



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

1

2020



English edition

European Federation of Older Students

Board

President:

PhDr. Nadežda Hrapková, PhD, Bratislava, Slovakia
Univerzita Komenského, Univerzita tretieho veku
e-mail: nadezda.hrapkova@cdv.uniba.sk

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Dr. Katarina Grunwald, Bratislava, Slovakia
Univerzita Komenského, Univerzita tretieho veku
e-mail: k_grunwald@orangemail.sk

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Contact address:

Dr. Katarina Grunwald
Červeňáková 19
84101 Bratislava
Slovakia
Tel. (00421) 264361655 Mobil (00421) 904800472
e-mail: k_grunwald@orangemail.sk

From the editor:

These are extraordinary times we live in. At the beginning of the year everything was still normal. We were working on our project and planned to meet in Dresden in April. By that time also this issue of EFOS News should have been ready.

And then in March the whole life changed. The Corona virus hit us hard and paralyzed all public life. Universities went close and the courses of the senior universities were also cancelled. Since then we have been sitting at home. We only go out to shop and to stretch our legs. Our social life has come to a complete standstill.

The leaders of the senior universities have been completely occupied by the sudden changes in the teaching programmes. They can hardly find spare time to write an article for the EFOS News. I think it is remarkable that we have managed to produce an interesting issue again despite these adverse circumstances. It shows the great commitment to EFOS.

Our sincere thanks to all authors.

May 2020

Peter Hug

EFOS News

Publication of the
European Federation of Older
Students in Universities

Editor:

P. Hug
Prinses Irenestraat 8
9401 HH Assen
Netherlands
Tel. +31-592-330464
E-mail: s.p.hug@planet.nl

EFOS Website:

www.efos-europa.eu

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President's Report for the year 2019

According to the EFOS plans our **main interests for next two years** are pointing in two directions. One is our focus on **EFOS Action plan approved in London for 2018 – 2022** and the second is the project goals and plans of our **Erasmus + Project „Senior's Learning in the Digital Society – SeLiD** (<https://selid.efos-europa.eu/>).

But “Back to the beginning of the year and going step by step”

The **Yearbook of International Organizations** has been updated by EFOS in February 2019 and we received the Invitation to take part in the Round table in Brussels, November 2019 or in 2020 in Prague. Prague is more suitable for us so we add this event to our plans.



Our **letter to the European Commission, DG Education, Youth and Sport**, sent in October 2018, was answered in February 2019 by Mr. Michael Teutsch, head of the Unit. He assured us that the EC fully recognises the relevance of LLL, including adult learning and supports it throughout policy initiatives like the European Agenda for Adult Learning and the Erasmus+ programmes. The **ROADMAP of the European Commission was updated in 2nd quarter of 2019** with additional information and EFOS activities.

In March the EFOS members, who decided to participate in the new project Erasmus+ KA204 *Senior's learning in the digital Society* - SeLiD submitted the application for the partnership of 8 universities/academies in 6 countries. The **Project application was approved with some modifications** in July for the period **September 2019 - August 2021**.

The Project includes **5 transnational meetings** for the eight project partners.

For the year 2019 we have planned two regular **EFOS meetings**. The first was **prepared by our members in Vienna and support of Vienna University** in cooperation with ÖH in April 2019. The regular meeting was opened by the Vice Rector Prof. Dr. Schnabl and by the Chairwoman of the Austrian Students' Union and representative of ÖH. The meeting was combined with the Seminar Senior's Learning in the Digital Society and we could also call it a kick-off project meeting. The members presented good practices in ICT, computer courses, project plans and activities within the SeLiD and other projects, focusing on digital literacy of seniors in Magdeburg, the project “Seniors in the knowledge society” (Graz), “Computer literacy for seniors” (Brno) and technical activities and equipment for seniors in Chemnitz. Thanks to Herta and Wolfgang Spitaler together with Gerti Zupanich **we got an opportunity to visit new places in Austria, with an excellent sightseeing tour** to the monastery in Klosterneuburg.

A **new issue of EFOS News** for 2019 has been published and added to **the website**. Peter Hug **also updated the website** with pictures from Vienna, a note about the meeting in Wroclaw and a link to the SeLiD project. Thanks to him our information to the members and the wide public is always up-to-date.

The booklet “Education for Seniors in Europe”, published under **EduSenNet, the previous Erasmus+ project of EFOS members** was distributed to various countries and U3As in Malta, Australia, Serbia, Latvia, Denmark and Ukraine. In Slovakia it is used by the researchers from the Department of Ethnology of the Comenius University for their study of gender policy. We have been asked by the European commission to produce a short movie for the European documentation about the most successful projects of Erasmus+. **Our project got two top marks of EU: Success stories; Good practices.**

Cooperation with other International organisations.

The AIUTA World conference in Wuhan, China was held on 20 May 2019. The EFOS president was invited as a VIP guest to give a speech during the opening session and received an award as a European expert for senior education. EFOS was recognised as a very active organisation by the Chinese association. Our former project VECU also caught attention. The EFOS General Secretary was also invited to the AIUTA meeting. The Wuhan conference was immediately **followed by the WSTC conference in Yantai, China** where EFOS was represented by our president, Peter Hug and Katarina Grunwald. Nadežda Hrapková - as one of the keynote speakers and VIP guest - was awarded the Confucius prize. Katarina Grunwald – EFOS General Secretary was invited by the **Czech Association of U3As** to give a presentation on EFOS during a conference in September 2019 in Vodňany, Czech Republic.

