

Educational Senior Network

# HELPING THE OVER-50 s

Survey among non-students

**UTA at Comenius University Bratislava**  
**SLOVAKIA**



2014 - 2017



Erasmus+

funded by the European Union  
programme for education,  
training, youth and sport  
2014 - 2020

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	2
II.	THE PROJECT	2
III.	THE QUESTIONNAIRE	3
IV.	POPULATION AND SAMPLE	3
V.	RESULTS	5
	Part A. Personal data	
A.1	The country where you live	5
A.2	Gender	5
A.3	Age	5
A.4.	Education	6
A.5	Place of living	6
A.6	Housing	7
A.7	Persons with special needs for learning	7
	Part B. Learning	
B.1.	Do you think learning in later life is important and are you interested in taking part in learning activities?	8
B.2	How and where do you find out about learning possibilities?	8
B.3	Do you know any University of the Third Age?	9
B.4	Which other learning activities for the over 50s in your region are you familiar with?	9
B.5	Which of these learning activities would be suitable for you?	10
B.6	Which of the following do you think are good reasons for taking part in learning activities?	10
B.7	Would more information and a wider range of learning activities persuade you to take part?	11
B.8	If yes, which subjects would interest you?	11
B.9	If no, what would prevent you from taking part?	12
B.10	Which type of education would you prefer?	12
B.11	Is the social aspect of learning important for you?	13
B.12	Would you want to use new media for learning either at home or in a group?	13
B.13	What sort of measures comes to your mind that would make it easier for you to take part in learning?	14
B.14	If you do not take part in learning activities, what kind of free time activities do you practice / realise in your spare time?	14
VI.	CONCLUSIONS	14

## I. INTRODUCTION

Demographic ageing is too often perceived negatively and older people are sometimes considered a burden on society and on public budgets. A change of attitude is needed to achieve an inclusive society and support greater solidarity and cooperation towards the older generation. The rapid development of Universities of the Third Age (UTAs) throughout the world is a testimony of their growing importance within our modern societies. Universities of the Third Age (UTAs) are organisations that provide education and activities to mainly retired people. Study programmes offered to older students are organised in a university premises with the participation of university staff and teachers. In our civic society are other groups of seniors in communities, residential homes and rural areas not involved into learning. Therefore it is necessary to integrate these groups of seniors to the activities by contacting them, doing interviews and preparing the innovation of the UTA programs or establishment of new programs for new groups of older persons.

## II. THE PROJECT

The new **Erasmus+** program is an EU Program focusing on education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014 to 2020. The **EduSenNet** project (Educational Senior Network) is shared by European Universities and their U3As in the category KA2 (Key Action 2) entitled '*Strategic partnership for Adult learning*'. The EduSenNet project aims to identify both the specific needs of older learners aged over 50 and the conditions under which they learn. The project examines opportunities for innovation of learning programmes, how they may be undertaken and by whom. The project research realised by the questionnaires should encourage older people to take part in learning activities, give them information about learning programmes and open space to create appropriate activities.

This report gives an account of the survey carried out by the workgroup in April, September and October 2015 as part 2 of the EduSenNet project. Members of the workgroup of the UTA at the Centre for continuing education of Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia are:

Katarína Grunwald  
Nadežda Hrapková  
Ľubica Opálková  
Jakub Trangoš

Let's know the results!

The project is funded by the European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport  
2014 – 2020



### III. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

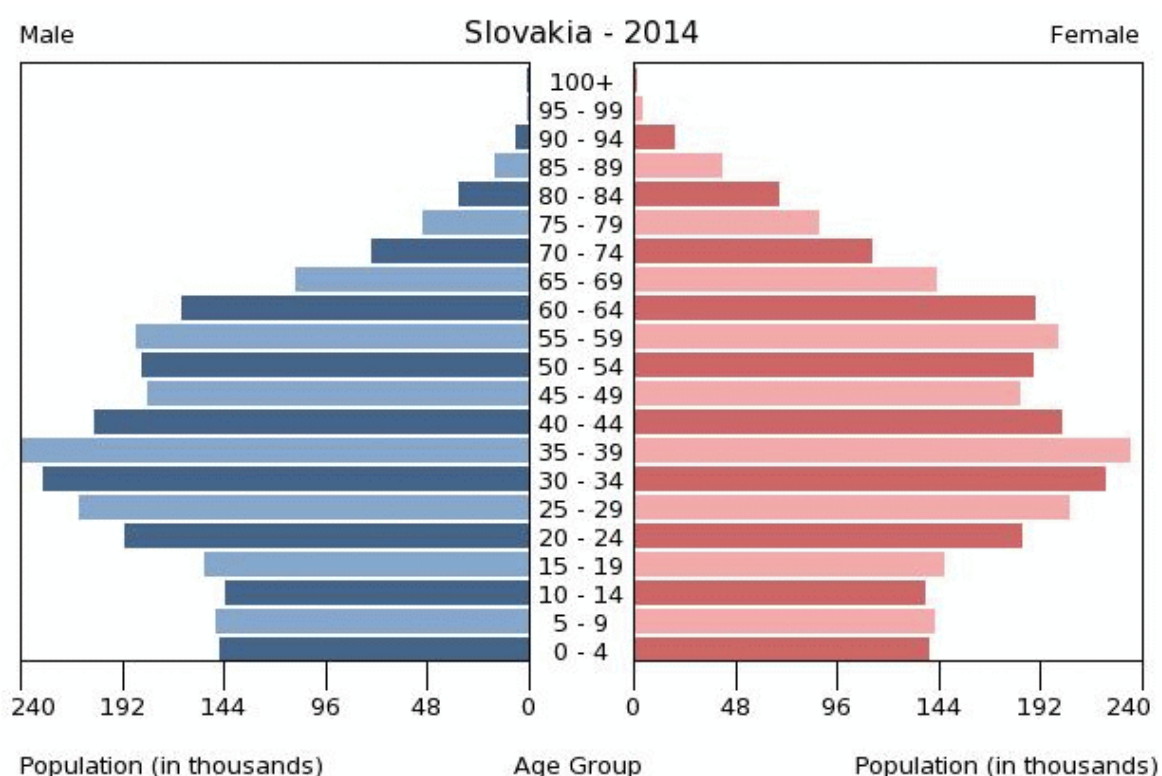
Our team has translated the written questionnaire from English into Slovak and has adapted the questionnaire in certain aspects to the circumstances in Slovakia, in order to make it more accessible for the respondents. The sequence of some of the questions was rearranged and the list of choices was modified for some of the multiple choice questions. The Slovak version of this report reflects the answers to the Slovak questionnaire. For the English version the report was reworked to correspond with the international (English) questionnaire to make it comparable to the reports of the other partners.

