



REPORT

**LEARNING OF OLDER PEOPLE IN LITHUANIA**

Persons of 60-80 years of age

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Development of a lifelong learning system not only helps to ensure satisfaction of self-expression or personal self-education needs of the adults but also significantly affects economic, social, and civil progress of the entire country. For that reason importance of adult learning is emphasized in educational documents of the European Union (EU) and Lithuania. Objectives of Lithuania are concretized in the National Progress Strategy “Lithuania 2030” (2012), the State Education Strategy 2013-2022 (2013), and the Law on Non-formal Adult Education and Continuing Learning (2014).

Objective: to analyze learning opportunities for older people in Lithuania.

Tasks: to present characteristics of older people in Lithuania, their needs, programs for them, providers, their cooperation, financing, legal base, structure, and conclusions.

In October-November of the year 2016 Kretinga District Education Centre conducted a survey of non-formal learning needs of adults in Kretinga District; lecturers and mentors of older people were questioned using the interview method. Survey results are provided in the report.

Number of older people for the previous year is shown in the figure 1.

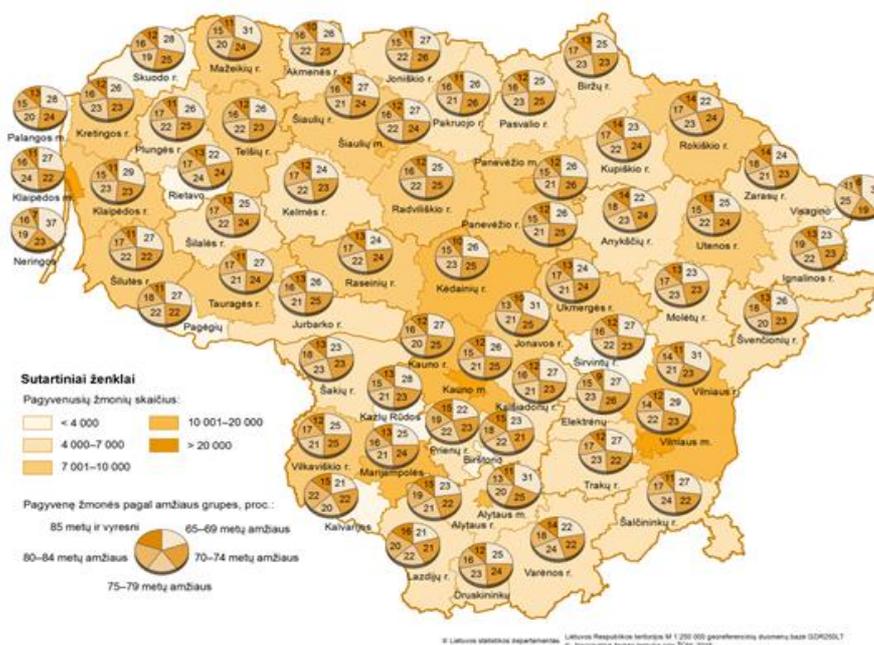


Fig. 1. Number of older people at the beginning of the year 2016

According to data from Eurostat for the year 2016, there have been 171648 older people aged 60-64, 151215 older people aged 65-69, 124183 older people aged 70-74, 88119 older people aged 80-84, 67927 older people aged 85 and older in Lithuania. Older people (aged 65 and older) have made up almost a fifth part (19%) of permanent residents of the country. Number of older women has made up twice the amount (66.4% of all residents aged 65 and older) of men. A tendency has been noticed that women live longer than men. Average probable duration of life of people aged 65 has increased

by one year within the decade. In Aukštaitija senior people constitute a majority of residents: at the beginning of the year 2016 a majority of people aged 65 and older lived in municipalities of Ignalina (26.8% of all municipality residents), Anyksciai (25.9%), and Zarasai (24.3%) Districts. In the year 2015 257 men and 136 women aged 65 and older created families, of which it was the first marriage for 14 men and 6 women. However, according to data from Eurostat, in the year 2014 a majority of older people residing in Lithuania were alone – 44.8% of all people aged 65 and older (the average value in the European Union – 31.4%). Employment of senior people is increasing: in the second quarter of the year 2016 8.2% of people aged 65 and older were working, and their employment level has risen by 1.4 percentage points within a year. In this field men surpass women: 11.6% of older men and 6.5% of older women have been working. In 2015 617 older people emigrated from Lithuania, 225 people immigrated, among there were 161 emigrant and 50 immigrants aged 80 and older. A person does not grow old all the time little by little. Human age is chronological, biological, and psychological. These processes may be totally inconsistent with each other, though they may correlate slightly. For instance, biological and psychological: if a person feels young and happy at heart, usually his body is also not totally “fallen to pieces.” Though it may sometimes be vice versa. Feeling young psychologically means wishing something new, being active, social, vigorous. It turns out that social people live longer than others, even than creative ones, as they feel happier. One more very important thing: a wish to make new friends. Really, the first sign of psychological ageing, in spite of person’s interests in many things, is a lack of wish to let in a new person to his heart. Health ageing is a balance between person’s abilities and goals. A support point of healthy ageing idea is to strike a balance between person’s abilities, goals, and environment (Fig. 2).

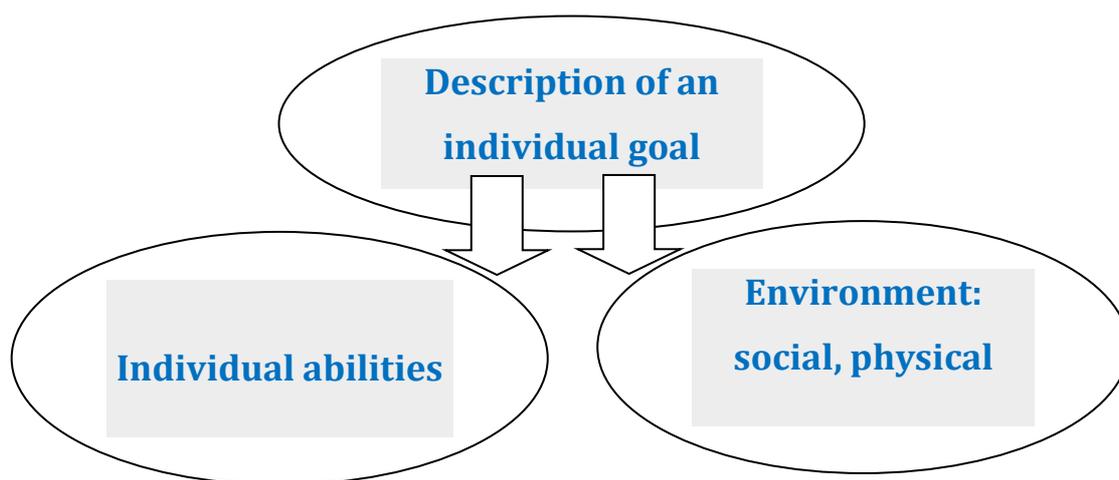


Fig. 2. Balance between person’s abilities, goals, and environment (Eino Heikkinen, 2006)

Most senior people understand that it is necessary to take care of psychological, mental health and also to have aspirations, good strong feelings to his relatives, to find challenges, to learn and improve, that it is necessary to move both mentally and intellectually. Healthy ageing is defined as a process of optimization of possibilities to ensure physical, social, and mental health, by which it is sought to

enable older people to actively participate in social life without suffering from discrimination and enjoy independence and life quality. Active ageing (according to definition of the WHO (World Health Organization) and the European Commission) includes lifelong learning, longer employment, later and more gradual retirement, longer period of activity upon retirement, activities which strengthen abilities and support health. Abilities, goals, and environment of an older person are three interrelated factors forming a process encouraging healthy ageing, and they consist in each other. It is estimated that up to 2025 one-third part of European residents will be people aged 60 and older. It is stated that a number of people aged eighty and older will especially increase. Undoubtedly it will affect economics, social, political life of the country. Last intentions to extend a limit of retirement age have raised a high wave of hostility. For certain, if you watch from the perspective of a person who has carried out heavy physical and badly paid work, several additional months until rest seem long and senseless. However, it is really desirable to present in the old Europe already known and occurring phenomenon – healthy ageing when you do not even really wish to retire on a deserved rest (pension). In 2050 half of the Europe will be aged fifty and older. Currently people of retirement employable age (25-49) make more than one third of European residents. It is thought that in 2025 this number will decrease, and people retired or intending to go on retirement will make 45% of all residents. Even worse forecasts are foreseen for the year 2050 when a half of residents will be in the age of retirement.

