



## 7 Examples of good practice in working with older people

### Life-long Learning

Austria, 2009

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Department for Ageing and Volunteering Policies

#### 1. L<sup>3</sup>-Lebensbegleitend Lustvoll Lernen nach Montessori (Enjoyable Life-Long Learning according to Montessori)

##### Relevance of the topic:

Life-long learning, education for older and very old persons, in particular in nursing homes or day centres

##### Start and end date of project:

March 2008 – June 2009

##### Goal and very brief description:

The project L<sup>3</sup> aims at enabling senior citizens to enjoy life-long learning for as long as possible so as to help them maintain or re-acquire self-initiated activities and independence even in old age. The project approach is based on the idea of transferring the principles of Montessori education to geragogics.

This approach is pursued on the basis of scientific and practice-oriented standards. The “undirected learning phase” has been practised in basic and intermediate groups for many years; it is a 4-stage model continuously modified and adjusted to the needs of senior citizens with a diversity of skills.

The result of these efforts is an “undirected learning phase using geragogic materials according to Montessori”. Practice of the stages leads to self-controlled learning within a given framework which makes senior citizens more self-assured. Another important aspect of the undirected learning phase with geragogic materials is that the participants design their learning environment.

To implement the undirected learning phase, the two project leaders developed a number of didactic materials based on the educational principles of Maria Montessori which meet the requirements of geragogics. The characteristics of Montessori materials – isolation of one feature, limitation of qualities, inherent error control, aesthetics and activity – were

complemented by stable base plates, clear structures, instruction cards in large print and various supplementary materials.

Materials are not only developed but also tested, evaluated and revised, if required. Both the concept and the learning materials were examined by experts in respect of their suitability for the target group and their contents.

A catalogue was compiled for the target group to be trained in using the materials, i.e. senior citizen carers (day centres – Fund Social Vienna), social support workers (Caritas homes of the Archdiocese Vienna) and LIMA trainers (teachers in gerontological education of KBW St. Pölten, a Catholic educational institution). The catalogue contains the theoretical background and didactic concept behind the materials and lists of the materials systems. It contains a photo collage, instructions for production and handling, information on geragogic aspects and ready-to-use templates for copying covering the 18 materials systems.

### **Degree of implementation/progress status:**

The pilot project has been completed.

### **Applicable criteria of good practice:**

- *Ideas of successful learning:* The L<sup>3</sup> project stands for a specific idea of how older persons – possibly with physical limitations – are able to and should learn, i.e. in a self-determined and joyful manner. The aim is to maintain or re-acquire independence.
- *Gender aspect:* The gender aspect is taken into account inasmuch as the documentation for learning support workers and participants is gender-sensitive. In part, men are specifically targeted so as to motivate them to attend. As a result, a total of 17% out of 108 registered participants were men. Another aspect is the choice of “coffee” as a focal topic for all materials at present. Coffee is something nearly everyone can relate to, regardless of gender.
- *Inclusion of educationally disadvantaged strata:* Educationally disadvantaged strata of society are taken into consideration because the main target group of L<sup>3</sup> is persons who are health-impaired and thus affected by restricted mobility. As many groups have directly been organised in the day centres of the Municipality of Vienna or Caritas homes, this conforms to the principles of outreach in education.
- *Participatory design:* The concept of an “undirected learning phase for senior citizens” is in principle aimed at self-determined and thus participatory learning. Most of the time in one unit is spent on the free selection and execution of tasks.
- *Publicity and degree of dissemination:* The project leaders do not believe in an idea of learning whereby the participants turn what they have learnt into a public performance. During the stage of reflection within the group, the participants are able to speak about their experiences and feelings during a unit. The project itself is accompanied by much public relations work, in that lectures or workshops are organised for various institutions and at events.
- *Self-defined and third-party defined quality requirements:* The concept of an “undirected learning phase for senior citizens” emerged from existing theoretical considerations and scientific surveys on Montessori paedagogics and geragogics. The theoretical underpinnings and the materials were and will in the future be examined by the project leaders and experts in respect on theoretical and practical aspects. Quality assurance is warranted by the three kick-off events for learning support workers prior to the practical implementation of the project. This way, the special situation and the needs of learning support workers in the institutions were taken into account. Moreover, the project leaders sat in on one L<sup>3</sup> unit under the guidance of a learning support worker each, and gave feedback. After training,

project workers will be given continued support. The project quality will also be assured by means of questionnaires to be filled in by the L<sup>3</sup> group participants.

