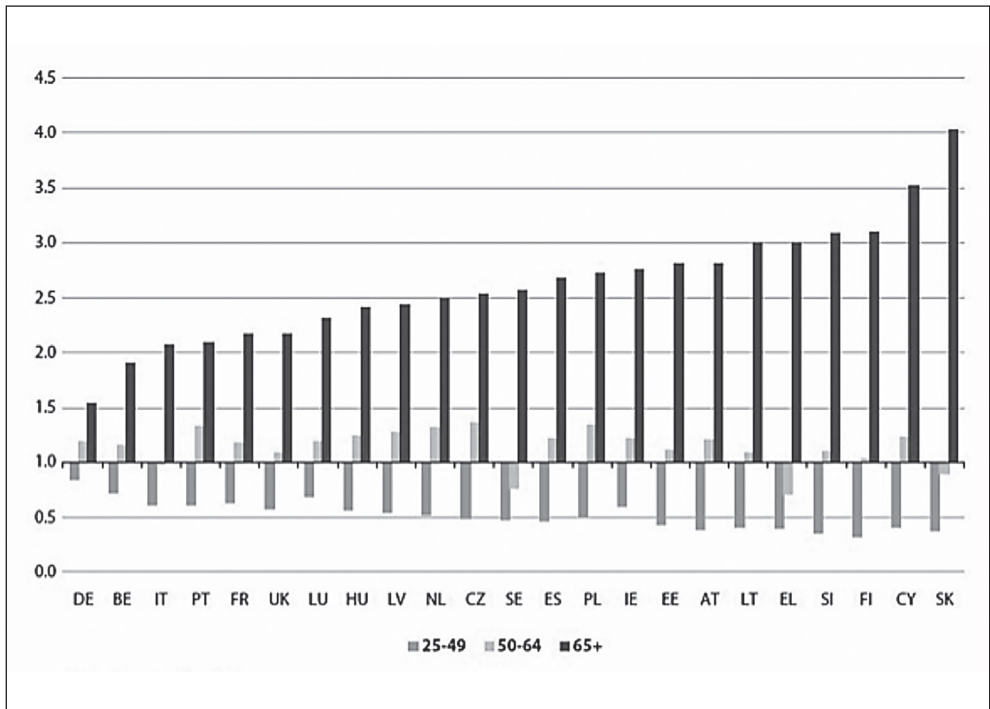
Figure 10. Ratio of those with no friends by age groups compared to the total population, 2006. Source EU-SILC Users' database

3.6. SOCIAL ROLES

Active ageing

Over the last years the concept of active ageing has been strictly related to health and the importance of healthy ageing. This approach focuses on a broad range of activities that emphasises the participation and inclusion of older people as full citizens. The essence of the concept of active ageing combines the element of productive ageing and the emphasis on quality of life and mental well-being. Thus, an active ageing strategy should cover the whole of the life course, because is concerned with how everyone ages, and not only with older people. So the vision behind the active ageing strategy is a society for all ages, in which all are valued and where everyone has an opportunity to participate and contribute regardless their age. In the third age, after retirement or during partial retirement, people should have opportunities to contribute in a variety of ways (paid employment, voluntary work, community participation, family activities and leisure), or a mixture of them, where special attention to nutritional aspects of healthy lifestyles is needed. Maximising citizens' potential and quality of life can create a more inclusive society and can further economic sustainability.

Social integration

Studies show that social integration is very important for the wellbeing of dependent elderly persons living at home: social activities and contacts improve their wellbeing (Caballero et al. 2007, Corinne 2005, Golden et al. 2009). Because of the changes in family structures, dependent elderly persons are more frequently finding themselves living alone. An emphasis on measures that encourage more social integration of the dependent elderly should stimulate a decrease in their rates of depression, and consequently, allow a reduction in their demand for care. The major results of this analysis are: health perception is strongly and positively correlated with satisfaction with one's main activity.

Staying at home can lead to adverse consequences, such as isolation: social activities, keeping active and busy, and meeting other people are important for retaining an interest in life, avoiding depression and, consequently, for wellbeing. Current social policy in Europe regarding the dependent elderly aims at making it easier to stay at home, essentially by providing assistance in the elementary activities of daily life.

Family links, intergenerational relations

Changes on family structure and job mobility during last decades have their consequences on elder relations. These changes occurred in all Europe but depending if we look at northern, eastern or southern Europe, the phase of the phenomenon is diverse. On the other hand, social construction of age and younger interaction practices have diminished the interaction among various generations.

Studies show that interaction with family or younger generations are crucial for elder quality of life (Generations United 2007, Olav ad Herlofson 2001). In this sense, public policies on elder dependence can help to increase family interaction or care. Besides, evaluated programmes on intergenerational practices demand from their users to expand and improve them due to the social benefits achieved. And not only to feel integrated with younger generations, but also to feel they contribute to teach from their experience and knowledge.

Elderly volunteering and well-being

A cross-European research conducted in 2009 and published in October 2009 (Haski-Leventhal 2009) show that there is an overall positive correlation between volunteering and perceived health, life satisfaction, and self-life expectancy, and a negative correlation to depression.

As people get older and enter their third-age they find volunteering a good substitute to the social roles they lost. Elderly volunteering can have a positive social impact, on society as well as on older volunteers, providing services otherwise unavailable or expensive. Volunteering by older people can help to eliminate isolation, strengthen community participation, enhance volunteers' self-esteem, change stereotypes, and promote social and political consciousness.

By helping others, older volunteers can also help themselves and enhance their physical, mental and social well-being, protecting from the pitfalls of retirement, physical decline and inactivity. The social integration related to volunteer work can enhance one's well-being, since the reduction of social isolation can lead to less depression.

A few cross-national studies were undertaken on volunteering and demonstrate that the picture of volunteering rates, perceptions and impact are not the same in all states and cultures. High participation rates in Northern Europe and low participation rates in Mediterranean countries are demonstrated (Haski-Leventhal 2009).

Technology

As a general increasing phenomenon in our societies, most ways of contribution to social volunteering or active ageing are more and more mediated through cyberspace, so full citizenship is also to let opportunities for elder people in using ICT (information and communication technologies). Furthermore, digital tools are mostly related to work, a phase of life that many elder abandoned in a recent or far past. This fact reinforces the idea of a lifelong learning, inside or outside job life. As volunteering associations base their communication on cyberspace, elder need the skills to cope with the information flows of the institutions they are engaged.

In the same way, for those elderly persons living at home, ICT can be developed as a helpful tool to keep in touch. Not as a substitute of face-to-face interaction but as devices that reinforce interaction. We know that this is still the beginning of new forms of interaction, so best uses to underpin intergenerational, neighbourhood or others relations could increase life quality for elder.

In third place, being socially integrated means to be informed. Information society flows through cyberspace and requesting accurate and authoritative information means access, skills and habits to use the Internet. That happens to be crucial in a continent in accelerated social changes. So a healthy democracy also depends on at least having access to information and the possibility of being active in the construction of these future societies.

3.7. CONCLUSIONS

The main demographic trends can be resumed as follow:
• Life expectancy continues to rise, especially from gains at older ages. Since there are large discrepancies among and within countries, there is scope for raising average life-spans for the less advantaged groups.
• Not only people are living longer lives; they may be living longer healthy lives. There is evidence that the process of ageing, during which people become progressively disabled until they die, is not becoming slower; rather, it is progressively delayed.
• The EU population ages at varying speed. Populations that are currently the oldest, such as Germany's and Italy's, will age rapidly for the next twenty years, then stabilise. Some populations that are currently younger, mainly in

the East of the EU, will undergo ageing at increasing speed and by 2060 will have the oldest populations in the EU.

3.8. EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Spain[17]

Introduction

In Spain senior education has been in place since 1978. It is driven by the Community Development Directorate[18] at the proposal of the General Sub-directorate for the Family,[19] who have signed various agreements with entities promoting cultural institutions, such as the European Universities of the Third Age[20] model. Spain has three institutions, Classes for the Third Age, Senior Citizens University Programmes and Adult Education Centres.[21] Adult Education centres offer intergenerational programmes.

Classes for the Third Age started their activities in Galicia (1978) and in other autonomous regions.

Senior Citizens University Programmes are educational spaces offering formal educational programmes for senior learners. In the nineties, the following universities pioneered these programmes: Alcalá de Henares (1992), Salamanca (1993), Granada (1994) and Castellón (1998).

Context

Currently the percentage of seniors (over 65 years old) in Spain is 32.9 %, and a sharp increase is expected in the coming years. In twenty years' time, the senior population in Spain will reach almost 47 %.

Related to socio-cultural characteristics, 60 % of Spanish senior citizens feel well and think that life is "to be enjoyed"; 26.6 % take up a sport, 12.2 % start craft classes and 8.8 % begin travelling.

Retirement means freedom and enjoyment. Spanish seniors think it allows them to perform new activities, such as travelling or joining associations. More pre-

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20. "Universidades de la Tercera Edad"
21. "Aulas de la 3ª Edad" los "Programas Universitarios para personas mayores" and the "Universidades Populares"

cisely, 12 % consider retirement as an empty experience, 16 % as a release, 55 % do not consider it important, and 17 % do not know/do not answer.

The report on the elderly in Spain includes 38.7 % of women and 29.7 % of men over 65 who are literate but have no formal education. Only 17.8 % of men and 14.6 % of women over 65 years completed primary studies; among the youngest age group (65 to 69) this percentage was higher at almost 20 %.

Only 1.8 % of women over 65 years reached higher education compared to 5.3% of men.

With regard to health, 60 % of older people perceive their health as good or very good.

As regards citizen participation, 43 % of seniors and 47 % of society in general (all ages) believe that older people should have a greater presence in all areas of society.

Challenges

Relevant topics in Spain could be related to gender influences (marital status, living alone, daily activities, care, perception of health, social participation, etc.). Educational level is the determining factor in the process by which the elderly form their perceptions, but it does not affect loneliness. In rural areas social services are less well-known, and more local health services and more social services are called for. There are differences between the perceptions of society and seniors with regard to loneliness and social participation.

Therefore, we must take into account the scope of the three types of organisations; all address the importance and the social component of social action.

Furthermore, it should be noted that Spain's agreeable climate favours extra-curricular activities that can be done outdoors.

And finally, the formal academic setting for senior education should also be highlighted.

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Finland

Introduction

Finland has a population of some 5 406 000 people, of which more than a million are over 65 years of age. Finns are relatively highly educated, and more than 60 % of people aged between 65 and 69 and about 25 % of the age-group of over 80 years have an upper secondary education; more than 40 % of people aged 65 to 69 and 25 % of the age-group of 70 to 74 years have reached an academic degree. In the Finnish culture, an education is highly valued. According to the results of the reports of the PISA (Programme for International Students Assessment), the Finns are the best readers in the world. The literacy rate of the population has traditionally been high ever since the 17th century.

A significant part of senior citizens (65+) participate in lifelong education. In Finland, there is a long tradition of folk high schools. There are some 200 further education and adult education centres in Finland, offering education and courses in a great variety of subjects, open for anyone at a reasonable price. The network of these education centres covers the whole country, which is significant as Finland has one of the most sparsely populated countries in Europe. Most of these educational institutions are owned by the municipality, some are private. Some 200 000 students of folk high schools are over 60 years of age and the majority of these are women. In addition to the folk high schools, there are special educational centres for senior students, which operate in connection with universities, e.g. the University of the Third Age at the University of Helsinki, which is part of the Open University. Its aim is to introduce the latest research findings to older people and offer them opportunities to independent academic studies without formal qualifications. Also similar Third Age universities can be found in other universities around the country.

Context

On March 31st, 2012, the population of Finland was 5 406 018 people. Of these, more than one million had reached the age of 65 years (June 2012). At the moment, the Finnish population is aging faster than that of any other European country. This is because of the low birth rate and high proportion of baby-boomers, born between 1946–1949. The population though, is slowly increasing because of immigration, even though the amount of immigrants is distinctly lower than in many other European countries. The population density of the country is low, about 17 people/

square kilometre, with the greatest part of people living on the southern coast. The life expectancy of women at the moment is 82 years, and that of men about 76 years. However, there are remarkable differences in health according to the residential area, education and income rate of people.

According to a recent study, two thirds of senior citizens are not fully satisfied with their situation, and a remarkable part of them feel that the development of care for the elderly in recent years has not been satisfactory. 25 % of the seniors suffer from loneliness to some extent. The increasing amount of seniors in Finland is a future challenge for senior and health care.

Challenges

Seniors in Finland feel lonely for many reasons; their spouse has passed away, children have moved out, they live alone without family and friends or live in some distance from the cities. The long, cold dark winter causes a decline in their social lives. Primarily, seniors need emotional and instrumental support and being there to listen and share their feelings is sometimes enough but instrumental support, on the other hand, is about helping with tangible goods, such as travel services.

Some government agencies arrange daily activities for seniors and some arrange transportation such as taxies so that they can get out from their homes and get involved in activities such as discussion, sports, choir, swimming or to volunteer for occupational and outdoor activities. Most seniors volunteer to help young children in schools or engage in non-governmental organisation activities and charitable works in order to fill up the void of loneliness.

Being a sparsely populated country, Finland is challenged in education for seniors. The network of adult education centres is well-developed, and seniors participate actively in the courses offered by these institutions. Nevertheless, there remains much to do in the field of modern technology, since a lot of elderly people are not active users of information technology. The fast growth of the senior population also sets its challenges in adult education.

Sources: Statistics Finland, Ministry of Education and Culture, The Finnish National Board of Education

Italy

The problem of adult literacy starts to become a real issue in Europe at the beginning of 1900, given the high number of illiterate people, employed or unem-

ployed. Social and economic changes deriving from the industrial revolution create the necessity of a mass education: the main challenge is teaching adults to read, write and calculate. Schooling happens first in towns and cities and then in country locations. During the second half of 1900, the Mutual Aid Societies and the Chambers of Labour start to appear in Italy, being a point of reference for the working class, bringing up forms of education aid and solidarity. One major target is to fight absolute illiteracy of a great part of the population. Over time, other capillary forms of social aggregation will come up, like ACLI (Christian Labour Italian Associations), with the role of promoting education and professional training.

The Italian government starts to have a major role in handling the situation only after the second World War and, during 1947, the first Public Schools for the illiterate start to appear and they will be operative until 1982. During the sixties, adult evening classes for the workers start to appear in Vocational Schools according to the Legislative Decree nr. 140 of March 8, 1968. During the following ten years, these classes start catching on more and more, adding also important modifications like matching classes to the specific needs of the adult learners.

Major changes however, happen during the nineties, with the creation of the CTP (Territorial Permanent Centres) and a more extensive diffusion of evening classes between second grade secondary schools, offering proper chances of learning upgrading. The coming forward of a new "information society or post industrial society" creates a new need of passing from a basic literacy of the population to a different meaning of education, intended as lifelong learning, allowing people to learn during their entire path of life.

In Italy people start talking about EDA (Adult Education) referring to new opportunities of getting new professional competences both for public and private labour force, being an integral part of the right of citizenship. The EDA is under the wing of the Public Education and received a proper role from the Fifth World Conference of UNESCO in 1997 ("One hour a day of learning for all"[22]). This Conference gave all state members the guidelines to establish the Adult Education forms.

From this date onward, new structures start to spring up, addressing non-formal education, like municipal networks for the adult education initiatives, public cultural infrastructures and associations, Universities of the Third Age (for seniors), all these being entities offering non-formal adult education, with the purpose to support a proper personal growth of citizens through wide learning as well.

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22. http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/confintea/declaeng.htm

Latvia

Introduction

The main target groups and their needs have been defined in the planning document "Lifelong Learning Policy for 2007–2013":[23] people without the elementary education and with low level of basic skills, people with special needs, and people with economically little activity who are bounded to the household, people who have already retired and pre-pension aged people. This document identifies the key problems for improving a learning system in Latvia. In Latvia, the general, professional and the higher education network operates in a defined structure; however, there is a lack of system in the adult and senior education. People of this age group prefer to use non-formal education opportunities. It has been observed that people of pre-pension age and older than that are eager to use informal education opportunities to obtain qualification and knowledge. Low geographical mobility is negatively influenced by the insufficiently developed transportation infrastructure in the economically less-developed regions, creating restricted availability to lifelong learning for the rural population. The low level of income of seniors has negative impact for education opportunities, especially outside of capital city Riga. Poverty is one of the most important aspects of social exclusion. Elderly people are one of the social exclusion risk groups.

Context

It is estimated that 22 % of all Latvian inhabitants will be aged between 60 and 79 years in 2030 and 6 % will be above the age of 80 years.

Taking into consideration the national socio-economic situation, the amount of pension, social and health care facilities, options for life-quality maintenance for older people in Latvia are very limited.

The results of the Quality of Life Survey in 2005 in Latvia showed that the worst assessment of life was for the elderly people (71 % of respondents agreed to this statement) and rural inhabitants (63 %). Among the most important aspects of quality of life in Latvia, health and financial security were mentioned. The quality of life is also characterised by satisfaction with life in general. According to the results of European Quality of Life Survey in 2008, Latvian people's satisfaction with their

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23. http://izm.izm.gov.lv/upload_file/Izglitiba/Muzizglitiba/LLL_Programme_Latvia_EN.pdf

lives was average; the average evaluation on a 10-point scale was 6 (the average evaluation in Europe was 7 points). Data of Eurobarometer survey in 2008 showed that more than half (62 %) of Latvian inhabitants were satisfied with their lives in general, while Latvia is well below the EU average level (-14 percentage points). The number of respondents who were satisfied with their lives decreased to 45 % in the age group of 55 years and older.

Health status indicators deteriorate with age, it occurs in the health self-assessment. People in the age group of 65 years and older in the new EU-12 Member States, including Latvia, evaluate their health status as poor more often (34 %) than in the old EU-15 Member States (15 %) (the average evaluation across the EU is 18 %). Differences between the groups of countries appeared in the answers to the question about long-term health problems, especially at the age of 65 years: 45 % of men and 56 % of women in the EU-12 Member States have admitted that they have long-term (chronic) physical or mental health problems, illness or disability. In the EU-15, respectively, this proportion is 42 % of men and 45 % of women.

Important indicators are those describing the health problems that prevent or restrict the daily activities at home, work or leisure time. 72 % of the inhabitants who are older than 65 years recognise such restrictions for at least the last 6 months. About one third of these respondents have real limitations. This shows the limited quality of life.

Challenges

Loneliness and social isolation are also one of the aspects of social exclusion. Large numbers of older inhabitants in Latvia are in a special situation that is marked by long-term living in poverty, leading to a sharp existential problems. They range from the spiritual to the material ones, such as despondency and depression. Participation in lifelong-learning activities can reduce risks for socialisation and mental health that significantly affect the quality of life.

Also physical health being greatly affected by the lifestyle is an essential component of quality of life. According to the study, only 1 % of respondents consider their lifestyle to be very healthy. Overall, a third of respondents (34 %) admit that their lifestyle can be pretty much considered healthy. The majority of people consider their lifestyle as generally healthy (48 %). Data reveals that 18 % of retired people regard to their lifestyle as little healthy or unhealthy at all. Data of seniors' focus group research indicate that the vast majority of people would like to know more about the psychology and the art of positive thinking. They also would like to

get information about the optimal age-appropriate exercises, different types of physical activities and disease prevention. Seniors are less interested in the information related to the basic principles of a balanced diet and preparation of healthy food.

Acquisition of new technologies is also significant at this age. The best practice in this field is a project financially supported by ICT enterprises Lattelecom "Be connected with Latvia" The main goals of the project are to reduce the digital divide – the barriers to information and communication technology, which creates the threat of particular segments of society being excluded from the information flow, socialising and employment opportunities.

Poland[24]

Introduction

After the Second World War, the Polish Ministry of Education has undertaken a number of initiatives that included the creation and support of schools for working adults. The forms of education of adults, known as practical training, dynamically evolved. Until 1989, teaching and professional skills classes were also carried out by companies and their educational institutions. According to statistics conducted in the years 1960-1970, elementary schools were completed by nearly one million adult graduates. At that time there was also a significant participation of adults in the secondary level education, both in high schools and technical schools (schools that prepare students for a job - practical skills). In comparison to the period immediately after the war, the number of working adults - students at high schools and technical schools –increased from 146 500 to about 488 000. The vast majority of them were the students of technical schools[25].

The year 1989 brought significant changes in Poland in the field of education and training for adults. The fall of the communist regime and the numerous economic and social processes (privatisation, rising unemployment, the democratisation of the rules of social life), caused that the Polish began to recognise the benefits of the raising level of their education and the acquisition of new qualifications or the improvement of professional qualifications. More and more frequently training institutions for adults

24. Responsible for this study are Alina Gil and members of the research team of the Jan Dlugosz University in Czestochowa.
25. Błędowski P., Nowakowska M., (2010). Poradnik. Podstawy kształcenia ustawicznego, Instytut Nauk Społeczno-Ekonomicznych, Łódź, http://www.centrumego.eu/pliki2/kwalifikacjeto podstawa_poradnik_ksztalcenia_ustawicznego.pdf.

began to appear, which allow them to undertake education or continue their education on higher levels. As a result of the Polish integration within the European Union, since the 1990s, a dynamically growing market of educational services was recorded. But Polish adults participation in these forms of training in 2002 was only 1.5 %. The analysis carried out during the research process led to the following conclusions:

- participation in various types of training is relatively low among the Polish;
- training held in Poland lasts much longer than in the countries where the level of participation is high;
- a very low level of participation among the unemployed and job seekers in targeted trainings can be observed;
- in Poland, as in the other countries, people aged from 55 to 64 years participate in lifelong learning lesser than the 25-54 years age group.
- in continuing education usually participate people who already have a high level of education (for example, those who have completed studies in normal mode and then have taken the post-graduate studies), while those with lower levels of education participate lesser in the process of improvement of their skills and expanding their knowledge.

This situation is mainly due to the fact that they have to face much more serious barriers (lack of financial support, lack of motivation) in access to various forms of education than higher educated people (who receive higher wages and are able to self-finance their further education).[26]

Context

According to the data collected by Social Insurance Institution[27] in 2012, there are over 7 357 400 retired people, with tendency still increasing. The retired in Poland usually receive a pension, sometimes they use family help, but only a few of them work. The overall tendency appears to be that Polish seniors do not have a job, not even part-time.

In August 2012, Public Opinion Research Centre[28] published results of a survey about way of spending time during retirement. The overwhelming majority of Polish

26. The OECD study "Adult learning - Thematic review". http://www.mpips.gov.pl (02.10.2009).
27. Statement of Social Insurance Institution for September - http://biznes.newsweek.pl/czy-system-to-wytrzyma-zus--o-szesc-tysiecy-wiecej-emerytow-i-rencistow,96636,1,1.html (13.10.2012).
28. Ways to spend your free time in retirement, (08. 2012), CBOS. http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2012/K_106_12.PDF

seniors claim that since retirement, they spend their free time watching television (98 %), meeting family and friends (87 %), praying at church (81 %), listening to the music (81%), reading book or newspaper (80 %) and do some activity outside like walking (70 %). Just over a half (55 %) work in garden or in allotment, only slightly fewer (44 %) said that they help family taking care of grandchildren or disabled family members. Polish when retired are also familiar with the newest technology: they use computers and smartphones, surf the internet, use virtual communicators but 64 % of the elderly are not interested in new technologies. Upwards of a third seniors in Poland declare to travel around the country and continent (36 %), spend time on their hobbies (44 %), participate in cultural life, go to the cinemas, museums, operas, theatres (35 %), whereas only few of them are volunteers in charity organisation (17 %). Only a tiny percentage of seniors (6 %) decide to learn foreign languages, take part in various courses, self-educate or join to the University of the Third Age.

Half of Polish seniors are also dissatisfied with their education and skills, whereas only 12 % of retired were satisfied. As can be seen from the survey, Polish seniors at the retirement prefer to do things which do not require spending money and big physical activity. The reasons for this behaviour may be a high pension and a low state of health. The overall tendency (75 %) appears to be that the Polish seniors prefer to live on their own, whereas a quarter (25 %) live with children, grandchildren or other family members. Only 7 % of seniors think that their standard of living is comfortable and there is no need to save money for bigger purchases, while the overwhelming majority (87 %) admits that they have an average standard of living and they sometimes have to save money for the necessities of life. A tiny percentage of seniors (6 %) declare themselves as poor and admit that they have the serious problems with satisfying basic needs. Over a third of Polish seniors (40 %) claim they are disabled. Just under a third (30 %) of seniors have a depression, impairment memory and require constant care. 50% of retired have vision impairment, 60 % have hearing impairment, 40 % of seniors suffer from pain in the muscles or joints.

Challenges

There is always possibility to learn some new skills in various courses such as pottery courses, knitting courses, florist courses, florist course, IT, etc. Information about them can be found in the newspaper, Internet, radio or just advertisement in the bus. All the seniors need to do is find announcement about the interesting course, apply and pay for the course. It is a common rule that courses are not for free and this is often the obstacle.

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Hungary

Introduction

Unlike in many European countries, in Hungary there is not a systematic strategy regularised by laws for the education of the seniors. The laws on adult education in general (Act CI of 2001 on Adult Education) cover the informal and non-formal education of seniors with not specific rules for its specifics. There are two types of adult education to be distinguished for older people. One is the labour market orientation-driven education, where the main aim of the trainings is to integrate older employees into the labour market, make their skills and competencies competitive, and help them not to drop out too early from their workplaces. The other type of education is more related to recreational and life quality-driven trainings (which is our scope of interest in Edusenior project). Here we are lagging behind other European countries in our statistics. Among older people over 55 only 1 % of the population (compared to the EU average of 5 %) is engaged in any kind of education. The majority of these people attend non-formal and informal shorter courses, mostly organised by the Community Centres-which are mostly run by local governments and offer courses at a relatively low rate.

Context

The population of Hungary was 10.45 million people on 1 January 2008 out of which 47.5 % is the share of males and 52.5 % is the share of females. The decrease in the number of births, the rise in the number of deaths and the gain from international migration lower than in the previous years resulted in an actual population decrease of 20 800 people in average per year. Since 2006 the rate of population aged 65 years and over has exceeded the share of child-age (0–14 year-old) population. On 1 January 2008, the rate was 108 old-age people per 100 child-age people. The

life expectancy at birth is 77.8 (female) and 69.2 (male) has slightly risen in the last years but is still under the average European life expectancy.[29]

TABLE 9. DEPENDENCY RATIOS AND AGEING INDEX (1 JANUARY)

Year	Age composition			Youth dependency ration	Old-age dependency ration	Total dependency ration	Ageing index
	0-14	**15-64**	**65-**				
1960	25.4	65.7	8.9	38.7	13.6	52.3	35.2
1970	21.1	67.4	11.5	31.3	17.0	48.3	54.4
1980	21.9	64.6	13.5	33.8	20.9	54.8	61.9
1990	20.5	66.2	13.2	31.0	20.0	51.0	64.5
2000	16.9	68.1	15.0	24.8	22.9	46.8	88.5
2001	16.6	68.3	15.1	24.3	22.2	46.5	91.3
2002	16.3	68.4	15.3	23.8	22.3	46.1	93.5
2003	16.1	68.5	15.4	23.5	22.4	45.9	95.4
2004	15.9	68.6	15.5	23.1	22.6	45.7	97.6
2005	15.6	68.7	15.6	22.8	22.7	45.5	99.9
2006	15.4	68.8	15.8	22.4	22.9	45.4	102.4
2007	15.2	68.9	15.9	22.1	23.2	45.2	104.9
2008	15.0	68.8	16.2	21.8	23.5	45.3	107.6

Health: Some 19.2 % of Hungarians in 2008 said they considered their health condition to be "bad" or "very bad". That is double the EU average and beaten only by Portugal. Life expectancy at birth was 73.8 years in 2008 – the lowest of any OECD country save Turkey.[30]

As to life satisfaction, according to an OECD survey[31] Hungary is one of the unhappiest countries. When asked to rate their general satisfaction with life on a scale from 0 to 10, Hungarians gave it a 4.9 grade, lower than the OECD average of 6.7. Hungarian women are even less happy than Hungarian men.

Challenges

In Hungary the economic system as well as health conditions and overall life conditions result in a much poorer situation of Hungarian seniors if compared with other European countries. The difference is even bigger if we take a look at senior's involvement in education. In Hungary the rate of people over 55 participating in

29. Statistical Yearbook of Hungary, 2007 Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2008
30. http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2010/07/health-care_hungary
31. http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/life-satisfaction/

education is only 1 % compared to the European average of 5 %. The reasons are various ranging from a lack of resources and free time as well as motivational factors. There is a lot to do to change this situation, both on the policy level (increasing offers and accessibility of courses as well as promotion) as well as on the individual level (increasing motivation and willingness to participate). An exchange of good practices among European partners as well as developed guidelines and possible solution-mapping could highly contribute to the new thinking in the country.

Bulgaria

Introduction

According to a number of usual statistical indicators, the educational attainment in the Republic of Bulgaria is currently at EU level, but aging and emigration bring the necessity for adult and senior learning.

Historically, the demand for lifelong learning in Bulgaria has always been recognised. But for a long time there was a lack of concrete activities aimed at the improvement of general knowledge and vocational skills. Still for a long time the system for senior education was not part of the educational system, it was informal and delivered by institutions in the form of courses, rounds and correspondence.

Bulgaria has the lowest EU record for overall adult participation in formal education and training compared to the EU average. Among people aged 45 years and over, participation in educational activities declines sharply, and the 55 years and over age group has the lowest participation level (6.5 per cent). The EU25 average in all these figures is about two to three times higher. Nowadays less than 2 % of adults participate in education and training, 1.4 % in formal education and training.[32]

A major trend in the demographic development of Bulgaria is the ageing of the population. This will have implications for the education and training systems and employment structure in Bulgaria over the next two decades.[33]

Despite the long list of institutions and NGOs active in Adult Education and Learning (ALE) in Bulgaria, training and education for seniors can be obtained in rather limited institutions though. They mainly provide educational opportunities for seniors, organised in courses, programmes, and different formal/informal activities.

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32. Adults in Formal Education: Policies and Practice in Europe, Euridyce, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2011, http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/128EN.pdf
33. Country Report on the Action Plan on Adult Learning: Bulgaria, March 2011, presented in the working group on the Adult Learning Action Plan, http://ec.europa.eu/education/adult/doc/bulgaria_en.pdf

The implementation of a Programme for Increasing the Quality of Adult Training in 2008 caters for the development of the senior and adult education sectors. Andragogy training courses for adult educators (multipliers) have been organised.

Context

According to the National Statistical Institute, Bulgaria, "… the most recent data (at the end of 2007) show that the calculated resident population of Bulgaria had dropped to 7.6 million persons. It is expected that the population will be 7.649 million by 2010 and 7.170 million by the end of 2020. There are 4 789 967 people between 18 and 64 years of age (65.1 %) and 1 389 059 people older than 64 (18.9 %)".[34]

Nowadays, 23.7 % of the population of Bulgaria is of pensionable age and this number is constantly on the increase. Therefore ensuring the well-being of senior citizens (in terms of both physical and mental health) is a challenge for public authorities, health and the social services. At present, efforts are being made in order to develop new legislative acts, concerning the above, and to restructure the existing mechanisms and methods of work.

