

Sustainable Learning in the Community

*Raising Awareness of Older People's Competencies and
Identifying new Opportunities for Learning and
Engagement*



National Report Hungary

“Realizing new potential for learning and engagement of older people - Overview of existing material and consultation with older learners”

**Zsuzsanna Brenner
Budapest Cultural Centre (BCC)**

May 2008



Table of Contents

1 Introduction	3
1.1 <i>Relevance of SLIC for my organisation</i>	3
1.2 <i>Target groups</i>	4
2 Theoretical framework and current (political) discussions	5
2.1 <i>Current (political) discussions on the learning of older people in the community in Hungary</i>	5
2.2 <i>Theoretical framework of SLIC</i>	5
3 Research phase: Tools and instruments	6
3.1 <i>Search strategy</i>	6
3.2 <i>Overview of tools and instruments</i>	7
3.2.1 <i>Examples for workshops</i>	7
3.2.2 <i>Examples for skills profiles</i>	8
3.2.3 <i>Examples for action plans</i>	9
3.2.4 <i>Examples for certificates</i>	11
4 Consultations with older learners	12
4.1 <i>Results of the consultations</i>	12
5 Key recommendation for the SLIC-workshops	17
5.1 <i>Recommendations tackling the content of the workshops</i>	17
5.2 <i>Recommendations tackling the methods and tools of the workshops</i>	17
5.3 <i>Suggestions for a workshop design</i>	18
6 References	19
7 Annexes	20
7.1 <i>List of interviewed persons or focus groups (incl. date and length of interview)</i>	20
7.2 <i>List of tools</i>	20

1 Introduction

Community and cultural centres play a key role in providing learning opportunities and cultural programmes for older people. There are 120 community and cultural centres in Budapest and nearly all centres offer programmes for older people. Approximately half of the centres organise clubs for retired people and support their learning by providing lectures on various topics. Approximately 5 percent of the clubs operate amateur art groups and great many centres host civil organisations representing the age group.

1.1 Relevance of SLIC for my organisation

The aim of the programmes supporting the learning of older people at BCC is to improve the quality of life and to contribute to ensuring cultural and information equality.

Groups of older people can be found in the BCC since its establishment. (1979.) “Autumn time” club, “Amateur theatre of retired people”, choir of older people are all valuable but rather **traditional programmes**.

We have been carrying out a **systematic development** since 2001 and a **new system of programmes and activities** was designed which includes the traditional programmes as well.

The **key elements** are the following:

- **developing courses** based on the needs of the age group – Click on, Granny! course and adaptation of courses developed within the framework of international projects
- **participating in international projects** – Removing barriers to learning for older people, www. Golden Age, Silver Net, SLIC
- **networking** – group of professionals, venues and teachers
- **supporting self organised communities** – e.g.: Silver Net Association
- **issuing publications,**
- **facilitating voluntary work and leisure time activities.**

We offer programmes to local residents as well as we deliver services to other community and cultural centres mainly in Budapest but some of our courses are organised countrywide. We are in a special position as we can reach through our network trainers and leaders / members of the above mentioned clubs, too.

1.2 Target groups

At the moment we can reach **middle class elderly people**. We work with:

- **Participants of our courses / lectures between the age of 50 and 90**

Generally at courses, lectures, international programmes etc. we can reach **active pensioners** and we try to keep them active through our programmes. Our centre is mainly visited by older learners from the 11th district, but thanks to our most popular course (Click on, Granny!) we can reach older learners living in the countryside as well.

We also work with “**champions**”. Some of the older learners who have finished the “Click on, Granny!” course have established the Silver Net Association. The members of the association take an active role in international projects and among others they volunteer at the public internet access point.

- **Trainers of older people**

Most of them are leaders of different clubs which operate in the community and cultural centres.

- **50+ active but jeopardised on the labour market**

Our Adult Education and Information Service Office offer guidance and counselling for those people who search learning opportunities. Vast majority of these people want to learn something new because of their changing situation in the labour market.

Geographically we offer courses and services on national level but the focus is on Budapest.