When choosing our target groups we considered the following considerations of importance. The project team visited one area in the north of Slovakia (town Námestovo), where the elderly wish taking part in learning, but there are not possibilities in this area yet. Another group of seniors' was chosen in a village Častá 35 km out of Bratislava. Other two groups of seniors consisted of the inhabitants of residential home in the Bratislava suburb Lamač and group of the gardeners in recreational area of Bratislava.

The survey was carried out in May - October 2015.

### IV. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

A population pyramid illustrates the age and sex structure of a country's population



[http://www.indexmundi.com/slovakia/age\\_structure.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/slovakia/age_structure.html)

From population of 5,443,583 (July 2014 est.) there is in Slovakia structure of people **55-64 years**: 13.5% (male 347,438/female 388,461) and people **65 years and over**: 13.9% (male 288,010/female 468,989) (2014 est.).

The team has focused on elderly over 50 who, don't have easy access to the different types of education in their area, or have other limits and barriers:

1. elderly who live rather isolated with limited sources of information
2. elderly who are limited in their mobility
3. elderly with other physical restrictions
4. elderly with financial restrictions
5. elderly who live at a long distance from places where education is offered, with limited or no public transport

In order to reach as much persons from these peer groups we have contacted various rural areas, residential home and group of older people in garden's area. We have collected questionnaires from 109 respondents, which are included in the evaluation report.

#### *Námestovo (town in the North of Slovakia)*

Group of the interviewed elderly consisted of 37 people in the youngest age from 4 groups of respondents (23 female and 14 male). The respondents have been contacted by former teachers promoted by the director of elementary school.

#### *Častá (the village 35 km North-east to Bratislava)*

The elderly have been contacted in the club for seniors. From 30 respondents only 19 filled in the questionnaire, because of lack of time. The seniors have been interviewed by the member of municipality who is taking part in our project.

#### *Residential home Bratislava Lamač*

It has more than 100 inhabitants. Some of them are students of UTA and helped to contact management of the home and did research among seniors. The oldest population of this research is from this group, which consists of 40 respondents (28 female and 12 male).

#### *Group of the gardeners in the area Zlaté piesky, Bratislava*

Was contacted directly in this area and all interviewed respondents filled the requested form. This group is most balanced group when we focus on the gender (6 female and 7 male). The respondents are with the highest level of education and regularly take part in recreational activities in the gardens.

