Education and quality of life of senior citizens

Pilar Escuder-Mollon, Salvador Cabedo (editors)
“Education and quality of life of senior citizens”

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License.

Attribution:

of the text: the authors, 2013

of this edition: Universitat Jaume I, 2013

Editor: Pilar Escuder-Mollon, Salvador Cabedo

Publisher: Universitat Jaume I
This guide is part of the “Evaluation toolkit on seniors’ education to improve their quality of life” project (http://www.edusenior.eu). This project is supported by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union with reference: 518227-LLP-1-2011-1-ES-GRUNDTVIG-GMP.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This communication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
Contributors (alphabetical order)

Bardus, Massimo. Università del le LiberEtà, Italy
Bódi, Zsuzsanna. TREBAG Property and Project management Ltd. Hungary
Eloniemi-Sulkava, Ulla. University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education. Finland
Escuder-Mollon, Pilar. Universitat Jaume I, Spain
Esteller-Curto, Roger. Universitat Jaume I, Spain
Gil, Alina. Jan Długosz University in Czestochowa, Poland
Heimonen, Johanna. University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education. Finland
Issakainen, Cecil. University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education, Finland
Kaupužs, Aivars. Personality Socialization Research Institute of Rezekne Higher Education Institute, Latvia
Lozanova, Slavina. Assist Net, Bulgaria
Lubkina, Velta. Personality Socialization Research Institute of Rezekne Higher Education Institute
Nagy, Enikő. TREBAG Property and Project management Ltd. Hungary
Nowacka, Urszula. Jan Długosz University in Czestochowa, Poland
Ochoa Siguencia, Luis. Jan Długosz University in Czestochowa, Poland
Raso, Giuseppina. Università delle LiberEtà. Italy
Rimšāne, Inese. Personality Socialization Research Institute of Rezekne Higher Education Institute, Latvia
Savtchev, Boian. Assist Net, Bulgaria
Seppälä, Tea. University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education. Finland
Ušča, Svetlana. Personality Socialization Research Institute of Rezekne Higher Education Institute, Latvia
Wichmann, Irene. University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education. Finland
# Table of contents

## Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 7

| Why Quality of Life matters .................................................................................................. 8 |
| Senior citizens ......................................................................................................................... 9 |
| The role of educational institutions ....................................................................................... 9 |
| About this guide ..................................................................................................................... 10 |
| Improving the seniors' quality of life through education .................................................... 11 |
| About the content of this book ............................................................................................. 11 |
| QEduSen Project .................................................................................................................. 13 |
| The partnership ..................................................................................................................... 14 |

## 1. Quality of life .................................................................................................................... 27

| 1.1. Introduction .................................................................................................................. 27 |
| 1.2. Understanding Quality of Life ....................................................................................... 28 |
| 1.3. Definition ....................................................................................................................... 29 |
| Basic needs ............................................................................................................................ 30 |
| Subjective and Objective ...................................................................................................... 32 |
| Adapting to changes .............................................................................................................. 32 |
| 1.4. QoL dimensions ............................................................................................................ 34 |
| 1.5. Increasing Quality of Life ............................................................................................. 37 |
| Adapt .................................................................................................................................. 38 |
| Social participation ............................................................................................................... 38 |
| Get and give support ............................................................................................................. 39 |
| Be active ............................................................................................................................... 39 |
| Always keep learning ............................................................................................................ 40 |
| 1.6. Conclusions .................................................................................................................. 40 |
| 1.7. Experiences and good practises .................................................................................... 41 |
| Researching QoL and Education ............................................................................................ 41 |
| ASLECT Project – Active Seniors Learn, Educate, Communicate and Transmit .................. 44 |
| Perception of QoL by Latvian seniors ................................................................................... 47 |
| 1.8. References .................................................................................................................... 49 |

## 2. Ageing ............................................................................................................................... 51
2.1. Introduction ........................................................................................................ 51
2.2. Facts of ageing .................................................................................................. 52
2.3. Ageing experience ............................................................................................ 56
2.4. The concept of successful ageing ..................................................................... 57
2.5. Conclusions and challenges ............................................................................ 60
2.6. Experiences and good practices ....................................................................... 60
   Heterogeneity of Ageing ..................................................................................... 60
   Psychological image of seniors in Poland .......................................................... 62
   Breaking down myths and stereotypes about the elderly ................................. 67
2.7. References ......................................................................................................... 69
3. Social .................................................................................................................... 71
3.1. Introduction ....................................................................................................... 71
3.2. Demography ...................................................................................................... 72
3.3. Population ageing ............................................................................................. 73
3.4. Life Expectancy ................................................................................................ 73
3.5. Social isolation .................................................................................................. 75
3.6. Social roles ......................................................................................................... 76
   Active ageing ...................................................................................................... 76
   Social integration ............................................................................................... 77
   Family links, intergenerational relations ............................................................ 77
   Elderly volunteering and well-being ................................................................. 78
   Technology .......................................................................................................... 78
3.7. Conclusions ........................................................................................................ 79
3.8. European context ............................................................................................... 79
   Spain ...................................................................................................................... 79
   Finland .................................................................................................................. 81
   Italy ........................................................................................................................ 83
   Latvia ..................................................................................................................... 84
   Poland ..................................................................................................................... 87
   Hungary ............................................................................................................... 90
   Bulgaria ................................................................................................................ 92
3.9. Experiences and good practices ....................................................................... 95
   Project “Moving your minds” in society ............................................................... 95
3.10. References ................................................................. 104

