VR Theatre
"Senior Outreach and Cultural e-Engagement"

Training format

Diesis Network

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Introduction

Module 1: What is this training format and how it is structured?

The "Senior Outreach and Cultural Engagement" Training format has been developed in the framework of the VR Theatre project.

The VR Theatre project

The VR Theatre is a project co-financed by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. The project aims to provide adult professionals in CCIs with innovative and creative tools to engage a wider public in their activities, targeting the 65+ population band which is at risk of being or feeling excluded thanks to the used of digitalization, in particular Virtual Reality.

The specific objectives of the project are the following:

- Activate local and transnational networks to boost transnational cooperation.
- Train CCIs professionals and operators on audience development, outreach, and engagement strategies for seniors in the wake of Covid-19.
- Design an innovative methodology aimed at performative and expressive arts practitioners for engagement and community-building through arts, combining Participatory Theatre and use of Virtual Reality (VR).

The partners or the project are:

- Chicken Shed Theatre Trust (UK) – the coordinator
- Diesis Network (Belgium)
- S.A.F.E. Projects (The Netherlands)
- Nara Egitim Teknolojileri Anonim Sirketi (Turkey)
- Consorzio MateraHub (Italy)
- NGO Nest Berlin (Germany)
- Drustvo Bodi svetloba (Slovenia)

Objectives and target group of the training

Objectives

The Training Format addresses skills and competences necessary an effective outreach/engagement strategy that CCIs operators that are working with technology such as VR can use to expand their outreach and audience, especially within the context of Covid-19 crisis recovery, and with a specific focus on senior citizens.

This will have the long-term aim of contributing to making the digital transition of CCIs inclusive and accessible for all.

Target group

Participants should be adult professionals and operators of the following categories: CCIs workers and professionals, adults members of cultural, arts organisations, theatre companies and other cultural/no-profit/volunteer institutions working in the social inclusion through digital skills and tools, interested in enhancing their outreach capacity and committed to involve seniors in their activities.

Structure of the training

The training will be structures into main five parts:

Part 1: Digital inclusion of the elderly

- **Module 1**: Audience Development in the era of Covid-19: how to analyze, research, and expand your audience within a context of physical distancing and isolation
- **Module 2**: "Socially Distanced Culture": how might (or will) socially distanced Creative and Cultural activities look like? How can we make them inclusive and/or accessible for seniors?
- **Module 3**: Effective Outreach for seniors in the era of Covid-19: marketing strategies, networking resources, and services to reach out to senior citizens
- **Module 4:** Marketing skills for innovative CCIs in the era of Covid-19: how to make innovative, digital cultural activities/contents attractive for seniors

Part 2: Inclusion of the elderly via digital cultural activities

- **Module 1**: Creative VR: what is it and what can it do
- **Module 2**: Creative VR for Seniors: how VR can be used for engaging seniors in creative activities (including storytelling, VR painting)

Part 3: Performing arts and cultural activities for inclusion of elderly

- **Module 1**: What is Creative Aging?
- **Module 2:** Creative Aging and cultural engagement in the era of Covid-19: why it is important to keep seniors engaged in cultural and creative activities, and how we can do it in a situation of physical distancing
- **Module 3**: Cultural dis-engagement in seniors: what are the reasons (identified by researchers during the Focus group) and what are the possible solutions

Part 4: Project work - Planning of an outreach campaign and structure for local workshops

- **Module 1**: - Outreach Campaign planning. How to plan an effective Outreach Campaign targeting seniors
- **Module 2**: Planning and developing the structure/format of the local workshops of IO3.

Part 5: Evaluation

- Midterm evaluation
- Final evaluation
- Evaluation of the project work

While implementing the this training format, it is suggested to pair these activities with study visits, talks with experts and first hand stories and experiences.

The training is a mix of theoretical and practical activities:

Activity	Format
Part 1: Digital inclusion of the elderly	
Module 1	Theoretical
Module 2	Theoretical
Module 3	Practical
Part 2: Inclusion of the elderly via digital cultural activities	
Module 1	Theoretical
Module 2	Practical
Module 3	Practical
Module 4	Practical
Part 3: Performing arts and cultural activities for inclusion of elderly	
Module 1	Theoretical
Module 2	Practical
Module 3	Practical
Part 4: Project work - Planning of an outreach campaign and structure for local workshops	
Module 1	Practical
Module 2	Practical
Part 5: Evaluation	
Midterm evaluation	N/A
Final evaluation	N/A
Evaluation of project work	N/A

Module 2: Short background and overview of research findings

Background

Cultural and creative sectors (CCIs) were heavily hit by the Covid-19 crisis. Across the EU cinemas, theatres and cultural venues were the first to be shut down by governmental measures. To provide continuity to their activity, many went online with digital versions of their offers. However, a large population band is at risk of being left out of the digital opportunity. Senior citizens aged 65+ are generally slower in transitioning to digital tools and options (Eurostat,2018).

Social isolation is another concern. Studies found that seniors are resistant in replacing "traditional", physical activities with online activities such as shopping because they fear that this will replace face-to-face interaction and result in loneliness (Lancaster University,2018).

Seniors are generally slower in adopting technological and digital solutions to undertake "traditional" activities, and this is also true for cultural activities such as going to the theatre or attending a concert. This is partly due to their own lack of information and digital literacy. On top of that, CCIs and cultural organisations themselves struggle to engage a senior public in innovative cultural offers such as VR theatre or VR streaming. This issue is more relevant now that, due to social and physical distancing measures, more and more cultural and creative entities are turning to technology as main vehicle for the consumption of cultural goods.

Overview of research findings

The digital transition is one of the most discussed issues in today's societies: it has entered the art world: telepresence, virtuality, digital mobility, and online tools have become an integral part of life. The new technologies provide the cultural sector with privileged opportunities to reach different audiences by developing new processes of awareness, transmission, and artistic and cultural education that are increasingly adapted to the intended audience.

The process of digitization of the arts, in addition to creating new products and new interdisciplinary collaborations, has enabled, and is evolving toward cultural and social well-being.

Studies have shown that the involvement of Senior Citizens in CCIs is related to empowerment and the feeling of successful aging. Successful aging means for the general Senior citizen a social life, personal growth, self-acceptance, autonomy, and health. Artistic creativity also aids successful aging by fostering the development of problem-solving abilities, motivation, and perceptions, all of which transfer into practical creativity in day-to-day life management.

In Europe, we observe different approaches and trends in this regard. Cultural participation plays an important role in active and meaningful aging. Many people enjoy participating in art and culture together with others, including the elderly, but as we age it becomes increasingly difficult. Half of those over 60 participate in culture; the other half do not. Only one-third visit a cultural center more than twice a year. To design and implement digitally oriented cultural engagement activities for seniors, it is important to research the cultural activities in which most senior citizens are interested and the channels through which to publicize new initiatives. The National Knowledge Institute for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts Netherlands is committed to increasing the focus on cultural education, cultural participation, and cultural accessibility. Among the structures responding to these needs, the most active are: music associations, choirs, painting, photography and film clubs, and theater and dance associations. Most associations have members aged between 50 and 64 (88 percent of associations) and between 65 and 80 (85 percent).

Only recently researches shown the opportunities offered by modern information technologies for the future of aging. ICT can be quite expensive, and the rapid development in this area also results in

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rapid turnover of devices and software, which makes less affluent people disadvantaged in this area. Within this senior group, respondents over the age of 70 report less frequent use of e-mail and cell phones than younger respondents. The demographic, social, and economic variables of the current population should be taken into consideration when developing and implementing technologies for this user group. VR/AR is a fairly new technology, with only (according to 2021 Audience Agency data) 7 percent of the population using it, most of them in London and residents in the 16-34 category, and only 3 percent of the over-65s using this software. VR can act positively on dementia and lead to healthier lifestyles in general.

Today, membership in the digital world has become increasingly dependent on the ability to create and use everyday Internet technologies. The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced an additional trend to digital jobs, and new decent jobs have become necessary for everyone, regardless of age, gender, race, location, disability, etc.

Studies show that the elderly are among the most disadvantaged. What should be tried to do is to create new online spaces rather than using pre-existing platforms to transform a business. Experiment and build new work environments, defining new kinds of practices within and new digital spaces, with different levels of access even for the over-65s.

We must take responsibility for including older people. Society at large must act to make the world more inclusive for older people. This means that cultural participation should be simplified for them through new technologies. Actors in the field of new technologies, cultural events and communication must work together to create possibilities for inclusion based on the transformation of our society.

To achieve social inclusion, it is necessary to use a vast and diverse number of marketing tools that reflect their audiences. Material inclusion can also be achieved through collaboration with charities. Simply put, the social participation of the elderly fosters bonds that prevent isolation.

The theme and issue are recognized, but there are still a few projects working with the target group to include them in cultural activities.

The future of digital CCI is exciting because of digital galleries, and we can merge practices through digital transformation. We need to push toward the digital world, VR and AR, and understand that we cannot just upload records, but that engaging people within the project online is where the best results and benefits are achieved for the over-65 demographic. Exploring different avenues, pushing the boundaries of each platform, and creating safe spaces will slowly change the attitude of this demographic as the number of over-65s able to understand the Internet grows over time. This is one of the largest segments of our society: "it is predicted that by 2050 one-fifth of the world's population will be over 60 years old." (Digital Technologies and Social Inclusion Group (DTSI), 2015). With longer life expectancy and better living standards, we do not want to exclude a large segment of the economic sector because we believe it has little to give CCI.

Module 3: Icebreaking and team building

More than one story game

More Than One Story is a unique and powerful card game which builds bridges between people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures.

It starts with a short presentation of each player. The oldest participant starts by pressing "new question" and reads the question out loud. The player then tells a story. The others listen actively and may encourage the storyteller by asking questions. When the storyteller is done, the game continues clockwise.

Learning objectives

To help participants understand and appreciate the perspectives of older people through their experiences and to establish connection between people of different ages, backgrounds and cultures

To enable participants to interact with their peers by recognizing the diversity of experiences, positive and negative emotions, special moments, etc, presenting them within the group.

In particular, the game wishes:

- to be able to address your own fears or prejudices that keep you isolated from those who seem different.
- to help facilitate the process of integration and inclusion, the opening of hearts and minds.
- to awaken empathy and appreciation for the unique experiences of each person and to deepen communication among family and friends.
- to present personal experiences and the feelings connected to them
- to get ideas for VR Theatre Play

Resources

A set of cards, chairs forming the circle, relaxation music.

Duration: 90 min circa

Instructions

Place the participants onto chairs, which form the circle. Ask each of them to randomly choose two cards. Tell them they can change up to one card with another card from the deck of cards. Explain them that each of cards have different tasks to do.

Ask each of the player to shortly introduce themselves. Choose the first player to tell her/his task.

Card tasks include:

- Tell about something new that you would like to do.
- Tell a story of your choice from an experience in your life.
- Tell a story about something you own which is special to you.
- Tell a story from a trip you have made
- Tell about a person who has had an impact on your life.
- Tell about how a film or a book has influenced you.

All the tasks are related to various life stories such as about a time when you got mad, when you were generous, about someone you still miss, about a period of your life time you will always remember, etc. You can also get a card when you ask a question of your own choice to another player.

Each participant becomes a story teller according to the card they have got. The others listen actively and encourage the storyteller by asking questions.

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When the first storyteller is done, the game continues clockwise with another storyteller. It continues like this until each participant has been twice a story teller.

When everyone has completed this task, ask participants to share and describe their thoughts, feelings, emotions or comments about opening themselves with the help of cards

Methods used

- Visual (spatial): using cards
- Verbal (linguistic): using words in speech
- Emotional): sharing personal experiences and feelings connected to them through life stories
- Social (interpersonal): learning in groups or with other people

Debrief

Once they have shared what they have written on their cards, tell the participants to close their eyes and imagine one story that they heard or their own story that was left unspoken. You can put on relaxing music and you can initiate the moment of reflection by asking the participants if playing More Than One Story has awakened empathy, compassion, understanding and appreciation for the unique experiences of each participant. You can explain to them that cards are not meant to ask for opinions but to ask for personal experiences and the feelings connected to them, feelings we all have in common.

At the end, give yourself five minutes for personal reflection on what it is meant to put yourself in the place of the other. You can end the activity by asking participants to embrace as a sign of mutual understanding.

Part I. Digital inclusion of the elderly

Module 1. Audience Development in the era of Covid-19

How to analyze, research, and expand your audience within a context of physical distancing and isolation?

Context framework

According to AGE Platform in early 2018 there were 101.1 million older people (aged 65 years or more) living in the 28 EU countries, which is almost one fifth (19.7 %) of the total population. During the next three decades, this figure is projected to rise to 149.2 million inhabitants in 2050 (28.5 % of the total population). However, the impact is heterogeneity distributed; being older women generally more likely (than older men) to face severe difficulties in being able to pay for basic goods and services, while the growing number of older people (older women) living alone is particularly worrying.

