

DANET, DANUBE NETWORKERS FOR EUROPE, Newsletter No. 10 , October 2019

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Dušana Findeisen

Editorial: Older People ,Their Education And Quality Of Their Life?

There have been many developments in the field of older people's education, culture and social participation in the Danube region and elsewhere in Europe all of them devoted to improving older people's social position, intergenerational dialogue (Women's stories), quality of their life. Outstanding have been the results of the connections and cooperation of quite different institutions and educational providers within networks like DANET and ELOA, the ESREA's research section dealing with older people's education. Outstanding have been also some national achievements we have decided to write about in this DANET Newsletter like the 5th Festival of Knowledge and Culture in Later Life in Slovenia. There are also new actors in the field of older adult education and old age in general, like a new type of third age university in Romania or OPRO, an institute for applicative studies, dealing with old age and social forces in Slovenia, new older people's social practices as well as emerging research topics related to older people that need to be examined further, like the impact of education and culture on both objective and subjective older people's quality of life or masculinities in older adult education.

The background paper to which we are introducing the readers discusses the research topic and social practices concerned with *socially engaged education* and *socially engaged art of*

older people and the role of constructive leisure time for older people. It is not enough older adult education has just a few traditional functions (personal growth, empowerment, active citizenship). In the times of turbulent social changes each generation, each social group, each individual indeed need knowledge and skills to reposition themselves in society, defending their standpoints and quality of life, having a simultaneous regard on other generations. The repositioning will be more effective with older people's engaged *social visibility* in mind, digital and social inclusion. Here older adult education has a great role to play.

There are great differences in perceiving the quality of life of older people in various cultural and urban contexts along the Danube and elsewhere in Europe. It seems that quality of life is closely connected with space, natural, built and social environments as well as historic, cultural and political contexts and their actors.

Quality of life is a concept, going beyond measuring objective life circumstances. Measuring subjective quality of life pertains to personal growth, happiness, healthy and secure environment, life satisfaction, well being in healthy society. In 2009 the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission proposed this concept should be included in measuring economic success and social development.

On the collective macro social level, however, political commodities as freedom, equality, active ageing, active citizenship, social fairness are to be measured as constituents of older people's quality of life.

Messages from the DANET Board



Tihomir Žiljak

We have been flying and will continue to do so

How can we describe the informal network Danube Networkers ,DANET and its follower the International Association Danube Networkers for Europe? In both cases this has been a group of people sharing values and being committed to *European cooperation, social*

inclusion, intergenerational dialogue and learning in later life. The Danube region as a junction between Eastern and Western Europe is the area in which this network most frequently carries out its activities. This group is not just a bondage of the core network members from the Danube region since DANET has been building bridges extending also to other countries and other regions, maintaining the network of the participating organisations in both formal and informal way. The formal side of the Danube networkers is the Association DANET. Danube networkers for Europe with its president, vice president, treasurer, general secretary, the board etc. But there are also many activities in which periodically are included individual experts, organisations from other European countries, NGOs and educational institutions. We meet and collaborate in conferences, seminars, projects and programmes. We have already written on the DANET web site about all those activities and what has been happening in the network Danube networkers, and the International Association Danube networkers for Europe over the past 10 years. So, what can we say about this network and this organisation? they remind us of bumblebees that seem to defy the laws of aerodynamics, yet they fly. There are problems with money, there are problems with premises and the provision of the professional support. Sometimes members are tired of having too many tasks to carry on in their own organizations. But despite all the hardships the DANET organisation still flies. Carmen, the main engine of the organization has ambitious aspirations which we gladly share and upgrade if necessary, but she expects our constant help and commitment. She always pushes us further. Over the last ten years also the political environment has changed in the Danube region, but in spite of the new circumstances we are as always open to cooperation. We are still committed to European ideas. It is not just about being committed as responsible members, it has become a kind of glue, a matter of friendship. And this type of bondage is amazingly strong and resistant. That is why I think such type of civil organisations survive. They say that it is relatively easy to establish a network or a non-governmental organisation, but it is not easy to maintain them. Founded during the Danube Festival in Ulm in 2008 the informal educational network Danube Networkers DANET has been there for eleven years now and a more structured international Association Danube Networkers for Europe was founded in 2014 in Ulm as well, so it has been there for five years already. Despite social, political and organisational obstacles we have been flying and will continue to do so. (Source: Tihomir Žiljak, Open University Zagreb)





