



EFOS

European Federation of Older Students in the Universities
Europäische Vereinigung älterer Studierender an den Universitäten
Fédération Européenne des Etudiants Âgés aux Universités



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European Federation of Older Students

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From the editor:

I am glad to present to you the newest edition of the EFOS News, this time with contributions about developments in various European countries.

Stanley Miller describes the U3A movement in Great Britain which took a completely different path from the education for older people on the continent and which presents a fascinating picture of the self-initiative by seniors.

Aleksander Kobylarek gives an overview of the various international contacts and projects of the University of the Third Age in Wroclaw (Poland). In the present political constellation the contacts with institutions in Belarus and Ukraine are of special interest.

Prof. Roland Schöne describes the development of the education for older people in Germany which by my knowledge we haven't seen before in this form.

Prof. Eric Bleumink is the long-time chairman of the Senioren Academie Groningen-Friesland-Drenthe and was also for some years chairman of HOVO-Nederland, the Dutch association of senior universities. At my special request he has written down his personal view on the development of the academic education for older people in The Netherlands.

Thanks to the cooperation of the authors we have again managed to produce an interesting edition of the EFOS News.

Many thanks as well to the translators: Herta Spitaler from Vienna, Stanley Miller from Keyworth (Great Britain), Christien Enzing from Groningen und Sigrid Hug-Tode from Assen (both Netherlands). Without their active assistance it would not be possible to produce the EFOS News in two languages (German and English).

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Peter Hug

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Seniors education in Britain

Stanley Miller, Keyworth (Great Britain)



There are a number of features which appear to be common to seniors education wherever it manifests itself.

Firstly, we live in a shrinking world. The combined impact of enhanced communications, the media, technology and travel, has been such that our minds have been opened to peoples, places and ideas which were either unimagined or only sketchily known in previous generations.

Alongside this, improvements in medicine, health care, hygiene, housing and diet, have all combined to lead to increasing longevity for the majority of people across the world. The extent to which this is occurring is shown by the fact that almost universally the growth in the numbers of older people has overtaken that of younger generations.

This, in turn, has led to a change, albeit a slow and gradual one, in attitudes towards ageing. It is a recognition that something has to be done in the face of demographic change.

Within what was all too often "the private world" of academia, in the Universities and in Higher Education, there is a growing recognition of the significant role which they can play within the wider civil society.

Finally, and not the least within these common features, is the increasing, and sometimes sudden realisation by politicians that they need to make a positive response to demographic change.

All of this has contributed to the development of **specific provision** for older people in the field of adult education.

That can most easily be discerned within **the University of the Third Age**, a term which, although not universally applied, gives us a working title by which we can identify those specific provisions which can appear under alternative titles such as "*Later Life Learning*" or "*Lifelong Learning*" and which resolve the problem for speakers of British English who rarely use the

title "*Seniors Education*". More important than the identification of an appropriate form of words is the notion that it is vital to design or facilitate learning opportunities for older people which fully take account of their unique position and needs.

This provision must be essentially client centred, focussed on what the learner seeks not what some external body wishes to provide, however well intentioned. This calls for great flexibility and leads to a higher level than usual of participation by the learner. Such are the characteristics of programmes for older learners whether they are provided institutionally on behalf of older people OR by the voluntary activity of older people themselves. For these are the contrasting extremes of the range of opportunities for learning among older people which can be observed in many countries around the world.

When we come to the British form of the University of the Third Age, recognised by its logo "U3A", we also meet *The Third Age Trust* which is the name of the national umbrella organisation of the British U3A movement.

The term "university" when used in connection with the "third age" can give rise to misunderstanding and misapprehension, so it is important to be clear about its meaning in this particular context.

In one definition, a university is an institution of higher education and research which grants academic degrees at all levels (bachelor, master and doctorate) in a variety of subjects. Such a university provides both undergraduate and postgraduate education.

A second definition uses the term "university" as derived from the Latin "*universitas magistrorum et scholarum*", roughly meaning a community of teachers and scholars.

The British U3A corresponds to the second rather than the first definition.

The notion that there should be provision specifically for older learners has been very much a 20th century development and in Britain it was inspired in the 1980s by a trio of exceptional individuals who were aware of the French initiative in this field and who adapted it to their own particular Anglo-Saxon circumstances and culture.