4. **Models** ............................................................................. 107
   4.1. Introduction .................................................................... 107
   4.2. Formal and non-formal education ................................. 108
       - Non-formal Education ................................................ 108
       - Informal Education .................................................... 109
   4.3. European Models .......................................................... 110
   4.4. European Context ......................................................... 114
   4.5. Practises ........................................................................ 123
       - AJD University of the third Age ................................ 124
       - University of Thirds Age, at Ursus - Warsaw .......... 126
       - Seniors' informal learning ......................................... 128
   4.6. Conclusion ..................................................................... 129
   4.7. Experiences and good practises .................................... 131
       - Project “Keeping Fit in Later Life” ............................. 131
       - A proposal for a formal course structure and its potentialities... 132
       - Leisure informal learning in educational programmes .... 137
   4.8. References .................................................................... 141

5. **Pedagogy** ....................................................................... 143
   5.1. Introduction .................................................................... 143
   5.2. Approaches to the content Implementation .................... 144
       - Social cognitive theory .............................................. 144
       - Social ecological theory ............................................ 145
   5.3. Ways and Means ............................................................ 150
   5.4. European context ......................................................... 154
   5.5. Conclusions ................................................................. 159
   5.6. Experiences and good practises .................................... 160
       - Research of educational needs for seniors in Latgale region,
         Latvia. ........................................................................ 160
       - The eScouts - Intergenerational Learning Circle for
         Community Service ..................................................... 162
New knowledge to get new information

5.7. References

6. **Content**

6.1. Introduction
6.2. Senior Education Programmes
6.3. Key Competences in Senior Education
6.4. Other Senior Education Programmes in Europe
6.5. Senior Education Programmes: forms and mode of delivery
6.6. Learners' Motivation
6.7. Conclusions
6.8. European Context
6.9. Experiences and good practises
   A Case study on Intergenerational learning
   University of the Third Age in Poland: Course structure
   ICT for seniors
6.10. References

7. **Staff and trainers**

7.1. Introduction
7.2. The changing environment of teaching older adults
7.3. The way older adults learn
7.4. The changing roles of adult educators
7.5. Competences of adult educators
7.6. Teachers of older people
7.7. European Context
   Spain
   Finland
   Italy
   Latvia
   Poland
   Position
   Hungary
   Bulgaria

References

Content

Introduction
Senior Education Programmes
Key Competences in Senior Education
Other Senior Education Programmes in Europe
Senior Education Programmes: forms and mode of delivery
Learners' Motivation
Conclusions
European Context
Experiences and good practises
A Case study on Intergenerational learning
University of the Third Age in Poland: Course structure
ICT for seniors
References

Staff and trainers

Introduction
The changing environment of teaching older adults
The way older adults learn
The changing roles of adult educators
Competences of adult educators
Teachers of older people
European Context
Spain
Finland
Italy
Latvia
Poland
Position
Hungary
Bulgaria

References
7.8. Experiences and good practises ................................................................. 222
    Training the trainers ................................................................. 222
    Adult educators: project SAGE .................................................... 224
    The teachers in the non formal system of Adult education in
    Italy ................................................................................................. 227

Annexes ........................................................................................................ 241
    Annex 1: Template used with an example for the cross-
    country research and report at the end of this document .......... 242
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-education 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.

**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
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.

---

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

You can use this guide in the way that best suits your needs and context, but we have found 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
Introduction

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

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

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:
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**
Coordinator of the Senior Citizens' University. Researcher and professor at the Senior Citizens' University.
mollon@uji.es
www.escudermollon.es

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.
esteller@uji.es
www.estellercurto.es

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.
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**
Development manager. PhD
tea.seppala@helsinki.fi http://www.helsinki.fi/palmenia

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,
ulla.eloniemi-sulkava@helsinki.fi http://www.helsinki.fi/palmenia

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.

**Johanna Heimonen**  
Project Manager in Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education, University of Helsinki  
johanna.heimonen@helsinki.fi  http://www.helsinki.fi/palmenia  
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 on this field 29 years.

**Irene Wichmann**  
University Teacher, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education, University of Helsinki  
irene.wichmann@helsinki.fi  http://www.helsinki.fi/palmenia  
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**  
Position, Institution: Planning officer in Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education, University of Helsinki  
cecil.issakainen@helsinki.fi  http://www.helsinki.fi/palmenia  
Cecil Issakainen graduates in Information Technology specialized in digital communication with 15 years experience in teaching ICT in adult education level. She is also responsible in virtual learning pedagogy and e-learning tools (Moodle-Learning Management System training). Teaching and planning ICT courses to multicultural groups including seniors group are few of her duties. She has been involved in European project, ActiveICT for seniors 2008
Università delle LiberEtà del Fvg.
Udine, Italy

Università delle LiberEtà of Friuli-Venezia Giulia is a Life Long 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 modernization;
- 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 (year of its foundation) the number 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.

Giuseppina Raso
President, Università delle LiberEtà
pina.raso@libereta-fvg.it

Founder and president of the Lifelong Learning Centre Università delle LiberEtà. Expert in lifelong learning for adult learners, school issues, volunteering. Lifelong expertise in setting and managing projects in education and cultural activities. Supervision of all school activities held inside of the Institution. Planner of local and European cultural projects. Planner of cultural meetings on Lifelong Learning. Planner of teacher training classes-courses and refreshers for state school teachers. Person in charge for the cooperation and networking with other Institutional Bodies like the Municipality Educational Offices, the State University of Udine and the Regional Educational School Agency.

