

Enhancing lifelong learning through intergenerational learning



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Erasmus+

Erasmus **+60**

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... the older generation is a fountain of invaluable experience and knowledge and is the bearer of traditions. Even just caring for the older generation can bring younger generations many powerful and satisfying emotional experiences, and can also influence their values and change stereotypes.

Foreword

by Prof. Jan Borm (UVSQ), project coordinator

Intergenerational learning is one of the two principal strategies the Erasmus+ 60 project has adopted to achieve its project goals of developing toolkits and online learning offers for senior citizens. As the main methodological approach, the Croat, Czech and Hungarian partners chose to follow the project-based learning framework in order to create a horizontal learning environment where participants of all generations are equal contributors, following the motivational teaching model based on four principles: inclusion, attitude, meaning, and competence.

Three main factors may underline the importance of intergenerational learning:

- the demographic changes characterized by the aging population
- the transformation of the traditional family and its consequences
- the changes in the wider social context and notably the transition to a knowledge society

It should also be stressed that IG activities can play an important role in terms of social cohesion. Indeed, as the authors of the report point out, “the older generation is a fountain of invaluable experience and knowledge and is the bearer of traditions. Even just caring for the older generation can bring younger generations many powerful and satisfying emotional

experiences, and can also influence their values and change stereotypes.”

The three partners involved in preparing this Toolkit are unanimous in affirming that project-based learning is an excellent method for IGL implementation, highlighting notably three principles for successful implementation:

- the forming of groups according to the interests of participants
- enacting the principle of co-management to support IGL
- to create a good and encouraging learning environment/atmosphere.

The case studies from each partner provide feedback on the implementation process leading to a whole series of recommendations concerning the following aspects to be reckoned with:

- Sustainability
- Think about how to motivate participants
- Invest time in proper preparation
- Focus on creating a supportive learning environment
- Recognize and work with the potential of prior learning
- Continuous preparation for all
- Be attentive to imbalances
- Stable structure
- Make it visible

To end, useful activity tools and some suggestions based on best practices are provided, as well as descriptions of the existing practices of IGL from partners of the Erasmus+ 60 project.

May I express the project partners’ sincere thanks to all participants of these activities and the authors of this report for having drafted such a useful and stimulating document in view of developing IG activities that are no doubt destined to become an increasingly important strategy in the development of HE learning offers for senior and younger citizens.

Background

The **Erasmus+ 60 cooperation** partnership project aims to help people aged 60 or above to reach Higher Education opportunities, either through international learning opportunities or mobility and intergenerational learning, thus raising inclusion and greater cohesion in Europe. The project puts emphasis on involving this generation in the Erasmus+ program, as well.

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With the financial support of the European Commission's Erasmus+ Program, the project partners from Croatia, the Czech Republic and Hungary implemented a pilot project to test out some of the key features of **intergenerational learning**. The main objective as well as the intention of the pilot project was to provide learning opportunities to seniors from the areas where participating institutions are located and also for students from these universities.

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

The pilot project was coordinated by **Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary**. The Institute of Research on Adult Education and Knowledge Management at the Faculty of Education and Psychology was responsible for the overall content and fostered the process by providing information and guidance to partners. The Institute also has its own University of the Third Age program. Therefore, recruitment of senior participants happened through this channel, while students were selected through an open call from the Community coordination undergraduate program.

Mendel University from Brno, Czech Republic, was one of the partner institutions in the implementation of the pilot project. They operate their own very successful University of the Third Age program. The pilot project was therefore also promoted through their own channel. Student participants were recruited from different undergraduate programs of applied educational science.

The University of Split in Croatia was the third partner institution. Although the university has no previous experience in intergenerational learning activities and does not dispose of a Third Age program, it was able to recruit senior participants locally and get students involved from their undergraduate program of psychology and master's program of pedagogy.

All in all, the pilot project thus involved 40 seniors and 53 university students from these three countries.

The main objectives of the pilot project were:

- to provide learning opportunities for participants from two different generations
- to create a learning environment that engages participants meaningfully by exchanging experiences
- to provide a platform for cooperation and learning from each other
- to introduce non-formal learning methods and settings in the context of intergenerational learning.

