

**ПЕДАГОШКИ ФАКУЛТЕТ У ВРАЊУ
УНИВЕРЗИТЕТА У НИШУ**



**УНАПРЕЂИВАЊЕ КВАЛИТЕТА
ОБРАЗОВНОГ ПРОЦЕСА
О СТАРОСТИ И СТАРИЈИМА**

ТЕМАТСКИ ЗБОРНИК



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DEVELOPING CURRICULUM FOR PEOPLE OF THIRD AGE

Abstract: *With the economic development of the modern world grows the average of human life which leads to a rapid expansion of the total population size. The idea of active aging is usually connected with three crucial, existential areas of the older man: family, health and material situation. Also, functioning seniors in society in relation to other demographic groups needs social engagement because often, the process of growing older can lead people to loneliness and isolation. One way to struggle against these obstacles is through senior education programs. Life-long learning for active and fulfilled life in the third age, can remedy that problem. Thus such senior education programs can provide a way to fight social isolation. Taking classes for senior citizens, particularly at local colleges, brings older people into respectful interaction with all sorts of interesting people. This paper focuses on the open questions in the area of senior issues in society. Macedonian context is understood.*

Key words: *curriculum, third age, life long learning, active aging.*

Introduction

Aging is a biological phenomenon characterized by gradual loss of the physical and intellectual capacities of man. With the economic development of the modern world grows the average of human life which leads to a rapid expansion of the total population size. The process of demographic aging and demographic transition, started from World War II onwards, it seems that more and more changes the natural flows of renewal of the population. With this, the aging of the population is imposed as a specific theme throughout the world, to which the social sciences are attached to an increasing amount of space and significance. Although demographic aging is felt mostly in the most developed countries, it began to be strong in a short time burdens both medium-developed and even underdeveloped countries in the world.

Data from World Bank and recent analyzes show significantly fast growth of a number of the oldest part of society. Worldwide, the proportion of people age 60 and over is growing faster than any other age group. Between 1970 and 2025, a growth in older persons of some 694 million or 223 percent is expected. In 2025, there will be a total of about 1.2 billion people over the age of 60. By 2050 there will be 2 billion with 80 percent of them living in developing countries.

The aging process is associated with a range of social, health, economic, legal, and ethical issues that intertwine among themselves. Nowadays, the perception of third age is usually determined by the social status, level of education, and the available financial resources of third-age individuals. Also, the position

of the older population in the social space is characterized by limited access to information due to the dominance of electronic media. At the same time, younger generations acquire more information via web browsers than with real contact with the elderly (Tomczyk & Klimczuk, 2015).

In this context, the term “lifelong learning” is essential for educational issues in the gerontology. Lifelong learning goals for the elderly are often changed and redefined in line with the development of the society. Therefore, the creators of educational policies are constantly searching for optimal teaching and mentoring practices in order to successfully meet the learning needs of the third-age individuals. Many third-age individuals are interested in learning something they always wanted to learn or to do, but they never had time to do it. Some want to learn something new simply because of the joy deriving from learning, others because of the social contacts they make with other people etc. The importance of lifelong learning needs to ensure that all older people have opportunities to learn on equal terms and in appropriate ways and that their skills, knowledge and abilities should be used, valued and widely recognised both locally and internationally.

The National Strategy for the Elderly of the Republic of Macedonia is a basic document identifying the priority areas and tasks for action in order to improve the quality and quantity of living of the elderly. According to this document, the aging of the population, in itself, imposes a number of new qualitative and quantitative health, economic and social problems. Aging affects the economic growth of a country, on saving, investment, production, pensions, labor, inter-generation transfers and taxes, as well as family structure, life expectancy, migration trends, household demand, health care and epidemiology.

Some macedonian educational institutions have included in the project activities within the European educational program "Grundwig". "Grundwig" pays special attention to people with specific educational needs, helps in developing innovative approaches in adult education, and provides resources for institutional strengthening of institutions which have to develop curricula for adult education.

Active Aging and Older Adult Education

*Live as if you were to die tomorrow,
learn as if you were to live forever.*
(Mahatma Gandhi)

According to many philosophical traditions, across the history, aging is considered as a last stage of the human life, i.e. as a natural illness (Aristotle, Seneca). By contrast, a lot of philosophical theories also, have emphasized a positive view of aging, starting from antiquity (Plato and Cicero) until to nowadays (Gandhi and Juengst). As is well known, the human being is a bio-psycho-cultural entity and because of that he or she have a need not only of biomedical conditions, but also of sociocultural ones. In this line, old age is considered as a phase of the human life which allows people to live in harmony with the world using the previously gained knowledge.

