



EFOS

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



EFOS NEWS

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European Federation of Older Students

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From the editor:

We start this issue with our President 's overview of her latest term of office. It links our activities of the last three years to the goals of EFOS and focuses on important developments.

At the UNECE Ministerial Conference in Lisbon EFOS was represented by Dr. Katarina Grunwald. In her report she describes her impressions and gives a summary of the conference results.

Stanley Miller describes the characteristics of the British system of the University of the 3rd Age with a vivid description of his U3A in a small town in England.

Concepción Bru Ronda's contribution about the Spanish National Association of Universities for Older Adults opens a series of articles in which we intend to describe for various countries how their institutes for education of older people work together on a national level.

Two articles are dedicated to our EduSenNet project, which ended in November 2017: A short summary written by the project coordinator Dr. Nadežda Hrapková and a letter from the EU Commission with an acknowledgement of our work.

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of „Studium ab 50“ at the Otto-von-Guerike University Olaf Freymark has written a review of the education for older people in Magdeburg, Germany before and after the fall of the wall.

Finally, we have an article about a very special art project of a group of senior students of the "Studium über 50" in Magdeburg. They show us what amazing fashion creations can be made with simple grasses.

In our gallery of distinguished EFOS members it is the turn of our long-time president Dr. Nadežda Hrapková.

This issue of EFOS News would not have been possible without the active cooperation of the authors, translators and editors, especially Eveline Rudolph and Stanley Miller. However, our translation work has been significantly facilitated by an excellent program on the Internet (DeepL). That's why in many articles the translator is no longer mentioned by name.

May 2018

Peter Hug

EFOS News

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Report of the EFOS president for the meeting in Groningen 2017

Dear EFOS members,

In my report I would like to evaluate the EFOS activities according to our EFOS action plan 2014 – 2018 that is based on the goals of EFOS

Referring to the latest update of the EFOS goals I would like to remind you, that we focus on:

1. Fostering of academic studies of older people alongside younger students or at special academies/universities for older people
2. Fostering of joint projects for older students throughout Europe
3. Fostering and securing the access of older people to academic education including those without formal qualifications
4. Representation of interests of academic education for older people in politics and society
5. Fostering of autonomous national organisations with similar goals
6. Identifying possibilities of using the skills and expertise of older students for the benefit of science and society
7. Cooperation with other international organisations that support lifelong learning (LLL)

1./ In our daily work we foster academic studies for older people alongside younger students at universities for older people or at special academies. In EFOS presentations and presentations of member universities during meetings and conferences abroad and in our own countries we are promoting the idea and importance of LLL in older age. For this reason we have used marketing tools as the EFOS and EduSenNet posters, flyers, conference presentations, project Newsletters, EFOS News and websites. In May of the year 2016 we propagated the EFOS goals in Reims during the AIUTA conference, where the Memorandum between AIUTA and EFOS was signed; also at the conference of UTW in Wroclaw in July 2016 and at the Osaka – world conference of AIUTA. Large promotion of the seniors' studies we have realised with our Booklet titled 'Education for Seniors in Europe' containing the results of our Erasmus+ EduSenNet project and the Best practices in senior's education.

2./ All the institutional members of EFOS and also some individual members are actively involved in the Erasmus+ project EduSenNet and foster active ageing by projects for older students throughout Europe. With the EduSenNet project, during last 3 years, we have achieved very concrete results of the research work from 12 universities in Europe and very valuable results in the Survey among the elderly non students and senior students.



The project is finishing successfully and focused on more than 4,000 elderly people. Almost 1,000 seniors have been contacted in various communities to support them and show them possibilities for being more active by learning in later life. Our work and dissemination activities attracted new members and persons who joined our Federation. There are some personal changes in the representation of Köln University (Helmut Weiss) and from Wroclaw University (Malgorzata Malec-Rawinski). Our new member Leipzig University was already represented at the conference and EFOS meeting in Chemnitz in the person of Caterina Hein. Today EFOS has 18 individual members and 18 institutional members.

3./ EFOS members permanently focus on other communities of the elderly in many different areas to encourage and include them in the learning programmes. Therefore this interest was one of the project priorities and lead to very fruitful results in the membership countries. It is shown by the support for our common projects and interest. The study programmes for older students with their big

variety of study possibilities offer chances to a wide public for active ageing and socialising through the learning activities on offer. The scale of the studies presently on offer is clearly visible in the project booklet and presentations during the EFOS meetings and workshops combined with the project events. Contacts with the communities and research inside the groups of seniors gave room to presentations of the possibilities in details.

4./ Concrete results from EFOS and the project activities are regularly presented on the EFOS website, project website, EFOS News (1/2015, 1/2016, 1/2017), public meetings and conferences, showing the necessity of academic education for older people in politics and society and the wide interests of the elderly students. Furthermore we published the brochure and booklet about our Erasmus+ project. One of the important issues is the yearly reporting to the United Nations Committee on Ageing and to national political bodies and the personal participation at the meetings of political bodies. It is clearly visible through our participation in the meetings of the Committee on Ageing in Vienna, where, during the last 3 years, we have been represented by Katja Grunwald, Horst Leonhard and Ingrid Dummer. Our delegates worked on the brochure “Social innovation on active and healthy ageing for sustainable economic growth” and on the Political Declaration for the NGO Forum and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Ministerial conference which took place in Lisbon in September 2017 with Katja Grunwald as our EFOS delegate. On request of the population unit of the UNECE we submitted a report about the project research and learning activities realised by the EFOS member institutions. In October 2016 and 2017 - the Month of the elderly – an annual report has been presented about the activities of elderly students devoted to the 1. October – the International Day of the Elderly.

Appreciation for our work was expressed by the invitations of the UTA and the rector of the university in Wroclaw in July 2016 to the 40th anniversary of UTA and the Jubilee International Scientific Conference where EFOS was awarded a Diploma. The EPAL platform of EU is presenting current results and news from adult learning. Therefore also some of our members (Alicante, Bratislava and

maybe others of you) sent reports to the Epale platform.

5./ Since 2015 the EFOS members have met at regular EFOS meetings combined with workshops and project meetings held in Brno, Alicante, Uppsala and Magdeburg. In the year 2017 the members met in Chemnitz, where EFOS meeting and project transnational meeting were combined in one conference, focusing on young and elderly learning together at the university or in other places. All meetings have been complemented with social programmes. The meeting in Groningen is not just a regular EFOS meeting, but it is important because started and ends the time period between two General assemblies and elections (in 2014 and in 2017). If needed EFOS members can get financial support from the EFOS budget for taking part at the meetings, according to the rules that we have formulated previously.

The Erasmus+ project opened possibilities for using the skills and expertise of our older students. The project Booklet contains the Review table, results from the research work with non-students, important results from the survey among older students at UTAs and good practices and innovations of the programmes. The final evaluation of the project is going to be submitted at the end of October 2017 and will describe the work realised by all partners' institutions and other participating EFOS members.

6./ Cooperation with other international organisations that support lifelong learning (LLL) – members of EFOS participated in many international events such as a conference of AIUTA in Reims (France) and Osaka (Japan), a conference of the university in Wroclaw (July) “Seniors for culture”, where our members (Grunwald, Odin, Hrapkova) successfully presented posters of EFOS, EduSenNet and gave presentations in the conference workshops. A specific presentation was given on “Reflection on EduSenNet project and results – so far”. The Memorandum between AIUTA and EFOS has been signed during the AIUTA conference in Reims in May 2016. All the mentioned activities gave us opportunities to present EFOS as an important European federation and to get in touch with other countries. Each EFOS meeting focused in its Agenda on other associations as

BaGWiWa and AIUTA besides presenting the information from member's institutions.

This meeting in Groningen comprises traditional points of the agenda and the transnational project meeting in addition with the EFOS General Assembly and the election of a new EFOS board. The symposium is going to be held on the topic "Innovations in Education for Older People brought into practice", including Best Practices from the EduSenNet project. Proposals for the future of EFOS will have our attention during a brainstorming about the future EFOS programme in more concrete lines.

I would like to thank those who fulfilled all the tasks from the meetings during the last 3 years and realised project tasks, contributed articles to the EFOS News, project booklet and on the website. In my report I would like to thank the members who attended our meetings without financial support from the project but are nonetheless of valuable help – especially our

treasurer Evi Rudolf. Other thanks go to other board members (Katja, Bjorn, Olaf) for their active work and participation and to Peter for his work on the website, EFOS News, translations and other important activities. Last but not least my thank goes to all participants and organisers with an active attitude to the EFOS meetings and tasks because EFOS is ours, EFOS belongs to all of us and through our work for EFOS, EFOS is visible and will be accepted and understood.

On behalf of EFOS I would like to thank the team from Groningen Senioren Academie for the hospitality and for the organisational work they have done.

I wish our meeting a fruitful and friendly atmosphere and a lot of success.

Thank you for your trust.