The pilot project was built on the outcomes of the desk research on intergenerational learning conducted by **Dr. Emese Schiller (ELTE)** (2022), prior to the implementation of the pilot. The report laid the foundation for the preparatory work, as it provided guiding questions to evaluate the already existing intergenerational learning activities of our institutions (except for Croatia). It also outlined the main features and criteria to design a successful intergenerational learning activity. As the main methodological (or rather pedagogical) approach, we chose to follow the project-based learning framework and amplified it with the principles of co-management. In order to identify the results and outcomes of the pilot project, Dr. Schiller, the research lead of the pilot program, provided information, instruments and guidance to partners to collect data. Based on her suggestions, three research instruments were applied in the course of the pilot project: questionnaires with close-ended and open-ended questions well as focus-group interviews. The close-ended questionnaires were not employed in all the pilot programs. The overarching aim was to investigate participants' perceptions of the program, including their general reflection on the pilot project and their conception of the applied methods. This required a commitment beyond the application of all partners and therefore in this Toolkit, we will only touch upon some elements of this research.

Methodological background of the intergenerational learning workshops

Project-based learning

Project-based learning (PBL) has been widely used in different educational contexts (Duke et al., 2016) and has become a signature pedagogy in higher education (Stewart, 2007, Guo et al., 2020). This project is anchored in the principles of PBL, which we will briefly outline in the following:

Project-based learning has five main features (Helle et al., 2006):

- PBL focuses on the solution of a problem, as set by the participants themselves.
- PBL projects involve initiative by the participants or a group of participants and require a variety of educational activities.
- PBL activities result in an end product.
- PBL often lasts for a longer period of time.
- Teaching staff are involved in an advisory role at any or all of the stages in PBL.

Partners of the pilot project were encouraged to design their activities on the basis of PBL and were provided with a structure to organize the learning activities. The structure is aligned with a research design also so that the data collection process could be easily carried out by all the partners.

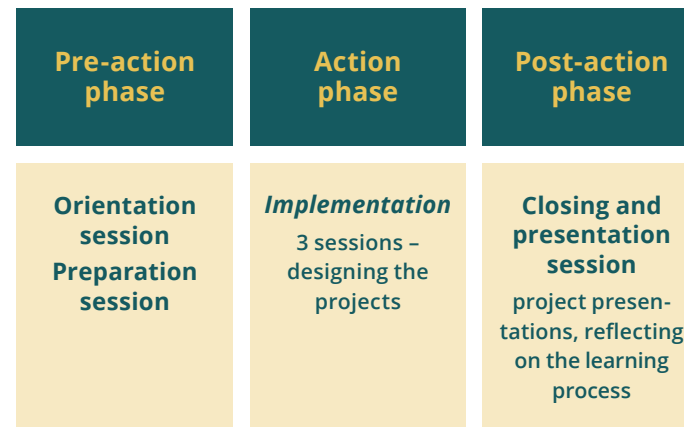


fig.1. The proposed structure of the intergenerational learning workshops

The project partners took the liberty to adapt the structure to their needs and possibilities. Through regular online meetings, experiences were shared regarding the use of PBL. This close monitoring strengthened cooperation among partners and reinforced the capacities among them in designing intergenerational learning activities.

The Principle of Co-Management

In formal education contexts, it is common to differentiate between roles and related responsibilities. The intention of the project partners was to create a horizontal learning environment where participants of all generations are equal contributors. Furthermore, the non-hierarchical atmosphere served as an overarching strategy (e.g.: calling everyone as participants, ourselves as facilitators instead of lecturers/professors, sitting in a circle etc.) to nurture the principle of co-management during the implementation of the sessions/program. By co-management it is meant that participants work together as a group and share responsibilities and tasks among themselves. There are specific conceptual angles to co-management (Carlsson & Berkes, 2005) or to learning experiences that apply this methodology (Plummer & Fitzgibbon, 2004). We can also find examples of well-established institutions: for instance, in 1972, the Council of Europe established a co-management system in the Youth Sector¹ which uses co-management principles even in the decision-making process. After evaluating and exploring different examples of the use of co-management, we employed this principle in our pilot project in the following ways:

- Participants of the program in each partner country were selected through an open call. In this call, we emphasized that the program will be co-created with the participants within a framework provided by the facilitators (e.g. number and duration of sessions, main objectives, logistics etc.).
- At the orientation session, participants were introduced to the pedagogical approaches of the program and through discussion, we reached a common understanding about how we will work together.
- During certain activities during the session (e.g. mentoring, creating project groups etc.), we encouraged participants to lead discussions.
- At the preparation session, partner institutions designed their own approaches to creating their working groups. The questionnaire before the orientation session included a question that could help facilitators to map out the interest of the participants. In a later section of this toolkit, you will find a description of an activity that builds on the principle of co-management and allows participants to experience it when creating working groups which could function as project groups.