2 Theoretical framework and current (political) discussions

2.1 Current (political) discussions on the learning of older people in the community in Hungary

- **Ageing society:** The issue is mainly communicated as an economic problem and a problem of the labour market. On the one hand elderly people are **not considered human resources** in the society. (They need help and care and their most important role is to support the family by looking after grandchildren.) On the other hand **isolation and loneliness** is a significant problem.
- **Professional bodies were set up** to coordinate programmes and civil organisations to represent the age-group.
 - o Secretariat for Issues of the Elderly within the Ministry
 - o NGO – Council for the Issues of the Elderly
- **New initiations:** There are more and more projects aimed to involve elderly people, facilitating their voluntary work and training programmes were designed, too. Network of projects and professionals are needed to set up as there is still no connection between projects.
- Vast majority of **adult education providers** (education centres etc.) do not consider older people as an important target group; their teachers are not well equipped with special methods.

2.2 Theoretical framework of SLIC

- BCC wants to play a key role in disseminating the idea that **older people** need to be considered as **human capital in our society**.
- We intend to realize the **concept of lifelong learning and active citizenship** through our activities. Developing courses with the **active participation** of older people, **supporting** (learning) **communities**, fostering voluntary work by participating in international projects are all evidences of this effort.
- We host **civil organisations** in our institution and we work in close co-operation with them on various topic.

3 Research phase: Tools and instruments

3.1 Search strategy

- First we tried to find those **people and organisations which coordinate older people related issues and have an overview** on the programmes running at the time of the research. We got in touch with the Volunteer Centre in Hungary and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour especially with Judit Ágnes Szabó who works for the Secretariat for Issues of the Elderly within the Ministry.
- With the help of the above mentioned organisations we found those **professionals** who are responsible for special programmes or projects. During the research phase we also used our professional contacts.
- We made phone calls and **interviewed** them. At the same time all **organisations and people were informed about SLIC project.**
- Following the interview we asked for **documents or descriptions** about the programmes / projects and we collect them in order to choose those which can be introduced in the report. During the research we studied **international projects**, too as most of the new initiations were inspired by international co-operations.
- Apart from the personal contact we also searched on the **internet.**
- During the research we faced that a lot of **traditional learning opportunities** are offered for older people like lectures on various topics. These are valuable in terms of giving information but interactive methods are just partly used during the lectures. We need to take this method into account as the majority of older learners got used to this sort of learning situation but these lectures were excluded from the research because of the method.

3.2 Overview of tools and instruments

3.2.1 Examples for workshops

Removing barriers to learning for older people

The training programme was developed within the framework of an international project. Interactive methods and interesting activities are incorporated into the programme. The training was designed for those who create learning opportunities for older people not older learners themselves but some type of activities could be used with them as well. The aim of the training is to alert participants to the range of barriers which hinder the participation of older people in learning and to find ways of overcoming these barriers.

Some ideas, methods and activities of the training can be applied within our workshop:

- Icebreakers - A number of activities designed to help people settle in and get to know each other and to help people become accustomed to work in small groups.
- What is learning? - Participants can discover their own learning style, they learn that we all learn in different ways and therefore appreciate the importance of using a variety of styles and techniques.
- Barriers - Participants understand the range of barriers – physical, psychological, cultural etc that might apply.
- Participants' own experiences - this is a facilitated session encouraging participants to share their own best practices
- Planning own strategy to overcome barriers - Trialling short activities with their peers, peer review

It was tested twice during the development phase. We realised the programme twice. In 2005 an international team took part in it and following the adaptation Hungarian trainers participated in the programme.

What can we use from this programme?

Methods and activities can be used for our workshop as well.

Click on, Granny! course

The 25 hour course has been organised by BCC. The aim of the course is to ensure the opportunity to older generation to learn about new ICT.

What can we use from this programme?

Basic principles of the course:

We make the programme as accessible as we can physically as well as financially.

We provide them with notes and handouts which are improved regularly. These are easily used after the course.

We ensure consultation during and after the course.

We create good atmosphere and real community of the learners.

Participants receive a certificate with their pictures.

Senior non-profit advisors programme

It is an 8 day training programme for those who willing to do voluntary work at different organisations making use of their expertise. Ex-managers of companies were selected and they were prepared to work as volunteers for NGOs where there is a lack of such expertise.