Unfortunately, in Bulgaria, retiree average income is very low. Pensioners tend to live with their children's families, other relatives, or, in public care-centres for elderly people. Usually, those who are in good health try to find a job to help them cover their everyday needs, no matter whether it corresponds to their educational qualification or not. The description of the current situation shows that there are not many premises and opportunities for gaining new knowledge by taking part in training and educational programs for people of pensionable age.

There are about 800 centres for social services in the country and their capacity ranges from 12 to 150 places. However, their condition is extremely poor. The fall of the net income and the gradual and constant ageing of the population have lead to the increase in the number of people needing social aid and protection, and consequently, to more people waiting to be admitted to the social services centres.

Challenges

The main types of institutions involved in senior education are public and municipal centres, including evening schools, a variety of schools, colleges, training centres and information and guidance centres, and higher education universities.

Opportunities have been created for evening or part-time/distance forms of

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34. Idem, ref. 33

learning. Concurrently, various projects involve teaching adults and seniors to read and write or include training for acquiring professional qualification and/or requalification. Senior education has been mostly delivered by community centres and libraries as recognised education centres for seniors in Bulgaria. Based on a survey conducted in Bulgaria, seniors prefer to be involved in activities related to use of new technologies, leisure, cultural and sporting events, health lectures and seminars on healthy lifestyles.

Some basic documents have been developed where systematic and long-term activities on a national level have been defined.

The Programme for Increasing the Quality of Adult Training adopted in 2008 caters for the development of the senior and adult education sectors. Other key documents are the National Lifelong Learning Strategy (2008-2013)[35] and the Action Plan on Adult Learning.

Among the key trends referring to senior education are improving the quality of provision and staffing, increase the possibilities to achieve a qualification at least one level higher, speed up the process of assessing, recognising non-formal and informal learning for disadvantaged groups, improve the monitoring of the sector.

Measures are being taken to increase the flexibility of access to senior learning opportunities, and promoting educational mobility for senior learners. Part of these focus on a second-chance system for formal and informal education, as well as recognition of non-formal and informal prior learning. E-learning and distance learning are also areas, which are being developed, particularly in aiming to make the systems more attractive to learners.[36]

3.9. EXPERIENCES AND GOOD PRACTICES

Project "Moving your minds" in society[37]

"A healthy city is the one that constantly creates and improves physical and social contexts, implementing community resources which will give the citizens the chance to get a better life and to enhance their potential" (Project O.M.S. Città Sane, Comune di Udine).

35. http://www.mon.bg/opencms/export/sites/mon/en/top_menu/vocational_education/LLL_Strategy_2008-2013.pdf.
36. EAEA Country Report on Adult Education in Bulgaria: Helsinki, 2011, http://www.eaea.org/doc/pub/Country-Report-on-Adult-Education-in-Bulgaria.pdf
37. Massimo Bardus, Università delle LiberEtà. Italy.

Introduction

In September 2012 the Healthy City office of the Municipality of Udine started a project in cooperation with some associations of the city, among them the Università delle LiberEtà.

The adoption of a healthy lifestyle is an excellent prevention to aging and promotes healthy aging. The city of Udine, which is already involved in initiatives to promote health and sociability, proposes this project which offers different activities to support cognitive health.

The project aims to offer guidelines on how to keep and support the integrity of cognitive functions in senior citizens, adopting effective and practical modalities, within the project targeting the old age problem in the town of Udine.

Adopting healthy lifestyles is already a very good start to promote a healthy seniority. When using a holistic approach, our most important target is the will to train our cognitive functions: this will give a positive response to the fear of decaying so often present in the mind of old people and will also contribute to enhance self-esteem. With our age progressing, we also have an aging of our brain: this fact gives serious consequences in the everyday life of seniors, especially considering the memory issue.

Development

The "Health Profile of Seniors" 2008 describes the town of Udine as a place having a 23.94 % of people over 65. These seniors believe in a positive view of their city life and are very interested in cultural meetings and in more specific meetings about the health issue. We believe this fact could be a good starting point for our project. The division of the territory in administrative districts and the consolidated habit of having initiatives promoting health and social issues, are all possible paths to use for a further development of the project "Minds in Movement", when dealing with "An Education toward a proper Mental Health". The presence of these "Walking Groups" and the general attendance of people to projects about physical exercise are all important resources when dealing with the rapport between memory and physical exercise.

Mental exercises can help throughout our life to maintain our brain health. All free time activities and cultural commitments can slow down our natural cognitive decay. The protective effect could be given by some kind of cerebral plasticity, the capability of our brain to modify itself in front of specific stimulation of the moment. An active process of mental remodelling can be enhanced by favourable local condi-

tions which can happen during our entire life, protecting our brain from the risk of cognitive decay. The personal profiles of seniors, living in the town of Udine, seem to indicate favourable conditions and a fertile ground for such a possibility.

The main aims of the project are:

- the making of sustainable environments responding to personal needs, which can offer favourable stimulus for a cognitive health
- promoting a healthy old age through a personal and a group empowerment
- to guarantee the continuity, the development and diffusion of this initiative, involving the participants to this project
- the making of a model of scientific intervention based on everyday situations and adopting exercises and a field of interests that can help people to maintain their cognitive power following a path of a healthy lifestyle
- the promotion of significant intergenerational exchanges

The trained cognitive functions and proposed activities are:

- attention and focus: perceptive games, gradual elongation of necessary time
- memory: visual-auditory-linguistic memory games, sense related activities (sense of touch included) , recalling and memory strategies
- language: production and comprehension, practice for semantic and phonetic skills, rhymes
- logical functions: abstraction, categorization, activities about logic, riddles, arithmetic thinking, completion of grammar and literature elements.
- Space-time orientation: orienteering, city maps, geographic and historical maps, history and types of calendars.
- Manual skills and abilities: how to copy geometric figures, drawing and picture completion, object assembling and disassembling, eyes-hand coordination, simple and complex movement coordination, puzzles, guides, how to use manuals, forms.

Recommendations

Università delle LiberEtà participated in the project as a key association providing educational activities to over 65 senior citizens. A 24 lessons English language course "English as a everyday language" was set. There was a huge demand for this course, being seniors very interested in discover how English words are used

every day at some different levels, sometimes they do use words that they do not even know they are English. Motivation was a key point: seniors were involved because they strongly believed that the course could help keeping their mind on work.

Thus, we suggest to use the available resources of the territory so to vary and enrich the activities and, at the same time, to enhance motivation, proposing entertaining and practical activities and stimulating personal creativity and the pleasure of discovering new things. We must always keep in mind that the right approach is a natural approach: we should promote inter-generational exchanges, including knowledge of new technologies, network resources and the pleasure of sharing these notions with all the others. These personal exchanges will work as a linking bridge between generations among participants of all ages, helping to prevent and erase existing prejudices.

We suggest to get in touch and ask the cooperation of Clubs dealing with card games, chess, entertaining math, cross words, social games, poetry and prose reading, music schools etc. You could also ask the population to contribute, bringing to a collection point suggestions, ideas of games, quizzes, drills, pictures, maps, proposals which will be evaluated and put into practice after being readapted to the situation. The setting up of all these materials will require great care and attention.

Learning in Rural Areas in Castellón (Spain)[38]

Introduction

Lifelong education is a right and a duty for everyone. The rural elderly is undoubtedly one of the groups that have traditionally faced greater difficulties in accessing lifelong learning programmes.

The lifelong learning programme at the Jaume I University (Senior Citizens' University SCU) in Spain is also applied in rural areas. This gives people living further from the city the opportunity to expand their knowledge, share experiences and establish links with the rest of society.

The objective of this programme is to ensure full and equal access of opportunity to cultural assets through permanent programmes designed to be generous and caring, and to encourage the development of more educated, critical and committed individuals, thereby increasing quality of life among the elderly population. The rural elderly have the same concerns as their urban counterparts and the same funda-

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mental rights to receive lifelong education.

The benefits of education are not only limited to those who receive it directly; it also has an impact on the whole community. For this reason the social and political agents in the towns where the lifelong learning programme is run play an important role in promoting, identifying direct needs, disseminating and coordinating lifelong learning among the adult population. Public and private agencies work together to promote courses and activities to ensure that the needs of this rapidly growing sector of the population are met and to foster greater welfare and personal realisation that will enhance their quality of life.

Content

The lifelong learning programme at Jaume I University in Spain provides courses for people over the age of 55, in an attempt to respond to their wishes to expand their education and their overall development. Through this programme, the University aims to contribute to improving the human capacities of the elderly in rural areas, both in terms of their academic development and their integration and social development. To this end, opportunities for reflection are freely provided, thus enabling the exchange of knowledge and experiences.

University education for senior learners is not intended to prepare individuals for a professional career, but is primarily designed to foster students' personal development and encourage them in the task of contributing to the cultural development of our society.

Older people in rural areas are, undoubtedly, one of the groups that have traditionally faced greater difficulties in accessing lifelong learning programmes. This programme aims to give people who do not live near the city of Castellón the opportunity to expand their knowledge and share experiences.

To promote the education of the elderly in rural areas, the methodology should be active, participatory, social, open and understanding, in order to provide opportunities to recreate the life of the elderly, giving a new meaning to their life experience.

Hence, this lifelong learning programme employs a teaching methodology suited to education of the elderly learner that is reflected in the content of the subjects taught. The syllabus of the programme for the elderly in rural areas generally has the following characteristics:

• Tends towards concrete issues and is based on observation and discovery.
• Stimulates activity and takes into account the principle of 'learning by doing'.

- Activities are varied and avoid becoming routine and boring.
- Encourages participation and group work.

It should be noted that Information and Communication Technologies have altered society's access to information and learning and have a significant influence in the field of knowledge. In consequence, and in relation to the senior learner's 'digital literacy' as part of the lifelong learning process, it should be remembered that both digital tools and lifelong learning should be for all, regardless of age, to enhance meaningful social participation, strengthen their social support networks and self-esteem, and enable them to benefit from the material advantages that ICT can bring. This can be even more pertinent in rural areas with low population densities and scarce resources. In sum, ICT improve their quality of life. This new computer literacy has to enable seniors to use the computer to construct their own learning.

Access to ICT is becoming easier due to support from official agencies. However, the distinction should be made between urban areas, where public connection points are common, and rural areas, where availability is limited. In urban areas material well-being is therefore covered.

ICT have a positive influence on the perception of quality of life, providing not only access to information and communication, but facilitating networks among people. These are especially useful in rural populations either because they are in remote areas, or because transport connections between them are poor. Without ICT, there would be a greater tendency towards isolation, which detracts from quality of life.

If we understand self-determination as the personal faculty that enables people to take their own decisions, and act in consequence of them, and if we consider that access to information is an indispensable requirement for making conscious and effective decisions, it is clear that ICT, especially the Internet, are particularly useful in such processes, facilitating knowledge of the environment and opening up possibilities to act on it. Because of the lack of services in rural areas (banks, administrative agencies, commerce) ICT play a huge role not only in providing access to information, but in allowing people to perform transactions online.

ICT related subjects are heavily emphasised in the rural lifelong learning programme. The teaching plan is as follows:

- Computer courses at different levels (basic, intermediate, advanced), but where students are not only taught how to use a new tool, but to foster links with each other, enabling them to keep in touch and share from their own

homes. 'Learning' thus becomes an excuse to continue practicing at home and communicate with each other.

- On-line or virtual classes: access to virtual classes allows learners to continue learning without having to move and to practice using technological tools, and although the online mode is limited, it imitates the social contact that take place in a face-to-face class.

Recommendations

Education in rural areas is often neglected due to insufficient demand (because the population is more dispersed), access to facilities (classrooms, technology), expenses and organisation. However, the effort invested, if done properly, can bring even greater benefits by meeting the needs and concerns of elderly education in rural areas that in urban areas are amply satisfied.

Lifelong learning (understood as a psychosocial activity) for the elderly in rural areas is pivotal in improving their quality of life, as it facilitates personal interaction processes in which active roles are acquired in activities that are perceived as beneficial.

Hence, education and training, Internet access and geographical variables (rural environment) are three interconnected factors in the programme. These should be considered together to provide an adequate quality of life for individuals. The need for personal development is satisfied through the acquisition of new knowledge and being in a lifelong learning process, which allows certain personal concerns, knowledge, training and information, activities, contacts, and so on, to be realised. Knowledge and ICT therefore provide opportunities to use all possible means that are potentially available in today's society for the personal development of the rural elderly

Some of the objectives of lifelong education programmes in rural areas, as detailed above, are to:

- Value the importance of what culture contributes in rural areas, through the implementation of education as a continuous process.
- Help each individual recognise the direction their own thoughts are going, in relation to their wishes, thus opening the way to better understand and operate in today's reality.
- Increase outreach to rural areas and share with rural populations the practice of experiences that prove enriching.

- Become aware of how important this experience can be and evaluate it in order to address the most important issues for new programmes.
- Develop the students' research autonomy, as it is students who explore freely and focus their research on issues they consider most appropriate to their ultimate goals.
- Ensure that students cease to be mere recipients of knowledge and take centre stage in their learning.
- Teach by using ICT that these technologies offer older students an ideal opportunity to learn, while at the same time turning them into critical researchers.

In conclusion, we highlight some of the issues raised previously in the implementation of a programme of lifelong education in rural areas:

- The socio-political agents in each town are very important in promoting lifelong education among the adult population.
- The methodology must be active, participatory, social, open and understanding in order to provide opportunities to recreate the life of the elderly, giving a new meaning to their life experience.
- The topics dealt with in the teaching plan typically:

  - Are specific and based on observation and discovery.
  - Stimulate activity and take into account the principle of 'learning by doing'.
  - The activities carried out are varied and avoid becoming routine and boring.
  - Improving participants' quality of life through participation and group work should be encouraged in applying the programme.

- The processes of interaction and personal development are favoured. Social participation is more significant, strengthening their social support networks and self-esteem, and hence the elderly benefit from the material advantages of ICT.

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Female and Male Life expectancy difference in Latvia[39]

Introduction

In Latvia, the life expectancy of the population older than 65 is lower than the average data in other EU countries. According to the EU statistics of 2009, a man at the age of 65 could expect to live another 13.4 years, and a woman at the age of 65 could live another 18.2 years. In Europe, a man at the age of 65 could expect to live another 17,2 years, and a woman at the age of 65 could live 20.7 years (CSP EU – SILC a).

In Latvia, 45 % of the population older than 65 consider their health as "bad" or "very bad". The limitations in daily activity due to health reasons increases for the people over 65. Only 33 % of the people have not faced limitations in daily activity at home, work or rest time due to *health* reasons.

The research about income and life conditions reflects the data about the retired people (26 %) who do not go to the doctor when facing medical problems. The elderly people mention that the visit to the doctor was too expensive. The people who are 65-94 years old drink herbal tea (39 %), but one third chooses preventive visits to the doctor. The same age group uses food supplements (14 %). Medical gymnastics is used by 3 % of the elderly people, but 1 % inure themselves to cold (CSP EU – SILC b).

Men to women ratio in analysing data on their participation in projects

Data analysis on the Internet (Uzmanību, seniori nāk mācīties, 2008) provides an interesting information on men's and women's participation in projects justifying the data mentioned before. These data are very similar when analysing statistics of various cities in Latvia that are presented in the table below. Project seminars were organised for people from social risk groups, the unemployed, and the disabled with an aim to develop their motivation and self-confidence and their further involvement in the labour market.

Conclusions

Social problems related with the economic crisis in Latvia and the high unemployment rate cause a need in many men and women to overcome a psychological

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TABLE 10. RELATION OF MAN AND WOMAN FOR PARTICIPATION IN LATVIAN PROJECTS.

City/ region	Number of participants	Women	Men
Valka	21	17	4
Priekule	20	19	1
Varaklani	23	22	1
Plavinas	25	20	5
Balvi	20	13	7
Preili	20	20	-
Malnava	20	16	4
Amata region	20	18	2
Jaunsati parish	20	18	2

barrier, take courses, get away from the usual environment, attend counselling with a psychologist, get rid of the inferiority complex, be aware of his/her abilities and know how to present himself/herself in different life situations.

However, the statistics show that Latvian men do not show any initiative to participate in motivational programs or a variety of projects and other activities. Often members of a project expect to obtain new knowledge; rarely they want to learn something new, or set in motion. Women are more enterprising in Latvia; they dare to start their own business using a modicum, for example, renewing own business and offering sewing services, joining driving instructors' training courses, etc.

Of course, these statistics are connected with the fact that there are more women than men in Latvia.

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MODELS

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4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we can find a theoretical, global and general introduction of the non-formal and informal education of seniors citizens not only in the partners projects countries but also a small introduction to the different schools and practices in Europe.

We will find some examples of good practice in the use of non-formal education for seniors in order to improve their quality of life. It is worth to read this section in order to realise the scale of the seniors problems and for policy-makers, managers, and teachers to pay attention to be able to develop a range of services related to seniors education in such a way to promote their activity, independence, healthy lifestyle and at the same time take advantage of their knowledge and experience.

The problems faced by the older people are numerous and complex. They have a right to expect the attention, support and kindness from the government, NGOs, and especially their families. The most painful for the elderly are cases of reluctance, refusal, omission or the other forms of humiliation due to the sole reason that the final say belongs to a young person, uncomprehending the aging process. Such a behaviour cannot be underestimated, as early as kindergarten children and then youth in school need to learn fuller acceptance of old age. If young people understand what mechanisms they are subject to, and how they can modify the conscious behaviour, it will weaken the subconscious fear of old age, both their own and that of other people.

UN General Secretary - Nobel Peace Prize laureate of 2001 at the Second World Assembly on Ageing Society said: "Trees over time become stronger and extend to the river. Similarly, the wisdom and experience of people are deeper and broader with ageing. Therefore, older people should be respected and treated as the wealth of society". Everyday challenges provoke adult people to learn continuously.

Senior citizens, who are usually no longer professionally active, are nowadays in a similar life situation. To an adult specificity, the most corresponding is an informal or a non-formal education. However, it does not mean that an adult citizen cannot participate in a formal education. The problem of senior citizens' education can also be analysed from a different perspective, in which elderly people become informal teachers for the others.

4.2. FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION[40]

Education of the elderly is a must, as it leads to improvement of the quality of their lives, influences their self-esteem, their feeling of accomplishment and self-realisation, while providing the younger generations with the opportunity to take advantage of the experiences of the seniors. Useful work and non-personal interests are the two main elixirs extending one's youth to over the age of sixty.

Currently, in the education of the elderly, we may observe a transformation from its organised forms (which share is reduced with age) to the less formalised ones, departing from education towards self-education, from centralised solutions to the more dispersed educational practice.

Non-formal Education

Participation in education outside the formal system covers all organised educational activities that do not meet the definition of school education, most of the time, they are not provided through formal educational institutions. It applies to all types of further education and training outside the school system in which the person participated after leaving the formal education system. The non-formal education, unlike in the case of formal education, does not changes in the level of education. Such instruction is carried out usually in the form of courses, training, tutorials (could be done in the workplace or outside it), seminars, conferences or lectures, to which the respondent volunteered and attended.

In this type of education we can place the Universities of the Third Age. Here private lessons (e.g. foreign languages) can also be included, as well as distance

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40. Responsible for this study are Luis Ochoa Siguencia , and the members of the research team of the Jan Dlugosz University in Czestochowa.

education, which takes place via snail mail, e-mail or any electronic media (e.g. computer, video, DVD).

Outside the formal education system, education usually leads to the development, expansion and acquisition of skills in different areas of professional, social and cultural development. In contrast to non-formal learning, formal education should take place through the lecturer, instructor, teacher or coach and lead to a diploma or degree.

In the non-formal education, classes can be taken out of the education centre or in an educational centre but the course is for improvement or training qualifications and may lead to skills needed in society (e.g., self-defense course) or for personal benefits, their own intellectual development or hobbies like: hobbies such as cooking classes, lectures in the history of art, modeling classes.

Informal Education

Informal education is the independent learning in order to obtain knowledge or training skills. Self-study in contrast to the formal and non-formal education should take place without the participation of the teacher. This kind of training is also the organised form of education outside of school and after-school (not to be taken into account courses, training courses and lectures with an instructor).

Informal learning (independent study) may be considered expedient, but it is less organised and may include, for example, events related to education or activities that occur within the family, workplace and in the daily life of the person in the context of education led by the family and society.

The methods used for self-education are:

- using the help of family members, friends, co-workers, for example: the use of advice, someone watching the performance of some tasks, consulting another person,
- use of printed materials - it should be understood to use literature, published earlier in the traditional - paper form (books scripts, professional press, such as 'Legal newspaper') to raise awareness. People reached these materials on their own initiative and it was not a part of the curriculum for the course, recommended by the teacher / instructor (that was not a part of the homework),
- use of computer programs and networking opportunities of Internet – means use through your Internet connection (on-line) with different types of guides,

books, trade press, language courses etc.
- use of educational programs broadcast by television and radio,
- guided tour of the museum,
- visits to research centres, such as libraries, combined with the use of their information resources.

4.3. EUROPEAN MODELS

French model[41]

The strategy to promote the elderly people learning is one of the priorities of education system in France. It points to the fact of creative use of leisure time, the initiation into the new areas of knowledge, active participation in the culture, meeting the people who share common interests or building the social contacts area, especially for lonely people. High social awareness that the third stage of life is valuable and characterised by a desire for knowledge and skills, enhances the interest of seniors in their own education for pleasure.

In France, the first University of the Third Age (UTA) was established in 1973 at the University of Social Sciences in Toulouse, and its originator was Pierre Vellas (Vellas 1977), professor of international law. That was the time when a rapid aging process of the population in Europe and generally in the world began. On the university students' initiative, the idea of opening the schools for the other age groups, also for seniors, came up. Then the project was started, in which young people had to contact adults and elderly in the several fields of studies, while they could share their life and professional experience. Thus this university mission was permanent education, culture creation activity and intergenerational integration. The movement launched by Pierre Vellas posed three main tasks for the Universities of the Third Age:

- Firstly, its intellectual and administrative capacities should be used for the further education of the elderly.
- Secondly, it should be an institution conducting the gerontological research in the interest of elderly.

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41. Responsible for this part are Małgorzata Piasecka and the members of the research team of the Jan Dlugosz University in Czestochowa.

- Thirdly, it should allow for cultural exchange between the generations and participation in the geriatric prevention.[42]

The movement of the Universities of the Third Age (UTA) developed and evolved very fast in France. The next emerging universities, following the example of the first one, have developed similar / parallel curricula, however, often assuming the different names. These include: Intergenerational University (UIA-université inter âge), University of the Leisure Time (UTL - université du temps libre), University of Culture and Leisure (UCL-université et loisirs culture), the Popular University (UP – université populaire) (Le Figaro), The Open University (RO – université ouverte), etc (Caradec 2005). Currently, the idea of learning in the French Universities of the Third Age, in the past described as segregated one, changed into the concept of the University for Every Age (ATA-Université Tous Ages). This idea of the university for all age groups contributes to the broadly defined and desired intergenerational exchange (Halicki 2001).

The characteristic feature of the French model is a high level of didactic and research activities combined with diversity of organizational forms: from the full integration in the university, across the close cooperation with the university, to the independence.[43] UTAs in France create the autonomous institutes, university's Continuing Education Centres, or the associations that are involved formally or informally with the university. In addition, the associations connect universities in the network and coordinate their work with the animators of social life. For example, the following are such associations which practice UTA in France:[44]

- the French Association of Universities of the Third Age (UFUTA), founded in 1981, in 1993 changed its name to the French Association of Universities for Every Age;
- the International Association of Universities of the Third Age (AIUT), the ideal place for exchange of experiences, analysis and research promotion;
- the French Popular Universities Association, a member of the European Association of Education for Adults (EAEA), comprises in its network the most of Popular Universities and Leisure Time Universities.

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42. Gralon.net, Popular Universities have their own tradition and specificity : L'Universitépopulaireeuropéenne : des cours pour toushttp://www.gralon.net/articles/enseignement-et-formation/universite/article-l-universite-populaire-europeenne---des-cours-pour-tous-4833.htm#presentation-de-l-universite-populaire-europeenne-
43. Le figaro, http://sante.lefigaro.fr/social/personnes-agees/universites-troisieme-age/quest-ce-que-cest
44. UTA practices in France, example: http://www.uta-vannes.org/index.php/cours; http://www.paris-sorbonne.fr/nos-formations/l-universite-inter-a

UTA students have a wide selection of systematic initial and advanced courses. They participate in a variety of lectures, seminars and conferences dedicated to the current issues. Universities offer classes for the creation of culture, natural history, cooking, physical activities as well as memory training and art workshops. In their studies offer they also provide visits of museums and other cultural institutions in the country, and also educational trips to foreign countries.

This is a general outline of the current educational offer; however, there are some slight differences depending on the region specificity and the expectations of local candidates. The autonomous Student Government plays a large role in the development of the curriculum concept and evaluation process of university activities. UTA propose the registration in September and October, but a lot of students enrol during the whole year. You can register via Internet or in person, completing the card of affiliation card.. The activities of the universities are funded by fees of their members, subsidies from government funds and from sponsors. Nowadays the membership fees of participants become increasingly important in UTA financing. Over three hundred Universities of the Third Age currently operate in France.[45]

Besides UTA, in France there are other types of non-formal and informal education of seniors, such as distance courses, the legalisation of knowledge, radio and video culture (U3A). However, they are not so popular as Universities of the Third Age.

English model

The idea of UTA came to Great Britain in 1981. The British model, also called Cambridge model, was based on self-help and mutual aid of listeners. The main features of this model are

- lack of the universities support,
- self-help as a main learning method, no distinction between students and lecturers.

Seniors themselves organise activities using their own knowledge and experience. The emphasis is put on experiment and group teaching.

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45. Possibilites de reprises d'études pour seniors (panorama) http://www.generali.fr/cote-pratique/guide/guide-placements/guide-reprise-etudes-senior/ges/onglet-1-3312 ; http://temps-ibre.unistra.fr/

The British call this model as "intellectual democracy", where you can be both a student and the teacher. This model is supposed to encourage helping through the volunteering.

Therefore, the British UTA concept is different from the French one – in the French UTA mainly academics teach, whereas the British is based on mutual assistance of the members who are simultaneously teachers and students.

At the core of the functioning of the British universities is the principle as stated by Matalkiewicz (2003):

> The University of the Third Age should focus people who undertake education and help the other learn. Those who teach should be encouraged to learn, and those who learn should also teach or otherwise support the functioning of institution. UTA curriculum should be as wide as its the human and financial resources allow. Remuneration shall not be paid to any member of the University for teaching and other supporting activity.

In Great Britain, a UTA can actually be established by anybody. There are both universities counting a few hundred members and small ones,, numbering from a dozen to several dozen members. These latter usually function in the smaller towns. The educational offer of universities is varied: there the academic subjects are taught, but also carried out practical activities. The program is mainly dependent on students' interests and their skills.

Some universities collaborate with the high schools, but most of them remain completely independent learning centres of the elderly, fulfilling besides the cognitive functions also the integration and therapeutic capabilities. British UTA audience are primarily women, retired, with secondary education or higher, representing the middle class.

British UTA created the program called SCE (Standing Committee for Education). Its purpose is coordination of British universities activities and information exchange between their students, which takes place mainly through the Internet. The specific objectives of the program, among others are:

- gathering of educational materials for students: cassettes, slides, CD,
- editing a magazine for UTA students - newsletter entitled Sources
- organising the studies for people interested in the selected topic, which is enabled by contacting via the Internet to the people with similar interests, organising the on-line learning (u3a.org).

In Great Britain in 2002 there were 440 UTA groups. They concentrated more than 100 000 members. Many of them brought together more than 1 000 members, 141 universities from 100 to 300 members, and 135 UTA less than 100. In 2009, in Great Britain there were already 870 of UTAs and they concentrated 295 813 audience.

In Ireland[46] this kind of education is realised by means of the national educational movement for the elderly, called the Federation of Active Retirement Association (FARA). There the term UTA is not used. However, the senior educational model is very similar to the British self-help model. FARA members organise the educational, cultural and movement meetings. There are about 80 affiliated associations with a total membership of about 8 000. Most of them operate in the area of Dublin, although in the recent years it has been noticed development of these organisations increasing also in the other parts of the island. The characteristic feature for the development of this Irish movement is the realisation of the *Age links* project created by FARA. The project aims to integrate intergenerationally the children from local schools with older people from the local FARA associations.

4.4. EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Poland[47]

In Poland, part of lifelong learning is defined in the Act of education system as education in schools for adults, as well as getting and extension of general knowledge, skills and qualifications in the forms extracurricular activities (acquisition and replenishment of general knowledge, skills and qualifications, vocational education institutions and centres of practical and training and professional development) by people who have completed compulsory schooling.

Research shows that people in Poland retire several years earlier than it is statistically done in Europe. "The process of population aging is perceived by many as the most important long-term phenomenon of the 20th century in terms of economy and principles of social interaction" (Szukalski 2008). According to the data of the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS), the number of people aged 60-74 is to increase in the years 2008-2030 by 40 %, of those aged 75-84 by 65.6 %, of those

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46. U3A: www.u3a.org.uk
47. Responsible for this part are Gertruda Wieczorek and the members of the research team of the Jan Dlugosz University in Czestochowa.

aged 85+ by 90 %, and the number of people aged 100 will increase by 253 %. In 2010, 25 % of the elderly in Poland were aged 80+.

The aging of the society caused increased interest in the issue, development of the field of gerontology, including its specific fraction of pedagogical gerontology. Gerontology, supported by pedagogy, determines a more comprehensive perception of the issues, as it develops knowledge about the elderly, not only from medical perspective, but, furthermore, presents the possibility of full application of the achievements and output of pedagogy. Over time, education and teaching transform into self-learning, self-improvement, self-education and self-accomplishment of people. As professor J. Homplewicz defines, pedagogical gerontology is "a pedagogy of needs and abilities of the elderly in the face of their reality, from which they depart. Pedagogical gerontology is the appeal of not only the 21st century, but also of the entire humanism, with which we are to reach also the elderly" (Homplewicz 2012).

The elderly are perceived nowadays, in the age of the "cult of youth", as people incapable of an independent and meaningful life, alienated, treated with compassion and often socially discriminated against. B. Synak even claims that "never has the world been so allied against the older generation as it is now, and never has the social standing of an old person been so low" (Synak 2000).

However, achieving a status of a senior should not necessarily be associated with social degradation. One may prepare for the old age through modifying their view of oldness and quality of post-retirement life. Factors affecting the perception of the elderly life quality include, inter alia, diverse positive effects of late life learning. These include:

- maintaining good health, coping better with everyday challenges,
- accepting more responsibility for one's own life,
- increased independence from others,
- better use of one's own resources,
- development of reflectiveness (self-awareness),
- following the development of science and technology,
- expanding one's knowledge of the modern world,
- learning one's rights and appreciating one's role in the society.

The conducted research shows also that 87 % of the surveyed undertake physical activity of varying intensity, while a mere 10 % declare engagement in intellectual activity, 36 % of those questioned declare being socially active, and only 4 % undertake all forms of activity (Gębska-Kuczerowska 2002).