Groningen, October 12, 2017

Nadežda Hrapková
EFOS president



Participants of the EFOS meeting in Groningen, October 2017



Report of the 2017 UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing Lisbon, 20 – 22 September 2017

Dr. Katarina Grunwald, Bratislava (Slovakia)



“It is an honour for me to invite you to the NGO Forum taking place on 20 September 2017 in the Centro de Congressos (Conference Centre) in Lisbon. The NGO Forum is organised within the framework defined by

the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing from 20 to 22 September 2012 with its motto “A sustainable society for all ages: Realizing the potential of living longer”. The UNECE (The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) Conference is hosted by the government of the Republic of Portugal through the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security and takes place in the context of the third review and appraisal cycle of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA, 2002) and its UNECE-Regional Implementation Strategy.

The NGO Forum, organized by Santa Casa de Misericórdia de Lisboa in cooperation with the NGO Preparatory Committee, will provide a

*forum for discussion of NGO-representatives in the field of ageing. The outcome of the discussions in the Forum is expected to lead to the adoption of an NGO Declaration, which will be presented to the Ministers of the UNECE countries on 22 September 2017.” (From the opening speech of **José António Vieira da Silva, Minister of Labour, Solidarity, and Social Security**)*

Following the strict selection criteria for participants, I was surprised, but also very happy when in July 2017 I received a letter from Lisbon inviting me both to the NGO Forum and to the UNECE Ministerial Conference, because the proposal for my participation in the Lisbon conference came from the Executive Board of the NGO Committee on Ageing at the UNO in Vienna. This honoured our good EFOS cooperation with the Committee on Ageing's working sessions at the UNO in Vienna and in the preparation of the NGO Forum of the past and this Ministerial Conference.

UNECE NGO FORUM ON AGEING (Wednesday 20 September 2017)

A civil society forum and the Research forum preceded the Ministerial Conference on 20 September 2017. Numerous representatives of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) as well as scientists took part in the Conference.

The objective of the NGO Forum was to foster a dialogue in and among civil society organisations representing older persons and dealing with ageing issues around the 3 themes of the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing 2017 from different angles of concern of civil society actors, to identify strong and weak aspects in the MIPAA implementation and the Ministerial

Declaration, and to formulate demands and recommendations on behalf of civil society organisations.

Prior to this forum the "Preparatory Meeting for the UNECE Conference" took place the 28th June at the Lisbon Congress Center. It was devoted to discussions about "A society for all ages - Realizing the potential of longevity" with the objective to give voice to all those who are permanently dedicated to mobilizing and strengthening the participation

of people of all ages in their respective societies.

The declaration resulting from this hearing of the national and societal movement forms an important contribution to the debate, supported by a wide and diverse participatory basis, being of added value for the overall reflection.

A bottom-up methodology was used in order to obtain the identification of the Good Practices, focused on the needs of the individuals and the community, through the national NGO'S to assess different needs and support.

Some contributions for the declaration:

1. Social responses centred on the person and not on the organizations; importance of understanding the ageing process as deeply individual with all that this means in terms of solutions and policies;
2. Ageing should be viewed as a process, never as a moment, and above all centered on the dimension of longevity, and therefore removed from dimensions that may be associated with loss or incapacity;
3. The importance of involving society as a whole, as a mean to fight stereotypes and prejudices associated with age and longevity;
4. To assume that a "sustainable society for all ages" requires a permanent combat against generational segregation, promoting solidarity and solidarity responses in particular in the field of intergenerational relations;
5. The valuation of the person and the individuality, of particular importance when we speak of institutional responses in which the risk of loss of identity becomes particularly high;
6. The importance of fostering networks of relationships, conditions of well-being and quality, both in individual and institutional dimensions. Public responsibility in this area is of particular relevance and is an example that must be continuously stated and developed.

The NGO Forum strongly supports the recommendation of the UN Independent Expert on the rights of older persons to establish a binding legal instrument on the human rights of older persons.

The NGO declaration was presented by Mr. Dirk Jarré (European Federation of Older People).

NGO Political Declaration – Key Messages as presented at the Ministerial Conference Lisbon, 22 September 2017.

We call on Member States

1. **to ensure** that older persons and their organisations are included in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2030, Sustainable Development Goals;
2. **to develop** policies to effectively ban any form of age discrimination, ageism, pejorative behaviour, violence and abuse towards older women and men;
3. **to remove** barriers and strengthen the voice of older persons and their organisations in research and in the monitoring and implementation of all relevant policies;
4. **to promote** all older women and men's right to dignity, well-being, adequate income, freedom, security and social inclusion;
5. **to actively engage** with older persons and civil society to ensure that the commitments made at the present Ministerial Conference are fully realized.

Lifelong learning was not treated as one of the main topics at this conference, but the topic was a subject that permeated all the discussions and the contributions made and was mentioned in the NGO Political Declaration as well as in the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration.

Lifelong learning means "surviving" and this means having to acquire new knowledge in order not to find oneself on the margins of society and in poverty and loneliness, but to learn to cope with the given situation, however.

Lifelong learning also means that all people who live or work, with the elderly with disabilities, no matter in what area, must learn to support this group of people in need with dignity and up-to-date expertise.

A very interesting contribution was made at the NGO Forum on Wednesday, 20 September, by H.E. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of the Republic of Portugal, who personally, as a 69-year-old man, joined the wishes of the elderly and their complaints about the lack of

cooperation of the responsible authorities and society. He stressed the impact of physical deficiencies and the joys of active ageing from his own experience and his own observations.

On Friday, at the ministerial conference, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres greeted us with a video message from New York and wished the conference a successful outcome.

**UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing
from 21 to 22 September 2017
with delegations from 46 ECE member States.**

Furthermore, government delegations from Brazil, Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, India, and Mozambique attended the Conference as observers.

The conference completed the third review and appraisal cycle (2012-2017) of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS), based on the guidelines provided by the ECE (Economic Commission for Europe) secretariat.

The Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons reported via video message on the findings related to the assessment of human rights implications of MIPAA implementation in the region.

Mr Heinz Koller, ILO Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia in his keynote speech noted the profound impact of demographic change on the world of work and the “future of work” alongside other transformations such as globalisation, technology and environmental changes. Therefore, a comprehensive, multidimensional, integrated and innovative policy mix that takes account of interdependent factors including demographic changes, employment, labour migration, social protection and economic development is needed.

To connect MIPAA/RIS and the Lisbon Declaration with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development he said, ageing is cutting across several objectives, and in particular Goal 8 on decent work strategies, Goal 1 on eradicating poverty, Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 10 on reduced inequality, which also implies developing sustainable social protection systems for all. It is important to add Goal 4 on inclusive life-long learning.

At the last meeting of the UNECE Working Group on Ageing in January 2018, the Secretariat provided the members of the WGA with a list of the 17 Sustainable Development goals (SDGs) for the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration on Ageing in 2017.

Goal 4 is relevant to the objectives of EFOS: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for

all". Of course, all 17 goals are important for people and society.

The focus of the Ministerial Conference on Ageing was on “A Sustainable Society for All Ages: Realizing the potential of living longer”. Three expert panels were held on the following topics:

1) Recognizing the Potential of Older Persons

The first expert panel highlighted strategies to sensitize societies to the value of older persons and their potentials and to the need to promote intergenerational solidarity. Older persons' knowledge and skills stemming from life experience and professional know-how have to be explicitly recognized as a valuable resource to be used in the political, economic and social spheres for the benefit of younger generations and society at large. Particular aspects of intergenerational solidarity as the foundation of cohesive and sustainable societies of all ages will be addressed. Intergenerational perspective and the necessity to deconstruct myths and stereotypes and to enhance mutual understanding as to promote intergenerational solidarity and lifelong learning as important sources for social capital. Enhancing contact between the generations through joint activities, for example in the context of volunteering or through encounters in multigenerational centres or multigenerational living arrangements can reduce negative stereotypes and foster mutual support.

Panelists underlined the need to respect the human rights of both younger and older persons and to collaborate across generations, including enhancing collaboration between the organizations that represent the interest of both youth and older persons and avoiding thinking and acting in silos.

Lifelong learning also means intergenerational learning (definition of UNESCO 2000):

„Intergenerational programmes are vehicles for the purposeful and ongoing exchange of resources and learning among older and younger generations.”

2) Encouraging Longer Working Life and Ability to Work

The second expert panel presented successful strategies and progress achieved in the increase of employment opportunities for older persons. It will examine most effective incentives for employers and employees and present models of proven age management in enterprises.

Speakers highlighted the lasting consequences of the economic crisis and new working conditions through advanced technologies, the so-called industry 4.0, on the employment of older persons and transformations in economies to lifelong learning and training to align employee skills to changing requirements of the labour market and skills recognition were seen as particularly important as part of life-course-oriented human resource policies and management. Longer working lives and encouraging older workers to stay at the labour market is not at the cost of younger generations. Generations do not compete on the labour market, their skills are in many areas complementary. Learning from each other is the best way to use this potential.