Active aging is a term used to describe the maintenance of positive subjective well-being, good physical, social and mental health and continued involvement in one's family, peer group and community throughout the aging process. It is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age". According to the experts, nowadays, there are two aspects of social policy related to the aging of the population. It is a policy for older people and towards old age. The first includes more short-term goals and it focused on the elderly. The second one refers to activities aimed at changing the image of the old age period by which its goals are long-term. Both aspects of aging policy can be implemented together at the national, regional, and local level with participation of public entities, commercial entities, and governmental entities. Moreover, contemporary, there are at least three different paradigms of the aging policy: productive aging, active aging, and creative aging. The paradigm of active aging is crucial at the beginning of the 21st century and crucial in relation to the implementation of international agreements. It is also reflected in the guidelines for institutions that are oriented to age-friendly activities for all age groups (Tomczyk & Klimczuk, 2015). The active ageing approach provides a framework for the development of global, national and local strategies on population ageing. By pulling together the three pillars for action of health, participation and security, it offers a platform for consensus building that addresses the concerns of multiple sectors in the society. The challenges of active aging brings together academics working throughout Europe from different disciplines including law, health care, industrial relations, human resource management and occupational psychology to explore and debate the challenges of the active aging agenda for equality law and management practice (Manfredi & Vickers, 2016). At the same time, the European Commission by identifying healthy and active aging as one of the major challenges common to all European countries, and potential area for Europe to provide innovative responses gave life to the European Innovation Partnership on Active Aging. The partnership has the purpose to make EU citizens able to remain healthy, active and independent while aging to improve the efficiency and sustainability of health and social care system and to increase the average healthy lifespan by two years by 2020 (Riva et al., 2014).

In this line, besides the institutional frame and the workplace context in which retirement decisions are made, individual characteristics are important. First of all, "awareness of the importance of the phenomenon of aging will influence the intensity with which politicians (who may fear rising financial viability problems for public pension insurance) and employers (who may fear a shortage of qualified labor) address the issue of promoting longer working life" (Konig et al., 2016, p. 39). In addition, the implementation and specific shaping of active aging measures themselves may depend on the level of individual qualifications as well as the degree to which individual health allows older workers to make use of such measures.

With the growing number of older adults becoming a global concern, many countries have focused on education as a means of promoting successful aging: "no one is too old to learn", "those who want to learn can learn", and "the

learners have healthier longer lives”. In fact, older adult education or lifelong learning is a philosophy of maintaining an active mind and youthful spirit through continuous interaction with peers and experts in all fields of interest. The subjects taught and learnt in the curriculum for people of third age should result entirely from the choice of the learners. There are no exams and no homework, just regular lessons or study groups. It’s learning for fun, not with the aim of gaining qualifications. Older people search for a renewed purpose to life and spend time undertaking activities that they consider motivating, such as the learning of a foreign language (Gabrys-Barker, 2017). Also, most important idea in the modern gerontology is that technology can transform everyday life and social relationships in shaping the lives of older people in contemporary society (Sixsmith, 2013). Recent studies concluded that digital technologies enhanced the social inclusion of older adults, empowered older adults with health-related knowledge, social networks, and increased independence, as well as improved chronic disease self-management. Subjects can cover different topics, for instance healthy aging, culture, humanities, economics, basic sciences and arts. Lessons can be offered by using of different methodologies like study groups, lectures, mini courses, reading events, intergenerational activities, cultural trips, evening with experts, special interest groups and book clubs.

Table: *Possible Educational Activities for Older People*

Crafts	Arts	Science
sewing	singing and dancing	computers / IT
knitting	music making	nutritionism
embroidery	painting	languages
ceramics	creative writing	astrology
jewelry making	carving	philosophy
rug making	photography	literature
soft-toy making	floral art / gardening	history

In this context, would be necessary to define precisely the purposes of adult education, content of curricula, teacher-learner relationships and methods of teaching (Bowl, 2017). Also, according to the anthropological point of view, “life course narratives pieced together from culturally situated experiences of transition and transformation provide new perspectives on the nature of self and society. Research informed by these perspectives will profoundly alter the ways anthropologists and others think about the category of old age, placing it within the everyday processes of power, nurturance, conflict, and innovation. Focusing on aging and the life course allows anthropologists to unpack the temporal dimensions of cultural practice, the ways people reflect on their pasts and imagine their futures” (Lynch & Danely, 2013: 18)

University of Third Age – Skopje

“University of the Third Age” – Skopje is a civic organisation offering all kinds of educational, creative and leisure activities to anyone who is no longer in full-time, gainful employment. Members organise their own activities and use their skill and knowledge to form self-help groups. Retired people of any age may join. No qualifications are required and none are awarded. The University was established in 1999 by the Center for Permanent Education and Social Development at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje and by the Association of retired teachers in Macedonia. Regular lectures are held at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje every Friday, starting at 17:00 p.m. All courses and lectures are free for the members of the “University of Third Age” – Skopje. There is small yearly fee in a form of membership. The lecturers are professors from the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje, retired professors and other professionals members of the University and guests.

