Doc. dr. Dušana Findeisen

EDUCATING THE 45+ TO UNDERSTAND AND CHANGE
THEIR SOCIAL POSITION

Paper prepared for the Seminar on the education of the elderly in Zalec, Slovenia, March, 2002

The position of young people and the position of the elderly are fairly defined by the generations in the middle. These generations are mainly responsible for the issues regarding the elderly. If they do not get aware of their responsibility, we will continue believing that each elderly individual above all needs medical treatment, security, stability and has to be taken care of by the social welfare system. But nowadays, elderly people are frequently in good health, are better educated, need less help and want to be acting members of the society. Thus they should not be exempt of contributing to the social and economic development. And finally, this is an urgent need of the society as a whole.

Societies whose population is ageing, need *a vision of the education of the elderly*,. This vision goes beyond schooling, supported by policies of lifelong learning. Despite the vogue for lifelong learning older learners are still perceived as largely missing from both policy and practice in educational provision. People who are post-work are not genuinely part of this vision.

A society in which lifelong learning policy will truly become lifelong, would ensure for the elderly a position independent on other generations. And what is more, *the world we are forging will be the very image of the position attributed to the elderly.* If it provides for the elderly learning opportunities, opportunities, to go on with the socializing process, opportunities to be creative, to be educated, this will be a world for people. If, on the contrary, we think of how to get rid of elderly people in some way or the other, other categories of population i.e. all that are not productive, will be clearly reserved the same treatment. It is not amazing, having in mind, what I have said just now, that the position of the elderly and of the young in our societies is getting very much alike".

In relation to this, adult educators could ask themselves. »*W*hat are we supposed to do in our societies in order to develop an interest in the old age, the elderly and their developmental capacities, notwithstanding ours is a society of quickly progressing technology in which elderly people can not be bearers of "interesting knowledge". Namely, today the elderly are hardly a part of the brave new world, of new maths, new computers, electronic gadgets. In this society old age has become a taboo topic.

The Need of Rethinking the Social Position of the Elderly

The social position of the elderly is different in many ways from the position of those who belong to the active population. In modern societies work has become an essential value. Our social rights and our duties have been connected with socially organised work and so have been most of our relationships. *Socially o*rganised work has been for us an essential means *to develop a collective identity, to share collective memory and finally to meet most of our psychological and social needs*. It has been one of the most important pillars of our self-concept. Moreover, it has been there to support our social position, providing for us a number of social roles to play.

In modern, industrial society, life has been divided into life periods, ages, the first, the second, the third and the fourth age all these ages having been structured around work. The first age was devoted to schooling and little leisure time, the second age to work and very little leisure time, the third age mostly to leisure time activities and very little work, and the fourth age corresponding to advanced age was supposed to come after the third… In the first period of life schooling is the main task of student and there is a lot of pressure put on him in this sense. In the second period of life, and individual devotes most of his life to his work and his education and training are job related. When learning they experience a lot of stress. In the third life period there is relatively little work in one-s life but there is a time for education. Education that is free and the elderly students experience hardly any stress in their studies. They learn because they want to. Therefore they have been found to be the most rewarding students for an adult educator.

Our social position has been changing from one age to another… and, finally, t*he old age even more than other ages, has become a matter of social construct…* A social construct on which social position of the elderly depends.

Yet, with the transition from modern to post modern society, chronological ages are not in focus anymore. Instead we speak about states. Thus, one can be in the state of the third age several times along one's life, i.e. withdrawn from paid work, rethinking about the meaning of life, values, attitudes, behaviour and one's personal characteristics, enjoying leisure time activities… Or, in the fourth age, i.e. the state on which one is dependent on others. There is one advantage, however. Namely, if the fourth age is not a chronological period, but a state, for many it may not come at all.

Most studies about the elderly start by outlining the numbers and percentages showing the phenomena of greying Europe, stressing the dramatic decrease in the rate of births and the growing number of the elderly. The corrupted equilibrium between the active and the non-active population of the elderly has led to considering the elderly as a social burden, which is one of the reasons why social tensions between the younger and older generations tend to become bigger…

These and other questions deserve serious discussion especially the one about the elderly being a social burden. The situation can be compared with the situation in France after the second world at the beginning of the baby boom with the number of people employed in the primary sector dramatically going down and with previsions that in 50 years, that is to say today, this would lead to an unprecedented food shortage worse than those of the Middle Age. In those days one peasant had to feed approximately 7 French citizens. The expectations were that one farmer would have to feed 47 French citizens fifty years later. The situation seemed unbearable. Likewise today all we think about is the proportion between the active population and the inactive elderly population, and like in the case of the French peasants we forget many other factors… Shall we say 1.7 % economic growth per year, for a start… The prolonged working period and as a result of it more money flowing into pension funds. These may easily collapse being dependent on a great variety of events, which do not hurt, however, the solidarity between generations. Thus, pension paid on the basis of a solidarity agreement among generations still seems to be the best solution for safe old age. And then, why elderly alone are considered as a burden and other maintained groups (the young, the handicapped, the unemployed, etc. not?. Moreover, if we sum up all the members of the dependent social groups, we always come up to 100%. If the group of the maintained elderly gets reduced, then some other group, for instance the group of the unemployed, will become bigger. Anyway, capitalisation is not a good enough solution for old age pensions and in accepting it,

the States align with the logic of financial institutions, which is a sad thing to say. This is also one of the issues the elderly need to be educated about as well as other issues concerning their place in society.

