

RECCOMENDATION FOR EDUCATORS

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The first suggestion proposed by the trainees **was to recruit candidates with regard to age and skills**. The age range turned out to be large, as well as the scope of knowledge. The addressees of the project, who had not previously dealt with new technologies, felt some fears that they would not be able to carry out tasks at a level similar to that of the other members of the course. Some said they felt uncomfortable not being able to keep up with their colleagues. The difficulty resulted mainly from the lack of familiarity with computer equipment (using a computer mouse, keyboard, etc.). To a large extent, this was related to the age of the participants - the older ones had more difficulty in understanding the tasks and performing them. One of the interviewees (MC, 71, TR) suggested that work in pairs should be organized according to age. In this way, seniors could solve the problems together.

The organisation of group activities can be taken as another guideline for educators. Interlocutors positively assessed this form of meetings. They stated that classes conducted in a wider group have greater potential, both social and social. Educators then have the opportunity to propose different methods and techniques, and each of the participants can choose the appropriate style of work, adequate to their own preferences. However, it is worth making sure that the groups are not too numerous, as the activity of individual course members decreases in the larger group and the interest in the subject decreases (Gibson, Burnside, 2005).

Group classes also make it possible to consult one's own doubts with other participants, which contributes to strengthening social bonds, while relieving the strain on trainers. One of the participants noticed that the motivation to work increases in the group. Looking at the achievements of colleagues, there is a willingness to overcome one's own weaknesses and constantly raise the bar. However, it is important to apply the so-called individualization in the group. Seniors admitted that despite the high potential of group work, they would not like to feel anonymous or ignored by educators. Therefore, a proposal was made to flexibly adapt the curriculum to the individual needs of the participants. This guidance can be combined with literature. Alina Gil and Pilar Escuder Mollon (2014) also emphasize that the key element of older people's education is to adapt forms of learning to the level of activity and motivation of individual individuals.

Seniors unanimously **agreed that as many young educators as possible should be involved** in the implementation of the projects, who will be able to provide support on an ongoing basis. Thanks to this, the participants will be able to consult the encountered problems at any time. It is important that people who use computers and mobile phones on a daily basis should take part in the projects. This will definitely improve the quality of the classes. Intergenerational cooperation may contribute to shaping positive relations between the generations and go beyond stereotypes and prevent social exclusion.

As a guideline, it was also suggested that **technical classes should be conducted more often**. As mentioned earlier, the level of knowledge and skills before the course was diversified. Technical classes can be used to equalize the level of the group and to fill in the missing information. It is worth noting that such classes are better remembered and more strongly involve the group. Understanding how to use a smartphone would be easier if educators made a technical demonstration (Kilian, 2014). These are important skills that often form the basis of modern life.

An important category indicated by seniors is **conducting classes in the morning**. Some claimed that working in the afternoon is inefficient. One of the participants admitted that during the classes she felt very tired, which had an impact not only on the quality of the tasks performed but also on her mood. Moreover, in the evenings the students have more responsibilities and often have to give up other activities in favour of training. Such a proposal may also result from the way of life led by older people (getting up early in the morning, fatigue in the evening).

During the focus interview, the seniors involved in the Learning Tree project proposed **the creation of a "difficulty catalogue"**. The idea was born from asking the same questions frequently. The participants noticed that certain activities were more difficult for them and therefore needed more support from the educators. Listing the most common problems could make it easier for seniors to work and relieve the strain on trainers. On the basis of the interviews, it can be argued that the difficulties encountered are similar among participants from all Member States and that the handbook could, therefore, be of a universal nature.

In order to facilitate work, it would be useful to **use a contracting method** whereby both participants and educators exchange views on their expectations and on the course of their activities. Some 'gentlemen's agreements' between the two parties may increase the efficiency of the activities. Such a form may prove to be an effective way of motivating

participants to express regular opinions about their participation in the project. During the first meetings, it is necessary to familiarize all participants with clearly defined rules of work and rules of functioning in the group (Kiljan, 2014).

It is worth noting that participation in classes for seniors is not only a desire to gain knowledge but also **an opportunity to take care of their image**. Older people, involved in the project, paid a lot of attention to their appearance. They took great care of every detail that affected their image. One could observe that the participants required the same from the trainers. They felt good when the educators were dressed neatly and elegantly. Similar conclusions were drawn from a study on the participation of seniors in cultural events. The research was conducted in 2012 among adults (50+) living in 35 Polish towns and cities. The members of the research from a few years ago, like the senior citizens of the Learning Tree project, stressed that the atmosphere of cultural events was a very important aspect for them - their festive character and the need to prepare beforehand, for example in terms of taking care of an elegant appearance. In this way, many senior citizens emphasize the importance of "breaking away" from the prose of everyday life (Sójka et al., 2012).

Another postulate expressed during focus interviews with seniors was that the educational activities should be longer so that it would be possible **to practice new skills thoroughly**. It also turns out to be important that the new skills are consolidated by a greater number of exercises in classes. This is important because learning requires repetition, and in older people, this is even more necessary because of the lower cognitive capacity. In the education of older people, it is also important that they develop their own knowledge in accordance with the Kolba cycle, starting from experience, through reflection, generalisation and ultimately application (Kolb, 1984).

It also follows from the statements of the workshop participants that it would be worthwhile **to introduce them to the topics that will be discussed during the classes** (Kilian, 2015). It turned out that seniors had a need for this information. This was not due to the fact that they want to prepare for the next classes, but rather to have a sense of security, which will provide them with knowledge about what will be realized during the next classes.