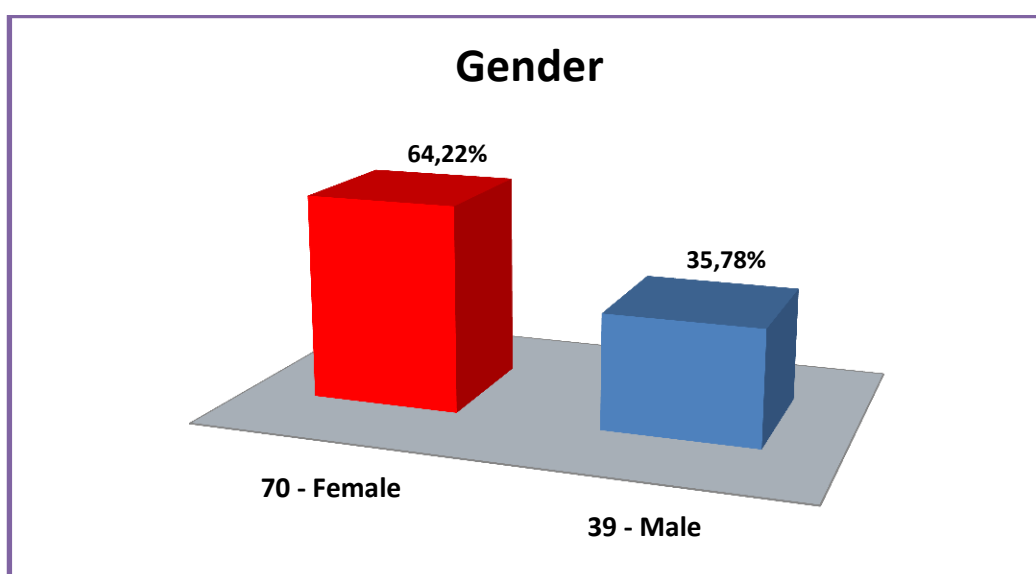
## V. RESULTS

### A. PERSONAL DATA

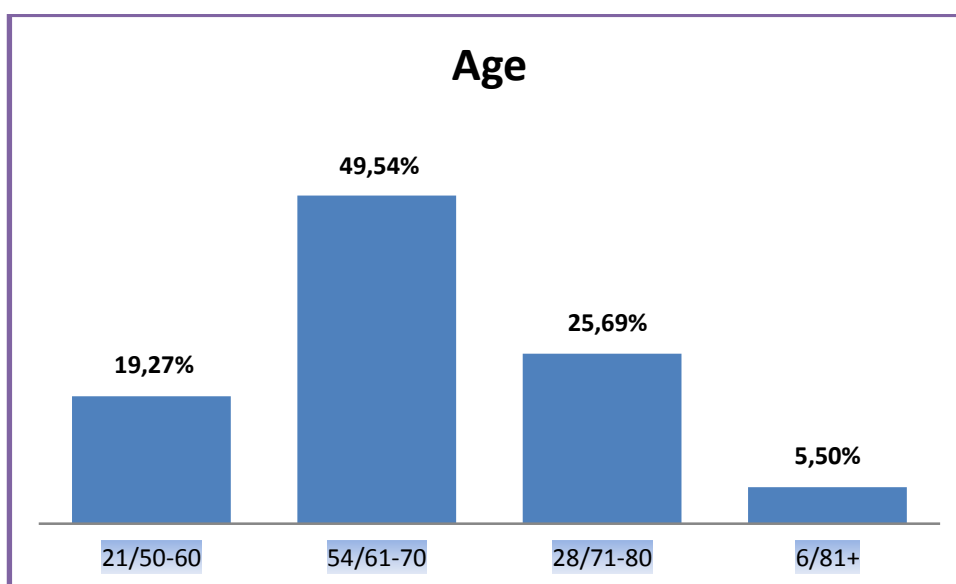
#### A.1 The country where you live:

109 respondents (non-students), all of them (100%) living in Slovakia

#### A.2 Gender



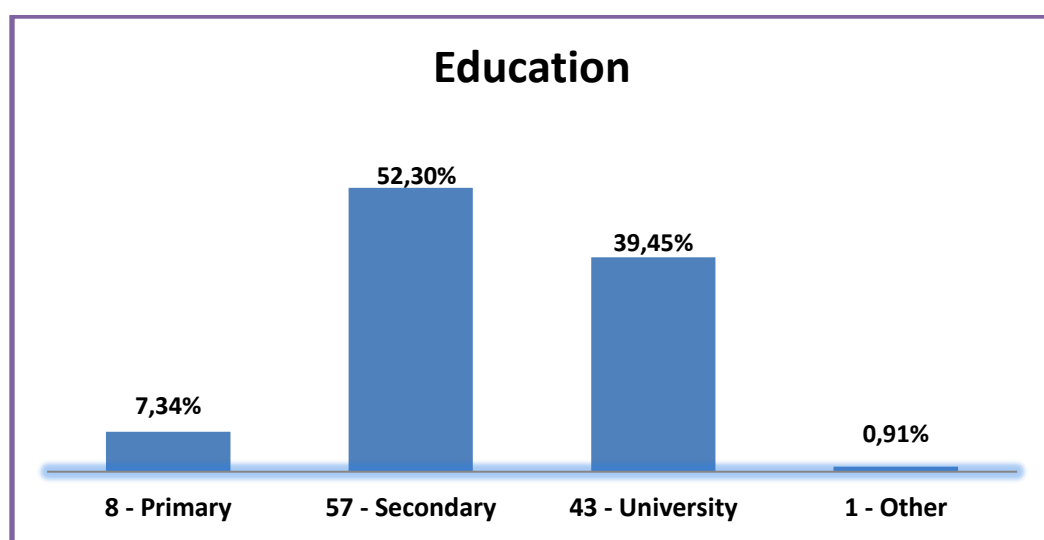
#### A.3 Age



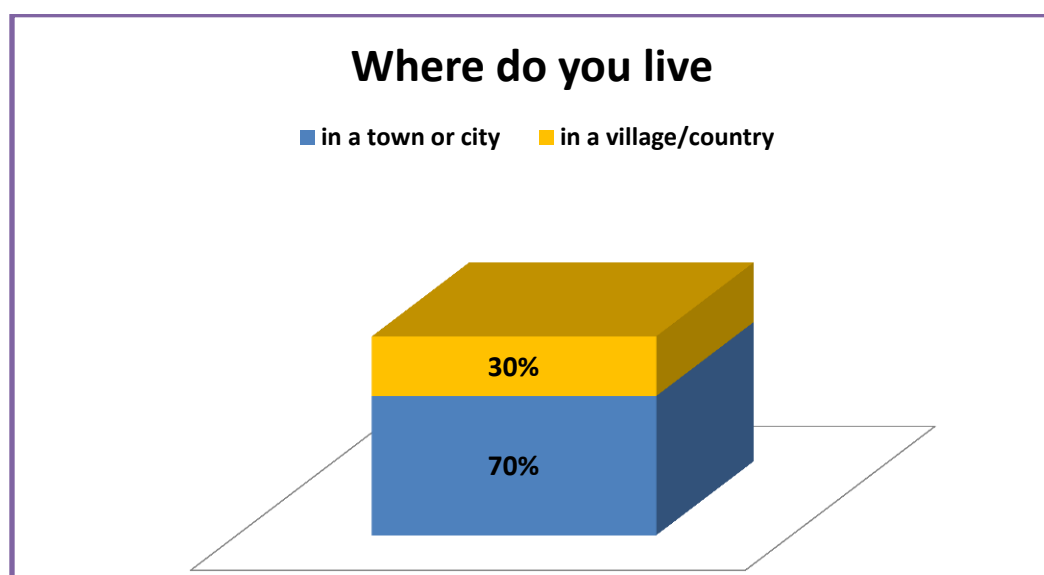
The biggest group of respondents is in the age 61 – 70 (49,54%). The smallest group is group of respondents in the age over 81 (5,50%).