- *Development:* From the very beginning L<sup>3</sup> has been a work in progress and the development process continues. For example, new materials are to be prepared.
- *Sustainability:* It is difficult to assess sustainability in a relatively new project. In view of the fact that L<sup>3</sup> is embedded in an institutional context and the project leaders are guarantors of a sustainable approach as they offer follow-up training, first indications of sustainability can be identified. In respect of sustainability within individual groups, it has to be added that the composition of the groups can only partly be sustained in the long run as the fluctuation rate in day centres or homes is high because the state of health of the persons concerned is frequently poor.
- *Education as a cross-cutting concept/network structure:* The project brings together the Fund Social Vienna, Caritas Vienna and KBW St. Pölten.

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## **2. LIMA – Lebensqualität im Alter (Quality of Life in Old Age)**

**Relevance of the topic:**

Life-long learning, senior education

**Start and end date of project:**

March – December 2008

**Goal and very brief description:**

The project LIMA – Lebensqualität im Alter“ is a low-threshold educational programme which addresses persons aged 55 and above. The basic idea for the development of LIMA is derived from the project “Independent Living in Old Age” devised under the guidance of Prof. Oswald at the University of Erlangen. This is a training programme covering and combining several areas: memory training, motor training, skills training as well as issues of meaning and life.

In memory training, cognitive performance is advanced by concentration and attention exercises, and mnemonic devices are learnt.

Motor training includes balance and coordination exercises, agility exercises, games and dances as well as relaxation training, aiming at more physical activity and safer movement.

Skills training aims at improving every-day skills which are to be attained on the basis of information and options in the context of changes that occur in old age, housing in old age, nutrition in old age or social contacts, and how these can be shaped and designed.

Issues of meaning and belief stand for a component in the programme which has to do with concerns that are addressed or remain unspoken, e.g. doubts and fears, hopes and longings, meaningful ways of ageing, relationships with life partners, loneliness, illness and suffering or farewell.

These four components are combined in the “LIMA” training programme, with the objective being the extended maintenance of senior citizens’ independence and self-determination to improve their quality of life.

“LIMA” trainings groups exist in educational institutions of parishes, senior citizens’ clubs, senior citizens’ homes, day centres, doctors’ practices, project groups or private groups etc. Meetings are usually organised in modules of 10 one-hour units, either weekly or at two-week intervals. “LIMA” training groups may be founded on location wherever there is an interest in this. The “Katholisches Bildungswerk” (Catholic Education Association) trains and puts interested parties in contact with trainers.

“LIMA” trainers undergo a training programme consisting of 6 modules. In total, they have to do 12 days of classroom training and practical work in a group, and they have to write a final paper. The entire programme takes four months. About 30 to 32 persons complete the “LIMA” trainer programme every year. The Catholic Education Association brings the trainers together in a network and organises various events and continuing education.

### **Degree of implementation/progress status:**

Fully implemented

### **Applicable criteria of good practice:**

- *Ideas of successful learning:* The Catholic Education Association Vienna defines successful learning as follows: “...when participants are able to experience and learn new things at a variety of levels for use in specific situations of life, thus broadening their ability to take decisions and act in every-day life.” The topics dealt with in the groups are tailored to the participants to the greatest possible extent, and take their interests, needs and personal circumstances into account. There is much focus on assistance to the “weaker” participants, who are especially catered to, with the objective being that the stronger attendees support the weaker ones.
- *Intergenerational programme:* The educational programme is specially geared to older persons, there is no intergenerational exchange between “old and young”. Some groups are composed of participants aged from 60 to 80, so that different generations of older people are represented. This is reflected in didactic approaches.
- *Gender aspect:* 95% of the participants are women. Advertising materials are gender-neutral, or even addressed at men (the photograph shows a man).
- *Inclusion of educationally disadvantaged strata:* These are taken into account as no previous knowledge and skills are required and that the programme focuses on the attendees’ lives. Attendance fees are low (depending on whether rooms have to be rented or not), amounting to about € 5.00 per training unit.
- *Participatory design:* Participants are supposed to get actively involved and make suggestions.
- *Publicity and degree of dissemination:* “LIMA” training is also offered in various institutions and parishes. “LIMA Days” are opportunities of travelling with group members and spending a few days away from home to continue training and attend events (always for exercise purposes).

