



# « International project cooperation of senior students in Slovakia »



**PhDr. Nadezda Hrapkova, PhD.**  
Comenius University in Bratislava,  
Slovakia, University of the Third Age



# Introduction

In my presentation I will focus on:

- general information about learning activities for the elderly in Slovakia.
- senior projects and informal learning activities which are offered to the elderly students:
  - a/ in the European context with experience in Slovakia.
  - b/ in the Slovak framework

On the other hand I would like to present some results from the projects with senior's involvement.



# History and goals of Slovak Universities of the Third Age

UTAs in Slovakia came into existence after 1990, with Comenius University in Bratislava being the first one

UTA at Comenius University offers participants three-year study programs in 39 study subjects – separated from young students (about 1900 senior students yearly are enrolling the study)

[www.uniba.sk/utv](http://www.uniba.sk/utv)



# Who are students at the UTAs

At the beginning the UTA in Slovakia started their courses especially for retirees.

At present UTAs are organized not only for retired people, but also for people medically retired (physically handicapped) without the age limit and also for people before retirement – generally for people 50+.

Currently from population of 5 mil. inhabitants there are about 7000 senior students at 16 UTAs across Slovakia.

The Association of Universities of the Third Age (ASUTV) of Slovakia was established as an initiative of Slovak universities on 1st of December 1994

[www.asutv.sk](http://www.asutv.sk)



# Layout of the UTAs in Slovakia



# Study system of Slovak UTAs

- The study plan of each year provides 14 three-hour lectures each fortnight.
- During their first year students attend basic lectures in each of the offered disciplines.
- The second and third years are devoted to the study of optional disciplines.
- After three study years in nonformal learning courses participants receive certificates during an official ceremony.



# What are the main subjects offered to seniors

- Archaeology
- Assertiveness training
- Astronomy
- Business skills of seniors
- Computers and Information
- Environmental science
- Economics
- Ethnology
- Expressive therapies
- General history
- General medicine
- Gerontology
- History of religions
- History of fine art
- History of Literature
- History of Opera
- History and monuments of Bratislava
- Law
- Financial learning
- Horticulture and gardening
- Japanese culture
- Journalism
- Latin and ancient Roman history
- Medicine
- Museology
- Pharmacology
- Philosophy
- Psychology
- Regeneration of the strength of Seniors
- Slovak History
- Social work
- Spas
- Theatre and Music through the ages
- Tourism and services
- Yoga





# Learning activities for the elderly

The pedagogical process is complemented by other educational and social forms along with lectures and seminars in chosen subjects

- panel discussions,
- language courses,
- International learning projects with the active involvement of the elderly students which are very much appreciated





# Other activities

- Summer camp and voluntary work of seniors organized for children,
- summer courses on different subjects or physical activities,
- cooperation with libraries in the cities,
- tourist and hiking activities,
- study excursions and thematically oriented trips



# Other leisure time activities

Activities in the Club of UTA:

- Informal meetings, discussions
- Newsletters, written by seniors
- visits to theatres, museums, opera



Intercultural work within generations

- volunteering and other projects

We started the first Slovak Senior sport games in 2012



# Initiatives in Europe

- The EU Strategy for the Danube region is an important strategy of the European Union. It has initiatives in Priority area 9 (Investing in people and skills) which support activities for all age groups.
- In March 2014 a new association for senior network - Danube Networkers of Europe DANET- was founded in Ulm University at the ZAWIW centre with the representatives of the senior institutions from Danube area and adjacent countries.



# DANET - Danube Networkers of Europe

Founded on experiences from the previous projects focusing on senior learning partnership or from projects of senior volunteers

Danube Networkers project built the contacts between seniors along the river Danube

Focused on writing stories about people, bridges, history, nature, important and interesting things from Danube area (Danube dam, castles, wooden mills, protected zones, etc.)



○ <http://www.danube-networkers.eu/>



# Aims of the Slovak team

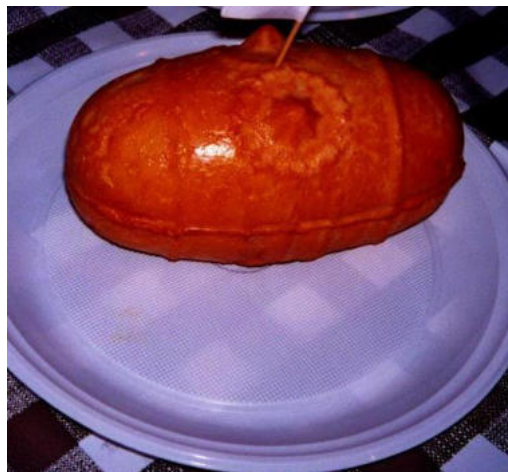
- description of Devín castle and its history, fossils
- Danubiana gallery,
- Beavers on the river branches  
wild orchids in this area, etc.
- personal attitudes and opinions of the seniors and persons which were interviewed (director of the gallery, the main architect of Bratislava)



Project was oriented on the methods on how older people can be made aware of everyday culture.

This intercultural project focused on

- Eating culture
- Yearly festivities
- Events in a human life
- Traditions and proverbs



# Eating culture

- Sheep farming in Slovakia – cheese, milk, meat and wool
- Wine traditions and route of wine in the area around Bratislava and vineyards
- Bread culture – sorts of bread, customs associated with bread, bread in a human life
- Menu at the Christmas time, weddings



**<http://vecu.efos-europa.eu/>**





# Yearly festivities

Customs in Slovakia are related to life events on specific days of the calendar and are regularly repeated yearly

Slovak group focused on:

- Christmas and New Year's Day-cakes, waffles, wishing men from door to door, Bethlehem performances
- Easter customs – painted eggs symbol of renewal and continuity of life, washing in the stream,

Meeting relatives, special menu, special cakes



# Events in a human life

- Birth
- Baptism
- Marriage
- Death / funeral



# Networking

- one of the most important international activities
- very well recognised in the Grundtvig project For Age (<http://www.foragenetwork.eu/en/>) with 19 European institutions
- International contacts are also essential for the strategic partnerships of new European projects Erasmus + which are designed for the period 2014 – 2020.
- Membership in EFOS, AIUTA
- <http://www.efos-europa.eu/>



# Summary

International projects are important for sharing senior's knowledge and exchange experience, train foreign language, which support making friends and international contacts as well as personal exchanges.

Each society has its own typical culture, which confirms its identity. The great variety of cultures creates possibilities for finding new forms of work in various fields, also for the work with seniors.





# Thank you for your attention