Although there are currently no global estimates of the proportion of older people in the community who are experiencing loneliness and social isolation, estimates for some regions and countries are available. For instance, 20–34% of older people in 25 European countries. [1]

Other studies conducted by WHO connect social isolation with mental and physical health damage, increasing the risks of cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, cognitive decline, dementia, depression, anxiety, and suicide, among others.[2] On top of that, many intersectionalities coexist putting people at greater risk of social isolation and loneliness, this includes ethnic minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans+ people; people with physical and learning disabilities and long-term health conditions; care-givers; and older people in residential and nursing care. Being an immigrant is also a risk factor, as immigrants tend to have fewer – especially long-standing – social ties and less social integration and often face language and communication barriers.[3]

Many intervention strategies coexist to fight isolation and loneliness, however the following framework used by the who embeds the impact and the role of digital solutions to it:

[1] Yang K, Victor C. Age and loneliness in 25 European nations. Ageing Society. 2011;31:1368 (http://dx.doi.org/ doi:10.1017/S0144686X1000139X)

[2] Social isolation and loneliness among older people: advocacy brief. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

[3] Jopling K. Promising approaches revisited: effective action on loneliness in later life. London: Campaign to End Loneliness; 2020 (https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/wp-content/uploads/Promising_ Approaches_Revisited_FULL_REPORT.pdf).

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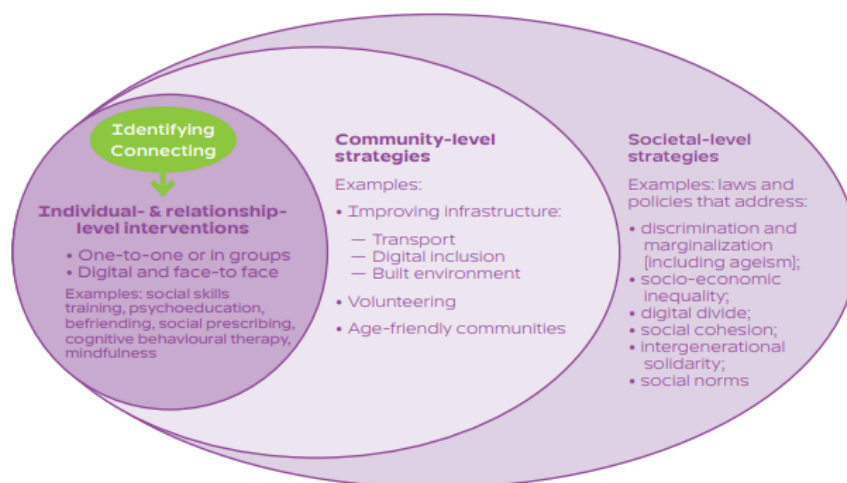
Source: Social isolation and loneliness among older people

Digital interventions are of particular interest because of both the increase in their use during the COVID-19 pandemic and the rapidly increasing role of technology in the past 10–15 years – particularly the Internet, smart phones and social media – in mediating social relations. Digital interventions include training in use of the Internet and computers, support for video communication, messaging services, online discussion groups and forums, telephone befriending, social networking sites, chatbots and virtual artificial intelligence "companions".[4]

Those online interventions are associated with several ethical concerns, such as potential infringement on privacy, informed consent and autonomy and disparities in access. Furthermore, it exist the possibility of online relations supplementing face-to-face interactions as a potential harmful effect of digital interventions, particularly impacting the risk of further isolating older people. It is important to protect the right to remain offline and develop alternatives for those who cannot or do not wish to connect digitally.
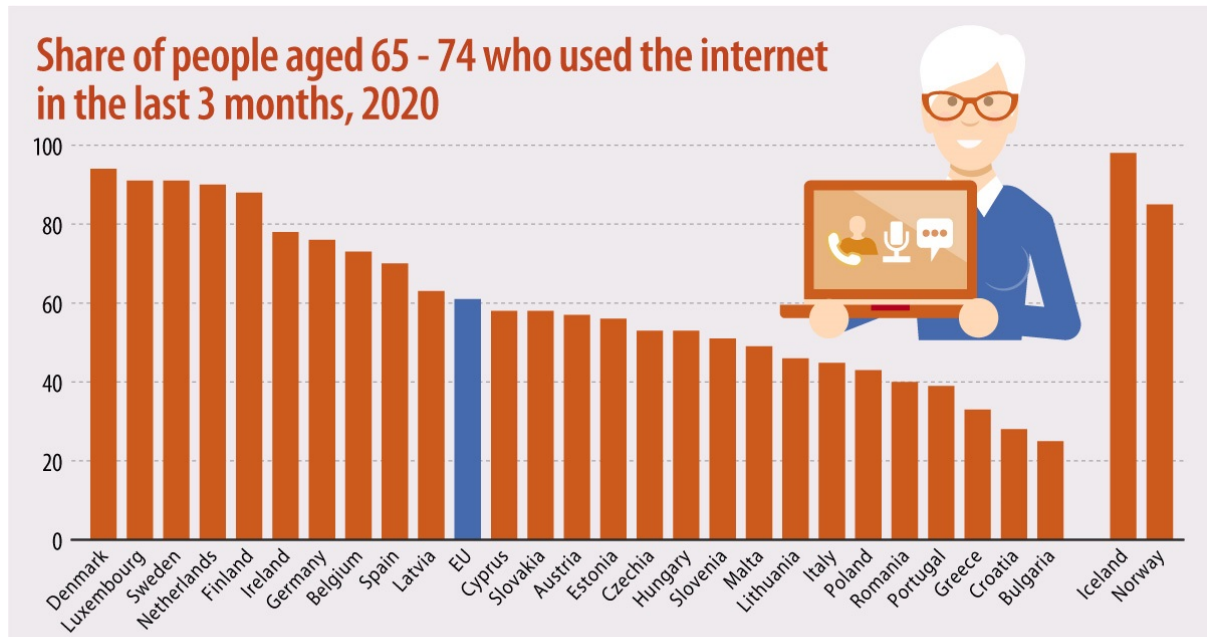
Finally, promoting an active healthy aging is of interest of the European Union, this requires of inclusive digital environments put in place in which accessibility guidelines must be taken into account whe designing new products and services[5], understanding the difficulties rising the digital divide across elderly in Europe; being in 2020, 88% of people aged 16-74 in the EU reported they had used the internet in the last 3 months; ranging from 70% in Bulgaria to 99% in Denmark.[6] Those statistics however, do not include specific uses of technology purposes, which most of the times starts with medical and financial usage while cultural online activities would come after and people would not be that much familiar to it yet.

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[4] Boulton E, Kneale D, Stansfield C, Heron P, Hanratty B, McMillan D et al. Rapid review of reviews: What remotely delivered interventions can reduce social isolation and loneliness among older adults. London: EPPI Centre, University College London; National Institute for Health Research Older People and Frailty Policy Research Unit; 2020

https://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/CMS/Portals/0/Rapid%20Review%20Remotely%20Delivered%20Interventions%20to%20Reduce%20Loneliness%20and%20S___.pdf

[5] Ageing in a digital world – from vulnerable to valuable. Geneva: International Telecommunication Union; 2021, https://www.itu.int/hub/publication/d-phcb-dig_age-2021/

[6] Eurostat: How popular is internet use among older people?; 2021, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/edn-20210517-1

Share of people aged 65 - 74 who used the internet in the last 3 months, 2020

France: 2020 data not available. As a result, the EU aggregate has been estimated.

ec.europa.eu/**eurostat**

Audience analysis, research and expansion at the silver age

The first frameworks proposed to use are based on the Active Ageing Index (AAI), a tool launched by the United Nations to measure the untapped potential of older people for active and healthy ageing across countries. It measures the level to which older people live independent lives, participate in paid employment and social activities, and their capacity to age actively. Moreover, it also considers environmental factors which enable them to be more active (such as, for instance, the educational and care systems, or the different infrastructures promoting well-being, social cohesion and digitalisation). [7]

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[7] 2018 Active Ageing Index Analytical Report: United Nations, Geneva; 2019, https://unece.org/DAM/pau/age/Active_Ageing_Index/ECE-WG-33.pdf

source: AAI Leaflet

AAI is recommended to be used at the individual and group level to frame the impact of the different variables shaping the ageing audience, and so to identify the main barriers interacting with the use of digital devices and services offered.

Furthermore, the Digital Skills & Jobs Platform has launch a new European online self-assessment tool for digital skills which can be used directly by the users of professionals guiding programmes in order to get a good understanding of current digital competences based on the established European Digital Competence Framework - DigComp 2.0, which is the starting point to identify and plan activities based on the digital skills of the audience. The test takes around 20 minutes to complete and, once done, a summary report is issued based on the digital skills level.

Understanding the pecualirities of our target audience is of extreme importance in order to design the best digital services addapted to their needs and overcome the effort of technology adoption by giving specific utility to the service provided. In order to search for the best utility and undertand the unique profiles in which to focus, different research methods cohesixt aiming at building know-how on the specific senior profiling. What is important to enforce is the need of creating user-centred design processes ensuring the participation of the elder in the co-design, implementation and evaluation of service and programmes.

Following, we can find an analysis conducted by the Government of South Australia framing different resarch and engagement techniques with older people. [8]

[8] Better Together: A Practical Guide to Effective Engagement with Older People: Government of South Australia; 2021, https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/efc56a004efc69f1b7ccf79ea2e2f365/Better+Together+-+A+Practical+Guide+to+Effective+Engagement+with+Older+People.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-efc56a004efc69f1b7ccf79ea2e2f365-nwLmRMW

Focus Groups

Advantages	• Useful for a detailed analysis of a particular issue • Can involve training and the use of peer facilitators • Can trigger further discussion and group interaction.
Disadvantages	• May not be statistically representative of all older people • May not be a suitable forum for older people to discuss personal issues.
Suggestions	• Focus groups should be used as a part of a larger engagement process to analyse and comment on particular issues. • To increase representativeness, peak, community sector organisations and schools can run focus groups.

Forums

Advantages	• Can involve a large representative sample of older people • Allows older people the opportunity to interact with other people • Can develop the communication skills of older people • Can be empowering for older people if they are able to influence the forum's agenda and contribute to the outcomes.
Disadvantages	• May not be a suitable forum for older people to discuss personal issues • Forums need substantial planning • Not everyone feels comfortable speaking in front of a large group.
Suggestions	• Ensure older people are adequately prepared to discuss the issues • Creative presentations can be part of the forum and inspire discussions • Break into smaller groups.

Interviews

Advantages	• Can provide participants with opportunities to talk about issues that may be difficult in large groups • Can be a comfortable and relaxed process that inspires a rapport with the interviewer and participant.
Disadvantages	• Will not be representative of all older people • Can be intimidating to some older people who have little to no experience with being interviewed and older people with limited English skills. • No group interaction or ability to talk or brainstorm ideas with other people • Unsuitable if a large sample is needed • Unsuitable if the participant or government has limited time • Can be difficult to recruit interviewees.
Suggestions	• Interpreters or bilingual interviewers can be used for Aboriginal and CALD participants where required • Provide some skill development for the participant particularly if they have never been interviewed before.

Surveys

Advantages	• A useful and quick method of gaining the views of a large cross section of older people • Can be physical (on paper or by telephone) or can be electronic via an email link or posted on a website) • Can allow for anonymity • Useful to include people who are geographically isolated • Surveys can often be completed at the convenience of the participant • Answers are usually easily collated and analysed.
Disadvantages	• Difficult to determine the seriousness of responses • Literacy abilities and clarity of instructions will determine the quality and accuracy of responses • Older people who are from non-English speaking backgrounds, may not find surveys accessible • No group interaction or ability to talk or brainstorm ideas with other people.
Suggestions	• Ensure surveys are short • Ensure clarity of instructions and expectations • Ensure clarity of purpose • Provide language support or translate survey • Ensure adequate options and include opportunities for comments.

Peer conversations

Advantages	• Can be useful to engage older people who feel more comfortable engaging with their peers • Can involve skill development such as communication skills, research, facilitation and interviewing skills • Builds capacity in the community • Provides a mechanism to better engage with marginalised groups through the potential to train peers from inside harder to reach communities.
Disadvantages	• Time may be needed to train peer consultants.
Suggestions	• Peer consultants can either be employed for the consultation or reimbursed in other ways (out of pocket expenses etc.).

Reference groups

Advantages	• Enables government to have an easy and ongoing access to a group of older people • Can be a starting point for other engagement processes for government • Effectively enables older people to provide direct feedback and input to government policies and programs on a regular basis • Can provide a forum in which older people can develop skills, experience and confidence.
Disadvantages	• The formal committee approach may exclude some older people • May not be representative of all older people • Can limit participation from marginalised and diverse groups or those who may not have been involved with committees previously • Requires resources to support the group • Formal meetings require a regular, ongoing commitment by older people to the committee (this may be difficult for participants with other commitments).
Suggestions	• The group may be more effective and older people will feel greater ownership if they assist in establishing the group including the terms of reference and purpose • Consider a variety of ways for people to participate, other than formal meetings of a reference group – a less formal network can also be effective.