In the 18th century *institutions for old people* as well *as a policy of public help to the elderly* appear for the first time. In the 19th century, however, geriatrics was introduced as a new science, though it was not yet given this name. Namely, in some countries, i.e. in France homes were set up for old people gathering a fair number of them under the same roof. Thus, for the first time old age was started to be treated medically, it also became possible to observe old people and to collect clinical data. In 1886 Charcot set on lecturing on old age and elderly people began receiving medical treatment. It was believed that old people could be treated. Between 1857 and 1860 Geist published a synthesis of geriatric literature having been published in Germany, England and France. In the 20th century social policy pertaining to the issues of the elderly came into being, pension were introduced in England, New Zeeland, etc. Considering these developments in the area of the elderly, it can be better understood why even today elderly people are mostly approached from these two perspectives: *the perspective of medicine and the perspective of social welfare.*

It is amazing that most studies about old age start by emphasising the fact that in the industrialized countries the number of people over 65 increases. By the year 2040, we expect that this segment of population will be more numerous than the segment of young people. Nevertheless, old age is not about statistics, nor it is a pre-death period as it is often tacitly referred to. On the contrary, it is much more than that. It is *a period of life during which a man or a woman, in the first place is a man or a woman, and then only an old man or an old woman. Therefore it is time we reconsidered the position of the elderly in our societies.*

The Issues of Old Age and the Contribution of Education to their Understanding

When discussing the old age, there is a tendency to consider it as a period made out of one block. But it is far from that! Namely, it is normal that young people resemble to some extent, but, on the contrary, it is not normal that elderly people who have been shaped by numerous experiences, should be similar. Yet, due to our not having gained a true insight into

elderly people, we go on thinking they are all the same.[1] Elderly people do have certain common characteristics of their group though they are their only characteristics.

We like to divide the elderly into *young elderly* and *old elderly but it seems that t*he only valuable common distinguishing characteristics would be those of the age cohort. Generations, which experienced the war, for instance, have developed certain traits of their common identity which become a part of their collective memory and are different from those who were not exposed to this experience. Thus having an insight in the common features of age cohorts as well as in their life history is important, when preparing an educational programme for the elderly.

When people get retired, we like to think of them as going through a crisis, although it is not necessarily the case in all elderly people. And what exactly this eventual crisis is all about? It means *passing from one type of adulthood to another type of adulthood*. Therefore, after people get retired they are still adults, but they become elderly adults. Now, getting retired also means *passing from one type of responsibility to a different one, to a different type of responsibility and to a different type of behavior.* Namely, people are assumed to behave in a way socially prescribed at certain maturity. And what is socially prescribed for elderly adults?

Getting retired also means that a person has *to structure his or her time in a different way*, the time that has always been structured by some institution, socially organized work, family, etc. Education can help in this field.

Similarly getting retired means that *gender roles in the family will change*…. Men will probably take on some typically female responsibilities. They will develop an interest in relatives, caring for them, whereas women will start assuming more public tasks… In Slovenia, i.e. elderly women take their driving test when their husbands are not willing anymore to drive, to travel.

---

[1] There is a need for professionals, researchers, politicians, etc, to review their attitude towards aging and old age. The Slovenian national radio programme, diffused as early as last month, a programme in which three researchers were invited to talk about elderly people. They pretended that all elderly people need is to feel secure and to be approached with tenderness. Theory concerning old age, particularly advanced age, is lacking. Does it mean that people in advanced age do not have needs? Does it mean that it is enough that we use common sense approaching them?

Moreover, getting retired means *changing identity*. Actually, we are referring here to one of the biggest identity crisis in life. Any crisis induces regression.. What has been squeezed out in subconscious reappears.. The psychological structure of the personalities loosen. The rapport a person has with himself or herself changes… There are several identity crises in the life course but in old age, upon retirement, a person has to cope with specific tensions. He or she does not know what this new self could possibly be and, on the other hand, he or she is confused about what his or her identity has really been so far… As a result of it, a person becomes involved, once again in psychosocial processes known to him or to her in adolescence… An old person has to find an equilibrium between the self, that has existed through person-s life and the new self that the person is going to form.