This means that a decreasing number of people of employable age will have problems related to ensuring social guarantees for retiring countrymen. The problem with qualified working force will also be faced. It is already spoken about healthy ageing, ability to stay healthy and fresh and compete on a labour market in 1998. It has been encouraged to draw more attention to maintenance of health, social skills of older people. For many people ageing is associated with decreasing physical, social activity and abilities to work. However, if you watch closer, you will see that mostly these are stereotypes. In most cases a person preparing for retirement only needs his work to be facilitated, another technology or approach to be used. He is to be additionally trained, so he would be able to work for several more years. As shown by surveys, the majority of retiring people would like to do it gradually by reducing the work load or changing their job to easier one. And what if people are trained to deal with physiological and anatomic changes of their body? Most people expecting retirement as their merciful rest name their ill health as main reasons of this desire and discrimination related to their age. If the discrimination phenomenon is familiar, extensively and hardly gained from all world countries, the event “healthy for the entire life” is even more known abroad and is even stranger to us. Encouragement of healthy ageing is composed of several simple things. The main principle is that activities, a system are focused on a mature person, as the points which are topical for a twenty-

years-old are not so important for a fifty-years-old. Main directions which may be named: mental health maintenance, selection of a physical load appropriate for age, household and work environment adjustment, prevention of injuries and bad habits. It would seem from the first sight that all themes are topical for people of different age. However, their presentation and content should really differ. Nutrition may be another example. Older people probably should not be troubled by talks about the principle of the healthy nutrition pyramid, but they should be helped to understand that their energy demand is decreasing, and nutrition demand remains the same. The demographical evolution feature typical for Lithuania as well as the majority of other European countries is ageing of residents. The current moment in the history of Lithuanian residents is special, as the level of residents' ageing has reached such scale in Lithuania there are a higher number of older people than children: a number of residents aged 60 and older (694 thousands, and it makes up 20.4%) exceeds a number of children aged 14 years and older (560 thousands and this makes up 16.5%). Change in structure of residents' age is notable for increase in an absolute count of older people and/or their relative part in the society. Residents' ageing occurs due to two reasons: decline in the birth rate (so the number and the part of the youngest are decreasing and proportions of older residents' groups are increasing accordingly) and extension of life duration (so the number of persons living until older the old age is increasing). An ageing limit is conventional, chosen depending on objectives of analysis. Two of them prevail: recommended residents aged 60 and older; recommended residents aged 65 and older. Spread of depression symptoms among women in Lithuania is higher than among men, but the syndrome of depression that forms an interaction of depression signs with social factors affects men more than women. Discrimination of people due to age is a global problem showing up in different forms (direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment / abuse, violence) and almost in every sphere of life. Discrimination of people due to age may decrease employment opportunities for some categories of people (young and older people, parents returning from parental leaves), limit professional skills of employees, all-round display and assessment of their work potential and experience. Discrimination of people due to age may negatively affect person's self-esteem, motivation for work, income, health, social status, and finally to contribute to person's pushing to person's social distancing. The issue of ensuring of equal opportunities to all members of society has arisen in the contemporary society due to several reasons: on the one part, exercising of equal rights is a necessary condition for creation of democratic, humanistic, and safe society, on the other part, a need to ensure equal rights of the members of the society of different age is a direct outcome of a demographic ageing process in the society. A quantitative jump of demographic ageing has comparably recently appeared in Lithuania: the number of older people has started to exceed the number of children. Representatives of older generation reach late maturity period more often and, additionally, they are healthier, better educated, and more active than their predecessors of similar age. So, current

generations may incomparably better foresee and plan their second part of life than their parents or grandparents. However, neither the people themselves nor the country has a clear vision of how to ensure both solidarity and life quality of increasing senior generation in the society consisting of several generations. Special attention should necessarily be drawn to discrimination due to age in one of fundamental spheres of life – the labour market. Many surveys have been conducted with regard to discrimination at a working place and upon existence of labour relations in order to understand an origin of this phenomenon, factors, expression, mechanisms, and efficient means of controlling such discrimination. Intolerance of some age groups, preliminary depreciation, and systematic construction of their social distancing is not only harmful to economic development of the society but also incompatible with development of the sustainable, democratic society. Uncritically taken assumptions which has formed for long decades specifying what young and old employees are able to do create these inexhaustible vivid provisions which notable easy allow ignoring or justifying discrimination due to age in case of daily social interaction of people. It is important to note that even if preliminary provisions regarding person's age are usually denied in literature, related only with older and senior people, both persons who following age standards and age stereotypes are recognized as “too young” and people who recognized as “too old” for performance of a certain role suffer from a negative attitude and discrimination due to age related to it. The Lithuanian laws prohibit discriminating a person considering six criteria: age, sexual orientation; disability; race and nationality; religion; sex. Discrimination due to age may be distinguished in different spheres of life: in a labour market (age restrictions for employment, work, and termination of labour relations), in a sphere of finances (age restrictions for rendering of certain insurance and credit services), a sphere of consumption of goods and services (shortage of goods and services for people of certain age, for instance, clothes and shoes corresponding to demands of older people), in a health protection system (decisions on admission of patients, applicable treatment methods and drugs, rehabilitation services, hospitalization of patients, and etc. by primary consideration of age; violence of staff working at institutions of care, nursing and treatment with regard to older patients), an education system (age restrictions for those who wish to study), also in public environments (offending words in a street, public transport, shopping centres, and luxurious stores; exploitation of age stereotypes in advertising, mass media, and etc.), and a private environment (emotional, physical, and financial violence with regard to older family members). Probably the most popular example of how discrimination due to age notable in case of existence of labour relations is secretly and openly applied age criteria when selecting and employing a person. However, there are different cases of discrimination due to age almost in every sector of regulation of labour relations, and talking about an individual – at each stage of his professional activity. When summarizing experience of the majority of authors exploring

discrimination due to age upon existence of labour relations, it is possible to state that people may essentially face this phenomenon at every stage of their professional career.

## **2. ADULT LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS**

Adult education is a very important part of a lifelong learning policy of the European Commission that significantly affects social involvement, active civic consciousness and personal improvement.

Lithuanian citizens who have overstepped a threshold of senile age and (majority) have left the labour market still live the rather long period of their life, but quality of this period of life by contrast with previous years of life depends not only from their behaviour and choice but also from support granted by the state or efficiency of social and health policy. Older people are very important to the society. The majority of older people lives a very conscious life and is very important to the society. They contribute to the life of the society, work a gainful or a voluntary work, take care of family members and friends, and carry out non-formal work in organizations and associations. It is never late to improve your health. Available data shows that rehabilitation means may extend life duration and improve its quality. Even though rehabilitation and prevention activities are available for very old people groups, the most prevention programs and rehabilitation means do not include older people. Equality from the view of health. The each ground of healthy ageing strategy and rehabilitation activities must ensure equality of older people from the view of health and improvement of main social and economic factors affecting older people. It is obvious that equality of older people from the view of health means lack of discrimination due to age. Independence and control. Independence and control highly affect person's dignity and integrity for his entire life. Every person should have a possibility to improve and participate in making decisions related to him. Inhomogeneity. It is necessary to consider inhomogeneity of older people. It means differences in sex, culture, nationality, sexual orientation, health, disability, social and economic status. It is also necessary to evaluate differences in generations of senior people. The people aged from 50 and up to 100 years form several generations. Too few scientific researches are dedicated to readiness for retirement, passing work to leisure and adaptation process. Advanced practice of means implemented before the retirement period shows that preliminary socialization means positively affect and strengthen the feeling of power. Upon increase of a part of older people and decrease of a number of working people the majority of the European countries faces a pension financing problem. When reacting to this problem the most attention is drawn to increase of a level of employment of older people. Unemployment is acknowledged to be a health risk factor negatively affecting future pension income. A social capital includes such social life features as personal relations with other individuals, standards, and perspectives which allow reaching general objectives more effectively. A person

attempting to obtain a social capital must maintain relations with other people who are a source of his benefit. The social capital is increasing if citizens actively participate in activities of political parties or charity organizations, trust others and vote during elections, thus improving their health. Recent surveys have shown influence of living conditions, personal success and strength of a public feeling on social confidence. Taking into consideration small exceptions people receiving low income, especially unemployed, are less likely to trust other people. It is considered that different income harms social linkage and integration, as it causes lack of social support and distancing in the society.