3) Ensuring Ageing with Dignity

The third expert panel looked at effective and innovative concepts, policies and measures to empower people throughout the life cycle to lead an active and satisfactory life – in particular when growing old – and to avoid or diminish the need of assistance and care in old age. This includes appropriate conditions for ensuring social, emotional and economic security.

WHO highlighted effective and innovative concepts, policies and measures aimed at enabling “healthy ageing”, age-friendly and

supportive environment and affordable assistive technologies and devices, that is developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables well-being in older age.

Discussants presented new policy approaches at national level that emphasize the importance of preventing loss of autonomy and independence. Speakers presented individualized care approaches that centre on the needs of the older person.

Panellists will explore services for people with poor physical or mental health that can help them accommodate their disabilities by learning or relearning the skills necessary for daily living (“reablement”).

Panellists further stressed the need to respect the human rights of older persons, ensure their social security and protect them from isolation, abuse and neglect. The importance of addressing negative attitudes towards older persons and eliminating age-based discrimination in access to services was stressed.

In her closing statement, Ms. Olga Algayerova, United Nations Under-Secretary-General Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe stated, that older persons have a lifetime experience and there is a lot we can learn from them. The NGO forum was a powerful illustration of the energies of older persons.

Our populations are getting older, and this will continue over many decades to come. A huge leap of technology shapes our working and living environment. We have to take this into account if we wish to sustain the social fabric of our societies.

I think that the main points of the NGO Forum and the Ministerial Conference have been described in this article. I know that many members of the EFOS are confronted with this issue in their professional and private lives. Maybe you will find here interesting ideas for the handling of your task.

U3A in Practice

Stanley Miller, Keyworth (United Kingdom)



Introduction

Thank you very much for inviting me to tell you something of the way the University of the Third Age works in the UK.

As you may know, I have been involved in the U3A for some 20 years and I have had the good fortune to have worked locally, nationally and internationally and have talked about the British U3A on a number of occasions and in a number of different countries.

But, today, it will be different because after a brief review of the overall structure and organisation nationally, I will concentrate on one particular U3A and its day to day operation so as to give you an idea of what it's like to be an individual British U3A member.

Just one other bit of background: when I first joined U3A in 1997, there were something between 100 and 200 U3As in the UK – there are now over 1000 with around 400,000 individual members and the movement continues to grow !

The Third Age Trust

This is the name of the charity which has the legal and organisational responsibility for the U3A movement in the UK. This movement which began in the early 1980s combines elements of the original French model with a distinctly British definition of its nature and purpose. Above all, it is a voluntary organisation in which the term “**university**” is understood as a **community** of learners and teachers NOT as a teaching/research institution with lecturers and professors.

The Trust provides a range of services for individual U3As: legal advice, insurance, support for development, publications, a website and a non-book resource centre of materials available on loan to the U3As. It employs a chief executive and a small paid staff but policy decisions are made by a committee of unpaid elected members.

To quote from the Trust's website:

What is the University of the Third Age?

U3A is a nationwide network of learning groups aimed at encouraging older people no longer in full-time employment to share their knowledge, skills and interests in a friendly environment. It is not a university in the conventional sense.

There are no exams and no homework, just regular lessons or study groups of like-minded people with a shared interest in a particular subject.

Does each group have a teacher or leader?

Each group has its own volunteer leader or co-ordinator who has a particular interest or expertise in the given subject.

Keyworth and District U3A

This is the U3A to which my wife and I belong and whose practices and activities I would like to tell you about so as to give you a better idea of what actually happens in a British U3A.

But first, who has heard of “**Robin Hood**”? And do you know where his adventures took place? Yes, in NOTTINGHAM which today is a large city in the middle of England about an hour and a half by train North of London.

Surrounding the City of Nottingham are a number of villages and small townships which bring the total population of the conurbation to about 915, 000 inhabitants. One of those villages, situated to the South of the city is KEYWORTH.

The major development of the original rural village began in the 19th century with the arrival of the railway and a nearby station and there are now roughly 7,500 people living in the village. The population is mixed but with a good number of practising or retired professional people: teachers, academics, engineers, ‘medics’ and geologists attached to the *British Geological Survey* which has a major base in the village.

Three primary and one secondary school, a library, health and sports centres, a purpose built village hall, two small shopping areas and an excellent bus service into the centre of Nottingham make up the major amenities within the village.

And then there is the U3A. With the help of an already established U3A in the area, the

original handful of pioneers were able to launch Keyworth U3A at a meeting in January 2009. Notices posted around the village and word of mouth brought in sufficient interested people for the U3A to make a start with a founding committee and with help available

locally and nationally where required. From an original 100 or so members in the first year, the growth has been consistent in both the number of members, now 500+, and in the number of study groups, now over 40.

VILLAGE IN FOCUS
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Village in focus: Keyworth

Keyworth is a large village to the south-east of Nottingham, set in the heart of Rushcliffe. It is mentioned as a settlement in the Domesday Book of 1086, and dates back even further, according to Roman remains found in the vicinity. In the middle of the village, alongside the playing fields (which themselves date back to medieval times) is the 14th century St Mary Magdalene Church, a beautiful centrepiece to the village.

Keyworth is in the middle of rolling countryside and a network of footpaths and bridleways surround it. Keyworth Meadow, off Ling's Lane, is a small nature reserve and a haven for lovers of flora and fauna.

The village is large enough to support three primary schools and a secondary school, South Wolds Academy, which is also home to Keyworth Leisure Centre.

Famous people who hail from Keyworth include Sam Oldham, gymnastics bronze medalist from the 2012 Olympic games, and Ed Balls – former politician, though he is probably more famous for his exploits on Strictly Come Dancing. Among the scores of activities organised in the

village, perhaps the most famous is the annual Turkey Trot, a half-marathon held every December, attracting runners from miles around.

Possibly Keyworth's most unique claim to fame is that it is home to the British Geological Survey. Part of the Natural Environment Research Council, it monitors, surveys and researches all things geological. We don't get many earthquakes in the East Midlands, but the chances are that when we do, they'll know about it first in Keyworth.

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A small committee of volunteers elected annually oversees the activities. Each month there is a general meeting held in the well-equipped premises of the Methodist Church. At the monthly meeting there is an opportunity to meet people, catch up with events and reserve places on excursions planned by a group of volunteers under the title “New

Horizons”. Following introductory and informative remarks by the U3A chairman, the main part of the meeting is a lecture from a visiting speaker who will have been contacted by the committee member who acts as “speaker finder”, who uses both local knowledge and reference lists of available speakers. Topics are often historical,

biographical or environmental. Party politics and the discussion of specific religions are avoided throughout the British U3A although, of course, politics and religion in general may well come up from time to time.

In addition to the national U3A magazine which is provided for all members 5 times a year, together with a special interest supplement, Keyworth has its own Newsletter produced 4 times a year. Obviously these publications and the other services provided locally and nationally do not come free! But the charges are low; local membership is charged at £15 per person per annum from which a subscription of £3.50 per person goes into the national funds. In addition to these fees, excursions are paid for separately and study groups make a small charge to cover rental and other costs (£1-2 per person per meeting).

From the Keyworth U3A website: *“As a local U3A we are an independently managed, self-governing association with our own constitution. As a member of the Third Age Trust, which is our national support and advisory body, we adhere to the aims and guiding principles of that organisation. We are a “university” of people, who come together to share and pursue learning in all its forms.”*

Study Groups

It is often said that the study groups are the very heart of UK U3As for it is in these groups that members come together and share their knowledge, curiosity, enthusiasm and experience, all of which is based on the principle of volunteering.

Let me give you an idea of the range of groups available in our particular U3A: some involve mental activity, others physical, some intellectually demanding, others recreational but ALL involve participation and sharing. The alphabetical list starts with *Absolute Beginners Bridge; Archaeology & Architecture; Book Group; Calligraphy* ending up with *Wildlife & Conservation; Wine Tasting; World War History and Yoga*. 42 in total and all run and organised on a voluntary basis by members of the U3A.

Who is it that leads these groups and what happens in their meetings?

Very often the initial leadership of the group is undertaken by the person or persons who have set up the group in the first place. But it is important to understand that in the U3A

leadership does not necessarily indicate expertise in a subject - interest or curiosity are as important because the groups are learning co-operatives in which discovery and sharing are important elements. *(For those seeking expert knowledge or recognised qualifications, there are Further and Higher Education institutions which offer courses and examinations, often very expensive and, in any case, not what the U3As seek to provide.)*

So the group comes together, perhaps on a weekly basis or else once a month –whatever the group decides – the leader / convenor will suggest or offer appropriate content or activity and the group take it from there. Let me offer some specific examples from my personal experience:

As a former teacher of French, I decided to avoid that subject when I joined Keyworth U3A 7 years ago but it wasn't long before I was asked to “help out” and I have been involved in that group since then! We meet each Wednesday morning for 2 hours in one of the smaller rooms in the Village Hall where between 8 and 14 of us convene around a large table. Membership is self-selecting in that each individual decides for themselves whether the level of language is appropriate for them. If a new member contacts me, I always point out that this is neither a beginners group nor do we have formal lessons. The learning is through listening, talking and reading based on a text chosen by whoever leads the group at a given meeting. As former teachers of the subject, a colleague and I will offer corrections or stimulate question and answer sessions. There is always a lot of laughter and coffee, tea and biscuits always enhance the social element of the meeting. The texts are often derived from a specialist magazine to which the group subscribes and this, together with the rent of the room and the refreshments, accounts for the £2 contribution we make each week.