Moreover, an inclusive digital design is key in order to guarantee the access and adoption of digital services, for doing so seven principles with specific guidelines were identified to enable the design of products and environments:

1- Equitable use: The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

2- Flexibility in use: The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

3- Simple and intuitive use: The use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

4- Perceptible information: The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

5- Tolerance for error: The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

6- Low physical error: The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

7- Size and space for approach and use: The appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of a user's body size, posture, or mobility

Finally, working on the expansion of online digital practices in elder population should take into account the userability of the technological platforms while understanding its complementarity with off-line participation, building services around territorial and cultural links of the target audience understanding as well the benefits of intergenerational interventions.

Module 2. "Socially Distanced Culture"

How will socially distanced Creative and Cultural activities look like? How can we make them inclusive and/or accessible for seniors?

This module is dedicated to frame the conversation around the relation between arts and technology and more specifically among performative practices and new media technologies, traying to understand how they interact and reciprocally influence each other during the last decades. The module is principally divided in two determined moments: the first one has been designed in order to investigate how main authors have studied the aforementioned relation during the last 40 years; the second one is mostly dedicated to analysing together contemporary case studies that can enrich the overall conversation.

The transformative potential of the arts has long been a topic of fierce contestation, philosophical speculation and scientific measurement (Belfiore and Bennett 2007). Philosophers, psychologists, sociologists and neuroscientists have all been intrigued by questions related to the agency of the arts. What do the arts do? What is the influence of the arts on people's lives? How do the arts affect society? What is the social impact of the arts? The answers to these questions are still open: evidence of the agency of the arts remains inconclusive and the efficacy of the arts to bring about change is still debated. With this review we take stock of the multiple, heterogeneous, and interdisciplinary ways in which the transformative effects of the arts, including their agentic, active and dynamic influences, have been theorized, discussed, measured and evaluated.

The current digital transformation constitutes a major social, cultural and economic shift triggered by technological advances such as virtual realities, smart technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of things (IoT), and automation processes linking digital networks and data-tracking tools and algorithms (Park and Humphry 2019). Amidst this profound digital transformation, people are more likely to seek to make sense of their own positions and to look for guidance and consolation, not least in and through the arts (Swidler, 2001). At the same time, artists are harnessing the power of digital technologies such as virtual realities as mediums of expression in order to experiment with new genres and new techniques of engagement or investigate critical questions about the future of humanity in the face of often black-boxed, inscrutable and unthinkable software operative mechanisms (e.g. Hito Steyerl, Holly Herdon, Krostoffer Ørum, and many others).

While a number of pioneering artists and institutions have become (or have been led to become) ambassadors of digital and technological culture already for decades, anyway the mainstream cultural institutions still show a certain resistance to the new aesthetics and new models of organisation and production that derive from digital technologies. The sources of such distancing could be the fear (or at least the anxiety) of the disappearance of the live, the ephemeral and the singularity of the live performance; of the collective experience; of the disintegration of the stage as a space for humanity, a social link and political forum, both organised and spontaneous.

All this could be replaced by an increasingly ill society, hungry for unethical consumption, automated and robotised, ruled by the law of the market and Big Data, which would soon lead to the loss of the human, its actions and skills. The idea behind these fears is that basically culture and technology oppose each other.

This very idea lurks in the background of a certain discourse, widespread in the cultural sector, warning that aesthetic excellence and a certain idea of art is not possible in performing art forms that integrate digital technologies. Too experimental and difficult to mediate for the audience; too focused on technical or technological components and therefore lacking real artistic relevance, or even lacking imagination; requiring specific expertise; de-socialising since the audience can ultimately stay at home and watch a screen; provoking speechlessness rather than real emotion: this kind of performance does not fulfil the social and cathartic contract attributed to live performance for more than 2,000 years. Not to forget the very practical aspect of the technical challenges that such performances pose to the

'classic' equipment of our cultural venues, which would make it impossible – or at least very hard – to stage them, if ever they were to be programmed.

On another hand, in the last fifty years the introduction of the digital in contemporary visual arts, performative aesthetics and music has been progressively breaking down the barriers of different artistic categories, both in the artists' work and in the venues and institutions inviting them.

Digital arts and their results on stage are meant as actual environments integrating the physical participation and the sensorial and critical perception of the audience. Digital arts bring to the fore the role of the technical in the arts, they deal with the reality of parts of the contemporary world and with its technical progress and aesthetic, social and economic changes. Yet it seems that they're not getting the anticipated and deserved recognition by the performing arts world.

We're thus facing the rise of a sort of parallel world, a network of specialised institutions – joined by a few rare multidisciplinary ones – attracting other professional figures, other artists, other audiences, and paradoxically claiming to be a stand-alone discipline. Paradoxically, because the performing arts world is indeed going in the opposite direction, towards the abolition of borders across disciplines – barriers, we should not forget, that are also ideological, as recently stated by art historian, critic and curator Christophe Wavelet in his article 'Malaise dans le performatif' ('Unease in performativity') in the Cahier de l'Onda (July 2013) 'Les Nouvelles Formes de la scène'; and as Theodor Adorno (and others before) had already stated in his famous essay Art and the Arts (1967).

In a context of structural changes and ideological conflicts, it is useful to refer to wider concepts proposed by some contemporary researchers and intellectuals. We could for example think about the 'Third Industrial Revolution' described by American economist Jeremy Rifkin, or the 'World Wide Lab' mentioned by the French philosopher and anthropologist Bruno Latour. The French philosopher Bernard Stiegler (former director of IRCAM3, founder of Ars Industrialis4 and initiator of IRI - Institut de recherche et d'innovation at the Centre Pompidou - France), is particularly active in debates agitating the French cultural world. He considers the dual nature of technique and its tools – mirrored in the debate around technology and digital – and refers to the ancient Greek term pharmakon, which is 'at the same time what allows us to take care {of something} and what we should take care of, in the sense of being careful: it is a healing power in the measure and excess in which it is a destructive power'.

We're living in a context in which the 'worlds', and namely the world of performing arts – be it from the point of view of institutions, artists or intellectuals – are questioning themselves and are trying to understand and affirm their role in the face of the tidal wave of (new) technologies and of the digital everything, often in focus in the public debate, 'penetrating' and influencing all the domains of our societies and all aspects of life. Opportunities for discussion are multiplying, new professional training opportunities arise, new practices blossom inside cultural organisations, public institutions propose frameworks and put in place supportive policies in the form of funding, agendas or digital strategies at the national level or more widely (see for instance the Digital Agenda for Europe at the EU level). It's indeed crucial to engage with audiences, whose behaviours, relations and cognitive processes have changed – and are still changing – due to contact with digital technologies, the internet and the accessibility and circulation of a huge volume of content on the Web. The new tools offer the cultural sector at large privileged opportunities to reach out to its existing audiences, develop new ones, develop new processes of awareness raising, transmission, artistic and cultural education more adapted to contemporary audiences. All these issues need to be approached as an ecosystem. For example, making a video recording available via streaming requires first of all its digitisation, then the development of a digital platform – which in its turn requires raising funds or creating partnerships, maybe working with some researchers and/or a commercial company, and a number of new activities to give sense to the online platform. All this leads to new questions including: why do we decide to offer a new (digital) approach to a work, or to culture? How to create new partnerships with the research or corporate world when we're not specialists of digitisation, digital development or digital

sociology? How to work together with those new partners? How to fund the work? How to manage the project consistently within my cultural organisation? Do I need to reorganise the departments and human resources? Does the staff need specific training? How to communicate with audiences? And who are my audiences and how would they be concerned?

This mapping gives athematic overview of the state-of-the-art of the performing arts at this precise moment of the digital era. This mapping approaches the digital issue as an ecosystem and considers the whole value chain – creation, research/production, documentation, dissemination/mediation. It highlights new trends taking place, the multiple goals and the eminently cross-disciplinary (or at least multidisciplinary) nature of the artistic and cultural activities that are pushing the barriers across, between and outside the different disciplines.

Module 3. Effective Outreach for seniors in the era of Covid-19

Marketing strategies, networking resources, and services to reach out to senior citizens

Global demographic trends show that the worldwide age structure is rapidly changing more than ever before. The United Nations defines older people as those aged 65 years or older based on people's chronological age. Currently, there are over 703 million older people, and it is expected to reach 2.1 billion by the year 2050. Population projections have indicated Europe and North America have the fastest growing aging population, and by 2050, the population percentage of older adults is expected to reach 34% in Europe and 28% in North America.

There is an ongoing negative narrative about aging that age-related changes, disability, and dependency among older people with poor and deteriorating health conditions imply an increased expenditure on health and its burden on the socioeconomic aspects of society. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic has also underlined how older people are generally perceived and valued in our contemporary society. This crisis exacerbated existing and deeply rooted inequalities such as underfinancing in the care sector and the chronic shortage of caregivers (both in the health and social sector). However, contrary to the negative narrative, increased longevity and good health allow older adults to meaningfully contribute socially and economically, and maximize their well-being late into life. To facilitate healthy and successful aging, the fast-growing digital technology, with all its drawbacks, barriers, and challenges, offers a staggering promise and opportunity.

Despite substantial mixed and inconclusive findings, several studies and reviews have demonstrated the positive impact of digital technologies on different dimensions of an older person's life, including health, housing, services and transactions, mobility and transportation, access to information, communication and work, recreation, and self-fulfilment. Moreover, digital technologies play a substantial role in improving older people's quality of life and independence. However, a review reported an ambivalence toward digital technology due to negative effects such as a sense of privacy and personal security breaches. Whereas, personal safety during emergencies was reported as a positive effect of owning a mobile phone.

Over the past decades, digital technology use among older populations has grown exponentially both in the mainstream (day-to-day lives) and assisted care (health and social care). Changes in the workplace and the "digital by default" strategy for delivering public services are among contributing factors forcing older people to engage digitally. Digital engagement in health promotion and social support through health information is also growing. However, the breadth and the extent of digital technology use among older people remains limited to communications such as sending or receiving emails, instant messaging, video calls (Skype), and making voice calls. A perceived or actual lack of interest, skill gaps, and socioeconomic factors were mentioned as possible reasons for the limited use of digital technologies [14]. Besides, the age-related decline in vision, hearing, cognition, and dexterity also attribute to the limited use of digital technologies.

Comparatively, there is a discrepancy in digital involvement, access, and connectivity between the younger and older populations. For instance, in the United Kingdom between 2014 and 2019, a significant proportion of the older population never connected digitally at all or had not used the internet over the past 3 months. The 2019 Office for National Statistics (ONS) survey showed 13.5% of older people aged 65 to 74 years old and 47% of those 75 years and older never used the internet. A similar population-based study in 7 European countries reported only 12% internet use among older people (60 years and older), of whom 64% used it for health-related issues. In the United States, smartphone ownership among older people 65 years and older is significantly lower in comparison to the national average (81%; ie, 59% of those between the ages of 65 and 74 years are smartphone owners, but it falls to 40% among those 75 years and older).

To create a digitally inclusive and accessible world, the International Organization for Standardization recommends human-centered and accessible designs (ISO 9241-11:2018). Adaptation guidelines such

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as text font size, screen setting, contrast, and color adjustments are among the recommended standards. These modalities enable older people with physical disabilities to engage digitally. However, technology designs are mostly driven by technology push rather than user demand pull factors. Additionally, the fast-evolving nature of digital technology makes it challenging for older people to catch up and sustain engagement with the adaptation guidelines.

Module 4. Marketing skills for innovative CCIs in the era of Covid-19

How to make innovative, digital cultural activities/contents attractive for seniors

Group or individual activity	Group Activity
Length	1.5 hours
Materials needed	At the moment any printable tool is required. In case we will provide them directly
Objective of the exercise	Understanding how digital engagement works.
Steps to follow and description of each step	Following the three steps of a digital engagement process in the marketing approach, we will start testing some digital tools of engagement, how to deal with the evaluation of the participant's digital literacy and starting analysing together some case studies.

Part III. Inclusion of the elderly via digital cultural activities

Module 1: Creative VR

What is it and what can it do ?

VR or Virtual Reality is one of the new technologies in our daily life. Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are technologies which have the potential to transform the way we work, communicate, and experience things. Not only will they have an impact on our daily lives, but they are also expected to create a multi-billion-euro industry. Both start-ups and large companies could benefit from VR and AR. These technologies have the potential to build on Europe's creativity, skills and cultural diversity, and impact various domains – from manufacturing, engineering and architecture to education, healthcare, arts, entertainment and culture.