#### A.4 Education

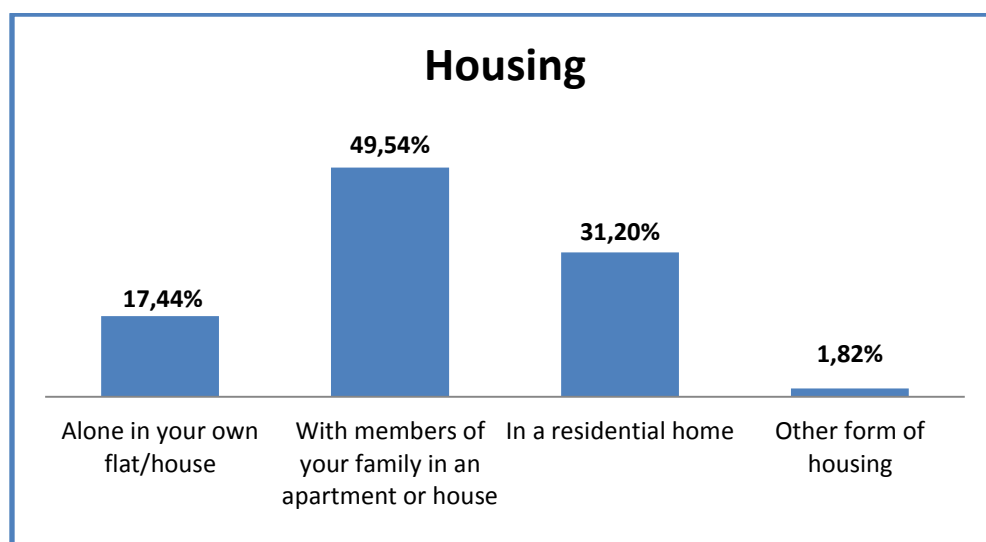
The biggest group of interviewed are respondents with graduation from secondary school (52,30%), but there is also big group of seniors who graduated from the university (39,45%). In this part we have to mention that for study at UTA of Comenius University is obliged educational prequalifying condition from secondary school. One person from the respondents graduated from the vocational secondary school without graduation.



#### A.5 Place of living

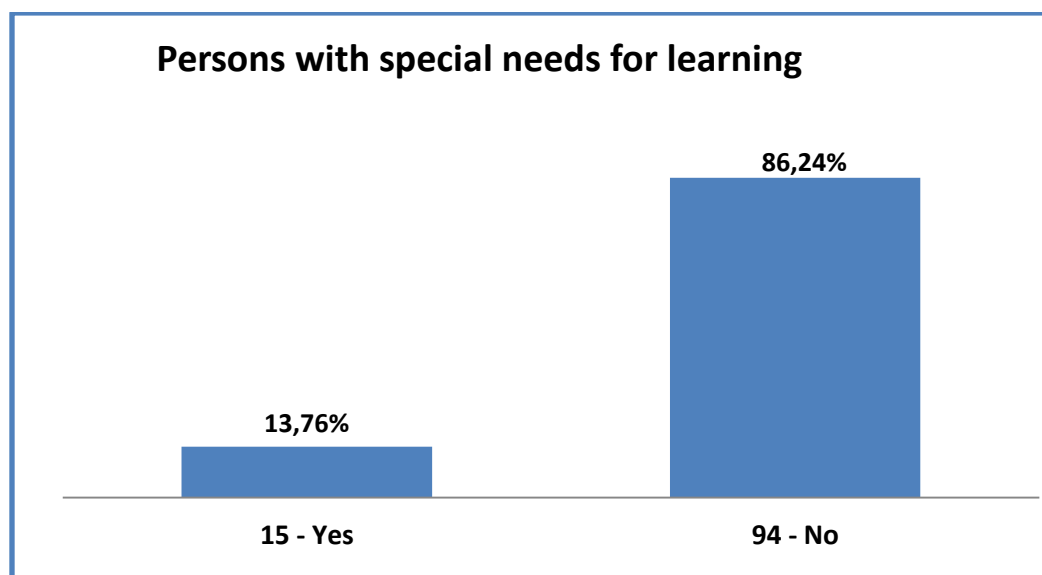


## A.6 Housing



From all respondents are 70% living in town Bratislava and 30% live in the villages. From them are 49,54% living with other relatives, but big group (31,20%) is from residential home. Two persons mentioned other forms of living.

## A.7. Persons with special needs for learning (physically handicapped)

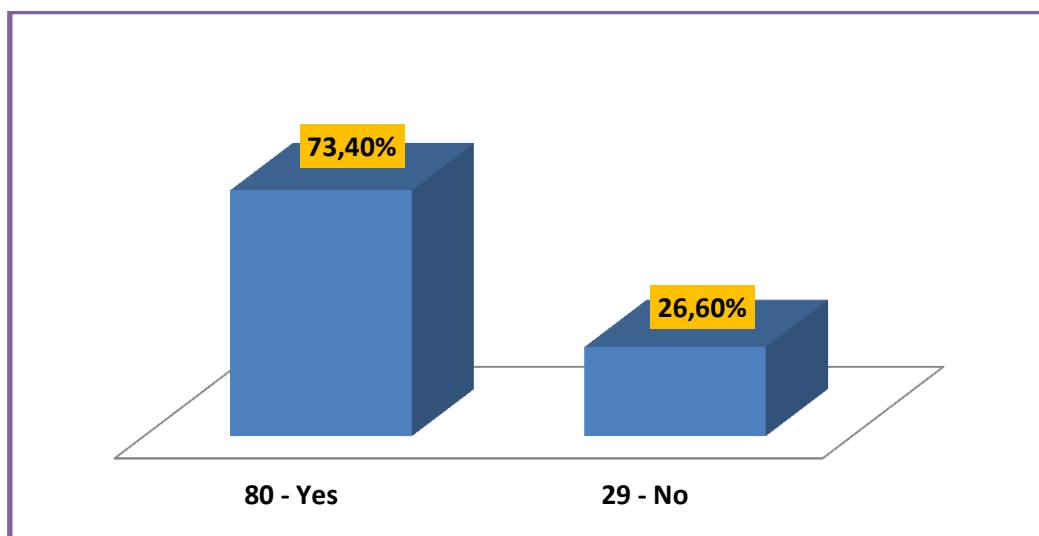


From whole group of interviewed persons are 15 (13,76%) with the physical handicaps. It means we can suppose that those have most important limits and barriers to take part in the education. They are mostly from the residential home (12 respondents), 2 are from the town Námestovo and one from the village Častá.