The old person reviews his beliefs formed through life, reevaluates his experiences, wants to reconcile with his limits and possibilities... He struggles for what Andre Malraux *calls "existential identity" referring to the whole life.* He or she *develops the identity of his or her generation.* There is no older generation to protect him or her… No older generation to rely on…It is therefore important for an elderly person to rely on his or her peers to be mirrored by them.

The activities and old man or an old woman has been identifying with, are now limited. There is no profession, no job anymore. His or her relations with other people that have been a support for him or her have changed, some of his or her friends are slowly dying. *People belonging to younger generations have different values, think differently.* They belong to a different world, they think, to a world that is not theirs''' Carl Rogers said that in old age writing became for him a way to preserve his values and to remain connected with the world he did not understand anymore…

Social and financial status has changed…. Some of the elderly go on relying their identity on what they *have accomplished materially... Many are proud of their children*, their social, financial professional achievements. Still, other develop their identity *because they managed to rebel against their social environment and their family. An important part of the identity in the old age is that people make peace with their mistakes, lost opportunities, lack of capacities.*

Many are rejoiced if their *children share their values with them. If this is not the case,* they have to admit that it is so…*They have to internalize new values, a new hierarchy of values…* Education of the elderly is often conducted in small groups of peers ion which the elderly can share their values and views.

”*Planning for the future, thinking about what the future will be like, seems to be one of the important psychological activities throughout life…*” A person should always think of the future, have goals, for the future… nevertheless the elderly mostly live in the present. This has some advantages and many disadvantages. This is one of the issues to be tackled in the educational programmes for the elderly.

How is it possible to overcome identity crisis in old age? To change ones' life philosophy… To make it more adapted to the life ahead? A new set of beliefs, values gets slowly created…Some people get adapted to the conditions of old age some do not. Slowly they start thinking about the fact that they can die…They start adapting to old age… but too often they try to go on with their old activities….The just want to go on living… They think that being alive is an achievement… an achievement in itself…They do not want to think about the time, when they will get older and be dead. Death is a taboo topic in the education of the elderly..

We cannot change any form of living without replacing it with some new. Those who do not do it…after retirement, i.e. they go on living in the old age in a way that is not advisable…

Some people believe that they have to go on with life, with no changes. Some want to stay in touch with other people, to remain linked with them actively. Some think the have to go on caring for other people. Some think that they want to take care of their body.

Still others would like to improve their relationships with their children. Some plan activities they could not enjoy during the active period of their life. They know that their forces are going down, so they protect themselves by judging what is going on in the world as critical… tragic…

They value respect, politeness and tolerance…Normally they do, since they consider they do not have enough of them being marginalized. An old person has to understand *that he or she is not needed any more to take care of other generations.. And finally, an old person has to*

come at terms with his or her past life... maybe in his or her childhood he or she was badly taken care of… maybe he was not a good care for his parents in old age… maybe…(therefore programmers in understanding personal relationships are extremely important for the elderly).

*Finally, why is it important to understand the crisis of the old age for somebody who is an adult educator. Be*cause, preparing people for the crisis ahead or enabling them to cope with it is one of his roles. Nevertheless, not all people who get retired or old experience a crisis, and this also should be taken into account when launching education of the elderly.

Ways towards a Change

Relatively little knowledge about old age has been integrated in school and adult education curricula, and there are relatively little news are about elderly people and living in later life in the media. This situation needs radical changing. I.e. In Switzerland, years ago, all course books used in schools were changed and modified to get rid of stereotypes of the elderly.

In its action plan after the Conference in Cairo Slovenia committed to deal with demographic problems in schools… There is in Slovenia and urgent need to develop a programme of socio-gerontological studies at the university level as to meet the new demographic developments. Knowledge about the issues of later life could be introduced in different studies and also different policies could focus on the elderly and their new, developmental role in the society.

A list of stereotyped views on the elderly could be created in different cultures and p*rofessionals, i.e. gerontologists, economists, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers etc., who deal with the issues of the elderly should stop contributing to generating stereotypes about the elderly.[2]:* "Dementia is considered as the basic phenomena in elderly" and old age is clearly mixed up with advanced age and the state of dependency. As an invited speaker I participated in a conference organized by the Slovenian Parliament. Three thirds of the lectures were about blood pressure measuring, the levels of cholesterol, etc. *But the elderly people are not patients, they are people with primary and secondary needs.* However, the latter are rarely met on the level by the community, the state, the politicians. A lot of

---

[2] "Do not get out of the main stream *yet*…" The elderly are a part of the post-modern computerized society, too" The elderly are still able to learn…." We, the elderly also contribute to building up the future… Are some of the slogans of the Third Age Festival in Ljubljana. Each statement is somehow tentative.

education would be need in this field in order to adopt appropriate policies. Policy of ageing, when and where it exists, seems to be far behind the changing realities.