¹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/co-management>

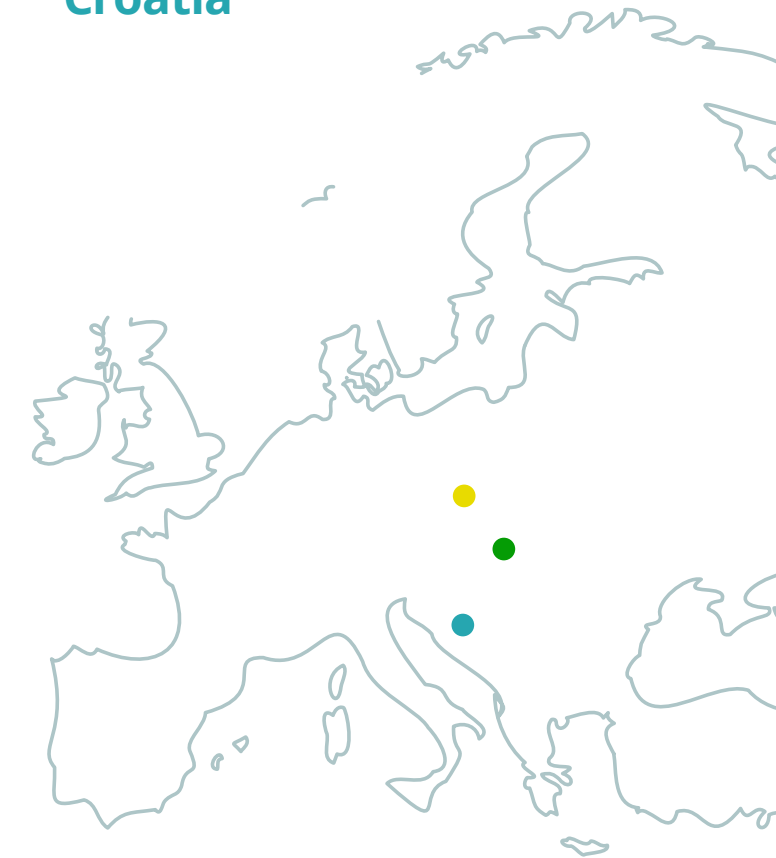
- Between the sessions, participants were given small tasks in order to enhance their sense of ownership and responsibility for their learning.
- Facilitators encouraged participants to share their experiences about how they perceive co-management but also acknowledged that the process is a pilot; therefore some of the solutions were intuitively evolving and group members had to agree to this principle.
- Continuous support was provided to participants to lower the risk of uncertainty and ambiguity which the process may cause due to its pilot nature, the uncommon experience to learn in an intergenerational context etc. For the smaller groups (functioning as project groups), we strongly advised partner institutions to organize mentoring support.
- We let participants use co-management to explore and experience its functions in practice in all phases of the pilot project, and encouraged them to reflect on how it contributes to a more engaging and active learning experience.

Case studies

The formality of the higher education (HE) context triggered the assumption in participants that lecturing and other formal learning methods would be expected (by the project faculty) in this project. Nevertheless, there was no such expectation. In fact, in this project as well, the use of non-formal learning methods in the HE context are considered acceptable, as these can be used meaningfully and efficiently with adult learners in HE (cf. Gulyás & Déri, 2022). Further, adapting the approaches of PBL and co-management in our pilot project also helped to trigger successful intergenerational learning engagement (cf. Schiller, 2022).

In the next part of the Toolkit, we outline the case-based implementation and adaptation of these approaches in different intergenerational learning activities conducted by the partner institutions. We will provide detailed descriptions and practical solutions, which may be helpful to those interested in designing and conducting IG learning activities.

Croatia



Recommendations



The pilot program has led us to draw some conclusions, which are synthesized as learning outcomes (or lessons learnt) and as a helpful list offered to colleagues who intend to implement IG activities in the HE context. Therefore, we list some suggestions that are connected with the practical aspects and some others that are more related to the framework and context.

Sustainability

In order to reach a sustainable impact with the IG activities, it's important to think in advance about what is needed to run the program on a sustained and ongoing basis. In our experience the IG activities we describe need considerable human and material resources to be continued successfully.

Think about how to motivate participants

It is necessary to find an appropriate way to motivate the participants to join the program. Although we may assume that the motivation will be intrinsic in the first place, in our experience it was not enough. For instance, in our pilot programs, we offered credits to participating students, which increased their interest to participate.

Invest time in proper preparation

It is advisable to have separate meetings with each generation group before the actual IG program starts. During this meeting, the individual participants can get to know each other and build trust, which is essential for successful implementation.