Virtual reality is an artificial three-dimensional environment that is created by computer modeling. This environment could be anything from games to artificial classrooms. In fact one of the main application areas of VR has been education. By providing a more immersive and interactive experience VR offers more memorable, inspiring and engaging education.

VR applications immerse users in this environment through the use of interactive devices such as headsets and gloves. Oculus was one of the first companies to develop VR headsets and Oculus Quest is one of the top selling headsets in the market. Oculus headsets have application stores (collectively called Oculus Store) where users can buy or freely download VR applications.

Virtual reality (VR) is a powerful technology with the potential for far-ranging social and psychological impact. Disciplinary psychology and other social sciences should take a proactive stance concerning VR and conduct research to help determine the outlines of this potential impact to affect its direction. Engineering and social science professionals should cooperate in research regarding the potential societal effects of VR.

Module 2: Creative VR for Seniors

How VR can be used for engaging seniors in creative activities (including storytelling, VR painting)?

We plan to play a game or show an application by wearing VR glasses.

Group or individual activity	Individual Activity
Length	5 mins per user
Materials needed	Oculus Quest VR Glasses
Objective of the exercise	Getting to know the VR world and witnessing its conveniences.
Steps to follow and description of each step	The glasses are put on and the application is started.

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Part III. Performing arts and cultural activities for inclusion of elderly

Module 1: Creative Aging

What is creative aging and which are the benefits?

Introduction

Cultural and creative sectors (CCIs) were heavily hit by the Covid-19 crisis. Across the EU cinemas, theatres and cultural venues were the first to be shut down by governmental measures. In order to provide continuity to their activity, many went online with digital versions of their offers. Live streams of concerts and plays were the most common option; Venice Cinema Biennale's VR room provided an immersive experience to its viewers; museums offered 360° online visits to their digitalized contents; libraries opened their digital archives.

We can expect that these kinds of solutions will multiply in the future, to enable people to engage in cultural activities in situations of physical distancing or isolation. In fact, Covid-19 might have accelerated a process that was already ongoing.

However, a large population band is at risk of being left out of the digital opportunity. Senior citizens aged 65+ are generally slower in transitioning to digital tools and options (Eurostat,2018).

DISCoVeR Theatre aims to provide adult professionals in CCIs with innovative and creative tools to engage a wider public in their activities, targeting the 65+ population band which is at risk of being or feeling excluded. A big part of this is Creative Ageing as a concept it's a great and innovative way to interact with seniors.

The aims of these modules are:

- To present concept of creative ageing

- To highlight best practices of creative aging and senior citizens' engagement through digital technologies

Definitions

Ageing[9] the process of growing old *signs of ageing.* In recent decades, life expectancy[10] around the world has increased – civilization, quality of life and well developed of health care. Aging is normal physical process. Process of life, process of our way… Some theories[11] suggest cells have a predetermined lifespan, while others claim it's caused by error and damage. Other theories say that aging is due to genetic, evolution, or biochemical reactions. Some healthy lifestyle can reduce your risk of disease, prolong your life and improve your quality of life.

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[9] https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/ageing_1

[10] https://www.healthline.com/health/why-do-we-age#life-expectancies

[11] https://www.healthline.com/health/why-do-we-age#life-expectancies

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Active ageing[12] means helping people stay in charge of their own lives for as long as possible as they age and, where possible, contribute to the economy and society. Active aging[13] promotes the vision of all individuals—regardless of age, socioeconomic status, or healthfully engaging in life within all seven dimensions of wellness: emotional, environmental, intellectual/cognitive, physical, professional/vocational, social, and spiritual (*International Council on Active Aging*).

*Warn up your brains with questions*

- Art ? with whom to eat and how to use it?
- What is art?
- What is imagination?
- What is skill?
- What is pleasure?
- What is creativity?
- Why art could be useful for healthy ageing?
- The needs of older adults

The concept of creative ageing

Older[14] adults are involved through arts education for adults 55 and older promoting the inclusion of professional arts programs in organizations that serve older adults; preparing teaching artists to work with older adults, and fostering lifelong learning in our communities.

Ageing creatively — through the arts (music, theater, dance, painting and etc.) — holds the promise of enjoying process of deserved free time.

The main idea of creative ageing concept – how to improve the lives of thousands of older adults. Creative ageing in its many forms is hopeful, often transformative and usually fun.
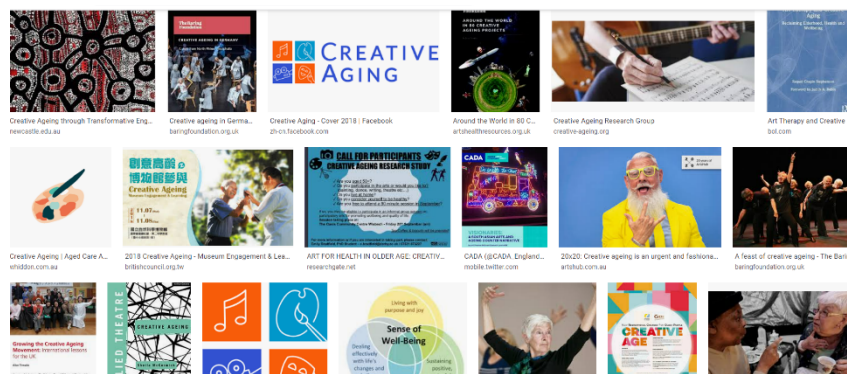
In the publication "The Creativity and Aging Study: The Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs on Older Adults," [15] emphasized participation in activities that foster creative and positive engagement. This engagement positively effects psychologically, physically and emotional health for older adults.

Older adults[16] have vital contributions to make to society as creators and community members. Based on lifetimearts.org article "arts participation improves the emotional well-being of older adults,

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[12] https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1062

[13] https://www.icaa.cc/activeagingandwellness/what-is-active-aging.htm

[14] https://www.lifetimearts.org/creative-aging/

[15] https://www.lifetimearts.org/creative-aging/

[16] https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa_research/creative-aging/

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supports good health, strengthens social bonds, and brings a heightened experience of purpose and joy to our lives as we mature". The effects of ageism – loneliness, isolation, depression, limited access to creative activities. Creative ageing helps to keep healthy and positive, to see benefits of future, to enjoy each day in life. Quality of life and wellness are important in each life episode, however, wellness using creativity helps to keep fit in mind and enjoy life experiences. Based on National assembly of State Arts Agencies research "Studies show that for those over 65, people involved in weekly art programs have fewer doctor visits and take less medication than those without creative outlets". Different research confirms that art could stimulate mental activity and help develop skills.

Non-pharmacological therapies[17] impact on neuropsychiatric symptoms and quality of life are tremendous and art-based interventions seem particularly suitable for elders' rehabilitation as they act both on cognitive functions and quality of life. As a conclusion National assembly of State Arts Agencies[18] emphasize that "there is overwhelming evidence attesting to the health and wellness benefits of the arts, especially for older populations".

Creative learning[19] connected with social engagement, creative ageing, assurance mental, physical wellness. What to learn new when you are elderly, how to enjoy non-formal learning activities. For quality of life is important good emotions. Music connects people's emotions, feelings, created choirs engagent in a common activities, singing useful physical activity which foster well-being of older people. Singing, listening, accompanying helps to develop different skills which allows older people to be busy and do not think about health issues.

Based on National assembly of State Arts Agencies "Music also can help older adults cope with the grief of losing loved ones, while engaging in any form of art can enable expression of experiences, like receiving a diagnosis of cancer, that are difficult to articulate otherwise. Older adults who sing with a chorus report fewer doctor visits, less medication use, lower rates of hypertension and better overall physical health than those who do not. There is also evidence that music can reduce chronic issues such as joint pain and emphysema, while playing a musical instrument can help mitigate hearing difficulties".

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[17] https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01467/full

[18] https://nasaa-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/creative-aging-strategy-sampler.pdf

[19] https://nasaa-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/creative-aging-strategy-sampler.pdf

Expression emotions with movement (dance) can be similar form as singing, however, combine with music dance help to keep motorical skills in order. Dancing useful for everybody no matter age. National assembly of State Arts Agencies emphasize that dance as an agent of physical health can relieve symptoms of Parkinson's. "In addition, older adults participating in ballet classes report feeling more animated and having better posture, flexibility, bodily control and general sense of physical well-being. Older adults who create art and participate in arts activities report greater memory and cognitive functioning than those who do neither. Research suggests that adults over the age of 75 who frequently play an instrument are less likely to develop dementia compared to those who don't".

National assembly of State Arts Agencies defines music therapy has demonstrated a capacity to manage memory loss experience better quality of life. "End-of-life care is a difficult reality of aging, but one that the arts can ease. The arts can effectively increase the physical and—by reducing anxiety and fatigue—emotional comfort of patients receiving end of-life care. In particular, research indicates that music therapy is an effective tool for bolstering the emotional and spiritual well-being of hospice patients as well as patients in hospitals receiving palliative care. More generally, but important nonetheless to patients and their families, hospital based arts programs can personalize patients' end-of-life care experience and reduce feelings of institutionalization."

Creative ageing benefits defined in a table 1. Main benefits for health, wellbeing and happiness described. Art activities[20] offer a wide range of benefits (helping individuals relax; providing a sense of control; reducing depression and anxiety; assisting in socialization; encouraging playfulness and a sense of humor; improving cognition; offering sensory stimulation; fostering a stronger sense of identity; increasing self-esteem; nurturing spirituality; and reducing boredom. Expressive art exercises constitute innovative interventions to promote self-expression and improve communication with others". Peishan Yang[21] research shows that "participants had lower rates of loneliness and depression, higher morale and improved hand dexterity. In addition, participants found that having new social roles because of the programs led to improved mood and confidence, better family relationships and in some cases even increased income".

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[20] https://www.todaysgeriatricmedicine.com/news/ex_082809_03.shtml#:~:text=Therapeutic%20art%20experiences%20can%20supply,pathways%20and%20thicker%2C%20stronger%20dendrites.

[21] https://www.forbes.com/sites/nextavenue/2016/10/03/the-arts-and-aging-5-surprising-insights-on-creativity/?sh=278369797be0

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For health	Reduce loneliness and improves cognition	Increase mental engagement reduce depression and anxiety
For wellbeing	Reduce boredom	Increased physical activity Helping individuals relax
For happiness	Social participation	Actively engaged in life

Table 1. Creative ageing benefits (Ž.Navikienė, 2022)

Participating in the arts creates paths to healthy aging[22]. Creative aging[23] efforts variously combine expertise about and practices from the arts, humanities, education, health and aging sectors. Given its interdisciplinary nature, state arts agencies have many options to enable creative aging activities.

People have different tastes and cultural reference points, but they all benefit from tapping into their creative capacity and they have fun doing it.

Increased longevity[24] is only one part of the bio-demographic changes affecting social and economic life. Creative ageing is "the practice of engaging older adults (55+) in participatory, professionally run arts programs with a focus on social engagement and skills mastery. Designed to provide opportunities for meaningful creative expression through visual, literary, and performing arts workshops. With a positive approach to the reality that we all get older, it's not surprising that creative aging has become a major force to be reckoned with.

Social participation and volunteering important for active ageing (table nr.2) involvement into volunteering activities focused on using arts creates for ageing possible activities (theather, music, dance, painting and etc.).

ACTIVE AGEING		
Social participation and volunteering	Theater	poetry, literature,
	Music	Choirs, singing, storytelling
	Dance	Expression
	Painting	Visual arts

Table 2. Creative ageing possible activities (Ž.Navikienė, 2022)

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[22] https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/participating-arts-creates-paths-healthy-aging

[23] https://nasaa-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/creative-aging-strategy-sampler.pdf

[24] https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/boomers-30/201709/creative-aging

"Reminiscence Arts[25] is Age Exchange's unique approach to working creatively. Simply put, it is the creative exploration of memories

- The exploration of living memory and shared life experiences through art

- Unlocking the past through storytelling and memory triggers from our archive of historical objects

- Creating bridges between the past, present and future which directly impacts health and wellbeing

We bring to life our stories and experiences, our shared heritage or even the history of our shared spaces. It's why our work can be a narrative linear or, when we are working with people with memory difficulties, a memory that is recalled by an action.

For example, unlocking the smell of Chanel on your mother's dressing table, the feel of woollen socks on a cold day, it's just like riding a bike, something you never forget.

Reminiscence Arts is the practice and exploration of lived experience through the arts

Reminiscence Arts may be narrative, linear, experienced through embodied memory, and as sense memory. When effective it has resonance and value where the focus is to explore past life experience to influence relationships, learning, care and creativity in the present.

At the heart of Reminiscence Arts is the focus on empowering the individual, enabling them to share reminiscence through a range of arts mediums and to interact creatively and positively with others.

Reminiscence Arts has relevance across cultures and generations. It is practiced by professionals from multidisciplinary arts backgrounds to which a focused training in reminiscence, ethics, and activity, enriches their potential to empower older people through triggering connections with lived experience.