Peter Laslett, a Cambridge historian with a career spanning the decoding of Japanese intelligence in

the 39-45 war; research and lecturing in Cambridge, including the founding of a group concerned with the history of population and social structures, and the development, with **Michael Young**, of the Open University. Young was a sociologist, social activist and politician. The author of the Labour Party's Manifesto which led to the election of the 1945 Labour Government, Michael Young founded or helped to found the Consumers Association, the National Consumer Council, the Open University and the University of the Third Age and was the author of the ground-breaking book *"The Rise of the Meritocracy"*.

The third founding father of the British U3A was **Eric Midwinter**, happily still with us and the author of an authoritative history of the British U3A *"500 Beacons"*, commissioned by the Third Age Trust to mark the achievement of the 500th U3A in Britain in 2004. Eric Midwinter is well known as a writer, broadcaster and consumer champion. He was Chairman of the Community Education Centre, Director of the Centre for Policy on Ageing and visiting Professor of Education at the University of Exeter.

These three pioneers, very aware of the history of British education, its particular ethos and form, its riches and the negative impact it had on many within the population, took their inspiration from the existing French model of Professor Pierre Vellas in Toulouse to work up their own British version. From the very beginning it was decided that the University of the Third Age should be based on certain key objects and guiding principles. Those which most clearly distinguish the British form of U3A include a determination to open learning opportunities to all who are at the third stage of life, irrespective of previous qualifications, and to ensure that learning is for its own sake, without the award of diplomas or certificates.

The other distinguishing feature of the British system is the absence of distinction between teachers and learners. Peter Laslett's dictum *"Those who teach shall also learn; those who learn shall also teach"* guides the activities and structure of all British U3As which are essentially voluntary activities undertaken by and for their members. Thus self-help and mutual aid are fundamental to this form of U3A.

From that tentative beginning in 1982, the U3A movement has spread across the British Isles to the extent that currently there are more than 890 individual U3As with a total of over 317,000 members. Very often a new U3A will spring up as the result of the initiative of individuals within a community who organise a first meeting and then elect their own committee. A recent survey reveals

that the majority of U3As have between 200 and 500 members although at the extremes it is possible to find some with 50 or fewer members but others with 500 to over a 2000 in size. What is common to virtually all these U3As is the pattern of a regular open meeting, very often on a monthly basis, together with a range of interest group meetings monthly, fortnightly or weekly. While the monthly meeting involving an invited speaker brings together a nucleus of perhaps a half to a third of the total membership, the smaller interest groups represent the central core of activity in the organisation. The range of interests pursued involves intellectual, cultural and physical activities so that a list of those available across the country would run into hundreds. One UK national welfare organisation for the elderly, **AGEUK**, describes this as follows:

"The range of subjects embraced by the U3A is mind-boggling. Here are some groups we've randomly picked out of individual U3A websites: Stained glass, wine-tasting, piano duets, botany, ambling, country dancing, Latin, Scrabble, bird-watching, lace-making, knitting, genealogy, belly-dancing, crosswords, astronomy, board games, computer skills, horse-riding, military history, kitchen gardening, digital photography, textiles and musical appreciation."



A U3A Exploratory visit

In my own U3A of some 440 members, there are over 30 interest groups run by volunteer members who describe them as in the following examples:

ARCHAEOLOGY

"The group started in October 2012, looking at all types of archaeology, below ground, on the ground and above ground by talks and site visits with the occasional outside speaker. The group looks at digs, landscapes, structures and buildings to set them in their historical context."

GERMAN

"The sessions consist of a mix of conversation, listening and reading with some grammar when

necessary or requested. Our main focus is on verbal communication, in German, of course."

PUTTING THE WORLD TO RIGHTS

"This is a discussion group where we share experiences, opinions and understanding while having our own ideas challenged."

PHILOSOPHY

"The meetings are designed to promote thinking and discussion with humour thrown in whenever possible."

CRAFT

"Each month one of the Group members leads a session to teach the other members a technique."

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH

"The aims of this Group are to stimulate interest in the wonders of our world through the scientific achievements of different branches of Science and Technology."

WALKING

"Monthly guided walks are provided for U3A members who wish to enjoy the local countryside for pleasure, health and friendship."

The British U3A is an organisation of Third Agers which is self-funded, locally based and operationally independent. A common annual fee to members of each U3A is about £20 per annum, to which is added a charge of £1 or two to cover costs of hiring rooms or providing refreshments, particularly where interest groups meet in private houses. At the heart of this organisation is self-help activity within an interest group. The number of such groups is, of course, as varied as the size and composition of each U3A. The majority of U3As offer between 21 and 50 such group activities but others offer 5 to 20 while some have as many as 100 going on each month.