The aim of the programme is to acquire knowledge about civil sector, volunteering, and non-profit management and to improve counselling competences.

On the second and third day participants take part in a training session where the self-assessment method is used by the trainer.

What can we use from this programme?

Using the method of self-assessment within the framework of a training programme (counselling competence, personal SWOT analysis and motivation). At the end of this process they could decide whether they wanted to work (or can work) as volunteers or not.

Lesson that they had to learn: it is very important to prepare the host organisations for hosting volunteers as well!

3.2.2 Examples for skills profiles

AVE project (Assessing Voluntary Experiences)

The skills profile was developed by an international team. Volunteer Centre Hungary was one of the members of the team.

The aim was to identify, evaluate and validate skills and qualifications acquired through volunteering as an informal learning.

The portfolio consists of 9 parts + introduction:

1. Introduction: information about what volunteering means and how far voluntary experiences can be used in a professional perspective
2. Volunteer's biography: compiling a chronological list of important events connected with his/her volunteer activities
3. List of training and seminars attended: collecting all useful knowledge learnt through different trainings

4. Collecting voluntary activities: explaining the different roles, functions, missions fulfilled by volunteers
5. Identifying competences: reflecting about the voluntary involvement and its benefits – mind map
6. Table of competences: selecting, explaining and ranking the different skills acquired or developed through volunteering
7. Action plan: giving goals to achieve and to improve specific skills useful in a professional perspective
8. Synthesis of the portfolio: presenting in one sheet the work done in the AVE process
9. Summary sheet: compiling in one sheet the skills/competences useful on the labour market, CV
10. Annex: glossary; samples of documents to be provided by the volunteer

The Portfolio is a tool to collect information on the experiences, skills and qualifications acquired by the volunteer during his or her voluntary experience.

The Portfolio users are people doing voluntary work for a longer period and would like to enter or return to the labour market. (E.g. mothers return to work after maternity leave, young people starting their careers but have no professional experiences, those who are away from the job market due to sickness etc).

What can we use from this programme?

- studying list of competence
- studying the approach and the structure
- They had to take into account the differences in terms of:
 - the terminology of volunteering
 - the perception of volunteering
 - the typology of competences
 - the experience in the non-formal education

3.2.3 Examples for action plans

AVE project (Assessing Voluntary Experiences)

Drawing up an action plan was part of the AVE project as well.

This part of the portfolio helps to think about future plans and the way how to achieve goals.

Skills development is an ongoing process and this tool helps to set some personal targets to develop additional skills or skills which can be directly relevant for some sort of jobs or to increase somebody's confidence in particular activities.

The process of completing the action plan is the following:

- Set realistic, achievable goals!
- Identify the actions which help to achieve the goals and then list them on the action plan!
- Put a time limit!
- Fill in the progress column later and decide if you need to take further actions!

Goal (skills to develop, awards, qualifications you want to gain)	Action to take (volunteer activities / tasks to do, courses to take, training to attend etc.)	Time by which you want to have achieved goal	Progress
			Goal achieved? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partly <input type="checkbox"/> Actions taken until now:

What can we use from this programme?

- studying the approach and the structure

Silver Net Association

The Silver Net Association was established by older learners who graduated from the Click, on Granny! course. Net Grannies design their action plan and further trainings are organised by the BCC upon their needs.

What can we use from this programme?

- What is the role of an institution in creating and supporting the action plan?

3.2.4 Examples for certificates

Certificate of Click on, Granny! course

The 25 hour course finishes with an exam and older learners receive a certificate. We have tried to personalise the certificate with their photo or with a photo of the group. They are very proud of that.

4 Consultations with older learners

We interviewed 19 older people: two of them are champions, 16 active and one is not active in terms of participating in programmes but she still works.

We have carried out 3 group discussions (each group consists of 3 people) and 10 interviews.

18 women and only one man have taken part in the consultation.

We used the interview guide and try to ask all questions in a very simple way, giving them examples.

Nearly all of the participants have welcomed the initiation; only two people told that this sort of activity would not be attractive and not give a solution for this problem. (“Older people do not like such meetings. They search for programmes, company, and entertainment”.)