Rosemarie Kurz presented EFOS at the **EURAG International meeting in Moscow.** The **UN Committee for ageing** has met ten times this year with the participation of Katarina Grunwald and Ingrid Dummer. Our president Nadežda Hrapková joined as a new member from 2020.

The **Seniorenakademie in Dresden celebrated its 25th anniversary on 7 October 2019.** The EFOS president gave a speech and other EFOS members from Magdeburg and Chemnitz University took part too.

The **Project Erasmus+ 2019-1-SK01-KA204-060649 ‘Senior’s Learning in the Digital Society’ (SeLiD)** has started with the **first transnational project meeting in Wrocław,**

Poland on 23 – 26 October 2019. After discussion and brainstorming on the project plans and administrative tasks, we held a Workshop on the topic: "What are new technologies in seniors’ daily life, how to live with them", attended by the project partners, other EFOS members and senior students from Wrocław U3A. Presentations were:

- Learning new Technologies at U3A in Wrocław by seniors " Easy and Useful" by Zbigniew Błaszczyk, U3A Wrocław;
- From traditional approaches in ICT learning to new methods - the use of tablets and applications in English lessons for older adults - Marian Aleson Carbonell, Paula Doncel, UPUA Alicante, Spain;
- "The project group Generation Team Technique about the use of smartphones for beginners" – Roland Schöne, Technical University Chemnitz, Germany

Thanks to the main organiser, Anna Gozdowski, we were able to enjoy an excursion to Książ castle near the city of Wałbrzych, and an interesting coal mine museum.

In 2019 we welcomed the **Third Age Trust from the United Kingdom** and the **U3A of the Charles University Faculty of Medicine in Pilsen Czech Republic** as new corporate members and we initiated contact with our new member from 2018 – the U3A Toulouse (France). As individual members we welcomed Irene Kembe, andragogist from Budapest, Hungary and Edward Bruce Bird, from Corbridge, United Kingdom. Thus **we expanded our membership to 2 new countries: France and Hungary.**

EFOS 30 Years!

Herta Spitaler, Vienna, Austria
former General Secretary of EFOS until 2011



In this year 2020 our association EFOS - European Federation of Older Students at Universities - celebrates its 30th anniversary!

The people responsible for the foundation and the beginnings of EFOS - Leopold Auinger, Horst Leonhard and Adrien Veillon - are unfortunately no longer with us, although we have not forgotten them but still remember their friendship and their commitment to EFOS and to senior studies. Since then, this idea of senior education has gained acceptance in many countries and has enriched the lives of many older people, as I can say from my own experience.

After the resignation of Horst Leonhard as president in 2002 Nadja Hrapková took over the presidency and since then she has led EFOS very well (with only a short interlude from 2011 till 2014 with Peter Hug as president).

The idea of EFOS has not only contributed to older people enjoying their studies and research, but it has also led to many friendships and contacts between people from different European and non-European countries. Numerous joint projects with the support of the European Union have been carried out and have brought new insights into "getting older", which is important and useful, not only for EFOS.

It is a fact - and here in Austria it is quite obvious - that people are getting older and older and spend more and more time in so-called "retirement". For older people it is not only further education in the academic sector that is important but also the participation in the "technical revolution" in order to be able to lead an independent and fulfilled life.

Through the EFOS website and the EFOS News awareness of EFOS is growing beyond the own borders. Also representation of EFOS in international committees like the "Committee on Ageing" at the UNO is important and necessary.

Highlights of the EFOS meetings over the years have been reports of various specialist seminars on seniors' education and current trends in this field in different countries. These have included newly published books and articles on seniors' studies and joint activities of older students such as a specialist seminar in Bratislava on "Further education for seniors and current trends for the third millennium" (2002), a study on "The effects of studying on the health of older students" (Prof. Szwarc Warsaw) as well as a joint action of older students in Vienna: the publication of a book about their experiences as children and adolescents in World War II "Mother, the sky is burning...".

Now I wish EFOS many more fruitful years and a good and friendly cooperation of senior students from all over Europe!



Klingenthal 1996



Berlin 1997



U3A in the United Kingdom

Auriol Ainley, London, UK

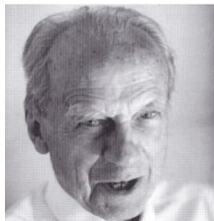


There are nearly 1050 individual U3As throughout the United Kingdom – all are individual charities and run themselves, but are members of the main charitable organisation,

The Third Age Trust. No government or other financial support is received, all are membership funded, and we are not affiliated to any university. So, how did this amazing organisation come about?

Stanley Miller, a longstanding respected EFOS and AIUTA member as well as having over 20 years in the U3A, has described the UK's U3A movement in earlier EFOS News. So, for any new members, I will describe how it all came about very briefly.

In 1981, our three founding members, all members of **FREE** – (**F**ree **R**ights of **E**lderly people to **E**ducation), decided that the Universite du Troisieme Age established in France in 1972, would be an ideal model for the UK – if significantly modified, as they recognised that most retired people have a lot to contribute, with the emphasis on sharing and without formal links to traditional universities. The three were socialist Michael Young (1915-2002) founder of the Open University, philosopher Peter Laslett (1915-2001) lobbyist for the Open University, and educationalist Eric Midwinter, director for the Centre of Policy on Ageing, who is still an active member of the U3A and contributes nationally and within his own U3A locally. In 1982 the first 8 U3As were established – who would have thought that now, early 2020, there are nearly 1050 U3As and that number is constantly growing!