Another group in which I am active is “Putting the World to Rights”. This group has been meeting for over 6 years and is based on an idea I picked up from another U3A. Once a month the group, which varies in size between 10 and 19, comes together for a discussion of a topic chosen by the group and introduced by one of the members. My role as leader is to keep order and to try to give voice to as many opinions as possible. The rules governing the discussions are simple: respect for other views

and no promotion of specific religions or political parties. Some of the topics discussed have been “Privacy in an electronic world”, “Legalising drugs”, “Volunteering”, “What should we expect from our children and they from us?” and most recently “The role of literature in putting the world to rights?” So far we have had no fights! and the major non-verbal contribution has been laughter! It should be noted that the group is mixed, male and female, and while there has been a core of regular attenders, other people come and go. One further example may be worth quoting because science has figured less often in U3A programmes generally than history, languages and recreational activities. So it was very welcome when a local member decided to try to bring together a group interested in science and technology. This has developed well with a monthly meeting which sometimes brings in over 30 members and has involved a number of our own members in presentations in various branches of science and technology. The convenor of the group has also established productive contacts with local universities and other science based institutions in the area. For those of us whose scientific education was sketchy to say the least, this is an opportunity

to stretch our minds and learn something new while it also reminds us of the considerable talent and expertise within our membership. To give you a better idea of the type of topics presented and discussed at the science meetings, here are some of the titles: “The use and history of microscopes;” “the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence;” “the secret life of the mobile phone;” “the importance of wheat ‘you are what you WHEAT’;” “more miscellaneous microbes;” “gold in Britain and Ireland from the Bronze Age until the present.” The presenters of these talks/demonstrations are researchers and professors from local universities, experts from the BGS and members of the U3A itself. There are always questions and comments from the audience which reveals a considerable depth of knowledge and experience in these different fields.

I hope what I have told you about Keyworth U3A has helped to give you a better idea of how the U3A operates throughout the UK. Our version of this extraordinary organisation of older people combines learning with social contact on the basis of participation.

“Asociación Estatal de Programas Universitarios para Mayores”

(Spanish National Association of University Programmes for Older Adults), acronym AEPUM.

Dr. Concepción Bru Ronda, Alicante (Spanien)



The Spanish National Association of University Programmes for Older Adults, is established by public and private universities, along with other legal entities that

have among their aims university education for older adults, for an unlimited period as an association with university-oriented goals. It has recourse to the Organic Law 1/2002 of March 22nd regulator of the Association Right (BOE (Spanish Official State Gazette) of March 26th) (LODA) with full legal and operative capacity, being a non-profit organisation.

The AEPUM has, according to its articles of association, as its main aim to promote university programmes for older adults, contributing this way to seniors' educational and cultural development. In order to achieve this objective, the Association seeks to favour and develop the dialogue and communication among universities, public administrations and private entities, promoting culture and the search for solutions to satisfy educational needs. Furthermore it aims to act as an inter-university information and advice centre for programmes for older adults, adapting to the principles of autonomy, participation and relation with the surrounding.

To achieve its aims the Association intends to:

1. Promote new educational and cultural strategies related to older adults.
2. Secure the collaboration and presence of the Association in scientific, academic or cultural university activities.
3. Establish ways of collaboration between the Federations and Associations of Senior Students and Universities.
4. Convene conferences, national meetings, scientific seminars or other events.
5. Organize international conferences, meetings and exchanges.
6. Coordinate with public administrations studies and projects that are interesting for lifelong learning within the field of programmes for older adults and lifelong learning.

7. Collaborate with public administrations and private entities that have as their aim older adult education.
8. Participate in European programmes with objectives that are similar to those of the Association.
9. Obtain stable financing procedures for university studies for older adults and for lifelong learning.
10. Implement actions aimed at promoting educational innovations in continuous and lifelong learning
11. Implement actions designed to increase international collaboration, especially with those European and Latin American countries which have networks or universities offering university studies for older adults.
12. Promote activities and networks aimed to favour intergenerational relationships.
13. Stimulate the publication of scientific works, studies, monographs and doctoral thesis in the field of older adults.
14. Promote the establishment of systems for grants and help.
15. Boost and execute publications for their periodic (like the AEPUM bulletin and the Internet portal www.AEPUMayores.org) or circumstantial edition (research and documents), concerning topics and matters related to the aims of the Association, as well as to collaborate in periodic publications and other dissemination channels which can contribute to a better reciprocal knowledge of University and Association.
16. Attend activities which are not specifically mentioned, but implicit within the aims of the entity.

The Spanish Association is currently domiciled at the University of Alicante, which assumes the presidency for the 2010-2014 period and renew the presidency for the 2014 to 2018 period, and its sphere of action covers the whole national territory.

Presently, the Association is formed by 45 universities, distributed in the following autonomous regions: Andalusia (9); Madrid



EFOS project Erasmus +EduSenNet



PhDr. Nadežda Hrapková, PhD., project coordinator



For the period of December 1st 2014 to October 30th 2017 there was an approval given for a new Erasmus+ project entitled "Educational Senior Network" (EduSenNet), coordinated

by the Comenius University in Bratislava and shared by European Universities and their UTAs in the category KA2 (Key Action 2) entitled 'Strategic partnership for Adult learning'.

The project partners have been from the institutions:

Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia, as coordinator

- Universidad Permanente Alicante, Spain
- University of Technology, Brno, Czech Republic
- Stichting Senioren Academie Groningen – Friesland - Drenthe, The Netherlands
- Technical University Chemnitz, Institut für Pädagogik, Germany
- Otto von Guericke University, Magdeburg, Germany
- Seniorenuniversity Uppsala, Sweden

Other institutions included in the project: EFOS (European Federation of Older Students in Universities) and its members from Berliner Akademie für weiterbildende Studien e.V., Berlin, Germany; U3A Bytom, Poland; Dresdner Seniorenakademie Wissenschaft und Kunst, Dresden, Germany; Department of Generations Graz University, Austria; Universität Wien, Austria; Uniwersytet Wrocławski, Wrocław, Poland.

The project plan was divided into three phases with organizing 6 project meetings, a project conference and project activities. The project plan included the work on the Study about learning possibilities, the setup of the Review table with the comparison and evaluation of the collected data. The second phase was aimed at the work with the questionnaires focusing on the older persons generally as well as on the elderly students

specifically. The third phase of the project focused on the qualitative and quantitative analyses with the design of new innovative study programmes and learning methods.

The project goals were achieved and they are documented in the Review. The table presenting the learning possibilities revealed in the study facilitated the validation of non-formal and informal learning and its recognition within formal programmes. The project activities gave a chance for improvement of the quality of life of the isolated older people, for the use of the knowledge potential of older students within communities and regions and for the support of the learning needs of the elderly in general. In the Review table we present the Study about the learning possibilities for the elderly students in the 12 chosen universities.



The Survey about the motivation, barriers and wishes of the elderly consisted of the opinions of both the older persons and Objectives, needs and outcomes have been met in various ways:

- by summarising experiences;
- by encouraging the elderly to take part in learning activities;
- by developing their interest in learning through participation in activities designed to promote and extend their knowledge and skills.

It was necessary to examine the objectives and motivation for and barriers to learning of the

elderly persons taking part in the programmes as well of those who do not participate. The introduction of the new programmes and the upgrading of the old ones could involve the elderly in activities more suited to their needs.



The project research was based on a questionnaire survey with the purpose of encouraging older people to take part in learning activities. The project teams gave them information about learning programmes and they opened space to create appropriate activities. In the groups of the elderly students at the universities and academies the project partners focused on the motivation for and barriers to study activities, wishes, requirements and proposals for the future. The research into the learning needs and conditions with the comparison of the results became the basis for the curriculum innovation within the study programmes.

The results were obtained from questionnaires, interviews, personal visits and discussions within the groups of 930 respondents of older people from 7 countries and of 3,151 respondents of elderly students from 7 universities and 6 countries.

The Project teams and the elderly students were directly involved in the project. They carried out the research by means of questionnaires and interviews with older people in communities and in rural areas. The project managers in each country utilised many project methods as the collection of the data, summary of the results and their evaluation, comparison of the results from different countries and among the project teams, description of the project ways of working and work practices. The project meetings included not only presentations of the results, discussions and exchanges of the findings but also brainstorming sessions, meetings with the

students and practical training of the moderators involved in the project.