It is highly effective in work with vulnerable older people, specifically older people with dementia. In these care and community settings professionals work with a highly person centred and empathetic focus. Reminiscence is explored organically through a wide range of stimuli as the professional reaches to find the trigger that enables the participant to engage, communicate, and create. This may be through encouraging sense memory, smell, touch, taste, or use of music, or most effective where language and formal memory may appear lost – through embodied memory. Looking at how a work movement, home chore, dance, may be reconnected with and enjoyed in the present. In this field of work Reminiscence Arts is highly valued in using a person's found life history to influence quality of life and well-being in the present.

Reminiscence Arts is used to train care staff, to provide them with relevant skills enabling them to use the life story of residents or patients and provide meaningful activity that is person centred. In this way reminiscence is used not for the sole purpose of reaching into long term memory, but in order to use knowledge of a person's life history to influence the quality of care they receive on a daily basis".

Creative ageing forms

Creative ageing forms and methods could be different and it is a lot of possibilities how to implement creative ageing. Older people engagement and participation as important factor should exist in NGOs, municipalities, public organizations responsible for cultural - creative activities. In the table 3 collected several different creative ageing forms (therapeutic art, community-based art, expressive art,

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[25] https://www.age-exchange.org.uk/who-we-are/what-is-reminiscence-arts/

reminiscence art, performative art, vitality art program model. Participating[26] organizations enlarged their capacity – including knowledge, skills, structures and networks – to plan, implement, evaluate and sustain Vitality Arts programs. Many shifted their identity as they became better known for offering participatory arts learning for older adults. Several reported that witnessing the growth and enthusiasm among their Vitality Arts participants energized their staff and deepened their sense of mission. At the completion of their two years of Aroha-funded programming, 27 of the 28 organizations said they intended to continue offering Vitality Arts programs. These programs and their public culminating events appeared to be having some impact on community attitudes toward older adults: over two-thirds of culminating event audience survey respondents agreed that the event expanded their view of older adults' capabilities. This was particularly true among audience respondents younger than 55, 79% of whom agreed with that statement.

Creative ageing forms	Description
Therapeutic art	cognitive and behavioral conditions, including addiction, mental illness, and particularly the dementias
Community-based arts	Encourage organizations that serve older adults to develop arts education programming
Vitality arts program model	Demonstrate the power and impact of creative aging programs to a national audience. Encourage arts and cultural organizations to develop participatory arts education programs for older adults.
Expressive arts	provide a link to social engagement
Reminiscence Arts	Life experience and memories
Performative art	an art form that combines visual art with dramatic performance

Table 3. Creative ageing forms (Ž.Navikienė, 2022)

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[26] https://bbe.037.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SVA-MN-final-report-final-DS.pdf

"Therapeutic art[27] experiences can supply meaning and purpose to the lives of older adults in supportive, nonthreatening ways. Neurological research shows that making art can improve cognitive functions by producing both new neural pathways and thicker, stronger dendrites". Art therapy[28] – "is an integrative mental health and human services profession that enriches the lives of individuals, families, and communities through active art-making, creative process, applied psychological theory, and human experience within a psychotherapeutic relationship. Art therapy, facilitated by a professional art therapist, effectively supports personal and relational treatment goals as well as community concerns. Art therapy is used to improve cognitive and sensorimotor functions, foster self-esteem and self-awareness, cultivate emotional resilience, promote insight, enhance social skills, reduce and resolve conflicts and distress, and advance societal and ecological change".

"Art therapy[29] has been studied at length and been proven to help with numerous cognitive and behavioral conditions, including addiction, mental illness, and particularly the dementias. The activities of coloring, drawing, and painting have been shown to provide individuals with meaningful stimulation that improves self-esteem and as a result increases social interaction.<…> The expressive arts provide a platform of engagement where older people can experience individual mastery. It only makes sense when one stops to think about the very nature of humans from the time we are born. We constantly strive to master something, from taking our first steps to our education, to our careers, child rearing, and retirement. If there is nothing to strive for or look forward to anymore, people tend to decline. Creating something slows this decline. In conjunction with individual mastery, the other aspect of the expressive arts that makes them such a viable non-pharmaceutical option is the opportunity for social engagement with others. Much research is coming out examining the nature of dementia and the need to expand dementia care. Greater attempts are being made to view the quality of life as more of an individual experience rather than a generalized treatment for a disease. Social interaction with others and expressive art therapy drive home this point in a highly relevant way".

Life journey brings us to different life stages. The Vitality Arts [30] programs were highly effective at helping older adults grow artistically, mentally and socially.program model of programming that delivers these outstanding results is taught by Lifetime Arts and has these primary features: • Sequential learning curriculum • Taught by a professional teaching artist prepared to work with this age group • Intentional social engagement as well as artistic development • Minimum of 8 sessions of at least 90 minutes, with public culminating event Important secondary features include: quality materials and supplies (e.g. visual and textile arts supplies and equipment, and musical instruments); suitable space/facility for learning and for culminating events, tailored as necessary to the physical limitations of participating older adults; and offered free or at an affordable price for the spectrum of local older adults. Arts programs are essential to help older adults remain dynamic members of society

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[27] https://www.todaysgeriatricmedicine.com/news/ex_082809_03.shtml#:~:text=Therapeutic%20art%20experiences%20can%20supply,pathways%20and%20thicker%2C%20stronger%20dendrites.

[28] https://arttherapy.org/about-art-therapy/

[29] https://www.seniorsmatter.com/expressive-arts-for-the-elderly/2491906/

[30] https://bbe.037.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SVA-MN-final-report-final-DS.pdf

and an important part of their communities. Community-based arts programming also provides younger generations with positive role models who encourage a strong sense of meaning and purpose. Creative aging is a good thing for everyone on a local and national level. Intergenerational activities take place in urban, suburban, and rural communities in a variety of settings such as community centres, senior centers, assisted living, adult daycare, arts institutions, and libraries.

In the book[31] *"Applied Theatre: Creative Ageing"* defines that theatre "responds to the needs of older adults to encourage outcomes such as wellbeing and social inclusion". In the book discussing how applied theatre practices can help us do so in a way that is both positive and inclusive.

Performative art. The Netherlands has a wealth of great art organisations in all disciplines, for example, the Concertgebouw and the Nederlands Dans Theater. The strength of the Netherlands in the visual arts is especially well known, from the Golden Age of Rembrandt through to van Gogh and Mondrian and cutting edge digital arts today, displayed in a series of famous museums such as the Rijksmuseum as well as museums and galleries scattered throughout the country.[32]

It is well established that social resources, such as family ties and presence of neighbours, have a profound impact on the development of social well-being in later life. Older adults evaluate social connectedness as one of the most important determinants of successful aging. Self-management abilities, the behavioural and cognitive abilities to sustain well-being in later life, are functional in the fulfilment of basic social needs, namely status, behavioural confirmation and affection. Strengthening the core self-management abilities for well-being can aid in the prevention of age-related social problems among older adults[33].

Access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), such as computers, tablets or mobile phones, are associated with greater life satisfaction, lower depression and less feelings of loneliness. To date, the majority of older adults has gained access to internet-based communication services in the Netherlands. Although digital participation does not substitute all kinds of face-to-face activities, the internet may be a useful instrument to support self-management abilities when social resources are declining. Little is known regarding the relationship of digital participation for social purposes and peoples' abilities of self-management. Therefore, this cross-sectional research investigated associations between self-management abilities and social internet usage, such as visiting social networking sites and digital calling, among community-dwelling older adults[34].

Cultural participation. Toepoel V. (2011) concludes[35] that "Older people participate less frequently in social gatherings and have fewer close contacts than the adult population in general. They also experience increased feelings of loneliness. In contrast, older Dutch adults feel better integrated socially, which suggests that feelings of social integration and loneliness are independent of one another. Older adults show higher participation rates in highbrow activities compared to the adult population as a whole. This study, however, shows that lowbrow or undiscriminating behaviours may increase social integration and satisfaction with life. Consequently, it may be appropriate to stimulate older people to participate frequently in lowbrow activities such as popular music events, cabaret, and

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[31] https://www.abebooks.com/9781474233828/Applied-Theatre-Creative-Ageing-Sheila-1474233821/plp

[32] Cutler D. Dutch old master and mistresses. Creative ageing in the Netherlands. https://baringfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Dutch-Old-Masters-Final.pdf

[33] Scheffer, M.M., Menting, J. & Boeije, H.R. Self-management of social well-being in a cross-sectional study among community-dwelling older adults: The added value of digital participation. *BMC Geriatr* **21,** 539 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-021-02482-6 https://bmcgeriatr.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12877-021-02482-6

[34] https://bmcgeriatr.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12877-021-02482-6

Toepoel

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cinema. Public policy-makers, therefore, can consider changing focus from highbrow to lowbrow activities in order to respond to the social challenges associated with older age".

Mieras M. analyze cultural participation[36] as an important part of life. "A series of solid scientific studies is unanimous on the influence of active participation in dance, theatre, music and visual arts. Positive effects appear as a result of plural stimulation through artistic activities and the fascination that arts can cause. Fascination stimulates focused attention and learning processes in the brain. Arts programmes are most effective when participants do something that suits them personally. Someone who likes drama, comedy, cabaret or dancing will benefit most from that particular activity.[43] The largest effect takes place when arts programmes have the ambition to learn and push the boundaries, and when they are taught by professional art, theatre, music, and dance teachers. Attention should focus on artistic merit and not on technical obstacles. The social context of cultural activities is also important. The cohesion of weekly group activities can reduce, or eliminate, loneliness. Loneliness has a strong negative influence on body and mind". Ruut Veenhoven[37] concludes cultural participation leads to happiness.

National Knowledge Institute for Cultural Education and Amateur Art[38] in The Netherlands is committed to increasing attention for cultural education, cultural participation and the accessibility of culture. Music associations, choirs, painting, photo and film clubs, drama and dance associations are an important facility for a large part of the art practitioners in the Netherlands. Most associations[39] have members aged 50 to 64 years (88% of the associations) and 65 to 80 years (85%). This age categories also have the largest on average share of the membership. 14% have members aged 11 or younger and 22% aged 12 to 19, where it is actually only concerns music, dance and drama associations.

Abraham Sahilemichael Kebede, Lise-Lotte Ozolins, Hanna Holst, Kathleen Galvin, 2021 emphasize that "digital technologies play a substantial role in improving older people's quality of life and independence". Over the past decades, digital technology use among older populations has grown exponentially both in the mainstream (day-to-day lives) and assisted care (health and social care[40]) [19,20]. Digital engagement[41] in health promotion and social support through health information is also growing. Besides, the age-related decline in vision, hearing, cognition, and dexterity also attribute to the limited use of digital technologies.

Digital Engagement in older age

Digital engagement after two years of pandemic Covid19 showed increased digital skills and used of information technologies. Digital engagement is important for vulnerable groups (especially not native digital users, who born earlier then computers, internet was in use).

Abraham Sahilemichael Kebede, Lise-Lotte Ozolins, Hanna Holst, Kathleen Galvin (2021) "propose to understand the current state of knowledge about older people's digital engagement through the stages of digital engagement (nonuse, initial adoption, and sustained engagement). This will facilitate an ongoing drive to reduce digital inequality and, in doing so, provide new understandings

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[36] Older, culturally active and full of life How arts participation contributes to health, welfare and independence. In opdracht van: **Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie**

[37] Veenhoven, R. Healthy happiness: effects of happiness on physical health and the consequences for preventive health care. Journal of Happiness Studies 9, 449–469 (2008)

[38] https://www.lkca.nl/kennis/

[39] https://www.lkca.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/210916-VERENIGINGSMONITOR2021-DT.pdf

[40] Ageing in place *Technology In Our Life Today And How It Has Changed.* 2019. https://www.aginginplace.org/technology-in-our-life-today-and-how-it-has-changed/

[41] Vaportzis E, Clausen Maria Giatsi, Gow AJ. Older adults perceptions of technology and barriers to interacting with tablet computers: a focus group study. *Front Psychol.* 2017 Oct 04;8:1687. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01687. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01687. [PMC free article] [PubMed] [CrossRef] [CrossRef] [Google Scholar]

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to promote the well-being of older people. It will also help identify potential alternatives for older people who remain nonusers of digital technology". Nowadays cultural entertainments could be found in different digital platforms, social platforms, which could be freely reached.