- *Self-defined and third-party defined quality requirements:* Quality requirements are fulfilled by the special and educational skills of the speakers which are assured by training and continuing education. The programme team is composed of specialised lecturers from the areas of medicine, sports studies and geragogics.
- *Research and development:* Further development and improvements are made on the basis of experiences discussed in the trainers' network.
- *Sustainability:* The project is sustainable because it is a long-term project (about 10 units). Practice has shown that participants attend the group over several years.
- *Education as a cross-cutting concept/network structure:* The Catholic Education Association Vienna brings the trainers in the Diocese together in a network and also ensures networking with the Catholic Education Associations in the other Länder. Moreover, there is cooperation with other adult education institutions, day centres, senior citizens' homes etc.

The special feature of the project "LIMA – Lebensqualität im Alter" is its special focus on the life and environment of older persons; trainers are educated in such a way that they take the interests and needs of older persons into consideration in the programme and identify potentials for activation and empowerment.

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**3. Montagsakademie  
 (Monday Academy)**

**Relevance of the topic:**

Life-long learning, scientific and scholarly continuing education for older persons, intergenerational learning, education at regional level

**Start and end date of project:**

The "Monday Academy" takes place in the spring and winter terms every year.

**Goal and very brief description:**

The "Monday Academy" is supported by the Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection. It is a series of lectures given on 13 evenings across the entire academic year. Since June 2003, the "Monday Academy" has been organised and developed further by the Zentrum für Weiterbildung (Center for Continuing Education) at Graz University. The "Monday Academy" in its present form and the extended version emerged from a predecessor project founded in response to the introduction of tuition fees. It was created to offer education to older persons with an interest in tertiary education free of charge. The series of events that ensued not only attracts older persons but now targets

persons from all age groups and social strata under the motto “Education for all by making science generally understandable”.

The basic principles of the “Monday Academy” are as follows:

- unrestricted access for all
- a special focus on older persons
- free admission

The “Monday Academy” has a scientific management team in charge of contents. It is composed of five professors from various faculties. The team is appointed for a three-year term of office and chooses a spokesperson. All members of the scientific management team are also facilitators and moderators at events. Each academic year has one underlying theme which is dealt with from the perspectives of different scientific disciplines in lectures. The speakers are volunteers who give their lectures free of charge.

The “eMonday” (“eMontag”) concept is an extension of the “Monday Academy”. Since November 2004 the regular lectures of the “Monday Academy” have been broadcast live via Internet (stream or video conference) live for audiences at regional institutions of the Land of Styria; in the academic year 2007/08 broadcasts in Lower Austria and Salzburg were added. Interested parties who live outside of Graz are thus able to follow the “Monday Academy” from their area. The lectures are given in the auditorium of Graz University, filmed by three cameras and broadcast directly in the three “satellite locations”. To date, four lectures were even given at KB5 Kirchbach, an event centre near Graz, and also broadcast. The first broadcasts could only be received at three technology centres because these had the technical equipment required. As time went by, interest in live broadcasts in various regions increased and the number of cooperation partners rose. At present, the project has a total of 16 cooperation partners:

The cooperation partners initiate the broadcast of the “Monday Academy” in their location, they advertise it and undertake to organise regular broadcasts over the term of the cooperation agreement. The requirements on the part of the Center for Continuing Education at Graz University are as follows: admission must be free of charge and the academic character of the lecture must be ensured (e.g. no party politics).

After each series of lectures, the Center for Continuing Education publishes the lecture in a collection of texts, provided that the required funds have been generated. This way, interested parties can read up on the past lectures or find inspiration for further engagement with the topic. The collection of texts can currently be bought for € 9.90.

### **Degree of implementation/progress status:**

The “Monday Academy” takes place in the spring and winter terms every year.

### **Applicable criteria of good practice:**

- *Ideas of successful learning:* The aim of the “Monday Academy” is to make scientific information available to persons who do not have an academic background. Lectures that are generally understood and backed up by audiovisual presentations are to give attendees an idea of what scientists and scholars deal with in their disciplines. They aim to promote thinking across several dimensions (one’s own life, as well as the national, international and global levels).
- *Intergenerational programme:* This is an intergenerational programme since it not only addresses older persons but also attracts people from other age groups who attend the “Monday Academy”. To foster the intergenerational exchange of ideas, the programme is also sent to schools.