The communities of the elderly were contacted in residential homes, in rural areas where there are some transport limits or long distances to university campuses. Therefore the new curricula and study programmes based on the project findings were designed for the chosen groups of the elderly. New offers in a new environment were designed for new groups of the elderly to give them a possibility for learning in their later life.

For the older students innovative study programmes were developed according to their needs, proposals and the evaluation of the project research. All these efforts led to the enlargement and widening of the study programmes at the universities for the elderly and their encouragement to the learning. On the other side, they led the university management to serious research work focusing on the older generation to forward the promotion of active ageing by learning.

Project outcomes

- Review Table presenting the learning possibilities revealed in the study;
- Improvement in the quality of life of isolated older people, support their learning needs;
- Research into learning needs and conditions, comparison of the results;
- Curriculum innovation within the study programmes;
- Facilitating the validation of non-formal and informal learning and its recognition within formal programmes;
- A project booklet and Newsletters setting out the results gained from the project analyses;
- Use of the knowledge potential of the older students within communities and regions.

Summary

The EduSenNet project focused on the specific needs of learners aged over 50 and on the conditions under which they learn. The project examined the extent of possible innovation, how it may be undertaken and for whom. Researchers from 7 universities in 6 European countries have been working together to find

the best possible ways of helping older people to satisfy their learning needs in the later years of their working life and during retirement. All project meetings have been dedicated to presentation of the project work, coordination of the results, analysis and evaluation of the project progress to assign tasks for the next working phase. We have realised 6 transnational meetings combined with training of the elderly students, brainstorming discussions and 3 workshops focusing on universities for seniors as a social task of each society, intergenerational learning and e-learning. The final conference “Education for the elderly and young people in Europe” was organised by the partner at the Technical University in Chemnitz with the participation of 160 elderly students and project partners from 2 Erasmus+ projects: “Educational Senior Network – EduSenNet” and project „Elderly build bridges together with young people in Europe“.

At the beginning of the project questionnaires were created to get a view on the learning needs, to get to know the opinions of elderly and senior students who were contacted as target groups. Their input was of major importance and was used for the development of pedagogical innovations, evaluation and description of good practices. A multi-method approach was used for the realisation of the project tasks and analysis with a predominance of qualitative techniques. These sought to verify the achieved goals and the learning competences acquired (through the focus groups of elderly, study programmes and their innovations, new individuals and groups of involved seniors, etc.).

Quantitative techniques were also used when we analysed the responses of the respondents. The group of the elderly respondents consisted of 930 persons, whom we contacted and interviewed in various communities. The group of elderly students whom we interviewed at universities and senior academies consisted of 3,151 persons. This means that in our project EduSenNet we questioned 4,081 elderly persons from 7 countries (Czech Republic, Germany, The Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden). During the project period the seven project teams regularly met to discuss their project approaches, realisation of the project tasks, ways of the communication

with the respondents as well as to give presentations of the project findings and results. The project booklet describes besides the project researches also the theoretical framework, working methods and possibilities for innovations.



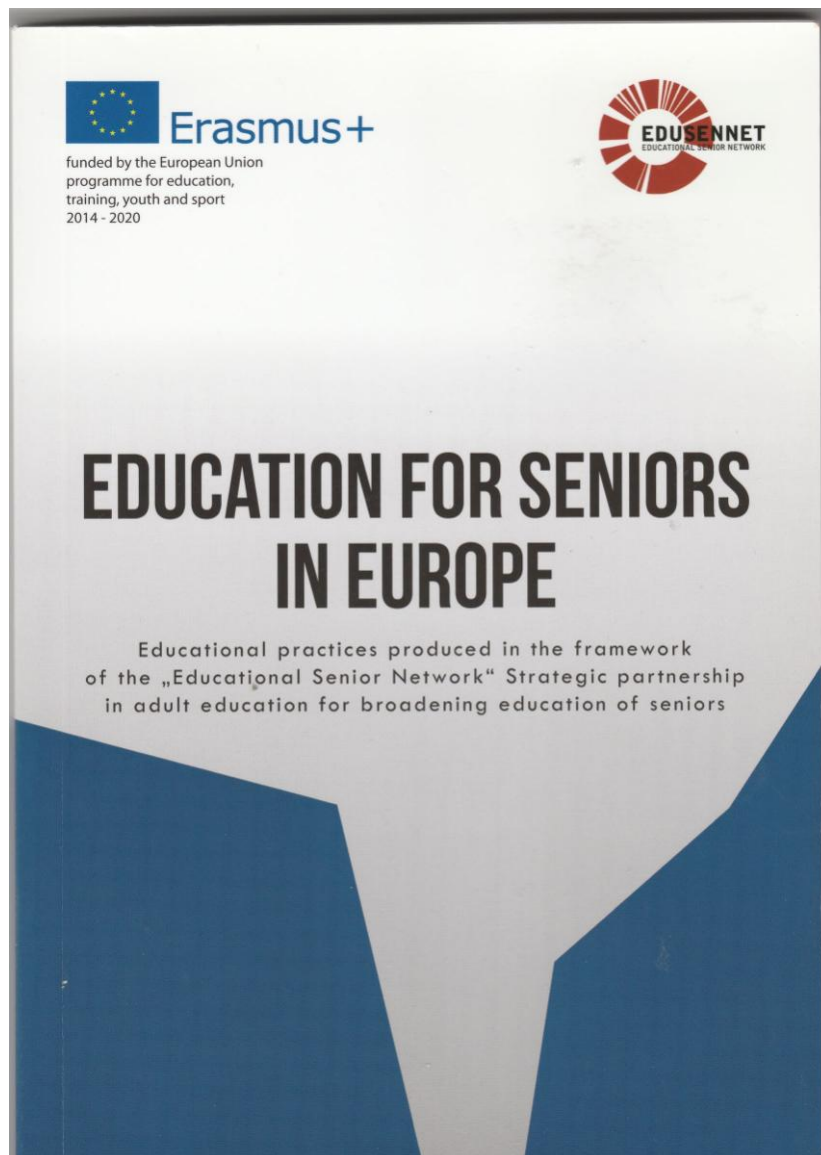
Chapter 9 is devoted to the description of the best practices as good examples from the learning process and meaningful leisure time activities for the elderly. The project partners have described 17 best practices, but some partners did work on other innovations too. Encouraging initiatives are taken in the field of:

- E-learning (Uppsala, Groningen)
- Live stream of lectures on Internet and Feedback system in lectures with smartphones (Chemnitz)
- Decentralising course venues through cooperation with societies of older people, in residential homes, rural areas (Alicante, Bratislava, Groningen, Uppsala)
- Collaborative learning schemes – peer to peer training and voluntary service initiatives (Alicante)
- Creative learning schemes – digital photography, digital video, creative design and art, creative writing (Bratislava, Brno, Magdeburg)
- Intergenerational learning in all partners' institutions
- Collaborative learning activities in collaboration with municipalities (Alicante, Bratislava)

For the project dissemination we have created our own website (<http://edusennet.efos-europa.eu>), 6 Newsletters and a project flyer. We also published 2 booklets with the research and project results. Thanks to the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission we

have been able to carry out this research on lifelong learning in the field of senior education at Universities of the Third Age (U3As) / Academies in Europe, which is very

often on the edge of public interest and needs to draw more attention with new information that can be presented, disseminated, published and discussed.



Sent: Monday, 02. Oktober 2017 at 10:44
From: Paul.Holdsworth@ec.europa.eu
To: roland.schoene@gmx.net
Cc: EMPL-E3-UNIT@ec.europa.eu
Ref.: Education for older people and ind intergenerational

Ares(2017)3803979

Dear Professor Schöne,

Thank you for your e-mail to the Cabinet of Commissioner Navracsics, which has been forwarded to our unit by its staff. We therefore apologise for the late reply.

Thank you very much for the interesting information about the two projects you have participated in and which we have read with attention.

Cross-generational learning has an excellent potential to add an additional dimension to the learning of young people and seniors. Your project "Bridges for Europe" provides several interesting insights in this context.

The results of the EDUSENNET project are also very informative and emphasise the importance of lifelong access to quality learning opportunities.

In this context, the Commission proposed "The European pillar of social rights" in April this year. The aim of the pillar is to provide citizens with new and more effective rights. It is based on 20 principles. The very first principle is that "every person has the right to education, training and lifelong learning of high quality and inclusive forms, so that he or she can preserve and acquire competences which enable him or her to participate fully in social life and successfully manage transitions in the labour market".

In this context, I am sure that the results of both projects provide very valuable impulses.

With kind regards

Paul Holdsworth

Team Leader – Skills for Adults



European Commission

Directorate-General for Employment,
Social Affairs and Inclusion
Directorate E (Skills)
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25 years of contact studies "Studieren ab 50" at the Otto-von-Guericke University Magdeburg - a review.