### **2.1. Learning of older people in Lithuania**

Currently one the most important education problem is learning of older people. Traditional learning methods are not always suitable to senior people. Thus, it is important to properly choose training methods and content. Too much attention is still drawn to theoretical knowledge by means of depreciating social skills. If these skills were emphasized, value of experience would be evaluated, and that would be important for older employees and their training motivation. More attention should be drawn to practical training and preparation of educational materials. It is also important to vary the content of training courses. Senior people are not always able to master modern training methods. Learning of older people depends on training organization: training strategies, conditions, methods, and speed suitable for senior people. In addition, learning must be organized considering learning skills and conditions. It is necessary to gather different methods of educating senior people, to compare them, analyze advantages and disadvantages, and spread information about the most successful methods between various interested organizations in our and other countries. The majority of older people is interested in adult learning and intends to learn in order to be able to equally participate in social life. Successful future depends on [physical and mental health, ability to use new technologies. A very important motive to participate in training courses is a possibility to meet other people interested in the same subjects. When learning, people feel healthier and more active citizens contributing to growth of country economics. People with various abilities make up great contribution to the labour market. Unfortunately, some older people are forced to retire even if they want and are able to work. Employers often select young people, but it does not mean that they will be working better than older ones. Young people do not have experience and wisdom that is frequently useful in professional life. The current challenge: to transfer to young generation knowledge that has been accumulated by older people. Participation in group courses gives a possibility to share ideas, feelings, discuss things, and exchange opinions. So, the task of training organizers and adult teachers is to create comfortable, open training (learning) environment, to encourage frank conversations, spontaneous reactions and reflections. However, if training (learning) is not evaluated by employers,

local community, family members or other environment, it is likely that a small number of both older and younger people will attend training courses. Training methods and forms are also important. Some people like to learn independently, other people – with close friends, people of their age group, and other ones wish to meet new people. Selection of suitable training environment, methods, and forms may eliminate a lot of obstacles and improve involvement of older people into the learning process. Senior people consider a lack of offer of interesting courses at their locations one of learning obstacles. Participation in learning does not always depend on training and motivation. Interest and usefulness of courses are also important criteria of selection of training courses. Increase in salary, issue of a certificate, learning during work is not considered very important factors. It is possible to assume that it is caused by retirement age of respondents. Learning provides opportunities for communication and similar, equal and qualitative learning. Low primary education, unemployment, living at distant village locations are factors increasing possibilities of social distancing. Education, training (learning) are tools which may restrain social distancing by means of knowledge and skills. It is especially important in the century of information society, communication technologies when communication becomes more virtual, network-related, and system-defined. People should learn to use computers and other technologies.

## **2.2. Needs of older people and training programs**

Main incitement for adults to learn is their personal interests: inner improvement, achievement of set goals, a wish to be useful, a desire to communicate.

In October/November of the year 2016 Kretinga District Education Centre conducted the survey of adult needs in non-formal learning.

**Goal.** To create a system of an offer and demand for lifelong learning that would create conditions for social involvement, active civic consciousness and personal improvement of adults.

**Task.** To create conditions for adults to gain general competencies and form their positive lifelong learning provisions by developing non-formal education services.

**Means and actions:** to prepare and implement programs of general competencies. After conducting a survey on how often older people of Kretinga District municipality have attended training courses within one year, where they have gained or deepened their personal or professional knowledge, it has been noted that people aged 65-69 (51.8%) have mostly attended foreign language, psychology, economics, and entrepreneurship trainings courses, and people aged 70 and older (1.6%) have been the most passive ones. Artistic self-expression has been the most popular for people aged 60-70 and older (55.7%). Rehabilitation courses have been mostly attended by respondents aged 60-

69 (61.9%) and 70 and older (78.7%). When analyzing a question by which it is sought to find out who has organized training courses which respondents had been attending within a year according to age, it has been noted that more women (23.5%) than men (8.5%) state that the majority of training courses has been organized by the Third Age University. More women (23.7%) than men (13.4%) say that courses have been organized by a library. Also more women (18.7%) than men (3.7%) say that training courses have been organized by Kretinga District Education Centre. The main reason encouraging residents to be involved into educational activities is communication of community members as people have missed usual communication and spending time together. Participation in training courses and events gives a possibility to find like-minded persons, new friends, to meet neighbours, acquaintances and spend time with them. In addition, it gives a possibility to self-improve by acquiring new knowledge and skills. Older people want to be equal, respectable members of the society. Senior people are to be taught until they learn things and find moral satisfaction. Age and opportunities of senior people are different, so it is frequently necessary to work with each of them individually. During the interview representatives who organize or carry out training courses have notices that it is necessary for them to self-improve, attend virtual lectures, to independently read methodical literature, to communicate with trainees, listen to their expectations, comments. According to organizers of training courses such courses or events of general nature which are selected by adults are as follows (listed according to actuality): a social psychology course, where it is spoken about training of communication and emotional abilities; a course on a topic of healthy lifestyle, where people find out more about use of exercises, healthy nutrition, body conditioning, and etc.; a foreign language basics course, during which is essential to learn main phrases which may be used to travel or visit relatives living abroad; cultural events and self-expression programs of general nature. During these events it is sought to find a conversation partner for a topical theme, to share experience, to find out new things, to learn how computer using basics. These courses are focused on older people and their needs related to e-banking services, management of electronic invoices and orders on the Internet. The adults who have taken part in a questionnaire survey emphasize that they would like to actively attend courses related to foreign language learning, healthy lifestyle, deepening of psychological knowledge, accumulation of basic legal knowledge, possibilities of application of IT technologies in personal life. The adults also emphasize that they would like to participate in various artistic self-expression activities. Not very topical training courses among the adults are related to learning of Lithuanian, agricultural themes and development of civil consciousness concept. It is recommended to relate non-formal learning topics more with the needs of adults according to the age stages and/or status. The survey has shown that the majority of adults attending adult training courses have found out about these courses from social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter – 44.9%, also a significant part of information is received from acquaintances, friends – 38.5%, Internet

- 38%. Radio – 4.4%, stands and posters – 2% are the most inefficient. The survey has shown that a place of residence may be specified as an obstacle because training course and cultural events take place in a district centre, school halls or library premises. People living at more distant locations not always have a possibility to come to events due to a transport schedule or other reasons. It is necessary to start creating a distance learning network and directly transmit training courses. However, survey participants specify the traditional learning method as the most suitable, and learning at home is specified as the most unattractive learning form. So, it would be possible to recommend not to focus on long-term distance training courses, but to focus more on conveyance of information through the Internet and to apply both traditional learning methods and IT technologies when planning courses in a moderate and proportional way. It is offered considering a desire expressed by adults and their need to communicate during courses and familiarize with experience of others. Different programs, adult education sector topics are available, for instance: Strengthening of general abilities of adult trainees, for example, strengthening of skills for problem solving by means of information technologies, improvement of competencies of persons having low qualification (literacy, numeracy and digital literacy) recognition of prevention programs, non-formally acquired competencies, entrepreneurship development, education of older trainees, health education, financial literacy, migrants' education, civil education, education of parents, education of prisoners, learning in the society, and etc. education of socially disadvantaged older people should be supported and especially encouraged. According to the law on non-formal adult education non-formal education institutions may prepare and implement non-formal adult education programs as well as basic, vocational, and higher schools which have incorporated non-formal adult education divisions (departments, groups, and etc.), other legal entities and natural persons which are granted the right to be engaged in non-formal adult education by the Government or its authorized institution. This provision is not necessarily applied to one-time non-formal education events organized by natural persons. State institutions, municipalities, non-governmental organizations, other legal entities, and natural persons may establish non-formal adult education institutions in accordance with the procedure set by the Government of its authorized institution. Non-formal education generally takes place along with basic education and teaching systems. It is also reasoned and organized. It is related to formal learning, as such learning is restricted by institutional dependence. It is typical for qualification improvement sphere. Non-formal education may be provided at working places; it may be taken care of public organizations and groups, also organizations established in addition to formal systems (art, music, and sports courses. Documents approved by the state are not issued. Good mental health allows dealing with usual life stress, working efficiently and thus contributing to life of your community. Conversations with older people show that the majority of them imagine ageing in a positive way, but they are afraid of changes related to age, for instance, deteriorating health, and death of beloved