Focus on creating a supportive learning environment

Creating a friendly and supportive atmosphere is key to the ultimate success of an IG program. To this end, it is advisable to focus the initial meeting on getting to know each other and the members of the IG activities, as well as getting to know the sub-working groups. Importantly, offering more time and occasions for team-building activities at the beginning of the program can establish the base for successful cooperation in the groups.



Recognize and work with the potential of prior learning



During designing any educational activity within an IG program, participants' prior learning experiences, attitudes towards learning and cooperation should be explored, as the generations react differently to methodological approaches, which affects the effectiveness of the entire program.

Continuous preparation for all

If a mentoring system is embedded in the program, mentors and participants should be prepared for running it, the roles must be clearly described, as mentors should only help to facilitate the project development but not fully engage as extra members of the group.

Be attentive to imbalances

Cooperation in the groups must be learnt, the delicate balance of the group roles has to be maintained between the generations, constantly monitored, and, if needed, to be managed from the outside. Participants from the older generation could easily take over the leadership that is respectfully accepted by the young generation.

Stable structure



The participants should therefore accept different norms of communication within IG activities, which most of the time goes against previous habits of communication among grandparents and their grandchildren.

The program requires a clear structure that is stable and participants can plan accordingly, especially concerning the students who may need to fulfill several requirements related to their studies.

Make it visible

Although we may have all experienced learning in an IG context, such an initiative has different dynamics than learning recipes from the elderly or teaching parents to use social media. Intergenerational learning offered a unique and novel experience to our participants, which should be shared and celebrated in a wider community. We therefore recommend inviting faculty and family members and peers to the dissemination of any IG. Make sure to create promotional materials as well, as these may be used again when preparing the next program.



Activity tool

In the following part, concrete activities that were used during the implementation of the pilot project are showcased. These practical ideas may inspire facilitators and educators who experiment with IG processes and wish to integrate IG approaches in their activities.

1. Carpet of ideas

This activity is appropriate when smaller groups are needed. The smaller groups may function as working groups or project groups in a learning process, according to the project-based learning approach. The activity helps participants to start problematizing topics and questions before they actually start the cooperation. An introductory session about the characteristics of IG learning and basic team-building is needed before this activity, so **we suggest using this activity in the Pre-Action phase of recommended structure for IG learning programs.**



Objectives

- to help participants visualize the topics they are interested to work on with others
- to support the group in taking a decision about how to split into smaller groups
- to put into practice the co-management principle



Materials

- Coloured markers
- Pens to participants
- Post-its
- A4 papers (or even A3 if that's more convenient, see it in the tips)
- Music in the background



Instructions

Suggested group size: 20-25

Total duration: 60 minutes (and 30' for preparing the room and evaluation)

1. Prepare the room in a way that participants have space to be able to write (tables, or chairs with desks or hardboards) and leave enough space in the middle of the room open without chairs or tables. This space in the middle will be used as the "carpet" in the later stage. 10'
2. Ask participants to think about the interests they are willing to explore and learn about with other participants from different generations. They can think about a maximum of three ideas and they should prioritize them. For each interest, they write it on a post-it, and only the no.1 goes on a paper. 10'
3. Facilitators explain how the sharing will happen.

A volunteer from the participants starts sharing and briefly explaining it and then place it on the floor. If a participant feels her/his interest connected then comes next and places it next to the other paper. This continues until all connected interests are placed on the floor after participants can start a "new category". 20'

4. Participants can check the idea carpet once it is done. If they need further clarification they can ask. Facilitators would ask participants to choose a category in which they are really interested (not necessarily the one they wrote) and stand next to that category. 5'
5. Participants are then asked to create groups in which both generations are presented and where everyone feels content, and groups are not bigger than 5-6 pax/each. It requires them to discuss further some of the topics, to negotiate, to bring back the second-third interest they wrote on post-its. The task is finished when the groups are created and each participant feels content where she/he is. 25'



Reflection/evaluation

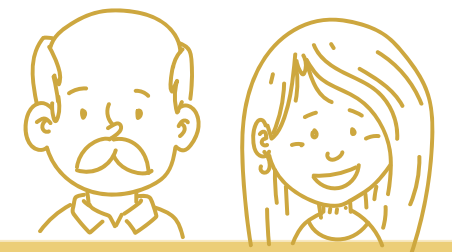
During the reflection, participants can reflect on the general process of the activity with some guiding questions:

- How did the group form the sub-groups? How was the process for you?
- Did you experience any uncomfortable situation? How did you and the group overcome it?
- What supported you in taking decisions?
- How did you ensure that everyone feels content?