- *Gender aspect:* The aspect of gender is taken into account at several levels: in the composition of the scientific management team, in the selection of speakers, and in the choice of topics (in the academic year 2008/09 two lectures were devoted to gender issues). Moreover, the focus is also on gender-sensitive language.
- *Inclusion of educationally disadvantaged strata:* Educationally disadvantaged strata of society are included inasmuch as scientists and scholars are directed to word their lectures in generally understandable language. Moreover, lectures are exclusively given in German even though it is customary to invite speakers from non-German speaking countries to universities.
- *Participatory design:* The programme design is not participatory in nature because responsibility for content lies with the scientific management team and the team largely selects the topics of lectures. However, after the end of each lecture, attendees can voice their ideas in a Q&A session or discussion. Suggestions can also be made by e-mail, phone or a questionnaire; these are then passed on to the scientific management team.
- *Publicity and degree of dissemination:* The “Monday Academy” reaches a large audience. Since the academic year 2002/03 a total of 52,000 persons has attended, this corresponds to an average 7,500 persons per year. Due to the development of the “eMonday” the range of offerings was expanded. Further interested persons in all of Styria and beyond can be reached with the help of the cooperation partners.
- *Self-defined and third-party defined quality requirements:* There are a number of self-defined quality requirements. The significant ones are that the lectures should impart knowledge in generally understandable language while maintaining the academic character of the event. Evaluations are done directly in Graz, feedback questionnaires are available at each lecture.
- *Research and development:* Via the programme “Vita Activa”, the insights from the lectures are deepened and geared towards older persons due to offerings directed exclusively at this target group or enabling enhanced intergenerational exchange. Moreover, a pilot project of the “Monday Academy” in south-eastern Europe is in the pipeline.
- *Sustainability:* The “Monday Academy” project is sustainable in several respects. Interested persons are given an opportunity of attending lectures on a certain overarching theme over an entire academic year (the overarching theme of the academic year 2004/05 was sustainability) and the programme has been in place for seven years now. Further long-range effects are produced by the publication of the collection of texts, online videos, radio recordings and continuous support by the Center for Continuing Education.
- *Education as a cross-cutting concept/network structure:* The programme is based on strong networking. On the one hand, it brings together many departments and divisions of Graz University, on the other hand, the programme cooperates with other universities, and by virtue of its local partners in the regions, the Center for Continuing Education has linked up with towns and smaller communities, centres of education and technology, schools, companies etc.

In all respects, the “Monday Academy” is a good-practice example of senior education. This has to be stressed because it is usually only a certain group of persons who engages in academic education. Due to its efforts to develop and further improve educational offerings for senior citizens, the Center for Continuing Education is a role model for other academic continuing education institutions.

**Link to website or contact for further information:**

Zentrum für Weiterbildung der Universität Graz  
(Center for Continuing Education at Graz University)

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#### **4 . Orientierungshilfe für freiwillige Mitarbeit** **(Orientation for voluntary work)**

##### **Relevance of the topic:**

Life-long learning, senior education, informal learning

##### **Start and end date of project:**

December 2007 – November 2009

##### **Goal and very brief description:**

The workshop “Orientation for voluntary work” emerged in the framework of the EU project “SLIC - Sustainable Learning in the Community”. The SLIC project is coordinated by the Austrian Red Cross and the Research Institute of the Red Cross as well as the Circle of Austrian Adult Education Associations (*Ring Österreichischer Bildungswerke*, the umbrella organisation of Austrian education associations). International cooperation partners are Institut für Soziale Infrastruktur ISIS (evaluation, Germany), Adult Education Centre of the City of Helsinki (Finland), Budapest Cultural Centre (Hungary), Lunaria (Italy), INTEVAL Limited (UK), Policy Research Institute on Ageing and Ethnicity PRIAE (UK) and the University of Strathclyde (UK).

The SLIC project, which is supported by the European Commission and the Austrian Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, aims at raising the awareness of older persons for their own skills and potentials and at showing them ways of shaping their life in retirement actively. “The aim is the empowerment of older persons in order to avoid social isolation, strengthen informal networks and facilitate a healthy transition from working life to retirement.”

For this reason, methods are being developed to “involve older persons actively in society and at the same time give them an opportunity to identify their potentials and develop them further by formal and informal learning. The participants are to find out which formal and informal learning options they need to avail themselves of if they want to become involved in their local environment. Local community activities may e.g. be volunteer work at various levels, becoming active in political life, the development of one’s own projects or the foundation of informal learning groups.”