For many people retirement is one of the greatest identity crisis. Namely, their professional status has been taken away from them. In this country they are not even called a retired worker, a retired teacher, etc…Full professors are taken away their title immediately and can recover it only when they die. Societies of professionals are opposing themselves to the work of their retired colleagues. Changes in the legislation are needed.

There is no regular pre-retirement education, no education of the employers to this purpose, no education of the general public.

No education, whatsoever, as to how to keep one's social status how to maintain it. All these issues and others, could become a part of a holistic *policy of old age and ageing* in our society (municipal policy and national policy).

Saying that, we should emphasise that discrimination according to the age of people also demonstrates the social position of the elderly and also other generations. Age discrimination pertains to the elderly and to the very young people, and one can combat age discrimination if one is aware of it…Why in job advertisements there are age limits? Why is it difficult, for instance, for a teacher who is over fifty to get a job…Regardless of his experience, knowledge etc.

In the Netherlands there is the National Biro against age discrimination. It was set up in 1994. The aim of this bureau is to fight against stereotypes about elderly people, to change the views of the elderly to improve the image of old age and to exert an impact on the living of the elderly.

When in 1996 they organised "A day of complaints against age discrimination" stimulating people to phone about what they had experienced, the telecommunication system in Hague yielded in. There were just too many calls coming in. They collected numerous stories of age discrimination: 46 % of the calls came from people aged 40, 36 % from those who were fifty and 18 % from those who were 30 years old. Clearly enough age discrimination in employment exists.

This Day was a part of the public campaign and the cooperation of the media aroused the interest of politicians and the population… Elderly workers have to maintain their employability, therefore they needed education as all other workers…

Education of the Elderly and the Concept of Lifelong Learning

For the education of adults the French uses very different names like: *permanent education* or *permanent training, permanent school* *Bachelard* global culture, voluntary education, popular education.

All these different names demonstrate that it is about permanent progress of the individual and the society in very different fields. *Permanent or life long education has been conceived in such a way that it goes on through life. And it also means that life and education[3] should permanetly with no longer interruptions exert an impact on each other.* In this process the education plays a special role.[4] *Nevetheless, it seems that in the contemporay society this process which should last through life is quite often stopped or interrupted* since 0acess to adult education in the contemporary society should be possible mostly for those who generate most income.*As a result of it appears inequality of the elderly as concernes lifelong education and learning.*

Education called by European politicians life long education and recently *life long learning* pursues different goals from the education of adults in the 60s and 70 s of the last century which was committed to achieve *a greater social mobility* .

What was social mobility all about? It was meant to for an individual to achieve a better social position by raising its level of formal education. Moreover, *social mobility should enable economic developement and reducing the enequalities in adults. In addition to that social mobility should result in a greater cohesion of the societz of a nation. Amnd adult eductaion was committed to these goals.It had social commitments.*

European politics today is in favour of social desintegration. This process has been accompanied by some phenomea: individualisation of education, employment mobility,

---

[3] Besnard, P., Lietard, B.: *La formation continue,* Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1976, str. 3.
[4] Kotasek, J. v: *L'école et l'éducation permanente,* UNESCO, Paris, 1972.

falling apart of collective identities, primarily of the identity of the employed people. *Thus the education of adullts moves from the "second chance education" and education for social mobility in the 60' to a totally different concept more adapted to economic and social structures coming into being beacause payed work has been lacking.*

Adult education used to be in the centre of the social and economic development, of collective sucess, as cohesive force a nation. *Nowadys it has become more as a way of maintaing adults on the labour force market.*

The concept of lifelong education has been changing constantly because of the changes in economy. One can say that it is getting less and less related to the entire life with the process of life, It seems like some social groups were left out from the concept. One of such groups being teh group of elderly wokers. Their situation however has started changing with the adoption of the resoltution pn employing and education elderly wokrs.

The Position of the Elderly in Lifelong Learning

Now, what is the position of the education of the elderly in this concept of life long learning. It is difficult to say that the concept of lifelong learning in practice pertains to the whole life. In practice some of the social groups are left out from this concept starting with the elderly workers. Education in the third age is supported in some countries like Germany, France by the States or by the private sector (Italy). In Slovenia for the time being it is a completely civil educational movement slightly supported by the State or local authorities.

Lifelong education that would be in favor of the elderly would be more connected with life, and less with the goal of maintaining and raising employability, which is the case today.

We are talking today about lifelong learning and not about lifelong education. Learning is an individual phenomena… this is, what happens to an individual. *Whereas an important role of the education of the elderly is helping creating or better recreating community.* Namely It corresponds to the basic need of the elderly to belong to a community. It is their basic psycho/social need. Younger adults and adults have many possibilities to be involved in communities, which is not the case of the elderly.

Notwithstanding what I have said so far, there seems to be an increased interest in the education in the learning of the elderly in Europe....The first reason lies in the field of economy. It is time for the states, regions and the elderly themselves and the whole society indeed to reformulate the position and the role of the elderly in the society since very quickly it is becoming a much more important social groups much more numerous than it used to be… When we talk about the education of the elderly in Europe, actually we are not talking about the education and learning of some unimportant social groups. More and more we are talking about ourselves, since the age when we become elderly is getting lower and lower.