Some of them have expressed concern about achieving our aim saying that already active people will come to the workshop.

4.1 Results of the consultations

The design of the workshop

Methods:

Most of the participants have had some kind of experiences on different kind of meetings (e.g.: international project meeting) or courses but only three of them have taken part in workshops where they have had the chance to try out training methods. Some of them felt a little bit embarrassed when we asked: What would you like to do during the workshop? Examples helped a lot.

The suggested methods which need to be combined during the workshop are the following:

- **conversation** – Some of them thought that we should simply follow this very personal / intimate conversation as this is the way how people can be open and honest.
- **working in small groups** – They liked the idea to work in groups. Discussions in small groups and different activities would be interesting. Not all of them felt

comfortable to speak plenary and the composition of the group was considered important, too.

- **questionnaire and individual work** – It was also suggested to work individually which is the most efficient way to explore themselves. A questionnaire could be a good tool for this.
- **presentation, lecture** – They mentioned that an introductory presentation would be useful in the very beginning to make clear the aims, topics and to motivate them.
- **the workshop can be supported with PC-s** (suggestion of Net – Grannies! 😊)
- **combination of presentation and activities**
- one participant mentioned her training experiences: badge, tables in U form, good atmosphere

Time, schedule of the workshop:

2 x 6 hours was fine by them. Approximately every second hour we should have a short break and a longer lunch time was suggested. Interval between the two days could be useful. They were ready to work more on the profile individually to find new competences. The length of the interval was not defined precisely.

The contents of the workshop

There were many ideas about the **content** of the workshop. The main ideas were the following:

Learning, further training: They would like to get a plan, ideas for possible learning opportunities or they would like to improve their knowledge during the workshop.

An important finding which reflects also to the method was that efficient help from us is needed. We experienced that they had struggled with the question about their already acquired knowledge. (“I do not know what I know.”) We should consider preparing a list of competences and letting them chose from the list. Otherwise it is fairly difficult to them to reveal all competences.

New programmes: The workshop could be a good opportunity for us / for them to design new programmes which are tailored to their needs.

Encouragement, self-esteem, success: Most of them thought that creating a skills profile is a good tool for encouraging older people.

Some participants suggested drawing up database of host organisations. The workshop (and the profile) could be only the first step and then we should provide the participants with contact details (addresses, phone numbers of organisations). We have to think over the follow-up and give an adequate answer to this question: How can our project be successful and sustainable without having such network / database? Who will prepare organisations for hosting these people in case of volunteering? Especially for those who are not active it is very important the support (how to start, where to go).

Preparation for retirement: This workshop can be used for preparing active people for retirement. Lot of participants pointed out that we have to start the involvement earlier.

Voluntary work: Some of them have already done voluntary work (caring people etc.) and are ready to do more voluntary work. The workshop can help to prepare them for taking voluntary work.

Self-recognition: They could face their knowledge. It is a good opportunity to look back, to summarize and release negative things.

Relaxing: Somebody wanted to take home good mood, wanted to chill out during the workshop.

Social network: Some of them would like to build social network and set up new communities according to the common interest.

Certificate: They have different approaches, opinions regarding this question.

- Most of them would be proud of receiving a certificate and would show to friends and grandchildren.
- Some of them think it is not important only if they can use it in the future.
- Somebody thinks that the principle of helping each other is more important than receiving a certificate.

The name and leader of the workshop

The **leader** of the workshop should have a pleasant personality. He / she is described as follows:

- has good communication skills (enthusiastic, good presenter, speaks very clearly, catches the audience attention)
- has good sense of pedagogy
- equality between the leader and participants is essential
- friendly, patient, polite, intelligent, open-minded
- regarding his / her age: not important, ability for bridging the intergenerational gap, got knowledge about the age group in question – not depend on the leader's age, ↔ middle-age, has life experience

Title of the workshop:

The title in general should include the following: target group, guidance, changing life-style, future. It should be something positive about life.

Concrete suggestions: Know yourself! Pass / give your knowledge further! Don't you want to be bored when you are retired? What do we know in our 60's?

Future plans

The vast majority of the participants emphasized the positive effects of being retired: having more free time, less obligation (family and working life). However, some of them still have responsibilities in the family.

