

# »EACH ONE TEACH ONE« - OLDER STUDENTS MENTORING THEIR PEERS

## AN EXAMPLE OF THE 'EOTO' MOVEMENT AT SLOVENIAN THIRD AGE UNIVERSITY IN THE FIELD OF COMPUTER MENTORING

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### **Abstract:**

In the network of the third age universities we started in 2009 the new social educational movement of volunteer education in pairs, education as the gift, what would liberate us from the financial resources in the time of financial, but also value system crises. The educational movement of the learning in pairs in its concept integrates intragenerational and intergenerational education. Everybody needs knowledge so badly for survival like people need the air for breathing. People cannot stop with education, it does not matter in what generation they are, when the financial resources and public support are not available any more. People have to discover the new ways to knowledge. The consumer society and misuse of capital pollutes our environment with mountains of products. Aggressive advertisement is the terror and psychological pollution of our environment to which people are exposed and nowadays tired of. The new educational movement among others support the great social need to upgrade the value of knowledge in our societies. Does the official national and EU politics recognizes this need? The older adults accumulated a lot of knowledge and experiences, but they differ among the people. Can the exchange of knowledge bring new benefits? The mentor and learner role are exchangeable. I am your mentor today and tomorrow I am her learner. The dynamic of lifelong education brings the new mechanisms into the process of education. The informal mentors possess the inclination and interest to work with people and to pass the knowledge he/she has to somebody else. Upon these premises is the concept of "Each one teach one".

**Key words:** voluntary educational movement "Each one teach one", peer mentoring, Slovenian Third Age University

## **TODAY'S NEW ILLITERACY**

Digital divide is connected with geographical distance and ICT skills that vary on regional level. Despite the fact that in 2010 68% of Slovenian households had an access to Internet and majority of them (62%) had the broadband access, over 80% of our population over 65 years (the population accounts for 300.000 people of two million nation of Slovenia) have never used the computer. Moreover, 90% have never used the Internet! (Source:[http://www.ris.org/uploadi/editor/1308110209DP1\\_e-kompetentnost.pdf](http://www.ris.org/uploadi/editor/1308110209DP1_e-kompetentnost.pdf)) This is a clear example of how a new technology does not serve its purpose. Instead of bringing people together and connecting them, it is amplifying the gap between the younger and older generation, between those who know how and why to use it and those who don't. Recent studies show, that majority of those older than 65 who use the computer and Internet live with their children and grandchildren. The 2010 EUROSTAT and SURS (Statistical Office of Slovenia) researches show that 55-74-year-olds gain their e-skills with self-learning, practical work and, most importantly, informal help of their friends and relatives. This is where the potential of EOTO movement comes in. We need to empower all generations, especially older and all those left behind. We need to acquaint them with the knowledge of all the benefits of the information society; we need to give everyone the chance to be a part of the modern society. That is the only way a society can move on and evolve and not get stuck with constantly helping those who were left behind. This is the main reason why we have started the 'Each one teach one' movement on the Slovenian Third Age University.

## **OLDER STUDENTS MENTORING THEIR PEERS**

The most important (most noticeable) characteristic of Socrates' teaching is the belief that knowledge is created in dialogue. Peer mentoring gives the opportunity for dialogue and exchange of experience is best at the heart of a great deal of third age education. The idea that students are also teachers and teachers are also learners underlines this form of education. In process of teaching in the movement "Each one teach one" one person takes the role of mentor, as he or she will teach someone else, for example, how to create an email account. The other one has trouble with digital photography, and the first one will help him download the pictures from the camera to the computer. It is often through sharing knowledge that people become empowered and assume responsibility for some of their own activities.

If we quote one of our mentors who once said: "At the first meeting with my student (older student, mentee) we have established the basic grounds of things she wanted to learn, for example the basics of digital photography, how to surf the Internet and the basics of typing in Word. We meet every week for one hour, where I first explain the basics and then ask her what specifically she would like to know. Then we slowly answer every question she might have." The volunteer says he had learned about our movement by coincidence, as he was already teaching his neighbour, and he was attending our University and gave him the invitation. "It seemed like a good idea, I have

already been doing it with my neighbours and friends and I see no reason, why I couldn't share my knowledge with someone I don't know. That hour per week is really not a big thing to give my knowledge to someone who wants it, who needs it. Otherwise I would probably be at home, watching TV..."

## **CONCLUSION**

Given the prominence to dyadic relationship and dialogic as well as effectiveness of such learning, and also as a challenge for the future shows how to include these "Mentor conversation" in different environments, how this becomes a part of everyday life and the part of the individual reflective practice. To share knowledge as a gift not as a product of material exchange through volunteer work and to simply enjoy by doing it, is an important benefit for an older person. Why? Because of meeting people and making friends, the satisfaction of seeing the results, by staying active and in good health and recognition that we can broaden experience of life endlessly.

Currently, The Slovenian Third Age University is the most widely nation set network in the field of education in later life in Slovenia, creating opportunities for learning, education, active ageing and socialising of older people. We are also aware that rapidly changing society requires constant learning, that lifelong learning is becoming more and more a personal path of research for knowledge and its implementation into the needs of society despite of age. Mentoring is a bridge between the world of oneself and life with its countless possibilities around oneself.