



Josipina Urbančič Turnograjska

## Drawing upon generational resources, sharing topics and beliefs

There is an on-going need to rethink both the definition and the concept of intergenerational learning. It is relatively easy to qualify as intergenerational the type of learning drawing upon resources contributed by the generations involved in an intergenerational practice. The type of intergenerational practice where not only knowledge is exchanged but also new knowledge is constructed in common activities in shared time and space. Recent experience from Slovenian U<sub>3</sub>A, however, makes us rethink the definition and the concept of intergenerational learning.

### Our experience

Older retired women, university graduates, members of the U<sub>3</sub>A study group *Squares, streets and buildings around us* decided to study urban space in relation to the social position of important women. The study group wanted to establish links between the topic of urban space and the topic of female social position both in the past and present. The group went further studying the position of the streets on the map of the city of Ljubljana. There is just one street named after Josipina Urbančič Turnograjska (a Slovenian poet, writer and composer, a spokesperson of women's sensibility and an advocate of human sincerity rights) that is located in the centre of the town. All other female names appear as names of the streets located in housing estates at the outskirts of the city. Sometimes female names are not even used to

name a real street but more some formless space lost between blocs of flats. Who were these women? Were they really less important than men to be always naming streets of the centre? And what is more, most of the times they are second world war heroes their names commemorating the resistance movement less than themselves. Only rarely are they scientists, writers, painters... Alma Sodnik, a famous philosopher, Luisa Pesjak, a famous Slovenian painter.. the streets with their names are located in the suburbs of Ljubljana, the suburbs of society? Out of more than 1600 streets there are no more than 46 named after important women.

Older and younger generations can learn a lot from a topic describing past culture. They can learn a lot even if a topic is not dealt with *jointly* and simultaneously by different generations, even when younger or older generations act more as recipients than producers of knowledge, there is intergenerational learning occurring due to the topic (the linking element), though not simultaneously but successively. This is going to happen at Slovenian U3A. An exhibition will be opened up, a round table will take place uniting generations around the same topic, a national radio programme will be recorded bringing generations together.

## Conclusion

What is intergenerational about this project? The group is being mentored by a young architect looking upon women's issues with fresh eyes, female students are older than 60 years of age. The topic belongs to both past and present. There are similarities and dissimilarities about the position of women in the past and present, about how they are included in society and urban space? *Intergenerational learning is possible if triggered by shared topics, values and beliefs.*