It turned out that some of them have already done (or doing) **voluntary work** in their neighbourhood: caring other older people, helping them to do the shopping etc. One participant works as a volunteer in a hospital. Two of them expressed their definite intention to learn more about voluntary work and spend more time on volunteering. Other participants were also ready to volunteer if they have time for that. (Or if they perceive this as a mission or task within the community - comment from Zsuzsa.)

The **field of interest** is very broad:

- doing some leisure-time activities – excursions, yoga, travelling,
- taking part in cultural programmes: theatre, literature, art, history, exhibitions
- taking part in courses / lectures - learning languages, ICT, photo, communication, psychology, health prevention

Motivating others to become active

However, most of them mentioned that they had already tried to motivate and involve other people enjoying these years is taken priority over other things. The majority just partly was successful in involving others. Some of them mentioned that they did not want to put a lot of effort on convincing depressed people or did not have more energy for that. Usually they give a try but after one or two negative reactions they give it up.

Those who had positive experiences emphasized the importance of **encouragement and building self-esteem**. Everybody pointed out that older people are more reserved and it is pretty difficult to reach them.

What is needed for being active or keep somebody active?

- It is a question of personality and need or desire to do something
- former life: the more active was during his / her working life, the more active is as a pensioner
- role model in the family
- being member of a community – taking responsibilities, tasks, mission
- strong connection to leaders or institution

Ideas how to involve older people:

- power of personal persuasion (giving a model - success, health, energy, happiness) conversation with somebody from the age-group(!)
- course for prepare active people for retirement
- media – role of positive examples (TV, radio, local newspapers)
- Silver Net Association – as a mission all members should try to involve at least one not active person
- One participant differentiated the age group. Different channels should be used for reaching them:
 - 55 – 65: flyers, media
 - 65 - : personal conversation

5 Key recommendation for the SLIC-workshops

5.1 Recommendations tackling the content of the workshops

- Skills profile + certificate together, otherwise the certificate is not valuable for everybody
- giving more information and examples on voluntary work
- providing them with tips – how to be successful in involving others
- activities which ensuring the chance to build social network – to find common interest → creating new communities according to the field of interest
- creating relaxing environment and situations where they can celebrate their success
- providing them with contacts and guidance is needed (how to start, where to go) – not to leave them alone with the results of the skills profile → preparing databases of learning opportunities and network of host organisations operating in different areas

5.2 Recommendations tackling the methods and tools of the workshops

- preparing a list of possible competences and letting them chose from that and giving them the opportunity to complete it individually
- a good mixture of presentation, discussions in pairs, group work, and independent work → make them more open and engaged
 - presentation → explaining things, giving more information on issues, understanding the aim, motivation, feel comfortable, familiar situation
 - discussion in pairs → more personal
 - working in small groups (interesting activities) → finding common interest, building social network
 - independent work → proceeding information

5.3 Suggestions for a workshop design

First day:

10.00 – 10.15	Introduction: aim, motivation
10.15 – 10.30	Ice-breaking
10.30 – 11.00	Getting to know each other (working in pairs or in small groups)
11.00 – 11.15	Coffee break
11.15 – 12.00	Skills profile I. – collecting information to the profile – hobby, family, voluntary work, job - group work
12.00 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 14.30	Skills profile II. – collecting information to the profile - group work
14.30 – 14.45	Coffee break
14.45 – 15.00	Summarising and celebrating the result (pool of competences, knowledge, expertise)
15.00 – 15.40	Knowledge market - what can we learn from you? → building social network
15.40 – 16.00	Introduction of the homework, closing the day

Second day:

10.00 – 10.10	Introduction: aim of the day, motivation
10.10 – 10.25	ice-breaking
10.25 – 11.00	sharing experiences on voluntary work – discussion in groups and plenary
11.00 – 11.10	Coffee break
11.10 – 12.00	Action plan I. – map of field of interest, collecting plans
12.00 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 14.30	comparing the portfolio and the action plan – what should I learn to achieve my aims?
14.00 – 15.00	tips – how to be successful in motivating and involving others
15.00 – 16.00	next steps – support, database, further individual work