Michael Young
1915-2002

Founder of Consumers
Association
Founder Open University



Peter Laslett
1915-2001

Fellow, Trinity College Cambridge
Lobbied for the creation of OU



Eric Midwinter

Born 1932 - Still an active member
Director for Centre of Policy on Ageing
Head of National Consumer Council
Public Affairs Unit

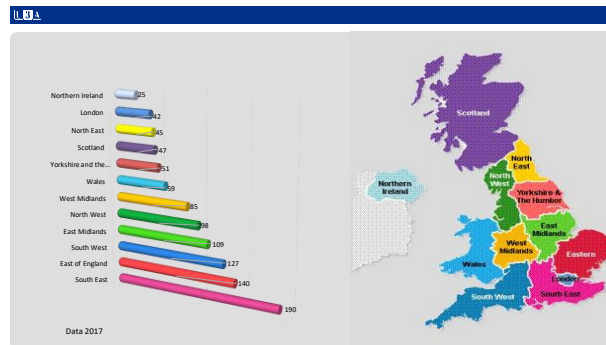
Laslett's philosophy for the organisation was 8 objects and 5 guiding principles, and these still form the basis of our U3A today. Simply, these are that we are non-religious, non-political, non-discriminatory, non-commercial and open to everyone in their third age – that is, no longer in full time employment. Teachers learn, and learners teach; no qualifications are sought or offered; varied interest groups are formed covering a wide range of topics and activities are “by the members, for the members”. Each U3A is a mutual aid organisation, operationally

independent but a member of The Third Age Trust requiring adherence to the guiding principles of our U3A movement. Everyone is a volunteer, no payments are made to members; each U3A is self-funded with membership subscriptions; costs are kept as low as possible.

The UK is divided into 9 regions and the three countries of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Each of these 12 regions have a Regional Trustee, voted for by all the members in that region. I am the Trustee for the West

Midlands, which apart from London, is the only region which is landlocked! All the

others have access to our beautiful coastline.



But, how do all our U3As come about? The desire for people freshly retired to continue learning in some form or another is important – what exactly do you do when no longer at work? A group of people will come together, establish what they need and contact, usually, the National Office to ask “How do we set up a U3A?”. There is a specially trained team of U3A volunteer members who will guide and assist a group through the process – a committee is formed, all interested seniors are invited to a general meeting, and explanation of the U3A is delivered in a friendly, safe and enjoyable way. There is standard guidance and advice to help the new committee establish a new U3A from the Charity Commission, but the most important factor for all the members is what groups will there be? And how much is the membership fee? A keen committee will soon establish all the required details for the Constitution, which is the legal document for all U3As.

Members are asked what they would like to learn, and who would like to lead a group with their knowledge and experience. Everyone has a lifetime of experience and knowledge to pass on and share with others, and they all have the desire to try something new, or pick up subjects forgotten from school days – it is surprising how many people want to relearn a language, or try and understand mathematics to help their grandchildren!

And so a new U3A is born – it soon grows, and before long it may become too big – so a new U3A is started, and so it goes on. Word of mouth is the best form of advertisement, and there is always something topical to pick up. As we all grow older, health and exercise become important. Last year an enterprising

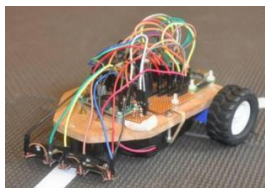
member in Yorkshire decided that Walking Cricket would be a good thing to try.....this has taken the country by storm, and there are now several groups around the country who get together for matches – and it has been recognised by the Lords Cricket association! The idea has spread to Walking Football, Walking Netball, and most recently Hand Table Tennis where members with walking difficulties keep one hand on the table while playing! This also means that ordinary members can join them – as long as they keep one hand on the table!



As a Regional Trustee I have been able to visit many of the 85 U3As in my region, and it is amazing how different they all are. Many of them get together to form challenges – teams of Petanque, Bridge, Table Tennis, meet for friendly competitions. Great fun is had by all, there is always tea and cake available, and the opportunity for a good chat!

Languages are very popular and important, many groups taking trips abroad to improve their language skills and learn about different cultures and history. Science covers a wide area, one U3A's Robot Construction Group held a challenge last year across the country – so popular that another Construction Challenge

is arranged for this year with increased participation!



Much research is undertaken by U3As, joining with local schools, councils, national organisations and institutions, the results are shared nationally. These have included declining bumblebee species; 'Cottonopolis' covering Manchester's cotton industry; local history and customs, and many more.

Combating loneliness is an important topic, and the U3A recently carried out research on this with many members across the country, and the results were presented at our Houses of Parliament in a book, 'Learning Not Lonely'. This proved the huge value of belonging to the U3A for those people on their own, away from family, in new areas. This has now extended into part of the Social Prescribing scheme run through doctors' surgeries.



In the recent past we have also been involved with intergenerational debates held at our House of Lords – interacting with young people is vital, both ages learnt a lot! Many of our U3As have been invited to work with local schools both to support events and to engage in classroom social history lessons by talking to the children, many of whom do not have access to their elderly relatives. Just talking about 'what we did when we were young' is valuable to them – how can children imagine life without television, computers, cars, and the internet!!

Many regions hold annual conferences; the West Midlands' is in March, and we welcome a representative or two from each U3A where they meet to hear what is happening within the wider U3A and at national level, to ask questions, to network with each other, and catch up on other news. Great fun as well! There is always a lighter side to some of the business work.