Although each U3A is operationally independent, they all work within the national framework of guiding principles and practices as set out and promoted by the Third Age Trust, the national umbrella organisation. This body consists of representatives of U3As in each of the 12 UK regions, assisted by full-time and part-time paid staff based in the national office in London. The Trust and its activities are determined by the Annual General Meeting at which each U3A is entitled to be represented, provided it has made the required financial contribution which is currently £3.50 per member per annum.

The Trust offers a range of services to U3As and to individual U3A members. Leaflets are compiled and made available which cover topics relating to

U3A start-up, advice on group leadership, computer techniques, model constitutions, etc. The Trust has used funds donated by charitable foundations and sourced through national lotteries to equip and staff a resource centre which provides a loan service of non-book materials the only cost of which is the return postage.

Insurance cover for all U3As against claims for personal injury and the like is also provided by the Trust, together with legal and financial advice directed at U3A committees.

The Trust runs its own website www.u3a.org.uk which has both public and members' pages and provides an immediate link between the activities of the Trust and the wider membership. It is also a very effective means of publicising the U3A movement.

Faithful to the spirit of U3A volunteering, the Trust has recruited individual members who offer a subject based advisory service to leaders of interest groups.

5 times a year, the Trust publishes its magazine "*Third Age Matters*" which is produced by a professional editor working under the direction of an editorial committee of trustees. This magazine provides information and reports for members but, at the same time, it provides the public face of the U3A movement to the wider world.

Each year the Trust organises a national conference, often held in a university conference centre and in collaboration with members of that university's academic staff. Speakers of national repute combine with leading figures in the U3A movement to make presentations on a wide range of themes and raise issues of interest and concern to U3A members. These gatherings also provide the occasion for elections to and reporting back from the Trust.

In addition to the National Conference, two national Summer Schools are provided with short courses on academic and creative themes, very often run by U3A members with particular expertise. These Summer Schools are frequently over-subscribed and increasingly they are backed up by regional gatherings of a similar nature, again based on members' initiatives, contacts and expertise.

The local and regional groupings which involve collaboration between U3As enable a sharing of expertise and ideas; this networking has increased significantly in recent years.

One particular annual event organised nationally is the occasion when the Royal Institution, effectively

the UK's academy of science, opens its doors to the USA and provides a series of lectures held in its famous Faraday lecture theatre and provided by leading academics and researchers.

Other activities promoted by the Trust include Shared Learning Projects and On-line courses. SLPs involve the participation of a number of individual U3A members from different U3As working together with the paid staff of a local museum, art gallery, library or other cultural institution. They research artefacts or documents to which the professional staff have not been able to devote time. At the conclusion of the research period the U3A group make a presentation to the professionals and thus provide additional resources to the institution.

To offer more depth of learning in particular topic areas, the Trust has combined with Australian colleagues to provide courses in specific topic areas which can be accessed on-line. They are described by the Trust as follows:

"U3A Online courses are short courses specially designed for older people and available through a partnership between Third Age Trust (the UK national U3A organisation) and the [U3A Online Inc.](#) (based in Australia).

These are courses for which no entry qualifications are required. They offer no credit on completion and are designed purely for personal interest and enjoyment. They have been written by volunteers who are experienced tutors or course leaders in their fields. These courses are aimed at U3A members, ex-U3A members who are no longer able to attend a U3A, and those unable to access conventional courses for one reason or another (e.g. restricted mobility, disability, etc)"

These courses can be tutored or untutored; in the former case there is no charge and the materials can be accessed and used at any time. Where the course is tutored there is a £5 charge and feedback is provided by the tutor via email. There is also a fixed timetable for completing the course units. The range of topics includes art history, creative writing and cultural and historical topics relating to Australasia and the Far East.

To complete the review of Third Age Trust activity mention should be made of participation by individuals in European development for older learners and the search for ways to support 4th Agers, who are unable to come to meetings. (Development of a "virtual classroom" is being considered as one possible response.)

Finally, reference should be made to the recent production of a series of DVDs which introduce the

U3A to those unfamiliar with it and also to the publication of a handbook for Group Leaders which is itself the result of collaboration between volunteer practitioners within U3As. *"Time to Learn"* is sub-titled *"Facilitating non-formal adult learning"* and this brings us back to the central feature of the British U3A, its insistence on the sharing of knowledge and experience. In the British U3A the learner is in control of their own learning and the motivation for learning is the enjoyment and benefit the individual derives from it. As the handbook points out, U3A groups frequently involve the active participation of the members who may well lead on topics which they have prepared or organised in partnership with other group members.