Digital Engagement Dimensions

Abraham Sahilemichael Kebede, Lise-Lotte Ozolins, Hanna Holst, Kathleen Galvin (2021) defines older people's digital engagement and disengagement (Figure 1). Below showed three-stage approach involves technological nonuse, initial adoption or acceptance, and sustained digital engagement.
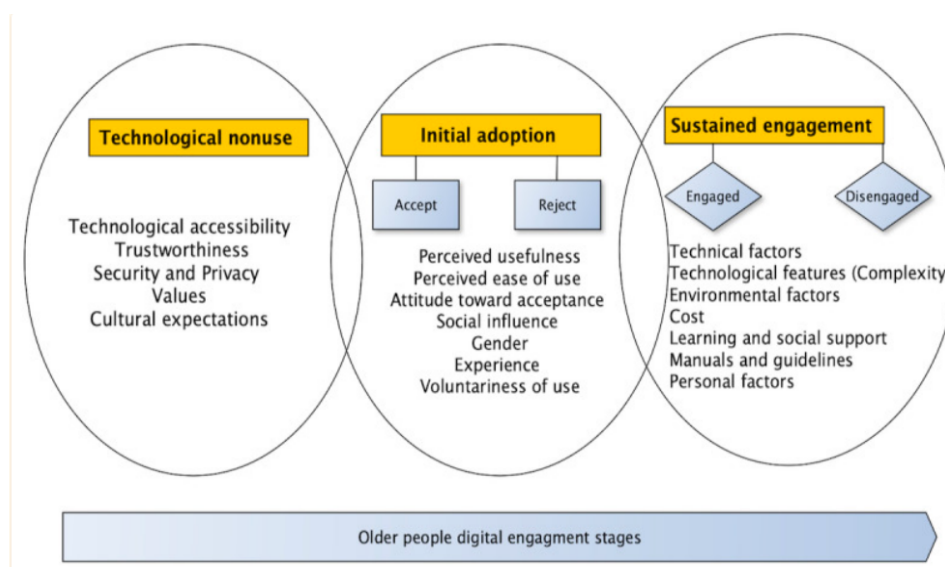

Figure 1. Older people's digital engagement dimensions and stages later in life[42] (Abraham Sahilemichael Kebede, Lise-Lotte Ozolins, Hanna Holst, Kathleen Galvin, 2021)

All mentioned categories (technological accessibility, trustworthiness, values, cultural expectations, perceived usefulness, technical factors and etc. important creating content for older people to be digitally involved into creative activities.

Summary

- Ageing creatively through the arts (music, theater, dance, painting and etc.) important process of enjoying life with well used deserved free time. The main idea of creative ageing concept is how to improve the lives of older adults. For successful involvement into digital creative events, should be several important factors (technological accessibility, trustworthiness, values, cultural expectations, perceived usefulness, technical factors and etc.) implemented creating content for older people to be digitally involved into creative activities. Creative ageing benefits for health, wellbeing and happiness convinced of importance of art activities.
- Digital engagement after two years of pandemic Covid19 showed increased digital skills and used of information technologies. Digital engagement is important for vulnerable groups (especially not a native digital users, who born earlier then computers, internet was in use).
- Music associations, choirs, painting, photo and film clubs, drama and dance associations are an important facility for a large part of the art practitioners who are working with older people.

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[42] Abraham Sahilemichael Kebede, Lise-Lotte Ozolins, Hanna Holst, Kathleen Galvin. Originally published in JMIR Research Protocols (https://www.researchprotocols.org), 05.07.2021 https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8406116/

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- Creative ageing forms and methods could be different (therapeutic art, community-based art, expressive art, reminiscence art, performative art, vitality art program model) and it is a lot of possibilities how to implement creative ageing. Older people engagement and participation as important factor should exist in NGOs, municipalities, public organizations responsible for cultural-creative activities.

Annexes

Good practice in the Netherlands

Dutch innovation43 which has attracted a lot of attention has been by the Humanitas care home group, which is giving free accommodation to six university aged students in its Deventer care home. Each student lives on a unit with 26 older people. The students act as a neighbour to residents for at least 30 hours a month, in return for food and lodging. Their contribution includes transferring skills such as the use of social media and skype or even graffiti art. In general the students seem to have an invigorating effect on the community and they have a different relationship with residents than the care staff.

Audience Engagement. The Van Gogh Museum44 stimulates elderly people participation in "creative on-location workshops and the museum is also developing new activities specifically for the over-70s. In January 2018, the museum started hosting special afternoons for elderly visitors. The programme responds to the specific needs and desires of the target group and supports participants wherever necessary. Age Friendly Museum Network. The Van Gogh Museum is keen to share its expertise and experience with other institutions. The museum is continually seeking new, innovative means of activating elderly people. An expert meeting was organised early in 2018 to launch knowledge exchange in this field. In the years ahead, the museum will work towards creating an Age Friendly Museum Network: a network of like-minded museums dedicated to making their institutions accessible to elderly people".

The Dutch45 municipalities of The Hague and Zoetermeer and whether or not ageism is manifested explicitly or implicitly. A qualitative photoproduction study based on the Checklist of Essential Features of Age-Friendly Cities was conducted in five neighbourhoods. Both municipalities have a large number of visual age-friendly features, which are manifested in five domains of the WHO model, namely Communication and information; Housing; Transportation; Community support and health services; and Outdoor spaces and buildings. Age-stereotypes, both positive and negative, can be observed in the domain of Communication and information, especially in the depiction of third agers as winners. At the same time, older people and age-friendly features are very visible in the cityscapes of both municipalities, and this is a positive expression of the changing demographics.

<…>The municipalities of The Hague and Zoetermeer have integrated a large array of age-friendly features in their respective neighbourhoods in order to make their societies more inclusive for older age groups. The city of The Hague is a consortium member of the WHO's Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide. Both municipalities have a large number of visual features, both facilitators and hindrances, that can be observed in the streets of the two cities. These features are manifested particularly in five domains of the Global Age-Friendly Cities model, namely Communication and information; Housing; Transportation; Community support and health services; and Outdoor spaces and buildings. Both municipalities and entrepreneurs (shops) have invested great effort in making the cities accessible for

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43 Cutler D. Dutch old master and mistresses. Creative ageing in the Netherlands. https://baringfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Dutch-Old-Masters-Final.pdf

44 https://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en/about/organisation/inclusion-and-accessibility-policy/age-friendly-van-gogh-museum

45 https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1420326X19857216

all age groups, and a large set of services and activities are offered to older people. Future research should address the solutions offered by entrepreneurs as a way to make their businesses more age-friendly. Age-stereotypes, both positive and negative, can be observed in the domain of Communication and information, especially in the depiction of third agers as winners. At the same time, older people are very visible in the cityscapes of both municipalities, and it is an expression of the changing demographics that signs and advertisements targeting older people are emerging in our societies. Other cities in the Netherlands could use the results of this study to make their own cities more age-friendly, for instance, by looking at best practices that can be implemented into their own urban planning or the design of public services, such as the availability of parking places for mobility scooters, as such patterns are very similar throughout the country. Cities abroad could benefit from taking notice of the best practices and by trying to translate these findings into the local urban context and level of service provision46.

Powerful 47means of engaging older adults from all parts of society and enhancing their quality of life are excursion is proof of a growing nationwide acknowledgment that cultural pursuits like fine art, theater, music, and dance are more than just pleasant distractions for an elite slice of the population. They are a.

The few dozen seniors at the Cobra Museum on this day are here with Museum Plus Bus, an Amsterdam-based organization that arranges free tours for older adults at 14 museums across the Netherlands — from well-known institutions like the Rijksmuseum and the Van Gogh Museum, to lesser-known gems like Kröller-Müller and Cobra. For the past decade, Museum Plus Bus has managed to give thousands of Dutch seniors access to art and culture. With their two massive tour buses, they ferry groups to and from museums about 300 times per year.

A wealth of programs and initiatives like Plus Bus are devising innovative ways to extend the benefits of the arts to the Netherlands' rapidly graying population. It's not surprising, given that this is a country with a rich artistic legacy (including Rembrandt, Vermeer, and Van Gogh, to name just a few Dutch icons) and an impressive network of arts organizations. The Netherlands has the fourth highest level of cultural participation in Europe, with 58 percent of citizens actively engaging in cultural activities. Museum Plus Bus is entirely funded by BankGiro Loterij, a national lottery dedicated to supporting causes in the arts. If there's any indication of the deep appreciation for arts and culture in this country, it's this; imagine buying a lottery ticket and having fully half of the proceeds go toward funding cultural appreciation efforts. And this being the Netherlands, of course it's all backed up by research. Ample studies by thorough Dutch academics affirm the theory that cultural participation has a positive effect on the well-being of people of all ages.

In 2013, the national initiative Long Live Arts (Lang Leve Kunst) launched with the specific aim of giving older adults increased access to cultural activities. Leveraging various public-private partnerships, Long Live Arts was able, over three years, to pour about 10 million euros into 950 cultural projects that reached some 400,000 seniors.

The Long Live Arts programme began in 2013 as a public-private partnership between Stichting RCOAK, the Sluyterman van Loo Fund, the National Centre for Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts (LKCA), VSB Fonds and the FCP. It arose from a study published the previous year called Kunstbeoefening met ambitie (Practising arts with ambition). This concluded that older people who cultivate their artistic talents are healthier and happier. A covenant to secure political support was signed between the Dutch Education, Culture and Science Minister, Jet Bussemaker, State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sports, Martin van Rijn, and the Association of Dutch Voluntary Effort Organisations. The Long Live Arts partners instituted a grants programme as well as international,

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46 https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1420326X19857216