The age border 45 I am referring to in this lecture, might appear to you as rather low. In fact, some years ago I would have used 55 + and may be, as you may expect, in some years I-d be talking about 40.+ The first thing we have to know is that old age, later life etc. are a matter of social construct. Education of the elderly should approach this problem.

Education or Training of the Elderly?

Thinking of the first adulthood there is a dilemma between education and training. Training might be considered as a selection of culture. And education as culture itself.

On the other hand, Carl Gustav Jung argues that elderly people are *interpreters of cultural concepts.* Therefore education is probably more appropriate for them as training. If, nevertheless they are offered training, than it has to be educational training.

In the life of anybody there is a moment when he has to change professional activities to cultural activities. So for most people in later life training is not an adequate solution. Training is connected with the idea of cognitive knowledge. Training, mostly educational training is adequate for elderly adults who are in a work situation. Elderly people, even more than adults, are to be considered as *whole men. That is those who have achieved the sense of wisdom*
.
Education and training are social processes related to the society. When the links of the elderly with the society start changing or start breaking up… there are less possibilities for their education and training… at least in some societies…

In societies where ageing and old age are considered, as processes of destruction there are not so many structures and organizations, there is not a lot of social capital… that would welcome elderly people. Consequently education and training events are less in number.

On the other hand elderly people and society need education because it is not only socially but also culturally reproductive. Moreover, we are living in a society where boundaries are getting blurred. In these circumstances what we need is lifelong and life wide education.

Elderly people are numerous and thus they have developed also a new relationship to education. Education of the elderly stimulates their desire to be involved to be more involved in this changing society. Moreover, in this society existential questions are more likely to be asked by elderly people. Therefore education of the elderly is still about being and becoming.

The aim of the educational programmes for the elderly are thus orientated towards their (1)maintaining links with the society and for their understanding the changing society and the role they could play in this society (education for self-employment, volunteering, for service jobs) (2)and their personal growth.

Analyzing the Needs in order to develop Educational Programmes

Educational gerontology literature reveals that older people learn for all sorts of reasons/ practical, academic, health, leisure pleasure, work. learning for its own sake will often be perceived as serving a purpose, i.e. staying mentally fit or increasing social engagement. Therefore, we have to find out what older people want to do and what they need in order to do what they want to do. Learning is namely of no value unless it is used for something. It is the activity that is important: the learning is only valuable when it contributes to doing something.

Each educational programme should start from who elderly people are or have become, from what their needs are (expressed or unexpressed), needs related with their present or future life…*Understanding the elderly people needs is important because these needs are to a great extent their motive for participating in the education.* And the needs are also what we develop education programmes from.

We all need other people to meet well our needs. The need for being with others relating to them is essential and on how well it is met depends our health. When somebody gets retired he does even not know how many of his psychological and other needs were met through socially organized work. This social organization of work does not produce only economic and technical products but it also has an impact in the individual in the system of their mentality. It is a way of shaping ones identity, of getting strokes….

There is a lack of social capital for elderly in Slovenia, therefore one of the most important needs behind their enrolment at the Third age university is to remain a part of the public life. Elderly people, even more than adults, are to be considered as *whole men. Those who have achieved the sense of wisdom.* This need seems to be as important as the need to learn, to develop, to understand oneself and the changing world.

Throughout ladult ife span people have the same basic psychosocial needs only their hierarchy changes… These needs are (1)emotional, (2)cognitive, (3)social and (4)the need for values…These needs are to be met on several levels: on the level of the family, the community and society as a whole. It is not enough for instance that emotional needs be met by the family and the partner by the children or grandchildren. They have to be met by their school mates, mentors, by the educational organization, the municipality, the State, the politicians,

The needs of education in old age differ according to sex. The gender roles change after retirement. Men become more orientated towards their family and the are willing to learn some activities that are typically female in our societies like cooking etc. They take on the qualities of their partner. But men have difficulties enrolling in educational programmes because in our societies not knowing is contrary to the role of successful men. Caring for the respect from the others is one of the basic men's roles in our societies. Men do not enroll in great numbers into programmes in which thinking is uncertain: like history of arts and more generally in different programmes that have to do with concepts, beliefs behavior, values appealing to one's sensitivity. This seems not to be the men's world. They prefer experiential sciences like economics, techniques, natural sciences, law etc…

But with the coming cohorts there will be a lot of changes, since the gender roles in families will change - men's possibilities an needs will change as a result of it.

Further, the elderly comply with models of needs i.e. models of knowledge about transitions in individual life and the life of the society. As a result of it, there are programmes for advocacy of the elderly, for solving community problems and managing family budget.