Carmen Stadelhofer

European Project "Building Bridges for Europe" – Ideas and inspiration for educators and committed Europeans

Within the Erasmus+partnership "Building bridges for Europe" (BBE) nine project partners from six European countries (Germany, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Romania, Croatia and Italy) created an online toolbox containing validated methods and projects, which support European awareness and critical thinking and help reducing prejudices about others. The project partners worked hard for two years to provide and analyse the "best practice projects". The result can now be seen online: www.bbe-toolbox.eu. The toolbox contains 27 projects and methods that are easy to call up and to be applied. The accumulated knowledge is available for free, to all who are interested in making use of the described methods. It inspires its users to further promote new methods in further education, education of adults, especially older adults, women, low-educated people, people from rural areas, migrants, etc. focusing on fostering European awareness. During the project duration, the partners strengthened their working relations, exchanged experience and expertise in the provision of educational programmes in their respective countries. The project partners-agreed upon continuing the European cooperation in the field of socially engaged education for the third age and continue to develop their intergenerational collaboration. The Project Coordinator was ILEU e.V, Ulm, Germany and partners ZAWIW, Ulm University Germany, University of Ruse Angel Kanchev, Bulgaria, LSFTB - The Writers' League Timisoara Banat Branch, Romania, Federation of the Universities of the Third Age in Italy (FEDERUNI), Public Open University Zagreb, Croatia, Slovenian Third Age University, Slovenia, Agora-Platform, Sofia, University Dunarea de Jos from Galati, Romania (*Source: Carmen Stadelhofer, ILEU and DANET*)

Once a Danube Networker, always a Danube Networker Ulm, October 2019

Some of the members of the Network Danube-Networkers will be taking part in new European projects starting in November, coordinated by ILEU. Connecting Danube-

Neighbors by culture (CODANEC). The project will be financed by the State Ministry of Baden-Württemberg. Members of the Network will soon be invited to participate. Discovering European Neighbors in the Third Age (DENTA), is another project financed by the Erasmus+ KA2 partnership program, with 8 partners from 6 countries (South-East, Central Europe and West of Europe). (Source: Carmen Stadelhofer)

MESSAGES FROM HERE AND THERE

Bulgaria



Drama, a community building method in older adult education

Intangible cultural heritage acquires new life in contemporary cultural events Ruse, October, 2019

The 15th Anniversary of the Union of Pensioners (UP) of the Slivo Pole Municipality was held in May on the Day of Europe. The event was titled „Preserving the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Danube Region”. Union of pensioners, the organizer of the event, was greatly supported by the local Government represented by its Mayor Valentin Atanasov, the Mayor of the Slivo Pole Municipality and all members of the 20 Clubs of Pensioners of Slivo Pole, Babovo, Ryahovo, Brashlen, Borisovo, Golyamo Vranovo, Malko Vranovo, Kosharna, Yudelnik, Chereshevo. Organisers were assisted by secondary and primary schools, members of the community centres etc. The event was meant to present the community building teaching and learning methods that have been used in different organizations over the last 15 years. Naturally the drama, which in its own right is a community building method, has been amply used by the Union of Pensioners in the field of intergenerational learning and more generally in the building of an inclusive community through education and learning.

The event was joined by the official guests: Mr. Galin Grigorov, the Governor of the Ruse Region; Prof. Hristo Beloev, Rector of the University of Ruse, Assoc. Prof. Emiliya Velikova, PhD; the President of ILEU and DANET Mrs. Carmen Stadelhofer, Ulm, Germany; the Presidents of the Union of Pensioners' 2004 Mrs. Valentina Nikolova; the Presidents of the

Union of Pensioners – Ruse Region Mr. Yordan Kazakov; heads of schools, social organizations, NGO's, etc.