people, depression, and forgetfulness. Problems with mental health are not an unavoidable part of the ageing process, but both specialists and older people often think like that. Probably depression is the most common illness. Approximately one of seven people aged 65 and older is suffering from it. Dementia is a disorder of mental health of older people that they are mostly afraid of. Older people are mostly pressed by the feeling of desolation. If contacts between relatives are strong, an old person is treated respectfully, his advices are considered, and such senior person feels happier, even though he becomes physically weaker. If a person has friends or favourite activities, his spiritual life is meaningful even in the age of eighty or ninety. It is very important the state to give enough attention to engagement of senior people. At the moment only single projects are being implemented, but there is no any general system. Lower interest of older people in ICT is a worldwide trend, however in Lithuania disjuncture between youth and older people is especially serious in comparison with leading EU countries. **Information technologies programs.** In order to keep pace with the rapidly changing society, to orientate themselves in information flows, everyone must learn – both young and older people. Currently, it is difficult to imagine how it is possible to manage without a video camera, a cell phone, TV, Internet. These technologies make our life easier and better. Older people may distantly communicate with their children and grandchildren who have departed abroad through a computer, to pay bills without leaving their home, and etc. The majority of Internet functions may facilitate life of older people by saving their time, energy, and money. However, Lithuanian pensioners are still considering new technologies to be suspicious and better trust old ones but familiar methods, for instance, they may wait for an hour in a queue at a bank in order to pay utility bills in cash instead of making it through the Internet; they look for goods with discounts at showcases of shopping centres, though they could find out information about discounts before leaving their home. According to the data of the Statistics Department 9.2% of pensioners use the Internet in Lithuania. 4.4% of them sign in daily; 3.9% - at least once a week. As a comparison, Internet users among pupils and students make up the absolute majority: 99.3% of them use the Internet; 90.7% use it daily. Numbers seem logical, as a computer and the Internet are primarily considered by the society as tools for work and leisure of young people. The older generation that has grown up without a virtual life looks sceptically at these technologies and successfully lives without using them. 78% of people aged from 65 to 74 consider their IT skills insufficient. Only 14% of persons of this age group have a computer at home that connected to the Internet. It is important to mention that these results are also affected by financial limits. Such limits have been specified as an essential barrier by 14% of senior people. Lower interest of older people in IT is a worldwide trend, however in Lithuania disjuncture between youth and older people is especially serious in comparison with leading EU countries. There is also the other side of the coin: many older people do not understand a benefit of the Internet, as they are not well-informed. Pensioners may get the same benefit from use of the

Internet as any other people. This means paying bills by using e-banking services, registering for a doctor visit electronically, communicating, e-services of authorities. The data of the Statistics Department also shows that Internet needs of pensioners do not differ a lot from the general situation among population in Lithuania. The main difference is that older people more often are looking for information related to health and use both social networks and Internet forums less. Older people do not rush to Facebook or other social networks, as they feel like outsiders there who have got into the territory of young people. And young people do not wish their grandparents to see their public conversations with friends. A lack of computer literacy is the main reason why pensioners heavily use the Internet. Psychological barriers are also very important. Older people are often afraid of making the first step and just try. Proper motivation facilitates a teaching process. A computer discovers the world for a senior person that he was not even been aware of previously. For instance, he will be able to manage his finances easier and more comfortable. By using electronic banking he will be able to see his received income, to control expenses, to check the balance of his bank account, to pay utility bills, and etc. He will not have to go to a post office and save much time. A lot of information about different topics may be found on the Internet: from the most suitable time to plant cucumbers to TV channel programmes. It varies a routine of an older person; if he lives alone, the Internet may help him to cope with loneliness. In social networks which older people should be encouraged to use a senior person will find out how his relatives and friends are doing, acquaint with new people, and be able to express his opinion in groups of like-minded persons.

**Physical activity programs.** Those were designed to improve the health of older people via spreading the message of active ageing and wellness throughout the nation. From birth to old age complex processes go on inside the human body that affect organs, tissues and cells. There is no such thing as eternal youth. One tends to change. As well as one's surrounding environment. However, physically active people may be able to "slow down time" or at least minimize the ageing-related "inconveniences". Physical activity and exercise routine adequate to one's health condition is mandatory at any age. If seniors exercise diligently or prefer a physically active lifestyle that includes fast walking, promenades, gardening and housework, playing with grandchildren, and morning exercises, their ageing process slows down. Such people are more resilient and do not get tired easily when performing any intensive work. Their lungs, heart, liver and digestive system function normally for a longer period of time. Proper physical activity has a major impact on one's well-being, confidence, peaceful sleep, immunity, and memory. A physically active lifestyle helps maintaining a normal body weight and reducing the development of chronic diseases (such as hypertension and diabetes) as well as improving flexibility, balance, strength, and grace. The physical activity programs have proven that:

- psychotherapeutic and psychosocial means aimed at seniors improve psychological well-being perceived by the seniors themselves, particularly when these means are applied to the inhabitants of nursing homes;

- means (including individual and family counselling and support groups, education and skills training) that can efficiently relieve psychological stress, improve skills of care workers and communication with persons to whom such services are provided;

- improvement of accessibility of healthcare services increases the likelihood of development of other services, for example, development of computer communications.

Major priorities:

- influencing factors (such as social relationships, poverty and discrimination) that have an impact on people's mental health and well-being in later life;

- providing as much information as possible about mental problems important to seniors, including depression and dementia.

The physical activity programs help communities to implement healthy ageing strategies and develop an integrated and holistic approach to seniors' health. Investment in healthy ageing means investing in human capital that could later contribute to a prosperous society and individual well-being.

**Orientation sports programs.** Modern orientation sports are a great way to combine a healthy and active lifestyle, outdoor recreation and taking care of one's physical and mental health. Orientation is not just fast running (if this is orientation running), cycling (if this is orientation cycling) or skiing (if this is orientation skiing), but also thinking and reflection and cogitation. A successful result is determined by one's ability to quickly absorb information and read maps. Age, speed or high physical stamina are not always the keys to winning; therefore, experience and well-chosen route may lead to the victory of older participants over the younger and more physically able ones. In addition, orientation sports may be rather addictive because a successfully found control point brings positive emotions and overcome route brings joy and desire to try other routes and areas. Orientation sports are among the few sports everyone can engage in as they do not require any special conditions. It can be done almost anywhere, starting with parks, plain forests and meadows, and ending with mountainous terrain and mounds. Those are not expensive sports. All one needs to start is a compass, a map and sports clothing. Orientation is an excellent active relaxation after a day of work or studies. It helps accumulating good emotions outdoors, getting acquainted with orientation sports and overcoming routes spanning through forests. In addition, it is a sport, in which the physical stress is limited by the brain work because one needs to think and follow the map to overcome the route as well as choose the best routes in order to find the necessary control point. This significantly

reduces the physical stress and health risks due to excessive or intense exertion. Orientation also helps to develop a mental processing speed, sharpness and quick self-determination (which is another useful feature), and prevents one from ageing.