Most of the educational *progammes for solving problems and meeting needs in family, community* and so on are such that they *can be well carried out by elderly people themselves.*

The elderly people *want to be self-sufficient.* Therefore they want to know what to do to remain financially independent in to preserve their social status. In relation to this need of the self-sufficiency are *health programmes, managing one's living environment. etc.*

*Education for self-sufficiency, living in community, retirement, health, living conditions and other concerns of the elderly people is best when permanen*t in order to achieve what is called *"successful ageing"* in medical terminology, or *"productive ageing«* in political gerontology…

The elderly people have *a need for independence and freedom…* They have to defend their need for independence against their children and the community as a whole. *Education of the elderly is meant to make the elderly understand that they have the right to think of their needs and to defend them…*

The elderly have *the need for security and stability,* trhus they can suddenly. Particularly in advanced age they can become extremely economical… or overwhelmingly attached to their property.

Some needs in the elderly are looked down by the society and consequently also by the elderly. Thus i.e. s*ex in old age* has been a taboo topic though but identity of the body is a part of our identity and it is a part of our awareness of ourselves…*The need for cognition* in the elderly has been looked down by the society… the elderly were not allowed to express themselves in public. It is only now that it has become normal that they can be involved in education. Likewise the women's need to educate themselves was for a quite a long time considered as illegitimate. *If the need for cognition is not met, pathological changes can occur.*

Education of the elderly is mostly about meeting secondary needs. Many elderly people would like to be strong, to be achievers, to be competent, to be self confident when facing the world.

Educational programmes are meant to meet the expressed needs of the elderly and needs that are not expressed, that we only sense. In postmodern society, in the risk society, only *meeting cognitive needs would make it possible for people to cope with the changing society.* "Production and distribution of knowledge have become pillars of the modern society." *With more knowledge people in general and the elderly will rely more and more on themselves.* They will gradually believe in helping themselves alone refusing the control from outside and from professionals.

Ensuring the Continuum of the Education of the Elderly

In order to achieve life long learning, there should be a continuum of socially stimulated learning, socially organized and supported education of the elderly. There is namely a better chance for the elderly to get involved and to remain in education or learning, when there are no interruptions in this field of their life.

❑ **T h e e d u c a t i o n o f t h e e l d e r l y w o r k e r s**

The new organization of work and the new concepts of production, ageing of the labor force and the reduced number of young school leavers as well as increased life expectancy have an impact on the elderly workers and their educational needs. Likewise, the retired people elderly workers are considered to be less useful , and their competencies to be diminished.

The employers think that elderly workers are less mobile less flexible as compared to the younger employees. Our economy however, is moving more and more towards *the service sector*, where physical force is less needed while experience and the ability of thinking are getting to be more valuable. *Therefore planning the development and employment of the elderly workers will soon become a priority task*. It would be sensible to retain in working organizations competencies and knowledge only elderly workers have.

On the other hand it has been generally admitted and by elderly workers themselves, *that the elderly workers do not need a lot of education…This reflects the construct of old age* in the

society. Thus the *marginalized position of the elderly workers* is resulting from the employers - *conviction and from the values* and from the *beliefs in the society*. Namely, that it is lack of common sense to, educate elderly workers.

Thereforel education of the elderly workers is successful only when *accompanied by the education of the employers and by raising public awareness*. The elderly workers namely *have specific knowledge about the culture of a company, collective memory*. They can *transfer both to the coming generations* and this transmission can be integrated into pursuing strategic goals of the company.

The elderly workers need knew knowledge and to maintain their old knowledge and skills. Training elderly workers exerts an impact on the style of the relationships in the company and prevents ageism. The elderly workers need knowledge to transfer it to younger generations of workers Education of the elderly workers is needed to improve the working capacities of the workers, the social relationships at work station, the position of the society as a whole.

When programming and planning education for the elderly it is necessary to know the *changes occurring in elderly workers:* some competencies and capacities remain unchanged, some go down and some improve as they progress in age. On the last group of capacities and competencies educational programmes should dwell upon…

Through the education of the elderly workers we could achieve a goal that seems to be less accepted in the field of adult education. *Most of the time, education is needed to increase competitiveness to improve productivity. Education of the elderly workers, on the contrary, could show that education may be needed also to reduce productivity to the benefit* of the society as a whole.

❑ **P r e – r e t i r e m e n t   e d u c a t i o n**

Retirement has personal *and social dimensions*. Retirement is a social institution, therefore it changes as changes the society. It has always been meant primarily as *a protection of the effectiveness of the labor force,* and to a lesser extent, *as a protection of the old retired workers*. Retirement and pension which appeared first in the Anglo Saxon world around the year 1900 had this function.

In relation to the retirement there have been in existence several concepts; (1) *theory of activity* in favor of active ageing, (2) *theory of disengagement* (3) *theory of continuity* stressing the need of un uninterrupted life course….In Slovenia we have set up (4) a theory of development of the elderly.