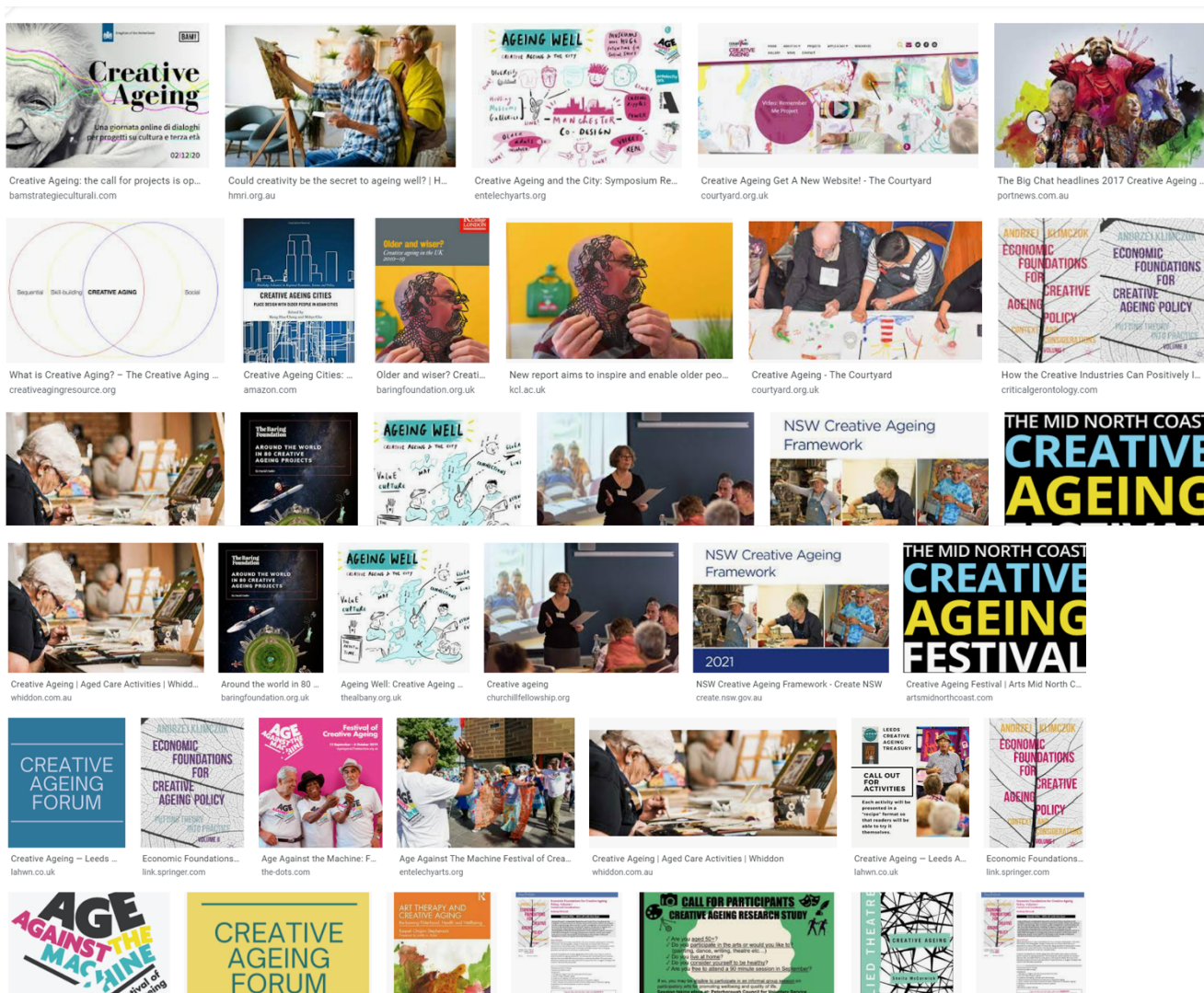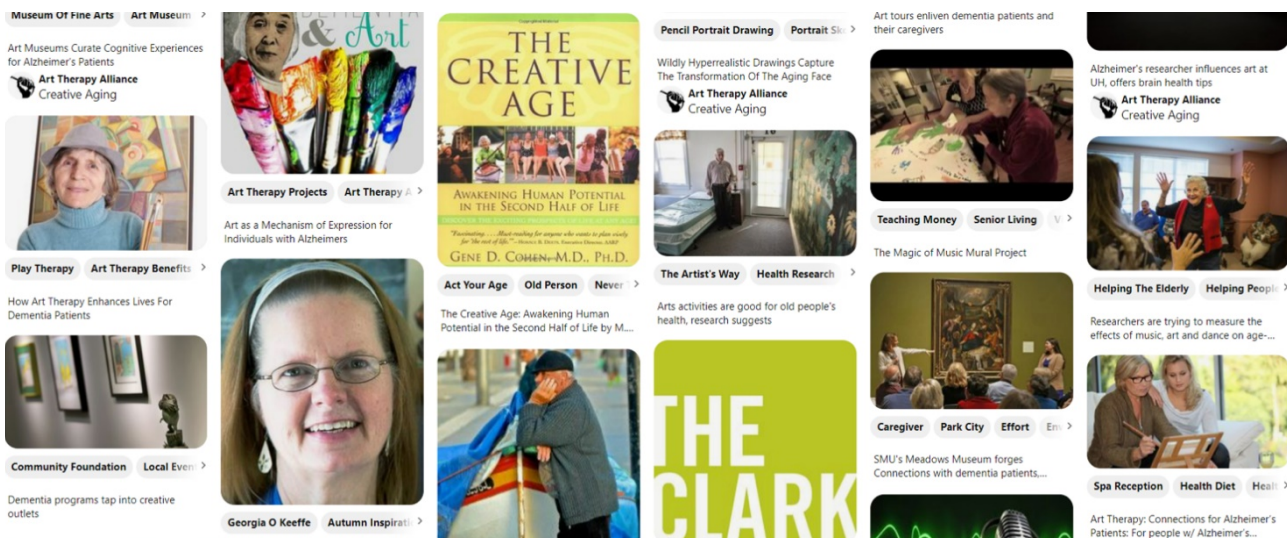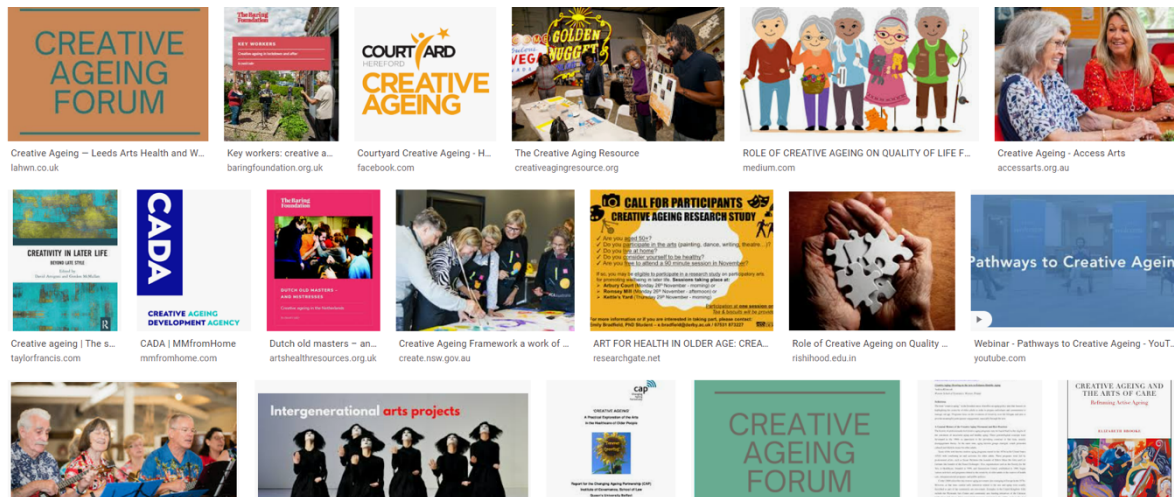47 https://www.aarpinternational.org/the-journal/past-editions/artful-aging

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national and regional conferences. Two reports were published and the resulting EU Manifesto was signed by 150 European cultural organisations.[48]

Photos
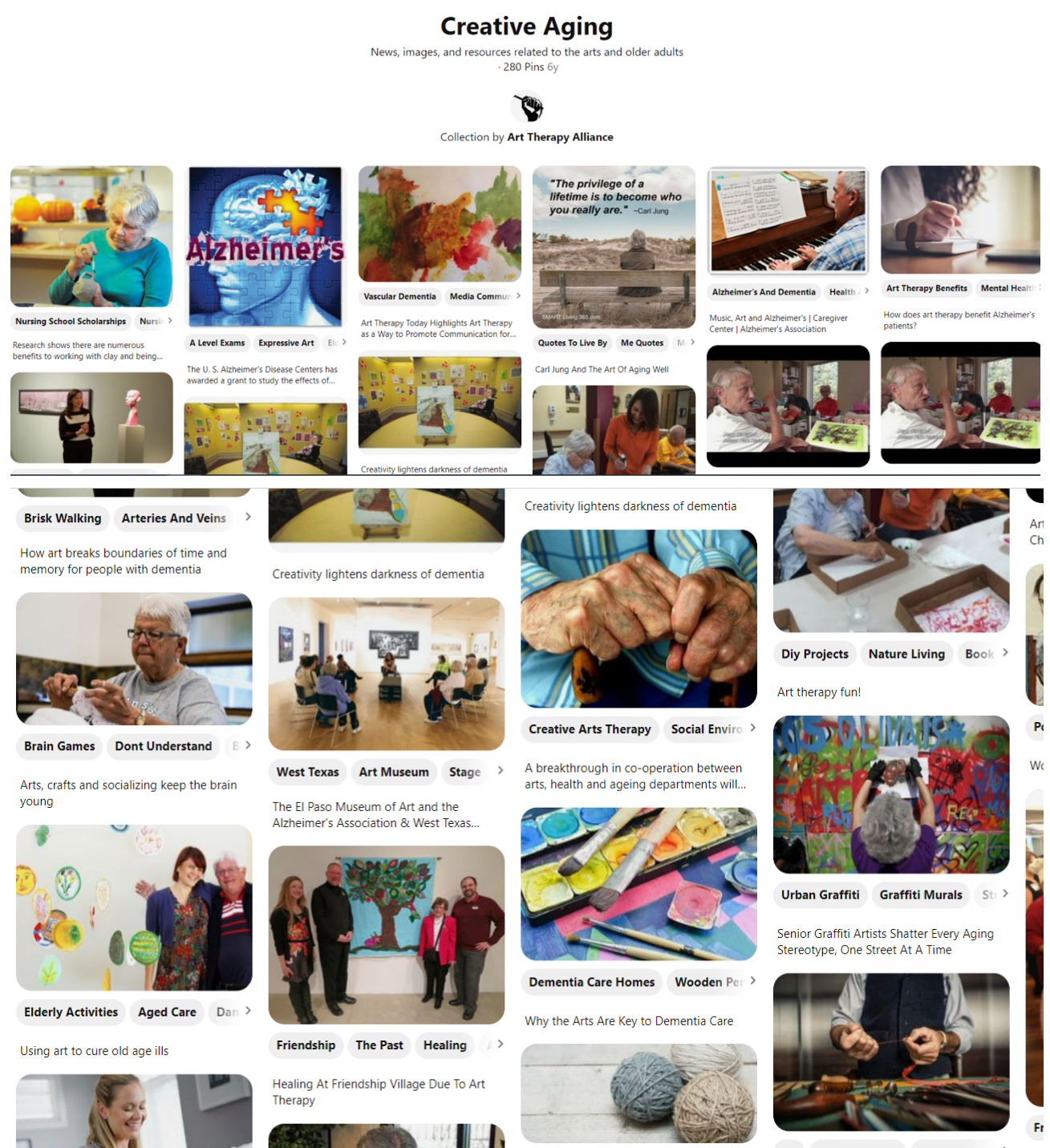
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Quiz [49]

- Why are adults not as creative?

As adults, I have discovered two barriers to our ability to think creatively: 1) the need to look good and 2) knowledge and expertise. Expertise is the enemy of creativity, as I often say. As our knowledge grows, it becomes harder for us to see things differently since we become accustomed to thinking the same way.

- How does creativity change with age?

Creative output doesn't increase as we age, at least not if it's measured by productivity or by making valuable contributions to fields such as science and art. That measure finds output growing as we age, peaking around our late 30s or early 40s, and then declining.

- How does age affect art?

It was observed that young artists tended to believe older artists were more original, more mature, more willing to take risks, and more knowledgeable about the art world, while older artists tended to think younger artists had more inspiration.

- Does intelligence and creativity decline with age?

The fluid intelligence of the elderly is known to decline at a young age based on many studies. While crystallized intelligence does decline as one ages due to experience and learning new skills, it actually grows with age.

- Why does creativity diminish with age?

In many cases, they spent decades doing uninspiring work before discovering their true calling. Among the striking implications of these findings is their lack of support for the idea that aging contributes to creative declines. Since late bloomers peak at a time when early bloomers have passed their prime, it makes sense for them to be creatively gifted.

- Does your imagination decrease with age?

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[49] https://artradarjournal.com/art-education/why-are-old-people-less-artistic/

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As we age, we may also have less vivid imaginations due to memory decline. As we grow older, we not only lose the memories we treasure; we also lose the ability to imagine.

- Do people lose creativity?

Over the past few decades, research conducted by psychologist Dean Keith Simonton has suggested that increased creativity is associated with rapid growth in your mid-20s, peaking between the late 30s and early 40s, and then slowly declining.

- Why do we lose imagination as we get older?

A mature adult would, on the other hand, think about past experiences and knowledge to create a viable plan. The ideas are no less creative, but not as childlike as those from a child. Imagination is lost over time as you acquire more knowledge.

- Why adults stop being creative?

"People's underlying abilities are not being challenged, which leads to a decline in creativity. They are stuck in boring jobs or situations. If we need to support a family as adults, we may have to take jobs that greatly hinder our creativity.

- At what age is a person most creative?

Creative endeavors generally peak in late 30s or early 40s for psychologists who study creativity throughout life cycles. Rather than looking at creativity through the lens of individual accomplishment, they tend to see it through the lens of creative and innovative disciplines.

- How does age affect creativity?

Researchers at UC Berkeley have found that creativity y psychologists suggests that creativity generally tends to decline as we age. Adults exhibited less creative thought processes than children, according to experiments. It is possible to be as creative as children by understanding our adult tendencies.

- How does art help older people?

The use of small, purposeful movements to create artwork can improve coordination, leading to a reduction in pain and even improved immune function. The focus on one's aches and pains can be lessened by art for seniors. By focusing on the creative process, seniors are able to concentrate on what they do best.

- Can adults be creative?

Adults exhibited less creative thought processes than children, according to experiments. It is possible to be as creative as children by understanding our adult tendencies.

- Are adults less creative?

Researchers at UC Berkeley have found that creativity y psychologists suggests that creativity generally tends to decline as we age. Adults exhibited less creative thought processes than children, according to experiments.

- Is it OK not to be creative?

Unfortunately, our survey data indicate that you are unlikely to be creative even if you think you are. It's not all bad news, though; you can actually become more creative if you adopt a different mindset. It is possible for anyone to innovate, if they so desire. Entrepreneurs who disrupt the status quo do so consciously, not by accident.

- Why are old people less artistic?

People who find themselves locked in situations that are repetitive or boring begin to feel as though they no longer have as much creativity as they once did. The end result of aging is responsibilities, the false necessity to "lock into routines", and feeling less creative all at once.

- Why do we lose our imagination as we get older?

In addition, as people age and become more knowledgeable, their perceptions of the world become more grounded and thus, their imagination fades. The burden of work, responsibilities, family, and emotions leaves little room for free time or creative expression.

- Why are adults not creative?

"People's underlying abilities are not being challenged, which leads to a decline in creativity. They are stuck in boring jobs or situations. Having to support a family often means locking ourselves into a job that is less creative than we would like.

- Why do people think they're not creative?

brush it aside. They only accept what is known to be possible. People who don't believe they're creative do so because they are haunted by this fear.

- Why do we become less creative with age?

"People's underlying abilities are not being challenged, which leads to a decline in creativity. They are stuck in boring jobs or situations. The end result of aging is responsibilities, the false necessity to "lock into routines", and feeling less creative all at once.

- At what age does creativity start?

Preschoolers live in a magical world filled with imagination. Before the age of six, creative abilities of most children will peak. Then, with the onset of formal schooling and the development towards conformity, creativity will decline.

- What does it mean to not be creative?

