The Importance of Being ...
Elder Adult and Part of Rural Networking

SOME INSIGHTS FROM SLOVENIA

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Statements

• Very heterogenous age group: various capacities, wishes and expectations.
• Infrastructure development and distance learning.
• Elderly people: institutionalization and deinstitutionalization.
• Unfold rural web.
• Slovene examples.
Personal Experience

How to initiate participation in ICT in rural areas?

Example:
Lopar, Šavrini Hills.

Fig. 1: Case Study Area.
Fig. 2: Municipality of Koper (MOK, functional regions).

Tab. 1: Elderly people in MOK.

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<td>POPULATION (%)</td>
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<td>AGED 65+ (%)</td>
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Source: Jerman, 2011.
Fig. 3: Number of 65+ (2007).

Fig. 4: Share of 65+ (2007).

Fig. 5: Ageing Index (2007).

Fig. 6: Average Age (2002).

Source: Jerman, 2011.
SEPTEMBER 2007 – project “Web page for local tourist association.”
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13 visitors, 1 interest: šagra.

Event: loparska šagra (3. 8. 2008)
“Well, we are not interested any more. There is too much work connected with this...”
(local young population).

“We would like to have pictures, more accurate notices, active front page, videos, more e-postcards etc.”
(comments of locals).

Survey results on lopar.si
But, no one prepared to be responsible!
Fig. 7-10: Slovenia and 50+: Distance Learning in Rural Areas

FACTS: COMPUTER USE AND INTERNET ACCESS

AGE STRUCTURE

Regular use of PC (2011)

Never used PC (%; 16-74; 2011)

densely populated  average  low density

Never used PC (%; 16-74; 2011)

Households with no internet access (%; 2011)

densely populated  average  low density

Source: Statistični urad RS. Informacijska družba. URL: http://www.stat.si/tema_ekonomsko_infodružba.asp (citrano 28. 5. 2012)
INTENSIVE ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE GROWTH OF OLDER POPULATIONS (AGED 65+) AND GENERAL POPULATION AGEING.

- 2003: more elderly than young population.
- In 2010: 16.5% of population aged 65+, (20th place in the world).
- In 2020 (projection): the share of 65+ will increase to 20%.
- In 2050: share of 65+ will reach 30% (9th oldest country of the world; Davies and James 2011).

Old age dependency ratio: 23.8 elderly population to 100 working age population; till 2050 the value of this ratio will double (SORS 2011).

EXTREMELY UNFAVOURABLE AGE STRUCTURE – ESPECIALLY IN PERIPHERAL RURAL AREAS.

Fig. 11: Typology of Rural Areas.
Source: Delo, 2010-2011, various editions.

... recent headlines ...
ISSUES

• Contemporary situation: *Institutionalization*. Interest of municipalities, close to the place of origin, profitability.

• Need for: *De-institutionalization*. Vital communities, inter-generational symbiosis, “*to grow old in familiar local community*”, impulse for local economy.

• “... to be done”: *Investments, attitudes, appropriate policies*. Minds set-up, regionalized approach, appropriate infrastructure, social entrepreneurship, networking, old-age saving schemes etc.

⇒ **YES, BUT HOW...**

towards creating age-friendly rural communities.
DATA GATHERING: MIXED METHODS APPROACH

USED APPROACHES: CRITICAL HUMAN ECOLOGY, (NEO)ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT, RURAL WEB.

• **Insitutionalized perspective:**
  a. In-depth interviews with the managers or other crucial staff members of senior’s institutions (54).
  b. In-depth interviews with responsible persons on the community (municipality; 35) level.

• **De-institutionalised perspective:** Interviews with firms and associations that are providing services (food and health, cleaning, shopping; 10).

• **Individualised perspective:** semi-structured interview with elderly people (154) on various locations in Slovenia.
INSTITUTIONALIZATION

19,000 places (2011), dispersed structure, general attitude, national policy.

Fig. 12: Distribution of Senior Homes in Slovenia.
Year of Establishment (N=54)

- till 1960: 5
- 1961-1980: 10
- 1981-2000: 15
- since 2001: 20

Legal status

- Public: 20
- Specialized: 5
- Private: 29

Number of Employees

- up to 50: 5
- 51-75: 10
- 76-100: 15
- 101-125: 15
- 126 and more: 5
- No data: 0

Capacities

- Up to 100: 5
- 101-200: 10
- 201-300: 15
- 301 and more: 20

Source: Survey, Dept. of Geography, FF, UL, 2011.
Co-operation with the Municipality

Source: Survey, Dept. of Geography, FF, UL, 2011.

Daily Rate (N=54)

- 15-17€: 25
- 18-20€: 10
- 21-23€: 5
- 24-26€: 10
- All categories: 10
- No data: 5

Co-operation:
- None: 5
- Sufficient: 10
- Good: 20
- Very good: 10
- No data: 5
DE-INSTITUTIONALIZATION

PREREQUISITES

• “WHO IS WHO” - AGED 65+?
• WHAT ARE SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF 65+?
• WHERE ARE THEY CONCENTRATED-DISPERSED, EVEN BI-FOCAL?
• WHAT ARE THEIR EXPECTATIONS?
• HOW ARE COMMUNITIES PREPARED TO THIS?
• WHY ARE WE INTERESTED IN THIS ISSUES?
• CLEARIFY THE STEREOTYPES! “… less mobile, attached to the place of origin, the re-settle only once and permanently…”. What about Silver Dollar effect, Ruhesitzwanderung, Grey Nomads, Snowbirds...
• “All elderly react in the same manner...”. It is extremely heterogenous group.”
• ... they a burdening the budget”. They represent specific development potential.
• LACKING APPROPRIATE STATISTICS. Small-scale research, field work. OUR QUESTIONNAIRE! MIXED METHOD APPROACH.
Survey: Model of Ideal Environment for 65+ (the Importance of Selected Elements)

Score

Unimportant

Very impo.