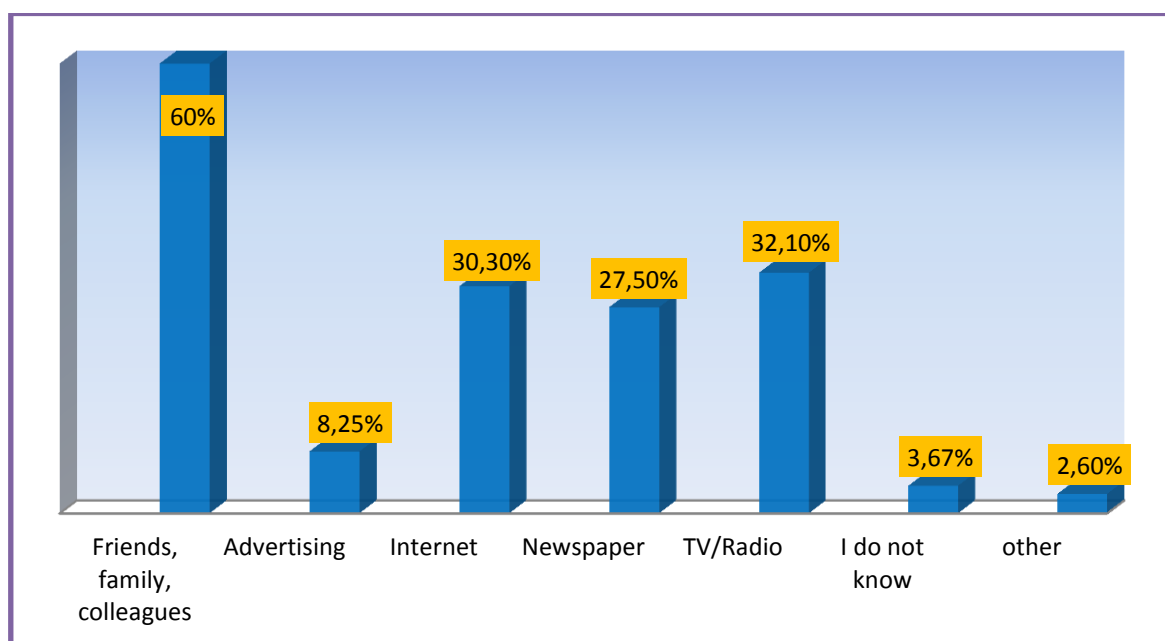
## B. LEARNING – 109 respondents (non-students)

### B.1 Do you think learning in later life is important and are you interested in taking part in learning activities?



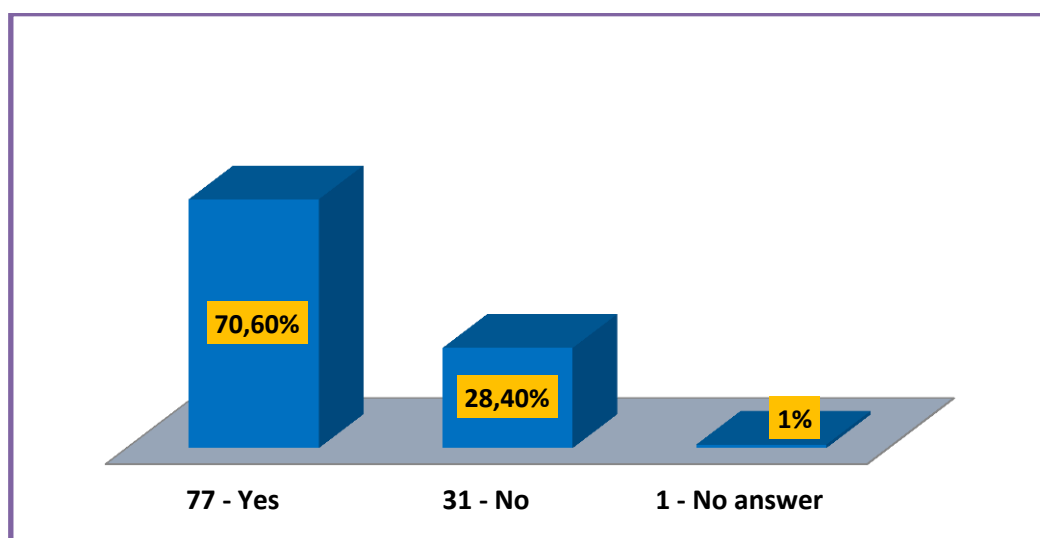
From the contacted persons only 73,40% are interested in learning. As we mentioned before 15 have physical handicaps, but 29 don't have interest in learning, which is surprising. They are people from the residential home (23), from village Častá (4) and from Námestovo (2).

### B.2 How do you find out about learning possibilities? Where can you find out about learning possibilities?



From the interviewed persons 65 (60%) mentioned, that personal contacts for getting information were most important for them beside the information multimedia as Internet for 33 (30,30%), Newspaper for 30 persons (27,5%) and TV/Radio for 35 (32,10%). Only 9 persons (8,25%) got information from the advertisement and other 3 respondents in residential home (2,6%).