5 times a year, the Trust issues a national magazine, Third Age Matters or TAM for our members. This is a valuable place for interesting articles by guest writers, exchanging news and ideas for groups to follow. Apparently advertisers queue to have their adverts included – but there is a definite limit on the amount of adverts! There is a monthly newsletter emailed to all members who have subscribed to read it.

This year will see the first national U3A Day – U3As will be promoting what they do locally to tell the wider public what we are about. This takes place in National Volunteer Week – remember, we are all volunteers in this incredible organisation!

We have an International Committee which can assist and guide U3As who want to liaise with European groups in order to improve their language skills or visit U3As when they are on holiday. There are requests for exchanges with other similar groups, and this is something which we are anxious to establish for our members. Currently I am chairman of this committee, joining EFOS was a very positive action to further our European communications.

I hope this goes some way to explaining our way of continuing lifelong learning for all our members – nearly 450,000 of them! We never stop learning, even if it is to work out how to text on a mobile phone, or the steps for a new dance, or a new language!



Auriol Ainley
West Midlands Trustee
International Committee - chairman

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Seniors' Learning in the Digital Society - SeLiD

Project Erasmus + 2019-1-SK01-KA204-060649

Dr. Nadežda Hrapková, Bratislava, Slovakia
project coordinator



Our members in EFOS felt that we should prepare a new project, which could on one side enrich life in our federation and on the other promote development of technologies among individuals and institutions.

Therefore we collected ideas and prepared the application for the project Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership in Adult Learning, Key Activity No 4.

The project Senior's Learning in the Digital Society has been approved but only for two years, which, despite some regret, I was glad to get. Eight institutions have agreed that the coordinator is going to be Comenius University and Nadežda Hrapková, who is already skilled in this kind of work from the previous project EduSenNet.

The main objectives are open education and innovative practices in a digital era, focusing on improving and extending high quality learning opportunities in digital technologies and ICT, tailored to the needs of individual low-skilled or low-qualified adults. The project concentrates on learning and training of the elderly in basic ICT skills and key digital competences. The project focuses on elderly students and older people in general in order to improve and develop their digital skills and knowledge. They need special education and training in many fields for a more flexible use of ICT in their daily life and for an active citizenship.

The Partnership consists of:

1. Comenius University in Bratislava, Centre for Continuing Education and its U3A, Slovakia
2. Technische Universität Chemnitz Seniorenkolleg, Chemnitz, Germany
3. Otto-von-Guericke-Universität Magdeburg Studieren ab 50, Magdeburg, Germany
4. Dresdner Seniorenakademie für Wissenschaft und Kunst, Dresden, Germany
5. Universidad Permanente de la Universidad de Alicante, UPUA, Alicante, Spain
6. Vysoké učení technické v Brně, Brno, Czech Republic
7. Uniwersytet Wrocław-UTW, Wrocław, Poland
8. Uppsala Senioruniversitet Uppsala, Sweden

We are planning to produce Outcomes such as:

- Review table presenting a study of learning possibilities within digital technologies
- Research about the needs of the elderly in the use of digital technologies and home equipment.
- New innovative curricula for the training of the seniors' skills.
- Opportunities and methods to encourage the involvement of isolated older people in the digital society.
- Digital education and training of low-skilled adults.
- Dissemination of the learning activities of the elderly in using ICT.

Results of the project will be published in the booklet and on the project website.

The project is being realised in partnership with the European Federation of Older Students in Universities (EFOS) which assure involvement of other associated institutions and individuals from Austria, the UK and the Netherlands who are voluntarily cooperating

with the project partners. The project partners are going to meet on 5 transnational meetings in Wroclaw, Dresden, Alicante, Brno and Magdeburg to realise the project plans and fulfil the tasks. Project outcomes and results from the research are available on the website

<http://SeLid.efos-europa.eu/>



Digital Society for seniors in Sweden

Dr. Björn Odin, Uppsala, Sweden



THE SITUATION IN 2020

The number of Swedes connected to the internet has increased in 2020 and consequently, the number of people left in digital exclusion is decreasing.

In 2014 about one million Swedes out of a population of 10 million were not connected.

Half a million still do not use internet at all - but another half a million use internet less than once a day.

Few elderly people have Facebook and 1,5 million people do not have a Bank ID*. These are a few examples taken from a recent report from a survey made by *The Internet Foundation in Sweden*.

Age is the dominating factor to explain that part of the Swedish population that does not connect daily (75 % are 65+ of age). But there are also other factors behind:

- Gender – a majority are women
- Income – a majority have low income
- Living site – a majority live in rural areas
- Education – a majority have lower education

Other factors observed are: being single, unemployed or on sick leave.

On the other hand, those who start to use internet do not stop doing so and those who start to use specific services (mobile Bank ID etc) do continue. Those born in the 1940's feel as involved in the digital society as those born in the 1960s did two years ago. The 1940 generation is increasingly connected in different ways. Those in the oldest group account for the largest increase.

One of the largest senior organization in Sweden (the SPF) has calculated the costs of having access to internet for a period of one year. The cost is over 700 euros per year per person, which is quite a heavy burden for most retired people. One major part of this cost is the purchase of a computer/smart-phone and the rest is the subscription cost of access to

internet and sometime costs for repairing of the hardware. Of course, it is a question of priorities, but a majority of seniors cannot even think of buying a smartphone or a computer because of too low a pension. Statistically females earn about 25 % less than men and consequently they get lower pension. Single households are more frequent in Sweden than in other European countries. Living single means that you cannot share costs for internet connection.