**Self-expression programs.** A variety of self-expression options is very important as well as their development.

**Foreign language programs.** Knowledge of a foreign language opens up more opportunities and helps avoiding uncomfortable and embarrassing situations. During the courses, a favourable linguistic atmosphere is created via simulation and practical classes resemble real-life situations. In addition, learning a foreign language through singing, playing and acting actually helps people to deepen their knowledge of music and theatre.

**Healthy nutrition programs.** For a long time we are aware of importance of nutrition for a human body and its impact on health. It is not even a matter of discussion that malnutrition is one of the main risk factors causing a part of diseases. Upon changes of times only a view to what a healthy nutrition is, how to eat to improve health but not deteriorate it has changed. For many years sensible nutrition, then balanced nutrition has been propagated. Recently there more and more talks about healthy nutrition. Healthy nutrition is when your body receives all necessary substances and energy to keep an ideal weight. It is also spoken about a health-improving nutrition that could help to prevent progress of diseases. Though a view to nutrition has changed, essential principles almost always remained similar. A person should daily get all nutritional substances necessary for proper functioning of his body. He should get carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, microelements, and recent finding – fibre. All food products may be divided into 5 groups: dairy products, meat, fruit, vegetables, and cereals. As they contain all necessary substances, a principle of a healthy nutrition pyramid is based upon their appropriate consumption. Healthy nutrition rules demonstrated by the example the pyramid are correct. However, it is possible to argue regarding its “simplicity” and understanding. As it specifies how many portions of products of a certain group should be eaten daily, you may sometimes feel doubts: whether you have eaten your portion of vegetables, or a half of the portion is still reserved; whether it is a sufficient portion of meat that you have eaten for dinner as pieces of pork in a pilaf, or you may some more pieces of bacon in the evening. It is not a sin if people who want to eat healthy food will just follow several clear principles. It is important to be temperate in your eating, because even necessary nutritional substances may be harmful to health if too much of them are eaten. And also diversity. And, undoubtedly, a balance. Nutritional balancing is a proper ration of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, and mineral substances. Speaking even shorter and more clearly... You should eat diverse food. To keep a normal body weight. To select food products

low in fats, especially in saturated fats and cholesterol (port fat and so on). To eat more different vegetables, fruit, berries, and cereals. To eat less sugar and sweets, edible salt and drink less alcohol. A dietary regimen is one more important part of nutrition. You may even follow a principle of two health nutrition pyramids, but if you have a meal once a day and you have it almost at midnight, you should not expect results and health improvement. A nutrition regimen means having your meal *at a certain time. It is very important to eat daily at one and the same time, as when it is time to eat your stomach produces more gastric juice. Thus, after having your meal, food will digest better.*

**Preventive programs.** Prevention costs less than treatment, as about 5-9% health care expenses are incurred due to unhealthy lifestyle, overweight and hypertension. The most attention in these programs is drawn to prevention of cardiovascular diseases and strokes, oncological diseases (lung, chest, and rectal cancer), asthma and chronic lung diseases, type II diabetes, mental disorders, and motor apparatus disorders as well as healthier nutrition, physical activity, propagation of more moderate alcohol consumption, improvement of availability of the medical aid. In the majority of the European countries injuries are the second reason causing reduction in life expectancy. Due to health problems and eye problems, gait and equilibrium disorders people aged 65 and older suffer injuries more often than younger people. In addition, due to osteoporosis and bad health their injuries are usually more serious, cause fatal complications more often and longer recovery period. From 30 to 60% of adults suffer an injury from falling annually. About half of these people fall more than once. Women are more woundable than men, as their muscles are weaker and they suffer from osteoporosis more often. At all levels of activities it is necessary to initiate better safety and injury prevention, including violence and suicide fighting programs. People start smoking being teenagers, but smoking mostly causes death and disability of older people. The majority of half a million deaths caused annually by smoking falls on older people. The death rate from smoking will especially increase within the next decades, as its delayed impact on health will finally show up. A disease mostly related to smoking is the lung cancer. The death rate related to this disease is the best evidence of a long-term impact. Epidemiological surveys show that if a person aged 65-70 quits smoking, a risk of early death is reduced by half. Alcohol abuse by older people may cause a serious disease, deteriorate health, cause incompatibility with drugs being prescribed, and negatively affect life quality. Though consumption of small doses of alcohol may be useful for healthy older people (in order to improve heart performance, to help to relax, to reduce anxiety), but watching from the world perspective there is no country, where a positive impact of alcohol on health would weigh down its negative impact. Older people are encouraged to use preventive health care services. A level of knowledge of older people about health is lower than a level of younger people. It affects high frequency of chronic diseases in an age group of older people. People with a lack of knowledge about health rarely come

for vaccination and get checked for cancer. Knowledge about health but not the acquired education is a reasonable predicative factor of older people using preventive services. **Senior people also like programs comprising basics of economics, entrepreneurship, andragogy.** It is necessary to increase a number of psychotherapeutic and psychosocial means intended for older people.

The ability of older people to remain active, take part in public matters and contribute to society is affected by both the internal and external environments. Improvements in the environment make a direct impact on the quality of life of older people, as well as those who provide them with various services. The majority of older people would like to be more active and vigorous. Those with movement disorders and disabilities should receive rehabilitation services near their home. Availability of “green spaces” and the opportunity to spend time outside are considered important factors for good health and overall well-being. Air pollution is one of the key environmental factors behind the ailments common to older people. As many as twenty million Europeans complain of respiratory illness; most of them are older and (or) lacking in sufficient income. In the future, global climate change may have an even greater impact on older people due to more frequent occurrence of extreme weather conditions. It is also important to encourage older people to adopt a healthy diet focused on reducing their intake of saturated fat and increasing the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as other foods high in fibre. There is plenty of data now to suggest the comprehensive positive effect physical exercises have on older people, their overall lifespan and quality of life. People over the age of 80 who are ill and have to take medications, as well as those less educated and financially secure get the least exercise. Physical activity improves stamina, strength, balance and vigour, which helps people to remain independent. Weight-bearing exercise increases bone density and has a protective effect against osteoporosis. People who are physically active tend to feel better, in part because physical activity lowers blood pressure and decreases the likelihood of cardiovascular disease, stroke and depression.

Changing demographics and ageing of the population are some of the most urgent public health problems. First of all, the increasing numbers of older people pose a challenge to the functioning of social institutions tailored to the needs of a demographically young society. The economic system is affected by the ageing of the labour market, changes in the levels of income and savings, and the proliferation of new models of consumer activity. The political system is challenged by the participation of older people in the decision making process. The educational system is affected by the increasing duration of active working life, which, in turn, increases the importance of lifelong learning. Social protection is challenged by the need for adapting insurance and support systems to changing needs and new funding possibilities. Human ecology is affected by the need to build housing, environments and settlement infrastructure that meet human needs. The ageing of the

population also poses a challenge to healthcare. The ageing of the population is a public health problem, which necessitates the expansion of preventative, treatment, long-term nursing and care services, because various ailments and chronic diseases are some of the key problems for the majority of older people. As health declines, the body becomes increasingly less efficient at mounting its defences against disease and disability, which causes the majority of older people to suffer from different types of health problems. Research has shown that people tend to develop a new chronic, non-infectious illness every five years after their 65th birthday. Healthy ageing can be defined as the process of optimising one's physical, social and mental health, which seeks to empower older people to take an active part in public life without discrimination, and enjoy their independence and quality of life. The health of older people can be improved by ensuring the continuation of physical exercise, by changing negative attitudes towards ageing, and by encouraging citizens to lead a healthy lifestyle. In Lithuania, it is encouraged to not only disseminate information about the importance of healthy ageing, but to also take specific action, i.e., to encourage people to see older people as an invaluable treasure, to create the conditions necessary for them to remain active, to help and create the conditions for them to protect and improve their health during their entire lives, to introduce as many people to older people, their experiences and activities as possible, and to provide information about the experiences of senior citizens from abroad – what they do and how they communicate.