The University curricula include the following courses: Computers/IT Courses, Art Courses, English Language Courses and Recreational Tourism. Also, the University participates in the many projects in the framework of European programmes. The regional project *Taking Action for Social Inclusion of the Elderly* is financially supported by the European Union, the Austrian Red Cross and the Austrian Development Agency. Project partners from the Republic of Macedonia are the Red Cross of the Republic of Macedonia and the Humanitarian Association “Network Inside” from Skopje. The project aims to creatively train and educate the elderly for a greater social inclusion in the community's activities. Through the activities of this project, developed is curriculum for people of third age. The project participants gained an ability to be more motivated and creative, to be able to engage themselves in a creative leisure time, and to feel more fulfilled and satisfied. Also, they will increase the knowledge for an improving of their health, i.e. how to better care about their own health, and improve the quality of their diet by knowing the ways and types of healthy foods. The results of the project are expected: 200 elderly people will acquire knowledge and develop their own skills and talents for: art (musical and artistic achievement), gardening, healthy food, physical exercises, psychology of success for third-year people and cetera. They will all acquire the training and development of creative abilities for more active and creative community involvement. Thus 200 elderly people (at lectures) have been informed and educated to expand their skills in the areas that have been listed. This would contribute to their active and creative involvement in the society. Through the workshops they were educated by experts from the respective fields. At the end of the project, a final event was organized, on which the best performances in all areas were promoted. Each participant could vote for the best achievement and each participant in the workshops received a certificate for attendance. An exhibition of the successful works of the participants in the artistic creativity workshops was organized in the Art Salon at the House of Builders in Skopje.

The project activities were realized through the following workshops and lectures:

- workshop for healthy food
- handicrafts workshop
- workshop for artistic expression and visual arts
- poetry workshop
- lectures on the topic of healthy food in the third age
- lectures on the topic of social inclusion of people of the third age
- lectures on art and creativity in the third age
- lectures on the topic of mental health and intellectual capacities in the third age.

The main goals of the Association are: to encourage adults to help each other, to acquire and share knowledge, skills, experiences, to discover new horizons through the lifelong learning, to encourage the satisfaction and benefits of re-activation and engagement, and to use the capacities and potentials of older people and their value for development of the society. The Association works exclusively on a voluntary basis and relies on the efforts of its members to create an ambience of cooperation, socializing, learning and sharing experiences with people who want through lifelong learning to create opportunities for active and dignified life in the third age.

Lifelong learning for active and worthy life in the third age, through the forms of acting at the University "Third Age" – Skopje, has been confirmed as a very suitable form of action for the people of this age, as a positive social trend for a replacement of passivity and depression with active and dignified life in the third age.

Conclusion

It is a primordial desire for every person to successfully pass life in the childhood, active working life, happily to retire, and then to sail into the quiet waters of life in the third age. The old human wisdom that the man learn while he is alive, now is decanted into paradigm “lifelong learning” – a new driving force of the modern world. Active life and lifelong learning are a culture of living, which shapes the personality, strengthens self-confidence, makes people spiritually and morally stronger and more resistant, and, finally, improves the physical and mental health. The experts in the field of gerontology claim that “linkages established between lifetime friends and lifetime "partners" overshadow previously privileged vertical forms of social capital based upon "family" and the spatially secured bonds of intergenerational solidarity. This does not mean that there are non exchanges between the generations; there is, of course, but it has become less salient source of cultural capital. This, in brief, outlines the principal forms of capital that maintain the logic of the Third Age – consumption, leisure, and life-style exercised within chosen social networks that are no longer constrained in time or place” (Dawn & Komp, 2011: 43).

In this context, we can conclude that future policies of the modern society and the educational institutions should be directed in particular to: reducing the risks associated with senior isolation and loneliness, digitalizing adult learning and establishing an inclusive membership at the universities of third age.

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Валентина Гулевска

РАЗВИВАЊЕ НА КУРИКУЛУМ ЗА ЛИЦА ОД ТРЕТО ДОБА

Резиме: Со економскиот развој на современиот свет расте и просекот на човечкиот живот што води кон брзо зголемување на вкупниот број на населението. Идејата за активно стареење обично е поврзана со три клучни, егзистенцијални сфери од животот на стариот човек: семејството, здравјето и материјалната состојба. Исто така, постарите лица во општеството, во однос на другите демографски групи, имаат потреба од социјален ангажман, бидејќи честопати процесот на стареење може да ги одведе луѓето во осаме-

ност и изолација. Еден од начините за борба со овие препреки е преку програмите за образование на лица од трето доба. Доживотното учење за активен и исполнет живот во третото доба може да го реши овој проблем. Така, ваквите програми за образование на лицата од трето доба можат да обезбедат соодветна борба против социјалната изолација. Посетувањето на часови за лица од трето доба, особено на локалните високообразовни институции, ги става постарите лица во почитувана интеракција со сите видови на интересни луѓе. Овој труд се фокусира на отворените прашања од областа на социјалните проблеми на постарите лица. Македонскиот контекст се подразбира.

Клучни зборови: *курикулум, трето доба, доживотно учење, активно стареење.*