To develop methods which are to contribute to older persons’ actively shaping their lives, SLIC proceeded as follows: Firstly, information on existing materials on education, skills and engagement of older persons was collected. This was done by gathering data on measures carried out by educational and vocational guidance institutions, on retirement preparation courses and skills balance sheets. The next step was to assess the needs of older persons in respect of their expectations about skills profiles and certificates for learning. Following this stage of the project, a concept for a two-day skills workshop with older persons was developed, and this concept was, or still is, implemented in practice.

The purpose of the skills workshops is to prepare a manual which will help various organisations to carry out the workshop on their own. In the long run, the goal is to enable older persons to offer skills workshops for people in their age group themselves.

On the surface, the target group of the workshop “Orientation for voluntary work” is people over 50 years of age who want to do voluntary work in the areas where the Red Cross is active. The two-day workshop is deliberately not organised on two consecutive days to give participants time for reflection. It takes place between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. The first day starts with taking stock of life, family and work experiences up to the present which eventually lead to a skills balance sheet identifying personal strong points. Therefore, the motto of the first day is “What can I do?” The motto of the second day is “Where do I want to go?” This is dealt with in a personal Action Plan showing where the participants can use their personal skills best and what they need to do to get there.

### **Degree of implementation/progress status:**

Currently being implemented

### **Applicable criteria of good practice:**

- *Ideas of successful learning:* The workshop concept is based on state-of-the-art knowledge about senior learning. Various learning techniques are applied, including chalk-and-talk, individual work, group work, discussion rounds etc. there are regular breaks and participants are given opportunities to work in an independent and self-determined way. Learning during the workshop will be considered successful if, at the end, participants find the right area to do voluntary work in.
- *Gender aspect:* The workshop addresses women rather than men. An average 80% of participants are women.
- *Inclusion of educationally disadvantaged strata:* Educationally disadvantaged strata of society were included in that the workshop was publicised in a variety of media. More than half of the participants who attended had completed compulsory education or an apprenticeship.
- *Participatory design:* Apart from scientific data, the workshop design was also based on the outcomes of focus groups with a total of 21 participants. They were asked what the framework of the planned workshop should be like. The result was i.a. that the ideal workshop day should be six hours of work with a long lunch break, and should offer the option of attending in the company of another person because this would enable participants to make plans for future voluntary work together. Older persons thought that it was important to have at least one week between the first and second workshop day to take some time for reflection and for research and more specific planning of the project. Respondent also considered it relevant to find a balance between focused and creative work. The workshop itself was supposed to support active participation on the part of attendees. In spite of the existing structure, participants should be able to remain active within the structural framework, e.g. by giving each other feedback.
- *Publicity and degree of dissemination:* What has been learnt is not actually presented by the participants although at the end of the workshop, they write short reports about their experiences and these reports can be accessed on the website of the SLIC project. The project management does a lot of PR work via the SLIC website, various articles in special journals and the magazine of the Red Cross, and eventually also by preparing the manual which sums up all the experiences made during the workshops.
- *Self-defined and third-party defined quality requirements:* At the end of the second workshop day, feedback questionnaires are handed out; they are about satisfaction with the workshop design, individual tools and the trainers. Moreover, there are short reflection periods after phases of work during which participants voice their impressions.
- *Research and development:* The workshop is still at a stage of scientific and practice-oriented development, aiming at the development of a manual for organisations and

summarising R&D results in respect of successful learning/work with older persons and/or older volunteers.

- *Sustainability*: Sustainability is ensured by many factors here. 1. In addition to the trainers, there are also specific contacts in the Red Cross organisation who will liaise with workshop participants and provide with more information concerning next steps, problems etc. 2. In the autumn, follow-up has been planned to meet with participants and discuss any problems as may have arisen. 3. Sustainability of the SLIC project and the resulting workshop also results from the fact that the workshop is to be institutionalised in the Red Cross. 4. Moreover, the manual currently being compiled will ensure sustainability.
- *Education as a cross-cutting concept/network structure*: Since SLIC is an EU project, there is strong networking among the project partners.

The workshop "Orientation for voluntary work" is mainly considered a good-practice example due to the high degree of international networking which entails exchange of experiences and input for further development, and because both its concept and further development are based on scientific insights, as well as because of the sustainable impact aimed for by a variety of actions.