Tips/Comments

It might happen that the group needs more time to discuss while creating sub-groups. The facilitators may take this into account when planning the process beforehand. We recommend using A3-sized papers so that participants can write even with bigger letters. In our experience, it helped seniors to read them more easily.



2. Fruits and vegetables

This intergenerational activity is suitable for a deeper mutual acquaintance between participants of age-diversified activities. It aims at both individual self-knowledge and mutual knowledge among participants, with particular emphasis on developing open communication, empathy and self-expression and also on revealing possible stereotypical ways of thinking and prejudices towards the age-diverse group of participants. So, **we suggest using this activity in the Pre-Action phase of recommended structure for IG learning programs**. However, this activity generally fits all phases too, depending on the objectives of the program.



Materials

- A larger number of laminated color pictures of a real specimen of fruits and vegetables.



Facilities

- A room with a sufficient number of desks (according to the number of groups) and chairs (according to the number of participants).



Instructions (step by step) with timing:

- **Start of activity** (5-10 min., all participants)
The facilitator will divide the participants into smaller groups of approximately five people (depending on the total number of participants).

The facilitator will offer one of the pictures to the participants in the form of a „fan of reversed cards“. This is done in a way that participants cannot choose a particular fruit or vegetable themselves, so the choice is random. In this way, each participant receives one fruit or vegetable card at a time. The facilitator will make sure that each participant knows the name of the fruit or vegetable from the selected picture and has some experience with it (e.g. knows its consistency, taste, how it is prepared, etc.), or, if the participant is not familiar with the selected fruit or vegetable type, the lecturer will offer the option of re-selecting.

The facilitator chooses one type of fruit and vegetable each and explains the specific procedure: the participant has to imagine what a person would be like if a particular vegetable or fruit (in the selected picture) were a person, what characteristics it would have, e.g., it is sour, sweet, is never alone, has a hard skin, squashes everything around, colors, spreads unpleasant smells around, etc.

- **First phase** (1-2 min. individually + 8-10 min. group discussion)

After the explanation, the facilitator allows all participants to reflect on their picture on their own. At the end of their reflection, they share their observations with the rest of the group. The others can complement their comments with their own thoughts on the selected picture.

- **Second phase** (10-12 min. group work)

Now the participants in the group have to put all the pictures in the middle of the desk and form an imaginary family. Thus, they need to identify the different “species” in the family (who will be the mum, dad, children - boy/girl and age, add members from the extended family such as grandma and grandpa or uncle and aunt etc.) and come up with a surname for this family. The group members must also agree in a group discussed how they think the means of communication will take place in this family (with its members having their own characteristics according to the fruit or vegetable) - who communicates with whom most often, who gets on well with whom, who gets on less well, where conflicts should be avoided, what to look out for in communication between the family members. In a joint discussion, they also emphasize who has what role in the family and what the specifics are -

who „needs to be watched out for“, who needs to be „restrained“, who will protect who, etc.

- **Third phase** (20-25 min. all participants)

Each group selects 1-3 „spokespersons“ of the group based on mutual agreement, who introduce their family to the other participants - show pictures, describe who is who and explain the possible roles of each member and their specifics, also describe the communication between them and its likely pitfalls. The participants from other groups can ask questions or add their own comments.



Reflection/evaluation

The facilitator will summarize the activity – with a focus mainly on the positive moments that led to the achievement of the activity's goal. If references to prejudices or stereotypes emerge during the activity, the facilitator can work with them appropriately in some future activities.



Tips/Comments

This activity can be varied according to the age of the participants, including school-age young participants or preschoolers. The pictures with fruit and vegetable themes can be changed to animals, plants or fairy tale characters.

Short descriptions of games and energizers

These ideas provide further suggestions on how to create an engaging and enriching learning environment with participants.

Typical examples of group warm-up activities (icebreakers and energisers)

3 facts 1 lie

participants tell three pieces of information about themselves but one of them should be a lie, the other participants try to guess which of them is the lie.

Whistle-blowing

each participant tells some new information about themselves that the others don't know, the more interesting the information is the better.

Advertisement

This is an activity in pairs (in the case of inter-generational activities this can be a pair e.g., grandmother and grandson). We give each pair ten minutes to share basic information about themselves: name, age, family information, interests, schools/jobs. At the end of the ten minutes, the pairs will be given another ten minutes to visually represent the information on paper. The senior

then visually represents the information about the student and vice versa. Then, everyone presents their artwork and comments.