### B.3 Do you know any University of the Third Age?



Only 77 interviewed persons know some University of the Third Age (70,6%). Those who do not know any UTA are mostly from the residential home (21), others are from village Častá (7) and from the North of Slovakia (town Námestovo) 4 persons.

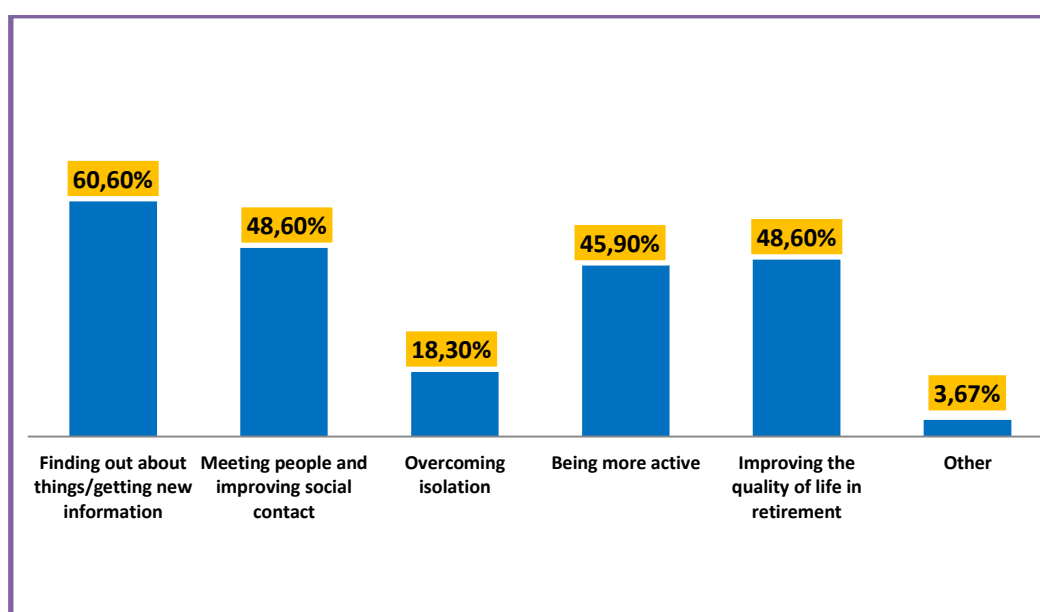
### B.4 Which other learning activities for the over 50s in your region are you familiar with?

Category	Respondents	Percentage
Foreign language courses	15	13,75%
IT-courses	11	10,1%
Horticulture and gardening viniculture	3	2,75%
Painting	3	2,75%
Sport, dancing, singing	4	3,7%
Health education, enlightenment lecture	3	2,75%
Discussions for pensioners, Club for senior citizens	3	2,75%
Promotion in stores	1	0,9%
I do not know	45	41,3%
Didn't answer	21	19,25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100%</b>

## B.5 Which of these learning activities would be suitable for you?

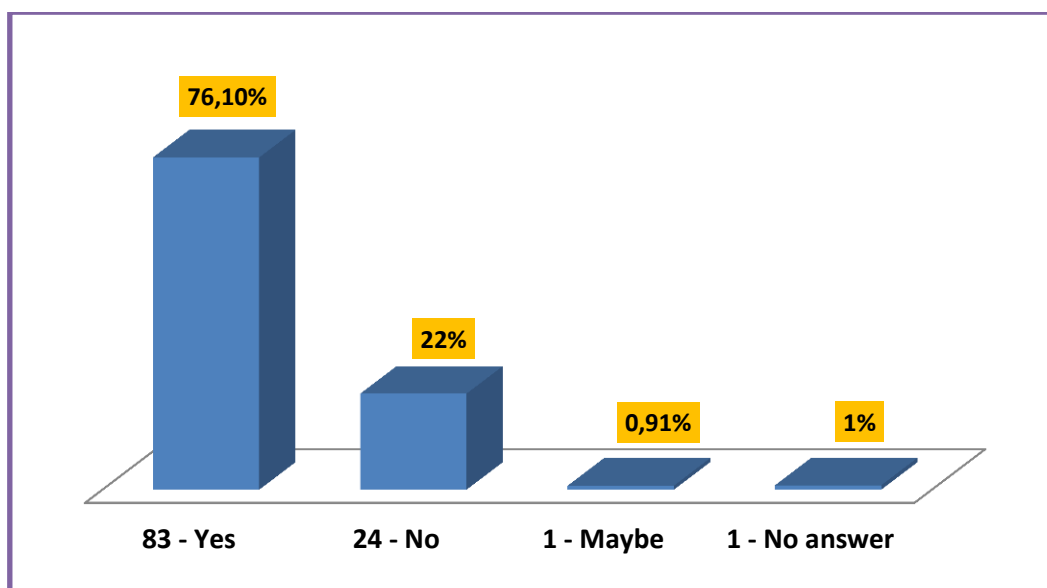
Category	Respondents	Percentage
Foreign language courses	7	6,4%
IT-courses	4	3,67%
Law	1	0,91%
Medicine	2	1,83%
Horticulture and gardening viniculture	1	0,91%
Painting, music, dance history, travelling	1	0,91%
Sport, dancing, singing	4	3,7%
Physical activities, tourism, sport	5	4,6%
U3A	6	5,5%
The latest technique, technologies	1	0,91%
No	41	37,6%
Didn't answer	36	33,06%
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100%</b>

## B.6 Which of the following do you think are good reason for taking part in learning activities?



Most important category for the answers are possibilities to get new information (66 persons). Very equal results we find out from 3 categories as meeting people and improving social contacts (53 persons), improving the quality of life (53) and being more active (50 persons). Overcoming isolation is important for 20 persons.