The following examples are not creative. Noncreative people can make interesting observations when allowed to do so even if they lack the ability or power to create.

- Why do people lose creativity as they age?

When we become adults, we do lose our creative flair, but not in the way you might expect. It is more likely that we are losing our creative abilities due to falling into cognitive traps than because of aging.

- How does art help older people?

Alzheimer's and dementia patients may benefit from the use of creative arts. Even forgotten memories of childhood and old times may be uncovered through painting or music. Additionally, it can provide clarity to those dealing with memory loss, enhancing their ability to function at their best.

Videos

- Creativity https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4jsGBIp8wY&t=105s
- Reminiscence Arts https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfgyr8__vI0&t=8s

Module 2: Creative Aging and cultural engagement in the era of Covid-19

Why it is important to keep seniors engaged in cultural and creative activities, and how we can do it in a situation of physical distancing?

Workshop One: Unravelling The Stories Within

The team from THESPACE BETWEEN US Programme at Chickenshed will introduce their intergenerational practice tools in this first workshop.

"The SBU is an established, nuanced program. It brings together cohorts of people for the purpose of community creation, interpersonal connection, and the development of confidence in relational, and creative domains of their individual and shared lives. Its precise form is reflexive, malleable, and moulded from collaboration between participants and facilitators in a truly participant-centred and participant-driven manner." Report BUPA 2021

Using These Hands as a starting point the team will take the participants through a series of creative tasks to develop artistic content from the lived experiences in the room.

Kind of activity

Group activity

Materials needed

- • Craft materials- Paper, pens, coloured pens, collage material
- • Recording equipment- Dave and Tiia to provide
- • Large pieces of paper A1

Objective of the activity

To explore these questions:

- • How do we get to know participants quickly and effectively?
- • How do we make quick human connections in a workshop environment?
- • How can we record this in a meaningful way that deepens connections between participants and creates material for performance?

Development of the activity

Step one

Introductions- a process to create quick and immediate conversations that break ice and make connections

Step two

Participants start this workshop by sharing what their hands have done through life. e.g. "these hands have changed too many nappies", " these hands have built many houses"

Step three

This task opens up shared experiences, giving the room a gentle awareness of the individuals in the group, people begin to connect through recognition of similarities, this task gives people a quick accessible introduction for further conversation outside of the session, people tend to want to know more and friendships start as people use this to form links.

Step four

This task is followed with a facilitated session using movement as the main artform. Music is accompanied by some of the words from the "These hands have task"

Step five

The reflective section of the session is centred around the visual arts, whereby people use their hands as a starting point to create a life map.

During this section people are recorded speaking about what they are creating.

Workshop Two: The Living Letters

This is a workshop looking at new ways to deepen connections across the ages- dispelling loneliness and isolation.

"The SBU offers participants a divergent expressive experience to deepen their connection to self and their connections to others, reinforcing relational security which is evidenced as the greatest buffer for wellbeing across the lifespan." BUPA REPORT

This workshop explores how we can bring stories to life through different mediums- film, sound, installation and live theatre.

The Chickenshed team will share films and sound scores inspired by the people they have worked with. The team will then lead the participants through a series of creative tasks to unpick the process.

Type of workshop

A group workshop

Material needed

- Screen needed to show films
- Paper, pens
- Large A1 paper
- Speakers

Objective

To open a creative dialogue on how we can bring stories to life through different mediums- film, sound, installation and live theatre.

Development of the activity

Step one

To view a selection of filmed material from Chickenshed

Step two

To pick apart the creative process- discussion and examples on film and recording

Step three

To divide into groups and create a creative concept to bring to life a piece of memoir writing. How can we develop material from an interview into theatrical moments.

Module 3: Cultural dis-engagement in seniors

What are the reasons (identified by researchers during the Focus group) and what are the possible solutions?

Overview

There are various reasons for cultural disengagement in seniors, at least in Slovenia.

The number of Slovenian pensioners was 624,800 out of population 2,108,977 on 1 January 2021. Prior to the 1 October, 2020, the International Day of Older Persons, Slovenia had 424,000 elderly persons (people aged 65 or more), or around 20% of its population so it has already passed the threshold of an "aging society" as defined by the United Nations. A comprehensive pension reform is needed to ensure a sustainable pension system as every year the public pension fund covers the shortfall due to insufficient revenue by funds from the state budget (in 2021, EUR 718.7 million went to cover the gap).More funds for seniors in future will come from the planned national demographic fund, which manages state assets worth almost EUR 8.6 billion.

The first reason for cultural disengagement in seniors, is poverty among seniors. 254,000 people in Slovenia live below the poverty line, most of them seniors (97,000 persons, two-thirds among them women).

The second reason is connected with health. according to official figures, 130,000 adults in Slovenia currently have no chosen family doctor, among them many seniors. Health problems due to age also contribute to cultural disengagement in seniors.

The third reason for cultural disengagement have been covid pandemics and measures against it. Since the pandemic in early 2020, many seniors have become isolated from their circle of friends while caregivers have had to take on increased responsibilities.With seniors being less active in the community and spending more time at home amid the corona virus outbreak, more cases of neglect and self-neglect took place. Many people have worked and cared for their elderly parents from home, which led to ties suffering due to stress and frictions from being in close quarters for long periods. There has been also high rate of covid-related death cases among seniors in Slovenia.

On the other hand, the use of digital technology has not only improved the quality of life for the elderly, but also allowed them to maintain social connections and introduce new learning and topics into their life. As most covid restrictions have now been lifted, seniors can again engage in cultural activities. Some of them have already adapted to online activities as well.

Possible solutions for seniors' cultural engagement

VR theatre for seniors is practically unknown in Slovenia but there are many advantages of it.Seniors can be completely immersed in a different world via a large headset. For example, in VR theatre play,performers can be seniors' size, not tiny people on a screen and they can come really close and engage with seniors on a personal level. You become part of the scenery and the passively sitting and observing audience member is transformed into the active player co-creating the scene. VR re-establishes embodiment digitally as its sensors and technologies aim to lead us and our bodies into virtual worlds. Virtual reality headsets are advancing beyond controllers, tracking the movement of the hands themselves. The capture and mapping of physical objects into the virtual worlds allows virtual objects to be touched and moved with the user's own hands. All these developments indicate that we will be able to experience virtual worlds more and more intensively in the near future.

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VR theatre can help seniors in health. Performances with virtual-reality headset help people overcome anxiety (avoiding real-life situations-agoraphobia) , build confidence and complete everyday tasks.VR allows seniors to feel able to try something new or approach the situation differently. If they get over something in VR, they will get over in the real world. VR headsets can be a great source of fun which has beneficial impact on health.

A system of cooperation and sharing has to be constructed which would lead to an exchange between experience and knowledge of culture and digital technology and result in inter generational interaction and communication learning. Key factors are that the play is attractive for seniors, that the text is simplified and that the play must establish a sense of achievement.Such play can improve seniors' digital gap. The theme of the play must not be competitive so that participants should discuss with and help each other regarding the content of the story or the performance.they need more time to adapt to and learn the operation of the Virtual Reality Theatre play. Although the VR play emphasizes the reality constructed by the virtual environment, the operation of the play still relies on the instructions. Seniors expect a slower process of the play in order to properly receive different kinds of information. This could also positively influence inter generational relations and communication. Due to the VR theatre play's content and topics, seniors could develop new topics and this would significantly enhance their social interaction. This will enhance their cooperation in the interactive VR theatre play.

Due to the pandemic still going on, difficulties can be encountered in the selection and willingness of participants to perform in the VR theatre play. Although not all seniors could successfully play, they would still develop interesting topics and interactions and thus learn from and comprehend each other. Combining the topic familiar to the elderly into the VR theatre play can help the elderly adapt to the play content and operation more quickly. The key factor lies in the design of the play, which has to strengthen the self-confidence of seniors.

Although there are interactive functions such as voice communication, video communication, and games, virtual social networks cannot replace realistic interpersonal connections. However, for many people, digital technology maintains such relationships and reduces distance, thus becoming indispensable for life and work. Virtual interaction is certainly the present option to maintain relations and exchange affections.

In the future,VR theatre play can be combined with mindfulness techniques

to leverage the elderly's memories and experiences to achieve the goals, which can be beneficial for connecting within society and improving quality of life.

Your silhouette is mine – practical activity

Learning objectives

To help participants understand and appreciate the perspectives of others by using silhouettes.

To enable participants to interact with their peers by recognizing the diversity of needs, thoughts, feelings, presenting them within the group.

Resources

Large sheets of paper (use a few sheets of flip chart, the back of a sheet of wallpaper or something else similar), colored pencils or markers, soothing music.

Duration: 30 minutes

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Instructions

Divide the participants into pairs, explaining that they will work as partners during these activities. Give each participant a sheet of paper (the size of a human). Ask them to lay the paper on the floor and draw in turn the silhouette of the partner on it.

When they have finished the silhouette, ask each participant to write the following information on their own silhouette:

on the head: a thought, on the chest/heart: a feeling , on the stomach: a need , on the hands: a desire to do something, om the feet: an activity he/she enjoys

When everyone has completed this task, ask participants to share information with their partner and describe every thought, feeling, need, or desire - activity that makes them happy, without explaining why.

Methods used

- Visual (spatial): using pictures and spatial understanding
- Verbal (linguistic): using words, both in speech and writing
- Physical (kinesthetic): using your body, hands, and sense of touch
- Social (interpersonal): learning in groups or with other people

Debrief

Once they have shared what they have written on their silhouettes, tell the participants to stretch on the silhouettes of others, to close their eyes and imagine that they are the other person. You can put on relaxing music and you can initiate the moment of reflection by suggesting to the participants to "go out from their own minds and enter the mind of their partner", to try to think about the thoughts of the other. To feel the needs of the other, to want what the other wants and to imagine that he does the activities that his partner enjoys.

At the end, give yourself five minutes for personal reflection on what it meant to each to put himself in the place of the other. You can end the activity by asking participants to embrace as a sign of mutual understanding

Part IV. Project work: Planning of an outreach campaign and structure of the local workshops

Module 1. Outreach Campaign planning.

How to plan an effective Outreach Campaign targeting seniors, to involve them in cultural activities with a technological component such as VR?

Group or individual activity	Group Activity
Length	2 hours
Materials needed	There is the need to print the tools inserted in the presentation. In addition, other printable tools could be integrated. There is also the need to have a PC and a projector.
Objective of the exercise	Understanding how to design an engagement process to seniors.

Steps to follow and description of each step	We will commonly design a specific activity of engagement of seniors, following the phases reported in the presentation, so deeping the knowledge of the reported tools and methodologies:
	- Design of the activity
	  o First design of the activity that want to developed with the target (this draft will be confirmed after the research part)
	- Research
	  o Desk Research: basing on the experience of every partner/stakeholder, understanding needs, goals and feelings of the project target.
	  o On Field: confirming the information reported during the desk research with an on-field data collection.
	- Implementation
	  o Analysing some case studies of digital seniors' engagement.
	- Evaluation
	  o Understanding how to deal with evaluating our work, how to create relevant indicators and proxies.

Module 2. Planning and developing the structure and format of the local workshops

Group or individual activity	**Group Activity**
Length	3 hours
Materials needed	The Guidelines for the local workshops can be printed and distributed. PC and projector to present some parts of the guidelines and show some examples.
Objective of the exercise	Understanding the guidelines to implement the loelcal workshops and analyse the main outcomes and phases.
Steps to follow and description of each step	Phase 1 (prior to the activity): Ask the participants to read the Guidelines for the local workshops and to make a list of the questions and/or items that were unclear to them. Phase 2 (30 min): Present the main objectives of the local workshops, as well as fundamental items that should be included in the workshops. Explain that the structure of the workshop can be flexible and adapt to the organisations' and participants' needs. Phase 3 (1 hour): Let the participants brainstorm in small groups on: - Which according to them are the key activities of these workshops - Which could be the best structure - How to insert this activity with the existing activities of their organisation - How to involve and attract participants and other organisations in the field Phase 4 (30 min): ask participants individually to draft a structure of their workshops featuring all the key activities Phase 5 (1 hour): ask all the participants to present their structure and the facilitators and the others provide feedback on this.

Part V. Evaluation

Midterm evaluation

Please find an example of mid-term evaluation **HERE.**

Final evaluation

Please find an example of final evaluation **HERE.**

Evaluation of the project work

For this activity, it is suggested to follow these steps:

- In organisational teams brainstorm/discuss an element of the project that really resonated with your team. How will you adapt /develop this for your target group? What changes (if any) would you need to make for your organisation? What difficulties may you experience with this activity? (15 mins)
- Plan out a short practical session using this activity/method/approach (15 mins)
- Present back to the wider group either by running a short activity the team has developed or by talking through the process. (10 mins per organisation)
- A cross organisation discussion on what elements worked, what was difficult and what further ideas would help develop the project (30 mins)

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