A U3A Monthly Open meeting

Looking to the future there are a number of issues to be considered. Non-formal, experiential learning raises questions around quality and evaluation. Without assessment and certification, how can the quality of learning be assured? If the learner can choose the level of participation they wish to make, how can their progress be evaluated? Such questions seem obvious in an educational context until one is reminded that the purpose of the activity in Third Age learning is that which the learners determine for themselves. Nevertheless, there does remain that uncomfortable feeling that the U3A movement ought to be able to justify itself in more conventional terms of achievement. Perhaps the way forward is to recognise the achievements of those who come to U3A with little educational background but who nonetheless succeed in their positive contributions to the work of the interest groups - and there are many such examples.

With changes in retirement patterns and likely reductions in pension rates, will the funding of

U3As become more difficult? With the growth of numbers there is already a serious problem in finding suitable premises for the monthly open meetings where several hundred may wish to attend. The use of closed-circuit television is one possible solution already in use.

More problematic still is the issue of how to extend the participation in U3A activity to that majority of older people in the UK for whom learning was an

uncomfortable and unprofitable experience of their younger years and one not to be repeated? Or will the '*baby-boomer*' generation have overcome these inhibitions?

Finally, a constant concern in the British U3A movement will be to maintain an acceptable balance between its contribution to social cohesion and to intellectual enrichment.



Participants of the EFOS meeting in Bratislava, April 2013



Participants of the EFOS meeting in Dresden, October 2013

The University of the Third Age at the University of Wrocław

Dr. Alexander Kobylarek, Wrocław (Poland)



The UTA in the University of Wrocław begins the year 2014 realizing several European Union funded projects.

The project GEM (Inter-Generational Memories) is coordinated by the Foundation “Pro Scientia Publica”, implemented in partnership with the UTA and organizations from France, Spain, Italy and Turkey. As part of the Grundtvig partnership, students and doctoral students cooperating with me conducted biographical workshops in Paris, designed a research on the biographies of seniors taking part in the project and are preparing an academic publication about learning and analysis of the educational paths of the seniors.

Project TELL me a story is also coordinated by our UTA and concerns perfecting the art of theater and the use of para-theatrical techniques in adult education. The project involves additional organizations from Italy, Austria, Netherlands, France and Portugal. As a part of the project, each organization prepares theater workshops for partner organizations, which are also the presentation of the achievements of the organization. A common theme in the work are the myths and legends of Europe. Each organization presents its own performances which use the myths and stories associated with the region. In the case of our UTA, it consists of two stagings of the legends of Lower Silesia.

CALL-in-LED project implemented by the Foundation “Pro Scientia Publica” in collaboration with the UTA relates to the use of new technologies in adult education. It is a Leonardo da Vinci partnership programme, in which the UTA is a partner (the project is coordinated by an organization from Austria). It includes organizations from Poland, Austria, Hungary and England. During the project partners analyze the mental and psychological barriers restricting the use of new technologies in adult education.

All of these projects will conclude this year. Last year however, we have begun two new, different projects.

The project pArt (Art-Inclusive) is coordinated by the Foundation “Pro Scientia Publica” in cooperation with the UTA. It is a Grundtvig partnership programme. The organizations involved come from Finland, England, Austria, France and Turkey. The project organizations represent different artistic techniques and conduct workshops for other organizations.

The GAMES project is coordinated by the UTA. In the course of its implementation organizations will diagnose the possibility of using games (both computer and other types of games developing thinking, such as Scrabble) as an assistive technology in adult education.

European projects are a very important part of the activities of the UTA. Project Managers have extensive experience in fundraising and partnership programmes project management. However, the new programme Erasmus+ is a big challenge, because the conditions of participation in the programme are completely different than before. We already have a few ideas, and a few first partners.

Both UTA and Foundation Pro Scientia Publica are learning organizations. Every year we try to take on new challenges. Two years ago, the first time we started a new programme project in which we had so far no experience, responding to an invitation of an organization little-known to us.

Last year, for the first time we used the grant funding to finance the stay of specialists from the east (in this case specifically from Belarus) and organized for them a week study visit in Wrocław.

This year, we are preparing not only to take up the challenge of Erasmus+ but we also want to report its educational offer in the development of an organization from the east, from the territory of the former USSR and we plan to use the programme RITA (Region in Transition, Transition in Region) to help set up several new UTAs in Ukraine and Belarus.

These ideas are a challenge for the coming years.