People get retired in various ways, so there are different retirement styles… Which have to be taken into account when one gets retired and in pre-retirement education.

Education about retirement is *education for a change*, a major change in one's life. *It can not be only informative and it is better that it is not conducted by professionals* like doctors, lawyers etc.. It has dwell upon the meaning people to be retired give to retirement. *Methods have to be interactive and experimental…*

Pre-retirement education is above all a preparation for the *transition from the professionally active period of life* to the *professionally inactive period* and it answers a number of questions:

(1) Is it possible to give up professional knowledge when one gets retired
(2) How to acquire new views and new ways of thinking, new priority goals or new beliefs and values

Pre-retirement education is accompanied also by the education of employers and family.

❑ **E d u c a t i o n   f o r   t h e   t h i r d   a g e**

The basic characteristic of the third age period following the social act of retirement is *acquiring new identity. Retirement comes very abruptly and it is a public certificate given to an individual that he or she is not capable anymore of performing professional work.*

This crisis is felt most painfully by women who except work have not had many possibilities to appear in public. *Men* have lived through their active period *between home and leisure time* activities, women between work and household tasks. When they get retired, six month later they easily experience a great crisis.

In the education for the third age one should have his or her basic needs met: emotional needs cognitive needs, the need to be respected, the need to be useful, *to be responsible. Being responsible to others is a matter of choice is a part of man's subjectivity and identity.* Those who are not responsible for others, which often is the case with elderly people, are not in a social relationship and can not be creative. Can not learn.

Therefore education for the third age stresses solidarity and caresses the idea of social participation of the elderly. Moreover, at the third age universities are created groups of peers… in which elderly people can get a response to their values.

Education in the third age is a link between the past present and future needs of the elderly.

The typology of elderly students is as follows:

-students who only look for some equilibrium in their life and sometimes even do not like studying. They often do not like interactive methods,

-students who are not limited by their past learning experiences who like what's new, who like abstract thinking,

-students who like linking their education with life, who are action oriented.

Views on the education in the third age are different in different social contexts. In some contexts (1) it is thought that *the elderly are valuable to the society* and therefore they like the education of the elderly.. In some other societies (2) it is believed that life of the elderly should be made easier, and thus education is a sort of *social service..* In other countries still (3) it is admitted that the elderly are *a part of the social and economic development* in these countries education in the third age is believed to be something elderly people need to have.

One of the question that has to be approached is *how to motivate the elderly to get involved in the education.* The elderly sometimes are not ready to accede to education because they are *demotivated either by their social environment or their partner, or* because they used to *have bad experience with schooling.*

❑ EducatIon in the fourth age

Ageing is a normal process and some pretend that it can been accelerated due to the psychological environment of the elderly. *Some authors argue that the elderly get older because we push them to be inactive.*

Nevertheless any individual, even an individual who is dependent on others can *experience his or her own value.* He or she can have *a social role to stay alive*. Elderly people can have this role in their family which does not fall apart as long as their ancestor is alive.

There are not many studies done in the education in the fourth life period, there is not a lot of theory in the field.But the advanced age demands rethinking values*. In advanced age an individual can support his deficits only by dwelling upon his ethics*. The elderly people can express their feelings and needs but we should be educated to hear them and to study them.

The fourth age is associated with a great number of negative stereotypes. Policy of old age and ageing, medicine, psychiatry are negative about it.. It seems that only education prepares the elderly man for what he can still live and enjoy.

The education of the elderly in the fourth age has several goals. To make the elderly more optimistic about their future, to improve their bodily and mental shape, to preserve their independency, etaching them not to leave the others meet and thus determine their needs.

Individual education seems to be the most appropriate method in this period because the elderly are in great need of attention.

Education for the fourth age is meant for the elderly, the carers, the staff the family and general public.

Besides education *counseling* is important in this period of life. The need for counseling is particularly present when people experience losses or are uncertain about how their life will end.

Conclusion

There is a need for a continuum of the education of the elderly. From the point of view of life long education it is important that this continuum be not interrupted. Those who get involved in the education of adults will more easily get involved in the education of elderly workers, those who participate in this education, will not hesitate involving in pre-retirement education… Participation of the elderly in education has been found to be important not only for *the individual and his social environment but for the society as a whole.*

Literature and references:

Adair, S.R.,
Mowsesian, R. :   "The Meanings And Motivation Of Learning During The Retirement
                     Transition", in: *Educational Gerontology,* 19 (4), 317-330, 1993.

Adams, T.:   "Preface" V: M. O' Connor (Ur.) *: Generation To Generation.*
                     Cassell, London, 1993, str.IX.

Allat, P.
in drugi :   *Women And The Life Cycle: Transitions And Turning Points,*
                     Macmillan, London 1987.

Anon: *Vienna Declaration*, International Expert Meeting Ageing in
                     Europe, Vienna 16. november 1998).