### **2.3. Adult education providers**

Non-formal adult education may be provided by all education providers located in Lithuania. Non-formal education/learning: organizations of different types, whose primary activity is non-vocational adult education: centres of language learning for adults, personality development and artistic expression, multifunctional centres in rural areas, the Third Century Universities (TCU), organizations (associations) of people with disabilities, communities, non-governmental organizations, libraries, museums, cultural and educational centres, high schools. Article 58 of LR education Law also determines that representative institution of the municipality (meaning the municipal council) in addition to other obligations forms network of schools providing non-formal adult education programs and initiates the formation of network of adult education providers, corresponding to the needs of the population. Moreover, municipal council independently forms network of non-formal education providers, whereas municipal executive institution (municipal administration) in addition to other important obligations organizes non-formal education of adults. Thus, the key role and primary responsibility receive municipalities for the provision of non-formal education for adults and promotion of the emergence of the Third Century Universities, not LR Seimas, the Ministry of Education and Science or any other ministry. LR non-formal adult education law governs non-formal adult education. This law determines that non-formal adult education - learning, education or studies, conforming to personal and public interests, does not issue state-

recognized document, certifying education, completion of a certain level or a separate fixed module or acquisition of qualifications. The following main objectives of non-formal adult education are:

- To help the person to meet the needs of self-education, to develop own cultural interests;
- To develop personal creative powers and abilities;
- To help the person to become an active citizen in a democratic society;
- To create conditions for gaining theoretical knowledge and practical skills required for professional activities, as well as conditions for the improvement of qualification.

In the Third Century Universities (hereinafter – TCU) people usually choose the following faculties: spiritual development and psychology, physical activity and a healthy lifestyle, culture and arts, history and tourism, foreign languages and information technology. The major part of lectures is taught twice a month and takes up to three hours. Lectures of foreign language take place at least twice a week, whereas computer proficiency basics are taught to all wishing students of all faculties. Learning is open to everyone, not excluding already existing qualifications, gender or social status. The main thing – the minimum age is 55 years old. In most cases, all registered people are motivated, disposed to gain knowledge, who joy to escape from routine because of nursing sick people at home or not having any other activities. So far, the oldest registered student is 85 years old. People are seeking knowledge in later age for a number of reasons. New knowledge helps older people to escape from routine and boredom, rescues from depression and even diseases - Alzheimer's syndrome, sclerosis. Those who wish to participate in TCU activities have to fill the application – questionnaire. It is necessary to specify the faculty, in which courses the person wishes to participate and other specified data. The form is available online; information can be provided by phone or found in media. More than 6000 seniors are studying in TCU of the country; they have such opportunities not only in big cities but also in Palanga, Kalvaria and Rietavas. Educational program of TCU, which is being created in Gargzdai, is flexible, curators take into account students' needs, the team of course lecturers is being collected, national university professors, associate professors and other qualified professionals are being called. Each faculty has deans, which are being elected from seniors. Outside lectures-tours to culturally rich locations of district or country, foreign places enliven studies. In the future, it is planned to organize degree programs in separate district neighbourhoods. It is expected that funding of non-formal education by European Union as well as partners will help to organize further education of seniors. Public libraries partially solve financial computer proficiency issue - they are open to those who cannot afford to buy a personal computer or connect the Internet. Pensioners, who voluntarily integrate into the digital society, can be counted on fingers. Authorities could take the role of encouraging all other people. Before the election, ideas to provide free Internet to pensioners appeared in programs of some politicians. However, so far, the most significant contribution to the increase of computer literacy of older people is performed by public initiatives.

The most popular activities in the country's Third Century Universities are classroom lectures and organization of leisure time, far less popular activity - organization of various workshops. It is possible that exactly for the organization of workshops Third Age University leaders have problems of finding appropriate teachers who would agree to work for free or just for symbolic reward.

#### **2.4. Cooperation of providers**

In today's dynamic society, adults must constantly improve and learn, because only in such way they will be able to adapt to changes and changing requirements. Education of adults is one of the main assumptions in creation of competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy. Availability of adult education (learning) becomes especially relevant since level and motivation depends on their participation in the learning process. Education and training are critical factors for achieving goals of Lisbon strategy - greater economic growth, competitiveness and social inclusion. It should be noted that it is necessary to increase participation of adults in learning; however, it is necessary to keep in mind the improvement of competences of adult education staff. Poor learning outcomes result from poor quality of adult teaching service. Professional development of people working in adult education sphere has a very significant impact on the quality of adult learning. Very little attention is paid for the content of initial training of personnel and determination of processes in adult education. In order to increase participation it is necessary to improve the quality of adult education. Effective training incentives include availability of learning places, open and distance learning services for people living in remote areas, information and guidelines, specialized programs and flexible teaching arrangements. It is necessary to develop competencies of pedagogical and managerial staff organizing education of adults, improve cooperation and the exchange of knowledge in adult education sphere among educators and providers or education, by enhancing their capacities and ensure the dissemination of publicity of adult education (learning). In 2014, the Republic of Lithuania had adopted the law on non-formal adult education and continuing education – new impetus and assumptions for the development of adult education system. It also foresees the coordination of adult education on state and municipal level. “Action plan of 2014-2016 on development of non-formal adult education” was approved in 2014. In 2015, while implementing provisions of the Law on non-formal adult education and continuing education, almost all Lithuanian municipalities had also prepared and approved strategic planning documents intended for the promotion of development of non-formal adult education - action plans, which foresee the participation of state, local governments and non-governmental institutions, ensured coordination of activities and financing options. Municipality of Kretinga district offers informally to adult residents to learn different things (foreign languages, knowledge and skills of psychology and healthy lifestyle, arts, ICT, gain financial literacy, civic activism, improvement in professional sphere and etc.). However, the analysis of the current

situation shows that the formation of consistent policy of non-formal adult education is a novelty in municipality. In order to achieve productive development of this education it is very important that educational and other organizations would develop non-formal adult education whatever their institutional dependence or usual activities are. As well as would improve managerial, pedagogical and other required competences of adult educators, would promote cooperation among the education community and other institutions and social organizations by exchanging the information and best practices, improving and expanding the activities and forming all together a new culture of adult learning in the municipality. Education communities and cooperation of public organizations promote policy of a lifelong learning and development of adult education. An important role plays Lithuanian council of non-formal adult education, whose activities are legalized in Law of non-formal adult education and continuing education, by leaders of Lithuanian adult education centres and Lithuanian Association of Adult Education.

### **3. METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF ADULT EDUCATION**

The most commonly lectures are educational and being taught by doctors, notaries, SODRA, social care professionals, herbalists, politicians, historians, pharmacists, psychologists, theologians. Seniors like meetings with litterateurs, poets, travellers, sportsmen, healthy people, composers, publishers of books. However, they like the most courses of lecturers-practitioners, which are proved by examples rather than by theory. Seniors select topics for lectures themselves. At the beginning of the year, they discuss actual issues, form plan of lectures and work in accordance with it. Participation in group trainings provides an opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings, discuss and exchange opinions. Therefore, the task of education organizers and teachers of adults – is a creation of a comfortable, open education (learning) environment, which would continuously encourage sincere conversations, spontaneous reactions and reflections. However, if employers, the local community, family members or other environment does not value education (learning), it is likely that there will be few people of both older and younger age. Other causes also reduce self-confidence and willingness to learn in older age. For example, long time gap since the last training (learning) experience or negative previous training (learning) experience, the fear of new technologies, the belief that learning is too late due to the old age and so on. Training techniques and forms are also very important. What is good for one is not necessarily acceptable to others. Some people like to learn independently, others - with close friends, people of their age, others want to know new people. Selection of appropriate learning environment, methods and forms can remove many obstacles and improve senior's involvement in the learning process. Education (learning) must be adapted to individual needs, because the vast majority of adults are unable to attend regular classes with students. For learning to be successful, the program should be made according to each person's education,