Massimo Bardus
Project manager, Università delle LiberEtà
massimo.bardus@libereta-fvg.it

Responsible of the 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 organization of conferences and seminars both at national and international level. Collaborator in the management of the financial aspects of Grundtvig Multilateral projects and Learning Partnerships and other Grundtvig 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 doesn't 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 Šuba**
Doctor of Pedagogy, professor, leading researcher.
The director of Personality Socialization Research Institute (PSRI)
velta@ru.lv

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.
svetlanausca@inbox.lv

Field of scientific researches: special pedagogy, social work, data processing using IT technologies. Duties of project are related to analysing the theoretical background of pedagogy methods, collect and analyse the project data. S.Ušča has defended her thesis “Development of Communicative Competence of
Adolescents with Language Disorders in a Basic Boarding School” where is combined the analysis of qualitative and quantitative research results.

**Aivars Kaupužs**

aivars.kaupuzs@inbox.lv

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

inese.rimsane@inbox.lv

Field of responsibility: time management of research group, planning and organizing the research workshops. She is responsible for technical organization and management of project documentation. 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 Częstochowie**

Częstochowa, Poland

The Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa (JDU) is a public a university, with history that goes back to 1971. At present the University community is created by 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 popularization 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 Długosz 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
V-ce Dean at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Jan Długosz University in Czestochowa, Poland
a.gil@ajd.czest.pl www.ajd.czest.pl
Experience in training of adults. Organizational skills, experience in management of the Institute. Courses taught include: IT in education and engineering.

Luis Ochoa Siguencia
Academic – researcher member at University Jan Długosz in Czestochowa – Poland, Institute of Technical Education and Safety
l.chooa@gazeta.pl
Doctor in “Research and Innovation in Education” for the University of the Balearic Islands (UIB), He has graduated previously with a MBA in Marketing and Management and has two Post-graduate studies in European Grants Management and in Public Relations. He is a member of E-learning scientific associations and the European Association for security.
Has special interest and expertise in the use of ICT in Education and Workplace. As part of his special interest he has published in Polish, English and Spanish several academic papers and books.
Urszula Nowacka
Director of the Institute of Technical Education and Safety. Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa
nowackau@interia.pl www.iet.ajd.czest.pl
Doctor degree in Pedagogy. Head of postgraduate studies for teachers of technology and education to security. The research work deals with the professional educator, intellectual property protection and entrepreneurship.
Experience in training of adults. Organizational 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. The scope of these activities includes: non-formal education, management consultancy, quality management consultancy, dissemination and demonstration activities, implementation of technology transfer and innovation chain management and organization and management of various R&D projects.

Trebag was promoter of the Leonardo-project that product 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, organized special training for the facilitator 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.

Enikő Nagy
Project manager, Trebag LTD, Hungary
eniko.nagy@trebag.hu
http://www.trebag.hu
MA in English and Hungarian Language and Literature. She also has a degree on European Studies. Currently she is a candidate for PhD in Pedagogical Sciences. Expert of adult education for the NA.
Introduction

She has experience in carrying out researches and writing studies, also in training adults. As a project manager she has gained experience in various European Union LLP projects. Her main focus is qualitative research and constructivism within the field of education. She also has a university degree in Physical Education with experience in research and practice in PE.

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 are focused 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 specialized 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.

**Slavina Lozanova**
Managing Director, Assist Net, Sofia, Bulgaria
assist_net@abv.bg
www.assist-net.eu

Degree in Special Education. Experience in training of adults, seniors and people with disabilities. Member of the European Network for Intergenerational Learning (ENIL).

Academic experience includes Assistant Professor and Lecturer at the University of Sofia, Department of Special Education and Faculty of Pedagogy, South-West University “Neofit Rilski”, Blagoevgrad. Courses taught include: Introduction to Special Education; Education of People with Special Needs; Specific means of communication of People with Special Educational Needs; Alternative Communication Therapy.

**Boian Savtchev**
Project Manager, Assist Net, Sofia, Bulgaria
assist_net@abv.bg
www.assist-net.eu

Expertise in developing and implementing training programmes, teaching and training tools; training of trainers; training through the use of ICT; assessment and evaluation; developing and coordinating educational and training projects.

Board member of Europe Schools network, Assist Net International Advisory Board, the European Network for Intergenerational Learning (ENIL) and International Certificate Conference – Europe. Centre Exams Manager for Cambridge ESOL (Centre BG015).

Experience in internal and external evaluation and monitoring of international projects.
1. Quality of life

Pilar Escuder-Mollon
Universitat Jaume I, Spain

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 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.

![Maslow's hierarchy of needs](image)

*Figure 2. Maslow's hierarchy of needs*

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
Quality of life. 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 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. Quality of Life

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)

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
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 1. Quality of life dimensions according to Schalock and Verdugo 2002.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Domains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>• Personal development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social participation</td>
<td>• Interpersonal relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Social inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-being</td>
<td>• Emotional well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Physical well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Material well-being</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. WHO Domains and Facets for measuring QoL (WHO 1997)

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

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, p. 94-95) designed for the adult population in general.

**Table 3. Domains of the Comprehensive Quality of Life scale - Adult (Cummins 1997).**

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

### 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 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 individual 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

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 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

---

3 Pilar Escuder-Mollon. Universitat Jaume I. Spain
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

\(^{4}\) Slavina Lozanova, Boian Savtchev. Assist Net. Bulgaria

\(^{5}\) http://www.aslect.eu/
achieved 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.

At 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 detail6.

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 educational 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. 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 socialize 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.

---

Perception of QoL by Latvian seniors

Introduction

The study samples consisted of 359 respondents 60-75 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 genders and number of samples are representative for population of Latvia at 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 standardized 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 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 mental component scale (MCS) it is 42.36 points (Figure 4). The vitality factor, which is characterized by questions about the joy of living and fatigue, is close to the optimal level and reaches 49.55 points.