Anon: *Les questions du vieillissement et le marché du travail, rapport de
                     conférence, Eurolink Age, 1998.*

.
Anon: Older Students Resarch Group: Older Students In The Open
                             University. Open University Regional Academic Services,
                     Milton Keynes, 1984.

Attias, C. et all: "La diversité des transitions", in: *Passages de la vie active a la retraite,*
                     PUF, Paris, 1989.

Aslanian, C.
Brickell, H.:   *Americans In Transition: Life Changes As Reasons For Adult Learning*
                     College Entrance Examination Board, New York, 1980.

Atchley, R. C.:   "Retirement And Leisure Participation: Continuity Crisis« in: *The
                     Gerontologist* 1, 1971 pp.13-17

Beck, U.:   *Democracy Without Enemies,* Polity Press, Cambridge, 1998.

Benasayag, M.:   *Le mythe de l'individu,* Editions la découverte, Paris, 1998.

Bengston, V.L. :   *The Social Psychology Of Ageing,* Bobbs-Merrill, New York, 1973.

Chiva, A.:   "Manging Change In Mid And Later Life", in: J. Walker, (ed.) Changing Concepts Of Retirement, Arena, Hants,1996, pp..71-85.

Chiva, A,
Walker, J. (Ur.):   *A Handbook Of Good Pracitice In Facilitation Of Pre-Retirement Education,* A Project Part Funded By The European Union Socrates Adult Education Programme, Center For Senior Planning

Coupland, N.
et all: *Language, Society And The Elderly,* Blackwell, Oxford, 1991.

Cross, K.:   *Adults As Learners,* Jossey-Bass, San Francisco,1988.

Cummings, E
Henry, W.E.:   G*rowing Old,* Basic Books, New York, 1961.

Field, J.:   "Market Forces And Continuing Education", in :W. Lenz (ed..) *Modernisierung Der Erwachsenenbildung,* Bôhlau,Wien, 1994.

Findeisen, D.:   "Izobraževanje za četrto življenjsko obdobje," in: *Bilten Univerze za tretje življenjsko obdobje, UTŽO, Ljubljana, 1988, p.p. 34-42.*

Findesien, D.:   "Izobraževanje odraslih za lokalni razvoj", in: *Vsebinska prenova izobraževanja odraslih, Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani, Ljubljana, 1997.*

Findeisen, D.:   *Prostovoljstvo starejših za starejše,* Univerza za tretje
življenjsko obdobje, Ljubljana, 1998.

Gutmann, D.L.:   "An Exploration Of Ego Configurations In Middle And Later Life." In: B. L. Neuagraten (ed..), *Personality In Middle And Later Life. Empirical Studies,* Atherton Press, New York, 1964.

Jarvis, P.:   "Being, Learning And Ageing"in: *Educational Gerontology,,* Vol. 15, No 2, Hemisphere Publishing, 1989, p.p. 161-170

Shaffer, K., B.:   *Older Volunteers,* Sage Publications, London, 1993.

Scroutton, S. :   *Counselling Older People,* Edward Arnold, London, 1989.

Sherron, R. H.
Lumsden,
D.B. (ed.):   *Introduction To Educational Gerontology, (*3rd Ed.), New York, Hemisphere, 1990.

Simon, R::   *Ethique de la responsabilité,* Edts. du Cerf, Paris, 1993.

Sitar, S.:   "Od kod tolikšna motiviranost?" in: Bilten 1997, Univerza za tretje življenjsko obdobje, Ljubljana 1997, p.p.15-18.

Soussi, G.:   *Les associations,* Dalloz, Paris, 1985.

Stephane, R.:   *André Malraux, entretiens et précisions,* Gallimard, Paris, 1984.

Šantej, A.:   "Razvoj slovenske univerze za tretje življenjsko obdobje," in: Krajnc, A (ed.): *Kako smo snovali slovensko univerzo za tretje življenjsko obdobje,UTŽ, Ljubljana, 1992, pp..69-95.*

Vandenplas-
Holper. :   *Le développement psychologique a l'âge adulte et pendant la vieillesse,* PUF, Paris, 1998.

Vellas, P.:   *Le troisieme souffle,* Dalloz, Paris, 1977.

Vellas, P.:   "A propos de la prévention des dépressions du grand age," in: *La revue de Géeriatrie, Volume 7, No 2. 2. 1982.*

Vellas, P.:   "Le programme de recherche de l'universite du troisieme âge de Toulouse", in: *"X e Congres international des universités du troisieme âge, Neuchatel, pp. 26-28. 9. 1984.*

Withnall, A,
Percy, K. :   *Good practice in education and training of older people.*
Arena Books, Aldershot, 1994.

Woods, R.T.
(ed.):   Psychological problems of ageing: Assesment , treatement and Care, John Willey and Sons, ltd., Chichester, 1999.