0

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7

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9

Attractive Landscape

Acceptable Costs of Living

Network of Supply Centres

Mobile Services

Traffic Accessibility

Inter-Generational Cohesion

Stable Real Estate Market

Close to Relatives, Friends

Home, Home Town

Institutions for Seniors

Activities for Elderly

Other

Source: Survey, Dept. of Geography, FF, UL, 2011.
The Very Same Village... four persons! Variety of Perspectives, Expectations etc.

Source: Survey, Dept. of Geography, FF, UL, 2011.
"Firstly, personal hygiene. Then I go and buy a newspaper and listen to daily news. Then I need to prepare some food, if the weather is fine I am occupied with gardening. In the afternoon I am visiting the club and taking care of club´s administrative issues. When I am asked (quite often) I am looking after a grandchild, or I am occasionally visiting relatives and attending English course. **There is a wish to develop my computer skills.** At week-ends: I enjoy in mountaineering, I attend Sunday mass and still participating in fire brigade – mostly in organizatorial issues."

(Person 1: Male, married, previously employed in public institution, since the birth living in the locality, very pleased with the life in the village, not thinking to move, but if – senior home in rural area)

Source: Survey, Dept. of Geography, FF, UL, 2011.

"In the morning I prepare coffee and read the newspaper. Afterwards I do the house works, **check the computer**, do some shopping in the local store, and prepare lunch. In the early afternoon I go to kindergarten to pick-up my grandchild and I look after him for several hours. In between I practice gardening, take care of flowers, trees, attend our choir and do the sports once a week. I listen to the news and TV programme in the evenings. Still I practice hiking during week-ends, Sunday mass, other obligations with choir, visit relatives and help my brother on the farm."

(Person 2: Female, married, previously employed in public institution, since the birth living in the locality, very pleased with the life in the village, not thinking to move, but if – secured dwelling)
N=154 aged 65+. Their Answers ... “How Important is for them...”. Mean Values.
Close to Relatives, Friends

Attractive Landscape

Source: Survey, Dept. of Geography, FF, UL, 2011.

Home, Home Town

Traffic Accessibility
Institutions for Seniors

Network of Supply Centres

Stable Real Estate Market

Mobile Services

Source: Survey, Dept. of Geography, FF, UL, 2011.
Gender (in %, N=154)

Matrimonial status (in %)

Living in the settlement... (in %)

Till retirement was working as... (in %)

Satisfied with the locality (in %)?

Source: Survey, Dept. of Geography, FF, UL, 2011.
Source: Survey, Dept. of Geography, FF, UL, 2011.
Need for help (in %)?

Already receiving help (in %)?

Able to pay (in %)?

Willing to accept help (volunteers; in %)?

Source: Survey, Dept. of Geography, FF, UL, 2011.
Fig. 13: Age-friendly Rural Community: Rural Web.
Fig. 14: Organisation of Clubs, Societies and Associations in the Municipality of Brda.
First step: … a list of services at the municipality level (adapted after Jerman, 2011).

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**Legend:**
- Green: Stopnjevanje pomoči glede na potrebe
- Yellow: Glede na potrebe

Avtorica: Keli Jerman
MOTIVES FOR LEARNING
- Contacts with relatives and friends (home, abroad).
- Health care.
- Managing personal finances.
- E-education.
- Listening to the music, watching the films.

OBJECTIVES
- Social inclusion.
- Intergenerational symbiosis.
- Attaining formal or/and informal education.

ACCESSING INFORMATION
- E-points.
- Volunteers.
- Contact points for learning (mobile units).
- iPad.
Looking Ahead: 50+ in Creative Business (Aachen, Germany) - 1

• self-employed persons work very often at home, in the city center or nearby
  → their offices can be reached quickly from home/apartment
  → spatial flexibility

• self-employed persons have flexible working conditions
  → this allows them to adapt to the effects of getting older and thus continue working productively

• many self-employed persons from the creative industries would like to work as long as possible
  → if their physical health situation allows them to
  → if the working conditions stay suitable

• some have to work as long as possible
  → when their financial situation is precarious or they lack savings
creatives as pioneers:

• demand for inner city office locations
• compact city – short distances between home and office

• necessity of longer working in highly qualified professions isn’t that problematic and often favored
• expertise and potential of elderly can be used longer

• lifelong learning essential and working in cross-generational teams desirable → creative class as trendsetter for future forms of work

"Experience, knowledge, networks!“
Nine principles for excellence in web-based teaching (Henry, Meadows, 2008):

- Different learning environment,
- Content is a verb,
- Technology is a vehicle, not a destination,
- Great online courses are defined by teaching,
- Sense of community and social presence,
- Multiple areas of expertise,
- Proper web interface,
- Ongoing assessment and refinement,
- The little extras go a long way.
RECOMMENDATIONS

• CONNECTING VARIOUS SOCIAL GROUPS AND ACTORS.

• ACCURATE RESEARCH ON DIVERSED ASPECTS OF OLDNESS.

• INCLUSION OF UNDER- AND UNEMPLOYED RURAL POPULATION.