Olaf Freymark, Magdeburg (Deutschland)



Continuing academic education for older people, whether in the form of own offers (senior citizen studies) or in the form of open courses (guest auditor studies) have meanwhile firmly

established themselves nationwide at universities and colleges in Germany. A large number of older students are currently taking the opportunity to attend academic events in the institutions.

In addition to teaching and research, academic further education was offered in a variety of forms at the universities and colleges of the former GDR. In the 1980s, courses were offered in distance learning for engineers in Magdeburg. The teachers of the then Magdeburg district took part in further and advanced training events at the Pedagogical University. The medical training of doctors took place in the Medical Academy. A special event was the series "Magdeburgense". All three Magdeburg universities offered academic lectures in series of lectures. The response was very strong and some lectures were broadcast on educational television.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, universities and colleges were restructured. This also affected the area of academic further education. Dr. Erich Schäfer came to Magdeburg in 1991 from Bielefeld University. He began to build up a structure of academic further education at the Pedagogical University. As a result, the further education centre of the Pedagogical University was established. This was also taken over in 1993 with the founding of the Otto-von-Guericke University. The main focus of the work was the initiation of two model projects, the certificate course "Adult Education" and the senior citizens' study course "*Studieren ab 50*". Mr. Gottschalk was the head of the model project from 1992 to 1995. He implemented the concept of education for older adults. The aim was to give the older generation the opportunity to engage in science. Science should remain accessible to interested parties

even at old age. The organizers wanted to support the individual educational interests of the older generation. It was also important to bring to life the regionally oriented component of knowledge transfer from the university to the region. Furthermore, the changed understanding of the roles of age and age(s) in our society should be taken into account. The possibility of dealing with science should give the elderly important impulses for a meaningful life.

However, "*Studieren ab 50*" also had a social component. With the collapse of the economy after 1990, many people were sent into unemployment. This was also the case in Magdeburg. Large enterprises were dissolved and the army of the unemployed grew. A reorientation of life was necessary. This target group was approached by the organisers of the senior citizens' study programme. So from initially 15 students in 1992 the number of participants grew to nearly 100 in 1997. In 2018, 790 "*Gasthörer*" (guest students) study in Magdeburg. Today it can be said that the university made a valuable contribution to people's new identity. The quality of the programme was improved in the 1990s and 2000s. The exchange of experience with the universities of Berlin, Frankfurt/Main, Bielefeld, Oldenburg and Leipzig was very exciting. In the 1990s, getting to know each other between East and West played an important role in the exchange of experiences. Since 2004, project work has been increasingly included in the programme. The aim was to bring younger and older students together in their academic work. The organisers thus fulfilled the motto of the senior citizens' course of study "Young and old study together". That is still our claim today.

Course concept during the semester

Each semester begins with an opening event and a lecture by various academics from the university and other institutions. The lectures cover a wide range of topics.

In the winter semester 2017/2018 a total of 280 teaching events were offered. Of these, 110 are

open courses and 170 are special offers and nine are projects.

Whereas in 1992 only courses offered by the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education were offered, today they are offered by all faculties and central institutions of the university. Since the beginning, the fields of history, philosophy, languages, cultural studies, psychology, political science and sport

have been particularly popular with the participants.

Special events are offered by retired academics and older students. Some examples: The use of new media, language and sports courses, literature workshops, topics on psychology and age, hiking groups "Wissend Wandern - Wandernd Lernen", regional historical topics, academic and engineering topics.



Project work

The quality of the contact study programme "*Studieren ab 50*" is determined by the initiatives of the "*Gasthörer*" themselves. National and international project work has developed well in recent years. The projects have also received public recognition. The following projects currently exist:

Biographical work: Contemporary witnesses report on their biographical life.

Writing workshop and European literature: In the writing workshop, students develop texts that are also published. Stories, poems and anecdotes, experiences are taken from life, so to speak. Members of the writing workshop took part in an international competition and received a literature prize for it. The award ceremony took place in Graz.

Use of new media: Computer Club for the elderly, "*Ran ans Netz*" and computer workshop. The projects are about image processing and the use and handling of new media. Video clips were shot. One clip was awarded an Internet Prize by the BAGSO in Berlin 2015.

Hiking group "*Wissend Wandern - Wandernd Lernen*" - national and international: Students from Hannover, Bielefeld, Groningen and Magdeburg meet every year for a hike. The

hikes have a thematic focus. They are a combination of lectures and walking.

City Guide of the City of Magdeburg and Surroundings": Many city guides of the city of Magdeburg are enrolled in senior citizens' studies. They actively participate in the study program "*Studieren ab 50*". Regional historical topics are offered or excursions are organized for interested parties.

Old-age fitness and health: Older students are supervised in health sports by staff of the Institute of Sports Science. The results are documented and evaluated.

Dialogue with foreign students: This project supports foreign students in their studies or in dealing with everyday issues.

Art project "Art and Grasses": Creative women work with different grasses. The artistic design with grasses includes tapestries, art coats and headgear. The group participated in various exhibitions. Most recently, they presented their work at the *Bundesgartenschau* 2015 in Havelberg and 2017 at the International *Gartenschau* in Berlin.

Those responsible for the studies consider this to be the right way in the further development of the studies in the post-professional phase. Away from "consuming" the courses on offer to actively shaping the course of study.

Cooperation with other universities and memberships

In the 1990s, Magdeburg University worked together with the University of the Third Age Frankfurt/Main and the Berlin Academy of Further Education as part of a project on "Identity, Communication and Values". There is still a close cooperation with the Spokesperson of the Council of Bielefeld University. Every year there is an exchange on education for older people.

Since 1998 there has also been a regular exchange of experience with the Senioren Akademie in Groningen/Netherlands. Students from Groningen and Magdeburg meet every 2 years. So far, the meetings have focused on getting to know each other, discussing values and culture, life in the new federal states and in the Netherlands. The meetings were also used to discuss the education of the older generation in both countries.

A workshop was held with the Leipzig writing workshop in 2014. Students from Leipzig and Magdeburg presented their texts. During the discussion, the work at both locations in the writing workshop was reviewed.

In the winter semester 2015/2016 there was an exchange with the University of Hanover on the topic "From Guericke to Leibniz". During the two meetings in Magdeburg and Hanover, the results of the surveys on education at the age of the participants were discussed at both locations. On the other hand, there was the opportunity to deal with the persons the universities are named after.

Cooperation with other universities and institutions at national level also takes place in the organisation and implementation of the "*Ringvorlesungen*" (online lecture series). The series of events has been organised by the

Federal Association for the Continuing Academic Education of Older Students BAG WiWA since the winter semester 2008/2009. Academics from different universities give lectures on a comprehensive topic. In the summer semester 2018, 13 university institutions will participate in this series of events.

Since 2014, Magdeburg students have been working with eight European universities in the Erasmus+ project "EduSenNet" to develop ideas for increasing the number of participants and improve the quality of senior citizens' studies. The project aims to explore the learning needs of the older generation. Cooperation partners include universities in Bratislava, Uppsala, Groningen, Alicante, Brno and Chemnitz.

The Academic Continuing Education Division is a member of the German Society for Continuing Academic Education and Distance Learning (DGWF) and of the Federal Association for the Continuing Academic Education of Older Students (BAG WiWA). The Magdeburg Spokesperson Council is also a member of DENISS e.V. (German Network for the Representation of the Interests of Senior Students) and organizes and cooperates actively. Internationally we are represented in the European Federation of older Students, EFOS. Olaf Freymark is currently Vice-President of EFOS.

Olaf Freymark
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The “Grass-Art“ Project

Undertaken by senior citizens at the Otto-von Guericke-Universität Magdeburg, Germany



Anne Facius, Foto: Karin Tietz

Dr. Karin Tietz

Dr. Cornelia Weikert, Photo: Rolf Winkler

For the past five years ladies of the senior citizens programme at the Otto-von-Guerike University have collaborated under the direction of Anne Facius on an artistic project of a very special kind: they produce and present objects made of grass.



Unusual headgear at the International Garden Show, Berlin 2017

Photo: Thomas Uhlemann

The fascination of grass

Anne Facius has been working on grass weaving since 1988. The inspiration for this unusual artistic creation springs from her love of nature, June meadows in bloom and glades of beautiful filigree grass. Hanging from her roof on an estate of terraced houses, large bundles of grasses are drying out. She has captured the many colours of summer scents

and transformed them into tapestries, ornate decorations, grass coats and hats. In the meantime she has been working with garden and set designers and horticulturalists in order to study cultivated grasses in depth. She has already done well with different varieties of Chinese reeds (*Miscanthus sinensis*). The delicate blooms lend themselves particularly well to bold fashion.



Different grasses, handled in different ways: From left to right: woven Chinese reeds, woven natural reeds, knotted Japanese forest grass, woven ostrich grass, Chinese reeds woven in a raised pattern.