Although it appears more difficult for the seniors to focus their attention, to learn the new things and remember new terms, it turns out that experience, previously gained knowledge and maturity are often helpful in drawing the correct conclusions (in particular, in situations where intuitive assessment plays an important role), making the right choices, making rational decisions, better planning, etc. It happens, unfortunately, all too seldom, that the intellectual potential and professional experience of the seniors are considered valued resources for employers, who, appreciating their qualities (including sense of responsibility and loyalty), employ them as mentors for the younger staff.

However, the elderly, most often, find it difficult to (re)enter the job market. Surveys show that as much as 29 % of people under the age 60 intend to undertake paid jobs after they reach retirement age, while, in reality, a mere 10 % of people do work after they reach the aforementioned age (this may be further broken down into 5 % of those working on a full-time basis, 3 % on a part-time basis, and 2 % performing casual work). This may be evidence of social withdrawal of the elderly (Wadołowska 2010).

Marginalisation of the senior citizens in Poland is further reinforced by, inter alia, their low activity in terms of demanding their rights and privileges, limited access to information, being ignored by the media, no real interest in the problems of the elderly, attitudes towards oldness and a negative stereotype of the old age in Poland (Rejman 2012).

It is easy to explain to oneself the unwillingness to continue education or self-development. Discussion on the factors hindering the decision to participate in educational programs includes such elements as conviction of one's own social inferiority, fear of derision on the part of others, fear of the unknown, unwillingness to attend school or to learn, shortage of financial resources, physical and mental conditions, uncertainty surrounding of learning, objections on the part of the family, no conditions for education, inaccessibility of educational institutions or their not meeting the expectations of the elderly.

It is doubtless, however, that there are seniors who do wish to learn. There is a direct link between the level of education, having clearly defined interests, current activity we show at reaching the old age, and the willingness to continue education. The higher the level of the above-mentioned factors, the stronger the motivation to undertake further forms of education. Most often, such people decide to continue education in its organised form when they realise that the knowledge they may acquire could help them in solving personal, social and professional issues, or that it may give satisfaction.

Motivations for older people to commence further education include, inter alia, wish to acquire new skills and information, as well as their improvement, preparation for work in a new position, productive use of spare time, wish to meet new, interesting people, achieving greater efficiency in performed duties, wish to change one's financial standing, expected social or professional promotion, personality development, improvement of interpersonal bonds, developing physical fitness, wish to adjust one's education with reference to the others, as well as attempt to increase one's self-esteem.

Spain

In Spain, education for senior learners has been essentially provided by three very different groups of institutions. Each of them implements educational programmes following different models.

Universities

Since 1991, almost all Spanish universities have created a programme targeted to senior citizens (over 55). The teachers are part of the university personnel, and the spaces (classrooms) are also on the same campus; in all cases, the senior programmes constitute an integral part of the university, equivalent to departments. The qualification of the staff working in those departments is very high as they are specialised in different areas of seniors' education (gerontology, pedagogy, psychology, etc.)

There are slight differences in the way each university implements its programme. Most commonly, a formal structure of subjects is offered to all learners each academic year. These subjects are specifically designed and tailor-made for seniors. In a few cases, a completely different structure is offered where seniors can freely choose the subjects and attend courses together with younger students. Senior learners obtain a certificate and a diploma after they finish their studies, which is recognised by the university although it is not valid for official accreditation in a national or international level.

Universities also frequently include extracurricular activities that enable seniors to continue learning more informally, although this has never been the main objective of this kind of institution.

Because of the formality of the universities, the senior university programmes as a whole, and the subjects and activities in particular, are designed following strict

rules to ensure the pedagogy is adequate for seniors' and social needs, to guarantee effectiveness and efficiency, and to include quality evaluation. These programmes are also used as laboratories by research groups for testing and innovating.

The subjects and activities offered in the senior universities mainly come from the humanities, but a wide spectrum of subjects can be found, depending on the faculties and schools in each university.

At present, 43 universities with a senior educational programme are linked through a national network called AEPUM (http://www.aepumayores.org/) and are supported by the Ministry of Education and the National Social Services Institute.

Associations

Institutions offering specifically designed activities for the elderly are also common. They do not have an education programme, but they create environments for informal learning where seniors do activities they enjoy: dancing, chess, theatre, some kind of handcrafts, or physical exercise. These kinds of activities are offered by a wide variety of institutions: adult associations, retirement homes, town councils or cultural associations. Of particular note are the "Third age classrooms" (Aulas de la tercera edad),

Centres for Adult Education

In the official Spanish education framework, adult education centres offer a second chance for anybody interested in continuing to learn any specific subject such as languages, ICT, professional training, etc. Although these courses are mainly job-oriented, they are open to all ages, although they do not usually offer specific courses for the elderly.

Italy

The first Italian UTA was initiated by A. Giusepe, psychologist in Turin, in 1975. In the late 80's, in Italy there were already more than 70 institutions affiliated with the National Association of Universities of the Third Age (UNITRE). Italian universities assume the realisation of French UTA model mainly trying to activate students intellectually and culturally. Students of Italian UTAs pay dues, and the only criterion for membership is reaching the age of 30 years. Universities affiliated in UNITRE are marked out by two categories of students: so-called free students not obliged to participate in the classes, and the real audience that might receive a

diploma of course completion at the end of the year (if they have at least 90 % attend-ance). UNITRE is supported by the volunteer activities of its members

Besides the affiliated universities in UNITRE, in Italy there operate not af-filiated universities, considerably internally varied in terms of structure and form of classes. They offer their students the classes in form of lectures, going to the cinema and theatre, exercises, they conduct research with students participation, promote the intergenerational integration.[48]

In Italy the older people are surrounded by special care from the state authori-ties. Educational institutions organise educational projects for this group of people. Their main objectives of the Italian education programme for adults are: local com-munity development, promotion of individual and intellectual development. Espe-cially important is the affiliate and integrative function as well as intergenerational integration. Therefore, Italian UTAs focus relatively young people, at the age over 30 years, and the people aged 60 years and over represent only 40 % of students (Czerniawska 1996).

Finland

In Finland, the first University of the Third Age (UTA) was founded in 1985 in Jyväskylä, and six months later a similar programme was launched at the University of Helsinki. At present, Finnish-language teaching is provided by nine universities under the name of the University of the Third Age. The Åbo Akademi University co-ordinates university-level education for Swedish-speaking elderly people in Finland. The activities of the UTA are coordinated nation-wide by a national advisory board.

The University of the Third Age provides the elderly with current research-based information and offers opportunities for self-directed non-degree studies. The University of the Third Age is open to all elderly people regardless of their previous education, professional backgrounds or independent studies. Studying has no lower or upper age limit.

The activities of the University of the Third Age include multidisciplinary lecture series, seminars, courses, IT teaching, distance teaching, online teaching, research, pub-lishing, study groups and study-related travel. Activities are based on lifelong learning, academic teaching and opportunities to participate in planning. Teaching is also provid-ed in cooperation with summer universities, adult education centres and other partners

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48. Italia-Universita della Terza Eta: www.worldu3a.org/worldu3as/uta-italia.htm

in altogether about 70 Finnish localities, and also in some countries outside Finland. During recent years, the University of the Third Age has had about 17 000 students a year, and the number of participants is constantly increasing. Among the students, some 75 % are women. The age and the educational background of the participants show a great variation, although most of them belong to the younger age group.

In **Sweden**, the first UTA was founded in 1979 in Uppsala.

Denmark has a long tradition of adults education, including also the special education of elderly at the universities Danish UTA are mainly associated with universities, but managed and run by volunteers, they belong to the institutions known as folk universities.

Also in **Norway** the UTAs work: in 1989, a council coordinating their activities the National Advisory Committee was formed, which announced that UTAs are the part of the university. In 1991 the Ministry of Education acknowledged that these institutions belong to the open universities system (www.worldu3a.org).

Bulgaria

In comparison with many other EU countries there is no established University of Third Age (UTA) type format in Bulgaria. Nevertheless, there has been a trend for increasing the interest of seniors in attending formal educational institutions. To a great extent this is due to the established contacts with UTAs in other European countries, but, still, when it comes to the 50+ age group the focus remains on adult (including VET) and not on senior education.

Various public and private educational institutions, community centres and NGOs, all outside the third sector, have developed non-formal and informal learning programmes, which are becoming more and more popular among seniors. Recent developments aim to introduce more flexible forms of learning (including e-learning, extra-mural learning, part-time learning, short courses, etc.) in the non-formal and informal learning though they are not officially recognised by most institutions of secondary education level and universities as validated competences and skills.

The changes introduced and the supplements in the Higher Education Act now establish a legislative base for the recognition of non-formal learning outcomes, which is seen as a prerequisite for improving senior education provision and quality, and validation of skills and competences acquired, and in general, for promoting lifelong learning. As stated in the 2007 Inventory Report, it contributes to the achievement and "…compliance with the common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning. Yet practical implementation of

this requires further action on the development of methodical documentation and handbooks to be carried out, corresponding legal entities to be defined, and for the validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning to be publicized among the potential users…" (Nikolova 2010, p.9).

Latvia

According to the results of the adults (25 - 64 years old) education survey, 84% of population participated in the non-formal education, as it was associated with their work. This trend indicates that the main attention in education in Latvia is paid to improvement of job skills and competencies. It is not interesting for seniors who have taken retirement. There is still no governmental program for ensuring seniors' non-formal education in Latvia. In other EU countries it is done by supporting University of Third Age. Seniors' non-formal and informal education is generally ensured by such municipal institutions as retirees' day centres, social security institutions, collectives of creative expression (dance, choirs, handicrafts) supported by local governments. There are municipal social service support centres in Latvia that give people free social services and leisure activities. The aim is to improve people's quality of life. Day-care centres provide social care and social rehabilitation services, development of social skills and education for people who have reached the age of receiving pension. The main task of the social service is to render social assistance services, promoting self-help and persons' involvement in public life, as well as contributing to their sense of responsibility to themselves and their families. Social services include social care that aims to ensure stable quality of life to a person, who cannot do it by himself/herself because of the age or functional disorder, and social rehabilitation that aims to prevent or reduce invalidity, disability, dependency and social consequences in person's life, caused by other factors. This indicates that seniors' education activities are primarily implemented as social support events.

Great contribution to informal senior education is provided by non-governmental organisations. Latvian Pensioners' Federation is founded as an organisation unifying senior's interests. It brings together 138 local organizations. It is a non-political, non-governmental organisation that represents seniors' interests in a governmental level, as well as implements a variety of projects, including the educational ones. Seniors' associations are established in almost every city and region. These associations raise funds from local governments, European projects and private financing and implement different types of educational activities.

Hungary

Conceivably also as a result of the successful year of Active Ageing 2012, in Hungary there are more and more initiatives for providing diverse senior education and cultural programmes, though the focus is still on adult education in order to protect or offer jobs for people aged 45+. Based on the model of western-European countries, in September 2012 a Third Age University (under the direction of the Eötvös Loránd University) in Hungary officially opened its gates for elderly people who would like to continue or widen their knowledge through the lectures offered by the Faculty of Science, Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology and Faculty of Arts.

Besides, so far the senior education providers in Hungary have been mainly community centres, local governments, NGO associations, private or public institutions, and clubs for the elderly. The majority of the offered and more popular course types are non-formal and informal courses which are more flexible in time and students are in closer relation with the teachers. Unfortunately the participation rate on these courses is still quite low and really concentrated to the capital. Another restraining factor that many seniors in Hungary struggle with financial problems, so in their case "self-realisation" certainly takes a back seat.

About the validation of formal and informal learning in Hungary, based on a recent report,[49] we found the following conclusion: "In summary there is no nationwide validation system based on uniform principles and procedures; however, several isolated validation procedures have been in use for a long time. At present major development projects are being implemented in the framework of the New Hungary Development Plan although very few of these go beyond the boundaries of the various training sectors. Hungary is also characterised by simultaneous and somewhat congested development of several preconditions that would be important for a validation system."

Germany

German UTAs mostly are connected to the universities. The curriculum are developed by university professors and the teaching methods are tailored to the specific needs of the elderly. In Germany there are three types of facilities for seniors.

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49. http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2011/77461.pdf

They serve an educational and integrative function. Such an institutions include the popular universities, training centres, academies for seniors and higher educational schools open for all age groups.

In **Switzerland** the first UTA was founded in Geneva by initiative of Prof. Dr. Geinsendorf. In the French-speaking part of the country, there are UTAs, and in the German-speaking part the universities for seniors. The latter had to exist in frame of high school, which developed the form and content of education, and its task was to familiarise the students with specific areas of knowledge. Students could continue their education at the folk university, as well as the regular university studies. In turn, in UTAs the rules regarding the age limits are not applied. The classes were conducted in form of courses and seminars as well as, based on the French UTA model, various research projects were carried out with the students' participation.

Senior education in **Austria** is neither based on the French UTA model, nor on the British model. At the end of the 70s, the universities facilitated the seniors to attend lectures, usually as non-regular audience. Also the seniors without secondary school certificate could start the studies. Women 40+ years old and men 45+ years old are targeted as senior students. The UTAs in Austria are actually the associations of senior students studying at regular universities. These associations are representing the Austrian senior students (Halicki 2000).

In the **Netherlands**,the academic model of senior education was created in the 1980s. Higher Education for the Elderly (Hogar Onderwijs Voor Oudern) is a model of general academic education of seniors. The institutions included in the HOVO have different names. The first facility was established at the University of Groningen by initiative of CJ Tempelman in 1986. In the years 1986 - 1989, the educational facilities for the elderly were organised at nine universities. In 1994, there were 21, and in 2002 already 25. Most of them were organised at universities; however, a noticeable trend are the universities based on the British model of self-help e.g. in Roosendaal. Dutch universities implement a rigorous academic education standard. In many universities, special education programmes for seniors are realised that provide a degree in the specific area of the particular area of knowledge. However, it is increasingly discussed if these academic educational programmes should be more liberal, and the programme range expanded and adapted to the multitude of seniors' needs (Halicki 2000).

4.5. PRACTISES

The examples of the non-formal education which have recently undergone dynamic development are Universities of the Third Age, workshops, training… In Poland there are about 6 million seniors, but in UTW participate only tens of thousands persons.

Definitely more difficult is to evaluate the participation of older people in informal education. Older people are here in two roles, as a student or as a teacher. In Poland, as in Europe, the disappearance of multi-generational families is noticed. There is no use of the potential of experience. We should return to include grandma and grandpa and their function in family. Kids love grandparents, and grandparents derive joy of life from contact with the children.

There is a need to develop a system that will enable the involvement of seniors to participate in associations, volunteer work and family support. Barriers perceived in the participation of the elderly in education are rather subjective and often are a result of low self-esteem and conviction of reduction in cognitive abilities along with the age progressing. It appears indispensable to prepare an educational offer which would be well adapted to the needs and possibilities of the elderly, otherwise, the issue of social exclusion, and, above all, of the digital divide, will be solved only through the natural process of generation change.

AJD University of the Third Age[50]

Activities conducted at the UTA in Czestochowa deepen seniors' knowledge, give them the opportunity to meet new people, and above all, care for their physical and mental health. The activities also allow seniors to achieve some independence and dignity of the elderly.

1. UTA students eagerly participate in lectures, in particular on literature, history, geography, law, medicine, philosophy, and psychology (some of the seniors, influenced by the lectures, have taken science courses in Philosophy at AJD). Seniors appreciate the commitment of the lecturers (their time and energy which they devote for seniors). Lectures broaden elders' horizons, do not allow for regression, help them in establishing dialogue with young people, families and raise their self-esteem.

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50. Responsible for this part are Urszula Nowacka, Joanna Górna and the members of the research team of the Jan Dlugosz University in Czestochowa.

2. Foreign language lessons (English, German, French, Russian, Italian and more recently Spanish) are extremely popular at the UTA. Language classes are conducted at several levels depending on the advancement level of the audience. It allows seniors to break barriers. Looking at their colleagues, they do not feel inferior. These classes are "open windows to the world" for seniors, they are the realisation of a dream of travelling and establishing contacts in a network with other seniors.

3. Activities in small groups are also very popular at the UTA in Czestochowa. There are workshops, sections or units dealing with specific topics In particular there are: bridge team, the team 'nutritionists', needlework section, the photo team. During these meetings seniors develop their hobby, which until now they could not pursue due to the lack of time. This allows them not only to develop in a specific area, but also to feel the satisfaction of shared passion and joy resulting with common work.

4. Seniors attending to the UTA are very interested in computer and Internet courses which prevent digital exclusion of seniors, provide access to information, expand opportunities to express themselves, to show their own opinion on the thematic forums (what is also associated with an increase of self-esteem). Computer courses make possible to feel themselves a part of the information society.

5. Very important kind of courses at the UTA in Czestochowa are different forms of physical activities of seniors. Undoubtedly it is much easier to overcome reluctance to exercise when elder students are among colleagues from UTA. Seniors point out that it requires a lot of motivation from them and strength to start taking care of their bodies condition. Exercises are conducted as a recreational activity - general development gymnastics, swimming, wrestling, yoga, rhythmic and dance activities. It is a recipe for long youth, it slows down the process of aging, it is a chance to the maintenance of their independence and capacity to make decisions about their life. We should not forget about the forms of exercises such as walking outside, nordic walking, walking tours (called by our seniors, 'Trampers'). The activities take place at any time of the year - in rain or frost as well as heat. Especially Nordic Walking is a safe form of physical activity and recently very appreciated by seniors. This form relieves the joints and spine as also brings our seniors extra pleasure of the communing with nature. Common walks allow seniors also to explore the region - the Polish Jura, watching the sunsets together, fires often combined with common singing and dancing. It is important for UTW students to take these kinds of activities, because they are taking place among the benevolent people. They have a sense of security and acceptance. This makes their life full of positive energy and joy.

6. Dancing is an excellent therapeutic form of activity - as the seniors defined. Many seniors at our UTA want to check themselves in the competition in the sport

struggles. Every year, representatives of the UTA in Czestochowa take part in the National Olympic Sports "Third age to start". First of all, participation and earning medals motivate seniors to daily physical activity.

7. We should also mention integration activities, which seniors assign high priority. These meetings give the opportunity to spend time together, share common experiences of everyday joys, sorrows and concerns, and seek solutions to difficult problems for them. Knowledge contained in such meetings often turn into long-term friendships, fulfilling life outside. These are meetings such as Christmas, Easter, having a festive setting. Representatives of younger generations, as the seniors' grandchildren, are invited to some meetings. They bring a lot of freshness and youthful joy. Such meetings develop intergenerational relationships. The presence of a vocal group of our UTW seniors "Uniwerek" enrich meetings.

8. Going to the theatre, museums, music performances (opera, operetta).

9. UTA students have not only open minds, but also hearts. Annually, they organise lotteries that allow Czestochowa raise money for the hospice. Students want to help and identify with the problems of these people (often the same age as they are). In addition, UTA in Czestochowa cooperates with many institutions dealing with the issue of seniors, especially in the region.

The awareness that accompanies our seniors that they can do everything and at the same time they do not have to do everything raises their spirits and gives them strength. Seniors participate with pleasure in all classes at the UTA in Czestochowa and there are very rare cases of resignation from participation in classes. In recent years the problem is the lack of places and huge number of people who declare their willingness to participate in the University Third Age.

Seniors can join the UTA only when a place becomes available, there is a limit of the places for the seniors. According to our seniors, active aging is the using of many opportunities arising from longer life, both in the field of physical activity, social, and professional. They emphasise, what we should not forget, that it all helps not only to improve the quality of their lives, but also bring many benefits to the whole society.

University of Thirds Age, at Ursus - Warsaw[51]

The Society of the S. Wojciechowski University of the Third Age, at Warsaw's Ursus district, belongs to group of initiatives which began their activities in

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2003 and are so far working with the J. Grabski Public Library. In 2010, the Warsaw University of Technology took patronage over the ongoing activities in the field of education and the promotion of cultural and social interests of the audience.[52]

UTA activity is based on three basic documents: 1. statute, 2. agreement with the academic, 3 self-accreditation. Directing and supervising the work of the Third Age is engaged in the management and the audit committee and ad hoc committees. The board authorises competences, such as representing and acting on behalf of the Third Age, passing resolutions of membership in national and international organisations, adopt internal regulations and organisational instructions, asset management and fund UTA. And, the purpose of the audit committee includes, among others: control of the current work of the UTA, reporting on the activities of this committee.[53] As part of the agreement with the academic, UTA received support from the educational activities of the Medical University of Warsaw (MUW) in the form of workers' participation in the classroom teaching seniors and invitations to participate in MUW's lectures. Self-accreditation UTA has been confirmed by the Foundation on the University for compliance declaration to raise the level of teaching and the organisation and authority of the UTA building in the scientific community and society (portal.bpursus.waw.pl).

Implementation of basic statutory UTA comes down to education of senior citizens from different fields of science, activating them through participation in various forms of social life, take action to intergenerational solidarity, promote and organise volunteer work for the elderly. This education is a factor in keeping older people active and it is implemented in the form of: 1) lectures (with the humanities, medical, biological, legal), 2) language courses (English, German, Spanish), 3) computer classes, 4) recreation - improve (Nordic walking, swimming, gymnastics, salsa dance, workshops, psychological), 5) seminar, 6) cultural and 7) groups of interest.

The current number of UTA students is 325 people (dated Nov. 2012), aged from 56 to 91 years, with basic and higher education. The primary source of financing for UTA are contributions and dues from members, voluntary contributions and the fee of cost of their own students.[54] However, on its activities UTA also receives a subsidy from the programme:

1) support non-governmental organisations from the Office of the Marshal of Mazowieckie province.

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52. http://portal.bpursus.waw.pl/galleries/328,500,03.jpg
53. http://portal.bpursus.waw.pl/art/uniwersytet-trzeciego-wieku/statut
54. http://bpursus.waw.pl/materialy/utw/sprawozdanie-finansowe-tutw-za-2011.pdf

2) governmental for the Elderly Social Activation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (X. 2012 - 2013).

The UTA's audience positively appraises the classes, emphasising aspects of the enrichment and expansion of previously acquired knowledge, which results in improving their personality and use of knowledge in the field of banking, finance, caring for their own health.

The presented study shows that UTA is an innovative and successfully realised project with non-profit aim, that works in the field of culture, education, health and tourism. It is also a voluntary organisation for elderly people, self-governing and ideologically neutral, at the same time it is seniors practical education that brings positive results. There is indication that the operation consisting in educating UTA seniors is beneficial for them, it may be one of the best forms of activation of the elderly (Schneider 2012).

Observations show that an increasing number of seniors in the towns and villages becomes a challenge due to old age, there is a risk of marginalization and exclusion from the areas of social, political and economic. Thus, the description of good practice for local authorities can provide information as to the most effective way to avoid this.

Seniors' informal learning[55]

"Education is always in relationship with the activity of a man, so the areas of education are consistent with the fields of his active life" (Kargul 2005). The primary function of the activities undertaken by the senior education is gaining more and higher powers, to help in the fulfilment of a personal life. Educational activities undertaken in the course of everyday life help in solving the problems of everyday life, in a reflective interpretation of the life situations in shaping the identity of the individual, in maintaining health.

The areas of informal education, which reveals the activity of the average person are (Kargul 2005):

• Family life
• Professional experience

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[55]. Responsible for this part are Agnieszka Kozerska and the members of the research team of the Jan Dlugosz University in Czestochowa.

- Unpaid work outside home
- Housework
- Leisure and tourism
- Care the body in health and disease
- Social activity (socialising, volunteering, political activity, the operation in cooperatives, clubs, associations)Learning through art
- Morality
- Technology
- Science

An important area of daily life which is connected with the seniors' informal education is the family life. Situations that arise in the family that are new, unexpected, disrupting daily life are especially challenging. They are educational ones.

Another area of informal seniors' education, which is inseparable connected with active aging is a social activity. Social activity of the elderly people can take many forms. This could be, for example, the activities within the charitable organisation, Universities of the Third Age, senior clubs, local communities (including operating at churches and religious associations), trade organisations, self-help activities, a variety of socio-cultural societies or circles of rural areas.

One of the forms of social activities is voluntary. Volunteer work, here, is defined as "unpaid work provided to parties to whom the worker owes no contractual, familial or friendship obligations" (Wilson 1997).

Seniors' informal education is often supported by various institutions and organisations.

In the last years, the local governments in Poland joined in efforts to support the educational activity of seniors and, first of all, the non-governmental sector. Senior clubs organise a variety of leisure activities, cultural activities, physical, social, development of pro-social attitudes, cultural, moral, clubs are in the range, for example, lectures, forums, hobby circles, seminars, educational courses, common participation in cultural events and creative amateur activities. Senior clubs also exist on the Internet,, such a www.klub.senior.pl.

Another example of informal education are sanatoriums, where animators are hired for free time and encourage residents to spend time actively.

4.6. CONCLUSION

Longlife learning means formal, 'non-formal' and informal learning from childhood to old age involving the formation of knowledge, skills and the ability to use them in private, civic and professional life. Its subject are all people as actors - this highlights the importance of genuine equality of opportunity and quality in learning.

In this chapter we presented a global and general introduction of of non-formal and informal education of senior citizens, the English and French System of education adapted to the Universities of the Third Age, and some good practices in the use of non-formal and informal education for seniors in order to improve their quality of life.

In this part we tried to present an approach of the seniors educational reality in order to realise the scale of the seniors problems and pay attention the policy-makers, managers, teachers to be able to develop a range of services related to seniors education in such a way as to promote their activity, independence, healthy lifestyle, and at the same time take advantage of their knowledge and experience.

Policy conducted currently in Europe to promote active aging as a way of life is considered as a remedy in the event of the challenges posed by the aging European society. "Active aging is the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participations and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age".[56] To maintain good health, seniors must make their lifestyles more active. The aging of the population is also a challenge for social welfare and their financial stability. It is a well-assumed premise that the policy of promoting active aging can help to prevent intergenerational conflict arising from the demographic shifts we are experiencing.[57]

The concept of active aging is connected with broadly defined concept of education. It is especially connected with informal education. One of the important area of informal education is the using of information technology. Seniors are a group at risk of social exclusion due to lack of access or poor access to information technology, which is present in almost every area of daily life (offices, banks, shopping, sources of information, communication and social). Without access to IT it is difficult to participate in social life. In addition to the lack of motivation and skills, digital exclusion may be compounded by the different types of disability, which often af-

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56. World Health Organisation. 'Active Ageing - A Policy Framework', A contribution of the World Health Organization to the Second United Nations World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, Spain, April 2002, p.12 http://whqlibdoc. who.int/hq/2002/who_nmh_nph_02.8.pdf
57. ibidem

fect the elderly (e.g., ophthalmologic problems). Thus, it is necessary to take action related to the inclusion of the elderly to the digital society, to take action related to the use of media and understanding of media messages by seniors . The concept of active aging is also related to seniors' learning by social activity. Social activity of the elderly people can take many forms.

This could be, for example, the activities within the charitable organisation, Universities of the Third Age, senior clubs, local communities (including operating at churches and religious associations), trade organizations, self-help activities, a variety of socio-cultural associations. An important area of daily life which is connected with the seniors' informal education is a family life. Grandparents who actively contribute to families' well-being and provide care and support to grandchildren benefit from an enhanced sense of purpose in life and of family identity, even when they feel emotionally drained by childcare demands (Glaser 2010). We should therefore take measures to encourage young people to support seniors with their families, to involve them in the activities associated with family life.

4.7. EXPERIENCES AND GOOD PRACTISES

Project "Keeping Fit in Later Life"

Introduction

Kifli- Keeping Fit in Later Life was a 2-year international project funded by the European Union's 'Grundtvig' programme. The project developed innovative training material aimed at older people (working or retired) to help them maintain and improve physical fitness and thus improve their quality of life. The outcomes of the project included a collection of useful exercises, instruction videos, social game-based physical activities, tests and motivational material. The objectives were twofold: 1, inspiring and motivating older people to start or pursue physical exercises, 2, providing hints and tips about how to take physical exercise in a safe but still effective way.

Implementation

The main aim of the project and related activities was to improve physical fitness of the elderly. During the two-year project a complex programme was established in which the voice of the older people was listened to carefully. Older people

were invited to take part in the project activities from a very early stage. Groups were formed whose participants could try out various physical activities offered by local providers (either social centres offering courses, or private trainers showing and marketing their programmes). In this way, intense communication could occur between the various targets: local service providers, facilitators and end users. The informal way of learning and sharing of views and information gave the project a dynamic feeling and channelled all these exchanges into the development of the final outcome. The learning took place on various levels:

1. Informal learning between trainer and older people on the spot:

Older people could try out various activities with professional support and were encouraged to give feedback (either directly to the trainer or indirectly via the project manager/programme organiser) on how they felt about that exercise/sport/intensity level. In this way, the development of the online material and handbook was shaped by their feedback and was not merely a construction of the experts.

2. Informal learning between older people themselves:

In some cases small communities were formed who started to get together and exercise themselves. In this context it was possible to give advice to one another and a kind of peer teaching was initiated.

3. Individual informal learning via ICT:

The online material was developed in such a way that it offered the possibility for individual learning. People could read about the benefits of exercise, what they are advised to do and what is the best way to take physical exercise (why? what? how?).

Conclusion

This informal way of learning offered chances for a lot of interaction which would be more difficult in a formal system. It also welcomed various aspects of the various participants (providers, facilitators and end users) and thus helped to develop final outcomes which reflected multifaceted views. As a spin off, it contributed to the forming of groups, as well as facilitating encounters and engagement in dialogue outside the closed community (e.g. exchanging practices at a mobility in Graz with involvement of representatives of trainers and older people from each country). All in all, it was a kind of informal learning whose benefits reached beyond the aims of the project and also ensured its sustainability.

Project website: http://www.kifli.eu

A proposal for a formal course structure and its potentialities[58]

Introduction

Adult education institutions commonly offer senior citizens some choice in the courses and activities they wish to enrol on. If the institution runs courses in, for instance, philosophy, sociology, history, arts, gerontology and health, learners can choose the ones that most appeal to them and disregard the knowledge areas they find less interesting.

The course structure at the Senior Citizens' University is more formal than this. Although it cannot strictly be considered 'formal' because the courses do not lead to an official degree, 'formal' in this case should be understood as a 'structured' and 'strict', rather than 'non-formal', which in this text is understood to mean 'free choice' and 'variable'.

Offering senior citizens a formal course structure may appear to limit their freedom of choice and oblige them to study subjects they do not like, which can be interpreted as a negative aspect, particularly because they are motivated to enrol on the courses for personal reasons, pleasure or curiosity.

However, this more formal course structure greatly benefits senior learners' Quality of Life (QoL), and it is commonly adopted by seniors' educational pro-grammes in Spanish universities.

Content

The Senior Citizens' University at the Jaume I University began in 1998 with 38 students. From the outset, learners were not given a choice; they registered for a package of 10 subjects, each with 15 hours teaching, a total of 150 classroom hours in one academic year. A three-year degree was established. Now more than 1,000 learners attend one of the three-year courses at the university. The subjects come from the areas of philosophy, psychology, sociology, arts, history, ethics, economics, family, gerontology, citizenship, health, technology, and learning to learn.