On the General Education of Older People in Germany, with particular reference to Universities and Higher Education Institutions.

Prof. Dr. Roland Schöne, Chemnitz (Germany)

Academic Director of the Senior College in the Technical University of Chemnitz

As a result of the demographic changes in Europe, the proportion of older people in the German population has increased – particularly in the east German regions as a result of the reduction in the birth rate since the decisive change which occurred in 1989 – and in addition, there has been the departure of many young people, particularly young women of child-bearing age, to West Germany and the neighbouring countries as a result of diminishing employment opportunities. Thus the population figures are declining particularly in East Germany and only a few East German cities, for example, Leipzig and Dresden, show an increase in their population.

To date no comprehensive documentation has been produced which describes and evaluates the development of university-based academic further education for older people during the entire existence of East and West Germany. In addition, the statistical data is sketchy and analysed in different ways. For example, guest students of different ages on standard higher education courses are not reported separately from older participants on specific courses for the elderly. Therefore, only selected aspects of older people's education are available to the author, with no claim to completeness.

Precursors of adult education in Germany were the university extension movement at the end of the 19th Century, the public lecture system as well as the training in workers and artisans educational associations. The Humbolt Academy is often considered the first German Adult Education Centre where, from 1879, academic achievement was enabled through lecture series in popular form for citizens with a non-academic educational background.

In adult education in Germany there are different training areas. First, general adult education for all ages, usually after the first school-leaving qualification, for the last 90 years or so especially in the German community colleges, where, however, the focus was less on the specific target group of the Elderly.

It is not proposed to go into detail here about the development of community colleges for the general and vocational education of adults (including the elderly), usually in courses, since there is an extensive literature concerning community colleges in Germany, which for the most part does not consider the specific target group of older people.. Only in recent years have the community colleges

offered specific courses for older people e.g. for PC and internet use where the didactic and content needs of older people are specifically addressed. Particularly noteworthy in this context is the "Older People's Academy" which is a network of 30 continuing education organisations in Wiesbaden, where the community college has assumed the administration.

A negative trend which can be currently observed is the cutting back of the formerly very numerous branches of most of the community colleges - particularly in rural areas - as a result of reduced support from state and local government. This - and the reduction for similar reasons in local public transport – will make it more difficult if not impossible for older people to get to the nearest town community college.

Continuing vocational training in the community colleges presently stands at about 10% of their training programme and general further education is predominantly in the areas of Health, Languages, Art and Culture. Repeat programmes for school leaving qualification have gone down to 2% of their total training programme.

The 2012 statistics of the German Community Colleges Association show that the elderly represent only 14% of further education participants. In all age groups women are in a majority of 76%.

There are also programmes lasting several days in residential community colleges which offer overnight accommodation in a rural setting.

The dominant form of provision in the community colleges consists of a system of 90 minute courses mainly on a weekly or fortnightly basis. In most cases lectures are only offered to a limited extent.

The first approach at universities to general academic training for adults can be seen in the time of the Enlightenment with the demand in the 19th century for the general public to have access to the hitherto elite universities. Professors Schleiermacher and Wilhelm von Humboldt opened the doors of Berlin University with a series of Sunday lectures.

As early as 1888 in Berlin the "Urania" was offering general scientific training with a scientific lecture theatre, an observatory and a public area for

experiments. This room with about a 100 experimental stations, which could be operated by pressing a button, can be considered the first 'science centre' in the world, and is commemorated by an exhibit at the Berlin Museum of Technology.

A model for the German Higher Education institutions can be seen in England where Professor James Stewart at Cambridge University as early as 1871 had established a training opportunity open to all citizens. The first to follow in Germany were the Universities of Jena, Leipzig and Munich with so-called "popular college courses". However, there was considerable opposition to this initiative from the mostly elitist academic staff and course offerings were limited to old style authoritarian transmission of specialist knowledge with little connection to real life, which was hardly appropriate for general adult education.

The first University of the Third Age (U3A) was founded in Toulouse, France in 1973. However it was only a year later in 1974 that an 'Older People's Academy' was founded at the teacher training college in Dortmund. As early as 1979 the first international workshop entitled "Opening Higher Education colleges to older adults" took place at the University of Dortmund with the participation of the Older People's Academy. After that, more and more West German universities and colleges offered educational programmes for older people in two forms. In the majority of colleges, where space permitted, student programmes were opened to all age groups, in which an increasing number of older people enrolled. On the other hand, special additional programmes were provided specifically for older people – particularly lectures and courses.

