

Poland: **SENIOR - ALWAYS FASHIONABLE**

Organization implementing the project

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Context

Intergenerational learning and education is not a wide – known approach in Poland. Even if some intergenerational learning occurs, people involved in this process do not have the awareness of the importance of this approach. Moreover, a core feature of IGL: reciprocity seems to be rather unintentional. Because of the lack of knowledge of the political and social role of intergenerational learning and even lack of the knowledge of the name of this approach in itself, it is difficult to find any institution which is directly involved in organizing educational activities that bring together different generations to create an opportunity for exchanging knowledge, skills, experiences, values and deepens the mutual understanding.

On the one hand usually elder people transfer their life experience and knowledge to their children or grandchildren. Young generation teaches older people how to function and perform in a global world. This exchange occurs mainly on a family ground. On the other hand it is important to stress that some “intergenerational education programmes” do exist in Poland and their importance becomes more and more significant.

The University of Economics and Humanities in Lodz is a meeting place for people of all ages. Young people study one of the eleventh faculties available in the University and graduate as Bachelors, Masters or achieve PHD degree, older people usually participate in meetings of the University of Third Age that was founded in University a few years ago. It was students initiative to organize events that would help different generations to meet together and exchange experiences. It was decided to undertake a project “Senior - always fashionable”. This enterprise became an opportunity to discuss the changes in fashion in last decades and created a platform for mutual understanding of different dress codes. Participants shared their life’s experience and skills to create new modern clothes. Elder and young students participated in workshop and they were changing together their clothes to become more fashionable. The main problem of this project was a little interest from young students. Their explanation was that they do not have enough time to participate in this project. Only few of them decided to take part in this activity.

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Action

This project provided a framework for an intergenerational learning which aim was to encourage elder and young people to create mutual understanding in fields of verbal communication and non- verbal communication, especially fashion and dress code. The main goal was to encounter different intergeneration barriers and overcome them. This project had to develop a bridge between the word of young students of the University and the word of elder students from University of Third Age. The important goal was to motivate this two generations to work together as a team. The project lasted for six months and participants met several times during this period. They learnt about fashion and took part in intergeneration workshops. The meetings were held in the classroom of the University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz. The staff included two coordinator of this project from the University (coordinator of the University of Third Age and one student from the University of Third Age) two lecturers from University therein one trainer the Creativity and Entrepreneurship Centre.

The project included the following activities:

- “Intergenerational communication and integration” - workshop
- “Fashion– creative activities with fashion magazines” - workshop
- “Modern fashion on movie and advertising” - discussion
- The day of fashion – meeting with make- up artist, hairdresser, colorist.
- exchange of clothes and jewelry
- preparation a project of new clothes
- specialist photographic session after metamorphosis (with new clothes and make – up)
- “History of fashion”- workshop
- “Making the jewelry” – workshop

Outcomes and impact

Young Students:

- at the end appreciated the value of integrating with elder people;
- have established long-term relationship with elder students ;
- learnt how to collaborate with elder people;
- expressed satisfaction for having the opportunity to work in a team with elders;
- changed their perspective of elder people (understood that that they are also creative and modern);
- changed their communication with elders (improved their communication skills and changed their attitude towards elders);
- learnt how they can change their clothes and use experiences of elders in this process
- rejected the stereotypes about elders they believed in at the beginning of the project, broadened their horizons

Elders Students:

- form the very beginning appreciated the value of integrating with young people;

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- have established long-term relationship with young students ;
- learnt how to collaborate with young people;
- expressed satisfaction for having the opportunity to work in a team with young people;
- learnt new things about fashion and modern clothes;
- were taught how to look modern, smartly and attractive;
- feel more useful for young people;
- feel more attractive;
- expressed intention to participate in similar projects in the future.

An added value from this project was a photography sessions:

http://www.wshe.lodz.pl/?lang=pl&content_id=46&category=archiwum&id=878

<http://www.modnaseniorka.pl/artykuł/dojrzałe-metamorfozy-w-ramach-projektu-senior-zawsze-modny/>