### B.7 Would more information and a wider range of learning activities persuade you to take part?



From the interviewed 109 seniors 83 (76,10%) mentioned that better information could persuade them to take part in learning. There is other big group of 24 (22%) seniors who think, that not more information can convince them for further education. When we compare these answers with answers in the point B.1., we can see that from those 29 who don't want to learn can better information about learning convince 5 seniors.

### B.8 If yes, which subjects would interest you?

#### The answers:

Psychology

Slovak history, General history, History of the fine art, Cinema

Archaeology

Literature

Health care, alternative therapy, memory training, physical activity

Environment, agriculture, horticulture

Sociology

Geography

Economics

Theology

Law, Political Science

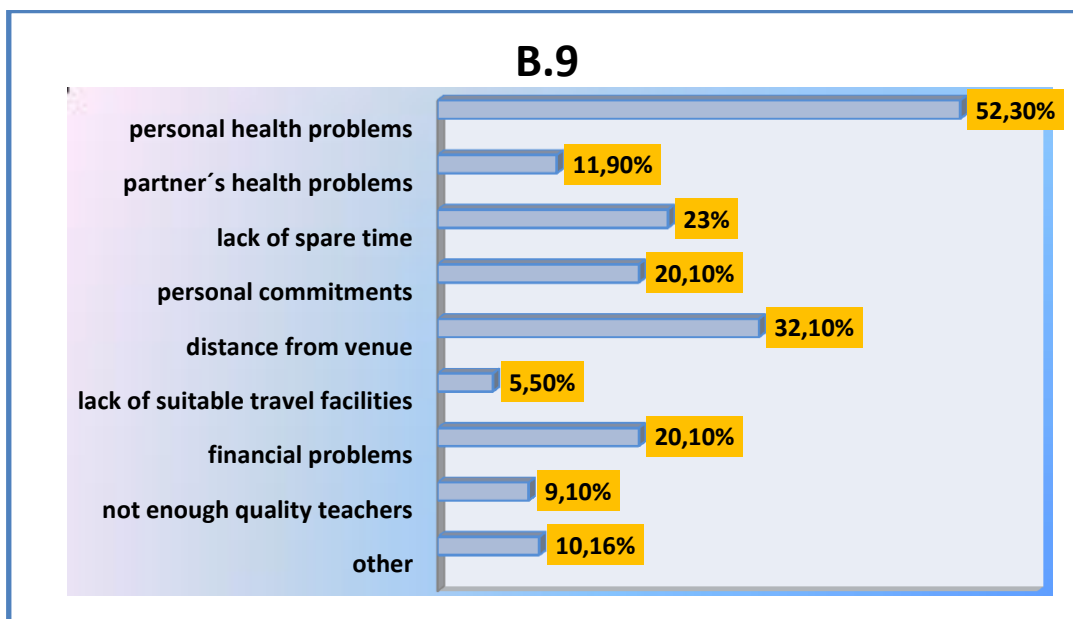
Informatics, Technology

Human relations

Foreign languages

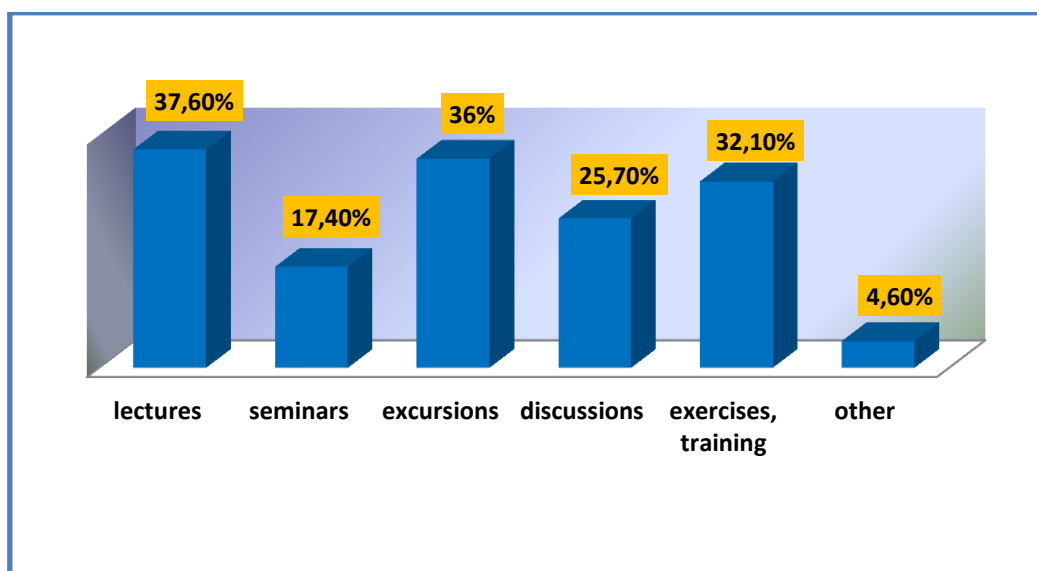
In the answers we can see large scale of senior's interests.

## B.9 If no, what would prevent you from taking part?



We can see that for the interviewed seniors the personal health is most significant barrier. Very important is to know, that distance from venue, where are the courses realised play a major role as well.