In East Germany the first specific set of lectures for older people took place on 3.9.78 at the Humboldt University in Berlin as part of the 'University for Veterans of the Workplace'. They originated in the context of a gerontological research project and were followed by the first lectures for participants at the Veterans Colleges at Jena University in 1978 and at Halle University in 1980.

In 1990 at Leipzig University specific lectures for older people of the Veterans College were also given, initially by teachers from the Medical Faculty and later by those in other faculties. In Dresden in 1994 a union between the 'Sunday lectures' at the Technical University and the 'Older Citizens' Academy at the Medical School gave rise to a local network, 'The United Dresden Seniors Academy', which other Dresden colleges, museums and organisations joined. Worthy of special mention are their rural branch offices in Tharandt and Coswig. In addition, smaller colleges

in rural settings offer special educational programmes for older people e.g. the Anhalt college in Bernburg or the Harz College as well as the Breitenbrunn study centre in the Erzgebirge.

For more detailed treatments of the history of the university education of older people in Germany reference is made to the work of Katja Andrea, Halle, 2014.

The Senior College at the Chemnitz Technical University was founded in 1993; with a current membership of 1000 participants it is one of the largest university educational programme for older people in Germany, taking into account the size of the population of Chemnitz which has only 240,000 inhabitants. The U3A at the University of Frankfurt on Main with its 3300 participants has probably the largest university programme in Germany exclusively for older people. Comparisons of the numbers of participants and the data for city populations provides widely differing relationships, as the table below indicates.

University city	Founded	City Population	Participants	Participant-relationship
Leipzig	1979	530 000	1 100	1:480
Halle	1980	230 000	450	1:510
Frankfurt a.M.	1982	700 000	3 300	1:210
Chemnitz	1993	240 000	1 000	1:240
Dresden	1994	530 000	800	1:660

These statistical results are in part very different and not always capable of comparison. Thus, in some cases the number of participants attending free events is not listed. In some cases the number of participants from each individual lecture is added to the total, so no conclusion can be drawn with respect to individuals. Others count only the total number of participants who register at the start of the semester without recording their attendance at the lectures or in individual courses. Few institutions record actual individual attendances differentiated between lectures and courses. Sometimes the number of registered external attendees at student-based courses is combined with the number of those on specific continuing education courses for older people. As a result of this very different and opaque approach, statistical analysis and research are very difficult in this area. In general, apart from occasional individual studies, the continuing education of older people is hardly ever differentiated statistically. Statistical surveys include usually only the age group up to 65. In recent years the emphasis has been on vocational

training for older workers, which has been much increased due to the shortage of younger workers.

For the first time in Europe, a CILL* study- based on the PIACC** study for younger trainees- was begun in 2013 at the German Institute for Adult Education and LMU*** – with a target group of 65 - 80 year olds - examining their reading ability, basic mathematical skills and PC use. (http://www.edu.lmu.de/apb/forschung/forsch_projekte/cill/index.html)

**CILL = Centre for Independent Language Learning*

***PIACC = Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competences*

****LMU = Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich*

In addition, the names given to these university programmes for older people in German universities and colleges are very different e.g. Senior College, Senior Academy, Senior Studies, Universities of the Third Age (U3A), People's College, etc.

As a rule with these specific educational opportunities for older people, there are no associated tests or final examinations. Nevertheless, regular attendance over 10 semesters is recognised, for example, in the Seniors' College of the Chemnitz Technical University, by a ceremony at which a "Senior Diploma" is presented by the Rector. Up until now there have been only a few specific educational offerings for which a certificate upon completion is awarded. To this can be added the Berlin model, for example,; training for retirement activities (BANA—Student course) at the Berlin Technical University and the 5 semester further education study programme for older people (i.e. over 50 years old), with assessments of practice and a final essay which 1200 older people have already completed at the Dortmund Technical University.

At present there is a tendency to open up specific courses for "seniors" to younger people, giving rise to changes in nomenclature. For example, in 2010, the former "Senior College" at the Mittweida Adult Education Centre was renamed the "Citizens' Academy", in order to recognise this trend, and to avoid the negative stigmatisation of "only for seniors".

Up till now there has been no complete and up to date overview of educational provision for seniors in German universities and colleges. An initial summary is offered by the national association for continuing education (BAGWIWA).through its member colleges at www.bagwiwa.de. Collaboration between organisations called "Senior

Academies" can also be seen at <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seniorenakademie>.