**Link to website or contact for further information:**

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**5. ZukunftsmentorInnen**  
*(Future Mentors)*

**Relevance of the topic:** Life-long learning, senior education, empowerment

**Start and end date of project:**

September 2008 - 31 December 2009

**Goal and very brief description:**

The project "Future Mentors" is a pilot project when it comes to "expanding the innovative potential of older persons by developing new fields of learning, activity and action". It is supported by the Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and the Land of Styria (Department of Science and Research). The subtitle is "ein alternatives – alterAKTIVes Angebot zum Querdenken – Mitdenken und Umsetzen für Menschen und Gemeinden" ("An alternative invitation to active senior citizens – for lateral thinkers who want to think for themselves and take action, for people and communities").

The project "Future Mentors" is based on the fact that our society is ageing and that the chapter called "older age" in our lives may last for as long as 20 to 30 years. Between the time when we stop working in our jobs and for our families and the time when we enter old

age, there is a stage in life which can be shaped according to our own wishes. Therefore, the project has two objectives:

- a sustainable and exemplary way of giving visibility to the added value and the options to design “older age” – a project involving 10 communities
- the identification of potentials in the stage of life called “older age” and development of options to shape it.

The “Future Mentors” project should thus be seen as an empowerment project for older persons, who are taught various capabilities and skills in six modules during a period of one year. At the end the participants should be in a position to develop and implement projects and initiatives revolving around the life of the older generation in their community. The first three modules serve to expand the participants’ personal experiences, modules 4 to 6 are devoted to a “toolbox” for subsequent work as a “future mentor”. Training provides fundamental knowledge and practical know-how about nutrition, motor activity, mental and social activity in the third and fourth age, gerontology, geragogics, communication, presentation, societal participation, project organisation, marketing and public relations as well as networking. During training participants are to collect ideas for a project they wish to implement once they have become “future mentors” and develop their ideas in more specific terms. They have to produce a written project paper describing their projects or initiatives and commit development and planning on paper so that they can be put into practice later on.

**Degree of implementation/progress status:**

Currently being implemented

**Applicable criteria of good practice:**

- *Ideas of successful learning:* Learning is described as an integrated and active process in which new information is linked with previous knowledge and experiences, and thinking, feeling and acting can be coordinated. According to the project leaders, learning is successful when educational content is incorporated in the personal sphere.
- *Intergenerational programme:* There is no intergenerational aspect in the strict sense of the word. However, if the notion is considered in a wider sense, i.e. also encompassing responsibility for the future – for subsequent generations – which is to be taken on by the future mentors, then the programme acquires an intergenerational aspect.
- *Gender aspect:* Information and project design are such that both women and men feel addressed and that the project is interesting to both sexes.
- *Inclusion of educationally disadvantaged strata:* Information describing the project and seeking to attract interested parties people are primarily addressed for their experience and social skills, not so much on the basis of the educational background.
- *Participatory design:* Participants choose the focus of their projects themselves. Programme design is given but the process is flexible and takes participants’ wishes into account.
- *Publicity and degree of dissemination:* What the participants have learnt is accessible to the public in that the projects developed by participants are implemented. At present, the educational programme has not been disseminated widely (pilot stage). One aim is to make the “Future Mentor” training an institution beyond the Land of Styria.

- *Self-defined and third-party defined quality requirements:* Self-defined quality requirements relate to the number of project communities reached and projects executed. Participants continuously provide written feedback in brief which forms the basis of adjustments. Moreover, the project will be evaluated by means of a written questionnaire at the end.
- *Research and development:* The project is a pilot, further development will be based on the initial model and the success of the first phase of training.
- *Sustainability:* Sustainability is ensured by the fact that during training, the Future Mentors develop a project which is then to be put into practice. Most of the participants (11 persons) are supported by their home communities. Whatever has been learnt can directly be implemented. Likewise, sustainability also means that communities send people to train as Future Mentors.
- *Education as a cross-cutting concept/network structure:* At the level of the provider organisation, cooperation is in place with other institutions (e.g. health promotion, assisted living, adult education). At project level, contacts with communities are built via the Association of Towns and Municipalities). After they have completed training, the participants stay in touch with each other with support from the club AUFWIND.

Sustainability is a specially important focus of this project. Successful initiatives and projects enable the Future Mentors to shape the environment for older people today, whilst they can also influence future generations, with the Future Mentors serving as role models.

**Link to website or contact for further information:**

AUFWIND Bildungsmanagement & TrainerInnennetzwerk  
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**6. TIK – Technik in Kürze**  
*(Technology in Brief)*

**Relevance of the topic:**

Life-long learning, senior learning in the field of new communication and information technologies, intergenerational learning

**Start and end date of project:**

September 2008 – March 2009

**Goal and very brief description:**

The project “Technology in Brief.” is an educational programme for the generation 50+ which seeks to convey technical skills when it comes to using a computer, the Internet, digital cameras and mobile phones. It is supported by the Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs

and Consumer Protection. A patent application was filed for the project and the German name is a registered trademark.