Names

The participants stick a masking tape on a visible place on their arm, then everyone moves and asks questions to each other about what they're interested to find out about one another. After each person answers, the questioner can write one letter of their name on the prepared „tape“, the activity ends when all participants have their full names on their stickers or the nickname they wish to be addressed by.

Typical examples of activities that help to divide the participants into groups

Colors

the participants have to make a rainbow according to the colors of their T-shirt and the number of participants (the rainbow) is divided by the facilitator into the required number of groups.

Candy

the facilitator will prepare different coloured candies in a bag, and each participant will take out one candy. The participants then group themselves according to the color of the candy.

Fairy tale characters

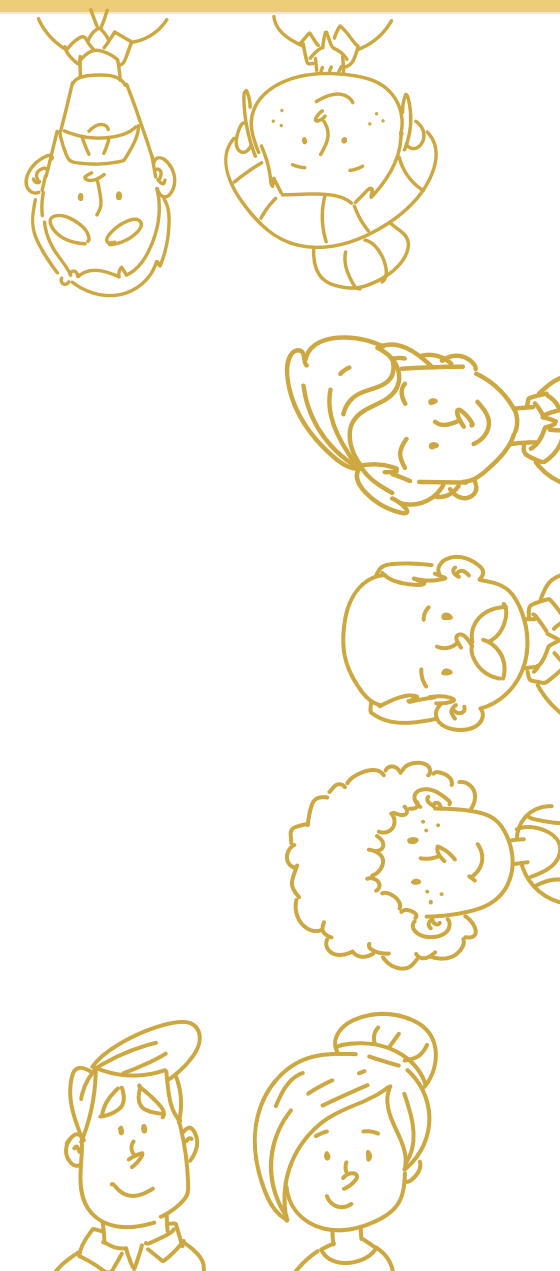
the lecturer prepares the names of a fairy tale or movie characters, writes each of them on a separate paper and folds them. Participants draw a paper, unfold it and look for a fairy tale or movie character according to the connection or link.

Pictures

the facilitator prepares various pictures in advance, e.g., from newspapers, magazines, postcards, etc., each participant then randomly chooses a picture, and the group is then formed by those who have the same element in the picture (e.g., inanimate object, sport, etc.). The activity also encourages communication between participants.

Molecules

the facilitator calls: molecules in groups of two, the participants must randomly and as quickly as possible form groups of two, then the lecturer asks a question, e.g., what did you have for breakfast and the participants answer in groups, then the lecturer calls molecules in groups of 3, etc. until there is the desired number of groups of participants, this activity can also serve to initiate communication between the participants and also to improve their mutual understanding, which the lecturer stimulates with well-chosen questions.



Exemplary practices

Third Age Universities & IG programs at partner institutions of the Erasmus+ 60 project

MENDELU Intergenerational University Czech Republic

The main impetus and driving force for the creation of IIG programmes was the demographic situation in the countries of the so-called Western world, which is leading to a relatively rapid aging of the population and the related need for social solidarity. Furthermore, it is also the transformation of the traditional family, characterized by its high degree of individualisation and the variability of its forms. Related to these phenomena was and is the significant need to promote relationships or bonds between family members across generations with the aim of deeper mutual understanding, tolerance and solidarity. These impulses challenged us to create the MENDELU Intergenerational University in 2019.