experience and qualifications. However, municipalities and counties are not always able to respect individual needs and consider them, which reduces the number of adult learners. Little information can be found about learning methods. Traditional forms prevail - lectures, seminars, and workshops. The main barriers to adult learning are as follows: non-recognition of competence acquired in non-formal way, lack of funding (no “student’s bag”), lack of properly prepared adult education literature, lack of inter-institutional cooperation, absence of social partnership. A large obstacle is worsening economic and social situation of the country. Studies show, the worse the situation, the least people want to learn. In an increasingly aging society, much more attention is paid to education needs of older people. One way to achieve this goal is creation of special educational institutions for older people. Such special education institutions are required because older people have their specific needs. They usually already do not need graduation certificate recognized by the state. In addition, older learners raise their own conditions for learning due to health issues – teachers must speak clearly and loudly enough, the information provided shall not be very large, relations in such educational institutions should be much more informal, more liberal than in the normal educational institution. Lithuania gone the way when Lithuanian enlightened, signatory, Dr. Medardas Čobotas, together with like-minded, had registered the first educational institution for older people, the Third Age University (TCU), in June 2, 1995. The statutes of this University state that it is a non-profit, independent, voluntary, republican public organization, whose activities ensure better social integration of older people into society, promoting their efficient, productive and meaningful life; supporting their ability to work; physical activity; raising knowledge and cultural level; exchanging life experiences; supporting health, as well as having legal personal status and working in educational, social, cultural, and other similar areas. So, from the very beginning, the aim was to create much wider profile institution in Lithuania than just academic institution for seniors. TCU is one of the most progressive educational institutions in Lithuania. The first TCU appeared in 1995, in 2012 there were 24 TCU institutions, in spring 2014 – 40 TCU were already known in different cities, and in 2016 – over 50 operating Third Century Universities were present. On the other hand, TCU were not included in the general education system of Lithuania all the time and existed independently. According to age, teachers of the Third Age University divide into three clearly expressed groups: 45 years of age and under, 46-60 years and older than 60 years of age. Teachers typically began to work in the Third Age University because they felt the need to share their knowledge. TCU leaders, teachers, volunteers asked a large part of TCU teachers (especially younger) to work as teachers in the Third Age University. Teachers and leaders of the Third Age University usually feel satisfaction with their activities. Forms of activities: classroom lectures and various workshops (language learning, art studio, handicrafts, development of IT skills, Nordic walking, etc.), organization of leisure time (tours, initiative actions, parties and so on).

#### 4. LEGAL BASIS

The lifelong learning system and adult learning receive much attention in the newest educational documents of both the EU and Lithuania. According to the National Progress Strategy “Lithuania 2030”, the intelligent society progress indicator is the level of lifelong learning in the said society. The goal is Lithuania ranking in 17th place among all member states of the European Union according to this criterion by 2030. According to Eurostat, in 2005-2013 in Lithuania the participation rate of adults aged 25 to 64 in lifelong learning were ranging between 3.9-6% (the general average of member states of the European Union is also rather modest, i.e. 10.5%). The National Education Strategy for 2013–2022 (2013) includes creation of incentives and a lifelong learning system that will have equal conditions and will be based on efficient aid in recognizing oneself and choosing activities, promotion of the diversity of lifelong learning, engaging cultural institutions and businesses, and creation of a more flexible access system. In that context, the Andragogue occupational description approved in 2013 is very important as it defines the andragogue’s purpose and activities. This Description shall contribute to ensuring lifelong learning and implementation of related strategic documents by allowing the personnel that works with adults to improve their qualification and ensuring high quality service for adult learners. The Public Audit Report submitted by the National Audit Office of Lithuania in 2013 states that organization and coordination of informal education for adults at both national and municipal level are insufficient and unevenly developed, there is a lack of attention from municipalities, no funding priorities and principles have been established, and the demand for informal adult education has not been sufficiently investigated at neither national nor municipal level. As a result, the development of informal adult education in the country is not sufficiently effective and balanced. The Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Informal Adult Education and Continuing Education was adopted in 2014, becoming a new impetus for the development of the adult education system. This Law also includes the adult education coordination at a national in municipal level. The 2014-2016 Action Plan for the Development of Informal Adult Education was approved in 2014. In Lithuania, adult education is presented as an integral part of the entire education system. The Ministry of Education and Science has the Informal Education Division and the adult education is taken care of by the Adult Education and Information Centre established by the Ministry. Its mission is to support education of adults in order to allow the widest possible public to actively participate in continuing education activities. The Centre organizes continuing training courses, data collection and storage, conducts researches related to the adult education situation and needs, develops and implements projects, develops and publishes methodological materials for adult learners and their teachers. According to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Education, informal education is an education based on various programmes for satisfying various

educational needs, developing qualifications and acquiring additional competencies, except for formal education programmes. This document also states that the purpose of informal adult education is to enable the person to learn throughout his or her life, to meet one's cognitive needs, to improve the qualifications already acquired and gain new qualifications. The informal adult education services are to be provided to every person opting for it; however, such person should be at least 18 years of age. The informal adult education services can be provided by all education providers.

#### **4.1. Legal regulation**

The Ministry of Education and Science is directly responsible for implementation of the lifelong learning strategy and coordination of actions. However, adult education is far from being equivalent to formal or vocational education. Documents were prepared and there is a decent legal framework, but implementation of provisions set forth therein is carried out slowly, and these provisions are rather declaratory in nature. Priority and real aid is provided to formal education, while informal education remains unrecognized, lacking both funds and prestige. Compared to other European countries, in Lithuania informal adult education is one of the most backward areas of education. Continuing adult education is perceived very narrowly, mostly as completion of secondary education and acquisition of profession or qualification. This brings us to the conclusion that there is no coherent policy and strategy regarding informal continuing adult education. Although the demand for it gradually increases each year. Younger people want formal education while older people prefer informal education. However, specific needs and ways of learning have not been scrutinized in more detail. Research and documents speak of the lack of motivation to learn, which is partly linked with the negative experience from the previous learning/training, employment, a lack of information, and so on. Another important aspect is the low prestige of informal education (lack of funds and recognition). Studies showed that learning foreign languages, computer literacy, entrepreneurship, and basics of economic and legal knowledge are among those igniting the most interest. It is apparent that people would be inclined to learn other things as well, but they either do not possess the necessary information or nobody asked them about it. Most people would like for their education to take place closer to home, not to be time consuming, and be organized at the time suitable for them.

Documents regulating adult education:

- Strategy of Securing Lifelong Learning;
- Law on Informal Adult Education;
- Recommendations for assessment of competences acquired in the informal adult education system and their recognition by higher education institutions.
- The Order "On Approval of the List of Training Programs for the Unemployed with Higher Education";

- List of training programs for the unemployed with higher education;
- The Order “On the Procedure for Acquiring the Right to Engage in Informal Adult Education”.

In 2010, the project “Development of the Adult Education System by Means of Providing the Learners with General Competencies” was launched to develop comprehensive adult education system in Lithuania. According to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Education, informal education is an education based on various programmes for satisfying various educational needs, developing qualifications and acquiring additional competencies, except for formal education programmes. This document also states that the purpose of informal adult education is to enable the person to learn throughout his or her life, to meet one’s cognitive needs, to improve the qualifications already acquired and gain new qualifications. In Lithuania, the legal status of organizations that call themselves the Third Century Universities varies significantly: associations de jure, branches of Medardas Čobotas’ Third Century Universities. Since 2008, the Third Century Universities established on the initiative of not only individuals but also municipal politicians or municipal administration specialists started to emerge. A certain part of these TCU may only relatively be called Third Century Universities, because they are functions carried out by other institutions (usually, schools for adults or educational centres) rather than separate organizations of some kind. Heads of TCU established under an institution operating in a municipality on the initiative of the said municipality do not usually plan any legal registration of TCU. Normally it is sufficient that the institution, under which TCU is operating, has a legalized status. Another way for the Third Century Universities to emerge in Lithuania is the initiative of universities, i.e. when a University (together with its partner, such as public institution, or independently) establishes a rather independently functioning organization providing the academic and other educational services to seniors, that is run by the University’s staff and normally conducts its activities at the University’s premises. In conclusion, it can be stated that TCU operating in Lithuania and institutions providing informal education services can be divided into three groups (based on founders):

- organizations established on the initiative of natural persons;
- on the initiative of municipal council members or municipal administration workers, perhaps, implementing the provisions of the Lithuanian Law on Education, assigning the duty of performance of seniors’ informal education to any organization already existing in the municipality;
- TCU, which originated from the initiative of staff of the University operating in Lithuania.