“Technology in Brief” emerged from the fast development of science and technology in the past few decades which had enormous influence on every-day life. Experiences have shown that many people – and especially senior citizens – found it hard to keep up with technical progress. In order to prevent older persons from being overcharged with notions such as “homepage“, “online form“, “digicam“ or “text message” and to make them less afraid of technical equipment, the educational programme was developed to introduce them to technology in every-day life.

The programme is composed of four modules which can be booked as a package, combining some or all, or individually:

- Module 1 “Basic Computer Skills”: Participants are familiarised with the basics of computers, Windows, word and spreadsheet processing, the use of the user interface and the application of software programmes. Interested persons need no preliminary knowledge. The course consists of a total of three units of 150 minutes each.
- Module 2 “Introduction to the INTERNET“: This course deals with the basics of Internet use, Internet research and information retrieval, Internet services, the use of Internet fora, the Internet in every-day life, communication by e-mail and the use of online banking systems. To attend this module, participants must either have completed Module 1 or have basic PC skills. The course consists of a total of three units of 150 minutes each.
- Module 3 “Introduction to the DIGITAL CAMERA“: Again, this course consists of a total of three units of 150 minutes each, familiarising participants with the basics of digital cameras and the differences between digital and analogue photography, the functions and use of digital cameras, computerised photo processing, reworking and storing, sending and printing photos. This module also requires completion of Module 1 or basic PC skills.
- Module 4 “Introduction to the MOBILE PHONE“: For this course, one 90-minute unit is scheduled. Participants are taught the basic workings and functions of mobile phones, storing phone numbers, texting and retrieving voicemail messages. In addition, questions about participants’ own mobile phones are answered.

The project follows three basic principles: intergenerationality, regional structure of the programme and low costs for participants.

The intergenerational approach is ensured by cooperation with lower secondary and middle schools. Courses requiring computers are organised at the schools. The local teachers are in charge of teaching whilst pupils work with the senior citizens and support them throughout the course. One pupil should attend to two to three senior citizens.

One requirement from the organisers is that the courses should be within easy reach for those interested. For this reason, much attention is paid to a wide geographical distribution of the “Technology in Brief” modules. Organisers look for partners in the Styrian regions and municipalities who are able to arrange the courses on location in cooperation with local schools. This keeps the costs for participants low: The fee for Module 4 is € 2.00, for the other modules it is € 15.00.

#### **Degree of implementation/progress status:**

The pilot project has been completed.

#### **Applicable criteria of good practice:**

- *Ideas of successful learning:* The Catholic Education Association defines learning as “the constructive processing of information and experience which leads to new know-

how, insights and skills, also promoting emotional qualities.” The didactic concept is based on an interactive engagement with the topic on hand. The topics are in line with the living environment of the older persons and have a bearing on their every-day life. The most important criterion is that the focus is on the senior citizens and that their questions are dealt with.

- *Intergenerational programme:* The intergenerational aspect is central to this project; it is found in cooperation with local schools and pupils as teaching assistants.
- *Gender aspect:* The gender aspect is taken into account in the low course fees, as older women usually have a low income. However, the courses address women and men alike as they relate to every-day life
- *Inclusion of educationally disadvantaged strata:* The courses are held in the local communities so that they also target educationally disadvantaged strata.
- *Participatory design:* Attendees are strongly involved in the design of the courses. Courses are largely participatory as the attendees are encouraged to state their needs and wishes, and to ask questions, which are then answered in individualised tuition and support.
- *Publicity and degree of dissemination:* The courses are offered throughout the Land of Styria, organisers take care to address “white spots on the map”. One objective is to make the programme available to other educational institutions outside of Styria after successful completion of the pilot project.
- *Self-defined and third-party defined quality requirements:* The project “Technology in Brief” is evaluated at several levels. Feedback questionnaires are handed out to the participants, teachers and assisting pupils write short reports. In the future, the short reports are to be complemented by questionnaires for teachers and assisting pupils to identify changes in social skills.
- *Research and development:* Further down the line, there are plans to offer additional courses to deepen knowledge. Such intensive courses will give participants an opportunity to learn more.
- *Sustainability:* The modules of the project “Technology in Brief” are designed in such a way that they can be booked separately but according to information from the Catholic Education Association attendees often book the remaining modules after having been to one. As the course content is relevant to every-day life, it is very probable that participants will continue engaging with the topics.
- *Education as a cross-cutting concept/network structure:* Due to cooperation with schools, the project “Technology in Brief” is brought to other organisations. Moreover, the Catholic Education Association at Graz-Seckau is connected with the other office of the Catholic Education Association in Austria, and with other institutions in adult education.