The MENDELU Intergenerational University promotes positive intergenerational family ties between the oldest and youngest generations (grandparents and their grandchildren) through the implementation of two intergenerational programmes as well as the Holiday Intergenerational University. With conducting the intergenerational activities, we want to achieve the following benefits for both target groups (grandparents

and their grandchildren) in particular: joint meaningful leisure time of both generations, sharing of knowledge and skills between generations supported by the implementation of the programme on the university campus, increased understanding between both generations, strengthening of mutual and family ties, promotion of active aging and intergenerational cooperation, development of social and human capital.

The IG programmes are divided into six meetings, which usually take place during the teaching period of each semester (October to December and March to May), once a month, on Saturdays, for five lessons. The programs are not overlapping; the only difference is in the thematic focus of each meeting. The implementation of two intergenerational programs has proved to be appropriate for a number of reasons - we have responded to the requests of the graduates of previous intergenerational programs who want to continue with the activities, while at the same time expanding the range of topics we cover towards a more diverse offer so that grandparents and grandchildren can choose the focus that suits them best. In addition, the Holiday Intergenerational University consists of three sessions on three consecutive days, each with a time allocation of five lessons.

Intergenerational activities are implemented in the form of a series of field trips, which are a traditional form of teaching at MENDELU. The proposed field trips and their locations are based on the potential of MENDELU in professional, technical and personnel areas. The field trips appear to be effective in terms of methodological and didactic aspects in relation to the target groups and their specificities.

The lecturers of the field trips are experts from the academic staff of MENDELU. An assistant lecturer is present at each field trip due to the difficulty of methodological work with diverse target groups. Teaching materials in the form of study texts and especially worksheets are prepared for each field trip.

Intergenerational activities are perceived very positively by the participants (as evidenced by ongoing verbal feedback from participants as well as from evaluation questionnaires that regularly assess the feedback on intergenerational programmes). The participants from both generations especially appreciate the opportunity to spend time together, to get to know each other from a different perspective and in different types of activities than they are used to from family interactions. The benefit for the middle generation, i.e., the parental generation, is not overlooked. The latter mentions, in particular, the satisfaction of good family ties, of generations coming together.



Supporting the active engagement of the elderly generation with the University of Third Age ELTE, Hungary

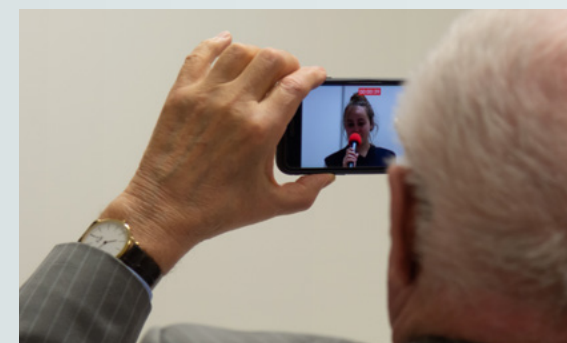
Learning in later life is not only a necessary component of lifelong learning but also an important aspect of building a learning society, a mission in which universities have to take responsibility. Along with the very successful lectures on the University of the Third Age held by Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest), the Institute of Research on Adult Education and Knowledge Management decided to develop a series of seminars that provide more active and participatory learning opportunities for the elderly people (Wlodkowski, 2008), many of whom are retired. The seminars with interactive methods in small groups provided opportunities for the participants to explore a topic in depth.

The pilot program was launched in Fall 2015/2016 and lasted until Fall 2017/2018, and consisted of biweekly meetings for 10 weeks per semester. The courses were held firstly by student teachers, whose activity was considered as teaching practice in their andragogy teacher education. Later on, doctoral students were taking teaching roles, with which this program offered the possibility to prepare them professionally for their academic teaching roles. The topics of the courses were diverse, in which the expectations of the participants and the expertise of the teacher were usually met. Some of the titles of the courses: Women in history,

Illusions and misconceptions in the 20th century of Hungarian history, Media curiosities in the 19th-20th century, Supporting digital learning, Healthy soul in healthy body etc. During these two years, more than 100 participants from the old generation were involved in the program.

Two benefits of this activity emerged: (1) the continuous support of positive adult development through engaging older people in active learning, and (2) the professional learning processes of those doctoral students who lead these seminars on various topics. We summarize the outcomes of the program based on these two approaches: the older learner and the teacher, as learners.

