

European Cinema for Active Ageing



**LIGHTS,
CAMERA,
ACTION!**

65+

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CINAGE PILOT ACTION COURSE

<http://cinageproject.eu>

Introduction

The pilot action was one of the highlights of the CINAGE project, a European Grundtvig project with four participating partner organizations: AidLearn, Portugal, Slovenian Third Age University, Slovenia, Centro Studi città di Foligno, Italy and Leeds Beckett University, Great Britain.

Learning about active ageing, active ageing competencies and filmmaking

Activities were focused on two topics: active ageing and film production (developing an idea into a story, script writing, shooting, acting, editing etc.) The course was followed by a filmmaking workshop, leading to the final outcome: a total of twelve short featured films produced in four European countries. The short film narratives were based on older people's stories and/or real life situations. Six selected competencies which older people should exhibit in order to be active were supposed to be engaged with through the content of each film. The six selected competencies were; emotional, learning, civic and community, economic/financial, technological and leading a healthy life style.

In most countries the introduction to active ageing and competencies were considered to be useful, although it was felt that the active ageing competencies hindered the creative process of writing the film story.

What was the pilot meant for? Creative processes fostered active ageing

The pilot action was designed to test the validity of the CINAGE package, it consisted of:

- ⊙ A manual for older learners wanting to learn about both active ageing and filmmaking;
- ⊙ A guide for adult educators and trainers.

The pilot action was also intended to examine the process for carrying out a film workshop; including shooting on location, editing films in the post production phase etc.

The pilot was a wonderful occasion for older learners, along with their much younger course facilitators, to go back to the roots of film. "There is something you see, there is something you feel, there is something you understand and you want to say. This is what film is all about", said one of the facilitators, a young Masters student of film directing. "This pilot brought me back to the film essentials... Because of the learners who were sincere and who wanted to say something, to convey a message and to convey it with a lot of energy."

The process of this pilot action was creative. So much so that one of the older learners commented: "Creative processes foster active ageing." All respondents underlined the importance of relationships, particularly intergenerational relationships created around the common project.

"Art, creativity are compatible, yet different generational culture, knowledge and skills are fundamental for intergenerational cooperation." Adult education and adult educators, youth workers etc., should bear this in mind.

Intergenerational relationships were not planned, but they have proven to be a great advantage.

Difficulties and how they were overcome

Some groups of participants experienced certain psychological tensions and frictions, which had to be overcome. They experienced difficulties in being together and working in a team, such as writing scripts together. A recommendation was put forward for future facilitators to prepare the participants in advance for possible psychological developments.

In one of the partner organisations the members experienced a traumatic event, the sudden death of a member during the group activities. The group were shocked, but later achieved an even greater cohesion. In productive society, later life can be and should be active, but there are competencies needed to cope with many changes and losses of this kind.

Some learners were not satisfied with the modules about active ageing. They were not attracted by the topic of old age in general, feeling that they already had a lot of knowledge about old age. However, the majority of the participants were satisfied with different modules of the CINAGE course manual. Nevertheless, practically all respondents included in the evaluation reiterated that it felt so warm and welcoming to be together, to work and to learn together. Due to the efforts of the CINAGE course, old age became “an evolutive phase of their life”.

Recruiting pilot members, participants and facilitators

Recruiting pilot members was, in all countries, a phased process which was either carried out by the participating organisations themselves or by another organisation specifically focussed on recruitment. Electronic newsletters, flyers distributed or mailed, circular letters, radio programmes, other educational formats, other educational public events were used, etc.

At the beginning, the number of potential members was, as a rule, higher which made further selection possible. The introductory phase, or pre-selection, was made according to set criteria. In all countries, it has been found that the pilot was more successful where the participants and facilitators had as much experience as possible (storytelling, creative writing, visual arts etc.) There was an apparent gender difference in motives for enrolling. Men were interested in the technological side of filmmaking, women in the expressive possibilities of film.

It was interesting to analyse the variety of the motives for enrolling. Participants enrolled mostly (1) for the sake of learning; (2) finding a new way to live in retirement; (3) out of interest in the technological side of filmmaking; (4) to engage in interaction with peers and younger generations, and thus to grasp the integrity of one's own life; (5) to carry on, lifelong learning; (6) to experience an additional artistic activity. In addition, they thought that filmmaking would be a pleasurable activity. The participants' level of education was from post-secondary to post graduate. The educational background was mostly social sciences and humanities. The prevailing professional background: teaching, artistic, scientific.

Facilitators were recruited in many different ways. The modules on active ageing were delivered either by highly specialised experts in the area, adult educators, or volunteers engaged in various local educational and cultural organisation. Filmmaking theory and workshops were delivered by either professionals or future professionals.

The first professional attracted other professionals, and a team was created. Members of the focus group, the staff, and partners from previous projects were also invited to participate. Only in one country did focus group members accept the invitation to be facilitators. Elsewhere, the proposal was declined due to lack of time or the feeling that analysing a film is far from film making.

Educational sessions

The educational sessions were run as a variety of activities, including discussions, screening of short films, writing short stories and scripts, writing and drawing story boards and psychological descriptions of the main characters. Old age was also discussed. The learning process was very well organised and stimulating. By this pilot action "it has been empirically confirmed, that cinema is a collective art, in which all participate and offer their contribution," said one participant. Generally it was felt that there was not time enough, especially for the technical but also for the creative parts of the process. It was felt that the manual should be delivered in two separate parts: filmmaking and active ageing.

Strategies to cope with old age

In old age, one should have an active and engaged attitude; one should engage in meaningful activities; one should rely on one's peers, experience emotion, beauty, and creativity. One should step out into the public space and sphere; one should take care of one's health, one should be engaged in meaningful learning and education, and one should respect what one has learned in one's family.

Shooting, post production

There was a lot of discussion in regards to whether shooting single short films should be done in one, or two, or even three days. Sometimes, it was decided to squeeze all activities in just one day in order to reduce the costs. In other cases, shooting took more time due to scripts which were not prepared in detail. All participants took the roles of actors, film directors, producers, wardrobe masters, extras etc. All of them participated in the post production phase, including editing, sound engineering etc.

Conclusion

Relationships and knowledge were gained through a creative process. Generations were surprised by each other. The pilot action was also a truly peer orientated experience. There were many opportunities to learn during the course, which was a tool, a way towards active ageing. The pilot changed individuals and organisations. It stimulated the participants to start watching films in a different way. "Today, I watch a movie with great attention. I analyse it in depth, not only the story and the actors, but also the technique. I observe everything in detail, which has not been the case before".