First course:

- Philosophy and culture of coexistence
- Adult psycho-social identity

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58. Pilar Escuder Mollon, Universitat Jaume I, Spain.

- Genesis and structure of the family
- The geographical environment: natural and human landscapes
- Justice and law: practical issues
- Europe: significance, history and culture
- Historical heritage of the Valencian[59] people
- Health education
- Writing workshop
- Science, technology and culture
- Socio-cultural promotion: leisure and free time
- Learning network

Second course:

- Introduction to sociology
- Lessons from economics
- Multiculturalism: lifestyles and current conflicts
- Art history
- Cultural roots of the Valencian people
- Major environmental problems of our time
- Citizens' rights and duties
- Medieval history
- Health education and physical activity
- Stress, emotions and wellbeing
- Socio-cultural promotion: active cultural participation
- Study skills and academic organisation

Third course:

- Society and information technology
- Music education
- Contemporary art
- Analysis of literary works and their authors
- Ethics and politics

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59. 'Valencian' is the name that receive the people that live in the region where the SCU is located. 'Castellón' is the official name for this region.

- Saving and investment in households
- Introduction to the Constitution and its framework
- Modern history
- The culture of Castellón and its framework
- Seniors in today's society
- Socio-cultural promotion: learning about our heritage
- Contemporary history
- Research techniques and projects
- Final project

One disadvantage of this structure may be that students feel obliged to take subjects they do not like. In the SCU this problem does not arise however, because as an adult education programme run in a university, it is regarded as normal to enrol for a full academic year (as in a secondary school or for a formal degree) with all the subjects that course entails. Students can also enrol on the optional subjects of language and technology, common to all academic years. They can attend the level best suited to their skills and their specific needs or motivation.

On the other hand, this structure provides great advantages related to the impact on senior learners' QoL, namely:

- The three-year subject content has been carefully designed, aimed to provide senior learners with a basic knowledge of the society in which they live (history, arts), the changes they experience (physically and socially) and the necessary skills to adapt and learn collaboratively (learn by research). This three-year path should be followed completely from beginning to end because all the subjects are important and provide knowledge which senior learners need.
- Learners begin the first academic course in a class with 40-50 other students who will continue through subsequent academic years, enabling links to be forged among learners, and creating networks of support, trust, and friendship, which has significant long-term benefits.
- As all the students know each other, it is easier for the teacher to prepare group work and class discussions and debates. Learners develop a growing capacity to share opinions, express their thoughts and support their ideas. As the group members get to know each other better, even shy or introverted learners gain the confidence to participate.

• This structure does not allow teachers to get to know all the learners well; each teacher only has ten ninety-minute classes with each group. But each course has a tutor, namely a member of staff who acts as a facilitator. Each tutor is assigned to two or three courses. The role of the tutor is to respond to questions about timetables, general course structure or any other administrative issues. But what is more important, tutors are facilitators who encourage the inclusion of all learners and attempt to solve any problems or conflicts that arise in the group.

• As all the learners know each other, and that relationship lasts for three years, it creates a group feeling: everybody feels part of the Senior Citizens' University, but also part of a group, which increases the feeling of inclusion. Other beneficial actions emerge out of this relationship, such as the organisation of parallel social events, extra-curricular activities, or leisure activities. All groups elect two delegates who act as learners' representatives on the learners' board. This learners' board represents all the learners when providing feedback, proposing activities, requesting information or any other suggestion to the Senior Citizens' University Managers.

• Apart from the more formal, classroom-based subjects, all students can take part in academic activities outside the class such as visits to museums, cities, one-day cultural trips, etc. These activities are used to complement the regular classroom-based subjects and although they have an academic purpose, it is fair to say that learners gain a great deal of enjoyment from them, firstly because they have the opportunity to spend time with their classmates in a more informal environment, and secondly, because they discover more about neighbouring cities or cultural sites from a new perspective after having learnt the theory in class.

Recommendations

At the SCU, there are two groups on each of the three courses of the first degree, a total of six groups. When students finish the third course, many want to continue learning and the SCU must respond to this motivation. We offer a choice of four study programmes (similar to a Master's degree in formal higher education), but the subjects are still mandatory. Two of the Master's degrees change every two years. Each Master centres on one topic: history, arts, quality of life, etc.

It can be difficult for some institutions to create such a structured offer for senior learners, which they may not be used to doing, either because senior learners are not used to this kind of formality or because it might not be the main aim of the institution. However, this design has great advantages, and in some cases, certain

attitudes and competences can only be achieved by belonging to a group over a long period, with all that involves. Some of these advantages are:

- An increased sense of belonging to a community with common interests, which also helps to forge new links between people who did not know each other before, and to create a new role for themselves (a new self).
- The pedagogy applied in the classes (participation, discussion and debate) includes those who are usually shy or introverted, and also because they can feel support from the group, their skills of communication and expression develop, and they are more able to defend and support their ideas.
- Regular contact with the same classmates provides fertile ground for social relationships, usually for support, advice and help in a variety of aspects including personal, family or health problems. Although this type of support is not directly facilitated by the SCU (it is not its mission), qualitative interviews have shown that it is very significant for the receiver, and important for the giver. This support is also found in positive activities such as working together on a common project or hobby.
- Acquiring a broad perspective on ideas, problems, opportunities, etc., in other words, learning that can only occur informally, in the corridors, cafeterias, etc.

The SCU also offers extra-curricular activities outside class, such as cultural trips and visits to sites of interest or museums. Optional ICT subjects and language classes are also available, and are open to all students, regardless of the course they are enrolled on. It is much more difficult to create a sense of group belonging in these subjects, because it is the learners themselves who decide which level or ICT tool they wish to register in, but it is fair to say that learners frequently attend extra-curricular activities and enrol in a specific ICT group only because their classmates are also enrolled in that group. This could be regarded as negative: a student enrols on a course despite not being motivated or interested in the subject itself. However, the opposite seems to occur: is a classmate's personal motivation not also a very good reason to learn something new? In this case, classmates are also a reason to continue learning and enjoying the acquisition of new knowledge. Social contact and learning in this environment create a synergy that leads to better quality social relationships and more knowledge that goes beyond the subject itself.

Leisure informal learning in educational programmes[60]

Introduction

We understand leisure as an integral part of an individual's experience and a fundamental human right. Free time is an aspect of human development, predominated by freedom of choice and expression and the freedom to carry out non-utilitarian tasks.

Today, education systems must adapt to the changes that these new times are generating. These changes include a higher life expectancy, and greater personal development through leisure. The family and the environment are also increasingly attuned with the educational situation, enabling educational systems to become more flexible.

Enjoying leisure implies satisfaction with oneself, keeping one's mind active and enjoyment, all of which lead to an enhanced quality of life and greater personal autonomy.

Leisure experiences

Leisure and personal development imply, a priori, freedom and equal opportunities, and the possibility for personal enrichment. Leisure may be defined as time for oneself, time that each person uses effectively and in a rewarding way.

Having opportunities for leisure is a fundamental human right that enhances quality of life as, among other things, it helps to improve personal autonomy in various facets of daily life (physical, functional, cognitive, emotional, social, etc.). Recreational activities are also a way of improving community inclusion in a pleasant way, thereby benefiting their opportunities in other areas.

Leisure can raise quality of life by increasing the degree of satisfaction that a person obtains from the lifestyle imposed by the society in which he or she lives. It is also related to the concept of well being. The potential availability of free time today is now considered as another variable with which to measure quality of life (Setién, 2000).

The main dimensions of leisure are recreational, environmental, creative, festive and supportive. Creative leisure includes the arts, adventure sports, new sports, hobbies; recreational leisure activities encompass walking, taking part in sports, etc. Culture, tourism, sport and recreation can be considered as areas of leisure.

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60. Mónica Sales Giner, Universitat Jaume I, Spain.

An optimal experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) is when a person perceives that he or she wants to and must do something that he or she is capable of doing. The interest of the leisure experience does not lie so much in the type of activity, but rather in the challenges it presents the person and the enjoyment obtained from achieving them.

The impact of leisure as a satisfactory experience goes beyond the personal and the individual to community and social levels. Leisure experiences as generators of experiences that tend to be repeated and improve the satisfaction they provide are sources of individual and social human development.

Worldwide, the proportion of elderly people is growing faster than any other age group. Life expectancy is increasing, and in Spain currently stands at about 80 years, and as a consequence the Spanish population as a whole is ageing. This ageing of the population can be considered as a major challenge involving greater social and economic demands.

The development of educational programmes that enhance the quality of life of the elderly in all its dimensions is one of the basic objectives in which public administrations, universities and research centres, and all civil society institutions, should collaborate in a coordinated manner.

We must work towards a flexible and adaptable university, where new ICTs are institutionalised in the process of teaching and dissemination of knowledge, with a new type of student and where new functions are developed for the university.

Universities must engage as educational institutions and ensure access to knowledge for society as a whole.

The education of the elderly, from the university perspective, must be seen as a new response from these universities to the new challenges and social demands, to the existence of a new social group and to the possibility of lifelong learning.

University education programmes for the elderly could be included within what Stebbins (2004) has termed 'serious leisure', since these programmes include the six features highlighted below:

- Need to remain active;
- Find an occupation based on effort;
- Significant personal effort based on the knowledge, training and/or skills acquired;
- Lasting benefits: regeneration or renewal of self, improved self-image, social integration;

- The single ethos that grows around itself, a central component of an extraordinary social world in which participants can nourish their leisure and free time interests;
- Tendency to identify with the activities chosen.

The programme of the Senior Citizens University of Castellón in Spain offers a range of studies for students over 55 years. The Senior Citizens University, responding to the demand of a growing segment of the population, has offered these courses since the 1998-1999 academic year, aimed at people who, for various reasons, could not go to university when they were younger, or who want to return to study and reconnect with university academic activities. The aim is to promote personal development skills and values from the perspective of lifelong learning.

The Senior Citizens University's programme consists of core credits and credits corresponding to language, technological and analytical skills, equivalent to learning new technologies and English. This academic programme also includes extracurricular activities, which take place outside the university context but are attached to it. These activities fall outside the curriculum but can potentially complement every person's general education, and include activities such as a hiking club, a drama group and a choir.

In addition, the students' education programme also offers socio-cultural activities that broaden students' education outside the classroom, such as visits to museums or cities of cultural interest, etc. These activities should be understood as outdoor classes, where art or history are taught through observation, without books. They also provide a magnificent opportunity to learn about our immediate historical and artistic heritage, to study it in greater depth and to develop subjects previously studied and explored in class.

"Walking is the best recipe to reach old age" (Monica Rerelu).

Hiking could be encouraged by interest in health training activities and by maintaining a healthier quality of life.

It aims to improve student's physical capacities and cognitive functioning. Similarly, hiking involves aerobic training to improve the executive function and the speed with which information is processed. In addition, this group activity helps to improve social relations and the enjoyment they can bring.

The drama group allows participants to recover sensory and perceptive capacities, exercise their memories, recover physical contact with their peers, revalue creativity, improve precision, re-start their cognitive system, foster the group experience and solidarity, and build new links and re-establish lost ones.

It aims to improve quality of life through involvement in stimulating, creative and highly significant activities.

By conceiving of theatre as play, among the elderly it fulfils a social and cultural function by allowing them to experience the pleasure of sharing a common activity, and satisfying the ideals of expression and socialisation. It also gives them the pleasure of physical and mental well-being. Socio-cultural re-vitalisation emerges as a way of organising free time, as well as constituting a means for personal and group emancipation through culture. Socio-cultural animation and leisure education are not exactly the same thing, but the former gives rise to situations of educational leisure, as well as offering possibilities for participation, permanent learning and cultural creation.

Conclusions

The present and the future of our society is characterised by a growing proportion of elderly citizens, and the increase of the number of people over the age of 65 years arouses concerns about their quality of life and the need to strengthen informal and community support structures.

A set of educational activities should be carried out that are designed to promote cognitive and relational sustenance and stimulation that favour constructive ageing.

Culture is an attitude, a process that has to be experienced from inside; a process that gradually culminates in a more active, creative and autonomous life.

In the area of seniors' education, teaching and culture form an indivisible whole. The aim and horizon of this whole is to favour personal and group identity.

In the area of leisure education as an important element of personal development, there is a persistent trend to consider leisure as a consumer activity, and any educational endeavour must be aware of this.

Leisure is based on principles of self-determination, of participation in social and cultural change, and the collective maturity of local communities.

The main aims of seniors' education involve shaping personal development that includes assimilating today's culture and taking advantage of leisure opportunities to achieve a higher quality of life.

Source

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5. PEDAGOGY

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5.1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of lifelong learning is a key factor for the development of today's society, taking into consideration demographic changes in Europe as well as the introduction of new technology and innovation. Increasing attention has been given to senior education because it has an essential role for both physical and social well-being.

In scientific research (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Hudson, 1999; Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 1998; Caffarella & Barnett, 1994; Lieģeniece, 2002), it is shown that senior education ought to be based on the conclusions that adult students should:

- have a great life experience;
- base their desire to learn on inner locus of motivation;
- have a desire to acquire practically useful knowledge and skills;
- should know why they need to learn particular things;
- be responsible for their decisions;
- learn according to subordinate study process.

Theoretical approaches to successful seniors' understanding of learning is described into this chapter, an insight into the learning models is given, learning forms according to the education context, seniors' needs and developing area are characterised.

5.2. APPROACHES TO THE CONTENT IMPLEMENTATION

Various approaches to the content (see Chapter 6) implementation are possible depending on the requirements in senior education (see Chapter 1 and 2) and the context (see Chapter 3). They are all intertwined with the ideas of humanistic psychology (represented by K. Rodžers, A. Maslow, G. Olports etc.).

There are many different theories about teaching and learning.[61] Tasks in senior education are not oriented towards the acquisition of a qualification document, and they are specific; time for content implementation is relatively short; the content is individualised and focused on practical application (Simkins, 1977; Bandura, 1986). Respecting the human personality as a whole unit (mind, feelings, will, attitude, values, motivation, self-experience, specific features of age, etc.) and recognising the idea of seniors' needs to participate in on-going education, two theories come in the focus of attention: social cognitive theory and social ecological theory.

Social cognitive theory

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977; McKhann & Albert, 2003; Schucnk, 1995) recognises that there are direct interaction links between the behaviour, environment and personal psychosomatic condition:

- on the one hand, the environment determines human behaviour,
- on the other hand, human behaviour and activity change the environment.

Human behaviour is influenced by personal values, social factors and previous experience that help to determine an individual's self-efficacy. It has four sources: previous experience, identification of a target, positive communication, feedback and encouragement, and replacement experience. Professional support during physical activities and feedback received of the participants characterise the implemention of this theory in practice that is described in the "Keeping Fit in Later Life" project review (p. 129). Also in the project "Be Active – Be Healthy" the main goal was to increase the self-efficacy of participants (p. 163).

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61. http://www.lifecircles-inc.com/Learningtheories/learningmap.html, http://www.learning-theories.com

Social ecological theory

Social ecological theory (Stokols, 2002, 1992; Bronfenbrenner, 1979) assumes that behaviour is formed by many social subsystems: family, community, workplace, beliefs and traditions, economy, physical environment, networks of social relations. It is assumed that changes in a subsystem results in changes in other subsystems.

There are four main levels that are mutually influenced, and they overlap with each other.

1. Level of individual expression. It is characterised by socio-demographic characteristics; knowledge, attitude, beliefs, motives, insecurity, fears; skills and abilities, health status.
2. Level of social environment. It is characterised by the relationship between family members; partner's support; personal socialisation opportunities; cultural level; societal norms; institutional forms; social and economic level of society.
3. Level of physical environment. The physical environment is divided into two kinds: man-made and natural. It is more likely that a person will choose active leisure activities spending time in the supportive environment. The urbanised or unsafe environment reduces the likelihood of activities. Physical environmental factors that may affect the activity are as following: availability of space for physical activities; public transport and traffic rate; criminal situation; weather conditions; building intensity of residential environment.
4. Level of political environment. The political environment consists of urban planning policy; health management policy; support policy of public activity; education policy; nature and labour protection policy.

The main objectives of the ASLECT project[62] were closely connected with the Social Ecological Theory framework. The improving of seniors' skills was done by providing interpersonal activities carried out by retired professionals and establishing the network between involved institutions comprehending the organisational level.

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62. The ASLECT project is included as an experience in the Chapter "Quality of Life", and also available in the project website: http://www.edusenior.eu

Also the project "Moving your minds"[63] is based on the Social Ecological approach as the main aim was to make the sustainable environment that respond to personal needs and promoting a personal and a group empowerment for healthy aging.

Study participant's personal experience should be maximally used in senior education, the content should be topical and connected with social and personal life. Principles and approaches for successful seniors' education have become apparent in researches. In the result, theoretical knowledge is changed into necessary skills. The following approaches in the theory and practice are regarded the most effective ones:

Action Learning

Small groups of 3-4 people are organised, they receive a task that is implemented under the guidance of a teacher-consultant, new knowledge derives from experience (see Figure 11);
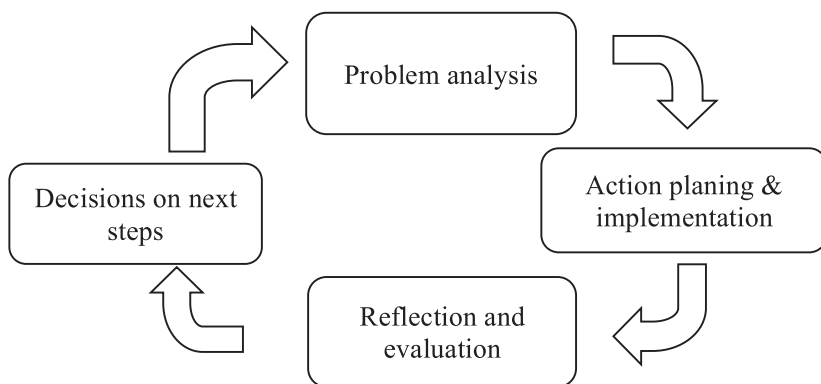
Figure 11. Model of Action Learning (Funch, 2007)

There are many good practices of the model of action learning that are implemented in the Universities of the Third Age. For example, the small group workshops and activities are very popular in Czestochowa.[64] Also the project "Elderly people now online: school in the afternoon" is a good example of the action learning approach.[65]

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63. The "Move your Mindes" project is included as an experience in the Chapter "Social", and also available in the project website: http://www.edusenior.eu
64. See the Models chapter on page 124.
65. This experience is provided as a case study on intergenerational learning for the chapter "Content". It is available on the project website: http://www.edusenior.eu

Experiential Learning

Knowledge production processes transforming the experience involved in the learning process, analysis and reflection are significant (see Figure 12);

Transfer of Learning
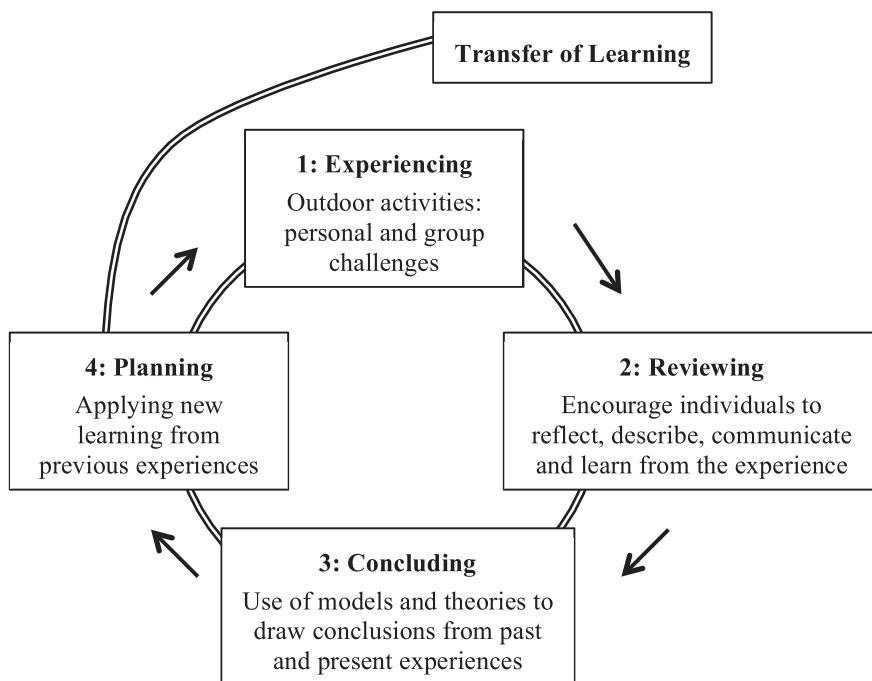
1: Experiencing
Outdoor activities:
personal and group
challenges

4: Planning
Applying new
learning from
previous experiences

2: Reviewing
Encourage individuals to
reflect, describe, communicate
and learn from the experience

3: Concluding
Use of models and theories to
draw conclusions from past
and present experiences

Figure 12 Model of Experiential Learning (Exeter, 2001)

Action and reflection are crucial components of the learning process that were successfully implemented during the eScouts project.[66]

Self-directed Learning

It is characterised by the ability to set goals and significant evaluation criteria that are self-important, regardless of a teacher, an education level and a type (see Figure 13).

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66. You can find the eScouts project experience in the section of "Experiences and best practises" of the chapter on Pedagogy, available online on the project website: http://www.edusenior.eu.
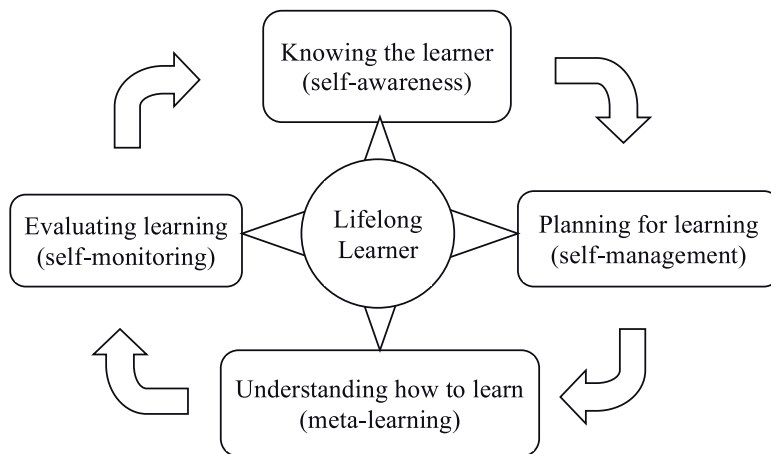
Figure 13. Model of Self-directed Learning[67]

The participation in more formal education activities such as provided by the Senior Citizens' University of Jaume I in Spain[68] reflect the high inner motivation of seniors for learning. This learning way is more complicated and requires self-directed management of the study process. The detailed structure of learning phases indicates the Self-directed Learning approach as it was implemented in the SenTrain project.[69]

Intergenerational Learning

The objective reality and human needs in the short and longer term determine the learning content. Short term of gaining learning experience (4-8 hours) has a positive impact on the motivation of the participants. It is possible to implement according to the models described above.

The analysis of the offered theories shows that the content of senior education, so the methods and tools may vary in Europe. It is determined by domestic policy, economy, level of citizens' welfare and the related senior social status. However, despite the differences, there are also some unifying features - respect for seniors' individuality and existing experience and desire to meet their specific educational needs. This can be done by using various learning models (see Table 10).

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67. from http://otl.curtin.edu.au/tlf/tlf2005/refereed/stauble.html
68. This is related to the experience "A proposal for a formal course structure and its potentialities" that belongs to the Models chapter. You can read this experience on the project website: http://www.edusenior.eu
69. This project is described in the Staff and Trainers chapter, available on-line in the project website: http://www.edusenior.eu

TABLE 11. LEARNING MODELS (BIGGS, 1993; MARTON & SIHJO, 1976;
SCHMECK ET AL., 1991; LIEĢENIECE, 2002)

Title	Description
Model of personal style	Learning styles affect learning nature, they do not depend on the learning context and the individual's overall abilities. An individual's cognitive scope is used and an individual action is emphasised.
Model of information procession	Attention is not paid to individual's fixed characteristics. Series of questions are used to determine how students adopt the proposed learning strategies and which strategies they prefer. Individual characteristics are revealed. The attention is paid to those cognitive strategies that seniors use for implementing tasks.
Fenomenographical model	Seniors construct knowledge from their own point of view on the issue. Learning outcome depends on the context and nature of task.
System model	Motivation affects learning. Seniors' activity is affected by personality descriptors such as special abilities, preferred learning styles, etc. Recognition of personality factors takes place. Learning takes place in the context; it is influenced by the structure of learning environment. Attention is paid to motives, way of learning (cognitive aspects), strategies that are used in solving tasks. Learning approaches in this model are derived from the 'bottom' where the emphasis is put on such things as the 'preference' to some phenomenon and the context that seniors consider as an important determinant of learning.

Appropriate methods are selected for the implementation of educational models.

5.3. WAYS AND MEANS

Consummation of set goals and objectives in senior education are based on certain principles. They are determined by didactics. Didactics is focused on solving specific tasks, problems and knowledge enrichment in follow up, institutional teaching and learning process (Gudjons, 1998). It is important to consider several factors when educational activities are being planned:

• who should be taught (seniors);
• what should be taught (content);
• why should be taught (justification, motivation);
• how should be taught (ways, means, communication).

Consummation of the result is contributed to usage of various methods, means and ways according to the specific content and requirements.

There are various classifications and structures of teaching methods and ways (Andersone, 2007; Rubana, 2000; Zhukov, 199; Гладченкова, 2002; Ivarsson - Jansson & Cooper, 2009; Malouff & Rooke, 2008; Cole, 1988). In senior education, the choice of methods should be based on constructivist insights that the need for knowledge is dictated by the experience gained before; and to train participants individually constructs knowledge (Pierson, 2002). A senior is an individual who is able to understand his/her knowledge or ignorance, levels of skills or inability. Adapting to a changing world creates conditions that help the senior to discover the required competence to be developed (Kristovska, 2012).

Constructivist teaching in seniors education is characterised by the following points:

- learning is based on the previous personal experience;
- there are many practical activities in the learning process;
- new learning techniques are acquired that facilitate integration into modern micro and macro environment;
- learning takes place through communication;
- learning is contextual;
- motivation is the main component of learning (by Taylor, 2008, Gerden, 1995, Kristovska, 2012).

Three main spheres can be distinguished in senior education according to the target: cognitive, psychomotor and affective.

- Cognitive sphere refers mainly to information processing and knowledge obtaining. Learning means gaining knowledge in the cognitive area. Such kind of study is based on the use of mind.
- The psychomotor sphere includes development of muscle operation and motor skills. Learning in the psychomotor field means getting person's physical abilities he/she needed the most.
- The affective sphere is characterised by emotions, attitude, values orientation, etc., related to changes in human behaviour and formation of belief (Lieģeniece, 2002).
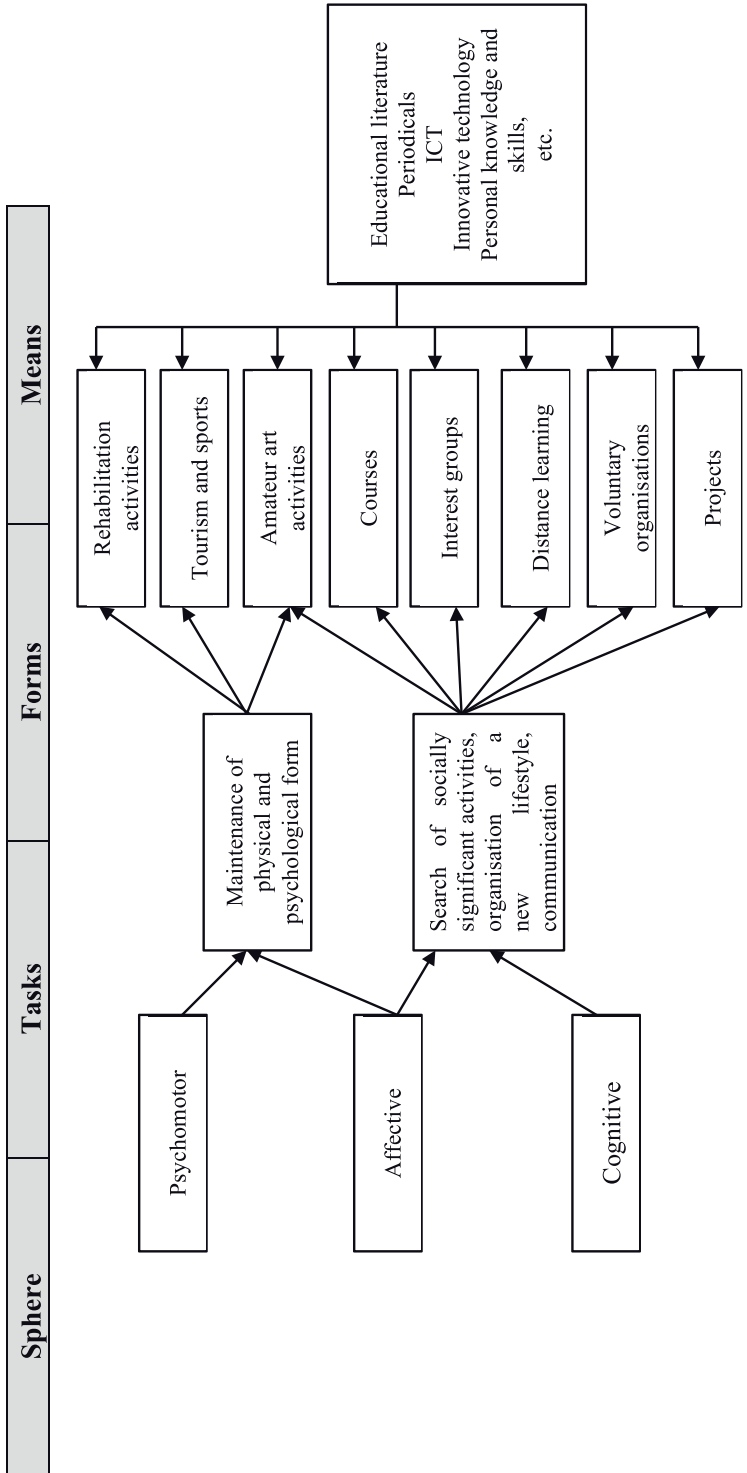
Figure 14. Sphere of development and related tasks

In the Figure 14 it is shown that development of psychomotor and affective area is connected with the aims of seniors education that promote preservation of physical and mental activity within age range, maintenance of health and the adjustment to health disorders. The development of the affective and cognitive areas is related to tasks that contribute to the search for new socially significant activities, recreation, hobbies and participation in the activities of various organisations. Implementation of any area or education tasks is topical for seniors for the creation of personal contacts with other people and self-realisation.

Rehabilitation training is conducted by specialists. This may include different exercises in accordance with health problems or lessons for psychological and psychosocial rehabilitation.

Active lifestyle helps to maintain physical activity in both individual sports (Nordic walking, orienteering, cycling, etc.) and team games. Inter-regional, inter-state or even state senior championships can be organised for widening the range of communication.