The different grasses provide interesting results. They differ significantly in structure and effect. While Chinese reed blossoms look like cuddly sheepskin, wild grasses often look like noble furs. The processing method also plays an important role and leads to distinctive differences. Knotting looks like fur, weaving gives a silky sheen.

How was it that senior studies participants developed a great interest in grass work? It began with the guide to ‘*Studies for the Over 50s*’ where Anne Facius had offered discussions in her studio. As not all interested parties could get to her studio, several small meetings were arranged. The discussions revealed a great interest in taking part. Some

expressed the wish to be actively involved in an event.

The Quedlinburg Brühl-Park-Festival entitled “*Midsummer Night’s Dream*” was the obvious choice. A plan was developed. Each participant was to make their own grass wig. At the beginning no-one had any idea what skill, effort and patience would be required. Before any further work was to be done – knotting or weaving - the dried material had to be soaked. Without the right consistency it would break into pieces. Everybody persisted and it worked out. They were proud of what they had achieved, a unique result which dismissed from their minds all recollection of the efforts involved.



Fairies from „A Midsummer Night’s Dream „

Foto: Pitt Beckmann

Cooperation with project groups in the senior studies programme had begun as early as 2013. An exhibition in the Magdeburg Hundertwasserhaus was the first time they were accompanied by another group, members of the *writer’s workshop*. It was also at this time that cooperation began with the *Computer Imaging* project group. Out of this came a Powerpoint presentation and a flyer. Over the next few years invitations to various events were received, such as exhibition

opening ceremonies, jubilees and other public appearances.

The 2015 Federal Horticultural Show held at the recycling site in Premnitz deserves a special mention. Anne Facius had received an invitation to this event and, in addition, she was given the opportunity to design an exhibition in a pavilion specially set up for the purpose. This set her going on another project: she wanted to design wearable fashion from recycled material.



Winter fashion: grass rather than fur Photo: Pitt Beckmann

At this particular high point there was little difficulty in recruiting interested ladies from the Senior Studies programme to present these artistically attractive products. It had got around how enjoyable it was to join in. Walking cheerfully through the park, with grace and spirit, the group had many encounters, conversations and enquiries over the types, harvesting and production processes

of the different grasses. The enthusiasm of the visitors is revealed in the guestbook where innumerable entries from all over the world are full of amazement at this unusual art form.

“I have seen many things around the world but never before such filigree natural art. Very impressive.” Sabine B.

"Enchanting fairies, a breath of magic, super. Thank you for the beauty." Dirk and Galoy, Berlin

"Thank you so much for making very nice Art for us to see." Marna from Bangkok, Thailand

Press and television had been attracted by Anne Fabius's artistic creations during both the preparation and the actual Federal Horticultural Show. Two brief television reports were transmitted; newspapers reported on the appealing fashion and announced the group's many appearances. This eventful year of 2015 was captured on film by senior students who are also amateur photographers. The Project group *"Magdeburg Hemisphere"* in which young students and senior studies members work together, produced a CD and a flyer from the photographic material.

By now well known, Anne Facius and her team were able to take part in Berlin

International Garden Show in 2017 with a project called *"Walk-Art"*. Preparation of the team members for the expected questions turned out to be far-sighted because the interest of visitors and the media was enormous. They themselves had very few opportunities to visit flower shows and gardens around the world. However, the best rewards they had for the intensive dedication during their days of presentation were the meetings with the visitors, surprise, amazement and joy at the renewed contact with grass art after the experience in Premnitz.

Participation in supraregional and international events was also very well received by the university. At the opening event of the winter semester 2015/16, Anne Facius gave a lecture covering the previous activities and the grass art group made an appearance.



Opening of the autumn/winter semester 2015/16

Foto: Pitt Beckmann

Alongside all these activities, the grass art ladies maintained contact with the other participants in the senior studies programme. Examples include contact at the Federal Garden Show in Premnitz, at the International Show in Berlin or in joint excursions. A joint meeting at the state garden show in Burg is planned for May 2018.

A suitable opportunity is always an absolute necessity to get an exchange going. And these come about through different activities. The participants get to know each other better through their conversations. They get the feeling of being on the same wavelength through frequent meetings and conversations and similarities of age, situation, attitudes and interests. Thus interpersonal contacts are

promoted which provide opportunities for an intensive exchange of views and experiences. New social skills are developed which is of great importance for older people.

The oldest of the grass art ladies is 78. Through this new creative hobby she enhanced her relationship with her daughter and granddaughter who found that *"what Granny does is real cool."* Prejudices with regard to older people that they lack innovation or readiness to learn or even that their motivation is diminished, can all be refuted. These examples reveal the very opposite. Older people stay 'young' mentally, 'young' in communication, can acquire new knowledge, make new acquaintances and develop new friendships.

Gallery of distinguished EFOS members

Dr. Nadežda Hrapková



She is the youngest, but expressed in years of membership she is one of the oldest members of the EFOS. She has made a major contribution to the history of EFOS, the course of EFOS with her ideas, with her commitment to fulfilling the mission of EFOS. That's why we decided to include her in the Gallery of distinguished EFOS members. I am talking about and with our president, Dr. Nadia Hrapkova.

How did you first become familiar with EFOS? How long have you been involved?

It happened for the first time in Prague, on 17 November 1992, "The International Day of Students", when I met Horst Leonhard from EFOS. It was an international conference focusing on senior education and care for seniors. There I met Horst Leonhard for the first time. He told me about EFOS and invited me to come to a future EFOS meeting. The first time I took part at an EFOS meeting was in Vienna in spring 1994, where I met Rosemarie Kurz from Graz, Herta Spitaler and also Inge Leonhard from Vienna, Leopold Auinger from Innsbruck, Adrien Veillon from Basel, prof. Halina Schwarz from Warschau and Prof. Helena Haškovcová from Charles University in Prag. The meeting took place at the University of Vienna. Since that time, I have been present at all meetings of EFOS.

How long have you been president of EFOS?

It was a big honour and very big surprise for me when in October 2002 Horst Leonhard

asked me, if I would be willing to be the next EFOS president. I was for a very long time the youngest member of the EFOS board, but I felt, that I was ready for this position. I was enough skilled as an organizer and I believed that. Together with other EFOS members, I could do a good job and realise some good projects.

On 8 November 2002, in Bratislava, during the EFOS autumn meeting, I was elected as the President of EFOS.

The common meeting of AIUTA and EFOS at the Namur University (Belgium) in 2001 was the first time that Peter Hug took part. After a short cooperation I asked Peter to be a vice president of EFOS to which he agreed. I think that it was a very good choice and since that time we have had a prolific cooperation.

At the beginning of my presidency, Herta Spitaler was already General Secretary and she was my first important cooperating person for the EFOS Agenda, for the EFOS meetings, for the contacting EFOS members, etc. During the next 8 years the EFOS board was very helpful in the realisation of our tasks. We discussed many political topics and the role of emeriti. In 2006 we started together the new project EFOSEC (European Federation of Older Students Enlargement and Cooperation).

In October 2010, at the meeting in Bratislava, after two periods as a president, I decided to take a break and asked Peter Hug, if he could take over as president for the period 2011-2014. In November 2011, at the meeting in Vienna, Peter Hug was elected as a new EFOS president and me as a vice president. At this

same meeting, Herta Spitaler finished her long and fruitful work as General Secretary and Katarina Grunwald was elected as her successor. I think it was very good decision. I am still very satisfied and happy to cooperate with her and I think she feels the same.

Later, in 2014, I was again elected as EFOS president. A proposal for a new Erasmus+ project EduSenNet (Educational senior Network) was submitted to the European Commission with the Comenius university in Bratislava as the project-coordinator. This double work – to be EFOS president and project coordinator was not easy to run, but on the other side I was convinced that this project could be effective and could produce very good research results. I think that during this period we had a successful time and that we achieved valuable results.

In autumn 2017, in Groningen, I was re-elected as EFOS president and now I have to think about new ideas that I could bring in to the EFOS after so many years. This is by no means an easy task and mission!

What are your activities as president of EFOS?

To the basic activities belong not only the preparations of the meetings, checking of new possibilities, but also thinking about topics for the discussions, brainstorming or workshops. We need to contact new people, new universities. For example, in March 2018 we have cooperated with Ukraine U3A Association and I took part at the international conference in Kiev held by the University of economics and fiscal studies in Irpin. I was invited to give a speech as EFOS president and as a specialist and researcher for senior education.

Other very important activities are aimed towards our present members, universities and individuals. I decided to change our habit to hold the EFOS meetings in a city of an active EFOS member. What do I mean? I proposed, not to have meetings at the universities, that are always represented, but at places, that are easier to be reached by members who can usually not take part. We contacted Vienna University and in February 2018 we met the director of the Post-graduate Centre and the Centre for Continuing Education. We needed to refresh this important contact. EFOS is

registered in Austria and we need institutional members from Austria as the Vienna university and universities from other cities. We are losing contact with Innsbruck University but still have a good contact with Graz University. I hope, that the meeting in autumn 2018 can be held in Vienna and that we will get a positive answer from director, Dr. Katharina Resch, MSc, Bakk., who promised us to contact the Vice rector of Vienna University. Maybe one of our next meetings can be in Wroclaw again, because I see a widening gap in our contacts.