For people living in rural areas there is also an initial cost of about 2000 euro to be linked up by fibre. In many places the traditional telephone net has already been removed and fibre installation is often delayed by years (according to my own and others recent experiences from rural parts of Sweden)

The case of Uppsala Senioruniversitet (USU)

In 2016 - 2018 an Erasmus+ project (EduSenNet) was carried out at USU (through EFOS). A survey was carried out and a random sample of 10% of the USU members were selected to answer a questionnaire. The experience from this exercise is as follows:

Only 9 % of the sample did not have an e-mail address. The questionnaires were sent by e-mail from the USU office. The people of the sample were asked to complete the questionnaire and send it back by e-mail. Detailed instructions on how to do that were given. If they still were not able to return the questionnaire by mail, they were asked to send an e-mail or call the USU office to get the questionnaire by regular mail with a stamped return envelope. The 36 persons which did not have an e-mail address and another 20 persons who could not read the attachment got the questionnaire by e-mail.

“We had to realize that we had misjudged the computer skills of our members.” Even some of those who had an e-mail address could not handle attachments. A new questionnaire was sent by regular mail to the persons that had not answered the e-mail. (After this action almost 80 % did answer)

From the results of the questionnaire we got the following information about USU members:

- 93% had a computer
- 44% had an Ipad
- 68% had a smartphone
- 30% had a simple mobile telephone

At the same time we were informed that 18% of our members needed help to use their computers. (There were fewer persons who needed help with their Ipads or smartphones.)

PROBLEMS

Implementation of digitalization

The fact that thousands of seniors do not have full access - for different reasons - to the society and its different institutions is a kind of discrimination. Most people still can pay their bills with a simple invoice on paper, but it is becoming more and more costly and complicated year by year.

When old people need some sort of assistance, it is almost impossible to get in touch with someone to assist by a simple telephone call. You will be met by a mechanical voice telling that *"You are number 87 on a waiting list"*, or *"You should press 1 for xx and 2 for yy and 3 for zz"*. You will have to go to the home page of that institution/company, use chat or create a personal account/a profile or log in with a Bank Id. (Not only old people find this a difficult procedure.)

Members of the society, who have been paying taxes during their whole life do not easily get in contact with Welfare Institutions - Welfare companies also lose customers.

The fast introduction of new technology has very much to do with the the interest of companies, who want to earn more money by selling new technology, hardware as well as software. Each individual has to ask her/himself questions about their own need for "this or that". Seniors have different needs from young persons. Each individual has to take into consideration how "climatesmart a smartphone is". How often do I need to buy the latest model? Is it possible to repair the old one? Do I really need what the new model will provide extra?"

To keep a smartphone and repair it for one more year will be equal to the cost of

hundreds of litres of petrol. A smart use of smartphone also has to be climatesmart!

Sociopsychological effects of digitalization

For many old persons there are now fewer and fewer opportunities in their daily activities to meet and talk with other people eg. at banks, when buying tickets, when shopping. People risk becoming more lonely as they get older, which is not good for your health. This is clearly underlined by the Canadian social psychologist Susan Pinker (*"The Village Effect"*). Living together in a "village"/human society means a longer and more healthy life. It is necessary to build an infrastructure within the society which makes it easy to develop social contacts

The more we have of digital technology, the more we get of a fragmented society. By the way we act in social media *"we establish our own rooms"* in the society, where others are not admitted. This phenomena is studied by prof. Elin Wihlborg (Linköping University), who emphasises that democracy means a bottom up process, where people have to listen to each other and solve problems together. A democratic dilemma will be the result if we are not aware of and find ways to solve this problem.

Life Long Learning and the internet

The SPF underlines the fact that as long as you are employed you get continued updating via your job or your colleagues, but as a retired person it is up to each individual to get updated. The municipalities do not take any responsibility for the updating of retired people! The national policy is at the same time stressing the importance of Life Long Learning. There are national plans for some 100 "Service centers" in Sweden but even if this is realised there will be too few and at too far a distance for many retired persons. There must at least be one digital help center in each municipality – with easy access.

The Internet Foundation started a pilot project in the town of Motala (Sweden) in 2017 and more than 15 municipalities are in the pipeline to start Digital Help centers for a two year period with funding from the Government. So far, the Motala project has been a success. *"The digital shame among many older persons has been cured"*.

Many seniors feel ashamed that they do not know how to use and handle internet and thus feel excluded by society if they do not get help, when needed. Digital shame can also lead to further isolation of seniors and be a hinder for inclusion in the society.

Think before implementation!

Ask the right questions at every step in the implementation process of digitalization. How to assure that half a million of the Swedish people can continue to live a safe and comfortable life in Sweden is an overall and national question..The planners for tomorrow's society need not only to take into account whether a particular target group uses the internet or not, but also why, how and how often they do it and how experienced they are.

Questions like those are very relevant on a local level when Uppsala University of the Third Age is developing a program to offer digital support to its members through the SeLiD – project.

*** BankID**

Most public institutions in Sweden use the national identifier for individuals. It is the Swedish Tax Agency that manages civil registration of private individuals. Also Banks, Health Care, etc, use the very same identifier. The use of the identifier is so frequent that almost all Swedes remember her/his identifier.

There are few countries in the world that have such a wide spread use of a national identifier. This has led to the success of the BankID. Almost all organisations, public as well as private, where a secure authentication is needed, today use the BankID.