Amateur performances (dance groups, choirs, theatre, etc.), a variety of courses (knitting, macramé and floristry), interest groups (gardening society, fishing associations, etc.) contribute to learning a new hobby and promote the development of skills acquired previously.

Participation in various projects and voluntary organisations, acquisition and use of the Internet technology for communication and distance learning also is very significant.

The choice of methods can vary according to the shape of the work, seniors' group and their specific needs, availability of financial and intellectual resources.

Regardless of the chosen method, it is important that it synthesises the feedback method that focuses on critical reflection, gives senior the opportunity to express one's views, observations and feelings. Only after receiving information about their work and group's mood, organisers of seniors' education can look forward to the continued success of work.

5.4. EUROPEAN CONTEXT

High quality of education and studies is very important for Europe to continue its movement along the path of the knowledge society and compete successfully in a globalised economy. Each Member State to the EU has its own education policy, but they set common goals and share the best practices.

The most-widely offered and delivered senior courses in partner countries (Spain, Finland, Poland, Latvia, Bulgaria, Italy, Hungary), according to the Key

Competences for Lifelong Learning were analysed within the implementation process of the project "Evaluation toolkit on seniors education to improve their quality of life". Most of the competences overlap and complement each other, but the EU normative acts reveal eight competencies that seriously affect a person's quality of life: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression.

The analysis of the courses mostly offered to seniors in the partner countries was carried out within the project. The courses can be divided into six groups:

- ICT
- Handicraft
- Physical activities
- Art (theatre, dancing, singing)
- Foreign languages
- Life skills

The research carried out in the European context allowed to draw the following conclusions.

1. The most widely used courses in senior education in all countries are ICT courses. Their topicality is confirmed by the dynamic pace of technological development and seniors' need to use different digital devices and technologies in everyday life. These courses are directly connected with development of **digital competence**. Although **mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology** include abilities for the use of technology tools and devices, as well as the use of mathematical models (logical thinking and perception of space), but these skills are only partially developed in ICT courses offered to seniors. We believe it would be necessary to integrate the development of these skills within ICT courses more closely, including activities to strengthen seniors' mathematical thinking.
2. The second biggest group are Handicraft courses that are mostly related to the people's opportunity to express their creative energy. Many social support programmes offer creative activities for seniors as an opportunity for self-realisation after taking retirement. Such kind of courses are closely related to

cultural awareness and expression, because creativity and willingness to cultivate aesthetic capacity promote artistic self-expression and participation in cultural life. Any kind of activities in groups promote also **social competences**. Although these competences are connected with **civic competences**, it must be concluded that they are not highlighted in the non-formal education courses, but they are acquired in independent and informal way of studying.

3. Different types of physical activities for seniors are often mentioned in various courses. Many studies have pointed out that good health is given as one of the priorities by seniors. However, 41 % of all European seniors do not participate in any kind of physical activities.[70] Historical experiences of each country in Europe must be taken into account, as well as differing physical activities of their inhabitants. There is seen a clear trend that physical activity decreases with aging. This is the reason why organised physical activities have an essential role in seniors health maintenance. These activities are connected with improvement of **social competences**, as they are related to personal and social welfare that requires knowledge of optimal physical, mental health and healthy lifestyle.

4. Artistic ways of expression (theatre, dancing, singing) are widely offered to seniors in informal education. They directly improve personal competence of **cultural awareness and expression**. Alike handicraft activities, they help people to find their way of self-expression and reduce social isolation which is an inherent problem in this age group. This kind of activity is also important for developing competence of **communication in the mother tongue**. This competence is realised in interpersonal communication.

5. Foreign language courses have a significant role in single European context, because many projects funded by Europe involve mobility activities, including ones intended for seniors. Although foreign language courses do not have a priority role in senior education at the moment, competence of communication in foreign languages is going to be one of the most important matters in the future, as European integration progresses. It is important to keep in mind that seniors are self-directed in the education process, so foreign language courses need to provide an opportunity to use language skills in practice. It is therefore necessary to integrate language courses

70. Afonso, C., Graça, P., Kearney, J., Gibney, M., & de Almeida, M. (2001). Physical activity in European seniors: attitudes, beliefs and levels. The Journal Of Nutrition, Health & Aging, 5(4), 226-229.

with ICT which provides an opportunity to communicate with representatives of other countries, developing social competences at the same time. The Experiences of the Spanish partner, the University Jaume I, serves as a good example, because this kind of integration is implemented in senior education. Language knowledge gives better opportunities for collaboration and communication in Europe, reduces stereotypes and discrimination and provides better opportunities for intercultural tolerance.

6. Courses that perfect seniors' understanding about various life situations and provide new skills and knowledge, can be included in the chapter 'Life skills' (for example, General Gerontology, Rural/Eco/Green Tourism Entrepreneurship, etc.). These courses improve competences of **communication in the mother tongue** and **social and civic competences**.

As it was mentioned above, these lifelong competences cannot be seen in isolation from one another, as factors that are important in one area can facilitate skills in other areas. Basic language skills, mathematical thinking skills, information and communication technology skills are essential foundation for any learning process. Learning to learn is a significant skill, needed in all areas. The learning process is measured by personality's development in the entity. Only the harmonious development of competencies provides social welfare and quality of life. Evaluating the offer of courses, it can be concluded that insufficient attention is paid to development of **sense of initiative and entrepreneurship** and civic competence. Taking into consideration the demographical situation in the future, initiative and entrepreneurship as well as civic attitudes and seniors' participation in social and economic processes will be of increasing importance. As a result, there would be a change in society's attitude towards seniors, as, for example, elderly population status in the society in the Baltic States is lower than in the old EU Member States. It is believed that the negative attitude toward old people is associated with the assessment of the economic contribution - young people's contribution to the economy is greater and they are better suited to leadership than older people (Rungule, 2011). Latvia is among those European countries where, according to the Eurobarometer Survey, discrimination on grounds of age is the most common (Rungule, 2011).

Goals in senior education are not focused on receiving a qualification document. Development and improvement of appropriate knowledge and skills dominate in the changing world, so we believe that the choice of method depends on a particular learning task.

Research carried out proved that the EU legislation is united in all partner countries, and it makes a base for choosing pedagogical theories for introduction and provision of senior education. A country's economy, politics, traditions and other factors determine approaches and methods for implementation of seniors education, as the introduced content is similar to a greater or lesser extent in all partner countries.

Table 12. Learning methods and techniques for specific tasks

Learning task (Andersone, 2007)	Learning methods, techniques	Usage
Activation of activities	Exercises, working in groups, creative exercises, projects, role plays, excursions, questions and answers	ICT Handicraft Physical activities Art (theatre, dancing, singing) Foreign languages Life skills
Excitement of curiosity	Role plays, narration, visualisation, collage, colour palette, circle of associations, brainstorm, creative exercises, analysis of situations, Online café of interest, excursion	
Development of thinking processes	Exercises, visualisation, circle of associations, projects, analysis of situations, creative exercises, writing of stories, mind-mapping, brainstorm, community mapping, stepping into the picture, cooperative integrated learning method, learning, prognostication	
Usage of knowledge into the practice	Exercises, writing of stories, projects, integrated learning method, Online café of interest, community mapping, stepping into the picture, role plays, prognostication	
Encouragement of searching activities	Projects, integrated learning method, brainstorm, stepping into the picture, prognostication	
Promotion of joint responsibility for results	Working in groups, projects, planning and organisation of events, integrated learning method, community mapping, Online café of interest, stepping into the picture	

Research carried out proved that the EU legislation is united in all partner countries, and it makes a base for choosing pedagogical theories for introduction and provision of senior education. A country's economy, politics, traditions and other factors determine approaches and methods for implementation of seniors education, as the introduced content is similar to a greater or lesser extent in all partner countries.

According to the results of adults (25 - 64 years old) education survey, 84 % of population participated in the non-formal education, as it was associated with their work. This trend indicates that the main attention in education in Latvia is paid to improvement of job skills and competencies. It is not interesting for seniors who have taken retirement. There is still no governmental programme for ensuring seniors' non-formal education in Latvia. In other EU countries it is done by supporting Universities of Third Age. Seniors' non-formal and informal education is generally ensured by such municipal institutions as retirees' day centres, social security institutions, collectives of creative expression (dance, choirs, handicrafts) supported by local governments. There are municipal social service support centres in Latvia that give people free social services and leisure activities. The aim is to improve people's quality of life. Day care centre provides social care and social rehabilitation services, development of social skills and education for persons who have reached the age of receiving pension. The main task of the social service is to render social assistance services, promoting self-help and persons' involvement in public life, as well as contributing to their sense of responsibility to themselves and their families. Social services include social care that aims to ensure stable quality of life to a person, who cannot do it by himself/herself because of the age or functional disorder, and social rehabilitation that aims to prevent or reduce invalidity, disability, dependency and social consequences in people's life,, caused by other factors. This indicates that senior education activities are primarily implemented as social support events.

Great contribution to informal senior education is provided by non-governmental organizations. Latvian Pensioners' Federation is founded as an organisation unifying senior's interests. It brings together 138 local organisations. It is a non-political, non-governmental organisation that represents seniors' interests in a governmental level, as well as implements a variety of projects, including the educational ones. Seniors' associations are established in almost every city and region. These associations raise funds from local governments, European projects and private financing and implement different types of educational activities.

5.5. CONCLUSIONS

1. There are various theories about teaching and learning but social cognitive theory and social ecological theory are offered in senior education, because seniors' personal experience and influence of the specific social environment is emphasised.
2. Action learning, experiential learning, self-directed learning and intergenerational learning are recognised as the more effective and more relevant approaches in seniors education.
3. There are various classifications of teaching methods and techniques. Choice of methods should be based on constructivist insights on studies and tasks of the area to be developed (cognitive, psychomotor, affective).
4. Feedback method is significant because it gives a senior the opportunity to express his/her opinion, observations and feelings.

5.6. EXPERIENCES AND GOOD PRACTISES

Research of educational needs for seniors in the Latgale region, Latvia[71]

Introduction

In Latvia the general, professional and the higher education network operates in a defined structure; however, in the adult and senior education there is a lack of system. The national Education Law states that the adult education programmes shall determine the content of such programmes and the conformity thereof to with the interests of the State and of employers, as well as of individual development, and adults have the right to acquire such programmes throughout the length of their whole life regardless of previously acquired formal or non-formal education programme. There is no education system for third age population in Latvia. Seniors are mainly engaged in courses or art and handicraft groups that are offered by local municipality or non-governmental organisations. As one of good practise is the NGO RASA – Alliance of Active Seniors of Riga (http://rasa.senjau.info/home.htm), that provides English, German languages courses, dance therapy, nutrition and handicraft classes etc.

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71. Velta Lubkina. Personality socialization research institute of Rezeknes Augstola. Latvia

Implementation

The aim is to find out seniors' attitude towards learning and needs for senior education.

111 seniors were interviewed in Latgale region (Latvia), of these, 25.5 % were men and 74.5 % were women. 58.2 % of respondents live in the city, 41.8% live in rural areas.

Respondents were offered a questionnaire with statements. Results of the questionnaire were coded and processed in SPSS program.

Seniors evaluated their activity in various educational actions (see Figure 15).

22 % consider that it is very essential to improve the existing knowledge, while 44 % of respondents think that such improvement is important. It is interesting that there are highly statistically significant differences based on age, assessing the personal importance of improving the existing knowledge (p = 0.002); it is the most important thing for the respondents aged 60 to 64 years (Mean rank 71.46) and respondents over the age of 80 years (Mean rank 61.03). Statistically the most significant (p = 0.000) differences on this issue are based on the place of residence. Seniors living in a city are more interested (Mean rank 65.95) than seniors living in rural areas (Mean rank 40.22).

Content positions that are evaluated as the most essential or essential are shown on Figure 16.

It is interesting that there is a statistically significant gender difference in the assessment of personal importance of getting new knowledge about health maintenance (p = 0.035); it is more meaningful for males (Mean rank 65.07) than women (Mean rank 51.52).

Senior educational needs are higher in a city with a better arranged infrastructure, more active social and cultural life, a wide network of social relations. This indicatives a double connection between an individual's behaviour and the environ-
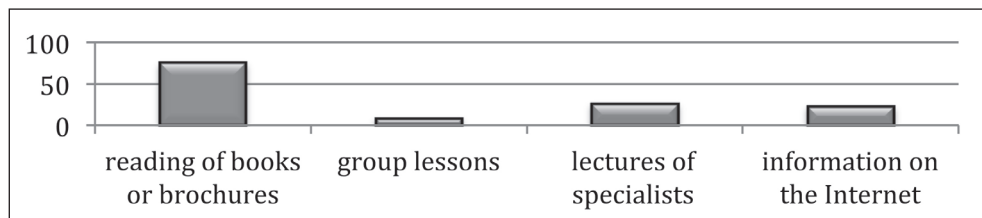

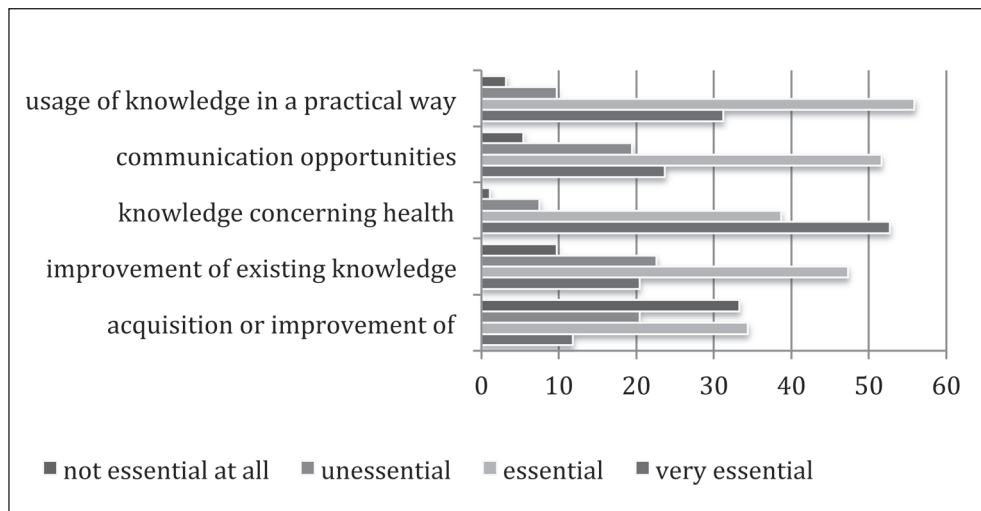*Figure 15. Seniors' activity in various educational actions*

Figure 16. The most essential or essential content positions

ment: on the one hand, the environment establishes a human's behaviour, on the other hand, a human's behaviour and action changes the environment. The results confirm the conclusions of the socio-ecological theory's (Stokols, 2002,1992, Bronfenbrenner, 1979) suitability in senior education.

It is important for respondents (85 %) to use newly gained knowledge in practice. 61 % of respondents indicate that they learn willingly, based on their previous experience. It is possible to conclude that Self-directed Learning (Read, 2001) dominates in Latvia. 36.5 % of respondents would chose courses with, preferably, practical orientation. That points indirectly to both Model of Action Learning (Funch, 2007) and Model of Experiential Learning (Exeter, 2001).

Conclusions

Three key aspects of the curriculum were identified in the results of the questionnaire: new knowledge about health maintenance, communication opportunities and knowledge improvement in order to 'keep up with the time'.

Seniors prefer different sources of information, and there are statistically significant differences in the content evaluation based on gender and age. The results confirm the theoretical insight about necessity to take into consideration individual needs and use various learning models within the organisation of a senior education process.

The eScouts - Intergenerational Learning Circle for Community Service[72]

Introduction

Intergenerational learning proves to be an effective strategy for encouraging responsibility and motivation, providing emotional and social support to various generations, therefore helping them to enjoy a quality life. "The goal of numerous intergenerational programmes is not primarily oriented towards the needs of the young or the needs of the elderly people, but rather towards increasing the quality of community life".[73]

This eScouts project[74] is a good example of transnational partnership (Germany, Spain, Poland, United Kingdom, Italy and Bulgaria) and is featured in the Initiatives database of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012) on the EUROPA server of the European Union. Intergenerational Learning Circle for Community Service eScouts is aimed at developing an innovative intergenerational learning exchange between elderly and youth volunteers, centred on the development of the digital competences for the eldest and on the guidance to the youngest of how to better face their upcoming adult life challenges, using ICT as a vehicle for the promotion of solidarity and exchange.

This intergenerational experience takes place through a variety of local stakeholder organisations (public internet centres, youth and elderly associations, etc.) with a view of producing a transversal impact over the communities they are serving.

The eScouts project

The Intergenerational Learning in Blended Environments and Spaces (ILBES) methodology is a new approach developed ad hoc for a learning circle in which the youth supports senior people in ICT usage and, in return, seniors mentor youths in their efforts to access to the labour market and to face the challenges of the adult life. It aims to complete a cycle of learning, exchange and conviviality. The teaching and mentoring are mediated by ICT means (social web applications) and Blended Environments and Spaces.

ILBES was developed as part of eScouts and is inspired in two proven learning methodologies, which are combined for the first time - *Community Service Learning*

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72. Slavina Lozanova, Boian Savtchev. Assist Net. Bulgaria
73. Krašovec S., Kump S. (2010) The Concept of Intergenerational Education and Learning, In: Intergenerational Learning And Education in Later Life, Ličen&Gubalová (Eds), University of Ljubljana
74. http://www.escouts.eu_

(CSL), aimed to maximise the development of individuals' potential and their active participation to society, and *Participatory and Appreciative Action and Reflection* (PAAR), which brings together action and reflection.[75]

ILBES methodology, as based on certain ethical principles/practices and learning methods, as well as on (informal, comfortable) training settings that enhanced learning exchanges between the participants, has been very effective in giving value to the life and work experiences of the participants and to encourage a sharing process. It has also given proof of the empowerment of the large majority of the participants, regarding their different roles and the expected learning outcomes.

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ILBES methodology is rooted on five principles. The first consists of valuing the space or the environment where the communication is taking place. For example, the youth or elderly centre and the neighborhood where it is placed. The second is the appreciation of the value that participating in eScouts can bring to society. The third and fourth refer to the extent to which youths and seniors feel empowered by their participation in intergenerational activities and by the exchange with other generations. Finally, an ethical dimension guides any eScouts intervention, always looking to produce some kind of societal good.

The expected outcome of ILBES is a community service-oriented action, reflection and learning, i.e. a collaborative process of committed actions and reflective learning for personal and community development, where learning is an effect of experiencing reflectively (CSL does by learning and learns by doing, PAAR acts and reflects to turn negative into positive). In it, social innovation is supported by e-facilitation, social media and user-generated content. Group reflection (done publically, rigorously and systematically) rather than solo self-reflection is promoted, since change and improvement with regard to the starting point of each intervention should be the effect of the collective rather than individual actions and views.

As the local implementation demonstrated later, the basis in terms of training programmes, methods, contents and materials for the "young facilitator developer

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75. http://escouts8.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/escouts-d3-2-methodological-frameworks-harmonisation.pdf

of intergenerational dialogue" and the "senior mentor developer of intergenerational dialogue" have been set by this methodology after its testing. Motivational levels and satisfaction of the key-training actors have been high.[76]

The implementation of the project includes three main phases:

• Train 16-25 year olds to become ICT teachers of the digital excluded elderly, with a "Community Service – Learning" approach.
• Train retired people over 55 to become mentors for the youth to better face work and life challenges.
• Train facilitators of intergenerational learning of each country of the consortium to be the key actors and mediators of those two groups.

Beginning in 2012, the eScouts project team started working on the test phase of its training modules, created for the Intergenerational Learning Exchange programme for social inclusion. Over 500 people from all partner countries (Italy, Spain, Bulgaria, Poland, Germany and UK) were involved in this phase of the project, based on the high expertise of consortium members, with their shared awareness of the importance of devising and testing intergenerational learning circles within the community.

Conclusion

The intergenerational learning cycle has mobilised 124 young facilitators and trainers of digital competences in a group of 355 seniors, a selected group of whom acted in the second half of the training cycle, as mentors to the youth in their access to the labour market and the challenges of adult life, completing in this way a cycle of learning, exchange and conviviality.

At the same time, it promotes key-European values and lifelong learning skills: civic and social, digital, learning to learn, cultural awareness and expression, entrepreneurial (in the sense of the spirit of initiative). In general terms, the project is seen as highly innovatory and necessary, given the specific problems that both youths and the seniors experience in nowadays societies and considering the scarcity of educational/discussion activities addressed to both of them.

The eScouts intergenerational learning model doesn't simply shift power from one generation to another (e.g. elderly to youth). It enables the constructive power to act to circulate and flow between generations in a mutually enhancing way.

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76. http://escouts8.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/escouts-final-publication1.pdf

New knowledge to get new information[77]

Introduction

Health promoting physical activity programme for seniors, "Be Active - Be Healthy" describes the developed programme based on scientifically grounded recommendations and cognitions of the social cognitive theory.

The aim of the created programme is to facilitate involvement of participants into daily physical activities supplementing them by exercises improving physical abilities and helping preserve physical and mental health.

Within the programme the participants were encouraged to include additional physical activities into their daily life, take part in sports activities offered in the surroundings and do exercises independently. Organising classes the following factors shall be taken into consideration: participants' health condition, interests, available means, readiness to change habits and others. The programme is individual oriented and it helps a person find inner motives and aims to increase activity observing safety principles. Besides, it helps find solutions to overcome possible obstacles.

Applying the theoretical aspects mentioned above and basing on the scientifically approbated recommendations the programme of physical activities included five stages carried out during 24 classes taking place once per week. The structure of classes included both theoretical and practical part. In the theoretical part 20-30 minutes were devoted to discussions with participants about the types of physical activities and their significance in the preservation of health as well as to provision of motivating information to increase activity. In each class the theoretical part was following by a practical part of 30-40 minutes, which included 5-10 minutes of warm-up, 20-25 minutes of moderate intensity and 5-10 minutes of flexibility and balance exercises.

Content

For approbation of developed programme and evaluation of efficiency the pedagogic experiment was carried out. The experimental group consist of 34 older adults, who agreed to participate in the programme "Be Active- Be Healthy". In data processing were included results of 24 seniors, who attended at least 75 % of classes (18 classes of 24 during 6 months).

The assessments of experimental group were made in 3 stages. Initial data were obtained in December 2009 before the beginning of the programme. After completing the programme in June 2010 the research assessment protocol was rerun. To define the sustainable of obtained results, the third assessment stage was carried out in December 2010. 22 participants took part in final stage of research.

Analysing obtained data of physical activities level of participants, can conclude, that the main aim of research is successfully done. Before the programme the average physical activity of participants was 4 215.2±2 100.47 MET-min/week. After six months participating in the programme this parameter increased to 6 038±3 108.98 MET-min/week, that is statistically significant improvement of results. Analysing results, it must be considered that the second stage of assessment was carried out in summer that by data of interview is for seniors the most active time of the year. It was necessary to access the sustainability of results throughout the one year period. Third stage of research was carried out six months later after the completing of experiment. The total amount of physical activities in winter period was retained above the initial results, it is 5 103.4±1 447.05 MET-min/week.

Statistically significant changes of the results were obtained also in question about spent time sitting, which is indicator of sedentary. Before the research participants spent time sitting 322±160.54 minutes a day, but after completing of the programme in winter assessment stage this result was 220.3±136.88 minutes a day.

The efficiency of the realised programme mainly is expressed in the changes of the person's physical activities behaviour model. Taking part in this programme there was achieved the main aim – increasing of the physical activity level among seniors. Realizing the health-enhancing physical activities programme increased the confidence of participants about possible benefits.

The increased physical activity level improved participants' components of physical fitness that confirm the results of the Senior Fitness Test. Analysing the dynamics of fitness results of the participants, it can be concluded that statistically significant changes were established in the results of leg and arm strength tests, lower body flexibility, and aerobic endurance tests

Conclusions

Summing up the results of the pedagogical experiment it can be concluded that implementing the developed programme it is possible to increase the overall level of physical activity significantly. As a result, the parameters of physical abilities improve as well. The obtained improvement of the results last for one year. The

participants of the programme, who regularly attended organized classes, also had changes in their behavioural model, which is proved by the positive dynamics of the results even after termination of organized classes. In order to reduce heart health risk factors it is needed to continue implementation of additional physical activities over a longer period of time.

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6. CONTENT

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6.1. INTRODUCTION

The developments in modern society create new challenges for senior education and its content (Klercq, 2009, p. 4-5).

> The perception and position of senior citizens is changing. The idea that these are dependent and in need of special care is making way for a more positive image of senior citizens as active people. This is not always based on reality but education can help to increase senior citizens' ability to do things for themselves and remain active longer, contributing in the community.

Recent studies in different countries show that educational and cultural activities for the elderly are more or less related to the level of education they have received. There is a trend of a continuous increase in the number of seniors enrolling in senior education programmes and courses.

In its modern interpretation senior education is seen as a viable means of survival in critical social situations, for maintaining and further developing the sociocultural status of the senior citizen.

As recommended by Schuller and Watson, "For those in the third stage, training and education opportunities should be greatly enhanced" and "The emergence of the Fourth Age means that we urgently need to develop a more appropriate approach to the curriculum offer in later life" (Schuller & Watson, 2009, p. 6).

More and more scholars see senior education as a key factor for seniors development, going further to issues where it can overcome even illiteracy and ignorance

by literacy skills development, reduce poverty and injustice, expand social and cultural contacts and develop mutual understanding among people.

In addition to efforts to make formal educational opportunities more accessible to seniors, attention must be directed towards the content of educational experiences. According to Fisher (1992) educational institutions need to help senior learners to understand the values, culture, and technology of today. As cited in EuBia Project Guide (2010, p. 10):

> Significantly it has now become accepted that education and training have a vital role in helping older people make decisions and exercise choices about their quality of later life whether this is about employment, engaging in voluntary activity, saving and investing, better understanding family and intergenerational relationships, or simply through a desire to learn and assess life's experiences to date. There is an increasing body of research evidence about the health and social benefits of later life learning, well supported by the testimonies of older learners themselves.

"At the EU level, older people are one of the main target groups for the European Commission as it reflects on the 2006 Communication "It is never too late to learn"[78] and the 2007 Action Plan on adult learning "It is always a good time to learn"[79] (Ibid., p. 10).

The EU policy in this respect has been thoroughly outlined in the *Grundtvig, a decade of European innovation in adult learning* – 26-28 January 2010, conference documentation.[80]

The pan–European Forum for the Education of the Elderly Grundtvig network (PEFETE) distinguishes four main strengths of senior citizens' education as follows:

1. Self-directed and experiential learning: senior citizens are often personally involved in their education; they have a lifetime of experience to offer others and generally feel strongly involved in the education process.
2. An immense volunteer reserve: many activities in senior citizens' education are peer-to-peer activities; senior citizens work as volunteers in senior citizens' education.

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78. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0614:FIN:EN:PDF - "Adult Learning: It is never too late to learn" (2006).
79. http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/adult/com558_en.pdf - "It is always a good time to learn" (2008):
80. http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc/conf10/doc_en.pdf - Conference documentation: Grundtvig, a decade of European innovation in adult learning – 26-28 January 2010.

3. Contributing to cultural heritage and human capital: senior citizens can play an important role in relation to cultural heritage.

4. Wide range of providers: senior citizens' education is offered by a very wide range of providers; universities and other organisations of formal education, commercial institutes, self-help organisations, local groups of volunteers, etc. (Mercken, 2004).

6.2. Senior Education Programmes

One of the global questions raised at the *Grundtvig, a decade of European innovation in adult learning* Conference in January 2010 was: What is the key to developing education and training programmes for older people which are relevant to their needs, whether it is for updating skills or knowledge, acquiring new knowledge, understanding and using new technologies, or encouraging active ageing and intergenerational engagement (Anne-Sophie Parent, 2010)?

Workshop 6 clearly stated that senior education strategies should address the needs of older people to stay active, to remain full and active citizens. It should be based on a life cycle approach and consult seniors as a targeted group regarding its development. Strategies may also take into consideration some seniors' needs to stay in employment, hence the need to update their skills, reconcile work and private life.

Particular attention should be paid to the importance of making educational choices and opportunities available, and guarantee flexibility in senior education provision.

One key issue is taking into consideration and ensuring that accessible and appropriate learning environment is created. Other issues related to the specifics of the target group is teaching approaches to take into account possible health-related limitations and overall health status of the senior learner that may require personalized/individual approach, teaching methods and carefully chosen learning pace.

Senior education in its nature has been influenced by various factors. Undoubtedly, one of the main considerations is the trend towards globalisation in today's world, the migration and the change to multiethnic and mulicultural societies, the establishment of the global market economy, the liberalisation and opening up of financial markets, and last but not least, the rapid development of information technology.

McNair (2009) writes about the new and expanded learning needs based on the key new drivers for learning among which are:

- "More mobile population, providing places where people need to find a role and place in a new community or new circumstances, after events like moving house, bereavement or the break-up of relationships;...
- a much longer third age: a period of healthy active retirement for most people;
- more people in the fourth age, living in some kind of dependency" (McNair, 2009, p. 51).

In this respect both adult and senior education seem to face the same challenges. According to Boggs (1981), adult educational experiences should enhance personal growth, make it easier for adults to adapt to internal and external changes until the end of life. Boggs considers adult education as life enhancing when it meets the following criteria:

1. Promotes skill-development and positive self-concept
2. Helps alleviate fears, prejudice, illusions, and promotes critical thinking about stereotypes, cultural myths, and biased thinking
3. Promotes creativity
4. Helps the individual move toward personal goals
5. Helps the individual become more tolerant, generous, sensitive, discerning and understanding
6. Provides access to greater opportunity
7. Moves the person closer to his/her full potential
8. Contributes toward revitalization of positive cultural ideals and traditions. (Boggs, D. L., 1981).

Malcolm Knowles (1980) believed that self-actualisation was the prime objective of adult learning, and the mission of educators was to assist adult learners to develop and achieve their full potential as emotional, psychological, and intellectual beings. Knowles made four assumptions about adults as learners: (1) Adults tend to be more self-directed as a result of their maturity, (2) Adults possess personal histories which defines their identities and serve as a resource of experiential learning upon which new learnings can be applied, (3) Motivation in adults is directed to more socially relevant learning, and (4) Adult learners have interest in immediate application for problem-solving (Knowles, 1980).

McCluski (1974) categorises courses for seniors on the ground of their needs. Educational programmes can help older learners to address **coping needs** – those

that help individuals deal with the social, psychological, and physiological changes brought about by ageing. Courses on health, physical activities, adjustment to retirement, and learning how to live with losses are good examples of education that addresses coping needs.

Expressive needs are related to activity carried out for its own sake. These are activities in which older adults derive satisfaction, pleasure, or meaning.

Contribution needs are related to feeling of being wanted and needed, they can be addressed through educational opportunities that allow seniors to act as mentors or peer counsellors.