8 Velta Lubkina. Personality socialization research institute of Rezeknes Augstola. Latvia
1. Quality of Life

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

More than a half of all respondents (55% in physical and 52% in mental health component) demonstrated results that were below the average (Table 6). 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.
Figure 5. Percentage of sample whose scores are Above, At, or Below the General Population Norm

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.

Bibliography


1.8. References


2. Ageing

Ulla Eloniemi-Sulkava

University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education, Finland

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 with 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 in Lithuania the lowest (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 is resulted 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 2).
Table 4. Percentages of people 65 + in EU countries in 1991 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>People 65 years old or over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>11.6 (in 1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 emphasized 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 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75 yr: 11 years</td>
<td>75 yr: 13 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 yr: 8 years</td>
<td>80 yr: 11 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 yr: 6 years</td>
<td>85 yr: 7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 yr: 4 years</td>
<td>90 yr: 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95 yr: 3 years</td>
<td>95 yr: 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 yr: 2 years</td>
<td>100 yr: 2,5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Estimated life expectancy of female and males at each age point (an example of Finland)
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 optimize the level of cognitive functions (Suutama 2010).

Table 6. The negative and positive factors affecting memory functions (Suutama 2010)

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

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. Crystallized 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 crystallized 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 persons 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 generalizing 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.

### 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).
Figure 7. The elements of successful ageing based on literature

Figure 8). The above mentioned conceptualization 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 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).

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

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 affect aged people and cause 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**

**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.

---

9 Ulla Eloniemi-Sulkava. University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education, Finland
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 workshops for the planning of education 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 finalizing 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, a continuous feedback gathering system 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.

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.
2. Ageing

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**

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

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 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 fulfilling carrying 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, values, others can benefit from the rich experience of seniors and their skills (Landsberg 2012). Although in post-productive stage of life, man has stronger need of closeness than previously (Susułowska 1989), now expect usefulness and respect from them. Meet of those needs determine creative attitude self-addressed, and to others.

Reports show, that Polish seniors describes low level of activity, and at the same time high level of alienation (Matusiak 2011). From the research there emerges a male senior picture as a man who wants peace, avoids stress and focuses on the interests of accompanying him all the time. Picture of female senior is more optimistic and active than the man described previously (Bonk 2011). In general, seniors are often accompanied by lack of trust the others, resulting in loneliness perceived as a destructive phenomenon (Bonk 2011). This lack of confidence is connected with low self-esteem and low value sense (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 counteract the solitude\textsuperscript{11} and promote the mental health.

**Interests and education**

Observations reveals, that amount of seniors using information technology is still not satisfactory. However, seniors in many various ways access the services offered by media, but despite this – they do not use them. Those, who use those means, have got better frame of mind and more optimism. According to Polish specialists reports only 10% of Polish seniors use Internet – this result is the lowest in European Union.

In terms of pre-figurative culture, young people play the role of teachers' 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 University of Third Age like lectures, computer classes, psychological workshops, they can realize 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

\textsuperscript{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)
limitations (Boni 2008). Through those forms they realize their hobbies not only individually, but also in a group, associations or clubs (Landsberg 2012).

Realization of interests and education results in avoiding of smoking (80 %), searching medical information and cause of disease and health (77 %). Enjoyment of friends and regulated family life (77 %), following the medical recommendations (77 %), diet (73 %) are perceived as a preventive health behaviors, 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 Polish seniors way of life. Picture emerging from the 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).

Senior's condition reveals through the sexual efficiency and time organization. Report results on sexuality show that Polish seniors are interested in this area of life, but they not always can enjoy it because of health problems. They have low level of knowledge about possible help and specific pharmacological agents. Next important aspect is organization of senior lifetime. The form of spending it in retirement is work for social organizations, local government or political. 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 organization, and 6 % -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 several times per week they meet the family, and one third (34 %) do it once or few times a month. One fifth of responders (18 %) meet the family few times a year, and 3 % occasionally (Wadołowska 2009). As can be seen, motivation for seniors' activities is desire

---

12 Report image of older people in the media, were obtained from http://www.bezuprzedzen.org/doc/Wizerunek_Osob_Starszych_w_Mediach.pdf (08.2007)
of having the organized time\textsuperscript{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\textsuperscript{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 at al 2012). Although, they are regular partners of resting grandchildren, often more than parents (Parnicka 2008), play a significant role in the socialization 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\% fill unnecessary 5\% is considered). 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 to others make them satisfied and well-being. Research reveals that the highest level of satisfaction is connected with quality of relationship with friends (62\%), relationship in family (43\%), achievements (43\%), financial situation of own family (43\%). Health (27\%) and prospects for the future (17\%) are cited as the factors bringing moderate satisfaction. Lowest level of satisfaction is connected with situation in the country (3\%).

High satisfaction with relationships with friends shows that contemporary Polish senior is often more social supported and has much better relationship with them than with the immediate family (Bonk 2011).

The image of Polish senior is not so unequivocal. They is accompanied by a sense of isolation and marginalization, the 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\textsuperscript{15}. It may be noticed that this image is based on dissonances and contradictions.

\textsuperscript{13} Government Program for Senior Citizens Social Activity for 2012-2013, obtained from: http://as.sektor3.wroclaw.pl/page/raporty/projekt_program%20na%20rzecz%20naktywnosc%20os
ob%20starszych.pdf (07.2012)

\textsuperscript{14} AXA Retirement Scope (2008) -United States.