6 References

<http://mapage.noos.fr/leonardo.vaeb/eeuropeassociations.gb.htm> - AVE project
(portfolio and guide)

Breaking down barriers to learning for older people – a training manual (ContinYou, 2004)

7 Annexes

7.1 List of interviewed persons or focus groups (incl. date and length of interview)

Interview/Focus group No.	Organisation	Type of consultation*	No. of participants	Date of interview/focus group	Duration [in minutes]
1	BCC	Group discussion	3	09 04 2008	75
2	BCC	Interview	1	09 04 2008	60
3	BCC	Interview	1	09 04 2008	55
4	BCC	Interview	1	09 04 2008	40
5	BCC	Group discussion	3	21 04 2008	60
6	BCC	Interview	1	21 04 2008	75
7	BCC	Interview	1	30 04 2008	75
8	BCC	Interview	1	14 05 2008	60
9	BCC	Interview	1	14 05 2008	75
10	BCC	Group discussion	3	14 05 2008	105
11	BCC	Interview	1	15 05 2008	60
12	BCC	Interview	1	15 05 2008	50
13	BCC	Interview	1	23 05 2008	60

* interview or group discussion

7.2 List of tools

Nr.	Name of the instrument	Organisation	Source	Type of the instrument	Short abstract
1	Removing barriers to learning for older people	BCC	Breaking down barriers to learning for older people – a training manual (ContinYou, 2004)	1	<p>This training programme can be used by trainers who are training others to work successfully with older learners but the activities can be used with older learners as well.</p> <p>The programme is a five-day training session.</p> <p>The activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help participants understand barriers to learning for older people • help them find ways to overcome these barriers that will work in their own circumstances • model inclusive methods of training that participants can use back in their own setting • help participants relax and enjoy their learning
2	Click on, Granny! course	BCC	http://www.bmknet.hu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=241	1	<p>Target group: senior citizens over 55</p> <p>Aims:</p> <p>providing the opportunity to older generation to learn about new ICT showing how to access information</p> <p>using Internet as a new way of communication (send and receive e-mails)</p> <p>Main features:</p> <p>Inclusive method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - developing a special curriculum tailored to the older learners' needs - Small groups (6, max 10 learners) - making the program as accessible as we can (physically and financially) - providing them with notes and handouts which are improved regularly - ensuring consultation during and after the program - good atmosphere and creating a real community - certificate with their picture - no previous experience is needed

3	Senior non-profit advisors programme	Nyitott Képzések Egyesülete		1	<p>It is an 8 day training programme for those who willing to do voluntary work at different organisations making use of their expertise. Ex-managers of companies were selected. The aim is to prepare them to work as volunteers for NGOs where there is a lack of such expertise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using the method of self-assessment within the framework of a training programme (counselling competence, personal SWOT analysis and motivation). At the end of this process they could decide whether they wanted to work as volunteers. - Lesson that they had to learn: it is very important to prepare the host organisations as well for hosting volunteers!
4	Assessing Voluntary Experience	Voluntary Centre Hungary (Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány) + international team	http://www.oka.hu/alap.php?inc=dsp&menu_id=23&almenu_id=7 http://mapage.noos.fr/leonardo.vaeb/	2, 3	<p>The skills profile was developed by an international team. The aim was to identify, evaluate and validate skills and qualifications acquired through volunteering as an informal learning.</p> <p>The portfolio consists of 9 parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a biography of the volunteer • a list of training followed • the missions fulfilled • a method to identify the competences (mind-map) • a list of competences (tables of competences) • an action plan for the volunteer • a synthesis of the portfolio • the volunteer's curriculum vitae • Annexes : European CV , presentation of the association
5	Silver Net Association	Silver Net Association + BCC	http://www.ezustnet.hu/	3	<p>The Silver Net Association was established by older learners who graduated from the "Click, on Granny!" course. Net Grannies design their action plan and further trainings are organised by the BCC upon their needs.</p>
6	"Click on it Granny" Certificate	BCC	http://www.bmknet.hu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=241	4	<p>The 25 hour course finishes with an exam and older learners receive a certificate. The certificate is personalised with their photo or with a photo of the group.</p>