Influence needs are simply defined as desire for political skill and wisdom so programmes which empower seniors so they can have influence and control over their quality of life. Being a member of a community is a fundamental human need. Moreover, personal well-being has been shown to depend heavily on social engagement and levels of trust between citizens. Learning is a part of the process of finding and maintaining a satisfying social identity, trust in one's neighbours and understanding of where one fits within one or more broader communities (geographical communities, professional or occupational communities, religious communities, interest groups etc.). Courses that address these needs teach about legal rights, or how seniors can assume leadership roles within their communities.

Transcendence need are fulfilled with courses that offer to seniors opportunities to advance artistically, educationally, physically, and occupationally so the learners feel better off in later life compared with earlier time in life (Wacker & Roberto 2008).

There has been a large variety of senior education programmes and courses offered worldwide, with huge number of themes, topics, areas, learning aims and outcomes, modes of delivery and content. The quality education programmes for seniors aim at enhancing their intellectual, physical, and personal well-being.

The practice in Europe generally refers to the national and or organisational traditions, but in recent years there has been a shift reflecting the EU policy in Lifelong Learning and the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning in particular.[81]

It is clearly stated that the "Key competences in the shape of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to each context are fundamental for each individual in a knowledge-based society. They provide added value for the labour market, social

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81.   http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0010:0018:EN:PDF, Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC), Official Journal of the European Union.

cohesion and active citizenship by offering flexibility and adaptability, satisfaction and motivation" (Ibid., 2006).

Senior education programmes and courses throughout Europe are especially focussed on active aging, including social cohesion and active citizenship, in order to stay active and improve their quality of life. They refer mostly to key competences like Digital competence, Communication in foreign languages, Learning to learn, Social and civic competences, and last but not least, Cultural awareness and expression.

The key competences for lifelong learning as such are a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context, and are particularly necessary for personal fulfilment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment, where appropriate. This is a process of acquiring not just new skills, but also a process of developing and updating the existing skills of the senior learner.

Today senior education is seen as closely related to Quality of Life facets or dimensions, also defined by this project, and namely:

- Physical Health
- Psychological Health
- Social (integrated, to know the environment)
- Increased participation (in communities, families, friends: communicating, creating)
- Increased perceived control (internal and external, primary and secondary)
- Personal growth: optimism, motivation
- Leisure, spend time on oneself, useful time.

6.3. KEY COMPETENCES IN SENIOR EDUCATION

The European framework defines eight key competences[82] and describes the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to each of these. These key competences are:
- **communication in the mother tongue**, which is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and

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82. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0010:0018:EN:PDF, Key competences for lifelong learning—a European reference framework, Annex, Official Journal of the European Union, L 394/13, 2006.

written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts;

- **communication in foreign languages**, which involves, in addition to the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue, mediation and intercultural understanding. The level of proficiency depends on several factors and the capacity for listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- **mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology**. Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations, with the emphasis being placed on process, activity and knowledge. Basic competences in science and technology refer to the mastery, use and application of knowledge and methodologies that explain the natural world. These involve an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and the responsibility of each individual as a citizen;
- **digital competence** involves the confident and critical use of information society technology (IST) and thus basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT);
- **learning to learn** is related to learning, the ability to pursue and organise one's own learning, either individually or in groups, in accordance with one's own needs, and awareness of methods and opportunities;
- **social and civic competences**. Social competence refers to personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life. It is linked to personal and social well-being. An understanding of codes of conduct and customs in the different environments in which individuals operate is essential. Civic competence, and particularly knowledge of social and political concepts and structures (democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights), equips individuals to engage in active and democratic participation;
- **sense of initiative and entrepreneurship** is the ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. The individual is aware of the context of his/her work and is able to seize opportunities that arise. It is the foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial

activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance;

- **cultural awareness and expression**, which involves appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media (music, performing arts, literature and the visual arts).

These key competences are all interdependent, and the emphasis in each case is on critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, decision taking and constructive management of feelings. The majority of the senior education programmes in Europe refer to the eight key competences for lifelong learning as stated above.

A specific case will be the **key competences for senior education professionals and the role of the senior education providers.**

In today's world more and more seniors are still involved in the labour market due to the retirement age increase and other factors. The statistics presented at the Grundtvig, a decade of European innovation in adult learning Conference in 2010 show that the employment rate of older workers is projected to increase sharply from 40 % in 2004 for the EU25 to 47 % by 2010 and 59 % in 2025: this is well in excess of the 50 % Lisbon target that is projected to be reached by 2013. The projection reflects the observed increase in employment rates of older workers in recent years (up by 4 percentage points since 2000).

Reviewing the state-of-the-art in contemporary European societies there are two main groups of senior learners that are to be distinguished: a) those who are still on the job (senior education professionals involved in the labour market), and b) those who are fully retired.

Hence the educational needs of these two main groups of seniors will differ and have to be taken into consideration when designing the content of the training programmes and courses.

This raises the question about the set of key competences that can be used to develop competence profiles for particular functions or individuals in a senior education institute.

In a recent study of 2010 by European Commission, DG EAC, each competence profile is seen as a combination of three elements brought together (B.J. Buiskool, S.D. Broek, J.A. van Lakerveld, G.K. Zarifis, M. Osborne, 2010, p.10).

The first one refers to the repertoire of activities, i.e. the actual actions someone is supposed to be able to execute. The second refers to the context in which the person

is assumed to take the actions. Moreover, it deals with the level of responsibility to be attributed to the particular profile of the professional. This level of responsibility depends on the context in which the professional is working and the level of autonomy with which the activities should be carried out. The third and last refers to the competences needed to carry out these activities. By determining the context, selecting the activities one needs to carry out, and selecting the competences needed, a specific competence profile can be developed for a specific position.

Together with the set of key competences, European tools (ECTS,[83] ECVET[84] and EQARF/EQAVET)[85] can be used to set the duration of the modules and programmes and compare them to each other. The set of key competences determines the content; the European tools determine the weight and duration of the educational programme delivering the content.

The research also notes that the set of key competences can be used to cluster the training courses provided within the Grundtvig programme, to give them a common focus, to compare them and to identify blank spots. This could also become a basis for the analysis of needs as a starting point for developing appropriate modules and courses around some of the identified competences (Ibid., p.15).

6.4. OTHER SENIOR EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN EUROPE

Contemporary scientists believe that society rests on a set of common values, knowledge and skills. Education has always played an important part in transferring these from generation to generation. The increased life longevity and the rapid social, technological and cultural changes, mean that there is a more defined need for updating and upgrading the senior education programmes and their content in particular. One thing is clear: all types of learning via formal, non-formal and informal education have a significant role in this complex process.

Seniors are not a unified group: they have different degrees of physical, social and psychological dependency. Key areas for learning during this phase of life may include life skills, personal finance, physical and mental health, use of information

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83. http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/ects_en.htm. European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System.

84. http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/ecvet_en.htm - European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training.

85. www.eqavet.eu - European Quality Assurance Reference Framework.

and communication technologies, active citizenship, as well as broader learning (e.g. Arts, Culture, Philosophy) to do with purpose and meaning in life.

There are also particular issues related to gender and living on one's own. There might be cases where seniors need to acquire new skills like cooking for men and financial management (managing personal finances) for women. They may also have to deal with reduced mobility, hearing loss, low-vision and other issues coming with the age, resulting in some degree of dependence. Therefore good and efficient educational content would include attention to all these issues: meaning and purpose, health and finance, communication (including ICT skills), citizenship, and active aging.

In recent years there has been a trend in developing new programmes aimed at specific topics. An interesting approach is presented, such as:

1. Financial literacy.[86] Levels of numeracy and financial literacy are known to be low among the adult population generally, and especially among older people who received less relevant education at school, and those who have had little need to maintain their skills during their adult lives. However, at the point of retirement most people face the need to manage money in new ways, and make more complex financial decisions than in their previous lives.

2. Health literacy matters to people at all stages of life, but is particularly important for the third age. Here an understanding of healthy lifestyles, diet and exercise, as well as the ability to understand medical treatments and choices, becomes critical to quality of life, and can defer the onset of serious dependency. This is more than an issue of passing on formal information: a critical dimension is important to understanding choices and to maintaining independence and autonomy.

3. Information and communication technology. In recent years, developments in ICT, and especially social networking, have provided a new means to achieve these purposes, but for many people 'traditional' educational routes may be more acceptable, either because of lack of technical skills, or preference for face-to-face contact. It is also likely that face-to-face education is more effective in promoting social cohesion. Indeed, online social net-

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86. LEARN ABOUT MONEY: Learn About Money addresses the need for better financial education amongst adults, providing a bridge between basic money handling skills and the information provided by financial products and advisors. http://www.life-academy.co.uk/.

working can be socially divisive, promoting ever more specialised global communities, while people become increasingly isolated from their immediate neighbours. By far the largest group of older learners (in formal and informal learning) are studying some aspect of IT. 'Computer skills' account for 40 per cent of those learning over 55 (a proportion which rises progressively with age, and is highest among the retired). It is likely that the motivations here include keeping up with younger generations, and developing the skills to communicate with remote family and friends, as well as the development of communication/ literacy skills, and the pursuit of social contact through a socially acceptable 'subject'.

4. A fourth area of learning of particular importance to older people is learning for citizenship, across a spectrum from the formal (understanding the workings of local and national democracy and how to influence policy) to much less formal processes of engagement in the local community and influencing decisions there. People in the third age are particularly well placed to contribute to political processes (both formal and informal) because of their life experience, and because they often have more time available. Some will seek influence over issues specifically affecting older people; others will seek a voice as citizens in broader debates about social cohesion, neighbourhood planning, or national politics, and others will simply want to keep in touch with what is going on in the world, without wishing to actively intervene.

5. A further issue is caring. This involves the training of both paid and 'voluntary' careers. The training of staff clearly has a major influence on the quality of life of those in residential care, and in recent years great efforts have been made to raise the skills levels of staff in residential care homes. However, a much larger proportion of care is provided by relatives, usually themselves in the third age, looking after dependent spouses or parents. Little training is available to assist them in carrying out this demanding task.

A review of the current practices has defined a number of commonalities with regard to the classes offered and namely:

• Art
• Active ageing

- Personal finance (economics, business)
- ICT skills, incl. computer courses, Internet, Skype and other applications
- Creative arts and crafts (e.g. Book Arts, Ceramics, Drawing/Painting, Fibers, Metals, Wood or Sculpture).
- Learn more about architecture
- Literature
- Music and learning a musical instrument
- Photography
- Dancing
- Health (and Fitness) e.g. Exercise your Body
- Home and Garden
- History
- Languages
- (Intercultural) Communication Skills
- Theatre and Drama
- Travel
- Writing
- Special events including discussion clubs, fora, trips, and lectures.

A common practice is a multi-disciplinary programme combining care, research and education, e.g. in Geriatric Medicine.

Some common health topics would include for example:

- Exercises (Physically Active Aging)
- Specific age-related diseases and illnesses (e.g. Dementia)
- Depression in seniors
- Psychological health via mental and intellectual stimulation
- Medication and medicines
- Medical and health services
- Prevention
- Pain and palliative care
- Health topics (e.g. body and oral health)

Scientists like Dr Gene Cohen in the USA (alongside many others) point to the benefits for older people of ongoing mental and intellectual stimulation offered by participation in learning and the ability of the brain to be regenerated (Cohen, 2000).

6.5. SENIOR EDUCATION PROGRAMMES: FORMS AND MODE OF DELIVERY

Adult education takes place in courses, and in many cases these courses are part of a bigger programme. Creating and developing these programmes is a distinct field of activity, including the following activities: curriculum design at module and programme level; development of programmes that are flexible in terms of mode (full-time/part-time); timing (modularity) and location (face-to-face/distance/mixed), taking into account adults' personal situations (B.J. Buiskool, S.D. Broek, J.A. van Lakerveld, G.K. Zarifis, M. Osborne, 2010).

The programmes and the courses can be delivered in various forms of learning modes:

- Formal
- Non-formal
- Informal, or
- A mixture of the above
- The programmes and the courses can be divided into groups depending on the way of attendance:

  - participatory
  - non-participatory
  - mixed, such as blended learning, e.g. F2F and online together

- Outcomes and mode of delivery: from credit to non-credit courses, discussion groups, special events and trips

  - Credit courses
  - Credit courses on a non-credit basis: when seniors attend credit courses on a non-credit basis without sitting for tests or being given assignments
  - Non-credit courses /classes e.g. where seniors join other seniors learning art, history, music, languages, computers, etc. These may also include discussion-based courses.
  - Discussion groups, special events and trips

- The content and format of the courses

  - formal
  - informal

The content and delivery of the senior education programmes and courses have progressed featuring some key issues and aspects, such as:

- Planned courses with specific learning outcomes and assessment records through monitoring the progress performance.
- Focus on collaborative learning, self-conducted and situated learning, and problem-solving approaches to learning.
- Most training programmes take into consideration the special needs of senior learners.
- Adapting the content to the individual needs of senior learners and diversification of activities.
- Offering practical subjects to the senior learners, where learners could bring their needs and experiences.
- Teach skills and aptitudes for tolerance, critical and constructive attitudes, learning to learn and be adaptive to changes.
- Develop self-esteem and better interpersonal, intercultural and communication skills.

The design of the training programmes in general cater for:

- acquisition of specific competences and skills
- developing strategies of communication
- better planning and organization of personal time of the learner
- encouraging creativity
- improving learner's communications with others
- autonomous learning and autonomy development
- improved self-esteem and self-confidence of the learners
- awareness and knowledge of other countries, cultures, customs and traditions
- better communication in a multilingual and multicultural society, increased participation.

As it was noted by the Latvian project partners, properly selected methods of work with seniors have an impact on the reception of the contents and result in a greater willingness to participate in the class, more courage, commitment, and assertiveness.

The **good practices** in institutions have made provisions for their staff with a view to:

- Making the trainers to know more about the experiences and needs of the learners.
- Use of appropriate methods that motivate, activate and encourage collaborative learning.
- Train the trainers in the necessary didactical, methodical and social skills and competences how to work with this specific target group.
- Select training material appropriate for the age group.
- Provide learners with rationale, justification and proofs why learning will improve their personal, interpersonal and communication skills.
- Bring in cultural aspects in the training provision.
- Encourage participation, empowerment, inclusion and development of interpersonal and intercultural skills.
- Apply techniques to motivate senior learners to learn.

6.6. LEARNERS' MOTIVATION

For most people, learning patterns change with age. The NIACE survey data shows that those who continue to learn are more likely to study for a long time (studying the subject for more than three years); to be learning at home, or at an adult education centre (rather than an formal education college or university); and on a course either provided 'free' or paid for themselves. They are less likely to be learning for employment, or for formal qualifications, and more likely to cite personal and social motivations (Aldridge & Tuckett 2007).

When it comes to motivation it must be noted that in most cases the seniors who attend different courses/classes are interested in learning for the joy of learning, as well as in communicating with their peers in the learning process, and not in getting a grade, certificate, credits, or diploma.

Staying mentally active is vital for quality of life, active aging and meeting the challenges of a changing world, and creates greater opportunities for seniors' active citizenship, inclusion and participation in society, fighting isolation and exclusion in later life, alongside with particular skills development, such as:

- problem-solving skills
- memory skills
- cognitive skills

- communication skills
- intercultural skills
- creative skills.

The above-stated skills help the participants to gain the confidence and support necessary to navigate today's complex life and its challenges, to get involved and stay active, and ensure their well-being and better quality of life.

Senior education programmes principally address the interests and needs of the participants reflecting the person's wellness, seen in its different aspects, such as:

- social
- emotional
- physical
- environmental
- intellectual
- spiritual, and
- occupational (where appropriate).

In addition to the above, other seniors' interests and needs (e.g. lifestyle) are also addressed.

As far as tutors and trainers are concerned, in order to achieve greater motivation of the learners, senior education programmes shall be applied with understanding of the trainees' specifics, such as age characteristics, taking into consideration the different learning styles, the appropriate pace of the training, as well as the defined need courses to be delivered with human care and compassion, and involving the needed competence and skills in dealing with the target group.

Surveys by major senior-oriented organisations across Europe and EU-supported projects provide numerous testimonies from older people of the value and benefit engagement in learning brings.

As far as involvement is concerned the Peer Learning Activity (PLA) working group on adult learning, organised jointly by the European Commission, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and the National Research and Development Centre (NRDC), has pointed out a number of key issues, which would refer to the training programmes both in terms of content and delivery including:

- Learner engagement - getting in
- Learner persistence – staying on
- Learner progression/achievement – getting on
- Learner progression - moving on
- Overall recording and monitoring

Or, in other words:

- Engaging learners;
- Supporting learner persistence;
- Measuring learner achievement;
- Recording learner achievement;[87]

The Integration to Inclusion (I2I) project gives[88] some examples (overview of good ideas and practices) to empower older people of highest risk of social exclusion, such as single older people from ethnic minorities, older persons with disabilities or chronic diseases, older persons in need of support and care, older women affected by poverty and older persons threatened by homelessness.

It addresses burning issues, such as:

- Poverty
- Loneliness (isolation)
- Gender (with specific risks for women and men)
- Very old age
- Poor health state
- Migration background
- Loss of job
- Poor access to services (e. g. ICT, means of transport).

The above have become rather common in today's ageing Europe, in the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies across Europe, and need careful consideration and special attention when designing the senior education programmes, the topics and the content of the courses.

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87. Summary Report on the Peer Learning Activity on One Step Up, European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, London, 20 – 22 April 2009)
88. http://www.i2i-project.net/index.php.

6.7. CONCLUSIONS

The concept of lifelong learning is seen as a leading concept of the century. It overcomes the traditional separation and even opposition between primary, basic and continuing education. Nowadays training is related to the concept of a learning society to ensure equal learning opportunities for all. Senior education, as an integral part of the lifelong learning concept, is not limited to providing higher skills, retraining or upgrading older. It offers a second or third chance, ensures continuous improvement and self-improvement of the individual. The integration between formal and informal education allows every citizen to study in different educational situations, be an active participant in this process, and have a role both as a student and as a teacher in a learning community. The concept of lifelong learning and senior education provides for comprehensive education from early childhood to old age.

In general senior education programmes and courses shall offer opportunities for seniors to

- actively engage their minds, and
- connect with each other through participatory learning experiences.

In any case the senior education programmes and courses shall be dependent on the interests and the talents of the members.

As stated in the *It is always a good time to learn* 2007 Action Plan on adult learning, which is applicable to senior education as well, it is a

key challenge for adult learning is to deliver a service that simultaneously meets the needs of the adult learner, provides high quality responses to the needs of the labour market and society and stimulates further demand.

As further stated in the Action Plan

Quality of provision is affected by policy, resources, accommodation and a host of other factors, but the key factor is the quality of the staff involved in delivery. So far in many Member States little attention has been paid to the training (initial and continuing), the status and the payment of adult learning staff. Adult learning staff in this context is not limited to teachers and trainers but includes management, guidance personnel, mentors and administration. They have to be able to address the different needs of the specific groups. The quality of staff is crucial in motivating adult learners to participate.

To further interpret the 2007 Action Plan section regarding the governance, good governance in senior education providers shall be characterised by:

- focus on the senior learner;
- innovative approach to learning;
- effective needs analysis;
- efficient administration systems and appropriate allocation of resources;
- professional staffing;
- quality assurance mechanisms for providers;
- strong evidence-based monitoring and evaluation systems within national frameworks;
- close relations with other educational areas and bodies.

With a view to seniors' perspective the programmes shall:

- address their needs
- better serve their personal, social and economic needs
- ensure their own well-being and quality of life
- help in updating their skills or knowledge, acquiring new knowledge, understanding and using new technologies, encouraging active ageing and intergenerational engagement.

Intergenerational learning has become an increasingly important issue in this respect.

Senior education and lifelong learning have now become a reality, a pathway to continually adapt to the requirements and face the challenges of a changing world.

The role of the Grundtvig programme of the EU has been constantly increasing in this respect. The Grundtvig programmes were designed to encourage the European dimension of lifelong learning, and encompasses all levels and sectors of adult education and all forms of learning: formal, non-formal and informal. Grundtvig "Success stories" respond to educational challenges of an aging population in Europe and help provide adults with pathways to improving their knowledge and competences (European Commission 2007).

Below are some ideas for guidelines to the future development of good practice, presented by Anne-Sophie Parent, Director of AGE, at the *Grundtvig, a decade of European innovation in adult learning* Conference, January 2010, and namely:

- Education and training of seniors should be considered a priority to respond to the demographic challenge.

- Recognise the diversity of the senior population and respect and value their individuality in the education and training on offer.
- Learning in later life can take place in a variety of contexts and visibility of older adults in a range of education and training contexts should be stressed and encouraged.
- Avoid making assumptions about the potential and motivation of older people to become learners at any age.
- Pedagogical approaches should make use of the life experience of older adults.
- Acknowledge that education, training and learning take place against the background of rapidly changing socio-economic and political world scenario.
- Be receptive to new ideas, be prepared to take on new challenges and recognise changing role that older people are coming to play in society.
- The need for projects that specifically address the needs of older learners, and in particular, vulnerable groups, such as older women, migrants, socially excluded elders, as well as projects that consider the potential and scope for intergenerational learning and cooperation.

6.8. EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Further to the research on the senior education programmes in Europe described in 6.4 above, the consortium decided on additional cross-country research to be conducted, reviewing the most common senior education courses in the 7 partner countries.

The purpose of this study was to find the commonalities among the most-widely offered and delivered senior courses (as part of a programme or offered independently) in the partners' countries, and include the data processed in the Chapter 6: Content, alongside with the already conducted EU-wide research.

The suggested rationale was findings to be related and referred to:[89]

a. The 8 Key Competences for Lifelong Learning of the EU, and
b. The Quality of Life dimensions, as already defined and specified by this project.

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89. See Annex 1: Template used with an example for the cross-country research and report at the end of this document.

The idea was not just to further exemplify and provide more data for this chapter, but also to use the relevant information collected through this research in other chapters (e.g. Pedagogy) to exemplify and justify the statements and conclusions made.

Findings and conclusions: In terms of content areas the information and data collected throughout the research have defined ICT, Arts and Culture, Foreign Languages, and Physical Health as most common to which programs and courses refer to. Despite the course- and content-specific competences for lifelong learning, such as e.g. Digital competence and Communication in foreign languages, almost all courses offered are seen as developing key competences like Learning to learn, Social and civic competences, and last but not least, Cultural awareness and expression.

The above also refers to a great extent to the Quality of Life dimensions such as Physical Health, Psychological Health, Social, Increased participation, Perceived control, Personal growth, and Leisure.

Content and delivery: Senior learners principally prefer to focus more on practical rather than on theoretical aspects and issues, as they do not need that much of a theoretical background, given their life skills, knowledge and sometimes experiences in different areas, topics and subjects. Therefore, the most common forms of delivery are seminars, workshops, practical activities, and topic-based discussions, and less preferred are lectures and presentations.

The most popular common courses in the partners' countries include:

1. ICT: Most widely-offered are the ICT courses (in all countries) as they reflect a declared need for the use of new technology and increased digital competence. They are generally at Basic and Intermediate level. Seniors themselves see the ICT skills development and practical use of new technologies as a prerequisite for improving their QoL, increased social participation, and active aging. Specific issues in terms of content related to this group are: using the Internet and looking for specific for information; email communication; using the Social media: Skype, Facebook, Google +, You Tube, LinkedIn, etc., especially with those who have friends and relatives away (overcoming the physical distance); tackling with decreased mobility and using web-based services such as e-payment systems, e-services, e-support, e-government, e-taxation. Other examples provided by partners include use of web services for banking and finance,

buying tickets, accessing civil services, Google maps and applications, photo-albums such as Picasa, participation in forums, social networks, etc. Some other would also include modern technology devices (mobile phones, tablets and the relevant mobile applications); others would refer to accessibility tools for disabled, e.g. people with low vision and hearing loss.

2. Languages with a focus on Foreign Languages. Foreign language learning refers mainly to most widely-used European languages such as English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. In terms of methodology and delivery these courses are based on the communicative approach, topic-based activities, and avoid the grammar-translation method, with the focus on conversational activities, everyday life and real-life communication between people. The content is commonly based around topics like: Greetings and getting to know each other; Food and eating out; Health; Housing; Shopping; Family and friendship; Time and weather; Travel; Work; Leisure and hobbies. Besides the Communication in Foreign Languages as one of the Key Competence for Lifelong Learning these courses also contribute to other competences such as Communication in the mother tongue, Digital competence, Learning to learn, Cultural awareness and expression, Social and civic competences.

3. Arts and Culture: The activities include mostly drama, theatre, singing, dancing, folklore, creative arts and handicrafts. The latter seem to be very well-accepted by seniors and examples of content include mosaic, textile dyeing, felt-making, sewing courses, glass painting, icon painting, tiffany techniques, patchwork, mandala courses, landscape painting, right side brain drawing techniques, and bead jewellery making.

4. Physical Health (physical education, sports and sport-oriented activities, physical and related exercises, e.g. Yoga, Swimming, Nordic walking, Gymnastics). These courses and their outcomes contribute also to the improvement of Psychological/Mental Health of seniors, both areas being interrelated.

There is an interesting phenomenon in combining both Arts and Culture with Physical Health in activities such as singing and dancing in senior dance groups, folklore, aerobics-type dancing, hydrobics and aqua jogging.

Also popular, though depending on other circumstances, are courses for self-awareness (e.g. General Gerontology); Rural/Eco/Green Tourism Entrepreneurship which refers to the Lifelong Learning Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship key competence (for developing entrepreneurial skills and personal growth); Life Skills for Seniors (for developing skills like: Problem solving; Critical thinking and decision making; Self-management skills; Self-awareness building skills, Interpersonal relationship and Communication skills; Empathy; Coping with stress and emotions).

Level: The level of the courses (e.g. Basic/Intermediate/Advanced) varies and is dependent on the previous knowledge, experience, competences and skills of the seniors attending.

Educational settings, providers and forms of delivery: The educational settings where senior courses are provided are mostly non-formal, though formal and informal happen as well. The type of providers varies a lot. These include universities and especially the Universities of the Third Age, who play a big role in senior education (e.g. 95 % of the universities in Spain have educational programmes for the elderly). Other establishments, both public and private, are colleges (with adult, further and continuing education profiles); schools, adult education centres, community centres, libraries, seniors' associations, seniors' day centres and clubs, NGOs, local and regional authorities/governments, and last but not least - social responsibility and other relevant projects at all levels.

Credit vs. Non-Credit courses, Testing and Certification: The courses offered by each institution are different, some of them are accredited and others are not. In general most courses are non-credit and there is little formal assessment/testing for certification. At that age senior learners are not generally interested in formal certification. Certificates of attendance are most common in principle.

Conclusion: Though the content and delivery of senior education courses vary, the main aim is seniors to acquire knowledge, competences and skills to face the challenges of today's world and the changes that happen in their lives. Major issues to be addressed are the changes in their own body, the changes in seniors' family and relationships, the digital divide, the new technology developments, alongside with the clearly identified and declared need to understand and be part of the society and community, to feel integrated and adopt positive attitudes, to provide and receive support, in order to stay active and improve their quality of life.

6.9. EXPERIENCES AND GOOD PRACTISES

A Case Study on Intergenerational Learning[90]

Project: "Elderly people now online: school in the afternoon project"

Introduction

The political changes that have taken place since 1989, the transition to a market economy and the restructuring of the Bulgarian economy alongside with the economic crisis have led to a big migration in the Bulgarian society. Many, mostly young people, migrated to bigger cities looking for a job, and almost 10 per cent of the population left the country to live, work or study abroad. This process has led to a breakdown in the communication between generations and the growing need of the elderly people to find alternative ways to be in contact with their children and relatives who are in other parts of the country or abroad. The poor economic status of the elderly has clearly identified the need for some cheaper or free options of staying in touch with their children and grandchildren using new technology and tools like the Internet and Skype in particular.

Content

Retired elderly people from the village of Patalenitsa, District of Pazardjik, Bulgaria, returned to school to learn how to work with the internet-based communication programme Skype. The "School in the afternoon" project was implemented with the assistance of the Workshop for Civic Initiatives Foundation (WCIF). The idea came simultaneously both from the retired elderly and from the school board.

The programme *Skype Conversation in Real Time* (children train grandparents to use Skype) was focused on computer literacy and use of Skype. It envisaged a two-week training in the local school computer lab. The programme was developed by a team of pedagogues, including the school director Mr. Nikola Kolev, who guided the training process.[91]

The trainers themselves were schoolchildren and the appointed 'senior trainers' were young teenagers from the Computer Studies class, supervised by their ICT teacher Ms Yuliana Peeva.

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90. Konstantin Velichkov Medium School, village of Patalenitsa, District of Pazardjik.
91. A video material can be found at: http://www.vbox7.com/play:fb40624d.

This was the second 'wave' of retired elderly trainees after 10 elderly completed the computer literacy course last year. The Intergenerational Learning initiative has become increasingly popular, thanks to the local Senior Club, where the enrolment takes place.

The second 'wave' in 2011 was successfully completed by another 9 seniors, the eldest being 69 years old. The certificates were given out at a special awarding ceremony.

Conclusion

The study on seniors' quality of life reveals that it is not only important to ensure active aging, but also to have a dignified participation in modern society.

Loneliness has a psychological dimension which affects people's attitude towards their life and has important influence on their behaviour. Seniors often tend to express negative feelings and the feeling of being lonely, which is a result of the combination of the ageing process and social stereotypes, both influencing their quality of life. Therefore, loneliness is considered a critical indicator in estimating the quality of life and vice versa. The training proved that the communication opportunities ICT offers can help older people to overcome their loneliness; that the elderly have a need to use modern computer technology, and, last but not least, that the school teachers and children can help them achieve this knowledge.

On the whole, this intergenerational learning environment on the one hand allowed the school children trainers to share their knowledge and acquired skills, and on the other hand helped the retired elderly trainees to acquire some competences and skills, allowing them to communicate better with the young, as well as building a positive attitude to new technology and innovations, and to continuously improve their knowledge and skills.

University of the Third Age in Poland: Course structure[92]

Introduction

The demographic changes alter the European societies. The population of the European Union is aging. This is connected with decreased mortality and the ensuing increase in life expectancy. Since 1960, the average life expectancy lengthened

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92. Responsible for this study are Alina Gil and the members of the research team of the Jan Dlugosz University in Czestochowa, Poland.

by eight years. Today Europeans are living longer and healthier than ever before.

A larger number of healthy and active elderly people is not only the fact that we should treat as a social achievement, but is also important when it comes to social resources. Older adults have significant care needs, but also they have extensive knowledge and experience, the time and energy and their own financial resources so that they can make a significant contribution to contemporary society as citizens, volunteers, employees, family members and consumers. Active aging not only improves the quality of individuals' life, but also offers many benefits for the whole society.

University of the Third Age in Poland: organisation

Since the year 2000 we have observed a dynamic growth of the number of Third Age Universities in Poland. The development of these institutions on an unprecedented scale in Poland introduced a new quality of their functioning and created a situation in which UTAs are perceived by other organisations as important partners in their efforts to the local community. These Universities represent the needs of seniors and enable the exchange of experiences.

Taking into account the organisational and legal forms in Poland, we distinguish three basic types of UTA:

- operating within the association or foundation
- operating within the structures of higher education
- operating within the local government units.