Intergenerational research learning and working at the Senior Citizens' College at TU Chemnitz with cooperation partners from business and politics

(Status 15.04.2020)

Prof. Dr. Roland Schöne, Chemnitz, Germany

Background

From the work with three Grundtvig, one Mercator and two Erasmus+ projects, there is already extensive successful experience in Researcher Learning with the participating project workers at the Senior Citizens' College at the TU Chemnitz. These include, for example, the development of a Chemnitz Route of Industrial Heritage, a senior citizens' sponsorship programme for international students, contemporary witness reports, intergenerational discussions, paper bridge building, etc.

At the same time, the experiences of older people from other universities were evaluated within the framework of the senior citizens' education programmes, e.g. at the University of Cologne, the University of Frankfurt/Main and the TU Dortmund, which also implemented projects in the field of Learning through Research - but restricted to the social sciences and humanities.

In accordance with the wishes and needs of participants in the Seniorenkolleg to become actively involved in project work, further working groups and project groups with cooperation partners from industry and other institutions have been established in recent years. Through the involvement of pupils, students and younger adults at Chemnitz University of Technology, intergenerational learning and application-oriented work has increasingly taken place.

The aim of the "Intergenerational Research Learning and Working" is the joint creative, productive and application-oriented researcher learning and working to apply to what has been learned in intergenerational groups at the Senior Citizens' College. In doing so, the empirical knowledge of older people (life and work experiences) is linked with the current knowledge of younger people (pupils, students, younger research assistants of TU Chemnitz and specialists from companies). It is used for problem solving and task processing with the

aim of optimising and inventing products and developing services in selected technical areas. It is also applied productively and beneficially in the field of political education, e.g. for informing older voters in elections at different levels.

For this purpose, analyses of the current status, future scenarios and development trends derived from them as well as the needs of the user groups are carried out. The results are then used to derive problem definitions and the structured development and evaluation of problem-solving variants as a basis for three-dimensional prototyping for technical tasks.

Selected problems are processed and presented in solution approaches with samples for testing. For inventions resulting from this process, 4 patent applications (AG WIRFINDER) have been prepared with the cooperation partners (companies) so far. One patent has already been granted, and the older developers are involved in the process.

Close cooperation in the development process with companies that manufacture or offer these products and services is realized by the cooperation of experts from the companies in the groups and by one or two two-day visits to the companies with tours, presentations and project-accompanying work consultations. The work and achievements of the group members are financially and ideally supported, honoured and publicly recognised by the companies.

The presentation of the project results in the Senior Citizens' College was carried out by the group members in lectures to 700 participants. The working methods and the social, entrepreneurial and personal benefits of intergenerational research-based learning and work between educational institutions and companies will also to be illustrated in order to reinforce the positive image of older people. At the same time, the participants of the Seniorenkolleg will take part in surveys and interviews with the project groups on their

needs and wishes and in practical tests of products and services in everyday life.

Current status of ongoing activities for Researcher Learning and Working

So far, two project groups are working in the field of technology and another one in the field of political education, which will be described below. The names of the groups have partly changed during the course of the work, and further project subgroups for the processing of subtasks have also been formed.

1st Project Group "WIRFINDER"

This comprises an intergenerational group (10 participants in total) of seniors (especially engineers), students (mechanical engineering, design) and skilled workers of Paul Hettich GmbH & Co. KG, Kirchleugern, a market leader for kitchen technology fittings with 8000 employees worldwide.

A first result of the work done so far was the development of an innovative turntable for storage in refrigerators as a new integrated or retrofittable part ready for patenting. At present, this innovative turning mechanism is also used for the development of revolving furniture (kitchen, bathroom, wall cupboards, etc.) and is being tested on self-built samples.



This task was accompanied by analyses, brain storming, problem solving in project subgroups, sample construction, presentation and consultations in the company before the management, patent application of four patents as well as presentation at the International Consumer Electronics Fair in Berlin 2017, which the project group also visited. The product was awarded the "Innovation Award" of the company Elektrolux out of 2500 applicants.

The work and results of the project group were reported in a presentation to 700 seniors of the

Seniorenkolleg 2017. A presentation also took place at the German Senior Citizens' Day 2018 in Dortmund and was included in the documentation of the Senior Citizens' Day of the organiser BAGSO. In several television broadcasts, e.g. *"Einfach genial"*, the group members presented their inventions, work results and experiences which met with a very positive response.

At present, sub-groups are working on further areas of practical application of the innovative turntable in practice. Here, too, initial samples are available for cabinets of different sizes, for use in the kitchen and bathroom, and are currently being tested and further optimised. A further company meeting with presentation to the management is planned.



2. project group "Generations Team Technology"

This project group was set up following lectures by Prof. Georg Jahn (Gerontopsychology), Prof. Gangolf Hirtz (Electrical Engineering at the TUC) and Dr. h.c. Gunnar Grosse (CEO KOMSA AG) at the Seniorenkolleg and subsequent excursions to KOMSA AG, to the test apartment of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering at the TUC, the Competence Center Ubineum in Zwickau and Kogni Home in Bielefeld during 2017/2018. It is increasingly working together with the company EMPORIA in Linz (visited during an excursion to Vienna in May 2019), in the area of testing, use and further education of smartphones for older beginners. Programmes of motivational activities for older beginners were successfully realised by 4 members of the project group in a club atmosphere in the multi-generation house in Chemnitz.

The project group works in cooperation with Prof. Georg Jahn, Chair of Applied Gerontopsychology and Cognition at the TU Chemnitz, and consists of approximately 13

members, 7 of whom are participants from the Seniorenkolleg, 5 young scientists and students of gerontopsychology, as well as a representative of KOMSA AG (Head of Digital Business Transformation).