In the view of this author, the further development of senior education in Germany requires action in the following areas:

1. Re-evaluation of policy for training and practical design of lifelong learning, in particular for older people and encompassing other generations, including younger people; all this at national, regional and community level in Germany in accordance with EU documents, as, for example, the "Memorandum on Lifelong Learning", "Green Book: 'Looking towards demographic change – a new solidarity between the generations'" and the "European Agenda for Adult Education".
2. Public support for academic further education for older people in the approximately 50 Higher Education institutions currently providing adult education, analogous to the support for the roughly 1000 adult and residential education centres.
3. Expansion of media supported learning opportunities, especially for rural areas via nationwide online lectures, transmission of lectures and other events on regional TV channels, as a live stream on the Internet or as prepared recordings for both groups within social encounters, as well as individually for immobile elderly and young people.
4. Qualitative and quantitative development of specific educational programmes for the elderly and across generations with younger people in all the universities, colleges, technical schools, academic and professional academies or in regional networks.
5. There should be an increase of courses for older people available up till now only in limited numbers in politics, technology and science. At present, humanities such as history, art and culture, as well as courses in languages and PC/internet use have predominated – this increase should be accompanied by greater empowerment so that acquired knowledge and skills can be put to use in both personal and community contexts (in volunteer and retirement situations).

6. Further development of cooperative action and networking among German university course providers in a national association as, for example, in Poland with 450 U3As or in the Czech Republic with 35 U3As, alongside public support of this association at national and regional levels, taking account of existing cooperative initiatives e.g. within the framework of the BAGWIWA.
7. Collection of comparable differentiated statistical data on the participants and training opportunities in all forms of education for all age groups accompanied by non-time limited research leading to further optimisation.
8. An increase in national conferences, seminars and workshops in the field of the further education of older people and encompassing

younger people and all generations, leading to an exchange of information and experience.

9. Extension of international cooperation e.g. in the context of EFOS at European level and with AIUTA internationally.

References:

Katja Andreae,
“The Development of university based training for older people in Germany”
Thesis at the Martin-Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, 2014 with an extensive list of references.

(Translation of the original German text by Stanley Miller)



20th anniversary of the *Seniorenkolleg Chemnitz*, October 2013



Second *„Mitteldeutsches Weiterbildungsforum“* Chemnitz, October 2013

Higher Education for senior citizens in the Netherlands Growing in line with society

Prof. Dr. Eric Bleumink, Groningen (Niederlande)
Vorsitzender der Senioren Academie Groningen-Friesland-Drenthe

Those who founded Higher Education for Senior Citizens (Hoger Onderwijs voor Ouderen - HOVO) knew their classics. From Plato and Aristoteles to Cicero, Marcus Tullius Cicero (105-43 BC), the Roman senator, lawyer, writer, poet and philosopher.

According to Voltaire Cicero taught us to think.

One of his many writings dealt with old age. (De senectute)

Old age comes with deficiencies, but as early as 2000 years ago Cicero claimed that our brains will not fail us if we maintain them well by studies and ever new intellectual challenges.

Lifelong learning to age well.

Fed by these insights and inspired by developments in France and England pioneers started off.

First of all in Groningen in the autumn of 1986 with an intensive course in psychology.

Its teacher was Prof. Dr. J. Snijders who, at the age of seventy-six, knew how to captivate his students and who incited them to self-study.

Till the end of his life Professor Snijders was to remain committed to HOVO in Groningen and in the Netherlands and he also kept looking for partner institutions in Europe and elsewhere.

After 1986 HOVO spread across the whole country. Students kept coming and they could choose from an ever-increasing number of courses.

Meanwhile so-called circles of friends had also come into existence and they contributed tremendously to HOVO's solid basis in society.

In 1990 it was decided to establish a countrywide HOVO association ('HOVO Nederland') in which all HOVO institutions and circles of friends were represented.

HOVO was now firmly grounded.

Those who had been involved from the start were an idealistic lot and they were quite militant.

Those who succeeded them found their beds laid out and the level of militancy dropped.

Society is still in progress.

People change and so do the Elderly.

The students from the early days, born before the 1940s, were succeeded by new generations with new needs and requirements who also had more of a consumer attitude.

HOVO had to find a proper balance between continuity and modernisation.

HOVO characteristics

HOVO has a number of characteristics that should not go unmentioned.

First of all, right from the start, HOVO has been anchored within Higher Education. A conscious choice. HOVO Institutions are part of a university or a college of higher education, or they are transformed into a foundation directly linked to one.

And the HOVO office is housed in a higher education building.