**Link to website or contact for further information:**

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## **7. Familiengeschichten in Wort und Bild – Generationen lernen gemeinsam** *(Family Histories in Words and Images – Generations Learning Together)*

### **Relevance of the topic:**

Life-long learning, senior learning in the field of new communication and information technologies, intergenerational learning

### **Start and end date of project:**

May 2008 – February 2009

### **Goal and very brief description:**

The project “Family History in Words and Images – Generations Learning Together” is a pilot project supported by the Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection.

The educational programme “Family History in Words and Images” is addressed at “all young people who enjoy travelling back in time with an older member of their own family, exchanging experiences and working on a computer,” and at “all older persons who would like to pass on to the younger generation what they know about their family history and relations, and who are willing to engage with the living environment of the young in the process”.

In a workshops consisting of eight units (three hours each), participants work together in a team as they produce a photo book. This process plays out at several levels. On the one hand, the participants, who work in pairs in a facilitated process, identify a theme that reflects their family as times are changing. On the other hand, they use various types of documents (e.g. photographs, school reports and certificates, documents) to commit the theme to paper in words and images. Various types of equipment (digital cameras, scanners, printers, computers) as well as software such as the image processing programme GIMP and the printing programme “MyPhotobook” are used. The workshop is a setting for learning how to handle equipment and software from a trainer, where experiences are exchange within the team, and where learning by doing brings insights. It is desirable that participants continue to study and practice at home. They are given instructions how to instal the programmes used at home and continue working in between workshop units. A USB stick is made available for this purpose. At the end of the workshop, the photo book they have produced in cooperation is a tangible result that can be shown to others.

Essentially, the project aims at two main goals:

- Young and old should get to know each other’s living environment and background without prejudice.
- Older persons should find it easier to use information and communication technologies.

### **Degree of implementation/progress status:**

The pilot project has been completed

### **Applicable criteria of good practice:**

- *Ideas of successful learning:* The idea of successful learning is discussed with participants. Due to the basic theme that reflects the history of a “family as times are changing”, the project focuses on the life and background of older persons.

- *Intergenerational programme:* The project is intergenerational due to the target groups as it is devised for old and young persons/family members.
- *Gender aspect:* Language used is gender-sensitive, gender aspects are i.a. also addressed in the group discussions.
- *Inclusion of educationally disadvantaged strata:* The joint participation of two family members aims at making participants less apprehensive that they might make a mistake or fail to understand something. The needs of educationally disadvantaged strata of society are also taken into consideration in the low workshop fee (fee for the first workshop: € 36.00).
- *Participatory design:* Participants choose the focal theme of their book themselves. During the workshop they can also state their wishes, which will be taken into account to the extent that this is possible.
- *Publicity and degree of dissemination:* At the end of the workshop there is an open unit to which friends, relations etc. are invited and in which the completed photo book is presented. Plans for the next project stage include inviting a press or radio journalist to the final presentation who would then report on the project.
- *Self-defined and third-party defined quality requirements:* The workshop is evaluated by the workshop management and the participants.
- *Research and development:* The project is currently at the stage of development. Further stages of the project will be designed on the basis of evaluations and experiences.
- *Sustainability:* The project is designed as a long-term proposition, the workshops each take several weeks. As participants are taught how to work at home, the learning setting is transferred from the educational institution to their own environment. After the end of the pilot stage, the programme is to be added to the regular programme of the “VHS” Adult Education Centres.
- *Education as a cross-cutting concept/network structure:* After the initial stage of the project plans include building a network structure and cooperating with other organisations (e.g. “VHS” Adult Education Centres in other Austrian Länder, other adult education institutions, libraries). The workshop “Family History in Words and Images” is to be offered by other institutions, such as schools or retirement homes, too.

The special feature of this project proposition is the goal of fostering intergenerational exchange and orientation towards the living environments and backgrounds of both young and old by establishing a link to the family.

**Link to website or contact for further information:**

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