Analyzing the financial situation of Universities of the Third Age in Poland, it should be noticed that their activity uses largely the membership fees. This applies to all UTA, irrespective of their legal form. This means that even in the case of UTA structures operating at the university or in the framework of the local government units, the contributions paid by students are an important part of their activities financing.

Most of Universities of the Third Age in Poland use non-financial forms of support, such as sharing meeting rooms or offices, which significantly reduce their operating costs.

In addition to membership fees, significant for the functioning of UTA are also:

- subsidies of institutions
- donations
- the public generosity.

UTA is unlikely to benefit from full-time employees, sometimes it's only one person employed (sometimes even part-time). Some institutions employ the staff on the basis of civil law contracts. However, generally the basis for the functioning of most of the UTAs is the work of volunteers.

UTA is extremely valuable for development of civil society institutions. On the other hand, the limited financial resources hinder the development of their activities, and the lack of full-time employees - to raise funds through projects that require professional preparation and settlement.

University of the Third Age Czestochowa

Almost 20 years ago a group of people experiencing the satisfaction of making social and cultural activities met. These people were looking for an idea for the third stage of life. That was the beginning of the University of the Third Age at the Faculty of Pedagogy of the Jan Dlugosz University in Czestochowa. At the moment, it counts 783 people, including 653 women and 130 men, the average age is 70 years, 255 people among the participants have higher education level, 444 secondary, 60 technical and 24 elementary.

Structure:
The University of the Third Age in Czestochowa structure is:

- Head of the UTA
- Secretariat of the UTA
- Student government
- There are lectures and activities like:
- Languages courses (German, English, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian)
- Computer Classes
- General development gymnastics
- Yoga
- Swimming
- Gym
- Table Tennis

- Movement and dance classes
- Step-aerobics
- Vocal team
- Section bridge – Chess
- Astronomy Section
- Photo Team
- Crafts
- Nutrition

Activities

Activities conducted at UTA in Czestochowa deepen seniors' knowledge, give them the opportunity to meet new people, and above all, care for their physical and mental health. The activities also allow seniors to achieve some independence. UTA students eagerly participate in lectures, in particular: on literature, history, geography, law, medicine, philosophy, and psychology.

For example, recently some seniors, influenced by the lectures, have taken science courses in Philosophy at AJD. Seniors appreciate the commitment of the lecturers, their time and energy which they devote for them. Foreign language lessons such as: English, German, French, Russian, Italian and more recently Spanish are extremely popular at UTA. Language classes are conducted at several levels depending on advancement level of the audience.

Activities in small groups are also very popular at the UTA in Czestochowa. There are workshops, sections or units dealing with specific topics. In particular they are: bridge team, the team 'nutritionists', needlework section, the photo team. During these meetings seniors develop their hobby, which until now they didn't pursue due to lack of time. This allows them not only develop in a specific area, but also feel the satisfaction with shared passion and joy resulting with common work. Seniors attending UTA are very interested in computer and Internet courses.

The activities prevent digital exclusion of seniors, provide access to information, expand opportunities to express themselves, to show their own opinion on the thematic forum, which is also associated with an increase of self-esteem. Computer courses make it possible to feel themselves as a part of the information society. Different forms of physical activities of seniors are also very important kind of courses at the UTA in Czestochowa.

Exercises are conducted as a recreational activity - general development gymnastics, swimming, wrestling, yoga, rhythmic and dance activities. It is a recipe for

long youth, it slows down the process of aging, it is a chance to the maintenance of their independence and capacity to make decisions about their life. We shouldn't forget about the forms of exercises such as walking outside, Nordic Walking, trips to nature. The activities take place at any time of the year - the time of rain, frost and heat. Especially Nordic Walking is a safe and recently very appreciated by seniors form of physical activity. We should also mention integrative activities, which seniors assign high priority. These meetings give the opportunity to spend time together, cshare common experience of everyday joys, sorrows and concerns, and seek solutions to difficult problems for them. Knowledge contained in such meetings often turn into long-term friendships, fulfilling life outside. These are meetings such as Christmas, Easter, having a festive setting. Representatives of younger generation, such as seniors grandchildren are invited at some meetings. Such meetings develop intergenerational relationships.

in recent years, the problem is the lack of a large number of volunteers and people who want to attend University. Seniors can join the UTA only when a place becomes available. There is a limit of the places for the seniors.

Recommendations

According to UTA seniors, active aging with UTA is making the most of many opportunities arising from longer life, in the field of physical, social, and professional activity. They emphasise that it helps to improve not only the quality of their lives, but also brings many benefits to the whole society. UTA therefore performs an important range of social policy. Universities of the Third Age, in order to meet the challenges facing them should become equal partners of the central and local governments in creating and implementing long-term policy concerning seniors. UTA in Czestochowa largely performs the demands issued by the organising committee of the celebration of the year 2012 as the year of UTA in Poland.

Inter alia supports all forms of seniors' self-help such as, for example, volunteering and cooperation with younger generation; developing and promoting all forms of legal advice, consumer, psychological and vocational senior-friendly social activity as long as possible. Building a positive image of older people as a self-contained, fully-fledged and active citizens, affecting the social, political and cultural state; developing advocacy and promotion of the rights of senior citizens to the environment of public administration, health services, social policy institutions. Undoubtedly, it should work on strengthening further cooperation with local institutions and local self-government authorities.

ICT for seniors[93]

Introduction

One of the greatest challenges for European society today is the dramatic increase of an ageing population and the fast technology that is separating the elderly from the younger generation. Due to these expeditious changes in technology, seniors feel more pressured to learn to cope with the changes. According to a 2008 survey, Finland ranked seventh among Europe's leading internet users.

Because of the increasing ageing community in Finland, every day more and more people end up living alone. Information technology is also on the increase. What lies ahead for the future of these seniors living alone with this new technology? Where can they get help? In recent years, most services such as banks, health care, libraries, food supplies, and transport can all be accessed by internet. Social media can also make the life of seniors a lot easier.

The main objective is to support the daily welfare of seniors through Information Computer Technology. It is in the interest of the seniors themselves to be able to access these services by themselves without the aid of family members or the health care department and through ICT they can access these services that the municipality provides. Many seniors, because of hearing or other ailments may have difficulty communicating by telephone so ICT is a good alternative for emailing and booking appointments and therefore reducing the risk of miscommunication.

ICT can also be a great help in preventing early stage memory loss. Through ICT the brain is exercised and it gives seniors an opportunity to enrich their social life and the ability to continue learning with others. Managing their own computer can help to break the stereotype notion that seniors are too old to learn new technologies.

In the case of immigrant seniors, friends and family may live very long distances away adding to the loneliness and depression which most immigrant seniors feel. ICT is a low cost tool that can fill that void and enhance communication fulfilling the life of the senior.

Most immigrant seniors read online articles and news about current events in their own country in their own mother tongue. When the can use it Internet is a source of information for everything, where they can find a variety of food recipes or through social media lives are enhanced by helping them to widen their social life to include old friends, acquaintances and relatives. They can print, watch videos and read maps through Internet.

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93. Cecil Issakainen, University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education, Finland.

Content

The University of Helsinki, Palmenia Center for Continuing Education began teaching ICT for seniors in 2008 with a total of 32 students. In 2012, in joint partnership with the Helsinki Municipality Social Welfare Department, we formed 3 small groups with a total of 29 seniors. There were 19 Africans (8 men and 11 women), 3 Asians and 7 Finns. The immigrants had 2 hours per week up to the present while the Finns had 3 hours per week for 2 months. During the process, we had at least 5 tutors who participated regularly. The immigrant groups continued until teaching started with the basic ICT programme for beginners and an advanced ICT programme tailored for seniors with computer experience of at least one year. All the participants were Europeans and after 3 months, almost 50 % volunteered to be tutors in the Helsinki Municipality Social Welfare Department, and some went to volunteer for non-governmental organisations.

Since September last year, seniors meet in Helsinki City Social Welfare for the Elderly, Syytie Services centre, in cooperation with the University of Helsinki. There are 8 senior men from Somalia, Bangladesh and Palestine. The class is held every Monday for 1.5 hours. We have noticed that there are many good practices during the group meetings.

From September to November, the University of Helsinki, Palmenia Center for Continuing Education in cooperation with the Helsinki City Social Welfare for the Elderly, held ICT classes for seniors with a group of 13, a mixture of native Finns and immigrants from the Philippines with ages ranging from 65 to 89 years old. The class was once a week for two and half hours at a time.

Basic ICT for seniors

Introduce computer uses, different programmes, accessories programmes, add-ins and other computer devices such as a printer.

1. Skype for communication
2. Internet
3. Online maps (Google maps, Helsinki route map and Helsinki transport map)
4. Online banking
5. Online reservation (health care reservation, private doctor's appointment)
6. Creating email and email uses
7. Online purchasing (tickets)
8. Online matter (Finland health services, post office services)
9. Folders and files
10. Ergonomic

Recommendations

The multicultural group has helped the participants to appreciate and respect other cultures reducing any preconceived prejudices. It is often difficult for immigrants to get to know local people and this kind of course offers an occasion to meet native Finns and cooperate with them.

Men and women have been able to choose whether they would like to study together or separately. For women from e.g. Somalia, which has a Muslim culture, it has been much easier to be able to study in a group with only women. In a multicultural group, special needs (like religious needs: possibility to pray at a certain time) have also been taken into account. This has increased the motivation of some participants.

Also groups of small numbers have made learning much easier, since the teacher then has time for individual 'one-to-one' instruction. Teachers should respect and treat these students as individual people with unique backgrounds.

The duration of the meetings has been kept short and there has been a coffee break after about 45 minutes, during which the students, tutors and the teacher have had an opportunity to share their experiences concerning the course.

Serving snacks is one way of increasing motivation to participate in the class and the exchanging of experiences increases the self-confidence of participants.

Conclusion

There are great differences in culture, race, personality, life history, schooling, skills, functional capacity etc. among aged people, and a tailored education is extremely important because of the group's heterogeneity. So besides tailoring different kinds of education to offer this means also tailoring different pedagogical approaches/measures within certain educational courses.

Learning new skills usually takes aged people longer because the cognitive processes take more time and movements are slower. A teacher must be aware that younger people are usually fast in many aspects: speech, movements, reactions, etc.

Teachers must always bear in mind that an aged student may have poor sight or hearing or has some other physical ailment affecting their capacity or concentration in the classroom.

The involvement of the volunteer senior tutors in the class helps to avoid the marginalisation of students in the classroom. Their participation has helped not only the students, but has also had a good effect on the tutors themselves by giving them an opportunity to share their knowledge and experience with others.

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"It is always a good time to learn". 2008: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/adult/com558_en.pdf

Documentation of activities. Adult education trends and issues in Europe. European Association for the Education of Adults. Restricted tender N0. EAC/43/05 as completed by 11th of August 2006: http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/doc/trends_en.pdf.

European Commission. Grundtvig: Success Stories - Europe creates opportunities. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. 2007: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/grundtvig/success-stories_en.pdf.

Knowledge system for lifelong learning. Working groups on adult education: http://www.kslll.net/Peer-LearningClusters/clusterDetails.cfm?id=7.

Projects

The project LENA - Learning in the post-professional and empty nest phase - http://www.bia-net.org/lena

Project "LISA – Learning in Senior Age" wanted to expand already existing networks in Learning Regions which are focusing on learning in senior age. - http://www.bia-net.org/en/lisa.html

Project "Changing track at third age" - http://www.uni-ulm.de/LiLL/conf2000/beitraege/sa07.htm

Project "LARA – Learning, a response to aging" - http://www.bia-net.org/en/lara.html

EuBia Guide. Getting Older People Involved in Learning: http://www.bia-net.org/images/stories/eubia/pdf/eubiaguide/eubia-guide-en.pdf

Project Lattelecom "Be connected with Latvia": http://www.piesledzieslatvija.lv/lv/jaunakas-zinas/

i2i-Project "From Isolation to Inclusion": http://www.i2i-project.net/index.php

7. STAFF AND TRAINERS

Enikő Nagy

TREBAG Property and Projectmanagement Ltd. Hungary

7.1. INTRODUCTION

In the changing context of education and, specifically, in the learning procedure of older people, it is essential to notice the changes that can be seen in people who act as educators for this age group. It is not only the learning strategies moving from formal to non-formal and informal education, but also the expectation that educators should be the source of knowledge changing to an expectation that they will take a more facilitating or moderating role. The main interest of the institutions and organisations providing courses, training or non-formal education for the elderly is to be aware what roles adult educators can and have to take, what competences these people have to have to transfer knowledge successfully, where and how to recruit them, and how to keep them in the teaching system.

7.2. THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT OF TEACHING OLDER ADULTS

In classical terms, when we refer to education our first image from this word is usually a school or university with students and their teachers in a formal classroom. However, if we think about it twice, we realise that there is much more to learning than this. The stereotypical formal learning whose attributes were described above still has a big role to play, mainly in public education, but when we talk about adult education, and especially about the learning of older people, the shift from formal to non-formal and informal education has been significant in the past years. This is accompanied by constantly changing teaching and learning methods, new motiva-

tions and new sources of inspiration, more interaction between teachers and learners and, last but not least, the incorporation of media and ICT into learning. Therefore, adult educators need to adapt to these changes and redefine their roles according to new demands. They might have to shift from the role of being merely the 'source of knowledge' to that of a moderator, facilitator and even manager.

7.3. THE WAY OLDER ADULTS LEARN

In the education of older generations there is a significant difference in the way that learning happens when compared to that of institutionalised learning of the younger people. That is, learning is much more self-directed and self-determined. The learner knows much better what he or she would like to acquire and requires much more practical, relevant knowledge on the spot. In adult education this takes two main directions: learning in order to be better positioned in the job market, or learning to enrich knowledge in a field of interest which contributes to a better quality of life. With older people it is not very typical to study for professional reasons. Some people still work after retiring, but the usual reasons for learning are to enrich knowledge related to hobbies or something related to leisure time activities. In general, the main goal is enhancing quality of life.

The form that effective education for elderly people takes is also different. Only rarely it is in the framework of formal education, but normally it belongs to non-formal or informal education. Formal learning is structured learning, typically provided by an education or training institution leading to certification. Non-formal learning can be structured, but not necessarily provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning is non-structured learning mostly related to leisure time activities, family and hobbies, and typically does not lead to certification either.

7.4. THE CHANGING ROLES OF ADULT EDUCATORS

The changing demands and changing environment of adult education also bring us to the changes in the roles of adult educators. The classroom environment is not the only way to teach older people anymore and, besides emerging new venues, methods and learning styles, the roles of teachers are also changing. According to a

study entitled *Adult education trends and issues in Europe,*[94] six activity fields can be distinguished:

1. **Teaching** with its new challenges, more learner-centred approach, meeting the demands of the adult learners.
2. **Management**: in the adult teaching environment it is even more essential to take up this role and to be able to advertise, to create a market and to implement and make the courses sustainable, alongside managing the premises, staff and courses on a local, day-to day level.
3. **Counselling and guidance**: adult learners need support in analysing their learning needs and finding offers which meet their expectations. This includes checking information on learning offers and guiding learners throughout the learning process.
4. **Media use or ICT knowledge** is a modern requirement that teachers must meet today. It includes learning to use new software and media resources, being able to effectively apply some media techniques and being aware of the possibilities of the Internet, online platforms and social networking.
5. **Programme planning** can be more strategic, i.e., planning the education concept and the courses taught, etc; or it can be more operational, i.e., planning and implementing the courses on an everyday basis.
6. **Support** is everything that accompanies and supports the above mentioned activities.

An adult educator teaching the elderly might need to get involved in most of the above activities. This complex role requires various competences, some of which are very different from classical teachers.

7.5. COMPETENCES OF ADULT EDUCATORS

As was mentioned above, adult educators perform various roles and thus need to possess a wide range of competences to enable them to motivate older learners and transmit knowledge to them.

In a study prepared for the European Commission entitled *Key competences for adult learning professionals* (Contribution to the development of a reference

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94. http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/doc/trends_en.pdf

framework of key competences for adult learning professionals)[95] major competences of adult educators are listed.

The competences are divided into two types: generic competences which each person involved in adult education has to have (regardless whether they are involved in teaching, management, or consultancy, etc.); and specific competences which are required for a specific field of activity within adult education.

As generic competences are the ones which are applicable for all Al personnel, we only list these competences here:

A1) Personal competence in systematic reflection on one's own practice, learning and personal development: **being a fully autonomous lifelong learner**.

A2) Interpersonal competence in communicating and collaborating with adult learners, colleagues and stakeholders: **being a communicator, team player and networker.**

A3) Competence in being aware of and taking responsibility for the institutional setting in which adult learning takes place at all levels (institute, sector, the profession as such and society): **being responsible for the further development of adult learning.**

A4) Competence in making use of one's own subject-related expertise and the available learning resources: **being an expert.**

A5) Competence in making use of different learning methods, styles and techniques, including new media, being aware of new possibilities and e-skills and assessing them critically: **being able to deploy different learning methods, styles and techniques in working with adults.**

A6) Competence in empowering adult learners to learn and support themselves in their development into, or as, fully autonomous lifelong learners: **being a motivator.**

A7) Competence in dealing with group dynamics and heterogeneity in the background, learning needs, motivation and prior experience of adult learners: **being able to deal with heterogeneity and groups.**

The first three competences (A1-A3) deal with aspects relating to being a professional, while the last four competences (A4-A7) are more focused on pedagogical/didactical competences.[96]

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95. http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/doc/2010/keycomp.pdf
96. http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/doc/2010/keycomp.pdf

7.6. TEACHERS OF OLDER PEOPLE

It is obvious that the existence of all the above mentioned competences is not a realistic goal in most adult education environments, especially where older people are concerned. Mainly due to lack of support, adult education cannot, for the most part, rely on highly qualified professionals who maintain all the above competences and are experts both in their profession and in adult education. A lot of those who teach elderly people do it as their extra-occupational activity, as a second job, part of their original job, or even on a voluntary basis. These positions are most often not market- or profit-oriented and are insecure in the long term. Therefore a lot of new forms of teaching (and consequently new types of pedagogues) have appeared in older adult education.

Teachers: Although the changing roles of adult educators have been described, teachers who teach older adults are still often regarded as the mere source of knowledge and information. This is especially so in environments where teachers come from an academic background and where the environment, the venue and the positions themselves determine a highly hierarchical structure. This can be typical in a university setting where teachers from the university staff conduct the lessons and where they are regarded as models, or the pure embodiment of knowledge. In these contexts, teachers have a responsibility to establish a new basis for communication and interaction, and to encourage students to adopt a pro-active approach to the lessons.

Facilitators: Sometimes qualified teachers are not available for all the required courses, but still informal learning might happen. People who undertake the role of facilitating education in these cases are called facilitator or mentors.

There are various successful initiatives for training mentors in the educational field. Please take a look at the experience chapter on Sage project for an example of how mentors are trained to be facilitators who can encourage participation in active citizenship. Another outstanding example is a programme called Learning Champions, where mentors are trained to promote learning on a voluntary basis.[97]

Peer teaching: In informal and non-formal learning it is a very frequent case that there is not a nominated teacher who would act as the 'source of knowledge and information', but with or without the conduct of a facilitator, attendees learn from each other. With older adults it is often the case as with a lot of experience and knowledge behind they have the capacity and the possibility to transfer knowledge

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97. For more information, please look at: www.communitylearningchampions.org.uk.

to each other and also they are eager to listen to co-fellows. Nowadays, intergenerational learning is also very popular and is highly supported by eg. the European Union and has a great effect on both generations.

In the subchapters connected to this chapter you can read about the experiences and good practices of institutions of various parts of Europe.

7.7. CONCLUSIONS

Education in general, but even more of the older generations is in constant change and consequently the roles and activities of the teachers, trainers and facilitators who operate in this segment of the adult education need to be reconsidered. There have been various new fields where educators have to focus on with higher emphasis on communication and non-curricular activities with the elderly. In the subchapters useful information is given through case studies and European data description on the status and trends of adult educators in the specific partner countries of the project.

7.8. EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Spain[98]

Validating and admission

There is no specific qualification relating to teacher training for educators of seniors in Spain. Teachers of older students have to be lecturers in the University in which they teach. Participation requirements depend on the organisation/location of the Senior University in Spain.

A Master's in Gerontology is available; its objectives include developing the skills necessary to work as an educator of the elderly.

Position

The teachers participating in non-formal/informal/formal training of elderly are professionals whose main activity is with another institution or agency, such as

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98. M. Paz García Alegre, Senior Citizens University, Jaume I University, Castellón, Spain.

the University, a Health Centre, etc. They complement their work by also providing training for older people, as they have the necessary skills and competences to promote learning among the elderly. In this case, their participation is part time, and they receive payment. They must be graduates.

Quality assurance

The quality of teachers who teach the elderly is evaluated by each organisation. In our case, at Castellón Senior University, each teacher and the subject taught are evaluated by the students themselves every academic year.

Finland

Validating and admission

The teacher qualification for teachers of the elderly is the same as for all adult education: mostly Masters degree, sometimes Bachelors degree and for some purposes another second level degree (e.g. teachers for physical exercise, handicrafts, art etc.). The pedagogical qualification is not required but very much recommended. The teachers are trained in universities as all other teachers, those with the second level degree also in other training institutes.

Position

Most senior trainings are arranged by municipal Adult Education Centres. In Finland, there is a Centre in every municipality, and the teachers are paid by the municipality. Most teachers in Adult Education Centres work part-time. Very often they have a full-time job elsewhere, mostly in schools (most adult teachers are also qualified subject teachers). Working as a volunteer is rare in Finland. Some third sector organisations also arrange training for seniors, and they get their funding mostly from the state.

Quality assurance

The quality assurance for all teachers in Finland is based on trust. Teachers are not monitored or evaluated but by the students. After each course, the participants give the evaluation of the teachers, and this is reported to the school or training institute. There are no 'special' challenges in senior training because it is a normal part of the work in the Adult Education Centres. The challenges in all teaching are e.g. motivating the learners, reaching the goals, making the teaching interesting and fun etc.

Italy

Validating and admission

The selection and role of the teachers is an area in which we can find the biggest difference between the formal and the non formal education. But the largest gap is the role that the teachers/trainers have related to the learner. As a matter of fact in the formal system we talk of teachers, in the non-formal system of trainers. The difference is not simply a matter of terminology, but of contents. In the formal system what is important is the school concept of the teacher who has to carry out a programme which has to be the same for all the students, regardless of their background and needs. Therefore, it is the student who has to adapt to the methods and contents, while in the non-formal system there is the opposite situation.

In the formal system the selection of the group of teachers is ruled by very strict State laws; legal graduate university studies are required, and after that a teacher has to stand selective examinations, but there isn't any specific training for Adult Education trainers. There is no specific training for each typology of learner, only for competences in the different subjects. As soon as they pass the specific examinations, the teachers try to enter into the most prestigious schools, which guarantee them working hours, more suitable mainly to the female teaching class. The schools for adults are necessarily evening schools and, for different social and cultural reasons, they are less regarded. Furthermore, as said, no specific training is required. In this way the teachers enter into the schools for adults because they have lost their job within the morning classes, and not because they choose to do it and, being used to teach to teenagers and without any training to meet classes of adults, they often mistake the approach, establishing a kind of hierarchical relationship that cannot be proposed to people who already have a consistent life and baggage of experiences and knowledge. These two elements turn out to be disruptive: on one side the teachers feel their evening job as a kind of downgrading, on the other side they aren't prepared to move from the hierarchical relationship adult-teenager to the adult-adult one. In the non-formal system this problem doesn't exist. It is true that, because of its features and other political – economical reasons, the teaching in the non-formal system can be considered like a second job, as it doesn't guarantee suitable incomes, but it is equally true that the trainer is extremely gratified by this experience.

Position

In general the teachers in the non-formal system are:

- Teachers of the public school who, being retired and still relatively young, have the time and the will to make new experiences in more gratifying environments.
- Teachers of the public school who, thanks to specific studies, have competences not usable within the formal system. The teacher of Movie History at Università delle LiberEtà is a teacher of literature in a junior secondary school. This subject is not included in any curriculum of junior secondary schools. The high professionalism of this teacher, supported by publications, collaborations with the main local newspapers and by an important role in world-wide movie events, doesn't find other outlet, in terms of didactics, than within the non-formal system.
- Immigrates coming from non-EU Countries, generally women, who have competences and high cultural levels, not usable within the institutional European system. For example, around 10 years ago Università delle LiberEtà established its first course of Chinese language held by a journalist of the main daily newspaper in Beijing. She was a young woman who had married an Italian man and she had left an important job to follow her husband. Since then the group of teachers at Università delle LiberEtà has had many trainers with similar features..
- Professionals who have always desired to dedicate themselves to teaching but, because of different life events, had to work in other fields.
- Lecturers who wish to leave the protected environment of the Universities and want to measure themselves with people having different cultures.
- Craftsmen who, regardless of their basic education, have technical-practical competences, highly required for the free-time activities.

Quality assurance

The relationship with the adults, if adequately prepared, is extremely rewarding, and at the same time is the best evaluation of the teachers' work. The free teaching makes it possible for the teachers to feel that they have been chosen at each lesson.

The students in compulsory education have to attend classes and study all the ordained subjects; the adults. instead. make a conscious choice that includes all the teaching activities: they choose the subject; then, directly or indirectly, they choose

the teacher, they are free to choose if they want to continue or leave the course. If they keep on attending the course, they surely are satisfied of the teaching they have received.

And with the contribution of their experience and knowledge, they can also support the orientation of the teaching. On the other hand the teachers, not having other obligations than carrying out a thematic training path, motivated by the pleasure of being chosen at each lesson by the learners, they find it rewarding to adapt themselves to the needs of the students, fitting the topics and methods to the single learner.

All these are the strong points of the non-formal system that, considering the above mentioned introduction, has a category of teachers highly enthusiastic and motivated.

Latvia

Validating and admission

Law on Education in Latvia collects and regulates all education area and guidelines, but lifelong learning and informal education principles are not defined within its framework. All target groups involved in the education process are named in the Law, including children, young people and also adults. However, adult education is mentioned only as: "...educational process of many forms that provides development of personality and competitiveness in the labour market within the human's life".

Adult education can offer formal and informal education programmes. Realising formal education programmes, teachers must have appropriate qualifications obtained in accordance with normative documentation. Educational institutions implementing formal education programmes for adults have the right to enrol students only after receiving a corresponding license for the implementation of an educational programme. Teachers' qualifications should be certified for receiving the license, and the performance quality is controlled in accordance with other educational programmes.

State and municipal education institutions are entitled to implement informal adult education programs without the license, but other legal and natural persons, who are not registered in the Register of Education Institutions, can implement this programme after receiving a license in the municipality. Every municipality sets its own criteria for giving the license and implementation of the programme by persons who are not registered in the Register of Education Institutions. They can vary in relation to staff qualification requirements.

There are no education institutions in Latvia that prepare teachers to educate seniors. So there is no unified staff register system in senior education. All programmes are implemented by the concept of adult education.

Position

Interest and informal education in Latvia is voluntary, it is not necessary to have a particular education level before entering this type of education. The Law states that informal adult education programmes can be financed by: the state and local government; employers' resources; learners' resources, donations and gifts; other funds.

The majority of local authorities have social support centres for retired people, and these centres offer informal education activities: handicraft, theatre, learning languages, playing music in order to develop personal social skills. Mainly classes are led by a social rehabilitator who operates under the supervision of a social worker. Usually these employees have a full-time job at the local government institution.

Social rehabilitator qualification can be obtained by completing the 1st level professional higher education study programme (college education level). Social worker qualification is of the highest level of education.

Local authorities finance also senior dance and music groups that are led by a specialist in the relevant area. Some art groups, which meet the requirements, are funded by the Ministry of Culture. NGOs widely use senior volunteers work in conducting classes, sharing their life experience. NGOs have attracted funding from various international projects.

Quality assurance

Senior education is included in adult education, and in Latvia it is mainly implemented by private institutions and NGOs such as Riga Active Seniors Alliance RASA. One of the priority objectives of RASA is to promote lifelong learning, knowledge transfer to the younger generation, a common reversible cooperation, to move forward a concept "Generation-to-Generation". Senior education is also implemented by Latvian Veterans (Masters)Athletic Association and social responsibility project "Connect, Latvia!" ran by Lattelecom, etc.

The main disadvantage of senior education in Latvia is that there is no a unified cooperation network the country. Preparation process has started (www.senioriem.lv), but it is incomplete. However, there are positive trends in the government level, because it was talked about building open universities (by the model of

British Open University with e-libraries available for everyone and regional centres) and volunteer mentor programmes during discussions on Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 (Latvia 2030) and the state's growth target within next 20 years (The third discussion in Saeima on the priority "Changing education paradigms", available on http://www.latvija2030.lv/page/301).

Statistics

362 education institutions implement informal adult education in Latvia, but mostly they are professional development education programs. Only 7 programmes are included in a unified database and specialised in the target group of seniors (courses of English, computer skills and nutrition). Other informal education programmes (handicraft, floristry, physical activities, etc.) are implemented in government or non-governmental institutions, and the information on their activities and workload of the staff involved is not compiled yet.

The only available official statistics are concerning formal education programme implementation. However, its proportion in adult education is very insignificant. According to the research data on lifelong learning availability, only 6 % of respondents aged 55-64 years have continued acquiring formal education, while there is not even one percent of respondents in the group of 65-75 year-olds currently participating in learning activities. 13 % of respondents in the group of 55-64 year olds and only 5 % or respondents in the eldest group obtained education in connection with interests and hobbies. Only 5 % of all seniors plan to engage in any of the education activities.[99]

Seniors involve themselves in informal education nearly 15 times more than in formal education. This means that informal education is more captivation for elderly residents. 78.2 % of respondents do not participate in adult education at all, because the main reason is the lack of free financial resources.

Poland[100]

Validating and admission

In the Polish educational system the offer of teachers' training mainly concerns the work with children and young people. There are no special institutions that train

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99. Mūžizglītības pieejamība un iespējas izglītoties Latvijā. Eiropas Savienības struktūrfondu nacionālās programmas „Mūžizglītības stratēģijas izstrāde un ieviešana" projekts „Mūžizglītības stratēģijas izstrāde". 2006.
100. Responsible for this part are Agnieszka Kozerska and the members of the research team of the Jan Dlugosz University in Czestochowa.

teachers to work with seniors. In our country, there are three types of Universities of the Third Age: First one - operating under the auspices of a university (French model). Second, working with associations active in popular science. Third - operating at community centres, libraries, day-care homes, social assistance centres, etc. (UK model). In the Third Age University, which operates within the structures of the university, the lecturers are mainly the academic teachers, research workers employed at the university or people from the world of art and culture. All of them must be professionals and authorities in the fields they deal. This model is intended to provide an academic university level education. In the other types of institutions the lecturers can be also other people, specialists, for example: teachers of local schools, doctors from the local clinics, psychologists, sociologists, historians. Simultaneously they can be the students of Third Age University, too.