Using the drama as a central method, the participants in the event depicted the connecting role of bread which may unite communities, countries included. Intangible cultural heritage- customs, traditions etc. - acquires new life in contemporary cultural events. To enumerate some of them: Sirni zagovezni (Forgiveness); Blagovestenie (the Annunciation); Lazarovden (the day of St. Lazar); Veliki Chetvartak (Maundy Thursday). Many pensioners actively participated in events such as afforestation of 2000 trees by 215 pensioners, celebration the European Generation Awareness Day, participation in the international project "The Wanted Danube" etc.

Mr. Valentin Atanasov awarded the leaders of 20 pensioners' clubs and Mrs. V. Uzunova, Mrs. C. Stadelhofer and Assoc. Prof. Emilya. Velikova. (Source: *Emiliya Velikova, Angel Kanchev University, Ruse*)

Croatia



Jasna Čurin

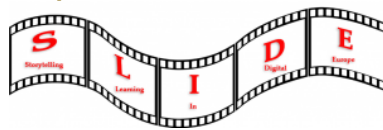
DANET and us. The travelling of Christmas boxes along the Danube and much more

The first European project we did together was the one called DANET, carried out in 2011/12 within the programme *Europe for Citizens*. It gave Open University Zagreb a great opportunity to learn from European partners. Examples of Germany and Slovenia were essential for us as concerns the rise in the quality of life in citizens of the third age due to life long learning. The project proved to be successful resulting in a new network under the same name DANET and we have accomplished several projects and activities in its framework. *The wanted Danube, Tastes of Danube, ODDA, Bread connects, Christmas boxes, Building Bridges for Europe* International conferences were particularly valuable since they provided an opportunity for third age students to meet their colleagues from other countries with whom they share interests and a preference for life course approach to active ageing and lifelong learning. What we particularly treasure in the DANET network is the continuity of partner cooperation. (Source: *Jasna Čurin, U3A- POUZ Zagreb*)

Creativity and readiness to learn in old age depends on the expectations of the social environment

Third Age University Zagreb (Public Open University Zagreb) has had a long and successful cooperation with DANET. We have participated in numerous DANET projects let us mention just some of them which had an important impact on objective and subjective quality of life of our older students. Each project was unique. Therefore, no doubt, it attracted different target groups. In *The wanted Danube* students of the U3A Zagreb were creative and wanted to use their hands. We met once a week, discussed daily problems, drank tea and knitted in common. The atmosphere was nice, and relaxed and their final products were real works of art, an exhibition of their products was set up, so that everyone could see what they had achieved during those few months. Another attractive project was *Tastes of Danube*. In this project we included many of our different study groups. Students went through cooking books in search of old recipes, posting them on the Facebook page. Groups of English learners translated them, and ICT groups made short videos concerning food tradition in Croatia, while students of art painted food, wine, herbs and made videos about them. And finally, a lot of our students participated in the photo competition. In conclusion I would like to stress that all many of our students were included in these projects though on different levels and in different domains and different roles, thus demonstrating that creativity and readiness to learn in old age are there on condition their environment has expectations towards them and appreciates them. (Source: Dijana Bebek Miletić, POU Zagreb)

Italy



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In the SLIDE project-Story telling Learning in Digital Europe both adult educators and older people have discovered bits of European identity

The culture of images and the culture of new technologies are dominating the culture of today's fragmented and globalised world. Therefore, digital images equipped with explanatory text or without explanatory text are a good tool universally understood when used in the process of adult education. They facilitate the education of everybody, particularly the education of the generations of older people who, unlike younger generations, were not born into the world of images or of those whose media literacy may be qualified as lower. Teaching and learning about the nature of images, teaching and learning about the use of ICT tools encourages simultaneous acquiring pictorial and technological literacy so much needed in today's world while enabling adult educators and learners to discover their psychological, cultural and social selves. Images are closely related to the technological evolution. They have their "grammar, syntax and semantics" Images combined and developed into a text enable older learners to learn more in their own way and interpret the meaning more freely. Finally, they lead older learners to the comprehension and construction of their individual, social and cultural identity. Through stories, from different European countries, sharing the same cultural code, the direct beneficiaries of this project (adult educators) and the indirect beneficiaries, older people have discovered bits of their common European identity and hopefully have raised their