At the same time, joint consultations took place with the Senior Research Group (SRG) from Berlin, which is concerned with testing products for seniors.

Within the framework of needs analyses and idea-finding processes, possible fields for further work are being analysed and a list of priorities is developed. One focus in the near future will be a needs analysis for an ideal smartphone for all age groups and for use by blind and visually impaired people. This will be in cooperation with the Association for the Blind.

The work will be integrated into the ongoing Erasmus+ project "Senior's Learning in the Digital Society (SELID)", 2019 - 2021, with 6 European project partners.

3rd Project Group "Political Education"

This project group, which so far comprises 16 participants of the Seniorenkolleg, started in 2017 with an exchange of information on current political topics. This will be continued.

The policy group worked continuously on a written survey of the parliamentary groups ahead of the German federal elections in 2017 and the local and state elections in 2019, and prepared analyses of the local public transport system in Chemnitz. The working group developed, conducted and evaluated the surveys. The results were presented and discussed in events to the 700 participants of the Seniorenkolleg.

Two project group members with long stays and experiences in Greece prepared the event "*Griechenland aktuell*" on 23.1.2018 and designed it with PPP, videos and music contributions to draw a well-founded up-to-date picture of the political situation in Greece.

There are also references to the other project groups on Researcher-initiated Learning. These examine the provision of political support for the framework conditions for electromobility and smart homes (digitisation in the residential sector) as well as broadband supply and the promotion of further education and use of smart phones, such as the "smart phone driving licence" in Austria and the "smart phone driving licence" in Germany.

At present, after a new finding phase, municipal political topics related to the Chemnitz region are being worked on, e.g. the work of the Senior Citizens' Advisory Council of the City of Chemnitz, also in comparison to other Senior Citizens' Advisory Councils in Hof, Leipzig, etc. The current status and need for improving mobility with regard to public transport in Chemnitz is also being discussed and a joint consultation with the City Council, the city administration and the local public transport providers is being prepared.

The group members from the Seniorenkolleg are trying to win over further interested students and pupils for this intergenerational work, e.g. to prepare the planned election forum for the mayoral election in Chemnitz 2020 for older and younger people.

Furthermore they are participating in proposals for the application process for the European Capital of Culture Chemnitz 2025.

(translated from German with www.deepl.com)

The members of the UN Vienna NGO Committee on Ageing have selected three of the UN Sustainable Development Goals as of priority concern for its thematic work in 2020: SDG's 1, SDG's 3 and SDG's 4.

Each member organization represented in the CoA should submit briefly their perspective with regard to "the demand of inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities" with the goal of ensuring "Healthy lives and well-being at all stages of life".

The EFOS perspectives regarding demand for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities in order to ensure a healthy lifestyle and well-being at all stages of life.

(A brief summary)

EFOS with its delegates in the Committee on Ageing propose in the cooperation with other organisations represented in the Committee to prepare the procedure for the implementation of the goals for sustainable development, help in writing relevant documents and distribute them to the different decision makers.

EFOS as the European Federation of Older Students in Universities represents older people learning at universities and academies - the most diverse educational institutions in Europe. It guarantees the implementation of the UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development, the implementation of the European agenda for adult education and promoting the education of the elderly in EU programmes.

1. The interest of EFOS is **to emphasise the right of older people to lifelong education**. EFOS as a member of the Committee on Ageing in the UN in Vienna, not only supports the demands of those people interested in higher education, but also advocates access to education for older people as a basic right, which must be simple and affordable for everyone. Through the EFOS experts and research work the **members manifest the positive social and health impact of lifelong learning on active ageing**.

2. **European cooperation in EFOS** is insured by the regular meetings (two times a year) **and project cooperation** within the European countries. Project Erasmus+ gives new possibilities in LLL to realise voluntary work and research about and with the elderly students. The skills, abilities and knowledge of older students are used for the benefit of science and society where can be recognized their potential. EFOS project Educational

Senior Network did research with more than 4000 respondents and got two top marks of EU: Success stories; Good practices. The present project Senior's Learning in the Digital Society expects involvement of about 2000 respondents from 8 European countries focusing on the digital literacy of seniors and further education in this subject.

3. The demands of the COA are actively supported by the EFOS activities. **The members' universities conduct surveys on the study development, search for the opinions**, wishes, motivation and barriers of the students to get success. It should also be seen that an expansion of knowledge not only leads to better health and well-being, but also causes **more educated people to participate in society, economic and political life as well as participate in important decisions**.

4. **The EFOS Agenda in other points includes exchange of information to improve the living conditions of older people**, to accept demographic change and secure human rights. Matters dealt with health and care, competences of older persons, new digital technologies and ageing, suitable work and volunteering opportunities, getting old in rural and urban settings, positive environments, intergenerational dialogue and lifelong learning.

5. EFOS representatives point out the **need for more available publications about education of elderly**, lifelong learning, formal and non-formal learning, because LLL can influence the whole image of the elderly.

In order to emphasize these demands on politics, societies, universities and on the

elderly, **EFOS has written several documents focusing on lifelong learning.**

Among others:

- The EFOS- Manifesto "Older Age Education - Lifelong Learning" (sent to the policy makers since 2012)
- "Educational Senior Network" (Study among EFOS member institutions) (in 2016)
- "Education for seniors in Europe" (publication as outcome of Erasmus project in 2017)
- "EFOS News" – electronical newspaper available on the EFOS website giving news in the senior education all around Europe.
- Road Map of the European Commission about LLL (yearly updated)
- The letter to promote LLL of older adult has been sent to:
 - the European Commission; DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (last in Oct. 2018)
 - the European Parliament, Committee on Culture and Education
 - the candidates for election to the European Parliament

In order to manifest these demands, EFOS has set itself the goals and for the summary want to point out:

The creation of simplified funding procedures is necessary to support the education of the

elderly mostly managed by voluntary work in European education networks. This civic engagement in lifelong learning is needed not only for the citizens of all social classes in all societies. In this way the older generations can make a significant contribution to develop and pass on an awareness that transcends generational and national boundaries.