\textsuperscript{15} Government Program for Senior Citizens Social Activity for 2012-2013, obtained from: http://as.sektor3.wroclaw.pl/page/raporty/projekt_program%20na%20rzecz%20naktywnosc%20os
ob%20starszych.pdf (07.2012)
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 no one of them is able to deny each other.

References


Bonk E., Contemporary image of seniors, obtained from the modern-senior http://www.centrumprasowe.swps.pl/badania/obraz-wspolczesnego-seniora (2011-01-21)


Łój G., (2001). Sense of security and personality determinants of adaptation to old age, Publisher WSP, Czestochowa: 99th


Breaking down myths and stereotypes about the elderly\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{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, crystallized 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 classroom, 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.

2.7. References


2. Ageing


3. Social

Massimo Bardus, Giuseppina Raso
Università delle Liberalità. Italy.

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 programs 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 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.
Table 8. Life expectancy at birth by sex, 1993 and 2009.
Source: Eurostat.

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

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.
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.
3. Social context

![Figure 10. Ratio of those with no friends by age groups compared to the total population, 2006. Source EU-SILC Users' database](image)

### 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. This 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 programs 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 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 demonstrates 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 long life 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 stabilize. 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**

Introduction

In Spain senior education has been in place since 1978. It is driven by the Community Development Directorate at the proposal of the General Sub-

---

17 M. Paz García Alegre. Universitat Jaume I. Spain
18 “Dirección General de Desarrollo Comunitario”
directorate for the Family\textsuperscript{19}, who have signed various agreements with entities promoting cultural institutions, such as the European Universities of the Third Age\textsuperscript{20} model. Spain has three institutions, Classes for the Third Age, Senior Citizens University Programmes and Adult Education Centres\textsuperscript{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 Hemares (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 precisely, 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.

\textsuperscript{19} “Subdirección General de la Familia”

\textsuperscript{20} “Universidades de la Tercera Edad”

\textsuperscript{21} “Aulas de la 3ª Edad” los “Programas Universitarios para personas mayores” and the “Universidades Populares”
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 extracurricular activities that can be done outdoors.

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

**Sources**

Agustín Requejo Osorio. La educación de Personas Mayores en el contexto Europeo (Older People Education in the European Context). University Santiago de Compostela, Spain. 2009

Senior Survey 2010. Ministry of Health and Social Policy, Spain. IMSERSO

Encuesta Mayores 2010. Ministerio de Sanidad y Política Social. IMSERSO

**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 school 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**

The population of Finland in March 31st, 2012 was 5 406 018. 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 on, children have moved out, they live alone without family and friends or live 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 organization 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 to the high number of illiterate people, employed or unemployed. 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, in Italy start to appear the Mutual Aid Societies and the Chambers of Labour, 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 great part of the population. Overtime, 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 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.

**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 lifelong learning system in Latvia. In the Latvia the general, professional and the higher education

---

\(^{22}\) [http://www.unesco.org/education/ue/conference/declaen.htm](http://www.unesco.org/education/ue/conference/declaen.htm)

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, creates 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% - above the age of 80 years.

Taking into consideration 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 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%). As one of the most important aspects of quality of life in Latvia was mentioned health and financial security. The quality of life is also characterized by satisfaction with life in general. According to the results of European Quality of Life Survey in 2008, Latvian people's satisfaction with their 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 deteriorates 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 recognize 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 number 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 of socialization 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 most often people look on their lifestyle as on average 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 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, socializing and employment opportunities.
Poland

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 adults 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 techniques increased from 146 500 to about 488 000. The vast majority they were the students of technical schools.

Year 1989 brought the 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 (privatization, rising unemployment, the democratization of the rules of social life), caused that Polish began recognize the benefits of raising level of their education and the acquisition of new qualification or improvement of professional qualifications. There began to appear more and more frequently training institutions, which offer to adults and allow them to take, or continue their education at higher levels. As a result of Polish integration with the European Union, since 1990s dynamic growth 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 small among Polish;
- training held in Poland lasts much longer than in the countries where the level of participation is high;
- there is observer very low level of participation among the unemployed and job seekers in targeted trainings;

---

24 Responsible for this study is Gil Alina, and members of the research team of Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa
3. Social context

- in Poland, as in the other countries, people aged from 55 to 64 years participate in lifelong learning much less than 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 much less in the process of their skills improvement 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 process education).26

Context

According to the data collected by Social Insurance Institution27 in 2012, there are over 7 million 357.4 thousand retired people, with still increasing tendency. The retired in Poland usually take pension, sometimes they use family help, but only a few of them work. The overall tendency appears that Polish seniors do not have a job, even the part time.

In August 2012, Public Opinion Research Centre28 published results of a survey about way of spending time during retirement. Overwhelming majority of Polish seniors claim, that at the 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 organization (17 %). Only a

28 Ways to spend your free time in retirement, (08. 2012), CBOS. http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2012/K_106_12.PDF
tiny percentage of seniors (6%) decide to learn foreign languages, take a 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 of this behaviour may be high of the pension and low health state. Overall tendency (75%) appears that 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 overwhelming majority (87%) admit that they have average standard of living and they have to save money for the first need articles sometimes. 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 at various courses like pottery course, knitting course, 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.

**References**

Hungary

Introduction

Unlike in many European countries, in Hungary there is not a systematic strategy regularized 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 employers to 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 organized 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 million 45 thousand 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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age composition</th>
<th>Youth dependency ratio</th>
<th>Old-age dependency ratio</th>
<th>Total dependency ratio</th>
<th>Ageing index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>15-64</td>
<td>65-</td>
<td></td>
<td>0-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 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 are a lot to do to change this situation, both at policy level (increasing offers and accessibility of courses as well as promotion) as well as 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.