European awareness. (Source: Maria Giovanna Romaniello, Libera Università Europea Terza Età Campania Luetec, Naples, www.luetec.org)

Germany



Markus Marquard and Belinda Hoffmann-Schmalek

More Women's Stories along the Danube

Danube Women's Stories focus on women from countries along the Danube, women from the past and present. Particularly, the project aims at connecting young women from the Danube region by bringing together the knowledge concerning the significance of women from different cities along the Danube. Together women go on a journey of discovery, to recognize the contributions of women, discuss gender issues and use an opportunity to reflect on their own social roles. The influence and impact of women in their cities should be made visible and should support the Gender Equality Strategy of the European Union. In the first Project *Danube Women City Guides* we took a look at women from Budapest, Novi Sad, Timisoara, Ulm and Vienna. Beside an exhibition in Ulm during the Danube Festival 2018, we published a book and a create a website to present interesting female figures. There are female artists, scientists, physicians, entrepreneurs, members of the resistance movement, athletes or politicians; they are well known or still unknown but always an important part of our societies.

With the new project *Danube Women's Media Stories*, new portraits of fascinating women from the past and remarkable women from the present from the cities of Regensburg, Linz and Vukovar have been paid attention to. During the Interreg conference in Regensburg in May 2019, the exhibition "Danube Women's Stories" was presented at the World Heritage Visitor Centre. Also, portraits of women from each of the new selected cities have been added to the exhibition, e.g. the entrepreneur Luise Händlmaier which is famous for the sweet mustard (Regensburg), Katharina Kepler as mother and facilitator of Johannes

Kepler (Linz) and Ljiljana Gehrecke who was one of the founders of the European House of Vukovar.

On the top of the 6th Danube Participation Day we organized a partner meeting to discuss the future activities. It was also a good place to present the project at the Participation Day and to meet other members of the Danube Civil Society Forum. In the future project period the exhibition "Danube Women's Stories" should be presented also in other localities along the Danube and the book will be released anew in its extended version. In addition we are developing a Media Story to bring this important topic also to young people via social media. These projects are founded by the Baden-Württemberg Stiftung, the city of Ulm and Förderkreis ZAWiW. (Source: Belinda Hoffmann-Schmalek and Markus Marquard)
More: <https://women.danube-stories.eu/>

Poland



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Have you ever come across a short observing documentary Anything can happen (Wszystko moze sie przytrafic') by Polish film director Marcel Lozinski ? We Have In The SPIDW Project.

Very little of what the small boy says is particularly interesting, but the contrast between the boy and the old people, both in dialogues and manner is what makes this film shine. It is a reflection on the human condition, a story of life and death, featuring Lozinski's six-year-old son Tomaszek and older people spending their time on the benches of a Warsaw park. Riding his scooter, from one bench another Tomaszek asks older, very adult people, basic questions about life which they are happy to answer. The boy's ideas of future and life are confronted with those of men at the end of their lives. <https://vimeo.com/37451466>
(Source: *Anna Grabowska*)

Romania



Ana Zlibut with Carmen Stadelhofer

A cultural identity perspective- insight of the Danube region Bucharest, June 2019

In June the Palace of the Parliament in Bucharest hosted a series of panel discussions organized by the Government of Romania in partnership with the Romanian Cultural Institute. The theme in focus was: "A cultural identity perspective- insight of the Danube region" and the final aim of the discussion panels was the creation of a Blue Book on the Danubian cultural identity. Besides the panels, the event contained also an exhibition of contemporary Romanian art "Danube River as Connector", curated by Oana Ionel.