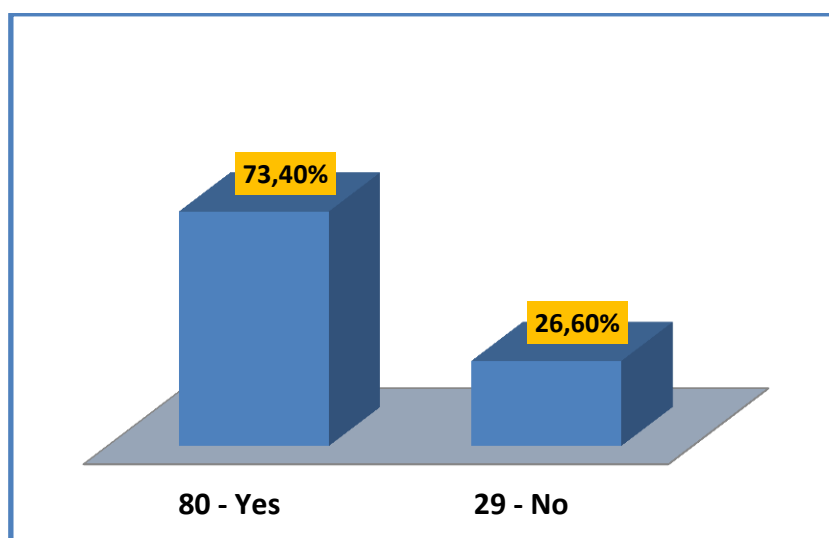
## B.10 Which type of education would you prefer?



We can mention that the answers are very equal and the respondents would enjoy many various forms of learning.

### B.11 Is the social aspect important for you more than internet?

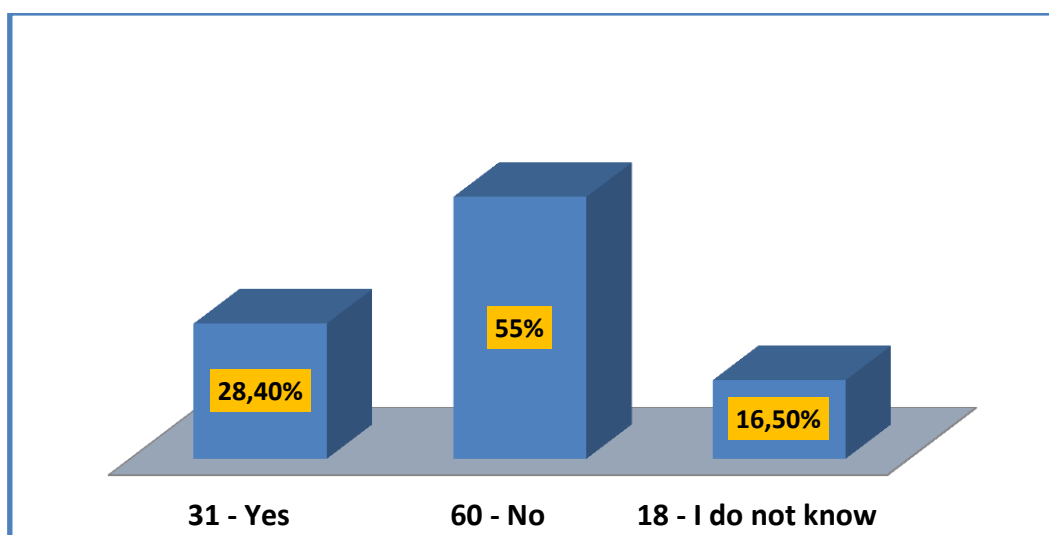
(learning inside a group and in direct contact with the lecturer)



The social aspect is important for 80 seniors. As a reason they mentioned that interpersonal contact is important, it gives chance for great exchange of views and experiences is possible; not each pensioner has a PC. Other 29 seniors do not think that social aspect is important for the contacts with people and they mentioned that Internet suits them, they feel more flexible, not bounded by deadlines, can study when and what they want.

### B.12 Would you want to use new media for learning either at home or in a group?

(e.g. courses on cd, live transmissions of lectures via internet)?



From 109 respondents there are 31, who definitely answered yes. The learning via new media gives them wider information from more subjects, learning in a convenient environment keeping own personal habits, improvement in the work with PC.

As a reason why not is the communication face to face, meeting people personally, Internet is perceived only as a supplement.

**B.13 What sorts of measures come to your mind that would make it easier for you to take part in learning?**

The answers consisted of the opinions about:

- Better public transport, short distance to the learning venue, Education in the village;
- Home tutor and opportunity to have learning material;
- Better financial situation, cheaper courses, lower fees.

**B.14 If you are not involved in educational activities, what other activities and recreational activities do you practice? (choose max. 3 possibilities)**

**The answers:**

Category	Respondents	Percentage
Reading books	49	68%
Gardening	36	50%
Babysitting	11	15,3%
Singing, dancing, musical activities, Sport activities	13	18%
Art activities, folk art, handiwork	8	11%
Volunteering	6	8,3%
Traveling	29	40,3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>72*</b>	<b>100%</b>

Other: handy man, TV, crosswords, Sudoku, listening to music, play cards, relax, party games, table tennis, petanque, darts throw, walking in the countryside, own activities, professional work, Unity of seniors, Ping-Pong, baking, etc.

\*Pilot group of seniors from Námestovo was not asked in this point.

## **VI. CONCLUSIONS**

The presented report will be used as basis for the innovation of the learning programmes for older persons who are not included in a learning process. One request came from a group of seniors in the North of Slovakia in the town Námestovo, where we realised research and immediately we have started in this pilot group new educational offer for 43 older people of this area. Another proposal we have received from the residential home in Lamač (suburb of Bratislava), where we started in February 2016 learning of 25 inhabitants in the premises of this home. These experiences show us that the research in the groups of seniors has immediate impact on the older persons who have been interviewed. The consequences of the project are directly visible and practically implemented to the life of the persons and put into a practice.