Lifelong learning of the elderly brings the benefit to all generations and continually supports active ageing and permanent involvement of the elderly to the public. Educated person is better prepared for the unexpected changes and tracks of their daily life.

It is in the interest of us all that EFOS permanently support learning activities linked with the goals of sustainable development to open space for lifelong learning of the elderly who want to participate in and be active in the society. This is what we are constantly, patiently and consistently committed to. This is also the goal of the EFOS representatives at the NGO Committee on Ageing in Vienna.

The information and EFOS documents are available on the website: <https://www.efos-europa.eu/>

Prepared by the members of UN Committee on Ageing on 20.03.2020:

Ingrid Dummer

PhDr. Katarína Grunwald

PhDr. Nadežda Hrapková, PhD.

Gallery of distinguished EFOS members

Dipl.-oec. Olaf Freymark



The long-standing members among us know and appreciate Olaf Freymark as Vice President and as a representative of the contact study program "Studying from 50" at the Otto-von-Guerike-University in Magdeburg, which he directed from the beginning of the 1990s until his retirement one year ago. He placed particular emphasis on a good and personal relationship with the course participants and on a variety of contacts with senior universities at national and international level.

His need for personal relationships with senior students was demonstrated, among other things, by the fact that even in the digital age, Olaf insisted that senior students register personally for courses at the office of the "Studieren ab 50". Through student representation, various working groups and projects, he also offered the senior students the opportunity to actively participate and make an independent contribution. The surveys initiated by him, together with regular and senior students and their evaluation were an essential contribution to the high quality of the senior studies. It is also thanks to Olaf that the number of participants in the "Study from 50" in Magdeburg has increased from 12 at the

beginning (1992) to over 800 participants in the winter semester 2018.

Since the 1990s, Olaf has introduced "studying from 50" into many international activities and organizations. This began with annual, later biennial meetings with the Seniorenakademie Groningen (Netherlands) and the Berlin Academy for Advanced Studies. In 1999, the hiking group "Wissend Wandern Wandernd Lernen" was founded, in which seniors from Magdeburg, Bielefeld, Groningen and Hanover (later Oldenburg) still meet for joint hikes with cultural content.

Olaf made acquaintance with EFOS during the autumn conference in Bratislava in 2002. He brought his "Studieren ab 50" at the Otto-von-Guerike-University in Magdeburg in as a member from the age of 50 on and he has remained a loyal and active conference participant. For one and a half decades, he has served as Vice President and liaison to the German Federal Association for Scientific Continuing Education for Older Persons (BAG WiWA). It is largely thanks to him that EFOS is well known in Germany.

In all four Grundtvig and Erasmus+ projects of EFOS (EFOSEC, VECU, EduSenNet and SeLiD), “Studium ab 50” has participated, with Olaf as an active and imaginative project manager. Here too, the prominent role assigned to the seniors in the execution of the projects was remarkable.

Also after his retirement Olaf has the wish to contribute ideas to the work of EFOS, so

helping the education for older adults to be more perceived internationally. At present he is working on the project: "The use of new media in old age".

Peter Hug

*Translated from German with
www.DeepL.com/Translator*

News in Brief

U3A Signpost

The World U3A Service and the U3A Forum jointly publish a monthly international news letter with interesting facts about the education for Seniors. The May 2020 issue includes references to U3A online communities, the Danube Network, u3a.online the virtual U3A online, an AIUTA art competition and an online workshop of the UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA). The newsletters can be found at <https://worldu3a.org/signpost>. You can also subscribe to them.



UN Sustainable Development Goals

Meetings of the **NGO Committee on Ageing at the United Nations** took place on 22 January and on 25 February 2020 in the UNO city in Vienna with the participation of EFOS representatives Katarina Grunwald, Ingrid Dummer and Nadežda Hrapková.

The main point on the agenda was a document with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the UN.



A discussion on suggestions for actions to achieve three specific UN SDGs (no. 1, 3 and 4) was proposed for 7 April 2020, but this meeting had to be postponed, because of COVID 19.

UIA (Union of International Associations) focuses on SDGs and offers on its website concrete information about

goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, on

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/health/>

and goal 4: Quality Education, on <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>



The Art of Living under all Circumstances

The International Association of Universities of the Third Age (AIUTA) organises an international art competition open to everybody. More information available on : www.aiu3a.org

APRIL-AUGUST
2020





**INTERNATIONAL U3A
COMPETITION**

THE ART OF LIVING UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

AIUTA (International Association of Universities of the Third Age) in cooperation with the WSTC (World Senior Teachers' Congress) is organising a major international competition for universities of the third age. Five categories of competitions are offered: **poetry, drawing / painting, creativity, singing, sport / photography**.

The grand prize winners will be invited to attend the Third WSTC 2021. There will be exhibition, performance as well as Awards Ceremony for the winners.

For more information you can contact:
 For English, French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish please contact the AIUTA office:
secretariat.aiuta@gmail.com +33561433637
 For Chinese, please contact the WSTC office: wstcchina@163.com 0535-8952006.