Position

Education of the elderly, supported by teachers, exists in Poland mainly thanks to the voluntary work. At Third Age Universities the decision makers sometimes decide to pay teachers, but in many cases their work has a voluntary basis. At the average Polish Third Age University 18 persons work without pay, while the average number of working for remuneration is 2.4.[101] We can see the impact of the organisational form Third Age University on the structure of employment. Independent associations and public institutions rely more on Third Age University students and other people's voluntary work than on full-time employees. On the other hand, private universities and cultural centres also largely rely on voluntary work, but they are more likely to employ workers for the training of seniors. The training of the elderly is not the principal occupation of the teachers. They are often the public school teachers or researchers, or lecturers from universities. In cases when they receive the money, the most common sources of funding are: Third Age University membership fees, government subsidies from which the Third Age University often benefits, donations from institutions, companies, as well as grants from government sources, EU sources, or funds from the 1 % tax personal income.

Quality assurance

Each institution engaged in the education of seniors independently monitors their teachers' work. The way of control depends on the model of management in institution. In many cases Third Age University students' self-governments have the

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101. zoomnautw.pl: http://zoomnautw.pl/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Zoom_na_UTW_RAPORT_ calosciowy_www.pdf

right to assess the work of the teachers and other persons engaged in the activities. Students' self-governments are particularly popular in case of Third Age Universities operating at universities and culture centres. In the Third Age Universities operating at higher non-governmental organisations and public institutions we can find rather Programme Boards. They perform the function issuing opinions, in many cases they co-decide about the educational programme of the institution.

Hungary

Validating and admission

In Hungary there are no specific requirements if you would like to train seniors. Rules applied to trainers of seniors are the same as for those teaching adults in general. There is a higher level degree for those willing to deal with adult education. Students can have a specialisation within pedagogy called andragogy, where they learn about specific issues regarding adult education. Otherwise, as seniors mainly enter non-formal or informal education, it is mainly market oriented who will be their trainer. It is need-driven mostly, depending very much on the concrete target group and on the topic.

Position

Non-formal and informal education in general attracts teachers and trainers from various fields of other types of education or from other professionals related to the field. No additional training is needed to be able to teach. Therefore, teachers training seniors rarely do it as their main profession. Mostly they do it in their spare time after working hours in their original profession or on a voluntary basis (which is rather rare). Mostly trainers are subcontracted for a concrete course with the main provider, which in case of senior education are mostly Community centres.

Quality assurance

There is no regulated system for quality assurance for teachers in non-formal education. The main indicator whether a teacher fulfils learner' expectations is the number of participants and the continuity of the given course. There are some self-established systems of the specific providers like visiting at random lecturers/teachers lessons in language schools. However, well-established monitoring and a unified quality assurance system would be most welcome.

Bulgaria

Validating and admission

In Bulgaria senior education is not regulated by the government due to the lack of a legal act or related legally-binding documents. In terms of qualification a lot will depend on the type of institution (public, private, NGO); whether education/training is provided as formal, non-formal or informal in terms of educational settings; the nature of the courses (accredited or non-accredited); and whether this leads to certification (certificates of attendance and/or certificates of achievement). For instance, in courses provided by higher educational and most secondary schools this will be done by teaching professionals with bachelor's, master's and higher degrees. In other institutions such as libraries and community centres this could be done by trainers/tutors/mentors with a lower level of education, e.g. college degree, secondary education degree, specialist qualification, etc.

The nature of the courses provided is also of great importance when it comes to trainers' qualifications required, as some courses do not necessarily need higher education degree tutors, e.g. in the health sector in certain topics and areas where a medical nurse can do the job quite well and the involvement of a medical doctor (MD) is not needed. The same will apply to other courses and training, for example activities related to leisure, travel, and hobbies.

The only existing data at present reviews some latest developments in this respect in the tertiary sector. Some actions in terms of providing andragogical expertise at HE level include:

- Andragogy programmes in progress in Bachelor and Master's courses for the training of adult educators in Sofia University, St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, Plovdiv University - Paisii Hilendarski and Konstantin Preslavski University of Shumen;
- A Master's course in Adult Education Management is taught at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, which provides basic andragogy training for adult educators;
- The implementation of a Programme for Increasing the Quality of Adult Training (in 2008), in which 200 adult educators are being trained in order to master modern teaching methods;
- An andragogy (adult education) training course was given in 2006 as part of the National Programme for Literacy Education and Qualification of Roma-

nies. A total of 72 adult educators were trained on this course and specialised study programmes for adult literacy education have been developed as part of the same programme;

- Since 2008, a new specialty – "Non-Formal Education" – has been opened in the Faculty of Education of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, which is intended to educate specialists and educators in the field of non-formal adult education.[102]

Position

In general the senior education teaching staff in Bulgaria do not have this occupation as their main job! It is true that there is staff involved in adult education (continuing and further education establishments, community centres, VET centres, libraries, etc.), but on the whole the senior education teaching staff are part-timers: guest lecturers, visiting tutors, freelancers, and volunteers. Their qualification will vary a lot depending on the nature and the specifics of the courses and models (see above).

As far as the special qualifications are concerned, it must be noted that in general the teacher training system does not cater for senior education teaching degrees, besides the university level and in-service teacher training courses related to Andragogy and Gerontology. Unfortunately, in terms of statistics there is no quantitative data available. Teaching staff (if not volunteers) are paid by the respective educational provider, and some are paid by the allocated funds for the training from various programmes (both educational and social), from funded projects, donors, sponsors, etc.

Quality assurance

Teachers, trainers and tutors involved in senior education activities are monitored, assessed and evaluated by the respective senior education and training provider. This will almost entirely depend on the quality assurance system of the institution itself. The same applies to the trainers' individual assessment and evaluation. In general assessment is based on the results/achievement as demonstrated by the senior learners in the process and also on their satisfaction by the senior education programmes, courses and services offered and attended.

The challenges in this respect are related to the specifics of the targeted group, and are mainly with regard to the specific needs in terms of special education teach-

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102. Country Report on the Action Plan on Adult Learning: Bulgaria, March 2011, presented in the working group on the Adult Learning Action Plan. p. 19), http://ec.europa.eu/education/adult/doc/bulgaria_en.pdf

ing methods and approaches, task-based, problem-solving and practical orientation of activities, modes of delivery demanding different pace and workload, previous knowledge and experience taken into consideration, focus on reaching conclusions through discussions, and collaborative learning, based on real life needs and challenges faced and experienced.

Statistic data

As previously pointed out, unfortunately, in terms of statistics, there is no quantitative data available regarding the above. In general there is a preference for trainers (special teachers for seniors or for adult educators), who have a degree in Special Pedagogy or other, e.g. related to Andragogy and Gerontology, and/or experience with the targeted group. There is no research data available neither on the number of teachers as adult/senior educators qualifying per year, nor on the number of trainers in senior education on a regular basis.

7.9. EXPERIENCES AND GOOD PRACTISES

Training the trainers[103]

Introduction

In 2008 the Senior Citizens' University concluded the SenTrain project (Train the Trainers), a Grundtvig Multilateral project within the European Commission Socrates programme. This project was designed to meet the urgent needs of trainers working with education for seniors on the topic of new technologies. Senior learners are frequently taught by ICT trainers with excellent expertise in technology and experience of teaching younger or adult learners, but without the necessary pedagogical skills needed for teaching senior learners. A growing demand was also noted from seniors with sufficient ICT skills who wanted to help their classmates through peer tutoring or by helping the regular teacher in class.

Today, ICT is a vital medium for communicating and exchanging information with family, friends and colleagues, as well as for accessing services and companies. Knowing how to use ICT is therefore necessary for maintaining contact with distant friends and avoiding loneliness (particularly in rural areas or for disabled people).

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103. Pilar Escuder-Mollon, Universitat Jaume I. Spain.

Teaching ICT then becomes the main way to acquire ICT competences, but learning technology can give rise to negative feelings such as stress, shame or fear, usually due to bad previous experiences. Through the SenTrain project, we became aware of many pedagogical, environmental or motivational errors in teaching ICT to seniors. The result was that instead of providing a benefit, ICT teaching impacted negatively by causing anxiety, a refusal to engage with ITC and mental block.

Seniors can use ICT for a variety of purposes: to increase their participation in society, their psychological well being and perceived control, in short, to increase their quality of life. However, trainers have to be aware of learners' specific needs, their motivation, interests and requirements.

Course implementation

The SenTrain project produced a coursebook with the following 10 units:

1. Evaluation of the learners' previous knowledge, their needs and the learning context
2. Steps for implementing courses
3. The teaching/learning process
4. Presenting the educational contents
5. Seniors' motivations
6. Effective communication
7. Feedback, evaluation and self-evaluation
8. Learning and memory in the third age
9. Gender-specific issues
10. Teaching using the technology

This coursebook is the main material used during the first phase of the course. Each of these 10 units provides a theoretical introduction, followed by some examples and cases; in this way, during the teaching process every learner becomes familiar with the background and also has some practice. But it is in the second phase that learning becomes more practical and active: students are required to prepare a lesson and teach it to ordinary students and other instructors who are invited to attend to this class.

A course was designed and offered to new ICT teachers, to adults who wanted to acquire this kind of expertise (as part of the University training programme open to students enrolled on other courses) or to seniors who wanted to become trainers (as volunteers in other adult associations, or adult education institutions).

All the students had some ICT knowledge, but this was not enough. An initial evaluation was conducted to find out their level of expertise. Teaching ICT requires not only the abilities that are taught in this SenTrain course, but also ICT expertise.

All learners were predisposed to learn all the course concepts, so motivation was high and teachers' efforts could thus be focused on other aspects of teaching. Student participation in the classes was also very high and experiences were usually shared before and after the classes. All of the students had experience of ICT courses so they were aware of the teaching and learning process from the student's perspective.

Before the classes, all the students and teachers came together to share the experience of being students, linking the knowledge learnt and debating the content of the course. This occurred in an informal setting which allowed for relaxed discussion, and proved to be extremely useful. Teachers gained additional knowledge about the students and the class subject matter could focus on the key factors: where students had the greatest problems, aspects they were most worried about, etc.

In the first phase of the course, the content was based on the project course book. This was a theoretical phase; nevertheless, in each explanation practical examples and cases suggested by the students were always necessary to lend meaning to the theory. Teachers encouraged students to propose and suggest examples to apply in each unit. This was very effective: from the experience that students had as ICT learners, they could identify past experiences they had, and thanks to the course and new ideas, they were able to correct and suggest new teaching approachess.

In the second phase of the course, all the students had to prepare a very short lesson (45 minutes, although this was always longer) to present to the rest of the class. After each class, a discussion was held so everybody could suggest changes.

Conclusion

At other education levels (young people, adults) education is mainly provided as a way to acquire knowledge and skills to gain competiveness and get a better job. Education for seniors differs in that, firstly, it is more human with a focus on their personal motivations and interests. Secondly, ICT has great potential; it is a powerful tool that can impact on seniors' lives positively (its use in their daily life can affect their well-being and quality of life), but also negatively. Finally, because of the complexity and impact of the technology, learning it can lead to positive and negative feelings.

These three reasons leave no doubt that ICT is a very important factor in seniors' quality of life. Trainers must be aware of that complexity, which was the aim of

the course: firstly, to provide knowledge using a guide, secondly, to acquire skills, and thirdly, to learn from other colleagues during the second phase of the course in which they taught a practical lesson to other students.

Adult educators: project SAGE

Introduction

Project **SAGE- Senior citizens pArticipate in creatinG their livEs** was a two year Leonardo project under the Lifelong Learning Programme of the EU. Partners in the project were from Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Hungary and the UK, and they researched and developed competency based training with the main aim to train facilitators to bridge the gap between older people and decision makers.

The project responded to demographic change and declining participation with the creation of training resources and a set of assessment methods to be used by either organisations or individuals working towards meeting the needs of people in their mid or later life. Candidates successfully completing the pre-course assessment and/or subsequent training programme were to be qualified as participation facilitators who could work in a variety of settings to encourage active citizenship amongst people aged over 50. The result was expected that people would be empowered and more able to shape services to meet *their* needs.

Developing

As a starting point the project explored what competencies are required to be a successful candidate for the training. The competence list was established carefully using academic models as well as experimental research via questionnaires in each partner country.

This was undertaken in various steps:

1. In an open brainstorming process, the SAGE group collected a list of knowledge, skills and attitudes that a suitable person would possess.
2. The initial list was categorised and presented to experts in the field who commented on it and added their suggestions.
3. A first competence framework was drawn up relating the competences to the various interaction fields that a participation facilitator would work in.

4. Finally, theoretical models of specialists in the work were incorporated into the model, and the framework was modified accordingly.

As a consequence, a competence list was developed where the most required competences fell into four major categories following John Erpenbeck's basic types of competences:

Personal competences: Demonstrating the detailed knowledge and experience necessary for the job of a participation facilitator. Being able to initiate and carry out a task confidently.

Professional methodological competences: This can be expressed more clearly using the term expertise, or specialised or technical knowledge. It contains all the specific knowledge and skills that you do not have before you start work but which you will have to acquire if you want to work in a certain field.

Activity related competences: This area focuses on the ability to carry out a task appropriately, to identify people's needs and develop strategies or schemes to meet those needs whilst overcoming associated problems.

Social/communicational competences: Using interpersonal and other communication skills to build rapport with others; understanding others' situations and concerns; valuing diversity and showing flexibility of style; communicating written and oral information clearly and facilitating discussions effectively in order to achieve clear outcomes.

Conclusion

The findings of the presented project can be flexibly applied in other contexts concerning education of the elderly. The methodology to establish a competence list and the selection and assessment procedure, as well as the piloting of the training of the facilitators can all serve as examples for adult education centres and other organizations dealing with the elderly from which they can plan their recruitment processes. In the present project, potential candidates could come from a variety of sectors including:

- Adult Care workers.
- Recruitment and Employment Advisors.
- Project Managers.
- Community Development Workers.
- Housing Advisors.

- Voluntary workers.
- Unemployed people over 50.

Here the aim was to train facilitators, and the applicants were accepted accordingly from the relevant fields. This might change according to the purposes of the provider who would like to employ an adult educator or other personnel dealing with the elderly. However, the above mentioned criteria and outcomes can be a starting point for consideration.

Further information can be obtained at the SAGE website: www.sage-eu.com, or on the project's Slovakian adaptation via Project SAGE plus www.sageplus.eu, or turn to the Hungarian partner for more information and an accompanying handbook at pkovesd@trebag.hu.

The teachers in the non-formal system of adult education in Italy[104]

Introduction

The selection and role of the teachers is an area in which we can find the biggest difference between the formal and the non-formal education.

But the largest gap is the role that the teachers/trainers have related to the learner. As a matter of fact in the formal system we talk of teachers, in the non-formal system we talk of trainers. The difference is not simply a matter of terminology, but of contents.

The teachers' validation

In the formal system what is important is the school concept of the teacher who has to carry out a programme which has to be the same for all the students, regardless of their background and needs. Therefore, it is the student who has to adapt to the methods and contents, while in the non-formal system there is the opposite situation.

In the formal system the selection of the group of teachers is ruled by very strict State laws; legal graduate university studies are required, and after that a teacher has to stand selective examinations, but there is not any specific training for Adult Education trainers. There is no specific training for each typology of learner, only for competences in the different subjects.

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As soon as they pass the specific examinations, the teachers try to enter into the most prestigious schools, which guarantee them working hours, more suitable mainly to the female teaching class. The schools for adults are necessarily evening schools and, for different social and cultural reasons, they are less regarded. Furthermore, as said, no specific training is required. In this way the teachers enter into the schools for adults because they have lost their job within the morning classes, and not because they choose to do it and, being used to teach to teenagers and without any training to meet classes of adults, they often mistake the approach, establishing a kind of hierarchical relationship that cannot be proposed to people who already have a consistent life and baggage of experiences and knowledge.

These two elements turn out to be disruptive: on one side the teachers feel their evening job as a kind of downgrading, on the other side they are not prepared to move from the hierarchical relationship adult-teenager to the adult-adult one.

In the non-formal system this problem does not exist. It is true that, because of its features and other political – economical reasons, the teaching in the non-formal system can be considered like a second job, as it does not guarantee suitable incomes, but it is equally true that the trainer is extremely gratified by this experience.

There are other elements in favour of the non-formal system. First of all its structure is flexible. It is usually composed by associations, local bodies, or other subjects of the socio-cultural life, that do not have other obligations apart from assuring a suitable service to the citizens and meeting their training needs. Even when the teaching normally requires a specific training (languages, mathematics, literature), it is not necessary to match the binomial competence-academic training. It is possible to choose the trainer just because it is considered right for this task: to teach a foreign language, for instance, it is possible to call native speakers who have studied and have specific experiences in their countries, even if they do not have recognised qualifications. For some subjects, not normally taught in public schools, there does not exist even a qualification. Just think about all those artistic and handicraft competences for the free time.

There are other reasons which contribute to increase the value of teaching in the non-formal system and motivate the teachers.

The relationship with the adults, if adequately prepared, is extremely rewarding. The free teaching makes it possible for the teachers to feel that they have been chosen at each lesson.

The students in compulsory education have to attend classes and study all the compulsory subjects; the adults, instead, make a conscious choice that includes

all the teaching activities: they choose the subject; then, directly or indirectly, they choose the teacher, they are free to choose if they want to continue or leave the course. If they keep on attending the course, they surely are satisfied of the teaching they have received.

And with the contribution of their experience and knowledge, they can also support the orientation of the teaching. On the other hand the teachers, not having other obligations than carrying out a thematic training path, motivated by the pleasure of being chosen at each lesson by the learners, find it rewarding to adapt themselves to the needs of the students, fitting the topics and methods to the single learner.

Conclusion

Personal competences, gratification, flexible didactical methodologies, adult-to-adult relationship: all these are the strong points of the non-formal system that, considering the above mentioned introduction, has a category of teachers highly enthusiastic and motivated. And this, of course, facilitates and enhances the motivation to learn and therefore the quality of life of the learners.

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8. CONCLUSIONS

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8.1. LEARNING: THE TREASURE WITHIN

Jacques Delors coordinated the report "Learning: The Treasure Within" to the UNESCO in the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (1996). He stated that learning through life is one of the keys to the twenty-first century, going beyond the traditional distinction between initial and continuing education to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world. The four pillars that education must be founded on are:

- learning to live together
- learning to know
- learning to do
- learning to be.

Other reports on education (as Delors stated) have emphasised the need for people to return to education in order to deal with new situations arising in their personal and working lives; there is a further requirement:

the far-reaching changes in the traditional patterns of life require of us a better understanding of other people and the world at large; they demand mutual understanding, peaceful interchange and, indeed, harmony – the very things that are most lacking in our world today.

In this learning-throughout-life paradigm, distinctions between learners are not made on the basis of age. Every individual has the right and, it may also be added, the duty to learn. We understand the duty to learn as a commitment each individual makes to society: to be integrated, active and participative, and that can only be reached by someone with full competences in each of the aforementioned four pillars.

At a European policy level, the Lifelong Learning programme of the European Commission (2007-2013), and the previous Socrates programme (2000-2006) have lent clear support to lifelong learning, with sub-programmes for all life stages and aims (Commenius, Leornardo, Erasmus, Grundtvig).

It is important to highlight the priorities where senior citizens are easily identified, and are therefore explicit targets, as in priority 3: "Creativity and innovation, including intergenerational learning; Learning for senior citizens; Family learning" which include:

- equipping senior citizens with the skills they need to cope with change and remain active in society;
- developing innovative approaches to inter-generational and family learning and strengthening the contribution of older people to the learning of others, including young adults.

The QEduSen project and this guide focus on senior citizens, understood as retired citizens or adults who are motivated by a personal wish to learn. In this context, senior learners are not pursuing professional goals or seeking competitiveness; their objectives are more closely related to personal interests, sociability, adaptation and integration in today's society, participation, and active citizenship.

On the other side of the teaching-learning process are the educational institutions. The most common aims of institutions focused on senior citizens are to increase:

- Knowledge and skills on specific subjects and tools, about which seniors are curious or interested, such as arts, history, economy, science, philosophy, sociology, etc. These usually focus on current events that can affect them, local or regional history and art, or general knowledge.
- Social competences and other skills related to the learners' capacities to adapt, be more social and active, participate in communities, in their families (intergenerational activity) and be creative. Learning leads to the creation of new social roles and therefore socialising, creating, sharing and collaborating.

- Physical, mental and psychological health, through physical or cognitive exercises, improving functional capacities.
- Happiness and enjoyment through doing activities that senior citizens like, and participating in creative activities

In a broader sense, educational institutions try to enhance seniors' well-being. This has a great impact on the senior learners and their communities in the following ways:

- They feel happier and more committed to doing activities with their families, in their neighbourhood or in associations as volunteers.
- They feel part of society, they understand the changes and feel they can act to change things they think are unfair.
- They understand the new roles and are more social.
- They are aware of and knowledgeable about their rights.

From both perspectives – the institutional aims and the senior learners' motivation – it is easy to see that the impact of education on senior citizens aims to increase their quality of life; indeed, the aforementioned aims and impacts match the quality of life dimensions described in chapter 1.

Professionals and researchers agree that education has huge potential; when educational activities are designed properly, they can be used to help learners acquire knowledge, skills, and competences that can be useful for communicating, sharing, or being more active or productive. In this guide, we have focused on the use of education to increase well-being, integration, participation, perceived control, physical and psychological health, etc., all of which are the main components of a good quality of life.

In this type of education, where there is no clear content to be taught (or at least not as clear as in professional or employment oriented education) and the learners are very heterogeneous (because of their different life experiences and aims), the pedagogies, content, models and trainers' skills are crucial. In the previous chapters we have illustrated how important each one of them is. If you are an adult education provider or your aim is to implement this kind of education, we hope you find this guide useful and interesting, and more importantly, that it helps you to increase the quality and impact of your educational activities.

If you are not directly related to educational activity (a politician, social services staff, researcher, student, member of an ONG, etc) we hope you also have discovered new opportunities about the treasure of learning.

8.2. LEARNING: A TREASURE FOR SOCIETY

Education has an impact on each individual's skills and competences. Depending on the way it is designed, it can be used to increase knowledge on specific subjects or to acquire other wider skills. The classroom is one of the places where learning occurs and at a first sight it can seem that educational institutions have very little opportunity to positively impact learners' lives. However, nothing could be further from the truth; teaching in a classroom is only one of a vast range of tools available to educational institutions. Fortunately, the learning process becomes a virtuous circle; it has a real impact on senior learners' lives, with subsequent effects on their interaction and relations with classmates, friends, families and neighbourhoods.

Society can benefit from more active and participative senior citizens, not only because they provide added value to the social knowledge through their experience and expertise, but also because seniors with higher quality of life are less expensive for health and social service systems.

Institutions should be aware of the potentialities of education and how to design and implement it, but we cannot end this guide without encouraging the reader to keep learning and to apply the second major outcome of the QEduSen project: the evaluation toolkit (available on the project website). Its 38 indicators can be used to evaluate institutions, but it also offers a way to understand how educational dimensions affect quality of life dimensions through examples and recommendations.

Finally, it must be stressed that the ageing of society should not be considered a problem, but a challenge. Increasingly, retired citizens want to remain active, useful and integrated. Society should not miss this opportunity. Courses and educational activities should be offered to help them continue learning about subjects they are interested in and keep abreast with our constantly changing society. If this is not done, we are likely to lose the wealth of seniors' life experiences, and we risk building a future society that excludes its most sagacious members.

8.3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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105. http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme.

ticular, enabling a positive impact to be made on educational institutions, decision makers, researchers and everyone with an interest in how education can be used to increase the quality of life of senior citizens.

We are also grateful to the institutions of this partnership, its contributors and associated partners who have collaborated in different parts of the project.

And finally we thank all the senior learners, from whom we have gained far more wisdom than we could ever offer them.

Visit the project website http://www.edusenior.eu to find other reports, links, or to contact the consortium. Feedback and proposals for exploitation are welcome.

GLOSSARY

Active ageing

Active ageing is the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. It applies to both individuals and population groups. Active ageing allows people to realise their potential for physical, social, and mental well-being throughout the life course and to participate in society, while providing them with adequate protection, security and care when they need them (World Health Organisation).

Ageing experience

In a specific cultural and historical context, each person has his/her own ageing experience, based on the own personal life history, individual developmental factors, situational factors and crisis. To understand the ageing experience of an individual is crucial to design learning activities to maximise the impact on quality of life.

Cognitive protective factors

Those are self-esteem, perceived control and optimism (according to Cummins), that protect us against threads helping us not to loose control and therefore maintain the quality of life.

English model

It is based on self-organised groups of teachers (usually volunteers) and learners. Seniors themselves organise activities using their own knowledge and experience. The emphasis is put on experiment and group teaching.

Experiential learning

In this learning process, the knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combinations of grasping and transforming experience. Experiential learning theory differs from cognitive and behavioural theories in that cognitive theories emphasise the role of mental processes while behavioural theories ignore the possible role of subjective experience in the learning process.

Formal learning

Formal learning usually takes place in schools, universities or training institutions and leads to a diploma or certificate.

French model

Formal institutions (as universities) offer courses and learning activities to senior learners in a structured way. It has a high level of didactic and research activities combined with diversity of organisational forms. Initiated by Pierre Vellas, it was the university initiative to open the schools for the older age groups.

Non-formal learning

Learning which takes place outside formal educational curriculum. Non-formal learning activities involve people on a voluntary basis and provide them with opportunities to acquire a wide range of skills and competences. The activities are carefully planned, to foster the participants' personal and social development. Learning in daily life activities, in work, family, leisure is mainly learning by doing; it is typically not structured and not intentional and typically does not lead to certification.

Quality of Life

Individuals' perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns (World Health Organisation).

Intergenerational learning

Intergenerational Learning (IL) describes the way that people of all ages can learn together and from each other. IL is an important part of Lifelong Learning, where the generations work together to gain skills, values and knowledge. Beyond the transfer of knowledge, IL fosters reciprocal learning relationships between different generations and helps to develop social capital and social cohesion in our ageing societies (http://www.emil-network.eu/).

Quality of life dimensions

Each of the different aspects of facets on which the quality of life can be decomposed. As the quality of life can be considered subjectively and objectively but

also from different perspectives, the multidimensional approach is the most used when trying to define the quality of life.

Social integration

Social integration is a process of building values, relations and institutions for a society where all individuals, regardless of race, sex, age, ethnicity, language or religion, can fully exercise their rights and responsibilities on an equal basis with others. Every person should be allowed to age in security and with dignity and be in a position to contribute to society in the most meaningful way (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe).

Successful ageing

It refers to refers to physical, mental and social well-being in older age, trying to maximise the positive factors (activity, positive attitudes, exercise, etc) while minimising the negative factors (isolation, non-stimulating environment, lack of motivation, etc.).

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

Template used with an example for the cross-country research and report at the end of this document

Section 1: Fill in the table below with the 3 most popular senior education programmes and courses in your country:

EU Key Competence (s) fop LLL (check as appropriate)	Communication in the mother tongue Communication in foreign languages Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology Digital competence Learning to learn Social and civic competences Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship Cultural awareness and expression
QoL Dimension(s) (check as appropriate)	Physical Health Psychological Health Social (integrated, to know the environment) Increase participation (in communities, families, friends: communicating, creating) Increase perceived control (internal and external, primary and secondary) Personal: optimism, motivation Leisure, spend time on oneself, useful time
Course	ICT for Seniors
Description: aims and objectives	ICT skills development and practical use of new technologies to improve their QoL

Content (Topics/Modules)	✓ Introduction; ✓ MS Office Word; ✓ MS Office Excel; ✓ Free tools like Open Office to replace MS Office; ✓ Using the Internet: browsing/looking for info; ✓ Using the Internet: email communication; sending and receiving files; ✓ Social media: Skype, Facebook, Google +, You Tube, etc. ✓ Decreased mobility people services: e-payment systems, e-services, e-support Other: modern technology devices; accessibility tools for disabled, e.g. people with low vision and hearing impairments
Mode(s) of delivery (check as appropriate)	Lectures Presentations Seminars Workshops; Practical activities; Topic-based discussions; Other (please specify): …………………

Educational settings (formal/ non-formal/informal) and Type of providers (check as appropriate)	Educational settings
	  Formal
	  Non-formal
	  Informal
	Type of providers
	  University
	  College
	  School
	  Community Centre
	  Library
	Other (please specify):

Type of course: accredited / non-accredited (check as appropriate)	accredited non-accredited

	Assessment/Evaluation:
	yes
	no
	Certification:
EU Key Competence (s) fop LLL (check as appropriate)	yes
	no
	Type of certification:
	Certificate of Attendance
	Certificate of Achievement
	n.a.
QoL Dimension(s) (check as appropriate)	

Section 2: Other popular programmes and courses (if you consider relevant to be added as additional information).

(Same table as above)

Reference 1: 8 Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (EU)

- **communication in the mother tongue**, which is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts;
- **communication in foreign languages**, which involves, in addition to the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue, mediation and intercultural understanding. The level of proficiency depends on several factors and the capacity for listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- **mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology**. Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations, with the emphasis being placed on process, activity and knowledge. Basic competences in science and technology refer to the mastery, use and application of knowledge and methodologies that explain the natural world. These involve an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and the responsibility of each individual as a citizen;

- **digital competence** involves the confident and critical use of information society technology (IST) and thus basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT);
- **learning to learn** is related to learning, the ability to pursue and organise one's own learning, either individually or in groups, in accordance with one's own needs, and awareness of methods and opportunities;
- **social and civic competences**. Social competence refers to personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life. It is linked to personal and social well-being. An understanding of codes of conduct and customs in the different environments in which individuals operate is essential. Civic competence, and particularly knowledge of social and political concepts and structures (democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights), equips individuals to engage in active and democratic participation;
- **sense of initiative and entrepreneurship** is the ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. The individual is aware of the context of his/her work and is able to seize opportunities that arise. It is the foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance;
- **cultural awareness and expression**, which involves appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media (music, performing arts, literature and the visual arts).

Reference 2: QoL dimensions, as specified by this project

- Physical Health
- Psychological Health
- Social (integrated, to know the environment)
- Increase participation (in communities, families, friends: communicating, creating)
- Increase perceived control (internal and external, primary and secondary)
- Personal: optimism, motivation
- Leisure, spend time on oneself, useful time

The target of the European project EduSenior is to improve the quality and effectiveness of educational institutions aimed at senior learners. Senior citizens (understood as retired people, usually 65+) have specific needs and risks, but also new opportunities and potential. Increased life expectancy and health mean seniors will be a significant population group in a future Europe. Education can help senior citizens better adapt to this constantly changing society and take greater control over their lives. Education can help them to be healthier, more independent and more integrated in their communities while participating actively and being creative; in sum, enjoying a more valuable life. These aims are all framed in the concept of quality of life. The EduSenior project firmly believes in the significant role of educational institutions to increase senior citizens' quality of life, which is positive for themselves but also for society in general.

This pedagogical guide is the first of the two main outcomes of the EduSenior project, the second being a tool designed to evaluate educational institutions. The guide can be used by any person interested in education for senior citizens. It introduces the main concepts of quality of life, ageing and the social context of the elderly to learn, first, about seniors' context and needs. It then explains the pedagogies, models, contents and staff skills that have the greatest impact on senior learners' quality of life. The guide also includes European information and experiences on each of these topics.