Engaging the participants with active learning methods and different topics could have the effect of fostering their well-being, as they perceive themselves as more competent and more socially integrated and supported. During the second year of the program, research was carried out with the aim of revealing the participants' learning outcomes. The chosen method for the research was a focus group interview as this way groups could form their opinions together, reflecting on each other's responses, slightly representing the social processes and the group dynamics of a seminar. The target population of the research were the participants of the 2016/17/1 and 2016/17/2 semesters' seminars, which means 65 people. 19 learners agreed to take part in the research, resulting in 5 focus group interviews altogether. The structure of the interview had been



created on the basis of the Wlodkowski model (2008), so 2-3 questions were raised for each of the four motivational conditions Wlodkowski defined (inclusion, attitude, meaning and competence).

The participants shared their positive feelings of connectedness, and openness supported by a social climate where mutual understanding and acceptance became essential features of the group functioning. „The teacher made a really good group cohesion and also connected the group members both cognitively and emotionally, so we became very open to each other.” They also highlighted the importance of listening to others' ideas and different opinions which supported the development of mutual respect and a feeling of equality in the learning group. The participants agreed that they had not noticed any difficulties caused by the uncommon roles of young teachers and old students.

We inquired about the attitude aspect of motivation asking the interviewees only about their favourite topics contacted during the seminars as their learning efficacy was discussed elsewhere in the competence part. All participants stated that their choice of the seminars was driven by their interest, therefore most of the topics were interesting. “Every topic could be named interesting from different viewpoints”. “There were some harder topics but the teacher made an effort to present them interestingly.” “I thought I knew everything about something and then it turned out that the reality was totally different.” “Our positive approach was very much determined by the teacher's personality.” As previously

mentioned, the participants had a positive approach and expectation toward the teacher even though he/she was much younger.

We asked the participants about those learning activities that meant a true challenge, or which they enjoyed most and also about their suggestions about other methods that could be involved. The responses reveal the participants' real need for active engagement in learning activities, and a serious demand for the deep elaboration of the theoretical knowledge they acquired during classes. "We were absolutely active; we spoke even when it wasn't allowed. We had the chance to be active so we used the opportunity to speak. For this reason, I think it would have been good to have more time." "Yes, we have discussed that the presentations were very good for structuring our previous knowledge. But we would have liked to participate in more interactive exercises...". Their reflection on learning experiences and learning efficacy come to the fore as well highlighting the importance they attribute to their learning process. "I experienced that I can remember and learn more effectively if I approach it from different viewpoints."

As the participants revealed in focus group interviews the seminars developed positive attitudes toward learning at this later stage of life too, supported the understating and acceptance of different points of view and helped to work with different preconceptions related to the elaborated topics. These regularly held mental and social activities could increase the active

involvement and social sensitivity of elderly people in our society as well.

The pilot project also had a significant impact on the young generation of academic staff who held these seminars, by bringing closer the characteristics of learning needs and modes of the older learners. Involving doctoral students in the program had two basic aims: to enrich the topics from other disciplines by integrating new professionals in the project and to offer a safe environment for the professional development of new academics in their teaching role. The teaching practice was supported with peer learning processes: classroom observations, peer feedback and regular meetings for preparation and reflections.

Although the focus of the program was rather offering active learning opportunities for the older generation, involving the young generation in the processes as teachers we created an intergenerational context for mutual learning that resulted in interesting and positive learning experiences for both generations.

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Mais ativos, Mais vivos Portugal

"Mais ativos, Mais vivos" is a 25-year-old exercise program developed by The Research Centre in Physical Activity, Health and Leisure (CIAFEL) of the University of Porto. This project provides a progressive, adapted regular exercise program to older adults and promotes benefits to their general health and well-being. It also encourages intergenerational relationships since the sessions are conducted by university students (undergraduate, master, PhD) under supervision.

More than 500 older participants and 150 students have been enrolled throughout the years, and several exercise subprograms have been developed for community-dwelling, frail people living in nursing homes, people with dementia, and "combined grandchildren and grandparents".

This project addresses two core pillars: Physical inactivity and social networking through regular exercise sessions (2-5 times per week for 50 min). These group sessions have shown a positive impact on health (i.e., functionality, physical fitness, cardiovascular and bone health, cognitive function, etc.) while promoting social connectedness between older adults and young adults. Moreover, it establishes a relevant link between the university and the social institutions and raises awareness among future exercise professionals about aging as a social challenge.

This intervention benefits both generations. On the one hand, older adults can share their valuable knowledge, inspire, and motivate younger generations, having a positive impact on their life trajectory; on the other hand, students are essential to provide insightful perspectives about the rapidly evolving society to older adults and to keep them motivated to adopt healthier lifestyles.

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