At this moment we are approaching an important event: Our first EFOS meeting in the UK. It will take place in London on 26 and 27 April 2018, in the cooperation with the Third Age Trust. At this meeting we will line up a new EFOS mission and activities of the EFOS Action plan for the next period.

These activities are not purely voluntary activities, but essential tasks and goals, giving EFOS a strong foundation. The resulting document will define the future orientation of EFOS.

What do you feel are your greatest successes as EFOS president / vice-president?

I think, that there will always be a lot of work for the EFOS president, for the EFOS board and for everybody in EFOS, because the members are very much involved working towards the aims of EFOS. In EFOS as in other associations it is only possible to be successful, when the work is done collectively, the people are enthusiastic and have a good team spirit. Success is not about the president, success is about people.

I am very glad, that in 2010 we could publish a book in German language about the history of EFOS and about 20 years of EFOS activities. Very important for the image of EFOS is the big research realised during last two years with more than 4,000 elderly respondents within the Erasmus+ project “EduSenNet”.

What is very good in our work, are the workshops, round-tables, brainstorming, which are usually a part of each meeting, besides the regular EFOS agenda. Topics are ideas and results from universities. We have had important discussions and conferences on specific subjects. In Dresden we had a very interesting workshop about the role of education in a democracy. Keynote speaker

was prof. Alexander Andreeff. Conferences were held in member universities as in Wroclaw, Chemnitz, Bratislava and workshops about the European values in Vienna and Groningen.

On 26 June 2014 the Comenius University in Bratislava, on the occasion of its 95th anniversary, awarded EFOS with a commemorative medal. During a ceremonial meeting, in the presence of the President of Slovakia Mr. Andrej Kiska and the rector, Prof. Karol Mičieta, the medal was presented to the EFOS president Peter Hug. On the same occasion I received a personal medal for my work for adult education.

On 4. July 2016, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of its University of the Third Age, the University of Wroclaw awarded a diploma to EFOS for its international cooperation with Universities of the Third Age. Some representatives of EFOS and me as a president took part in this event.

What is the most interesting project that EFOS realised in the past years?

In the past years EFOS has realised three projects. Our first project EFOSEC (European Federation of Older Students Enlargement and Cooperation) lasted only one year, but our team continued and realised research surveys which were very useful and have been published.

The second project VECU (Virtual European Culture centre) was completely different. The project not only focused on the elderly and their learning, but also on knowledge of the elderly and its transfer to the young generation. Main topics were traditions and values in the society. This project was very important for the intergenerational learning and involvement of the young generation together with seniors, and fully activated elderly students.

The third EFOS project EduSenNet (Educational Senior Network) was mostly a research project. We did a huge research work involving approx. 4,000 older persons. This project proved to be a bit difficult for some partners because of its specialized nature. Main priorities focused on methodology of learning, innovations and on good practices. Very important for the society was that we contacted

communities of the elderly, those who are usually left out by organised activities or isolated from daily life. Isolated people cannot find possibilities for learning activities. Therefore we tried to offer them a chance for further education and how to learn new things. To me the project brochure with the results shows the fantastic work not only of our project partners, but of all EFOS members involved.

I think, all three projects were very successful, because our seniors could apply their knowledge and skills in their active involvement in the project.

What are the federation's biggest challenges or weaknesses?

From my point of view it is necessary **to involve older adults** (younger senior generation) in our member basis from universities. It was about 20 years ago when I heard criticism that, not being a student, I am member of EFOS. The criticism was based on the opinion that EFOS should be the federation of older students. But I think that also younger organizers from the universities, who prepare activities for seniors, are very important and should be involved in EFOS. I do not really want to say, that we should try to refresh our member population, but looking back 25 years, I was and still am one of the youngest persons in EFOS. We had some younger members like Annika from Magdeburg and Malgosza from Wroclaw. I am very happy, that from Leipzig Catherina Hein took part at the meeting in Chemnitz and I hope that this connection will stay for the future. I hope that EFOS will attract more younger representatives from universities.

A very important role play **intergenerational contacts in the society**. Therefore in EFOS we can work together among the older generation on one side and cooperate with young generation on other side. It means that intergenerational discussions and meetings can be realised inside EFOS, between EFOS representatives. We can sit together and discuss about life, experience, special topics or problems, which belong to the age of younger and older people. This is our big task for us **to find our successors for EFOS**.

One of the weaknesses could be the **language barrier**. I cannot speak German, other members cannot speak English. But with the

help of EFOS members, who are willing to translate during the meeting, (as Peter, Katja) we all can have fruitful and interesting meetings.

What is your dream / plan for the near future and distant future for your federation?

I am a person, who likes to work for the elderly, with the elderly and have done so during 27 years of my professional life. If we generate a new idea for an EFOS project, I will be glad to be involved and work on the project. But for now I cannot promise and I do not know if Comenius University could be the coordinator.

I want to say some words about dissemination activities, which are very important. The first EFOS News magazine was published in Austria. I still remember my first EFOS meeting, 24 years ago, when we had a discussion of 2-3 hours about the magazine EFOS News, its topics, publisher, etc.

Now it is easier for us to write some articles and send it to Peter Hug who collects and finalises the issues. I am very grateful to Peter, because he is responsible for the dissemination of EFOS, for the EFOS News, for the website etc. He is very reliable and I want to thank him for all this work. I believe that he can do this job also in the future.

Another idea comes from the EFOS mission to be in touch with other associations. I think that it would be interesting, as EFOS president, to attend the conference of BAGWiWa in Germany, or of another national organisation. I do not want to let EFOS to fall down into

stereotypes; therefore the visits of the conferences could be an incentive for our further actions in EFOS. Actually we have contacts also with AIUTA, but with me leaving AIUTA it the contacts between both Federations threaten to be broken and we could lose the contacts outside Europe. That is why I believe that EFOS contacts should be spread out as we do now with the Third Age Trust in the UK and the Association of U3A CLEPSYDRA in Ukraine.

Thanks to Katja, Ingrid and Horst we have a very good position in the NGO Committee on Ageing at the UNO in Vienna and it is very important to keep in touch and play an active role in this body also in the future.

We are not very well known in the European Commission even though we have sent some letters to the EC and we have run some European projects, in which EFOS was mentioned. It shall be a new task to send a letter to the European Commission with the information about EFOS and senior education.

What is your “message” as EFOS president?

I want to thank everybody who trusts me and who wanted, supported and elected me as the EFOS president. It is an honour for me to lead this very nice group, to organize activities for the seniors and I believe that EFOS will be very successful and active also in the future, in which we can live together. I believe in our members. Thank you.

News in Brief

Obituary

In February 2018, we learned that our loyal EFOS member

Dr. Hieronymus Praxmarer

from Innsbruck died in December 2017 after a long and serious illness surrounded by his family. Hieronymus was a good friend, very active, helpful and cooperative. He has always been a good advisor in legal matters.

We will miss him in our circle and remember him with affection.

The EFOS board



EFOS MEETS U3A IN LONDON

The 2018 spring meeting was held in London from 25th to 28th April. This was the first time in its history that EFOS convened in the United Kingdom. It offered us the opportunity to meet with representatives of the U3A movement and the Third Age Trust for a mutual exchange of information and experiences. The Seminar “British model of U3A and experience from Europe” consisted of short presentations on the topics: “UK U3A Model”, “EFOS and the European Third Age Experience” and “Feedback from EFOS research”. A lively discussion following the presentations added significantly to the understanding of the differing approaches to education for the Elderly in European countries, with the British U3A as one of the most prominent examples. We think that this meeting was very interesting for both sides..

On the agenda of the EFOS meeting were important items like the action plan for 2018 -2022, a letter to the European Parliament and a discussion about the future of our organisation.

The next meeting of EFOS in October 2018 is going to be organized by the Comenius University in Bratislava and will be combined with a Seminar on the topic: “EU citizens' awareness of and relationship with the younger generation”. Other topics we shall focus on in our future activities are:

- Intergenerational learning
- Information Technologies in the life of seniors
- Needs of seniors for active ageing
- Values and knowledge of immigrants about their respective countries

We are pleased that EFOS has established new contacts and that in the meantime some individual members of U3A have already applied for EFOS membership. This is an important step for our federation.



33. BERLINER SOMMER-UNI

From 27 August to 2 September 2018 the *Berliner Akademie für weiterbildende Studien e.V.* organises its yearly *Sommeruni*, this year in cooperation with the *Freien Universität Berlin*. The subject is „**Africa - Origin and fate of mankind, scientific findings - political challenges**“. You can find more information on http://www.berlinakademie.de/su_ankuendigungen.php.