In her capacities of the first vice-president of the Writers' League Timisoara Banat Branch, LSFTB and that of general secretary of Danube Networkers for Europe, DANET, in her panel contribution Ana Zlibut underlined the importance of mutual understanding and further cooperation in the Danube region. She emphasized that within the international context and given a great cultural diversity of the Danube countries tolerance is not enough. Knowing and understanding each other while being aware of the countries' cultural diversity are needed. She also highlighted the need to alleviate stereotypes as to reach mutual understanding and respect as well as the will to find the ways to overcome language barriers in the Danube region. The projects "Bread connects", "Open Doors for Danube Countries for All", "Danube Bridge Breakfast" and other recent activities of DANET and LSFTB were presented as examples of good practice in this area. Ana Zlibut enriched her contribution by a quote by the King Ferdinand of Romania: "There aren't the walls which make a school, but the spirit which is inside it", thus accentuating the importance for the Danube region to cultivate common Danube spirit. "Borders are meaningless, what matters is us- the people" she added. (*Source: Ana Zlibut, LSTB, Romania*)

Lifelong learning has no age in the eyes of the first Third Age University of Cluj-Napoca Cluj-Napoca, July 2019

In July 2019, graduated the first generation of Cluj's first third age university. It all started with a project of the association "Platforma Romania 100" in cooperation with the Direction of Social and Medical Assistance. The inspiring slogan leading to the establishment of this U3A was : "Lifelong learning has no age". Although the initial project lasted only one month, significant results are to be seen on the local level, as older people developed a willingness for further education and participation in the activities of the civil society. The initiative rapidly evolved into a larger project, which was taken over by the City Hall of Cluj-Napoca, in partnership with the association EduNation and the foundation of the university Babes-Bolyai. Presently, the educational programmes extend over the academic year divided in two falls. In the academic year 2019-2020, the courses officially started in October. The introductory lecture 'Compared constitutional systems', was held by the mayor of the city of Cluj addressing the new students. There is a variety of options for further education in the frame of the U3A, ranging from health education and economy, to art and photography. The courses are taught in a non-formal and interactive way, for better understanding of the concepts to which the students are being introduced. The list of proposed courses depends mainly on the interests of the students, and may change from

year to year. The courses offered classes in the academic year 2019-2020 are the following: Self-medication- advantages and risks; Economy - basic notions; Religion and society; The press - in between information and misinformation; Visual arts- painting; Photography

U3A Cluj is a project which aims at social inclusion, active participation and education of older people. The beneficiaries of the project at this initial stage are mainly older people who are already enrolled in the Day Centres for Older People. (Source: Diana Zlibut, LSFTB member)

Spain



4 ELEMENTS

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The deaf have to be looked into their eyes. In the 4 Elements project e-books for learning English and learning about cultural heritage for various target groups is being created
Reus, 17th-19th September, 2019

Teaching vulnerable groups English and teaching them about intangible cultural heritage: myths, legends, tales were approached in the *4 Elements project joint staff training* held in Reus. The Reus municipality representatives who addressed the training call their town “a small big town” which is exactly the impression it gives to its visitors. The town has approx. 100 000 inhabitants, but narrow streets and small squares squeezed among them give the feeling of a small Mediterranean settlement. Reus, however, has good urban infrastructure and a robotized hospital on the top of it.

Though the project partners may be discordant, their expertise is compatible. The French editors Les Apprimeurs *are setting up an E-book for dyslectic/older learners* (SIGIL – an open code multi-platform e-editor). For those who have reading difficulties an auditive file will be created. The size of fonts and fonts themselves will be varied, as well as background colour could be changed, which is quite useful for older learners as well. The digital program *StoryBird* was presented by DomSpain. This is an educational application that can be easily used in older adult education <https://storybird.com/>. Universal principles of cultural interpretation (John Muri) were presented by *My artist, a Greek partner*. *Instituto dei Sordi* from Turin introduced the participants to the language of signs. Slovenian Third Age University contributed theoretical discussion on four elements: earth, fire, water, air in old and contemporary urban myths, legends and fairy tales. (Source: Olena Bilozero, DomSpain)

Slovenia



O P R O, a new actor on Slovenian old age scene, has just published *Starost ni za mevže*. ((Eng.'Growing old ain't for sissies')