Secondly, students pay a course-fee. The amount they pay depends on the length and intensity of the course.

Thirdly, HOVO's core activity is offering courses specifically tuned to the needs of people over fifty who wish to broaden their horizons.

Also, people who have reached a certain age are past the age of 'academic' learning. They prefer to share their own knowledge and experience with teachers and fellow students.

They also come to classes to meet others.

All this poses demands on course programming.

Fourthly, quality and standards of the course programme are being monitored.

The co-ordinator is the head of the Institution and he/she is being assisted by a broadly based Programming Board.

Moreover, on a nationwide level an assessment framework was compiled as a guide for local HOVO institutions.

In this way HOVO's character is being safeguarded so that the students and the institutions HOVO is associated with, as well as other parties, know what Higher Education for Senior Citizens stands for.

Modern times:

professionalisation and commercialisation.

From the year 2000 further professionalisation took place.

It had become apparent that HOVO would not be subsidized by universities, colleges of higher education or the government.

The co-ordinators had to ensure recovery of costs and they had to do their utmost to guarantee the course programme's high level and high quality.

The co-ordinators' jobs were upgraded.

They became professionals who had to manage their organisation but who also had to look after the pennies.

For a long time civil society and the government considered HOVO to be an innovative movement promoting Life Long Learning.

A movement with a social mission and internationally oriented.

A movement that keeps the aged active and modern, making it possible for them to fully participate in a knowledge-intensive society, who as a result can use their talents for the benefit of society and mankind.

“Active ageing and solidarity between generations“ was the adagium the European Union promoted. And rightly so.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science therefore subsidised ‘HOVO Nederland’ to improve HOVO’s innovative power, to increase social support for lifelong learning and to develop programs for those who still work. But the present recession put an end to this financial support.

For quite some time we have not heard anything of all those well-meant intentions to make lifelong learning Europe’s spearhead aiming at a permanent leading role on the world’s stage.

We shall just have to wait a while for the spirits to awaken again.

The new functionalism resulted in fewer seminars, in the disappearance of most study groups and a no-go for courses for which only a small number of students registered.

Furthermore it is to be regretted that the circles of friends were marginalized and were no longer part of HOVO Nederland. HOVO needs the direct input of senior citizens.

Without the circles of friends and without allies there is a fair chance that HOVO will loose its social support.

It is time to re-invigorate the circles of friends.

Key figures of HOVO in the Netherlands (2013)

Cities where HOVO courses are given in The Netherlands	22
Number of course applications per year (lectures and the like excluded)	29,000
Number of courses per year spread across 3 trimesters	700
Students’ average age	65
Age Group with most students (ca. 2/3)	61 – 70
Age varies from	48 - 93

Continue on its own

HOVO now has to continue on its own and look ahead to the time ahead when Europe has overcome its lethargy.

After a long period of steady growth till 2008 the number of students now no longer increases, whereas the number of people over sixty continues to grow.

In twenty-two cities courses are being offered. Those who are keen to learn can choose from seven hundred different courses every year, spread across three semesters.

For lectures auditoriums are packed with people.

Philosophy, ethics, religious studies, history, art and culture still are the most popular subjects and

Europe plays a fairly central part in the course programme.

New scientific insights, for example in the field of neuropsychology, brain research, healthy ageing, the evolution or in the field of astronomy or nanotechnology are being explained in courses.

Topical issues are certainly not avoided whether it be Islam, the financial crisis, climate change or developments in the Middle East.

Here also HOVO aims at both continuity and modern insights.

Higher Education for senior citizens has enough tenacity to keep up with social developments. So keep it steady as we go.

(Translation from Dutch: Christien Enzing)

News in Brief

Letter to the candidates for the election of the European Parliament 2014

EFOS has made up a [letter](#) addressed to the candidates for the European Parliament, pointing out the important contribution of the education of older people to their well-being and their inclusion in society. For more specific demands the EFOS Manifesto is attached.

EFOS members are invited to send this letter to candidates in their region.



Oldenburger Declaration of BAGWiWA

At her yearly convention 2013 at the C3L the Oldenburg University BARWiWA formulated **five demands for the fostering of academic further education of older people** and published these in September 2013 as the Oldenburger Erklärung.



Guide for distance learning for older people

The German *Portal Fernstudium Direkt* has produced a guide to assist older people with the choice of an educational programme.

The guide can be found in the *Magazin bei Fernstudium Direkt* under <http://www.fernstudium-direkt.de/magazin/senioren-fernstudium.html> to read online or to download in pdf format.