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.

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

---


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, colleges,

\(^{34}\) Idem, ref. 32
3. Social context

training centres and information and guidance centres, and higher education universities.

Opportunities have been created for evening or part-time/distance forms of 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 recognized 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)\textsuperscript{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\textsuperscript{36}.


3.9. Experiences and good practices

Project “Moving your minds” in society

“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)

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

---

37 Massimo Bardus, Università delle LiberEtà. Italy.
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 conditions 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 fundamental 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 realization 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 freely are 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

---

³⁸ M. Paz García Alegre. Universitat Jaume I. Spain
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.
- Online 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
3. Social context

support networks and self-esteem, and hence the elderly benefit from the material advantages of ICT.

References


Female and Male Life expectancy difference in Latvia

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 the medical problems. The elderly people mention that the visit to the doctor was too expensive. The people who are 65-94 y. o. drink the herb tea (39 %), but one third chooses preventive visits to the doctor. The same age group uses food supplements (14 %). The medical gymnastics is used by 3 % of the elderly people, but 1 % inure themselves to cold (CSP EU – SILC b).

39 Velta Lubkina, Svetlana Usca. Personality Socialization Research Institute of Rezekne Higher Education Institute, Latvia
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 organized 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.

Table 10. Relation of man and woman for participation in Latvian projects.

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

Conclusions

Social problems related with the economic crisis Latvia and the high unemployment rate cause a need in many men and women to overcome a psychological 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 a fact that there are more women than men in Latvia.

Sources


3.10. References


European Comparison Based on SHARE Data. International Society for Third-Sector Research and The Johns Hopkins University 2009


4. Models

Alina Gil, Luis Ochoa Siguencia, Urszula Nowacka
Jan Długosz University in Czestochowa, Poland

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 of 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 bother to read this section in order to realize 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 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 person understands what mechanisms is subject to, and how they can modify the conscious behaviour, it will weaken the subconscious fear of old age, both his own and 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 person 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 be also analyzed from a different perspective, in which elderly people become informal teachers for the others.

4.2. Formal and non-formal education

Education of the elderly is a must, as it leads to improvement in the quality of their lives, influences their self-esteem, their feeling of accomplishment and self-realization, 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 organized forms (which share is reduced with age) to the less formalized ones, departing from education towards self-education, from centralized solutions to the more dispersed educational practice.

Non-formal Education

Participation in education outside the formal system covers all organized 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

---

40 Responsible for this study is Ochoa Siguencia Luis, and the members of the research team of Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa
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 Third Age Universities. For this type of education can also be include private lessons (e.g. foreign languages), as well as distance 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: cooking course, lectures the history of art, modeling course.

**Informal Education**

It 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 organized 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 organized and may include, for example, events related to education or activities that occur within the family, workplace and in everyday the life of every person, in the context of education led by the family and society.

The methods used for self-education are:

- use the help of family members, friends, co-workers for example: the use of advice, someone watching the performance of some tasks, consult 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. Person 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

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 characterized by desire of 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), the professor of international law. That was the time when it began a rapid aging process of the population in Europe and generally in the world. On the university students' initiative there came up the idea of opening the schools for the other age groups, also for seniors. Then was made the project, under which, on the several fields of studies young people were to contact with the adults and elderly, 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,

---

41 Responsible for this part is Małgorzata Piasecka and the members of the research team of Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa
Models. 4

- Secondly, it should be an institution conducting the gerontological research in the interest of elderly
- Thirdly, it should allow for cultural exchange between the generations and participation in the geriatric prevention\(^{42}\).

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 (Caradecc 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 French model is a high level of didactic and research activities combined with diversity of organizational forms: from the full integration with 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 these are such association as UTA practices in France\(^{44}\):

- French Association of Universities of the Third Age (UFUTA), founded in 1981, in 1993 changed to the French Association of Universities for Every Age

---

\(^{42}\) Gralon.net, Popular Universities have their own tradition and specificity : L'Universitépopulareeuropéenne : des cours pour tous http://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
• International Association of Universities of the Third Age (AIUT), the ideal place for exchange of experiences, analysis and research promotion
• French Popular Universities Association, a member of the European Association of Education for Adults (EAEA), rearranges in network the most of Popular Universities and Leisure Time Universities.

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 the culture creation classes, natural history, cooking, physical activities as also the memory training and art workshops. They provide in their studies offer the museums and the other cultural institutions visits in the country and the foreign educational trips.

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 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 the whole year. You can register via Internet, or in person completing the card of affiliated. 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 there are in France the other types of non-formal and informal education of seniors, such as distance courses, the legalization 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 r. 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 organize activities using their own knowledge and experience. The emphasis is put on experiment and group teaching.

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

At the core of the British universities functioning 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 UTA can be actually established by any person. There are both universities counting a few hundred members and the small one, numbering from a dozen to several dozen members. These latter usually function in the smaller towns. The educational offer of universities is varied: there are taught the academic subjects, as also carried out the 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 the 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 students UTA - newsletter entitled Sources
- organizing the studies for people interested in the selected topic, which is enabled by contacting via the Internet to the people with similar interests, organizing the on-line learning (u3a.org).

In Great Britain in 2002 there were 440 UTA groups. They concentrated more than 100 thousand 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\textsuperscript{46} this kind of education is realized by means of national educational movement for the elderly, called the Federation of Active Retirement Association (FARA). There is not used the term UTA. However the senior educational model is very similar to British self-help model. FARA members organize 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 organizations increasing also in the other parts of the island. The characteristic feature for development of this Irish movement is realization of \textit{Age links} project created by FARA. The project aims to integrate inter generationally the children from local schools with older people from the local FARA associations.