O P R O , Institute for applicative studies, brings underdiscussed social issues of older people and other marginalized social groups to the fore. The institute strives to identify and make visible social forces that undermine social cohesion, preserve stereotypes as well as various forms of discrimination. The institute then works towards their deconstruction by employing different methods and formats. It has been organizing a series of panel discussions as the first step towards empowering the least powerful groups, older people included, in Slovenian society. To this end, besides panel discussions, the institute will employ an array of methods: publication and promotion of literary and scientific works, introduction of creative groups for examining single social issues, intensification of the presence of relevant contents in classical media and social networks, launching initiatives as to intensify social inclusion of socially marginalized groups. Additionally, the institute will provide for creative workshops for the inclusion of marginalized groups in entrepreneurship, cultural design, leisure time activities, thus enabling their individual empowerment and individual resistance to the pressures of consumer productivity. (Otto Gerdina)



**10 years of the International Festival of Knowledge and Culture in Later Life
Domžale, Slovenia, 25th April 2019**

In Domžale, a smaller Slovenian town took place the 5th bi-annual Festival of knowledge and culture in later life. "I am proud that over three decades and a half Slovenia has become one of the most holistic and leading institutions for older adult education, that this festival celebrates art and creativity that accompany ageing. Those who are ageing must have an opportunity to appear in public in a way that is good for entire society» said one of the Slovenian Third Age students. Bi-annual International Festival of Knowledge and Culture in Later Life is one of the rare festivals of its kind in Europe. It is coordinated by the Network of Slovenian third age universities. It has been made possible by the co-funding by the Ministry of Education. Each time the festival moves to another region and smaller towns. In Domžale were present performers from Croatia, Germany and Italy. They played the plays they had written themselves, exhibited their thematic paintings, discussed their transnational projects and their results like short featured films on active ageing, and documentary films on migrants. "With this festival the University consolidates the established and new connections. Knowledge, art and culture make older people a social group that is very much alive«, that want to be heard and seen in public, surrounded by those who have expectations towards them and want to be in a transformative contact with them. »The Festival addresses also young people inviting them to participate in cultural geragocics« says Alijana Šantej, the initiator and directress of this Festival. (Source: Alijana Šantej)

10th ELOA Conference

**The pluralisation of transitions to the after-working life phase: Gender capital, silver productivity and mental health,
Ljubljana , 10th-11th May 2019**

The Conference was co-organised by Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana and Slovenian Third Age University. The conference focused on different research questions concerning *forms of masculinity and old age* in the post retirement period now that the patriarchal image of older men has gone. How to attract men, particularly those who are low educated to education and many others.

Men's gender capital experiences in later life

Ljubljana, May 2019

Over the last decade there have been substantial advances in understanding the gendered dimensions of issues in the last few decades, and only recently, to masculinities and gender capital in later life. Contemporary discussions on cultural and gender capital are bringing relevant recognition and somehow unintentionally reveal that gender can matter to the same extent or even more in old age than in childhood or adulthood. Interviews with 98 men aged 60 or more and other data collected in Slovenia with the *Old Guys Erasmus+* project. The project results are in line with recent studies on gender capital and masculinities, and justified why older men should be seen, discussed and examined as individual agents who practice, perform and produce gender in later life too. They also explain why hegemonic masculinity is only one aspect of gendered life experiences and that different masculine realities stand alongside each other and are as necessary for men in later life as femininities are for women, particularly in contemporary societies, where both, aged men and women are seen and represented as de-gendered, un-gendered, even

genderless ageing. Prior studies mostly dealt with the understanding of the lives of older women, while older men had been largely neglected or omitted. The focus on women facing disadvantages in socio-economic and marital status as shifted to men's post-work and health (Source: Marta Gregorčič and Kaja Cizelj)

More: <https://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/AndragoskaSpoznanja/article/view/8487>

Background paper : Dušana Findeisen: Older Adult Education Is Not Just Casual Leisure Time. Socially Engaged Education, Art and Filmmaking Of Older Students At Slovenian U3A

<http://www.utzo.si/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/DANET-ELOA.pdf>

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