In recent years, the number of the Third Century Universities established in Lithuania’s various municipalities has increased as well as the number of education centres and schools for adults operating in the municipalities, which are starting to provide informal education services to seniors

as well as starting to call themselves the Third Century University. The number of seniors using informal education services clearly increases.

## 4.2. Structure

ICT-based and distance learning opportunities (EPALE system, SMIS) are used for the expansion of adult learning opportunities, as well as already operating formal educational institutions (adult education centres, non-formal education schools, vocational training institutions and high schools), partnerships of cultural institutions (museums, libraries, archives). New opportunities are being created - Third Century Universities, universal multifunctional centres. Lithuania has a number of organizations of older people. The largest and the most active association of senior people of the Third Age University is association „Bočiai“. Union of Lithuanian pensioners „Bočiai“, created in 1991, organizes club activities, promotes activities based on interests, self-education, healthy lifestyles, develops mutual assistance, handouts, nursing, care and charity, supports and implements national traditions. About 41000 of members unite 54 „Bočiai“communities established in all districts. The major part of union members is united in Kaunas, Panevezys, Klaipeda, Kretinga, Sakiai and Vilnius. Their members participate in organized non-formal education courses, lectures, and discussions, have fun together, dance, and sing. Counting TCU, established by municipal initiative, it can be stated that the majority of them - 10 out of 14 – are operating with the centre of education located in municipality (educational service centre, educational support services, education and cultural services centre and so on). Whereas other 3 units - with formal adult education institution located in municipality (adult and youth school, adult learning centre, adult education centre). To summarize, it can be said that TCU institutions, operating in Lithuania, and institutions, providing non-formal education, by founders, can be divided into 3 parts:

- Organizations, established by initiative of physical persons;
- Established by initiative of members of municipal councils and employees of municipal administrations. Perhaps, while performing an obligation of senior non-formal educational performance of provisions of the Law of the Ministry of Education, and assigning to an existing organization operating in municipality;
- TCU, established by initiative of workers of Lithuanian University.

Legal registration issue is important, for example, because, according to legal status, Third Century Universities may have different internal procedures, responsibility, finally the opportunity to attract financial support or to conclude cooperation agreements with outside organizations. Completing survey, in TCU, which was established by physical persons, answers of leaders were distributed as follows: 19 of them indicated that the legal status of their TCU is association, 1 - public institution, and 2 respondents did not answer this question. Leaders of organizations, operating in

municipalities and providing educational services to seniors, simply did not answer to this question; only one leader of TCU indicated that the legal status of his TCU is an association. The leader of TCU established by one university indicated that the legal status of his educational institution is a public institution, whereas the leader of TCU established by other university did not answer to this question. In general, it can be said that the problem of the legal status of TCU is greater than it seems to be at first glance. After the establishment of the Third Age University of Medardas Čobotas in 1995 (MČTCU) and thus promoting the creation of TCU in other municipalities, leaders of MČTCU provided legal assistance by formally registering these new TCU – for simplicity, new TCU emerging in municipalities were registered as branches of MČTCU. Later, these enhanced MČTCU branches often reregistered in other municipalities as an independent association; however, MČTCU continued to keep them as its branches. There was a question in discussed survey questionnaire if respondents led TCU has any branches. Leader of MČTCU replied that TCU branches were established in districts, which are now registered as the Third Century Universities: Kaunas, Telsiai, Utena, Visaginas, Kretinga, Klaipeda, Anyksciai, Jonava, Kupiskis, Raseiniai, Taurage, Varena, Panevezys, Marijampole, Alytus. On the other hand, these listed answers of TCU leaders show that currently TCU of Rokiskis, Kaunas district, Panevėžys, Visaginas consider themselves as MČTCU branches or faculties operating in other municipalities. True, we failed to interview one leader out of two TCU operating in Taurage. It is possible that his lead TCU also somehow legally links with MČTCU. TCU legal status of Raseiniai is also very interesting. Although, the leader had indicated that the founder of TCU is the education centre of Raseiniai, legally, according to the respondent's words, it is TCU branch of Medardas Čobotas of Raseiniai district education centre. So, summing up, it can be stated that according to the legal status, as it seems, it is not enough to divide TCU operating in Lithuania into three groups according to the founder. The part of sufficiently autonomous operating TCU, established by physical persons in municipalities, what is evident from the answers of the respondents, are legally operating as MČTCU branches in other municipalities. It seems that TCU of Raseiniai may be defined similarly, which founder, as the respondent stated, is the education centre of district. Therefore, from a purely legal point of view, TCU operating in Lithuania can be divided into TCU, established by physical persons, TCU, established by municipal bodies and performing TCU functions, TCU, established by universities and basically independently acting MČTCU branches in other municipalities. However, for analytical simplicity, this analysis will comply with earlier TCU distribution into three groups. The issue of TCU legal status is very important when dealing with survival issues of this type of adult non-formal learning. For example, very often the organization's legal status causes the access to financial and other means to support, opportunities to participate in various public purchases or projects of different levels. Answers of respondents indicate that TCU, if it has its own divisions or branches, or plan to establish such, typically focuses on other

cities and towns located in the same municipality. An exception is the already discussed MČTCU, MČTCU branch of Kaunas district, which has its branch in Kedainiai, as well as Lithuanian sports and health TCU, planning to establish branch in Birštonas. Lithuania has the greater number of working Third Century Universities, connecting from 100 up to 300 listeners. It should be noted that better or worse relationships with their municipal administration specialists identified even a little less than half of leaders of Third Century Universities, established by physical persons. The most popular techniques of local community information about Third Age University activities (as in 2012) are local newspaper and TCU website or other organizations, such as educational centres, museums and so on.), Internet website. Among the less popular, but also an interesting way - dissemination of information through the community council members, on local television and radio, at city festivals.

### **4.3. Financing**

Directions of state support of adult education:

- direct financing of educational institutions, financing of separate state or local government, individual or group provided educational projects and programs;
- provision of lease of public premises and tax incentives, promotion of charity and education support through the tax system;
- partial or complete support of adult education participants;
- free provision of learners with information and publications in public libraries.

The huge impact on citizen involvement in educational activities has namely external financial support. Also, free events are considered to be a financial support for educational activities, which allows residents to develop and grow without investment from their personal funds. It is important for citizens to have the opportunity to participate in educational activities for free or at a low cost of funds.

The Third Century Universities may solve a lot of their organizational, financial, and other problems if they closely communicate with specialists of an education or other division of their municipality administration (e.g., social protection). Sponsors: various private organizations, private persons, a municipality directly or through its incorporated organizations, various national (not municipal) institutions and organizations, TCU heads, lecturers or trainees (not by means of a membership fee), TCU trainees by paying a membership fee. Various private organizations or persons do not regularly support activities of the Third Century Universities carrying out their activities in Lithuania, though almost one third TCU incorporated at the initiative of both natural persons and municipalities may boast of support obtained several times from private organizations or private persons not directly related to TCU. Municipality more often supports activities of the Third Century Universities incorporated by the municipality or, to be more precise, of municipal institutions

providing non-formal education services for senior people directly or through organizations incorporated by it. Municipality also constantly supports activities of almost one third of natural persons incorporated by TCU. Only respondents representing the Third Century Universities incorporated by universities have specified that they being constantly supported by various national (not municipal) institutions and organizations. TCU heads, lecturers or trainees (not by means of a membership fee) constantly support or have at least several times supported a small part of the Third Century Universities incorporated by natural persons or municipalities and TCU incorporated by both higher education institutions. Some respondents have explained that it has taken place when TCU trainees or heads have been engaged in free activities of lecturers of the Third Century Universities. The Third Century Universities may submit project applications. Projects: municipal, national and EU projects. The Third Century Universities are more focused on projects announced in their municipality or Lithuania. Certainly, an application for projects announced in the municipality may only be prepared and submitted if funds are generally allocated for such projects. Non-material support is obtained from different institutions. Representatives of the Third Century Universities have specified a possibility to use premises and office equipment without charge. Higher education institutions (not only universities but also colleges) assist the Third Century Universities in searching free lecturers.

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