\section*{4.4. European Context}

\textbf{Poland}\textsuperscript{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 persons 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 aged 85+ by 90 \%, and the number of people aged

\textsuperscript{46} U3A: www.u3a.org.uk
\textsuperscript{47} Responsible for this part is Gertruda Wieczorek and the members of the research team of Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa
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. With 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 persons incapable of 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 (Wadowska 2010).

Marginalization 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 persons decide to continue education in its organized form when they realize 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. Campra 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 realization of French UTA model mainly trying to activate students intellectually and culturally. Students of Italian UTA 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 % attendance). UNITRE is supported by the volunteer activities of its members.

Besides the affiliated universities in UNITRE in Italy there operate not affiliated 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 theater, exercises, they conduct research with students participation, promote the intergenerational integration.

In Italy the older people are surround by special care from the state authorities. Educational institutions organize educational projects for this group of people. Their main objectives of the Italian education program for adults are: local community development, promotion of individual and intellectual development. Especially important is affiliate and integrative function as well as

---

48 Italia-Universita della Terza Eta: www.worldu3a.org/worldu3as/uta-italia.htm
intergenerational integration. Therefore Italian UTAs focus relatively young people, at the age over 30 years, and the persons 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 coordinates 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, publishing, study groups and study-related travel. Activities are based on lifelong learning, academic teaching and opportunities to participate in planning. Teaching is also provided in cooperation with summer universities, adult education centres and other partners 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 there was formed a council coordinating their activities the National Advisory Committee, 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).
4. Models

**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 UTA 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 recognized 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 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 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, 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 organizations. Latvian Pensioners' Federation is founded as an organization unifying senior's interests. It brings together 138 local organizations. It is a non-political, non-governmental organization 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 programs; 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 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 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-realization” 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 UTA 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. 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 the doctor-prof. Geinsendorf In the French-speaking part of the country there operate the 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 familiarize 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 did not apply the rules regarding the age limits. The classes were conducted in form of courses and seminars, as also, basing on the French UTA model, there were carried out the various research with the students participation.

Senior education in Austria is neither based on French UTA model, nor on the British model. At the end of the 70s there facilitated the seniors to take the studies usually as a free audience. Also the seniors without secondary school certificate could start the studies. The women over 40 years old and the man over 45 years old were determined as studying seniors. UTA in Austria is actually the association of senior students studying at regular universities. These associations are fighting for the rights of senior students (Halicki 2000).

The academic model of senior education was created in the **Netherlands** in the 80s. 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 CJ Tempelman initiative in 1986. In the years 1986 - 1989 there were organized at nine universities the educational facilities for elderly. In 1994, there were 21, and in 2002 already 25. Most of them were organized at universities, however, a noticeable trend are the universities based on the British model of self-help e.g. in Roosendaal. Dutch universities implement the rigorous of academic education standard. In many universities there are realized the special education programs for seniors that provide a degree in the specific area of the particular area of knowledge. However, there is increasingly discussed, if these academic educational programs should be more liberal, and the program range expanded and adapted to the wider seniors multitude 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 mln. 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, it is noticed the disappearance of multi-generational families. There is no use of potential which is an experience. We should return to grandma and grandpa function. 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.
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.

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 window to the world” for seniors, they are the realization 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. They 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 could not pursue due to the lack of time. This allows them not only develop in a specific area, but also 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.

---

Responsible for this part is Urszula Nowacka, Joanna Górna and the members of the research team of Jan Długosz University in Czestochowa

---

124
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 and recently very appreciated by seniors form of physical activity. 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 about integration activities, which seniors assign high priority. These meetings give the opportunity to spend time together, common experience of everyday joys and sorrows, share 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 to some meetings. They bring a lot of freshness and youthful joy. Such meetings develop intergenerational relationships. 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 the hearts. Annually organize 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 everything and at the same time they do not have to anything 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 emphasize, 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**

Society of the S. Wojciechowski University of Thirds Age, at Ursus- Warsaw's district, belongs to group of initiatives, which began its activities in 2003 and 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.

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. Board authorizes competences, such as representing and acting on behalf of the Third Age, passing resolutions of membership in national and international organizations, adopt internal regulations and organizational instructions, asset management and fund UTA. And, the purpose of the audit committee include, among others: current work UTW control, reporting on the activities of this committee. 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 organization and authority of the UTA building in the scientific community and society.

Implementation of basic statutory UTA comes down to education of senior citizens from different fields of science, activating them through participation in

---

51 Responsible for this part is Elżbieta Napora and the members of the research team of Jan Długosz University in Czestochowa
52 [http://portal.bpursus.waw.pl/galleries/328,500,03.jpg](http://portal.bpursus.waw.pl/galleries/328,500,03.jpg)
various forms of social life, take action to intergenerational solidarity, promote and organize 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, dance salsa, workshops, psychological), 5) seminar, 6) cultural and 7) groups of interest. 

Current number of students UTA is 325 people (dated XI. 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 cost of their own students⁵⁴. However, on its activities UTA also receives a subsidy from the program:

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

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

UTA's audience positive appraise classes, emphasizing 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 realized project with non-profit aim, that works in the field of culture, education, health and tourism. It is also voluntary organization, self-governing and ideologically neutral elderly people, at the same time it is seniors practical education that brings positive results. Indication that the operation consisting in educating UTA seniors are beneficial to them, 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.