For effective learning, and this is what it is all about, it is undoubtedly important to have **the right motivation**. For older people, the usefulness of the knowledge they are able to acquire in class is particularly important when learning with new technologies (Knowles et al. 2009). In order to inspire motivation to learn among workshop participants, according to the

theory of physical, psychological and social ageing (Halicki, 2006), it is necessary to, first of all, satisfy the necessary needs of participants. Educators have no influence on the physical and mental wellbeing of the participants, their concentration on a given day, etc. They have no influence on the physical and mental well-being of the participants. However, they have an influence on when and where the workshops take place. It is also important that the temperature is appropriate (air-conditioned/heated room), breaks are long enough depending on the needs. It is also worth taking care of an appropriate atmosphere during the workshops, which will guarantee the satisfaction of the need for the safety of participants in the classes.

On the one hand, **participants postulate that educators should devote more attention to them during classes**, help, support, and on the other hand, **they expect to give them a chance to independently reach** the essence of the programs they are learning to use. It is worth observing the progress of participants carefully and giving them the opportunity to learn independently (Kilian, 2015). At the same time, one should be vigilant that such an attitude does not make them feel neglected when educators devote their attention to people who do not do well.

It is worth mentioning here the **importance of the atmosphere prevailing during the classes**. It is important to take care of the kindness of the educators towards the participants but also to ensure that seniors themselves take care to build mutual relations among other participants. Thanks to this, new acquaintances will be established, it will help to maintain a good atmosphere and encourage the willingness to help other participants when the educators will be busy helping others. At the same time, educators should remain vigilant and careful not to neglect people who appear to be independent, and in fact may also require support, when supporting those who require it.

At the same time, the workshop participants expressed **the need to continue the activities**, because the knowledge they gained during the project is valuable to them and only awakened their need to acquire knowledge about genealogy and looking for their ancestors, as well as to build their family history. Therefore, it would be worthwhile **after the project activities to inform the participants about the places where they could do further research on genealogy on their own and about the people who could help them**.

Focus interviews with the course participants revealed the **need to repeat the content of the classes in a nutshell**, so as to recall the topics of each class. This was pointed out, among others, by Alicja (64, PL). At the beginning of the following classes, it would be good

to remind what was the subject of the previous lesson or to add one more day as a summary of the acquired knowledge. This would allow one more chance to the participants who, for various reasons, could not be present at a given lesson to learn what was discussed during the previous lesson, and the others to remember what they had learned.

It is also a suggestion for educators to **present their own family trees and their own ways of searching for ancestors and build their family histories**. Thanks to this, the participants, despite the difficulties they encounter when searching for information about their roots will be motivated to overcome them and continue their work.

On the part of the participants, there was also a **proposal to recommend homework** after classes i.e. exercises to be done at home, which would allow consolidating the skills acquired earlier. Here it would be helpful to use after-school materials containing the most important points of each lesson, which would allow the most important points to be remembered and which would be helpful during the additional exercises to be done at home.

Another issue raised is; **the equipment on which the participants work in the classroom**. It should be efficient and have constant access to the Internet. Efforts should be made to avoid breakdowns and interruptions in Internet access, etc. The best situation would be for a person to be present at the classroom who would help to correct any malfunctions related to the operation of the equipment on an ongoing basis.

It is also reasonable for a person to use the same equipment during the cycle of classes. This is particularly important for people who are not fluent in computer skills. For those who are proficient in operating the equipment, changes will not be a problem. However, for older people who are just learning and most likely, if at all, used only their own computer, it is worth making sure that they use the same equipment throughout the whole cycle. It would be best if they could work on their own computer if they have one.

It is also worth making sure **that classes are held in one place**. It would be best if the participants did not devote their time and attention to searching for a workshop place immediately before the classes. The most advantageous situation would be if the whole cycle of classes was held in one place. Thanks to this, the participants would not be late for classes and would avoid unnecessary stress associated with difficulties in reaching the right place.

The trainers also shared their suggestions on how to carry out further projects. They admitted that it is worth paying attention to the **characteristics of older people's educators**.

It is very important that they should be patient people who can solve problems and share knowledge with peace and composure. Seniors admitted that they value educators who are willing to help. Therefore, it is important to observe the needs of participants so that they feel satisfied at any time with the form of cooperation and relationship with the trainers. Participants like to feel support and willingness to act from younger teachers.

The last issue to be addressed when it comes to guidance for educators is **to ensure the confidentiality of certain information**. Genealogy activities require the disclosure of certain data such as age, place of birth, origin, family names, divorce information, illegitimate children, etc. The last issue to be addressed in the guidance given to educators is to keep certain information confidential. Not everyone wants to share this information with other course participants or educators. It is worth allowing participants to keep important information for themselves and to indicate at the very beginning of the class that it will be tolerated. Persons taking part in the workshops are the people who have been instructed by the media and their families most probably many times not to provide their data for fear of fraud. This may give rise to fears and should be respected

Following these guidelines can improve the learning process for seniors. It is also worth mentioning a few principles of education of older people, which are commonly used to ensure high quality of education (after Pólturzycki, 1991):

The principle of temporality, which results from the fact that the reaction time of seniors is longer. Usually, older people acquire new knowledge longer, therefore educators should slow down the pace of work and adapt it to the abilities of learners;

The principle of a positive assessment of learning outcomes, which is based on the motivation of seniors to learn and the desire to build a positive image of oneself. It is important that educators assess the progress of senior citizens in a credible and relevant way in relation to the level of knowledge and skills acquired;

The principle of taking into account the physical and health condition of seniors, which implies adapting to the physical and mental abilities of learners. Therefore, classes should be conducted in a way that does not overburden senior citizens. It is worth taking care of breaks during which you can regenerate your strength,

and *the principle of frequent reference to the life experiences of seniors*, without which it would not be possible to deduce the wisdom of the older generation.