4. Models

Seniors' informal learning

“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
- Unpaid work outside home
- Housework
- Leisure and tourism
- Care the body in health and disease
- Social activity (socializing, 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 a family life. Situations that arise in the family as a 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 organization, 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 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).

---

55 Responsible for this part is Agnieszka Kozerska and the members of the research team of Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa
Seniors' informal education is often supported by various institutions and organizations.

In Poland in the last years the local governments joined in efforts to support the educational activity of seniors and, first of all, non-governmetal sector. Senior clubs organize 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 in the network 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

Long life learning means a 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. Subject all persons as actors - this highlights the importance of genuine equality of opportunity and quality in learning.

In this chapter we can presented a global and general introduction of the Non-formal and Informal education in seniors citizens, the English and French System of education adapted to the Third age Universities 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 realize 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 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 as well assumed premise that the policy of promoting active aging can help to prevent intergenerational conflict arising from demographic shifts we are experiencing.\(^\text{57}\)

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 affect the elderly (e.g., ophthalmologic problems). Thus there 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 organization, 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. 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 activity associated with family life.

\(^{57}\) ibidem
4.7. Experiences and good practices

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 organizer) 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**

**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

---

58 Pilar Escuder Mollon. Universitat Jaume I. Spain
‘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 programmes 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
- 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

---

\(^{59}\) ‘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.
4. Models

- 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
- 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**

**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

---

60 Mónica Sales Giner. Universitat Jaume I. Spain
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.

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

Educación de adultos y calidad de vida. Santiago Sanchez Torrado. El Roure Editorial, S.A.

Formación universitaria de personas mayores y promoción de la autonomía personal. Políticas socioeducativas, metodologías e innovaciones. X Encuentro Nacional de Programas Universitarios para Mayores. Universidad de Burgos.

4.8. References


Kargul J.,(2005), Obszary pozaformalnej i nieformalnej edukacji dorosłych. Przesłanki do budowy teorii edukacji całożyciowej, Wrocław


5. Pedagogy

Velta Lubkina, Svetlana Usca, Aivars Kaupuzs
Personality Socialization Research Institute of Rezekne Higher Education Institute, Latvia

5.1. Introduction

The concept of lifelong learning is a key factor for development nowadays society taking into consideration demographic changes in Europe, 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 researches (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Hudson, 1999; Knowles & Holton & Swanson, 1998, Caffarella & Barnett, 1994, Lieģeniece, 2002), it is shown that senior education should be based on 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.
5. Pedagogy

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 characterized.

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 u.c.).

There are many different theories about teaching and learning. Tasks in senior education are not oriented on acquisition of qualification document, and they are specific; time for content implementation is relatively short; the content is individualized 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 recognizing 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) recognizes 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 participants’ feedback receiving characterize the implementation of this theory in practice that is described in „Keeping Fit in Later Life” project review (p 129). Also in project „Be Active – Be Healthy” the main goal was to increase the self-efficacy of participants (p 163).

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 characterized by socio-demographic characteristics; knowledge, attitude, beliefs, motives, insecurity, fears; skills and abilities, health status.

2. Level of social environment. It is characterized by relationship between family members; partner's support; personal socialization 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 urbanized 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 were closely connected with 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 comprehend the

---

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
organizational level. Also the project “Moving your minds”\textsuperscript{63} is based on 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 called as the most effective ones:

**Action Learning**

Small groups of 3-4 people are organized, 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)](image)

There are many good practices of action learning model that are implemented in Universities of Third Age. For example, the small group workshops and

\textsuperscript{63} The “Move your Minds” project is included as an experience in the Chapter “Social”, and also available in the project website: http://www.edusenior.eu
activities are very popular in Czestochowa\textsuperscript{64}. Also the project “Elderly people now online: school in the afternoon” is the good example of action learning approach\textsuperscript{65}.

**Experiential Learning**

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

![Figure 12 Model of Experiential Learning (Exeter, 2001)]

Action and reflection are crucial components of learning process that were successfully implemented during the eScouts project\textsuperscript{66}.

\textsuperscript{64} See the Models chapter in the page 124
\textsuperscript{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
5. Pedagogy

**Self-directed Learning**

It is characterized 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).

![Diagram of Self-directed Learning](image)

**Figure 13. Model of Self-directed Learning**

The participation in more formal education activities such as provided by Senior Citizens’ University in Jaume I in Spain 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.

---

66 You can find the eScouts project experience in the section of “Experiences and best practises” of Pedagogy chapter, available on-line in the project website: http://www.edusenior.eu


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 in 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

148
**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 participation motivation. It is possible to implement according to the models described above.

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 11).

*Table 11. Learning Models (by Biggs, 1993; Marton & SiHjo, 1976; Schmeck et al., 1991; Liegeniece, 2002)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model of personal style</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model of information procession</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fenomenographical model</td>
<td>Seniors construct knowledge from their own point of view on the issue. Learning outcome depends on the context and nature of task.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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, choice of methods should be based on constructivist insights that need for knowledge is dictated by the experience gained before; and training participant 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 senior to discover the required competence to be developed (Kristovska, 2012).
Constructivist teaching in seniors education is characterized 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;

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.
- 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.
- Affective sphere is characterized by emotions, attitude, values orientation, etc., related to changes in human behaviour and formation of belief (Lieģeniece, 2002).

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. Development of affective and cognitive areas is related to tasks that contribute to search for new socially significant activities, recreation, hobbies and participation in the activities of various organizations. Implementation of any area or education tasks is topical for seniors for creation of personal contacts with other people and self-realization.

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 organized 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 organizations, 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 synthesizes 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, organizers of seniors' education can look forward to the continued success of work.